

# EXTENDED TERRITORIAL STRATEGIES TO BOOST RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## C5.3

Geographical indications can act as levers for extended territorial strategies. GI products, as a wealth anchored in the territory or zone, allow for the adoption of such strategies. This means that local stakeholders can use the GI product, the associated specific local resources (local gastronomy, traditions, landscapes etc.) and its reputation as tools to increase the competitiveness of the entire local social and economic system.

## Objectives

The GI strategy can strengthen the area's capacity to attract consumers and tourists to the production territory or zone and can offer a differentiated basket of local products and services based on the use of local resources. As a result, other economic activities can be developed or strengthened both by GI producers and by other local companies.

Within an extended territorial strategy, the GI product can also benefit from the attraction capacity of the area. For example, major tourist locations (museums, archaeological sites, particular landscapes, ski resorts) may benefit the marketing of the GI product.

## Key concepts

Local tourism and GI products present clear synergies. This interaction is particularly evident in cultural events organized around products representing a region, inasmuch as they link traditions, culture and gastronomy (for example a cheese museum, a saffron festival or wine or olive-oil celebrations) and attract tourists to the region.

Actors in the tourism industry can play an important role in supporting the collective promotion of the GI product as an ambassador of the locality, by disseminating information and organizing itineraries for tourists in relation to the GI product.

The development and promotion of a GI product can serve as a starting point for the development and promotion of the entire geographical and cultural heritage, as well as for a number of other related products.

There are some necessary preconditions for activating an extended territorial strategy based on a GI:

- the GI product must represent an element of identity for all local stakeholders;
- in addition to the reputation of the GI product, the area should be attractive or have the potential to attract external consumers (tourists), who may enjoy buying typical products and services in the zone itself;
- social cohesion is also relevant in supporting consolidation of the identity based on the product and enhancing linkages between different economic sectors and common projects;
- the local resources (natural, cultural, historical etc.) should be very specific and easily recognizable by consumers.

## Process

Such a strategy requires effective collective coordination and synergy between the various activities concerned in order to avoid competition for the same resources and conflicts between local companies. It is therefore necessary to consider how a global territorial strategy can be coordinated within sectors.

It is important to organize meetings within the local community in order to explain the process of developing and promoting the specific quality of the product and show that it is also an economic opportunity for the territory or zone as a whole through interactions with other economic and social networks.

There is therefore a need for the involvement of local public actors in order to facilitate an integrated development strategy involving the various sectors and social groups and providing for an enabling environment.

Public actors should make sure that their actions take into account not only economic and business issues, but important social, cultural and natural environmental issues as well.

This interaction between sectors, in particular agriculture and tourism, is relevant not only at the local level, but also on a national scale, for example in highlighting the culinary heritage.

## Summary

GIs can represent a good opportunity to enhance local development, in partnership with other actors in the zone, in particular the tourism industry. If certain conditions are met (attractive region, strong identity of the GI product etc.), extended territorial strategies can have positive benefits for the whole community.