

The FAO Programme in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Workshop on Geographical Indicators and their Role in Rural Development

Riyadh, 10 – 11 October 2011

A. Background

Promoting the links between people, places and agrifood products can be an effective tool for sustainable rural development in many parts of the world. In fact, origin-linked products show quality attributes linked to the geographical places and people as a result of a specific local know-how to use natural resources, and over time, a collective reputation is developed, that is identified by a geographical indication (GI). In many countries - including France, Italy, Switzerland, Morocco and Tunisia – the use of GIs to identify and market quality products has dramatically increased over the past twenty years or so. The quality attributes as defined by the code of practice and the management of the GI System are in fact fundamental tools for sustainable economic and social development and for preserving the environment.

The aim of this two-day workshop is to provide the stakeholders of the FAO Programme in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with concepts, methodologies and concrete illustrations from countries in the Near East Region for the promotion and preservation of quality products linked to geographical origin and for implementation of their corresponding GIs.

B. Workshop agenda

The detailed workshop agenda is given in Annex 1. On the first day, following the opening ceremony, experiences from Morocco and Tunisia were reviewed along with the importance of geographical indicators to the design and evaluation of rural development projects. The FAO experience in supporting member states on the development of geographical indicators programmes

was also reviewed. Discussion sessions provided opportunities for participants to interact and exchange information and knowledge on these important issues. On the second day, a round table discussion was organized to discuss the possibility of developing a geographical indicators project for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia within the framework of the rural development programme.

The list of the Panel and of the participants is given in Annex 2.

C. Presentations and discussions

1. Opening ceremony: Introduction to the theme of the Workshop by Eng. Mohamed Al Heidari, National Director, Rural Development Project (Ministry of Agriculture, Riyadh) and Dr. Abdallah Oihabi (Coordinator and Principal Officer, FAO Technical Cooperation Programme in KSA).

- Importance of Geographical Indicators for local agricultural and rural development.
- Guidelines for the development of GIs System specific to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

2. First presentation: “Geographical Indicators and their role in Rural Development” (Dr Fahad Al Dossarie, King Saud University, KSA).

- Importance of GIs in relation to Human development indicators and policies.

3. Second presentation: The Moroccan Experience on Geographical Indicators (Dr Lahcen Kenny, Institut Agronomique et Veterinaire Hassan II, CHA Agadir, Morocco).

- Review of agricultural and rural development planning in the Kingdom of Morocco- the innovative approach of Green Morocco Plan.
- Historical development of the Moroccan Geographical Indications System (legal framework, scientific bases including use of indigenous knowledge, technical matters and tools, participatory

approaches for inventory of major quality crop and livestock products and related handcraft in all regions of Morocco).

- Functioning of the Moroccan GIs System- current situation and projected development.

4. Third presentation: The Tunisian Experience on Geographical Indicators (Dr Rachid Elloumi, Directorate of Quality Systems of Food Crops, Ministry of Agriculture, Tunisia)

- Review of the Tunisian experience on Geographical Indicators for major food crops – historical development and present situation, including legal framework, technical procedures and institutional development).
- Highlights of the Tunisian experience through the case of Gabes Pomegranade.
- Highlights of the Tunisian experience through the case of Sbiba Apple.

5. Fourth presentation: Geographical Indicators and their importance in the Designing and Evaluation of Rural Development Projects (Dr Siddik Munir, King Saud University, KSA).

- Principles, methodologies and tools used in designing and evaluating rural development projects including livelihood and participatory approaches.
- The importance of incorporating the Geographical Indicators among the design and evaluation methodologies of rural development projects.

6. Fifth presentation: Geographical Indicators as a Tool for Local Development- Alzafran case at Talween Region in Southern Morocco (Dr Lahcen Kenny, Institut Agronomique et Veterinaire Hassan II, CHA Agadir, Morocco).

- Highlighting the Moroccan GIs Experience through the outputs of the FAO TCP Project on the development of the Saffron Crop in

Talween Region of southern Morocco (Project design and planning; field surveys and other activities including historical development of the crop; participatory extension and interactions with local producers; laboratory quality assessment of the produce).

- Registration process of the Saffron of Talween for GIs international recognition.
- Social and economic value of the Saffron of Talween crop in relation to local communities and its environmental impact.

7. Sixth presentation: The FAO Experience in Supporting Member States on the Development of Geographical Indicators Programmes (Dr Peter Damary, FAO Consultant, Rome, Italy).

The speaker made two separate presentations: the first on the issue of GI as intellectual property; and the second – which he presented on behalf Ms Emilie Vandecandelaere of FAO Rome – was on GI as a development tool.

GI as intellectual property refers to the fact that geographical indications are protected names, e.g. Darjeeling Tea; Argan oil. This means that GI identifies products with unique quality that are linked to specific geographic areas and know-how. An example of intellectual property right is “Appellation of Origin” (AO) which, in addition to the geographical name of the area, also includes well defined specifications and characteristics as a result of a clear **code of practice** which is associated with the production of the good.

GI as a development tool is aimed at promoting geographical indications for sustainable rural and agricultural development. On this GI facet, FAO organized in Casablanca (Morocco) in 2007 a workshop to review potential roles of GIs and opportunities for their contribution to achieve sustainable development in member countries. A programme with a series of TCP projects was launched including the Saffron of Talween in Morocco and Pomegranate of Gabes in Tunisia. Among the lessons learnt from these and other projects it should be emphasized that GIs are

considered to be important economic, social and environmental pillars of any rural development programme. For example, most GIs-oriented projects of FAO show a very strong link between tourism industry and Geographical Indications. However, there are also important challenges to be addressed for further GIs development. Coordination between sectors and between levels for a given sector is an important issue to be resolved. Also institutional capacity development, both at national and local levels, is a challenging issue.

The FAO approaches, methodologies and tools used to address these challenges are described in details in the recent publication entitled ***“Linking people, places and products – A guide for promoting quality linked to geographical origin and sustainable Geographical Indications*** (FAO, 2009-2010, second edition).

D. Round table discussions

Participants (complete List of Workshop Participants in Annex 2):

Ministry of Agriculture

- Eng. Mohamed Al Haidari, National Director of Rural Development Programme
- Eng. Hassan Fakih, Assistant to National Director of Rural Development Programme
- Eng. Salah Ibrahim Al Hodaibi, Field Coordinator, Rural Development Programme
- Eng.; Mohamed Al Faris, Assistant to Field Coordinator, Rural Development Programme.

FAO Technical Cooperation Programme

- Dr Abdallah Oihabi, Programme Coordinator and Principal Officer
- Dr Lahcen Kenny, FAO Consultant
- Dr Rachid Elloumi, FAO Consultant
- Dr Peter Damary, FAO Consultant
- Dr Tayeb Ameziane El Hassani, FAO Consultant (Workshop Reporting).

On the second day of the workshop, the roundtable was organized to take advantage of the discussions which followed the first day presentations; review/prioritize the workshop recommendations; discuss ways to implement these recommendations on the ground; and propose a coordination mechanism for the after-GIs workshop event, possibly within the Department of Rural Development of the Ministry of Agriculture.

From the first day presentations and related discussions, it was clear that origin-linked products have the potential to be part of a sustainable quality virtuous circle based on their promotion and preservation of local bio-diversity and resources. This potential is associated with the specific characteristics of the products, the result of a unique combination of (i) Natural resources (climatic conditions, soil characteristics, local plant varieties, animal breeds, etc....); (ii) Local skills and historical and cultural practices; and (iii) Traditional knowledge in producing, processing and marketing the products.

Then, the Panel explained that the first role of local/regional actors who are present in the roundtable is to be aware of this potential by identifying the links between product quality and the local environment in each region of the Kingdom. Also, the different steps of the origin-linked quality process were made clear to every participant:

- Step 1: Identification – awareness and potentials of products;
- Step 2: Qualification: setting rules for a GI product;
- Step 3: Remuneration: marketing a GI product;
- Step 4: Reproduction of sustainable GIs; and
- Step 5: Creating conditions for the development of geographical indications – the roles of public policies.

The panel and participants discussed these steps in details with particular focus on Step 5 which, according to the recommendations below, requires immediate actions.

In order to implement the workshop recommendations and subsequently the GIs guidelines under satisfactory conditions, there is a need to integrate the GIs initiative into the wider national programme on rural and agricultural development since the Geographical Indications project will make an important contribution to sustainable agricultural and rural development through production and marketing of quality products from crops, livestock and handcraft.

E. Recommendations

After discussions and deliberation, the participants made the following recommendations to the Ministry of Agriculture and to FAO Technical Cooperation Programme in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

1. Integrate the Geographical Indications initiative (GIs) into the framework of the wider rural and agricultural development programme aimed at producing and marketing local quality products from crops, livestock and handcraft.
2. Establish a national legal framework with rules and regulations concerning the development of GIs label for agricultural products and agriculture-related goods specific to each regions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
3. Undertake a comprehensive survey in all parts of the Kingdom on locally existing and potential crops, livestock, and related products which are eligible for registration in the GIs system.
4. Establish at the Ministry of Agriculture a Section or Unit on GIs within the Agricultural and Rural Development Department of the Ministry to deal specifically with GIs related issues.
5. Enable KSA scientists and professionals to get acquainted with the Moroccan experience in the field of Geographical Indications for major crops, livestock and related agricultural products.

6. Develop capacities of the related national staff on Geographical Indications - scientific bases, methodologies and tools- to enable them to gain expertise in this domain.
7. Undertake as soon as possible the professional translation of the FAO Book entitled "Linking people, places and products – A Guide for promoting quality linked to geographical origin and sustainable Geographical Indications", Second Edition, FAO 2009-2010.
8. Organize public awareness meetings at national and local levels to sensitize the stakeholders (engineers, technicians, professionals, decision makers and the public at large) about the role of GIs system as powerful tools for sustainable rural development.
9. On this basis, design a comprehensive national strategy on the development of geographical indications quality products and for marketing such products and the related cultural and civilization attributes of KSA locally, regionally and worldwide.