



**Seminar on
Food Product Quality Linked to Geographic Origin and Traditions
in the Mediterranean**

Casablanca, Morocco, 8-9 November 2007)

Background Paper

For FAO “food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”, Within this scope, FAO has extended its activities to include food safety,, nutritional quality, as well as specific food quality linked to special production systems (e.g. organic and fair trade production systems). FAO has recently initiated work to address the new field of food product quality linked to geographical origin.

This document seeks to introduce the topic of food product quality linked to geographical origin and traditions. Section 1 recalls the various concepts related to food quality. Section 2 defines the field of application of products linked to geographical origin and its relevance to strategies for rural development. Section 3 provides a brief overview of what is happening in the Mediterranean region in relation to this subject. The paper concludes with the formulation of three major issues that FAO hopes will be addressed during the seminar.

1. Generic and Specific Food Quality

Food quality is a vast concept that is related to consumers’ needs or expectations. For example, ISO standard 9000:2000 provides a fairly broad definition, thus: “quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product, process or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs.”

Types of product quality

The following are the main types of product quality that are currently in use:

- **Food safety.** This is directly related to health and is the basic requirement of quality for the consumer
- **Nutritional quality.** This is also associated with health, and ensures good functioning of the body, particularly in relation to the content of certain nutrients.
- **Absence of allergens.** This is important in the context of the increasing number of people with allergies. This notion is often covered under “food safety”.
- **Preservation of the environment.** Organic food represents a major type of this product quality, linked to the production methods.
- **Culture and religion.** An example of this product quality is “Halal food”.
- **Geographical origin and traditions.** The identity and characteristics of this product quality are essentially linked to the place in which the product is produced and processed, and can include cultural or environmental dimensions.
- **Ethical or social quality.** The fair trade labels, for example, typify the way the food chain is organized in order to secure equity and a fair price along the production chain, especially for small-scale producers.
- **Animal welfare.** There are increasing requirements in some regulations for product quality linked to animal welfare and the development of some private schemes.

Another way of considering the various aspects of product quality is by reference to the demand aspect, with three stages that can be considered as chronological: (i) the quality of the product is linked to an absence of defect; (ii) the quality takes into account the basic properties legitimately expected by all consumers; and (iii) most recently, it refers to specific characteristics that can be desired by certain categories of consumers.

In order to ensure consumer protection and the proper working of markets, governments have the task of defining these various aspects of quality. In this regards, it is useful to recall the two approaches presented at the FAO Regional Conference for Europe in 2004 on “generic quality” and “specific quality”.

What is generic quality ?

Generic quality corresponds to a minimum standard of quality that food must meet if it is to be placed on the market. It thus corresponds to the first two stages mentioned above – absence of defects; and expected properties. Generic quality therefore has a normative character, inasmuch as governments have to ensure consumers’ safety, health and information as part of their mission to protect the general welfare of their populations.

It may be recalled that FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO) have been jointly setting up international food standards since 1961, within the framework of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. In order to ensure fair practices in food trade, the two organizations felt that it was vital to harmonize standards, and the codex standards are therefore intended not only to protect consumers’ health but also to facilitate trade.

What is specific quality?

Specific quality corresponds to a supplementary level of quality: a product possesses specific characteristics that may be linked to its composition, production method or marketing, and that allow its differentiation. These characteristics are often a response to growing social expectations, such as environmental conservation, fairer trade and preservation of heritage and

culture, but may also reflect an attachment to traditional practices or a production area with particular resources that result in product differentiation.

Specific quality therefore also corresponds to a strategy on the part of producers with regard to market segmentation, product differentiation and the creation of added value. It can thus be considered one of the ways of developing and organizing agricultural and agrofood chains in order to produce and market differentiated, added-value products corresponding to consumers' expectations.

The specific quality of food is therefore distinguished from minimal quality, which is usually obligatory and non-negotiable, by the fact that it is a voluntary, optional aspect intended to capitalize on the specific features of the product, as compared with products currently available on the market. Even so, the quality still has to be defined by the regulator, particularly in order to ensure fair practices and protect the consumer.

Various systems and labels must then be put in place to inform and guarantee the characteristics of the product for the consumer (for example, origin-linked quality labels, organic farming labels and fair trade labels).

It is important to note that Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), which describe good practices that need to be carried out at farm level in order to achieve basic food safety, could be considered as practices which generate products of generic quality. However, farmers can choose on a voluntary basis to become certified in certain GAP schemes (national or private) in order to produce differentiated and labelled products and thereby create added value. These schemes could be considered as specific quality schemes.

How can specific product quality be a tool for rural development?

The process to differentiate and market specific quality products can also be a tool for rural development. According to the type of scheme involved, these products can:

- create added-value by accessing new niche markets or by maintaining existing markets, therefore improving the income of local producers;
- contribute to the preservation of local resources, either physical (e.g. landscapes, soils) or cultural;
- lead to strengthened relations between stakeholders involved in the process, especially through local organizations and increased equity.

These tools are particularly suited for marginalized areas such as mountains. Mountains are rich in biological and cultural diversity, but the majority of mountain people live in poverty. Indeed, according to a recent FAO study (2003) on vulnerability in mountains, as many as 245 million rural mountain people in developing and transition countries are at risk of, or actually experiencing, hunger and food insecurity. Smallholder farmers in these marginal regions are confronted with several constraints, including often harsh climates (short production cycles due to long winters), weak or inexistent infrastructure, distance from markets, high transportation costs and inadequate technology. One important strategy for sustainable development in these regions is to promote the production and marketing of "specific quality" local products. Building on the comparative advantages of mountain areas – unique natural resources and traditional know-how – specific quality products (organic, fair trade or products linked to geographical origin) allow farmers to differentiate their products,

access niche markets (national and international), obtain premium prices and increase their income levels.

These tools can also be important to differentiate mass produced cash crops for international markets, in order to meet consumer demand for differentiated products.

Governments may then have an interest in supporting specific quality approaches because of the contribution these might make -- depending on the specific example -- to such factors as economic or rural development, environmental protection and heritage preservation.

2. Quality Products Linked to Geographical Origin

The identity of products in terms of their origin is an important component in such specific quality approaches, for the link established between the product and its area of origin allows its differentiation, the organization of actors at the area level and the conservation of local resources, and thus helps to combat delocalization and rural outmigration.

Typical products are products that have acquired, or are on the way to acquiring, a certain reputation with consumers who recognize the particular qualities associated with their geographical origin and associate the name linked to their production area with a certain quality that they seek.

Despite the lack of data about the importance of origin-linked quality products on the market, a growing consumer demand for such typical products can be noticed, in particular through the increasing marketing, branding or labelling of food that indicate where it originates and how it is produced. The more global the market, the more important appears the differentiation of products linked to their origin, not only for export products, but also for locally marketed products in relation to their competition with imported products. This is increasingly the case in developing countries.

In developing countries, consumers have a lower purchasing power than in European countries where products with origin-linked quality have existed for a long time. However, local products are very prevalent. With increasing urbanization, origin can be a proxy of quality conveying trust to consumers. These urban populations are keen to eat traditional foods from their origin or items that have acquired a certain reputation. These products then gain a reputation that needs to be protected from appropriation.

Localized resources, linked to a determined geographical area, whether physical (local land conditions, landscape), genetic (plant varieties, local animal race) or human (know-how, traditions, culture), therefore contribute to the reputation and uniqueness of the product. Geographical indications make it possible to recognize the special link between the features of a product and its origin, and to inform consumers of this relationship through labelling.

Interest of specific quality linked to geographical origin for rural development

Research on origin-linked products in European countries (and increasingly in developing countries) shows that there are a number of advantages related to these kinds of products.

Interest of such process concern different aspects: economical (added value, access to niche market), environmental (contribution to physical resources, biodiversity) and social (cultural preservation and valorisation, collective action).

In particular, the value of Geographical Indications (GIs), as defined by the trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS) agreement of 1994¹, was mentioned during the recent World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) symposium in Beijing on GIs in June 2007, (Cf. WIPO Magazine²) in this way:

- they help producers obtain a premium price for their products
- they provide guarantees to consumers as to the qualities of products
- they develop rural economy
- they protect local knowledge and strengthen local traditions

These assets explain the development of GIs in the international markets, where we can notice a trend from mass produced and standardized food towards origin-linked differentiated products, together with a certain reconfiguration of institutions, producers' associations, and intermediaries, with local conditions of production being taken more into account. Examples are the coffee and tea sectors.

Origin-linked quality is also extremely relevant in fragile or marginal agricultural zones where particular production constraints can at the same time be considered as comparative advantages because they become features that give a product its traditional characteristics and reputation and can create added value. For example, mountain zones, where competitive farming cannot be developed, are rich in typical products linked to specific preserved attributes (e.g. biodiversity, endemic plant varieties or land races, a particular ecosystem, know-how about mountain conditions). One of the challenges for sustainable development of these zones is that of enabling small-scale producers to gain access to sufficiently profitable markets to support their modes of production.

As stated by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Center for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) in their analysis³, "*GIs are considered useful because of the emphasis they place on the product-place linkage*". Indeed, a finished product labelled in its region of origin allows it to retain more value in the region and keep people in rural areas. Another important element that is being analysed is the potential of GIs to be a tool to preserve traditions and local knowledge, as they can protect knowledge linked to a product and the area through reputation. Nevertheless, there are a number of limitations and discussions are currently underway within The Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

Towards a specific quality linked to geographical origin

¹According to article 22.1 of this agreement, geographical indications are defined as "indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member ... Where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin". This very broad definition of geographical indications means that the varying legal instruments within member states can be covered, ensuring a minimum of protection in order to prevent the wrongful use of names of places without any specific system of protection.

² http://www.wipo.int/wipo_magazine/fr/2007/04/article_0003.html

³ Socio-Economics of Geographical Indications, Issue Paper 8, 2004

The existence of a geographical indication requires a collective approach on the part of producers, with a view to joint management of the resources that provide the specific qualities of the product.

Preservation of the geographical origin-linked specific quality of a product, on which its reputation depends, involves drawing up specifications that define the elements needed for such preservation. Therefore, the producers in the area concerned must collectively define the rules guaranteeing the specific quality expected, through definition of the geographical zone concerned, the characteristics linked to the area's physical resources (e.g. climate, local land conditions) or non-physical resources (e.g. traditions, culture).

This process is critical both for preserving and guaranteeing the specific quality for the consumer, which will require a monitoring and certification system, and also for organizing the actors and ensuring area-level management of local resources.

From the point of view of local organization in the production territory, the formulation of specifications must allow for the consideration of the role of the various levels in the food chain and the practices and know-how involved in the specific quality of the product. This is therefore an opportunity for the actors, especially small-scale producers, to organize a system of recognition and a fair redistribution of added value. It is important also to involve traders and distributors in the promotion of the origin-linked product at an early stage of its conception. Failing this, it is possible that traders will not see any interest in segregating products under the specific quality label from generic commodities. This is especially important for geographical indications in countries where enforcement of property rights is not very strong. Involving the whole supply chain in organizing a GI also strengthens the commitment of all stakeholders in the chain to exercise due diligence and ensure the good quality of the product from farm to table.

Furthermore, the optimization of local resources, whether material, human or cultural, also assumes their preservation by ensuring sustainable management. Territory-level management is thus established, bringing together various actors in the area to agree on the optimization and preservation of local resources, in terms both of production and of other associated activities, such as tourism.

Therefore, the local process for establishing the specifications of the products, followed by the territory-level management of the code of practice require a "value network" as the combination of:

- **vertical relationships** along the food chain (e.g. suppliers, farmers, processors and exporters, branded buyers and retailers, depending of the type of chain)..
- **horizontal relationships** among producers, that can take the form of producers' associations and cooperatives.
- **support relationships** between producers and facilitating organizations (e.g. local governments, business service providers, research institutes, universities, non-government service organizations), which reinforce the quality, efficiency and sustainability aspects of the chain.

In this perspective, the territory-level management of the product and its marketing can be compared to that of a cluster.. This is defined as the concentration, in a local area, of firms coming together at the same time to collaborate (ensuring the collective action needed for the

homogeneity of the specific quality produce) and to compete on their own products, thereby creating a situation of so called “coopetition” (cooperation and competition).

Importance of labelling and certification schemes

From the consumer’s point of view, it is essential to ensure that complete information on the product is provided and that the product specifications are met. Labelling and certification systems may differ among countries or regions, depending on the objectives, type of market/s, and the economic, social and cultural contexts. In some cases, especially in local markets, consumer confidence may be based on the short distance between consumers and producers, whereas in other cases, as the distance between the places of production and consumption widens, certification and monitoring systems have to be established.

In the case of export markets, certification should be made by an independent certification body, recognised in the export market. In the case of domestic markets, there are various possible options:

- National authorities monitor the integrity of applications but avoid possible conflicts of interest.
- Self monitoring is undertaken by a local group of stakeholders (e.g. producers, local authority, local traders).
- Participatory guarantee systems are founded on the principle of social control and trust on producers and implemented in cases of organic farming (e.g. Ecovida in Brazil or Teikei in Japan).
- A full fledged independent certification system is in place, enabling national authority to accredit private certification bodies.

The choice of the system requires a cost-benefit analysis and an assessment of the existing institutional capacity in the country. In all cases, a minimum internal control system by the group of producers is important in order to facilitate the monitoring of the quality product.

Role of public authorities

Governments potentially have a major role to play in the development of quality products linked to geographical origin. On the one hand, institutional regulation of such approaches is vital in order to guarantee fair trade practices, and mechanisms appropriate to the local and national context must be designed. On the other hand, government intervention can support initiatives contributing to the economic and rural development of areas, in particular marginal zones.

3. The Situation in the Mediterranean Region

The countries of the Mediterranean region have a great wealth of food heritage in common, and many advantages and strengths in terms of economic and rural development, especially in certain zones, which enables them to capitalize on origin-linked quality products.

In European Mediterranean countries, there are numerous food quality products linked to geographical origin, amongst which some are registered and protected under Council regulation (EC) No 510/2006 on protected geographical indications (PGI) and protected designations of origin (PDO) for agricultural products and foodstuffs. In October 2007, there

were 762 registered products throughout Europe (439 PDO; 323 PGI for foodstuffs and agricultural products, excluding wines and spirits). Of these, 163 were in Italy, 155 in France, 108 in Spain, 104 in Portugal and 85 in Greece⁴.

In non-European Mediterranean countries, a number of food products have specificity with regard to their origin and traditions. Turkey has registered a number of them through legislation since 24 June 1995: in October 2007, there were 43 protected designation of origins and 48 protected geographical indications. Other countries are in the process of protecting food products, while some have already registered some wines and spirits. In Morocco for example, a draft law related to Geographical Indication (GI), the Appellation of Origin (AO) and the Agriculture Label (AL) was adopted by the Council of the Government, the Council of Ministers and has been submitted for final approval and publication.

Preliminary information collected on these issues has been synthesized in Annex 1. One of the aims of the present Seminar is to collect more information on the institutional framework in non-European Mediterranean countries.

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/foodqual/quali1_en.htm

ANNEX 1

Preliminary information on institutional aspects in the Mediterranean countries

The countries on the northern shore of the Mediterranean were the first to develop a system of recognizing and protecting origin-linked quality (France started in 1905,⁵ Italy in 1942⁶ and Spain in 1970⁷). The European Union has also passed legislation in this regard, using the term “geographical indication” in council regulation 2081/92.⁸ This regulation sets up two distinct legal mechanisms because of the “two different levels of geographical reference” (considering no. 9 of regulation 510/2006 of 20 March 2006⁹) represented by these two mechanisms: protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications. The geographical link is thus stronger for a protected designation of origin than for a protected geographical indication, inasmuch as in the case of the latter the raw materials could come from another zone than that of production.

In southern Mediterranean countries including Turkey, the protection of origin-linked specific quality exists in general for wines and spirits. Turkey has a *sui generis* system to protect appellations of origin and geographical indication for foodstuffs, and in many countries, initiatives at the institutional level are now underway for food products – and are in some cases on the point of coming to fruition; hence the relevance of the topic of this seminar.

⁵ The law of 1 August 1905 starts to base “guaranteed appellations of origin” on a concept of delimitation, stipulating that the Government grants administrative recognition of appellations of origin by defining the grape production zone in which the product has the right to bear its name. The law of 6 May 1919, concerning the protection of geographical indications, then attached the concept of specific area to these products. Drawing inspiration from the already existing protection system for wines, the law of 28 November 1955 created a similar protection system for cheeses, laying down conditions for the recognition of appellations of origin for cheeses. Subsequently, specific norms on appellations of origin and consumer protection made it possible to guarantee the protection of geographical indications. The legislative basis of the protection of signs of quality is Article L.642-4 of the rural code. The law of 26 May 1930 constitutes the reference text regarding indication of provenance and represses false indications of provenance. Legislation on the origin of products was later reinforced with the law of 2 December 1973, Article 44 of which forbids any misleading publicity, particularly on the origin of products.

⁶ Although the regulation of appellations started in 1930 with legislation on wines, Royal Decree 262 of 16 March 1943 approving the Civil Code was the starting point for the protection of geographical indications in Italy. In particular, Article 2598/2 of the Civil Code sets forth legislative measures on the protection of geographical indications.

⁷ Law 25 of 2 December 1970 on wine, grapes and spirits is the legislative basis creating appellations of origin for wines and anticipating the possibility of applying them to other agricultural products (Additional Disposition 5a). There have thus been many ministerial decrees extending this law to other groups of products: olive oil, smoked ham and cheese (1975); beans, lentils and rice (1982); peppers (1986); fresh meat (1987); etc. Royal Decree 1573 of 1 August 1985 creates and legislates on specific appellations and also generic appellations for foodstuffs.

⁸ Council Regulation 2081/92 of 14 July 1992 on the Protection of Geographical Indications and Designations of Origin of Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs.

⁹ Council Regulation 510/2006 of 20 March 2006 on the Protection of Geographical Indications and Designations of Origin for Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs.

Turkey

Turkey's adopted governmental decree no. 555 on 24 June 1995, concerning regulations on the protection of geographical signs, provides for the protection of agricultural, mining, industrial and artisanal products. This decree was strengthened by the law of 6 October 2003, which provided for the creation of the Turkish Patent Institute and defined two distinct types of geographical sign: protected appellation of origin (*pao-menşe*) and protected geographical origin (*pgi-mahreç*). Three types of people have the right of application : natural or legal people who are producers of the product; consumers' associations; public institutions related with the product or the geographical region. Once registered, the protection is unlimited if sufficient monitoring reports are submitted every 10 years. The total number of applications up to October 2007 (*pao-menşe*, *pgi-mahreç*) is 252, from which 43 have been registered as registered *pao-menşe* and 48 as *pgi-mahreç* and 91 are pending applications. Monitoring is carried out as described in every designation of the origin's registry (generally carried out by the chambers of industry and trade, municipalities, or special boards constituted for this goal by several related organizations). Registration of a guarantee mark in conformity with Turkish Trademark Decree Law (numbered 556) could also be used for a geographical indication, but as the proprietor of a certification or guarantee trademark cannot use that trademark, this creates an uncertain situation. A draft law is in preparation in order to implement a new protection system for traditional specialty guaranteed products and make some changes regarding the geographical signs (e.g. regarding the applicant: instead of a single producer, a "group of producers"; regarding amendment of specifications; and regarding the publication procedure and the use of an official logo).

Morocco

In Morocco, the protection of quality products linked to geographical origin was introduced in the national legislation with the « dahir » of 14 October 1914, which constitutes the basic charter for action against fraud. This concept had rather a repressive connotation since it involved regulating fraud against the consumer with respect to the origin of products. The basis for the legal framework of appellations of origin applied to agro-food products was laid out in decree n. 2.75.32 of 12 August 1977, which established the regulation of processing, ownership, distribution and the trade of wines, and by the Ministerial Order of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Reform n° 869-75 of 15 August 1977, which established the regulation of appellations of origin in the wine sector, which in turn was revised and completed by Ministerial Order of the Ministry of Agriculture, rural Development and Maritime Fisheries n°1956-98 of 8 October 1998. In order to generalise this approach, the Department of Agriculture drafted a draft law related to « seals of quality and origin of agricultural products and food commodities. This draft law is in line with the national policy on sustainable rural development, promotion of agro-food products, consumer protection, as well as protection of the national agricultural heritage. This law foresees three different seals : the Geographical Indication (GI), the Appellation of Origin (AO) and the Agriculture Label (AL). This draft law was adopted by the Council of the Government, the Council of Ministers and has been submitted for final approval and publication. In order to comply with to the new legislation related to the protection of industrial property (law n. 17-97 of 15 February 2000 related to the protection of industrial property, modified and completed by the law n. 31-05), this draft law gives the government authority (which has recognized a geographical indication or an appellation of origin) the authority to proceed to its registration at the Moroccan Office of Industrial and Commercial Property.

Tunisia

In Tunisia, the Law No. 99-57 of 28 June 1990 on appellations of origin and on geographical indications of agricultural products aims to protect and promote the specificities of agricultural through "appellation of origin" and "geographical indication" labels which differentiate them from other products. The law applies to plant or animal-based processed and unprocessed agricultural and food products, as well as wines and spirits (since the 1950s a specific regulation existed on wines but the law n. 99-57 of 28 June 1999 repealed this regulation but maintained the text relating to geographical indications of wines and spirits up to their integration in the new law). The delimitation of the appellation of origin or the geographical indication zone is triggered by the request of one or more concerned producers and must be validated by the appropriate technical commission. The delimitation of the geographical zone is finally approved by the Ministry of Agriculture by Ministerial decree, which defines the geographical area, the production methods and the nature of the product, as well as its specific characteristics. Currently, three application decrees (registry, control and payment of fees) are being drafted. These decrees will operationalize the management of the geographical indication system, as well as indicate the competent authority to which the private and/or public agencies appointed by the Minister (identified in each specific decree for each specific geographical indication) will have to render account.

Lebanon

At present, the intellectual property law allows for the protection of a geographical indication through a collective trademark established upon request of the interested party (Law on Trademark No. 2385, 17 January 1924). A draft law on the Protection of Geographical Indications is being developed in Lebanon (the draft law is pending approval of the Government). This law defines the geographical indications, the appellations of origin and the traditional denominations (for designations without geographical name). This law applies to agricultural products, processed or industrial agro-food products, artisanal products, as well as to wines and spirits. The applications for protection of geographical indications and appellations of origin are presented by 'representative' producer groups and/or processors. Producer/s of processor groups are deemed to be "representative" on the basis of two criteria: if they represent 50% of the produced volume and represent 50% of the number of producers and processors. Exceptionally, a physical or moral person (if this is the only person who produces the product in a certain region) may also present an application. It is also foreseen that the raw materials of products concerned by an appellation of origin may come from a geographical area which is different from the area of processing, only if; i) the production area of the raw materials is delimited; ii) there are specific conditions for the production of the raw materials; and iii) a control system exists that ensures the enforcement of these conditions. A department of registration and of protection of geographical indications and appellations of origin will be established in the Office of the Protection of Intellectual Property, which will keep the registry of geographical indications and the protected appellations of origin. The decree will determine the task of delimitation of the geographical area as well as the evaluation of registration requests. The decree will fix the control and certification modalities.

Algeria

A large number of regulatory texts have been adopted since the 1990s to ensure principles of consumer protection (e.g. the law 80-02 containing general rules of consumer protection), as well as the modalities and procedures of control of products on the market and importation of products. With respect to the promotion of quality products, one can recall the Order 76-65 of 16.07.1977 related to Appellations of Origin. This Order has a wide application field (agricultural, natural, industrial and artisanal products but not services), but in reality it concerns principally wines (with seven appellations of origin granted). The appellations of origin and indications must be registered by the National Institute of Intellectual Property, which examines the registration applications. These must follow a specific format. The protection of the geographical indication is for a period of ten years, and is renewable.

Jordan

In Jordan, the Trademarks Law No. (33) for the year 1952 and its amendments can cover geographical indications. The Law of Geographical Indications No.8 for the year 2000 specifically deals with geographical indications. Nevertheless, neither regulations nor institutional frameworks have been developed to register the geographical indications. There is currently a proposal for a fund that will be allocated to develop both the legislative and institutional frameworks for registering the geographical indications. The aim is to adopt a system to register quality products under their geographical region so as to promote price stabilization through the added value of the territory and the historical background of these products, which is called “Geographical Indication” (GI). This solution will in return encourage consumers to appreciate these added value products.

Syria

In Syria, the Legislative Decree No 47 issued on October 9, 1946 and amended by Law No.28 dated 3/4/1980, provides protection to trademarks and is applicable to goods (agricultural and/or industrial) and/or services (trademarks for alcoholic beverages are excluded). The Law No. 9 dated July 1975, provides a definition of geographical indications, and these are protected as collective trademarks, available for geographical indications, in the case of professional, regional, agricultural or industrial groups that want to secure the origin or the manufacture of their goods or products. The application is being examined and the Minister of Supply and Internal Trade shall decide by a final order as to the acceptance or refusal of the mark. Protection is for 10 years and renewable for similar periods.