



**INSTITUTIONAL PATRONAGE OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLIVE COUNCIL TO NATIONAL  
EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL QUALITY COMPETITIONS ORGANISED BY COMPETENT  
AUTHORITIES**

**RULES OF THE NATIONAL COMPETITION  
FOR THE QUALITY OF EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OILS**

with institutional INTERNATIONAL OLIVE COUNCIL patronage  
for the ... crop year

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The national competitions for the quality of extra virgin olive oils (EVOO) have become important events for the promotion of the extraordinary sensorial qualities of this exceptional product in each of the categories established in the competition rules, and one of the best ways to reward the activity of their producers around the world.

National competitions for extra virgin olive oils leading to national quality awards with institutional International Olive Council (IOC) patronage are based on Decision DEC-III.6/121-VI /2025, which the IOC adopted on 8 July 2025. Pursuant to this decision, the IOC may grant its patronage to national competitions organised by competent authorities, according to the requirements established in the International IOC “Mario Solinas” competition.

This patronage should be considered as another means of assisting the competent authorities in ensuring the objectivity and high standard of the foundations of these competitions and their results for the participants.

In accordance with this purpose, and taking into account that these national competitions are indeed organised by the competent national authorities, the name and the logo of the IOC can be used exclusively in the publicity of the competitions, with the sole purpose of highlighting this particular institutional patronage. Thus, the name and the logo of the IOC cannot be included in the rules document, even though reference may be made to the rules and elements of the IOC’s “Mario Solinas Quality Award”, such as the EVOO categories or the sensory assessment sheet used.

Furthermore, the design of the price labels, stamps or medals must be original, avoiding the use of the IOC’s logo and name, to make it clear that the organisation of the national competition falls exclusively under the jurisdiction of the competent national authority and not that of the IOC.

## **GENERAL COMPETITION RULES**

To obtain this institutional patronage, all the olive oil competition documents have to be submitted to the IOC or the person designated as observer by the IOC at least two months in advance of the competition.

This document provides a general overview of certain exemplary aspects that the national olive oil competitions could contemplate in their rules, such as eligible oils, categories, etc. The competent national authority organising the competition can adapt its own rules to the particular national EVOO sector or to certain characteristics of the national producers, and can even create new categories, such as organic EVOO, for example.

EVOOs presented by registered individual producers, producers' associations and packers may be entered for the competition.

### **1. *Eligible oils***

- Only extra virgin olive oils that are produced in the competition crop year and comply with the requirements stipulated for this grade in the IOC trade standard applying to olive oils and olive pomace oils shall be eligible for entry.
- **For producers, two types of oil are entered:**
  - For large-scale producers, entries must be from a homogenous batch of oil stored in a single tank of at least 4 000 litres.
  - For small-scale producers, entries must be from a homogeneous batch of oil stored in a single tank of at least 1000 litres.
- **For packers**, the oils entered for the competition shall be from a homogenous batch of oil stored in a single tank of at least 10 000 litres.

**Note: Virgin olive oil production must be the main activity of producers and account for at least 75% of their activity**

- Each competitor/registered name may enter only one extra virgin olive oil.

Types of producers:

- Small-scale producers: less than 20 000 kg/year olive oil
- Large-scale producers: more than 20 000 kg/year olive oil
- Packers (packaging volumes of oil exceeding 25 000 kg/year) may enter the competition. A packaging company, which owns the competing brand, can only enter a single oil to the competition.

National competitions do not have to apply all of these categories.

## **2. Responsibilities of competitors**

Competitors shall be required:

- 2.1. To complete the registration form (Annex 1).
- 2.2. To arrange for a notary<sup>1</sup> to carry out the following:
  - . To collect representative samples of the batch of oil entered for the competition, comprising seven (7) samples of 500 ml each, collected in coloured glass containers of the same capacity. The container holding each sample shall be closed with a tamper-evident cap, which shall be sealed by the notary, and shall bear a label showing a code number created by the participant comprising digits and two letters. The rules to be observed for sample collection shall be as laid down in standard ISO 5555 “Animal and vegetable fats and oils – Sampling”.
  - . To seal the tank holding the entry batch of oil until the competition is over. The completion of the competition will be notified either in writing to the competition organisers or when the list of winners is posted on the competition website.
- 2.3. To arrange for the notarial deed to be drawn up stating:
  - . The name and address of the competitor and the registration number of the company;
  - . The location and identification of the tank holding the batch of oil entered for the competition;
  - . The volume of the batch of oil entered for the competition;
  - . Category: small-scale producer, large-scale producer or packer: Producers must prove that virgin olive oil production is their main activity (at least 75% of their activity). For this, they are required to submit an affidavit within the notarial deed confirming this condition.
  - . The procedure for collecting, sealing and identifying the samples;
  - . That the tank holding the batch of oil entered for the competition has been sealed.
- 2.4. To send one of the 500-ml samples to a laboratory recognised by the International Olive Council for the period in force<sup>2</sup> in order for it to be chemically tested and for the corresponding quality testing certificate to be issued confirming that the oil is an extra virgin olive oil based on the following parameters:

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<sup>1</sup> Or equivalent legal figure.

<sup>2, 3</sup> The lists of laboratories and panels awarded IOC recognition for the period in force are adopted by the IOC Council of Members in November every year, after which they will be posted on the IOC website: <https://www.internationaloliveoil.org/what-we-do/chemistry-standardisation-unit/#recognition-laboratories>

- Free acidity
  - Peroxide value
  - Absorbance in ultra-violet (K1%): 270 nm, 232 nm and  $\Delta K$
  - Fatty acid ethyl esters (FAEEs)
- 2.5. To send one of the 500-ml samples to an olive oil tasting panel recognised by the International Olive Council for the period in force<sup>3</sup> in order for it to undergo organoleptic assessment according to the IOC method for the organoleptic assessment of virgin olive oil in force and for a certificate to be issued indicating the grade classification of the oil, the median of the intensities of the fruity attribute and whether the fruitiness is green or ripe.
- 2.6. To send the following documents and samples to the organisers, stating “National Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition under institutional patronage of the International Olive Council” on the envelope:
- The registration form;
  - The notarial deed concerning the collection of the samples and the location and sealing of the tank;
  - The chemical testing certificate and sensory analysis certificate issued respectively by a laboratory and a tasting panel holding IOC recognition for the period in force;
  - Three of the 500-ml samples, properly packaged to avoid breakage during transportation.
  - Declaration on honour that the participant does not participate in or own other companies or company names that have submitted samples in this competition.
- 2.7. To keep the remaining two 500 ml samples. These samples will remain at the disposal of the organisers of the national competition in case any of the other samples should be spoiled or lost.

### **3. Stages of the competition**

- 3.1. After receipt of the samples, the organisers of the national competition shall assign a secret code number to each of the oils entered for the competition. Such code numbers shall be written on an opaque, self-adhesive label that shall completely cover the original identification label.

It shall classify the oils from producers into one of the following groups according to the intensity of the median of the fruity attribute and the type of fruitiness awarded by the panel that issued the sensory analysis certificate:

**Category**

**Median of the fruity attribute**

- Green fruitiness: Set of olfactory sensations characteristic of the oil which is reminiscent of green fruit, depends on the variety of olive and comes from green, sound, fresh olives. It is perceived directly and/or through the back of the nose.

Robust <sup>4</sup> fruitiness	Me > 6
Medium fruitiness	3 < Me ≤ 6
Delicate <sup>4</sup> fruitiness	Me ≤ 3
- Ripe fruitiness: Set of olfactory sensations characteristic of the oil obtained from sound and fresh olives, perceived directly and/or through the back of the nose and reminiscent of ripe fruit.
- Extra virgin olive oils from packers. packers will only have one category.

The organising competent authority reserves the right to perform physico-chemical check analyses and, if appropriate, to disqualify any oil that fails to comply with the parameters stipulated in the IOC standards.

- 3.2. Entries shall be analysed by a jury made up of leaders or members of panels that are recognised by the IOC The panel leader recognised by the IOC must not have any conflict of interest with the companies participating in the competition.

The jury shall use the assessment sheet given in Annex 2 for this analysis and shall then calculate the median of the total scores awarded by each member of the jury.

If the jury considers that an oil does not belong to the category to which it has been pre-assigned, it may classify the oil in another category.

The jury shall select the winner of the national quality award for extra virgin olive oils under IOC patronage in each group according to the scores obtained and shall propose a second and third prize winner in each group from amongst the remaining finalists. In the case of a tie, the oil with the lowest free acidity shall be chosen. If the tie persists, the oil with the lowest peroxide value shall be chosen.

The minimum score for entitlement to a prize shall be 70 for the robust and medium green fruitiness categories, 65 for the delicate green fruitiness category and 60 for the ripe fruitiness category.

The jury reserves the right to award a number of prizes in proportion to the number of entries received for each of the categories.

The list of prize-winning oils shall be released on the competition website.

The decision of the international jury shall be final and shall not be open to appeal.

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<sup>4</sup> New terminology affecting the English version only, following terminological changes made to the IOC organoleptic assessment method.

#### **4. Closing date for registration**

The deadline for registration and presentation of samples established by the organisers shall apply.

#### **5. Award of prizes**

The prizes for the winning oils shall be awarded by the organisers or other authorities during an official ceremony.

#### **6. Prizes**

In accordance with the decision taken by the organising competent authority, the prizes shall comprise a medal (gold, silver or bronze) or similar for the winners in each category, who will also receive a diploma. The three finalists in each category will also receive a finalist diploma.

The design of these awards should be original and different to that of the IOC's international competition, the "Mario Solinas Quality Award", due to the fact that this design is exclusive to the IOC. Furthermore, the IOC logo and name cannot be used to make it clear that the organisation of the national competition falls exclusively under the jurisdiction of the competent national authority and not that of the IOC.

In categories with fewer participants, the number of winners will be determined by the jury and will be proportional to the number of participants in each category.

The winners may only mention the prize on the label of packs belonging to the same batch as the winning sample, in accordance with the rules specified for its display in Annex 3.

The results of the competition shall be published on the organisers' website and shall be communicated to the IOC and the corresponding competent authority.

#### **7. Acceptance**

Participation in the national extra virgin olive oil competition for the national quality award under IOC patronage implies acceptance of the present rules.

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**NATIONAL QUALITY AWARD WITH THE INSTITUTIONAL PATRONAGE OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL OLIVE COUNCIL**

**NATIONAL COMPETITION FOR THE QUALITY  
OF EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OILS**

... crop year

**Registration form**

**Name of competitor/registered name/packer brand company:**

**Address**

**Post code**

**City/town**

**Country**

**Telephone**

**Sample identification  
number:**

**Batch volume :**

**Category:**

☐ **Small scale producer**

☐ **Large scale producer**

☐ **Packer**

**Email:**

**Contact:**

**Registration deadline: ...**

**Done at ..... on .....  
(Signature)**

**Send to:**

NATIONAL COMPETITION FOR THE QUALITY  
OF EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OILS  
... crop year

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| (1) Complexity:  | increases with the number and intensity of aromas and flavours   |
| (2) Balance:     | The intensity relation among the evaluated olfactory fruitiness descriptors or gustatory attributes.   |
| (3) Harmony:     | increases when attributes are balanced   |
| (4) Persistence: | length of time that retronasal sensations persist after the sip of olive oil is no longer in the mouth |
- \*Descriptors of direct or retronasal olfactory sensations as described in COI/T20/Doc. N° 22



**DESCRIPTORS OF DIRECT OR RETRONASAL OLFACTORY SENSATIONS**

**Green:** Complex olfactory sensation reminiscent of the typical odour of fruit before it ripens

**Grass:** Olfactory sensation typical of freshly mown grass

**Olive leaf:** Olfactory sensation reminiscent of the odour of fresh olive leaves

**Apple:** Olfactory sensation reminiscent of the odour of fresh apples

**Almond:** Olfactory sensation reminiscent of fresh almonds

**Tomato fruit (green/ripe):** Olfactory sensation typical of tomato fruits

**Tomato leaf:** Olfactory sensation typical of tomato leaves

**Banana:** Olfactory sensation reminiscent of the characteristic odour of banana

**Artichoke:** Olfactory sensation reminiscent of artichokes

**Citrus fruit:** Olfactory sensation reminiscent of that of citrus fruit (lemon, orange, bergamot, mandarin and grapefruit)

**Fig leaf:** Olfactory sensation typical of fig leaves

**Flowers:** Complex olfactory sensation generally reminiscent of the odour of flowers, also known as floral

**Hot spices (pepper, etc):** Olfactory sensation mainly of green peppercorns or of fresh green peppers

**Sweet spices (anise, etc):** Olfactory sensation of green anise or of fresh sweet red peppers

**Aromatics herbs:** Olfactory sensation reminiscent of that of aromatic herbs

**OTHERS:**

**Camomile:** Olfactory sensation reminiscent of that of camomile flowers

**Eucalyptus:** Olfactory sensation typical of Eucalyptus leaves

**Exotic fruit:** Olfactory sensation reminiscent of the characteristic odours of exotic fruit (pineapple, banana, passion fruit, mango, papaya, etc.)

**Leafy vegetables:** Olfactory sensation typical of leafy vegetables (i.e. chicory, etc.

**Pine kernel:** Olfactory sensation reminiscent of the odour of fresh pine kernels

**Soft fruit:** Olfactory sensation typical of soft fruit: blackberries, raspberries, bilberries, blackcurrants and redcurrants

**Vanilla:** Olfactory sensation of natural dried vanilla powder or pods, different from the sensation of vanillin

**Walnut:** Olfactory sensation typical of shelled walnuts

**NATIONAL QUALITY AWARD WITH THE INSTITUTIONAL PATRONAGE OF THE  
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NATIONAL COMPETITION FOR THE QUALITY  
OF EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OILS**

**... crop year**

**RULES FOR DISPLAYING THE AWARD ON THE LABEL  
OF THE WINNING EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL**

**1. Mention of the Award on packs of the winning extra virgin olive oil**

The winner of the first prize of the national quality award with institutional IOC patronage in each of the groups may mention the prize obtained for the ... crop year on the packs of extra virgin olive oil belonging to the source batch of the winning sample. The winners of the second prize and third prize in each group may do likewise.

Such mention is dependent on the submission of a request to this effect by the winner, which should be addressed to the organisers, and on the notification of the number of packs that will be filled with the extra virgin olive oil from the source batch of the winning sample.

**2. Display of the prize: official label**

Each of the prizes shall be displayed on a numbered, self-adhesive official label not larger than 7cm<sup>2</sup> bearing the mention of the prize and the year it was granted. The IOC logo cannot appear on this label.

**3. Delivery of the official prize labels to the winner**

Winners who submit a request to mention the prize on packs of the winning extra virgin olive oil will be supplied with official, numbered labels by the organizers. The number of official labels provided will coincide with the number of packs notified by the winner and will be delivered after prior payment.

In the event of failure to comply with the requirements specified in this Annex the winners concerned may not enter for future editions of this competition and the IOC will be notified.

**4. Prize-winning oils**

Winners shall in no event receive any financial contribution.

**5. Registration fees**

The IOC may not provide its patronage to any competition or activity of a commercial nature. Registration fees, where applicable, must be used solely to cover the costs of the competition (jury, awards, etc.).

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