



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

FIFTH REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON **GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS (GIs)** IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

CONCEPT NOTE AND AGENDA

DATE: 20 NOVEMBER 2025 (ONLINE)





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Zoom link: <https://fao.zoom.us/j/94011888853> **Passcode:** 5THGIREU

BACKGROUND

Geographical Indications (GIs) play a vital role in promoting rural development by increasing the value of local products, preserving traditional knowledge, and generating economic opportunities for rural communities. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) has been actively supporting improvements in legal frameworks and governance, while also leading awareness-raising initiatives among producers and consumers on the benefits of quality products linked to geographical origin.

As part of FAO's global efforts to harness the potential of GIs for sustainable development—and in collaboration with international organizations, national governments, local authorities, producer communities, and researchers—FAO REU launched the Regional Consultation on Geographical Indications. This platform has become an important venue for fostering dialogue, networking, and knowledge exchange among government officials, civil society, producer groups, and farmers. The consultation plays a key role in promoting collaboration and strengthening GI systems across Europe and Central Asia.

Since 2017, FAO has organized a series of Regional Consultations on Geographical Indications (GIs), providing a platform to exchange experiences, strengthen institutional capacities, and promote regional cooperation.

- The First Consultation (2017) introduced GIs as a rural development tool, emphasizing the importance of legal frameworks for the registration and protection of GIs.
- The Second Consultation (2019) provided updates on regional progress and emerging challenges, identifying areas where FAO could further support stakeholders. The proceedings were published and made available on the FAO website.
- The Third Consultation (2021) brought together nearly 100 participants from 34 countries. It highlighted the importance of collective governance and showcased the economic, social, and environmental benefits of well-functioning GI systems.

- The Fourth Consultation (2023) focused on four critical pillars of GI success: strong producer cooperation, robust internal and external controls, sound governance, and effective marketing strategies. The role of producer groups and associations was central to discussions, resulting in the development of guidance for governments on how to better support these groups.

Additionally, sustainability emerged as a key theme, in line with growing societal demands and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Geographical indications directly support SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production by promoting environmentally friendly practices, reducing waste, and fostering informed consumer choices that strengthen sustainable agriculture and local economies.

Since the launch of the First Regional Consultation in 2017, notable progress has been made in GI registrations across the region: Albania (18), Azerbaijan (45), Bosnia and Herzegovina (20), Georgia (31), Montenegro (11), North Macedonia (72), Republic of Moldova (18), Serbia (19), Uzbekistan (20), and Kosovo* (2). In Türkiye, FAO has supported new GI product registrations and revised five product specifications, resulting in two producer groups updating their specifications and two newly established groups. Türkiye now counts a total of 1,742 registered GIs.

PURPOSE OF THE FIFTH CONSULTATION

In response to the interest expressed by experts and country representatives, the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia is convening the Fifth Regional Consultation on Geographical Indications (GIs), with a dedicated focus on economic, environmental, and social sustainability of GI systems. This upcoming consultation aims to build on past discussions and expand the dialogue around sustainability, aligning with new developments such as the recent FAO–origIn publication: *"On Developing a Roadmap Towards Increased Sustainability in Geographical Indications Systems."*

The event will provide a platform to explore practical approaches for governments and GI producer groups to assess, monitor, and enhance sustainability performance, and to support the integration of GI-specific considerations into broader public policies. To foster a more global perspective and enrich the regional dialogue, the consultation will also welcome experts from outside the region, including representatives from Latin America, to share experiences, insights, and challenges related to the sustainability of GI systems in different contexts.

OBJECTIVES

Proposed Focus Areas of the Fifth Regional Consultation on Geographical Indications:

- **Building on Previous Consultations:** Deepening the discussion on the role of producer groups, internal and external controls, and marketing strategies, with a specific focus on how these elements can be better integrated to enhance the overall performance and sustainability of GI systems.
- **Country Updates:** Providing an overview of member countries' progress in terms of registering new GI products, supporting existing GI producer groups, and incorporating GI-specific needs into broader public policies to address emerging challenges.
- **Sharing Experiences and Innovations:** Showcasing best practices and innovations for supporting the sustainability of GI producer groups through case studies and experiences from Europe, Central Asia, and other regions, with a special focus on contributions from Latin America.
- **Advancing Sustainability in GI Systems:** Continuing and expanding the discussion on the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of GI systems, and identifying gaps and priorities for developing sustainability roadmaps in the region.
- **Setting a Vision for the Future:** Facilitating a strategic discussion on the need for a regional approach—such as a strategy or roadmap—to promote sustainability in GI systems and guide future action.
- **Fostering Regional and International Cooperation:** Strengthening cooperation and dialogue among countries and regions by encouraging knowledge exchange and the formation of networks to collectively shape the future of GIs.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Enhanced awareness of the status of geographical indications across member countries, with shared experiences on integrating GIs into public policies such as agriculture, land management, training, tourism, and environment.
- Participants gain a solid understanding of the concept, methodology, and practical application of sustainability roadmaps for GI systems.
- Sharing of actionable guidelines for strengthening collective action, empowering GI producer groups, and initiating or advancing the development and implementation of sustainability roadmaps.
- Development of concrete recommendations to guide FAO's technical assistance for GI development and sustainability in Europe and Central Asia during the 2026–2027 biennium.
- Agreement on a vision for advancing sustainability in GI systems, potentially resulting in the adoption of a regional concept note, strategy, or roadmap during the consultation.
- Enhanced cooperation and networking among GI producer groups, experts, and institutions within the region, leading to shared innovations and the dissemination of best practices.
- Expanded collaboration and knowledge exchange between Europe, Central Asia, and other global regions, fostering new networks and partnerships for GI system development and sustainability.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The consultation will bring together representatives from national governments, GI producer groups, civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, and international organizations. Special emphasis will be placed on engaging producer groups and associations, who are at the center of GI sustainability, as well as policymakers shaping enabling environments.

The consultation will be held in English language with translations available in Hungarian, Russian, and Turkish languages.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

<p>09:00 - 09:20</p>	<p>Welcome and Opening</p>	<p>Raimund Jehle, FAO Regional Program Leader for Europe and Central Asia</p> <p>Peter Gál, Head of Department, Department of Wine, Geographical Indications and Agricultural Marketing, Vine - Wine and Geographical Indications Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Hungary.</p> <p>Dmitry Zvyagintsev, Policy Officer, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, FAO</p>
<p>09:20 – 10:10</p>	<p>General Session</p>	<p>This session introduces the roadmap towards increased sustainability, a toolkit developed by FAO and oriGIn to help GI producer groups create and implement tailored sustainability strategies. The roadmap outlines practical steps for identifying sustainability priorities, assessing performance, and improving economic, social, and environmental outcomes in GI systems. Experts in the region and beyond it will provide insights into the development and implementation of sustainability strategies for GI producer groups, sharing lessons learned and best practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO vision for GI sustainability (<i>Valerie Pieprzownik</i>, FAO), 15 min • Implementing sustainability elements: experience of a producers' association (<i>Sebastien Ramade</i>, President of the Saint-Nectaire PDO cheese/<i>Emilie Rousset</i>, Director of the Saint-Nectaire PDO cheese, 15 min • Exploring and benchmarking practices and policies for sustainable GIs across EU countries (GI Smart project, <i>Áron Török</i>, Corvinus University of Budapest, Head of Department of Agricultural Economics), 10 min • Delivering Sustainability: Geographical Indications at a Crossroads (<i>Claire Bernard-Mongin</i>), 10 min
<p>10:10 – 10:20</p>	<p>Coffee break Virtual exhibition booth</p>	<p>Brief introduction of online training module "Sustainability and developing sustainability roadmaps in Latin America (<i>Luis Samper</i>, International expert on collective marketing, geographical indications and sustainability, Colombia)".</p>
<p>10:20 – 11:15</p>	<p>Interactive Discussions</p>	<p>The interactive session will encourage participants to discuss their countries' status, future potential, and how to work jointly to improve their GI systems. This will provide a platform for delegates to share experiences, challenges, and ideas for collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Part (40 min): Roundtable Discussion by Regional Groups (Groups divided into one Russian and two English-Speaking groups) <i>Participants will be divided into 3 groups to discuss about two themes - (1) current situation and challenges, linking with GI sustainability; (2) strategies for further strengthening GI systems in their countries and overall, in the region.</i> <i>Group 1 (moderator Sertac Dokuzlu, rapporteur tbc)</i> <i>Group 2 (moderator Valerie Pieprzownik, rapporteur tbc)</i> <i>Group 3 (moderator Sophie Treinen, rapporteur tbc)</i> • Second Part (15 mins): Open Discussion (Plenary) <i>Summary Reported from Group Discussions (15 min)</i> <i>Rapporteurs from each group present summaries of the discussions.</i>

<p>11:15 – 12:05</p>	<p>Special learning sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special session 1 (15 min): <i>Alexandra Grazioli</i>, Director in charge of the Lisbon Registration Service, Trademarks and Designs Sector, WIPO • Special session 2 (15 min): Facilitating EU-level registrations for GI products from Bosnia and Herzegovina, <i>Dr. Dragan Brenjo</i>, Food Safety Agency, Bosnia and Herzegovina • Special session 3 (20 min): Western Balkan GI Practitioners Network (and “Local Products and Geographical Indications Turkey Research Network (YÜciTA)”. Moderator - <i>Tamara Zivadinovic</i>.
<p>12:05-12:15</p>	<p>Concluding remarks</p>	<p>Technical summary presented by <i>Dmitry Zvyagintsev</i>, REU Policy officer and ESN GI focal point (HQ)</p> <p>Strategic remarks - <i>Mary Kenny</i>, Regional Priority Program Coordinator (Shaping food environments and markets for healthy diets and sustainable agrifood systems)</p>
<p>12:15</p>	<p>Consultation closed</p>	