



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



MINISTRY
OF AGRICULTURE



Fourth Regional Consultation on Geographical Indications (GIs)

in FAO Region for Europe and Central Asia

CONCEPT NOTE and Agenda

December 11, 2023

09:00 - 12:10
CET, via Zoom

in different timezones:

08:00 - 11:10	London, UK
10:00 - 13:10	Ankara, Türkiye
12:00 - 15:10	Tbilisi, Georgia
13:00 - 16:10	Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Background

FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia is supporting an informal regional technical network on promoting quality products linked to geographical origin and geographical indication (GI), as part of FAO's Regional Initiative on improving agrifood trade and market integration. The First Regional Consultation was held from 11 to 13 December 2017 and the Second Regional Consultation was organized on 28–29 November 2019, both in Budapest, Hungary while the Third Regional Consultation was held on 8–9 December 2021, as an online event. Almost 100 participants from 34 countries participated in the meeting, including administrative staff from ministries of agriculture, academicians from universities, agencies responsible for intellectual property services, FAO experts, the European Commission, WIPO, NGOs, and producer associations. During December 2023, the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia called for the Fourth Regional Consultation on geographical indications that is going to be held online with participation from organizations like EC, OriGIn, CIRAD, and WIPO. In 2022 we prepared a proceedings report including baseline studies on the following countries: Croatia, France, Hungary, Poland, United Kingdom, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, and the Russian Federation. The publication is currently available online.

Each of the consultations has confirmed the interest in the matter from the countries and the relevance to keep sharing experiences between countries and for FAO to provide technical assistance.

The combined effect of COVID-19, the war in Ukraine, and climate change have created a crisis in the cost of living. The crisis manifests through three main transmission channels: rising food prices, rising energy prices, and tightening financial conditions. In the case of food and agriculture, higher energy costs have led to high fertilizer prices and high input import bills. High fuel and fertilizer prices increase farmers' production costs, which may result in lower production, lower economic activity, and lower food availability.

Negative effects of climate change, war, and the Covid 19 pandemic being felt all over the world, the issue of sustainability in the agriculture and food sector has gained even more importance. Sustainability has economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Geographical indications are a very important rural development and sustainability tool that has direct and/or indirect effects on sustainability. The implementation of geographical indications contributes to sustainability in several main aspects. First

of all, geographical indications ensure the preservation of local plant varieties or animal races (through dairy and meat products GIs) and the continuity of the production of these varieties/races. This helps biodiversity to be sustainable. The fact that the production of GI products is subject to certain rules and that these rules are prepared in a way that protects the environment and biodiversity contributes to the sustainability of both production and the environment. The implementation of GIs according to certain rules ensures the protection of quality and enables products with GI to be sold at higher prices than their counterparts through product differentiation. When a GI product gains a premium price in the market it will result in economic sustainability. Providing better-added value also directs producers to protect their resources better. The successful implementation of GIs requires the collective effort of all actors in the value chain. This collective effort is an important element of social sustainability. However, in order to provide GIs to contribute to sustainability, first of all, GI registrations must be viable and successfully implemented. In this context, it is necessary to share the experiences and successful examples during the preparation and implementation phases of GIs with the relevant parties in all countries that implement the GI system and/or are at the beginning of implementation.

Considering this special situation, it is even more important that the rationale behind the GI policy framework in the Region is to support small and medium-scale farmers and processors, and the short value chains. These actions are essential in order to increase the actors' competitiveness in the market via the utilization of local resources, traditions, and skills as well as the local environment and microclimate to produce products representing the area - the terroir - in a way, which distinguish the product from other similar products not produced within the area. In this way, the farmers and processors taking advantage of protected geographical indications, benefit in terms of increased income while maintaining bearable prices for consumers.

In December 2023, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) called for an online Fourth Regional Consultation on geographical indications with participation from countries representing ministries of agriculture, national IP offices, NGOs, experts, and the international organizations like WIPO, EC (DG AGRI), OriGIn, CIRAD, and REDD.

Objectives

Further support for GI development in the Region would benefit from a comprehensive consultation event on the current situation, both for the countries in the field and in terms of available tools to support their actions. This consultation will therefore present existing studies, guidance, and tools in relation to crucial topics: sustainability performances,

examination of GI request, and certification, and will utilize country-specific panel discussions to share experiences and discuss perspectives on related topics. The current situation in countries, depending on their GI system and types of registered GI products, will be analyzed, as well as their length of experience in the EU -between old and new EU members,

EU neighborhood countries, Central Asia, and approximation applicant countries in SEE. In addition to the baseline assessment, the consultation will inform FAO REU strategic planning on GI regional policy priority areas

and how to effectively organize technical assistance to GIs in the countries individually, and summarize the key aspects.

The specific objectives of the consultation are:

- Analyse the current situation of GIs in ECA countries, using baseline studies, and considering their GI system and types of registered GI products as well their length of experience in the EU -between old and new EU members, EU neighborhood countries, Central Asia, and approximation applicant countries in SEE.
- Evaluate existing studies, reviews, evaluations, and similar documents on the contribution of GIs to agri-food systems sustainability, using country-specific panel discussions.
- Inform FAO REU strategic planning on GI regional policy priority areas and how effectively organize technical assistance to GIs in the countries individually, and summarize the key aspects.

Expected outcomes

The consultation will result in the following expected outcomes:

- how to use GIs to improve sustainability
- sustainability strategy for GIs and tools for producer groups and policymakers
- the role of certification and controls in strengthening the sustainability of GIs
- good marketing strategies for the economic benefit of the GIs and sustainability
- well defined GI - policy priority areas for Europe and Central Asia

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Initial Consultations with Government Representatives and NGOs

December 11, 2023

09:00 Welcome and Opening

- Nabil Gangi**
Officer-in-Charge, Deputy Regional Representative,
Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
- Péter Gál**
Head of Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Hungary
- Dmitry Zvyagintsev**
Policy Officer, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

09:10 Importance and modalities for GI controls

The role of certification and controls in strengthening the sustainability of geographical indications (moderator Lisa Paglietti, Economist, FAO and key presenter of new publication on controls, Nathalie Vucher, international expert on geographical indications, former President of Control Board at INAO, France) [15']

Tour de table on country situation and experiences [15']

invited speakers:

- TURKPATENT representative and Dragan Brenjo**
(Food Safety Agency, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

09:40 Considerations for strategic and operational marketing of geographical indications

Implementing marketing strategies within the GIs framework to enhance sustainability (moderator Dmitry Zvyagintsev, Policy Officer, FAO and key presenter of a new marketing publication (Pascal Bernardoni, International expert, REDD, Switzerland) [15']

Tour de table on country situation and experiences [25']

invited speakers:

- professor Yavuz Tekelioglu**
"Local Products and Geographical Indications Turkey Research Network (YÜciTA)" (Turkey) and professor **Matthew Gorton**, Newcastle University, UK on baseline assessment of UK experience with geographical indications.

10:20 - 11:30 [70'] Panel Discussions by group of countries

10.20-11.00 Panel 1. - A discussion with the representatives (national IP offices, ministries for agriculture) from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Georgia, and Moldova, with institutional contributions from the EC (DGAGRI, tbc), CIRAD (tbc) and WIPO (tbc), moderator Valerie Pieprzownik (FAO)

Interventions (delegated representatives)

11.00 – 11.30 Panel 2. - A discussion with the representatives (national IP offices, ministries for agriculture) from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, and Kyrgyzstan, moderator professor Sertac Dokuzlu, Uludag University, Türkiye

Interventions (delegated representatives)

11:30 - 11:35 Summary reported from panel discussions

11:35 - 12:00 Working with GI groups and policy makers to embark in a sustainability journey

- Keynote speaker:**
FAO presenting the policy brief, the guidelines and the toolkit to support producers group in designing their sustainability roadmap [15']

- Keynote speakers:**
oriGIn presenting "Sustainability strategy for geographical indications" [10']

12:10 Concluding remarks

- Dmitry Zvyagintsev**
Policy Officer, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
- Raimund Jehle**
Regional Programme Leader, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia