

S.12 Geographical Indications for a territorial approach to the SDGs

Our vision is of food systems that are inclusive and diverse and which contribute to the elimination of poverty and food and nutrition insecurity by creating jobs, raising incomes across food value chains, protecting and enhancing cultural and social capital, reducing risks for the poorest and increasing value distribution. This vision cannot be realized by crossing planetary boundaries and implies the protection and enhancement of natural ecosystems and tackling climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss.

1. How would you define equitable livelihoods? What are the dimensions of equitable livelihoods that you feel are missing from the AT4 Discussion Starter? (https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/at4_discussion_starter-dec2020.pdf)

Equitable livelihood is a comprehensive approach to ensure that all people in a territory can have a decent life, including good working conditions, access to healthy diet and good education, supported by revenues from their activities conducted in a sustainable manner, i.e. preserving the local resources, natural and cultural, for the future generation, and that feed the sense of ownership, local identity and self-esteem.

A dimension that could be enriched in the AT4 discussion starter is the topic of inclusive value-chains, and more generally the topic of market access and fair marketing practices. It is important that producers (primary producers, processing actors) can get the sufficient return from their local economic activities, that recognize and remunerate their efforts towards the development of local sustainable food systems. This is crucial to ensure sustainability of the food system, for people, especially small-holders, family farmers, women, to really engage in better and sustainable practices, develop motivation and self-esteem from their activity and reinvest economic return in their territory. More specifically the topic of “place-based voluntary standards” such as geographical indications, developed by the local community to enhance the preservation of their resources and their practices throughout the production of food in particular, and ensure a better remuneration from the market and local redistribution of added-value, could be specifically addressed.

2. What are the potential actions that could be taken to advance equitable livelihoods in the context of food systems in your community, locally? (In one simple, clear phrase). Please, be as specific as possible You can mention up to three actions.

The development and management of a geographical indication (GI) is one of the potential actions that addresses the gap described above with a systemic and place-based approach. A well-managed GI process can support fair and equitable value chains, by empowering local producers to make decision over the local rules. They can agree on their own in tailored specifications that are then recognized and protected by the State at the domestic and international level, so to preserve their specific-quality product linked to the origin and differentiate it on the market. A GI is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin, including natural and human factors (WIPO definition). It represents an opportunity for a group of smallholders to protect collectively the intellectual property attached to their product name and the reputation of their related production system. The added value can be then better redistributed locally to local primary producers and processors, as a result of their specific practices valued in the specifications.

GI specifications represent also a powerful tool to preserve the natural resources and traditional knowledge involved in the GI food product. At the same time, the control or certification system provides guarantees to consumers on the product quality and traceability and prevent from frauds. By preserving traditional and specific quality products on the market, GIs can contribute to diet diversity and the promotion of food heritage.

Finally, territorial strategy can be developed building on the GI process, by linking with the other actors of the territory to develop a territorialized basket of goods (food, handicraft) and services (accommodation, restaurants, tourism and agritourism etc.), following the same vision: endogenous development with ownership of local producers over the rules of production and promotion of their products in an equitable and sustainable manner thanks to remunerative and fair markets.

3. Whose livelihoods will your proposed action(s) aim to advance?

GI products can concern all types of value-chain stakeholders, but it is particularly relevant for small-holders, family farmers, indigenous communities and women. As they often play a key role in the production of traditional food, GI allow them to be recognized as crucial actors within the value-chain and thus to be able to gain more decision-power in their activities and management of the scheme.

GI also benefit the whole territory as the value-chain stakeholders are localized, bringing more employment in the area. Tourism development based on GI products is for instance an important outcome.

4. What is the potential action that could be taken to advance equitable livelihoods in the context of food systems in your country? (In one simple, clear phrase)

At country level, the national legislation is crucial to protect consumers and producers and maximize the economic benefits from the GI and the positive externalities to contribute to sustainable food system. National competent authorities can also play a key role in setting a national GI protection legal framework, identifying their national food heritage and GI potentialities in the country, develop research and knowledge on specific GI products, support smallholders, family farmers and indigenous communities in engaging in GI processes (collective action, promotion, control systems), raise stakeholders' awareness including to consumers and fight against frauds in the market.

5. Whose livelihoods will your proposed action(s) aim to advance?

Same as before: small-holders, family farmers, indigenous communities and women. Actions at country level can scale-up the benefits from the GI processes by extending to many territories. In this perspective, capacity development of public authorities (national and local levels) and all the stakeholders of the territory through GI processes in such a game-changed is crucial and is also beneficial to any local development processes as local producers gain ownership in the management of their local resources and production system.

6. What is the potential action that could be taken to advance equitable livelihoods in the context of food systems globally? (In one simple, clear phrase)

International recognition of GI for the benefit of small-holders, family farmers and indigenous communities to preserve their traditional food and the related knowledge and natural resources involved in their production is important to raise awareness of the treasures that represent traditional

and origin-linked quality products, from the point of view of national cultural heritage and equitable livelihoods. This can be facilitated by the work of UN agencies on the topic according to their mandate (e.g. WIPO, FAO, UNCTAD, ONUDI) and other international organizations such as WTO, therefore conducting to the enhanced protection at national level in every country.

The consolidation of International or inter-regional networks of GI producers and territories, in particular oriGIn, but also AREPO, etc., could be further promoted and supported with Communities of practice where local stakeholders from different places could share their experience on GI processes. For example, knowledge exchanges for similar types of territory and landscapes which provide with highly specific origin foods (e.g. oasis, nutritious forest, mountain areas, mangroves...) could promote the food heritage globally.

7. Whose livelihoods will your proposed action(s) aim to advance?

Same as before, with particular emphasis on people from vulnerable ecological areas and the ones more impacted by climate changes (e.g. oasis, nutritious forest, mountain areas, mangroves...).

8. Please share any additional details on potential solution (Optional but preferred)

An additional interesting aspect of GI processes is the fact they enhance public-private collaboration, linking a market tool to differentiate the origin-linked products on the market and the provision and maintenance of public goods (heritage, landscape, biodiversity, food diversity, reputation of the place etc.). The development of GI locally is not only an opportunity to strengthen and support inclusive localized value chains but also to enhance coordination with public authorities, locally and nationally, to maximize the provision of public goods, and pave the way for additional territorial strategies, extended to other economic activities, in particular in relation with tourism development. Finally in the perspective of sustainable food system, at local, national and global, food diversity and balanced diets are important considerations. GI schemes represent tools for the preservation and promotion of a huge diversity of traditional foods, unprocessed or minimally processed foods, and food linked to biodiversity, which have been recognized as playing certain roles in relation with healthy diets.

It is to be noted that even though we have chosen to submit GI as a game-changing solution for AT4, they represent a cross-cutting solution for the other Action Tracks. Indeed, as mentioned before, they have consequences on both the safety and nutritional quality of the produced food, they play a role in keeping diversity in local diets and are produced in a sustainable manner.

9. What factors your proposed action(s) is/are targeting?

Areas could include:

- Political and policy factors: Ownership and access to land and other natural resources specifically assets that increase livelihood productivity such as livestock?
- Social and cultural: Decision-making, agency & leadership roles for women and youth
- Recognition of traditional forms of knowledge regarding sustainable local food systems
- Realization of aspirations among youth and those with entrepreneurial spirit
- Economic, finance, and building entrepreneurial skill sets
- Training and education, access to technology, knowledge, credit, and financial services Capacity of rural institutions

- Institutions for collective action that foster improved access to markets, financial services, and technology, as well as sustainable management of natural resources with a focus on structural inequities that marginalize disadvantaged communities and diminish opportunities for equitable livelihoods.

The following factors are considered:

- At policy level, to raise awareness, build capacity of public authorities on the importance of the topic and need for appropriate legal and institutional frameworks.
- Capacity development of producers and their collective representative organizations to ensure their empowerment, leadership capacity, and decision power, on the following topics: collective action, territorial governance, preservation of their traditional knowledge, specific quality management (control and traceability), natural resources including biodiversity, recognition of the specific roles of certain categories of actors (smallholders, family farmers, women, youth...), entrepreneurship and fair marketing access.
- Capacity development of rural institutions, extension services, local research and development centers, to provide support and knowledge to producers for the identification of the specific quality of their product and establishment of the specifications.
- Consumers' awareness and education for informed choices to contribute to sustainable consumption.
- Appropriate guarantee systems (national and local levels) to protect producers and consumers, including establishment of certification system such as participatory guarantee system

10. How would you measure whether the proposed action was successful? References to specific accountability tools most welcome.

Different impacts can be easily measured with the following indicators.

At international level: number of countries being part of an international agreement on GI (such as those managed by WIPO)

At country level: number of countries having a GI legal system with detailed specifications and managed by a collective representative of the producers in place.

At country level: evolution of the number of GI recognized (registered), which can be monitored through the oriGIn compilation website (<https://www.origin-gi.com/i-gi-origin-worldwide-gi-compilation-uk.html>)

At local level (on a specific GI): number of producers involved, evolution of the price paid to producers, in particular smallholders and women, references to traditional knowledge and natural resources, biodiversity in the specifications, number of job created to measure the impact on territorial development.

In relation with comprehensive assessment of the specific GI contribution to sustainable food system, FAO and oriGIn have developed the sustainability strategy for GI (SSGI) and a series of tools to help GI producers to identify their sustainability issues, assess and improve their GI system to be more sustainable. A database of GI sustainability indicators and guidelines can be instrumental in measuring and monitoring contribution of GI to equitable livelihoods and sustainable food systems.

11. Where do you think the action you are proposing would be applicable? Your response can be a specific region, or an entire country, or to various countries, or a type of landscape, etc. (e.g., District X, or semi-arid areas in country Y, or higher- or lower-income countries)? If so, please specify.

The action proposed is appropriate in any place where food present some specific qualities linked to their origin to be the driver for a sustainable GI process. This is particularly relevant in areas where food and agriculture remain strong or at risk of decline so the action can restore and preserve food heritage, biodiversity and traditions including mountain areas, oasis, mangroves, forest, traditional agriculture and specific related landscapes, etc.

12. Where is this idea coming from? Please include a citation to an evidence or learning document, if applicable, or the name of a person or organization or project or initiative.

The idea comes from many players in the topic, including FAO, Cirad (research institute), oriGIn (producers associations federation) and countries particularly interested in preserving their food heritage and resources associated, not only in European countries but more and more worldwide in any continent, in particular Asia (see the Asean GI policy), Latin America, and Africa, as illustrated for example by the Continental strategy for GI endorsed by the African Union in 2017.

Some references :

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13. Please share any other comments, including evidence or arguments in support or against.

References above provided evidence on the many benefits that can arise for GI processes, from a number of case studies in the world. A large literature exist that demonstrate the elements provided as game-changing, when specific conditions are taken into consideration during the establishment and management of GI, in particular: i) the specific quality linked to origin well defined in the specifications ii) the collective action and territorial governance; iii) the effective marketing efforts and iv) the legal framework and the role of public sector.

For information, Cirad and FAO, with the support of oriGIn and the Swiss Intellectual Property Institute (IPI), will convene an independent dialogue on GIs in the frame of the UN Summit on Food system, on on 27 May 2021.