



National Contest for Terroir Products: Identification, Development and Promotion



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A Methodological Guide

This manual was developed as part of the Project for Market Access for Typical Food Products (PAMPAT), implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

Any reference to people applies equally to men and women.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

CMT	Concours & Marché des Terroirs - software for managing regional products contests and markets
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
FRI	Fondation Rurale Interjurassienne (Interjurassic Rural Foundation)
PAMPAT	Project for Market Access for Agri-food and Regional Products
ADA	Agency for Agricultural Development
SECO	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
FIBL	Research Institute of Organic Agriculture
OriGin	Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network

FOREWORD BY UNIDO

In agri-food markets, consumers are increasingly interested in traditional products that are strongly connected to their region of origin, identified as origin-linked products or by the French terminology “terroir” products. This trend is a major opportunity for producers and small and medium enterprises in the agri-food sector, as they need not compete with the prices of generic and standardised products. On the contrary, this trend rewards them for excelling in what, in a way, they have always done: using artisan methods to produce traditional products which are deeply rooted in a region and which have special characteristics.

It is against this backdrop that the present guide was developed. It is the result of a collaboration between UNIDO and the FRI on the PAMPAT project (Project for Market Access of Terroir Products), funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), to organize the first Moroccan Regional Products Contest. This competition (a first outside of Europe) was organized in November 2014 in close collaboration with the Agency for Agricultural Development (ADA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime Fisheries, both in charge of the Moroccan national strategy for origin-linked products.

This guide builds on the experience of the Moroccan Regional Products Contest, as well as UNIDO’s international experience in structuring agro-value chains and promoting terroir products, so as to provide assistance to other countries wishing to similarly promote local products by holding a National Contest.

We are convinced that a National Contest for Terroir Products encourages positive competition among different products of a given country by prompting the participation of all regions and terroirs. With this tool, people in charge of structuring sectors and promoting products can focus attention on the know-how of the producers to draw the final consumer to them, while also ensuring continuous improvement of product quality, and facilitating market access for producers.

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FOREWORD BY THE FONDATION RURALE INTERJURASSIENNE

Regional products take us on a journey across flavours, cultures, time. They lead us on a path to the discovery of others, through their languages, their regions.

A National Contest for Terroir Products is about celebration and competition, dynamism and tradition, work and know-how. It sharpens the spirit of innovation, fosters vocations, and helps to better fulfil consumers' qualitative expectations. Quality is never an accident; it is the result of a smart effort in know-how and perseverance.

Since 2005, the Fondation Rurale Interjurassienne (Inter Jurassian Rural Foundation) organizes the Swiss Local Food Competition, held every two years. Based on its experience organizing the Competition's 5 editions, it helped to set up the first Moroccan Regional Products Contest.

Each edition is an opportunity to discover top quality products and to exchange with producers and consumers. This contest is a true promotional and communication instrument.

With this guide, we wish to take you behind the scenes of a National Contest for Terroir Products and Market. We hope that this experience will be repeated and enriched in other countries or regions of the world.

We are particularly grateful to Ebe Muschialli and Fabio Russo of UNIDO for fostering excellent collaboration.

Exchanging on and drafting the present methodological guide has helped us further develop and improve the Swiss Local Food Competition.

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FOREWORD BY SECO

In its projects, the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) makes sure to promote sustainable and inclusive growth in developing countries. In accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SECO places special emphasis on the social and environmental dimension. The inclusion component springs from a desire to ensure that all segments of the population benefit from growth.

Origin-linked products are a niche market, yet promoting them is particularly well suited to SECO's goals. These are original products rooted in regions, traditions and flavours that are often unique. They are prepared by local populations perpetuating ancestral know-how.

Promoting these products through a label of origin confers many advantages: decent income for the population, in particular for women (empowerment), preserving or keeping jobs in the regions involved, quality products coming in various forms (different uses, different ways of presenting the product), upholding an authentic and living culture.

As such, SECO supports the terroir products value chains - from strengthening the organization of producers, farming best practices, product certification and packaging design to market access and export promotion. Traceability and quality are among the essential prerequisites to obtain recognition through Geographical Indication (GI) or Controlled Designation of Origin (CDO) labels.

Developed in Switzerland by the Fondation Rurale Interjurassienne (FRI), a "National Contest for Terroir Products" is perfectly suited to this context, being both fun and constructive. The contest nationally promotes terroir products and rewards the very best, while also supporting non-award-winning producers. Consumers and producers are brought together in the Terroir Products Market held during the event. This manual describing the procedure of the contest is very detailed, as one would expect from Swiss precision. Nonetheless, it is important to note how good preparation and respecting processes serve such a contest's reliability and reputation on the long term.

SECO wishes delicious discoveries and rewarding encounters to all countries holding a National Contest for Terroir Products. Long live regional products!

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Long-term strategy

The sensory or hedonic quality of food is a significant part of its overall quality. It is the complex result of multiple characteristics such as appearance, smell, flavour and texture. Consumers assess these characteristics by using their senses: sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing. These attributes prompt reactions of acceptance or rejection; consumers' judgment will usually be limited to this overall reaction of pleasure or dislike, which will determine whether consuming the product is an experience they are willing to continue and repeat.

The sensory qualities of food depend on many factors related to production conditions, regions, harvest and post-harvest conditions, know-how, and processing and packaging techniques. Sensory properties can fall into one of two categories: positive attributes and negative attributes. Positive attributes are the sensory features that consumers seek in a quality product. An example of a positive attribute is the 'fruitiness' of extra virgin olive oil, reminiscent of the scent and aroma of fresh fruit, harvested when it is appropriately ripe and having experienced no chemical and/or microbiological alteration during storage and oil extraction. Negative attributes, or sensory defects, are sensory criteria that negatively impact the quality of the product. These can have several causes, such as non-compliance with best practices of production, lack of control over harvest

and post-harvest conditions, non-compliance with best practices in hygiene and preparation during processing and storage, as well as contamination. An example of a sensory defect is the 'rancidity' of olive or argan oils that have been oxidized by extended contact with air and light. Another example is a mouldy smell in cheese.

Though some sensory features can be measured with instruments, the most direct and accurate evaluation method is sensory analysis. This is an assessment of a product's organoleptic properties by sense organs. This method draws on the complex human sensory system. It helps to better identify product characteristics, and to apprehend consumer expectations.

1.2. The Fondation Rurale Interjurassienne and the Swiss Local Food Competition

The Fondation Rurale Interjurassienne (Inter Jurassian Rural Foundation), based in the Swiss Canton of the Jura, initiated the Swiss competition of local food products in 2005 and continues to organize this event every two years. The mission of the Fondation Rurale Interjurassienne is to train and advise farmers, by anticipating Switzerland's agricultural policy decisions as much as possible. One of the organization's divisions deals with the food sector and rural areas development. Its goal is to add more value to local products. In 2013, a 'World Terroirs' category was added to allow regional foods from other countries to compete in Switzerland.

Excerpt from the 2015 press release:

The 6th Swiss Local Food Competition just proved it: producers in all Swiss regions are innovating, keeping alive and improving traditional products. On Saturday, 351 medals were awarded to the country's best producers during a successful edition of the Regional Products Market, which drew about 15 000 visitors in Délémont, Courtemelon at the Fondation Rurale Interjurassienne. Six countries were gathered at an international conference, along with the United Nations (UNIDO), which worked on improving product marketing. Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann emphasized Switzerland's great capacity to innovate, which must in particular strengthen the market positioning of Swiss high-quality agricultural products.

The cantons of Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft, as well as the Southern Black Forest Natural Park (Freiburg region, Germany) showcased their know-how with numerous producers and products. Numerous gold, silver and bronze medals were awarded.

The 113 jury members have just concluded the 6 days of tastings needed to evaluate all the products. Producers will be receiving their certificates in Basel (Markthalle) on Saturday, 7 November 2015. Excellence awards will also be handed out in the “Dairy”, “Bakery and Pastry”, “Meat”, “Fruit, Vegetable, Honey and Other Products” and “Alcoholic Beverages” categories. The Fondation Rurale Interjurassienne will be holding the 7th edition on 30 September and 1 October 2017.

The numbers:

Cantons present at the competition	24	(22 in 2013)
Products submitted	1033	
Products evaluated	972	(812 in 2013)
Jury members	113	(101 in 2013)
Medals awarded	351	(271 in 2013)
Regions of the world	12 medals	

Among the 351 medal-winning products, 30 were of Protected Designation of Origin, 7 had a Protected Geographical Indication, and 38 were organic.

All the award winners can be found on the following website: www.concours-terroir.ch



www.concours-terroir.ch/fr-video

1.3. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations. Its mission is to promote and accelerate sustainable industrial growth in developing countries and transition economies and to help improve living standards in the world's poorest countries by mobilizing its resources and international skills.

UNIDO contributes to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9, 'Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure', through its Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) strategy.

The Organization is known as a specialized service provider that effectively contributes to reducing poverty through productive activities, such as furthering developing countries' participation in international trade by building their trade capacity, supporting sustainable industrial development and improving access to energy. UNIDO mainly provides support and technical assistance to target countries to build commercial capacity in agricultural commodity processing, to participate in international trade flows for manufactured products, to increase technology and investment flows, to develop entrepreneurship and foster job creation, to promote environmentally-friendly production techniques and to develop renewable and rural energies for productive purposes.

With regard to adding value to regional products and agri-food value chain structuring, UNIDO has extensive experience in various countries such as Peru, Ecuador, Egypt, Tunisia, Montenegro and Morocco. UNIDO organized expert meetings on the subject of adding value to regional products (Morocco, Ecuador), and has also collaborated on the matter with FAO, WIPO, FiBL, Diversity & Development and OriGIn.

In 2013, UNIDO established the PAMPAT (Project for Market Access for Agrifood and Regional Products) in Morocco, funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). The first Moroccan Regional Products Contest was organized in 2014 as part of this project, in close collaboration with the Moroccan Agency for Agricultural Development (ADA), charged with the national strategy for origin-linked products. This experience was the first outside of Europe.

The present manual is the result of collaboration between UNIDO and FRI on the PAMPAT project. It hopes to assist other countries wishing to similarly promote local products by holding a National Contest.

1.4. The Moroccan Regional Products Contest

The first edition of the Moroccan Regional Products Contest was organized by ADA in Rabat on 19 and 20 November 2014, as part of the PAMPAT project run by UNIDO and funded by SECO.

This National Contest is part of the “Plan Maroc Vert” (Morocco Green Plan) strategy, which gives special priority to small producers, in particular by developing local products. This provides a promising alternative for sustainable and lasting local development, especially in challenging areas such as oases and mountains, which hold untapped potential in terms of regional products.

The Green Plan includes a strategy to develop origin-linked products. Its goals are to improve their quality, so as to better meet the needs of a very competitive market, to develop national and international marketing of these products, and to ensure that added value benefits local farmers.

The purpose of this contest is to give producers the opportunity to submit their products to a jury of over 100 tasters, including experts, producers and consumers.

For the first edition, over 350 products, coming from all regions of Morocco, were tasted and 109 medals were awarded to the finest ones.

Further information on the Moroccan Regional Products Contest is available online: www.concours-terroirs.ma



1.5. The National Contest: strengthening the bond between consumers and regions

Beyond its promotional aspect, the National Contest for Regional Products is a way to strengthen existing bonds and to develop ties between the various players of a given value chain.

UNIDO defines a value chain as the full range of activities undertaken to bring a product from the initial input-supply stage, through various phases of processing, to its final market destination, including its disposal after use¹. When products move along the successive steps, transactions take place between the multiple players in the chain, along with financial and information flows, gradually building up value. Macro-economic conditions, policies, laws, standards and regulations and institutional support services - which form the environment of the chain - also constitute important factors influencing the performance of value chains.

In this context, the National Contest for Terroir Products makes the work carried out by the variety of players more visible to consumers. It achieves this by showcasing producer knowledge and know-how, and by strengthening the link between the place of production and sale.



1. Agro-value chain analysis and development: the UNIDO approach (Vienna, 2011)

A glass jar filled with honey sits on a rustic wooden surface. To the left of the jar is a small basket containing fresh green leaves and clusters of small white flowers. To the right of the jar are two slices of lemon. The background is a close-up of the wood grain.

8. CONCLUSIONS


Why organize a National Contest for Terroir Products in a country?

It is the most efficient, integrated approach for promoting producers of origin-linked products. Creating and maintaining local jobs, a contest also helps to preserve and develop a living culinary heritage that generates satisfaction. The opportunity for producers to be recognized by consumers is clearly a factor that motivates them to continue their work.

The National Contest for Terroir Products is also an extraordinary driving force that can boost a country's entire regional products sector.

Products entering the Contest have very strong ties to their region of origin. By raising their visibility, one contributes to developing the entire economic fabric of that region, generating revenue for it. In this context, respecting and strengthening the value chain is an important part of the process, as it will truly grow production chains which are contingent on the skills of each one of their links. Competing for quality, recognition, healthy competition among producers, publicized results: all are effective driving forces at the disposal of countries interested in organizing a National Contest for Terroir Products.

Setting up such a Contest is an affordable undertaking which may interest many institutions wishing to develop regional product sectors.



Nonetheless, it is crucial to clearly define responsibilities and that organizers truly take ownership. Responsibilities must be assigned from the very start, so as to maximize the Contest's chances of success.

Lastly, recognizing the work of the producers is essential. Let us not forget that they are the ones who are being promoted and that their opinions are important to ensure the products durability and that traditional characteristics are preserved.

The authors speak from their positive experience in Morocco and in Switzerland, alongside farmers, artisans, communicators, journalists, sector managers, authorities, and a variety of people involved in sales, gastronomy and tourism.

Understanding the value of this Contest persuaded us to write the present guide, convinced of the National Contest's potential to gather thousands of visitors and consumers, as well as hundreds of producers and artisans with well-established skills and know-how.

The Contest is a tool available to all, which can effectively and efficiently add value by encouraging quality and forging a direct bond between consumers and producers.



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