

منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



Organisation des  
Nations Unies pour  
l'alimentation et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Agricultura y la  
Alimentación

## **FORUM INTERNATIONAL GREEN WEEK**

“Global food security – A global challenge for politics and industry”

16 January 2009, Berlin, Germany

TECHNICAL FORUM

**“GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION AND ITS  
CONTRIBUTION TO FOOD SECURITY”**

Report

## **“GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO FOOD SECURITY”**

---

Technical Forum

16 January 2009, Berlin, Germany

FORUM INTERNATIONAL GREEN WEEK

“Global food security – A global challenge for politics and industry”

Editors:

Hajnalka Petrics

Richard Eberlin

The views expressed in this information product are those of the panel members and do not necessarily reflect the views of FAO.

FAO 2009

## Table of Content

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table of Content .....   | 3  |
| Acronyms and Abbreviations .....                                 | 4  |
| 1. BACKGROUND .....  | 5  |
| 2. GI: DEFINITION AND LINK TO TERRITORIAL IDENTITY .....         | 8  |
| 3. GI AND FOOD SECURITY .....                                    | 9  |
| 3.1. Food security – standardization versus differentiation..... | 9  |
| 3.2. Food security and food culture .....                        | 10 |
| 4. GI AND REGULATORY ASPECTS.....                                | 11 |
| 4.1. Protection of GI.....                                       | 11 |
| 4.2. GI: a rural development tool or a legal tool?.....          | 12 |
| 5. COST AND BENEFITS OF GIS .....                                | 12 |
| 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....                         | 13 |
| 7. ANNEXES: .....  | 15 |
| Annex 1 - Programme .....  | 15 |

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>CAP</b>    | COMMON AGRICULTURE POLICY  |
| <b>CIRAD</b>  | FRENCH AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  |
| <b>EU</b>     | EUROPEAN UNION   |
| <b>FAO</b>    | FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS            |
| <b>GI</b>     | GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION  |
| <b>ORIGIN</b> | ORGANIZATION FOR AN INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS NETWORK |
| <b>REU</b>    | FAO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA                    |
| <b>TRIPS</b>  | TRADE-RELATED ASPECTS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS              |
| <b>UNCTAD</b> | UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT                 |
| <b>WIPO</b>   | WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION                           |
| <b>WTO</b>    | WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION   |

## 1. BACKGROUND

The interest for food products produced with local know how and with a defined geographical origin, bearing a geographical indication (GI) is growing and consumers are increasingly demanding such products. In addition, modern rural development approaches regard GI products as a tool to support rural economies by adding value to locally available resources, deepening agricultural production and diversifying the rural economy, while contributing to the preservation of food culture, biodiversity and landscape, which becomes an important resource for rural tourism.

Agenda Item 11 of the Twenty-Sixth FAO Regional Conference for Europe<sup>1</sup> examined the scope of regional traditional products and the ways that these products can contribute to sustainable rural development. One of the recommendations of the Conference was that FAO should assist in raising awareness about the importance of traditional products and their role in agriculture and rural development and biodiversity preservation, particularly in Central and Eastern European countries.

The Technical Forum “Geographical Indication and its contribution to food security” was held on 16 January 2009, at the Forum International Green Week in Berlin, Germany. The event was organized by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) and was moderated by Richard Eberlin, Land Tenure and Rural Development Officer. The Forum, upon recommendations of the 26<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Europe, aimed to raise awareness about the importance of traditional products and their role in agriculture and rural development.

The overall objective of the panel discussion was to consider to what extent GI products can contribute to increased rural incomes and improved food security, or if GIs are rather limited to niche markets with good access to wealthy consumers in developed countries. The main objectives of the discussion were to provide answers to a set of key questions raised by the moderator with the panel members. The key questions were the following.

- Are GIs a viable option for the sustainable development of rural areas, e.g. are they contributing to:
  - economic diversification, income and employment creation
  - preservation of traditional knowledge (including farming systems)
  - safeguarding of biodiversity and maintenance of genetic resources
  - safeguarding local culture
  - maintenance of the landscape and its positive effect on tourism
  - food security
- What are the limits/threats for GIs to contribute to the development of rural areas, e.g.:
  - intellectual property rights are not respected, e.g. products copied
  - specialisation and economic dependency
  - jeopardized carrying capacity of the territory (environmental and social aspects)
- What are the policy options to support GIs:
  - existing international legal frameworks, WTO/CAP/Codex Alimentarius/WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization), etc.
  - support policies:
    - developing appropriate national frameworks for registration and protection
    - specific measures under rural development policies.

---

<sup>1</sup> Innsbruck, Austria, 26-27 June 2008.

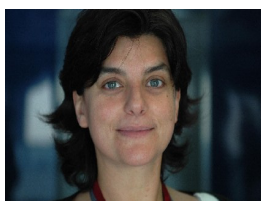
The panellists, prominent experts in the technical subject of the Forum, represented a wide range of sectors and institutions including academia, research, the non-governmental sector, intergovernmental organizations and the UN system. Namely panellists were a) Mr Gianluca Brunori, Professor of Rural Development, University of Pisa, Italy, b) Ms Cinzia Scaffidi, Director of the Slow Food Study Centre, Italy, c) Mr Didier Chabrol, Senior researcher in Social Sciences of Food, CIRAD, France, d) Mr Christoph Spennemann, Legal Expert, UNCTAD, e) Ms Emilie Vandecandelaere, Food Quality Project Officer, FAO and f) Mr Massimo Vittori, Secretary General, OriGIn.

**Table 1. List of panellists and their background**



**Gianluca Brunori**, Professor of Rural Development, University of Pisa, Italy

Prof. Gianluca Brunori is full professor of rural development at the Faculty of Agriculture in Pisa, Italy, with a background in agricultural economics and rural development. He is also chair of the scientific committee of the Regional Agency for Development in Toscana, Italy. His research is focused on the link between food and rural development, on rural governance, on innovation processes in agriculture and in rural development, and on the survival strategies of small farms.



**Cinzia Scaffidi**, Director of the Slow Food Study Centre, Slow Food, Italy

Cinzia Scaffidi has a background in history and philosophy. Before joining Slow Food in 1992, she worked as a journalist, taught and worked in the area of international cooperation. In 2000 she was in charge of the Slow Food Award for the Defence of Biodiversity and since 2004 has been one of the coordinators of the Terra Madre meeting. She is Director of the Slow Food Study Centre and is responsible for International Relations at the University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenzo and Colorno, where she also teaches “Interdisciplinarity of gastronomy”.



**Didier Chabrol**, Senior researcher in Social Sciences of Food, CIRAD, France

Didier Chabrol is a specialist of food culture and socio-anthropological approach of the agri-food sector at the Joint Research Unit « Innovation & Development in Agriculture and Agri-food sector » at the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), France. Before joining scientific research some years ago, he worked with NGOs, contributed to set up a museum about food and agriculture in the world, and created and managed culinary travels.



**Christoph Spennemann**, Legal Expert, UNCTAD

Christoph Spennemann holds a master degree in international economic law and European law of the Universities of Lausanne and Geneva. Mr. Spennemann joined the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 2001. He mainly deals with issues related to intellectual property rights and their development implications. His particular interests relate to patent and copyright law and the possibilities of striking an appropriate balance between exclusive rights and the public domain. He has published and co-authored various articles in the areas of patent law, geographical indications and trademark law.



**Emilie Vandecandelaere**, Food Quality Project Officer, FAO

Ms Vandecandelaere is working as quality expert in the Food Quality and Standards Service (AGNS) of FAO since 2007. She is managing the programme on Specific Quality and Quality Linked to Geographical Origin which aims at supporting Member Countries and stakeholders in the implementation of specific quality schemes contributing to rural and sustainable development. She is an agro-economist with a PhD in rural economics, for which she analysed the role of quality linked to geographical origin, territorial network and proximity between producers and consumers for rural development (INRA, 2000-2003). Prior to joining FAO she worked on food and nutrition policy in the General Food Policy Directorate of the French Ministry of Agriculture (2003-2007).



**Massimo Vittori**, Secretary General, OriGIn

Massimo Vittori is currently Secretary General of OriGIn, the global coalition of Geographical Indications producers that aims to secure a more effective legal protection for GIs both at national and international level. He previously worked as legal advisor for the UN/WTO Agency “International Trade Centre” and for the “United Nations Conference for Trade and Development”. Mr Vittori holds an LLM in Intellectual Property and a Masters Degree in International Law. He wrote a number of publications in the field of intellectual property rights and geographical indications.

The panel discussion started with the introduction of the panel members by their professional background and the statements expressing their personal position or the position of their organization on GI and its contribution to food security.

**Table 2. Statements of panellists on ‘GI and its contribution to food security’**

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Gianluca Brunori</b>       | “GI as a tool to promote economic diversity and to strengthen local food systems.”   |
| <b>Cinzia Scaffidi</b>        | “Geographical Indications as a tool for strengthening identities and developing territories.”  |
| <b>Didier Chabrol</b>         | “Geographical Indications can contribute to food security in rural areas, as far as they are considered and implemented as a rural development tool, and not only a commercial or legal one.”  |
| <b>Christoph Spennemann</b>   | “Depending on consumers' preferences, efficient marketing systems and the availability of government support, GIs may make an important contribution to the availability of quality food.”   |
| <b>Emilie Vandecandelaere</b> | “GIs: a multiple tool for local development (economic, social and environmental components), depending on the way the "rules of the game" are set up and managed: therefore public policies and support towards a territorial approach are important together with the private-public collaboration.“  |
| <b>Massimo Vittori</b>        | “Geographical Indications (GIs) have a tremendous potential in terms of development of rural areas. GIs are a powerful tool in the hands of local producers to differentiate their offer through quality and make economies of scale in the management of their businesses. GIs can also generate spill-over effects on local economies by promoting tourism as well as helping preserve the environment and biodiversity. But a sound legal framework, both at the national and international level, is a condition to make the GI business sustainable in a medium/long term, thereby allowing GIs to play a significant role in improving food security.” |

The following report summarizes the discussion under the different main topics dealt with during the panel and the following open discussion with the audience.

## 2. GI: DEFINITION AND LINK TO TERRITORIAL IDENTITY

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) geographical indication (GI) is one form of industrial property and in this sense it is an intellectual property. “A geographical indication is a sign used on goods that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that place of origin” (WIPO). They may highlight particular qualities of a product, which are due to natural (e.g., race, variety, soil, climate, etc.) and human factors, such as specific manufacturing skills and traditions, found in the place of origin of the products.

**Box 1**  
**Intellectual and industrial property**

The term intellectual property refers broadly to the creations of human mind. Intellectual property rights protect the interests of creators by giving them property rights over their creations. Intellectual property is usually divided into two branches: copyright and industrial property. (WIPO)

The use of GI is not limited to agricultural and food products, many developing countries are developing GIs for handicrafts. In the framework of the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) GI is defined as “indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a Member, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin” (Article 22.1). The European Union (EU) legislation refers to GI in the legislation on protected designation of origin and protected geographical indication<sup>1</sup> ((EC) No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006 and the implementing regulation (EC) No 1898/2006 of 14 December 2006)<sup>2</sup>. According to Reg. No 510/2006 "geographical indication" means the name of a region, a specific place or, in exceptional cases, a country, used to describe an agricultural product or a foodstuff:

- originating in that region, specific place or country, and
- which possesses a specific quality, reputation or other characteristics attributable to that geographical origin, and
- the production and/or processing and/or preparation of which take place in the defined geographical area.

GI codifies what is the specific quality linked to geographical origin, through the description, in the code of practice (or specifications), of the ingredients and the productions process of a product and the demonstration of the link to production area. This codification creates the basis for protection. GI determines to which territory a product belongs to, this is why it is important to strengthen territorial identity. GI refers to a place, a territory, in terms of its culture, people, history and traditions. At the same time, identity is a complex cultural issue; therefore it is not easy to define GI in terms of political geography. The physical limits of an area constitute also the limits for GI production (where the product produced in conformity with the codification can bear the GI). The uniqueness of the specific quality product linked to a territory can be determined also by its biological resources. Therefore, GI can be a tool not only to preserve but also to monitor biodiversity.

**Terroir**

**Box 2**

The *terroir* encompasses the interaction between physical (natural) and human factors that has built up over time. It refers to local resources, which can be physical (soil, climate, landscape etc.), genetic (especially indigenous plant varieties and livestock breeds) and/or cultural (know-how, traditions, etc.). The specific nature of these resources leads to the uniqueness, identity and value of products. (FAO)

<sup>1</sup> Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) are the two types of geographical indications protected in the EU.

<sup>2</sup> (EC) No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006 was amended by (EC) No 628/2008 of 2 July 2008.

The food culture along with legal traditions (civil or common law) and a higher awareness of the advantages of GI among value chain actors and administration, may explain why GIs is more developed in some regions of the world (e.g. southern Europe) and less in others (e.g. the northern European countries). The number of GIs are now increasing not only where the population was historically more sensitive to traditional food, local culture, good diet and the social aspects of eating, but also in countries where industrialisation had a deeper impact in terms of marginalizing local food cultures and thus lead to some traditional foods disappearance.

Following the end of the socialist regime and the standardization efforts, Eastern European countries have now the possibility to rediscover traditions and thus high potentials for GI production both for food and non-food products (e.g. handicrafts).

Today in countries where local food culture and traditional food has for a long time been depressed, interest for origin-linked quality food is increasing. Nonetheless, domestic demand can not always be met with local production due to the fact that local producers have not yet fully discovered the advantages GI can offer them. This is confirmed for example in countries where most of the GI products are imported, which shows a clear break in the interest of producers and consumers.

Producers shall consider GI as a new business model and look at tradition as a source of innovation to build on. Business models that build on local tradition and its uniqueness can have significant comparative advantage due to the fact the reproduction of territorial specificities is not possible elsewhere.

### 3. GI AND FOOD SECURITY

#### 3.1. Food security – standardization versus differentiation

Food security does not relate only to quantity and volume but also to quality and consumers preferences, economic (price and income) and physical access (proximity) of food products. Taking this into account, GI, by providing a better income for producers and creating a better economic access to food, can determine and influence food security.

When standardization was considered the only way to achieve competitiveness in the agricultural sector, big agro-food industries and big food supply chains have been created and promoted as a model to follow. Specialisation and modernization were suggested as the successful paradigms and the only survival strategies for agricultural producers. Production of agricultural products with clear geographical origin posed a rupture in this system and provided an alternative business model for small producers. This alternative business model is linked to local knowledge and tradition, which represented a way to produce differentiated and unique product standards. Production of GI has created a plurality in the agricultural economic sphere. GI has gained particular importance in areas where traditional production methods were the only way to maintain activities and thus employment. In some countries, with the help of GI, by enhancing their reputation and selling directly to final consumers, small local producers have become able to compete more effectively with large food industries.

**Box 3**

**Food Security**

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO).

### 3.2. Food security and food culture

The economic and political transition process in emerging countries is regularly accompanied by a change in the nutritional habits of their populations. People in transition countries often abandon their traditional food culture and adopt western type food culture, which can affect their food security. The idea of GI linked to a very strong concept of specific quality is a way to preserve a sustainable food culture and introduce new dynamism in the food market.

Consumption of GI products can represent a particular social connection between the countryside and the town through those generations that moved to urban centres from rural areas. This type of connection between the production site (rural areas) and the consumption site (urban centres) can create a different market where “nostalgic” and/or responsible consumers maintain their traditional food habits and diet. In this way, with a particular awareness of the role of food in life, they contribute to maintain biodiversity, economic activities and food traditions of their communities of origin. This leads us to reflect on the role that consumption styles play in sustainability.

Consumption styles, which aim to preserve gastronomic-cultural heritage, are promoting traditional food model, food culture and food system (see e.g. Slow Food). Food security is therefore not necessarily related to a corporate based food industry organization. GI can help people to reflect about their daily food and the organization of food provision to all. Urban food systems should be organized by increasingly involving local producers (e.g. in public procurements, school food schemes), and self- or co-production of

food shall be enhanced to achieve food security (including for example urban gardening). A dual approach to food is in place: on the one hand countries need to feed their population, on the other, they are aware of the importance of preserving local food culture.

Countries with different levels of economic development show different approach to food. In less developed countries where the objective is to meet basic needs, quality aspects of food are often disregarded. While it is comprehensible that the provision of sufficient food is given priority in countries where hunger is a widespread problem, it is important that these populations become aware of the value of their traditional food products and preserve (even improve) their specific qualities in order to avoid the loss of local traditional food culture when economic situation improves. Preservation of origin-linked food can become an asset for later economic activities that aim to respond to new consumer demands.

#### Box 4

##### Slow Food Presidia

A Slow Food Presidium is an artisan, traditional, excellent-gastronomic product that is threatened by industrial standardisation, hygiene laws, the regulations of the large-scale distribution and environmental damage. The Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity in the framework of its “Ark of Taste” (like Noah’s Ark) initiative has created a catalogue of presidia to document the existence of diverse traditional foods. The Foundation through small projects assists groups of artisan producers to promote artisan products, to stabilize production techniques, to establish stringent production standards and to guarantee a viable future for traditional foods. (Source: Official website of the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity, [www.fondazione Slow Food.it](http://www.fondazione Slow Food.it)).

## 4. GI AND REGULATORY ASPECTS

### 4.1. Protection of GI

Currently, considering its scope and the number of signatory members, the WTO TRIPS Agreement of 1994 is the principal international instrument for protecting GIs. Since GIs are considered to be property rights, member countries have to provide legal tools to protect these rights, although the legal tools are not defined.

The TRIPS Agreement provides two levels of protection. A basic protection is laid down for all GI products to prevent misleading the public and unfair competition (Article 22). Additional protection is fixed for wines and spirits in Article 23 to prevent any incorrect use of GIs for these products.

The TRIPS Agreement was described as a negotiated compromise for the signatory countries by the Panellists. Still a considerable number of countries are discontent with the fact that the level of protection differs from product to product, where wine and spirits enjoy higher protection with respect to all other food products. It has been suggested that WTO rules should, to a major extent, take into account producers' perspectives. Negotiations within the WTO, with the aim to extend the higher level of GI protection currently accorded to wines and spirits to all food products and to establish a multilateral system of notification and registration of GIs, are ongoing.

The Panellists have underlined the importance of protection. OriGIN representative mentioned the experience of its worldwide network of GIs producers in securing the legal protection of their geographical names at the national level and on foreign jurisdictions (in general key export markets for the product at issue).

Together with the public system of protection of geographical names and local traditions based on intellectual property rights, some "private standards" have been developed. Slow Food representative referred to the fifteen years of experience of *Slow Food* and the *Slow Food Presidia* initiative, which has shown that it can be very dangerous for producers if they neglect the possibility to protect their origin-linked products in their country of origin. The danger is that if producers are reluctant to protect and thus institutionalise their products, the geographical name can be appropriated by others and local producers can become excluded from the use and reputation of the geographical name of the territory to which the name originally relates. It has, however, also been mentioned by the Slow Food representative that regulatory means of protection should enforce the "promotion of territory" rather than the "exclusion" of economic actors.

As far as the type of protection is regarded, it has been emphasized that if potentials exist for exports, producers are advised to gain international protection for their products. However, international protection can be granted only after protection has been established at domestic, national, level.

The role of the state in the promotion and protection of GIs has emerged as another crucial discussion point. The case of India has been mentioned as an example for strong influence of the state in favour of GIs. In India the state has been playing an important pro-active role in motivating producers and their groups to apply for GI registration and protection. The Indian state strongly assists and promotes those underprivileged producers, who have great potentials but do not have the capacity to apply for GI registration. The reasons for the strong role of the state in India in registering GIs are explained by the very strong historical consciousness and

#### Box 5

##### International protection

At the international level various agreements exist that grant some level of protection to GIs. This protection is granted as an intellectual property right. These agreements include the Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and their International Registration (1958), the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (as revised in 1967), and the Madrid Agreement for the Repression of False or Deceptive Indications of Source (1981).

awareness of the country's traditional food products and the cultural pride and by the endeavour to protect GIs at the national level, which is the precondition for international protection. In this way, the state protects future GI producers in the country from the abusive uses of Indian GIs by producers in other countries or by other Indian producers not producing in the certified region. In connection with the Indian example and the role of the state, panellists have underlined that GI registration should be a bottom-up process and it has also been raised how international organizations could assist producers groups to launch and manage such processes.

#### ***4.2. GI: a rural development tool or a legal tool?***

The panel discussion confirmed that GI, being a collective tool for promoting specific local resources, can be an effective rural development option for the poorer and smaller producers in developing countries. The TRIPS Agreement has opened significant legal opportunities also for developing countries; however, they need to learn how to benefit from these opportunities. So that GIs can function as economic development tool it is not sufficient to establish regulatory frameworks, but it needs to be integrated with rural development work including organization of producers, development of code of practices and distribution of power along the food supply and value chain. Distribution of power, how GI products are produced and by whom, are vital questions to clarify if smaller producers are to benefit from GI production. Some cases, where delocalized companies has the control over GI definition (delimitation, code of practice, link to "terroir") and commercialisation while producers cannot make their ends meet, clearly shows that the pure registration of GI will not implicitly bring power and benefit for producers: the participative process and involvement of primary producers to set up the GI code of practice is a key factor for development.

Legislation is, nevertheless, an important tool to contribute to strengthen economic development aspects of GI. The European GI regulation was created to support business models different from the big agro-food industries, as part of a sectoral policy, that of agriculture, benefiting from the symbolic capital, and immaterial asset that GI represents in the competition of global food markets. Although GI policies aimed at enhancing rural development, regulation did not directly relate to issues like the preservation of environment, enhancement of tourism or the safeguarding and management of landscape. These issues were raised when the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the rural development policy, was established, when the link between territory, tradition, local food and rural development have been made evident also in political discourses. With the introduction of the rural development policy, GI has practically shifted to make part of a territorial approach rather than of a sectoral one, and is promoted locally in this perspective. This territorial and multi-sector approach could be better taken into consideration in regulation, so as to benefit small and underprivileged producers for whom GI could be an important tool to increase food security through increased income and more secure livelihoods. Exactly because GI can link sectoral policies to rural development policies, GI regulation, should go over sectors and consider a territorial approach.

## **5. COST AND BENEFITS OF GIS**

Costs and benefits associated with GIs have been subject to discussion for a long time. This discussion includes the possibility for small farmers and communities to access GI protection and the size of the market GI producers should target. Production for niche markets often emerges as one of the ambiguous aspects of GI. However, if the market spectrum was broadened the risk would be that GI products loose exactly that aspect, which differentiates them from the other, not origin-linked quality food products. A considerable part of the costs related to GIs are costs regarding registration, certification, legal protection and marketing.

One of the benefits of GIs is related to the mechanisms to generate different type of business based on tradition as a source of innovation.

However, it is difficult to make a cost-benefit analysis in general terms; this should be done case by case. What is important to remark is that not all products have the potential to become GI products. At the start, producers have to cover costs to meet basic requirements, such as basic quality and food safety requirements. As GI is a specific quality label, it can be awarded only if the product respects the safety of consumers. Establishing a GI requires also considerable amount of time. However, this time is essential to build a common approach among local actors, strengthen social network and organization, and agree on the most suitable code of practice.

Opinions for how to cover GI related costs include:

- costs covered by public administration,
- redistribution of costs and benefits along the value chain, and
- costs to be covered by the added value of the product.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GI can be an excellent opportunity for producers, however, it is not a solution in itself. Success of geographical indications depends, to a great extent, on local conditions and circumstances and on how GIs are managed. GI in many countries has brought significant benefits for rural areas and producers, but in other countries it has created disadvantages for some of them. GI can become an important driver for rural development where the role of tradition, as a source of innovation in rural areas, has to be emphasized.

Therefore, it is important to highlight that GI can be an economic development tool with many positive effects, but, at the same time, if improperly managed, it can also result in less desired outcomes, like monopoly of some actors over specific produce and the exclusion of others. In addition, in order for GIs to be successful, the following are indispensable elements:

- a specific quality product, which has characteristics or reputation linked to the territory, able to find a market,
- functioning regulatory framework including legislation for labelling and protection,
- producers' organization that represents all type of producers including integration of processors and some level of other actors of the product value chain into the producers' group,
- code of practice elaborated by (or at least with) the producers themselves in a participatory way and recognising the roles of local resources (natural and human),
- adequate time dedicated to the establishment of a geographical indication (including defining the area, organization of producers, the labelling practice, the code of practice), and
- coordination between private and public actors and between institutions at local and state level.

Building GI is a learning process. There is no one-fits-all model for how to build GI, each country has to develop its own structure that fits the local economic and social characteristics.

FAO, through its multidisciplinary expertise in agriculture and rural development, could provide support to the countries of Europe and Central Asia through a broad scale of services and

technical cooperation programmes in order to develop GIs as an efficient tool for rural development.

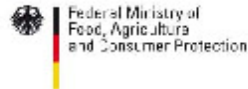
More specifically, FAO could provide assistance in, for example:

- raising awareness among value chain actors and public administration about the advantages of GIs.
- supporting national and local institutions to integrate GI as a tool/measure into their agriculture and rural development policies,
- supporting national institutions to develop efficient GI regulatory framework,
- support producers association to develop GI code of practices, with a sustainable approach, and value chains including product upgrading and marketing and

Overall, the panel discussion showed that the topic is of utmost interest, not only for the developed countries, but also as a tool for developing countries to preserve and promote their national food and agricultural heritage. The panellists, the audience as well as FAO, agreed that further work needs to be done in order to enhance the development of sustainable GIs taking into account that its positive impacts are not automatic and that possible negative effects need to be prevented.

## 7. ANNEXES:

### Annex 1 - Programme



Federal Ministry of  
Food, Agriculture  
and Consumer Protection



## Forum International Green Week 2009

### Technical Forum

The interest for food products produced following traditional processes and with a defined geographical origin or indication (GI) is growing and consumers are increasingly demanding such products. In addition, modern rural development approaches regard GI products as a tool to support rural economies by adding value to locally available resources, diversifying the rural economy, while contributing to the preservation of biodiversity and landscape, an important resource for rural tourism. In our discussion panel, renowned experts will focus on to what extent GI products can contribute to increased rural incomes and improved food security, or if GIs are limited to niche markets with good access to wealthy consumers in developed countries.

#### Geographical Indication and its contribution to food security

Organiser: FAO

Date: Friday, 16.01.2009 from 09.00 till 11.00 h

Venue: Hall 8 International Congress Centre (ICC) Berlin

The key-questions this Panel will address are:

1. Are GIs a viable option for the sustainable development of rural areas?
  - economic diversification, income and employment creation
  - preservation of traditional knowledge (including farming systems)
  - safeguarding of biodiversity and maintenance of genetic resources
  - maintenance of the landscape and its positive effect on tourism
  - contribution to food security
2. What are the limits/threats to GIs' contribution to the development of rural areas?
  - Intellectual property rights are not respected, e.g. products copied
  - specialisation and economic dependency
  - jeopardized carrying capacity of the territory (environmental and social aspects)
3. What are the policy options to support GIs?
  - existing international legal frameworks, WTO/CAP/Codex Alimentarius/WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization), etc.
  - support policies:
    - developing appropriate national frameworks for registration and protection
    - specific measures under rural development policies

The Panel will be composed of experts from the following institutions/field:

- Gianluca Brunori, Professor of Rural Development, University of Pisa
- Didier Chabrol, CIRAD
- Cinzia Scaffidi, Director of the Slow Food Study Centre, Slow Food
- Christoph Spennemann, Legal Expert, UNCTAD
- Emile Vandecastelaere, Food Quality Project Officer, FAO Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division
- Massimo Vittori, Secretary General, Origin

Contact:  
[raymond.lehle@fao.org](mailto:raymond.lehle@fao.org)  
[richard.eberlin@fao.org](mailto:richard.eberlin@fao.org)



#### Contact

For registration and information please visit  
[www.forumgreenweek.com](http://www.forumgreenweek.com)