

# GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE IN GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS (GIs)



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## • FOREWORD

Geographical indications (GIs) are an important value-creation tool for agricultural foodstuffs. Identifying a product with a geographical origin opens up potentially significant opportunities for producers. Recognition of a GI generates added value and can create useful synergies with the geographical area with which the product is identified.

A GI is a collective geographical 'seal'. The creation and maintenance of a GI has to be promoted and supported by a 'group', i.e. a group or association of persons who have a direct interest or are directly involved in the production of the specific product covered by the GI.

This guide is intended as a working tool. It is designed to help the authorities and applicants to prepare the necessary documentation to set up a GI for an olive oil or table olives that provides consumers with assurances that the product associated with the GI comes from its stated geographical origin.

The advice provided is only for guidance; it does not have legal effect or carry legal weight. It is for each country to draw up the relevant rules and regulations. The guide does, however, cover the chief elements that have to be put forward in support of applications for GI status and the points that have to be checked by the authorities to protect a GI.

A geographical name is public property. It cannot be appropriated by private individuals, even less so when the geographical name is linked to a product - in this particular case olive oil or table olives - which is probably made by several business operators.

When a GI is recognised, all the producers in the supply chain who comply with the GI specification earn the exclusive right to use the name of the GI.

First and foremost, a GI is an official guarantee of origin. Hence, it identifies and showcases a place or area.

Owing to the nature of GIs, applications for the establishment of a GI should be backed by a set of coherent elements that explain and prove the geographical roots of the product.

Clearly, one such vital element is the history of the local societies which have made olive oil and table olives in the olive growing areas. Other aspects to take into account are the know-how and culture of those people and how they are intertwined with their way of life and the local materials available. Local resources - the varieties of olive used - are another element to highlight in applications.

Hence, any tangible, cultural or historical background that can be put forward in support of the establishment of a GI is an asset to the application. Furthermore, the supporting points proposed by applicants will help to demarcate the GI area and to secure its boundaries.

## 1.2. Definitions

The first step is to define the term geographical indication. Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006 on geographical indications of origin, published in the Official Journal of the European Union, can be taken as a basis for this purpose.

### 1.2.1 Geographical indication

According to the above Regulation, 'geographical indication' means the name of a region, a specific place or, in exceptional cases, a country, used to describe an agricultural product or a foodstuff:

- originating in that region, specific place or country, and
- which possesses a specific quality, reputation or other characteristics attributable to that geographical origin, and
- the production and/or processing and/or preparation of which take place in the defined geographical area.

GI products have a strong identity, which is taken to mean the intrinsic quality of the product as such.

This depends essentially on one or more of the following aspects which characterise a specific geographical environment: soil and climatic conditions, raw material, cultivation system, human skills and traditions in the production of the product.

The link between a GI product and its geographical area is based on a quality and/or reputation and/or other characteristics of the product attributable to its geographical origin. This relationship should clearly exist.

If the link is based on a specific quality of the product, it has to be proven that that attribute can be ascribed to the geographical origin. In any event, detailed information has to be provided about the characteristics and standard features that set the GI product apart from other products belonging to the same commercial category.



## 1.2.2 Group

The first stage to be able to apply for the recognition of a GI is to create a "group", i.e. an association of producers and/or processors who actually produce and/or process the specific product.

The group has to draw up voluntary specifications identifying all the characteristics of the product and the conditions necessary for its obtention. Producers should adhere to the specifications if they wish to produce GI-status product. The purpose of the group is to enhance and protect the GI.

## 1.2.3. Scheme management body

This is the body set up for the purposes of the representation, defence, research, development and promotion of the GI.

The principles underlying the creation, structure and operation of the scheme management body should be that:

- a. It represents the economic interests of the various component branches of the GI.
- b. It is managerially autonomous.
- c. It is non-profit.

These bodies should have legal personality, be financially autonomous and have full capacity to act in order to fulfil their aims. They may comprise one or more persons.

The members of the scheme management body should be producers and/or processors of the product.

There are no requirements as to the legal form or composition of the scheme management body. However, they should have a name (which may be the name of a natural or legal person) and a single address in the country (telephone, fax and e-mail address).

Producers and/or processors of the product, other interested parties and organisations may be part of the group.

It is not necessary for all the producers of the same product to belong to the group, but the group should provide proof that it is sufficiently representative of the product.

## 1.2.4. Control body

This body should be accredited according to the general internationally accepted requirements for bodies operating product certification schemes (UNE-EN 45011:1998 or subsequent replacement standards).

It is an independent, impartial body - it may be public or private - that controls the processes of production, preparation and marketing and the physico-chemical, organoleptic and specific characteristics that define the product covered by a GI.

## 1.2.5. Standard features

These comprise the set of objective characteristics required of an agricultural foodstuff or product, according to the compulsory provisions governing its raw materials, the processes employed for its production, processing and marketing and its final composition, which make it suitable for direct consumption or for processing into another agricultural foodstuff or product.

## 1.2.6. Differential features

These comprise the set of characteristics of an agricultural foodstuff or product complying with voluntary provisions concerning its raw materials or the processes employed for its production, processing or marketing. Such features are additional to the compulsory standard features required for an agricultural foodstuff or product.



## 1.3. Documentation

### 1.3.1. Remit of the scheme management body

The remit of the scheme management body is:

- a. To oversee the prestige and promotion of the GI and to report any improper use of the GI to the competent administrative authorities.
- b. To research, make known and encourage the application of the systems of production and marketing and to advise any companies seeking advice as well as the public administration.
- c. To draw up the product specification or production rules for the GI, as well as any amendments to the specification or rules, and to propose them to the competent authority.
- d. To promote and create consumer awareness of the quality characteristics of the products.
- e. To carry out promotional activities.
- f. To compile statistics on the production, processing and marketing of the product covered by the GI and any other information it may be requested to supply.

The scheme management body should fix the qualified majorities required to propose and amend the product specification or rules of production.

### 1.3.2. Application form

The details of the applicant group, such as name, address (telephone number, fax number and e-mail address if available), legal status (according to national legislation), size (number of members in the group: olive growers, olive oil mills, table olive processing facilities and packing plants) and composition (role or occupation of the members: farming, production, distribution, packing, etc.) should be provided in a separate sheet.

The application should specify the representativity of the group in terms of the volume of olive oil/table olives produced by the group members as a percentage of area production, and the area covered by the members as a percentage of the total area.

If the application is submitted by a single natural or legal person, the national authorities should be convinced that they are the only producers in the area.

## 1.3.3. Registration of trademarks

The document registering the trademark or reserving the name should be presented.

## 1.3.4. Product specification

This is the chief document underpinning a GI. It defines the product (olive oil or table olives), demarcates the producing area, specifies the method of obtention and outlines the control system guaranteeing compliance with the conditions and requirements laid down in the product specification. The product should comply with the specification to gain entitlement to a GI.

## 2 - PRODUCT SPECIFICATION

The product specification should include the following:

- A. Name of the product
- B. Description of the product
- C. Demarcation of the geographical area of production, processing and preparation
- D. Evidence that the product originates in the demarcated area
- E. Method of product obtention
- F. Details proving the link with the geographical environment
- G. Verification of compliance with the product specification
- H. Labelling
- I. Legal requirements
- J. Other provisions

### A. Name of the product

The choice of the name to be protected is obviously essential and has to take into account several factors, notably the geographical place and the source variety.

GIs are not created, they are recognised. The basis for such recognition is the characteristics of the product and its history and/or reputation in the specific geographical area.

The name chosen therefore has to reflect this heritage. It has to be a geographical name coinciding with the name of a province or region, a district - administrative or natural -, a geographical feature or a municipality.

The name should be used to designate the specific product and it should have been in use for that purpose prior to the application for GI recognition. It may not be the name of a plant variety, breed of animal or generic name, i.e. it cannot be a name that has become the common name of an agricultural product or foodstuff.

When choosing the name, the effectiveness of protection should be considered.

In point of fact, the geographical name is not really a choice but rather the end result of the history and reputation of the product.

## B. Description of the product

The description of the product should allow clear, accurate identification of the product and should state the characteristics that enable it to be distinguished objectively from other products belonging to the same category.

The raw materials should be defined, i.e. whether one or more varieties are used and the variety/ies concerned. If several varieties are used, the percentage or maximum/minimum share of each one should be specified.

The product description should be scientific and consonant with the techniques, terminology and bibliography that define the product and the pertinent legislation.

The type of product should be defined, as well as its physical, chemical, organoleptic and other notable characteristics. When establishing the category and characteristics of the product, the IOC trade standard for olive oils and olive pomace oils or for table olives should be used as appropriate.



These elements determine the scope of protection and the product controls to be performed.

If the GI is for a single product, it may be presented under several 'quality' groupings or forms, in which case it would be wise to define these variants in the product specification and to inform consumers on the product labelling (for instance, Nîmes olive oil - extra virgin).

### **C. Demarcation of the geographical area of production, processing and preparation**

This is fundamental when drawing up the product specification because GIs are defined by their geographical origin, above all on the grounds of created rights.

Only products from the demarcated region earn entitlement to bear the name of the GI. Hence, any value-added generated by the protected name is reserved exclusively for those products.

This explains the importance of demarcating the area and what is financially at stake. It is crucial, therefore, for the demarcation criteria to be based on objective, verifiable facts. Applicants should put forward precise, objective criteria for the official delimitation of the geographical area, indicating the reasons for demarcating the area and for excluding some municipalities while including others.

The geographical area is the location where the product is obtained and/or prepared in clearly defined stages (raw material, processing, packing,...).

Demarcation should be based on the link between the product and its geographical origin and take into account the following four main criteria:

- ✓ Physical factors such as soil, climate, relief, orientation, water regime, altitude
- ✓ Local production, harvesting and processing practices
- ✓ Local history and reputation
- ✓ Location of producers (current and potential)

The geographical area should be described as far as possible in terms of physical boundaries (for instance, rivers, roads, mountain chains). These do not necessarily have to coincide with administrative boundaries.

It is essential to conduct surveys and above all to interview local people and organisations such as local community groups, land conservation agencies, research centres and others to make sure the geographical boundaries are properly determined.

The description of the geographical area should be precise and unambiguous and should contain an exhaustive list of the zones to be covered by the GI.

A map should be attached with the application to give a better idea of the area concerned.

## **D. Evidence that the product originates in the demarcated area**

The specification should demonstrate that the checks and controls of the specified requirements ensure that the final product originates in the demarcated geographical area.

Applicants should provide all the evidence and supporting documents that prove that the product originates from the delimited geographical area, namely the history of the area, the reputation of the product and the means to be employed to ensure traceability.

This evidence encompasses:

### **(i) Product characteristics**

The organoleptic, physical and chemical characteristics of the olive oil or table olives (section B, Product description) make them distinctive and link them to the natural environment and methods of cultivation and obtention.

However, these characteristics are not enough to guarantee product origin, which should be endorsed by the control body.

### **(ii) Controls and certification**

Control and certification systems provide a fundamental endorsement of the origin of the product and give consumers guarantees that the product complies with the specified requirements. They are based on two components:



(a) Olive oil mills and table olive processing facilities, which supply products that have passed the certification process and which are responsible for ensuring that they fulfil the requirements fixed in the specification.

(b) The authorised body responsible for the control and certification of the GI, which should apply systems entailing at least supplier quality system audits and monitoring (self-monitoring scheme) and independent laboratory testing of samples collected from facilities.

The certification system could be modelled on the requirements of standard UNE-EN 45011: *General requirements for bodies operating product certification schemes (incorporating ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996)*. This standard is an internationally accepted mechanism which inspires confidence in the conformity of a GI product with the requirements listed in the specification (and particularly provenance from the geographical area).

The authorised body should check for compliance with the following specific requirements when controlling and certifying supplier quality systems:

- There is an individual contract between the olive oil mill or table olive processing facility and the olive grower containing the technical production and quality requirements for the olives according to the conditions fixed in the product specification.
- There is documentary proof that producers present annual declarations providing details such as the land registry (cadastral) number and location, size and estimated capacity of the olive growing plots and certifying that the olives will come from olive orchards located in the producing area and where it has been checked that the authorised varieties are grown.
- There are systems for the control, monitoring and registration of the agricultural and production practices employed and these comply with the rules and regulations and guarantee product traceability.



- There is documentary verification that the olive oil mills or table olive processing facilities have sufficient technical and legal capacity to meet customer orders and that the requirements are adequately specified and documented.

- The olive oil mills or table olive processing facilities have skilled human resources, technical means (measuring and testing equipment), infrastructure, control, documentary registration and quality mechanisms and corrective procedures at every stage of the production and storage process.

- The olive oil mills or table olive processing facilities will extract the oil or process the olives according to the conditions laid down in the product specification and will subsequently store them in suitable installations to ensure their optimal conservation.

- The olive oil mills or table olive processing facilities will supervise the product during storage to ensure that it retains its physical, chemical and organoleptic conditions and, if a product below the required quality standard is detected, they will have procedures in place to prevent its distribution and marketing under the GI.

- The olive oil mills or table olive processing facilities have defined methods for sampling the batches of oils or table olives at the consignment stage such as to permit correct labelling and use of the GI designation on the product in compliance with the legal requirements.

A numbered back label should be issued by the control body as a guarantee that the oils and table olives bearing the GI abide by the specification requirements.

Labelling rules are dealt with in the Labelling section.

## E. Method of product obtention

This chapter is the technical core of the application. It should highlight the conditions of production that have an impact on the specificity of the product in relation to its geographical origin.

The specification should detail all the distinctive features of the production process: cultural practices, harvesting, haulage, fruit delivery, crushing or processing, storage and packing.

It has to be demonstrated that the elements determining the typicality of the product have been acquired through custom.

The specification should give a schematic outline of all the stages influencing the specific characteristics of the product. Each stage should be dealt with in detail, point by point, and specifying target values.

The description of the method of obtention could include the following stages, amongst others:

### A. Tree care:

- Soil tillage
- Fertilisation
- Irrigation
- Olive pest and disease control
- Pruning

### B. Harvesting, haulage and storage

- Assessment of fruit ripeness (in the case of olive oil)
- Fruit harvesting
- Fruit haulage
- Fruit reception
- Storage of harvested olives

### C. Processing

- Technological processes

## **F. Factors proving the link with the geographical environment**

The link with the geographical area is the key part of the specification. It has to be demonstrated how the characteristics of the product are due to the geographical area and which natural, human and other factors lend it its specificity. The description should also highlight the ways in which the methods of production are superior to other methods and contribute to the specific, distinctive nature of the product.

An application for GI status can be based on a specific quality or reputation or other specific characteristics attributable to the geographical origin.

### **F.1. Detailed information on the geographical area (natural and human factors)**

The characteristics of the demarcated geographical area that are pertinent to the link with the geographical environment should be identified and described. These can include soil, climate, relief, precipitation, orientation, altitude, etc.

The characteristics of the physical environment should be established: climatic indices and values, rainfall regime, mean rainfall (mm/year), climatic classification, mean, maximum and minimum temperatures, frost regime, solar radiation; geology and lithology, edaphology, soil characteristics, composition, texture and profile; altitude, latitude, hydrology and hydrogeology, influence of seas, rivers, mountain chains.

Those characteristics of the geographical area that do not have a bearing on the specificity of the product should not be included.

The human factors at play in the special, distinctive preparation of the product may be defined.

When GI applications are based on reputation, the reasons why the specific product is associated with the geographical area should be explained; these may be historical.



## F.2. Product history - reputation

The history of the product should be outlined to demonstrate it has existed historically in the geographical area. Key historical information about the product provides evidence of the usage and reputation of the name. The aim of GI recognition is not to coin new names but to recognise the existence of a product sold under a particular name. There is no minimum requirement as regards the number of years although recent products are not likely to be awarded GI recognition.

Details of the first use of the name, in addition to the first product descriptions as far as possible and any description of the processing method will be particularly helpful for review of the application dossier. Literary quotes and references (business documents, references in literature or cuisine, ethnological documents, current or old labels, etc.) allowing the product to be linked historically to the place, particularly in terms of human expertise, are very useful, as are oral testimonies of local inhabitants (elderly persons, authorities) or endorsers even from outside the region (for instance, renowned chefs).

## F.3. Information on the quality or characteristics of the product due fundamentally or exclusively to the geographical environment

The requirements making the product different from other similar products should be identified and described. Only the special characteristics laid down in the product description should be stated.

When GI applications are on the grounds of reputation, adequate ways of demonstrating the link may be to supply precise supporting information on the specificity of the product attributable to reputation such as press clippings, publications or websites.

Product characteristics should not be included if they are not related to the geographical area or they are traditional, or if they are not related to the reputation of the product (if the application is based on reputation). Precise information should be supplied in addition to concrete examples of past and recent usage of the name, preferably taken from product marketing.

## F.4. Relationship between the characteristics of the geographical area and product quality

It should be demonstrated how the product characteristics are the end result of factors present in the area. An objective reason should be put forward linking the characteristics of the area with the distinctive features of the product.

The information mentioned in the preceding points should not be repeated.

## F.5. - Product traceability

Product traceability refers to the system enabling the product to be tracked from production to marketing. The product specification defines an area; depending on the definition of the GI, proof has to be provided of the place where the different stages of production, processing and preparation take place.

It will be necessary:

- To put in place a documentary tracking system and an internal control procedure
- To keep records of all the activities (olive harvest and oil production declarations, ...)
- To perform chemical and organoleptic testing to ensure product quality and compliance with the product description

It is suggested presenting the information in table format showing the different stages, tracking information and related documents.

# GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE IN GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS (GIs)

It is suggested presenting the information in table format showing the different stages, tracking information and related documents.



Stage		Traceability identifiers	Reference documents/ Documentary proof
<b>PRODUCTION</b>	<b>GROWING</b>	Name of producer Farm location	Signed undertaking of producer Producer registration file Plot location plan Crop monitoring register
	<b>HARVESTING</b>	Name of producer Plot name or number Harvest period	Harvest register
	<b>HAULAGE</b>	Code or name of producer Code or name of haulier Plot name or number Weight Haulage period	Ripeness monitoring register
<b>PACKING</b>	<b>CRUSHING/ PACKING TABLE OLIVE PROCESSING</b>	Code or name of producer Reception period Plot name or number Amount delivered Name of olive oil or table olive processing facility	Register of olive oil or table olive processing operations Pack labelling
	<b>SHIPMENT</b>	Name of customer Volumes Destination Date of shipment	Marketing tracking register Delivery note Invoice



Anyone involved in the production and/or processing and/or packing and/or preparation of the product should keep registers to facilitate monitoring of compliance with product certification requirements.

## **G. Verification of compliance with product specification**

The body responsible for checking fulfilment of the product specification should be identified (name, address and contact telephone numbers).

As mentioned earlier in this document, the body should be accredited in accordance with the requirements specified in the standard entitled *General requirements for bodies operating product certification schemes (UNE-EN 45011)*.

The certification body should take all the necessary steps to evaluate conformity with the product specification in line with the requirements of the specific product certification system.

The certification body should implement the applicable standards and any other requirement such as sampling, testing and inspection which will form the basis of the certification system applicable in their quality manual.

## **H. Labelling**

The logo of the name will be declared on the labelling, which should comply with general labelling requirements.

## **I. Legal requirements**

The legal requirements will be the rules regulating the product in each country where the area of production is located.

## **J. Other provisions**

The applicant should pledge to abide by the health and hygiene requirements and regulations in force along the GI production and packing chain.

Solely the health and hygiene regulations applicable to the product should be indicated in this part.