
Introduction

People, places, agricultural and food products

Enhancing the relations between people, places, agricultural and food products is an important pathway to sustainable rural development. These relations benefit from the local capacities for creating value within a global market while being anchored in a specific territory. Origin-based products show specific quality attributes linked to the geographical places where they are produced and, over time, build a reputation by a Geographical Indication (GI) that identifies them. These differentiated products have the opportunity to meet a specific and remunerating demand. Consumers are increasingly concerned with specific attributes of agricultural and food products, in relation to culture, identity, and sustainable ways of production. Moreover, such products are potentially contributing to biodiversity, world cultural heritage preservation, socio-cultural development and rural poverty reduction.

The identity of GI products reflects the unique combination of local natural resources (climate, soils, local breeds and plant varieties, traditional equipments, etc.) and cultural ones (traditions, know-how and skills, some of which are transmitted through generations) in a given territory, linking the product, the people and the place.

The behaviour of many different contributors within the production area (farmers, processing companies, local consumers, public institutions, non-governmental organizations, etc.) and their interaction with other factors outside the territory, build over time the identity of a product linked to a specific place and to a specific group of people. This process involves different actors, who coordinate and harmonise their production and commercial practices.

Developing Geographical Indications for sustainable development

The origin-based product can become the pivot of a quality virtuous circle within a territorial approach, meaning that its promotion through a GI process can have positive effects which reinforce themselves over time, permitting to preserve agrifood and related social systems and enabling local stakeholders to pursue economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability:

- Economic sustainability should bring about improvements to the producers' incomes and quality of life, and boost the entire rural economy dynamic.
- Socio-cultural sustainability should lead local actors to empowerment, to take part in decisions and actions on GI products and to attain a fair distribution of the benefits between actors. Local actors should raise their consciousness and pride in their work, as well as cultural identity and local knowledge and traditions.
- Environmental sustainability should orient actions towards preserving and improving local natural resources such as biodiversity, landscape, soils and water, for future generations.

The contribution of the GI process to sustainable development will depend on how local resources are used and the interaction among local stakeholders.

The importance of setting the rules for using Geographical Indications

Origin-based quality virtuous circle is threatened both by external pressures and by the lack of coordination between local stakeholders. Market globalization and new technologies may endanger the specificities of traditional farming systems and processing techniques. In addition, a GI product's reputation and value is often attractive for imitators, usurpers and free riders, both inside and outside the original production area. Misleading practices mainly touch the use of the name of the product and/or, in some cases, specific characteristics of the product.

For all these reasons, a set of common rules built up at the local level, is strongly recommended to prevent the loss of the product specificity, avoid misuses and foster consumer confidence. This includes the development of a Code of Practice (CoP) to define the product in relation to its geographical origin, and a local organization to ensure both coordination among stakeholders and product conformity.

Then the GI can be recognized by public authorities and protected under intellectual property right as provided by the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) of the World Trade Organization (1994). Producers may decide to apply for a GI registration, according to the legal and institutional framework of the country. As such, the use of a GI requires a formal identification of authorized users and this can only be achieved through a collective effort.

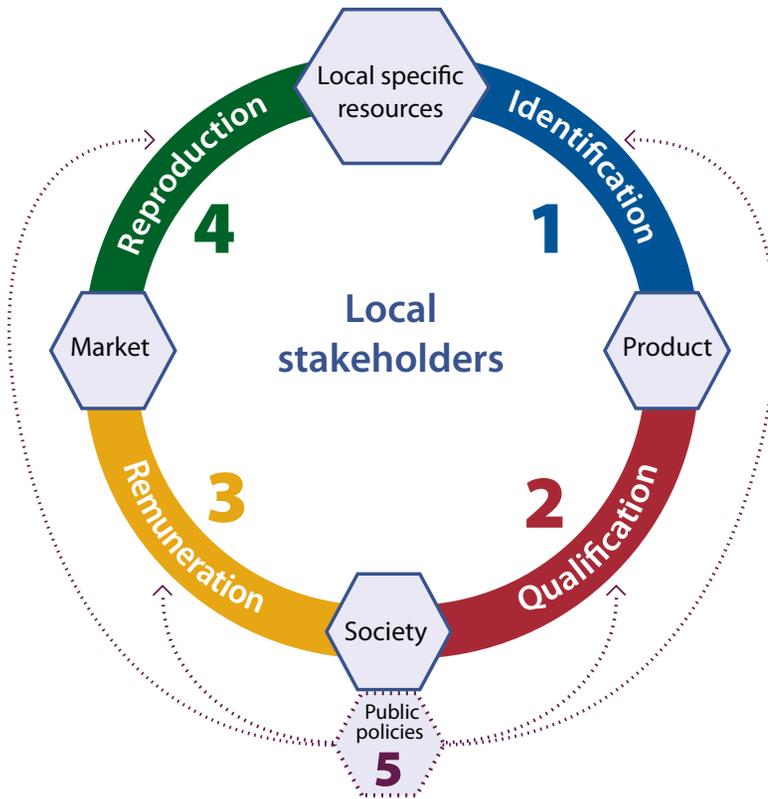
Managing value chains based on Geographical Indications

For any product linked to a geographical origin, establishing a sustainable beneficiary system based on local specific resources and a set of rules written in a CoP requires the establishment of a management system, the GI organization adapted to local particularities. In fact, obtaining legal protection is not an achievement as such, but is just a milestone in the ongoing process of maintaining a profitable and sustainable system for the stakeholders and the territory. This achievement requires marketing of the GI product, traceability along the supply chain, a high level of responsibility and accountability of producers and processors and, generally, involves a number of technical or management innovations.

The quality virtuous circle: a methodology for development

The local implementation of the GI includes therefore different activities and requirements. The origin-based quality virtuous circle can be used as methodology to support local stakeholders in dealing with the different aspects involved in the development of a GI product system and enhance the potential for sustainable development. This origin-based quality circle proposed in this guide is composed of different steps: identification of the local resources, qualification of the product as a GI (setting the rules), remuneration (management of the GI system) and the reproduction of local resources to reinforce the sustainability. Public policies can play an important role along the circle, in order to provide an adequate institutional framework and favour the potential positive effects of origin-based products for rural development.

The origin-based quality virtuous circle



Objectives of the guide

The objectives of this guide are:

1. Explaining what is quality linked to geographical origin and the concept of GI;
2. Raising awareness on the potential of origin-based products for rural development and conditions for sustainability;
3. Facilitating the implementation of GI schemes at local level, by providing concrete tools and methodology.

Based on multidisciplinary research and empirical evidence from many places worldwide, this guide is addressed to practitioners, facilitators, rural development specialists from public or private sectors, representatives of the supply chain, as well as to policy makers, rural community leaders and trainers. This guide is principally addressed to people working in the development of agriculture and food systems that may have an interest in promoting and preserving local food and local resources (traditions, know-how and natural resources) within a rural development perspective. In fact, the roles of these facilitators are of paramount importance for helping local actors to be aware of the potentialities of origin-based products, grouping and setting-up collective actions, understanding the importance of appropriate rules and orienting the GI system towards economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability.

Avoiding prescriptive or normative solutions, the present practical guide offers a step-by-step approach to answer the main questions faced by development actors and facilitators who seek to identify, define and protect products whose quality is linked to geographical origin, as well as to establish the complex set of elements for their sustainable development.

Structure of the guide

Each part of this guide describes a specific phase of the origin-based quality virtuous circle and the last is about related public policies:

- Description of the origin-based quality virtuous circle
- Identification: awareness and assessment of potentials (Part 1)
- Qualification: setting up the rules and the code of practice (Part 2)
- Remuneration: marketing aspects (Part 3)
- Reproduction: the sustainable way forward (Part 4)
- The role of public policies in the overall process (Part 5)

Each chapter provides concepts, concrete examples from case studies from all over the world, and some practical exercises. Guidelines or models also provide specific activities or documents to be established in related chapters.

At the end of each chapter, a self assessment (practice) is provided so that the readers can carefully think over the issues in relation with their particular local situation and context.

At the end of the guide, a detailed glossary is provided with definitions of technical and conceptual terms.