

WORKSHOP

Towards the creation of a global mountain label

Branding mountain products to improve mountain peoples' livelihoods

FAO HQs, Rome

20-21 May 2015

The Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS) is organizing a workshop to discuss the establishment of a labelling scheme to brand high value mountain products as a strategy to boost sustainable development in mountain regions.

The workshop is part of the Mountain Partnership (MP) project *Climate Change and Mountain Forests*, funded by the Government of Italy .

Mountain products offer a great opportunity to generate employment and income for mountain dwellers. Through the centuries, mountain communities have developed invaluable knowledge and practices in agriculture, water harvesting, forestry and agroforestry in ways that integrate well with the ecosystem cycles they rely upon.

Due to its small-scale nature, mountain agriculture cannot compete with the prices and volumes of lowland production. Nonetheless, it generates a wide variety of unique and high value products that have great potential to improve livelihoods and boost local economies, spurring sustainable development of mountain areas.

Worldwide demand is on the rise for quality, high-value foods and beverages produced in mountain areas, such as coffee, honey, herbs and spices, as well as handicrafts, cosmetics and medicines. However, consumers cannot always distinguish mountain products from others when displayed in the marketplace.

Mountains are universally associated with product quality. For that reason, setting up a mountain origin indication label can be an effective marketing tool for mountain family farmers and small enterprises. Research shows that it allows producers to access niche markets and leads to premium prices and added value.

The MPS invites a select group of experienced members of the Mountain Partnership and other experts to be part of an informal task force to look at how to create a mountain label along the lines of a geographical indication label. The group will discuss ways of establishing a labelling scheme to brand mountain products and to develop a strategy of implementation in one or more pilot countries, so as to benefit local producers and help them better tackle market challenges.

Based on the existing regulations and certification mechanisms, the discussion will build upon the lessons learned from previous phases of the Mountain Products Programme of the MP Secretariat, as well as the relevant experiences of the MP members.

Workshop participants will be asked to join the task force that will develop a global mountain label to distinguish and give visibility to mountain products; define the label criteria; draw up the certification scheme; and define the modalities for its application around the world.