

BUILDING AN ORGANIZATION TO MANAGE THE GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION SYSTEM

C4.1

All members of the GI production system share a common asset: the reputation of the GI. This common asset justifies a specific coordination structure, representative of all the members of the GI production system. It is essential to communicate the importance of such a structure right from the beginning of the GI undertaking, so that it can be part of discussions during the qualification phase, and then be operational in the remuneration phase for management of the GI.

Objectives

The GI organization (which goes under various names depending on context, such as GI association, consortium, interprofessional body, or protection and management body) may enable local producers to reach agreement on questions relating to production systems and marketing strategies. The GI organization manages the control system (directly or indirectly) that guarantees the quality level of the GI product for producers and consumers on the basis of the code of practice. It may also manage collective market promotion of the product.

Key concepts

Composition and representation

The organization should represent all the stakeholders in the GI production system and certainly all those bound by the code of practice. A formal definition of the structure of the organization is necessary (association, consortium, cooperative, interprofessional organization etc.). The organization must include stakeholders active at the various levels of the GI supply chain: raw material producers, primary processors, secondary processors and, when relevant to the GI system, middlemen or distributors.

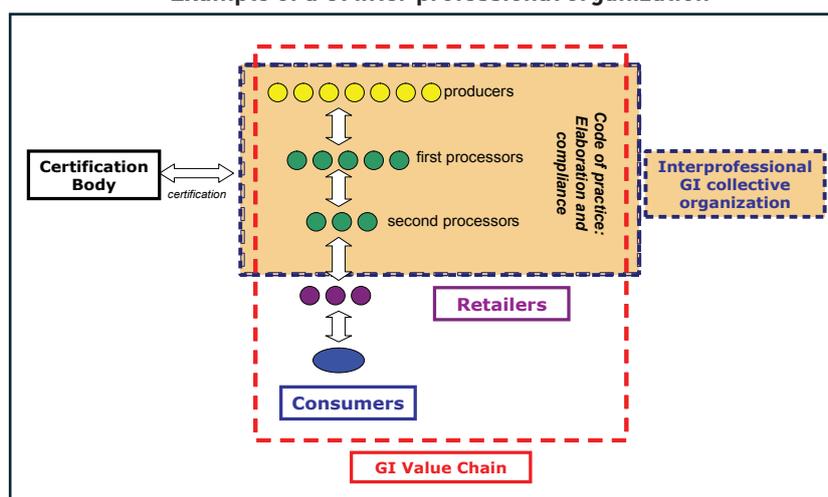
The following key principles should be taken into account for a good organization:

- representation on the management board of all categories of stakeholder involved in the GI value chain and all types of actor within each category;
- transparency and democracy in decision-making processes;
- equitable financial contribution of each member to the GI organization;
- promotion of communications and networking;
- definition of clear internal rules;
- participation of the local public administration in the GI organization may allow greater coordination with public policies.

Collective and individual action

Producers belonging to the GI value chain delegate certain responsibilities to the collective representative organization, depending on their objectives. Collective actions complement individual entrepreneurial actions and do not replace them. All members maintain their financial autonomy, remain owners of their assets and trade with partners of their choosing.

Example of a GI inter professional organization



Source: Linking People, Places and Products

Roles of the organization

The agreement between the members will define which responsibilities and activities are delegated to the collective organization on the basis of their objectives and needs. The minimum elements to be delegated to the organization are the representation of the GI to consumers, public authorities, partners, operators and usurpers, and the implementation of common decisions on the management of the GI and its promotion. The organization may also coordinate individual initiatives, provide a forum for shared decisions and facilitate conflict resolution. Some organizations may play a role in supporting production (jointly owned machinery or other equipment, technical assistance, product research and development etc.) and trade (commercial strategies, support in negotiations etc.).

Process

When creating a management organization for the GI system, it is important to start by mobilizing all the local stakeholders (both inside and outside the supply chain) so as to support the emergence of a group of actors directly concerned by the qualification of the GI product. The following questions may facilitate the creation of the collective organization:

- Who are the stakeholders in the supply chain of the GI product?
- What are their objectives? Do they agree on these objectives? Which issues are controversial?
- Who leads the chain? Who holds the power in the chain? Are there any bottlenecks in the chain or dominant positions among the stakeholders?
- Does the supply chain include producers, processors and traders? Will they all be represented in the organization? If not, why?

Once the GI organization has been created, it should, like all organizations, establish internal mechanisms and statutes covering good practices, models and national legal requirements. As it will group different types of supply chain stakeholder (producers, processors etc.), it is important that the structure reflect the reality of the supply chain so that everybody feels represented.

The members of the organization must then agree on the roles to be delegated to the organization, including which responsibilities can be mutualized and which must remain the responsibility of the members. The following questions may facilitate these decisions:

- What are the main tasks of the GI organization?
- What are the main responsibilities and are there associated obligations?
- What financial and human resources does the GI organization need in order to carry out these tasks?

Summary

A collective coordination structure is essential to represent and manage the GI system and its associated reputation. The success of a GI depends in large part on the capacity of its operators to coordinate, generate and benefit from collective actions: the organization is at the heart of the process.