

SOUTH EAST EUROPE TECHNICAL SEMINAR
Quality Food Products Linked to Geographical Origin and Traditions

Belgrade, 3-4 December 2008

In South and Eastern European countries, many food specialties and traditions are present, reflecting the role of both farm food production and a growing local food industry. Whilst a new demand for quality food has increased in the urban areas, traditional products and their production systems are threatened by the increasingly integrated commercial farming. In the context of market liberalization and modernization of the agricultural and food sector, the development of quality products both for the national and external markets represents challenges and opportunities. Quality labels linked to geographical origin are favourable tools for rural development: to support small producers for accessing markets, complying with food safety requirements, securing added-value attached to the product's specifications, but also to contribute to social welfare and food diversity and biodiversity preservation. As highlighted by the 26th FAO Regional Conference for Europe, geographical indications (GIs) can also be an efficient indicator of food quality, and regulations are necessary to protect both consumers and farmers.



Objectives:

To provide an overview of the range of approaches to origin-based quality in South and Eastern European region and to highlight common challenges and opportunities (legal and institutional framework, food safety issues, local organization, etc.).

To discuss lessons learned from the various countries' experiences.

To identify country needs and necessary concrete collaborative actions in the region (project coordination, networking, funding, development of tools...)

Participants:

Representatives of governments and local authorities.

Representatives of civil society, local and private sector and development organizations involved in GI support in the region.

Experts on quality products linked to geographical origin and traditions.





Tentative Programme

3 December

Welcoming speeches and presentation of the subject.

Presentations:

- FAO: How GIs can contribute to rural development.
- AGRIDEA, SEEDEV: Lesson learnt from case studies in South East Europe.
- World Intellectual Property Organization: international situation for GIs.
- European Commission, DGAGRI: overview of the EU rural development policy and its instruments promoting quality policy.

Workshops:

- Cooperation and partnerships, financial and technical assistance tools: elements on European Neighbourhood Policy and illustration of existing different cooperations.
- Institutional and legal situations taking into account the diversity of the countries context: presentation by country representatives.

4 December

Plenary sessions, workshops and working groups in order to analyse some concrete cases in the region on:

- Local process to upgrade products, organize the value chain and market the products: presentation from concrete experiences.
- Focus on technical aspects for implementation (specifications, food safety issues, etc.).

Organizing Committee

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO): Food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Within this scope, FAO has extended its activities to include supporting implementation of quality linked to special production systems in relation to rural development. A programme on specific quality was launched in 2007: several regional seminars have been organized in order to share knowledge and experiences and support Member countries' experiences. www.foodquality-origin.org

AGRIDEA is a competence pool on Geographical Indications at the international level, with a broad range of products and services, such as research and development projects; short-term expertise on GIs for enterprises and/or producers, as well as for private or public institutions; advice on intellectual property, certification and marketing; training modules and seminars. www.agridea-international.ch

SEEDEV is a consulting group gathering Balkans based international and national experts involved in strengthening farmers' and rural based associations, rural community mobilization, techno-economic analysis of commodity chains and private entrepreneurs' projects. SEEDEV foresees that GI protection and other analogous labelling will contribute to rural development in the Balkans region by adding value to agricultural products and improving the image of rural areas. www.seedev.org

For more information: seedev@seedev.org