



Institutional patronage of the International Olive Council for national extra virgin olive oil quality competitions organised by competent authorities

Rules for national competitions on the quality of extra virgin olive oils

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

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.10/123-VI /2026, which the IOC adopted on 30 June 2026. Pursuant to this decision, the IOC may grant its patronage to national competitions organised by competent authorities, according to the requirements established in the IOC's international competition, the Mario Solinas Quality Award.

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 analysis sheet used.

Furthermore, the design of the award 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 are not required to apply all these categories in full.

2. Responsibilities of competitors

Competitors shall be required:

- 2.1. To complete the registration form (Annex 1).
- 2.2. To arrange for a notary¹ 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.

¹ Or equivalent legal figure.



- 2.4. To send one of the 500-ml samples to a laboratory recognised by the International Olive Council for the period in force² 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:
- Free acidity
 - Peroxide value
 - Absorbance in ultra-violet (K1%): 270 nm, 232 nm and ΔK
 - 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 force³ 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

^{2, 3} 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>



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:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Median of the fruity attribute</u>
- <u>Green fruitiness</u>: 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 ⁴ fruitiness	$Me > 6$
Medium fruitiness	$3 < Me \leq 6$
Delicate ⁴ fruitiness	$Me \leq 3$
- <u>Ripe fruitiness</u>: 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.	
- <u>Extra virgin olive oils from packers</u>. 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 composed 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.

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



In the event of a tie, the average score awarded by the jury, rather than the median, shall be used as the tie-break criterion. If the tie persists, the oil with the lowest free acidity shall be selected. If the tie still persists, the oil with the lowest peroxide value shall be selected.

The minimum score for entitlement to an award 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 grant a number of awards in proportion to the number of entries received for each of the categories.

The list of award-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.

4. *Closing date for registration*

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

5. *Granting of awards*

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

6. *Awards*

In accordance with the decision taken by the organising competent authority, the awards 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.



Annex 1

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:



Annex 2

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

National competition for the quality of extra virgin olive oils
... crop year

Sensory analysis sheet

SAMPLE CODE:			
TASTER IDENTIFICATION No:			
DATE:			
Perceived defects : NO/YES		If YES, please write the name of defect/s:	
N.B. In case of the defects perception, do not fill in the next section.			

A. DIRECT OLFACTORY ANALYSIS (40 points)		FLAVOUR DESCRIPTION (DIRECT OR RETRONASAL OLFACTORY SENSATIONS)		
FRUITY DESCRIPTION: Green ☐ Ripe ☐		Descriptors	Direct	Retronasal
PARAMETER	SCORE			
Fruity (0-10) <i>Delicate</i> ☐ <i>Medium</i> ☐ <i>Robust</i> ☐		Green		
Complexity ⁽¹⁾ (0-20)		Grass		
Balance ⁽²⁾ (0-10)		Olive leaf		
PARTIAL SCORE A		Apple (green/ripe)		
		Almond (green/ripe)		
		Tomato (green/ripe)		
		Tomato plant		
		Banana (green/ripe)		
		Artichoke		
		Citrus fruits		
		Fig leaves		
		Flowers/Floral		
		Hot spices (pepper, etc)		
		Sweet spices (anise, ...)		
		Aromatic herbs		
		Camomile		
		Eucalyptus		
		Exotic fruit		
		Leafy vegetables		
		Pine kernel		
		Soft fruit		
		Vanilla		
		Walnut		

B. RETRONASAL, GUSTATORY AND TACTILE ANALYSIS (45 points)	
FRUITY DESCRIPTION: Green ☐ Ripe ☐	
PARAMETER	SCORE
Fruity (0-10) <i>Delicate</i> ☐ <i>Medium</i> ☐ <i>Robust</i> ☐	
Sweetness (0-5) <i>Delicate</i> ☐ <i>Medium</i> ☐ <i>Robust</i> ☐	
Bitterness (0-5) <i>Delicate</i> ☐ <i>Medium</i> ☐ <i>Robust</i> ☐	
Pungency (0-5) <i>Delicate</i> ☐ <i>Medium</i> ☐ <i>Robust</i> ☐	
<i>Astringency</i> <i>Delicate</i> ☐ <i>Medium</i> ☐ <i>Robust</i> ☐	
Complexity ⁽¹⁾ (0-10)	
Balance ⁽²⁾ (0-10)	
PARTIAL SCORE B	

C. FINAL OLFACTORY-GUSTATORY SENSATION (15 points)	
PARAMETER	SCORE
Harmony ⁽³⁾ (0-10)	
Persistence ⁽⁴⁾ (0-5)	
PARTIAL SCORE C	

FINAL RESULTS			
TOTAL SCORE Sum of partial scores (A+B+C)	TYPE OF FRUITINESS	Intensity	
		Delicate	Medium
		Robust	
	Green		
	Ripe		

(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



Annex 2

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 INTERNATIONAL OLIVE COUNCIL

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 award: official label

Each of the awards shall be displayed on a numbered, self-adhesive official label not larger than 7cm² 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 award 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. Award-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.).