



Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG) on
Quality Policy – PDO, PGI, TSG
Kick-off Meeting

REPORT



28 – 30 January 2019

**Skopje, Macedonia
Continental Hotel**

1. Introduction

Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA) is a 3-year regional program jointly implemented by SWG and GIZ, aiming at strengthening the institutional capacities of selected stakeholders in Southeast Europe for supporting EU-compliant economic diversification in rural areas. Considering that the schemes of geographical indications and traditional specialties are important for adding value and marketing of products with specific characteristics, particularly those coming from less-favored rural areas, Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographic Indication (PGI), Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG) are among the topics that are selected within the project, as part of the economic diversification agenda in SEE countries.

The objective of this assignment is preparation of overview of requirements and implementation of the EU schemes of geographical indications and traditional specialties and of the state of the art in the SEE countries. The presentation on the terms of reference of the REAWG is provided in **Annex 1**.

The kick-off Meeting of the REAWG on Quality Policy took place in Skopje on 29 and 30 January 2019 and gathered experts and relevant ministries' representatives to discuss the concept and methodology for the work of the REAWG. The list of participants is provided in **Annex 2**, and the program of the meeting in **Annex 3**.

2. Overview of the quality policies in the SEE

In **Albania** the legal framework needs to be aligned with the EU acquis and TSG need to be protected and incorporated into the law. The law does not constitute the relationship between a GI and a TM. There are no existing rules on the determination of the Geographical Area, as well as controlling authority. Capacity building for the relevant staff is needed, as well as awareness campaign for the potential markets. The full presentation is provided in **Annex 4**.

Kosovo* has a specific Law on Geographical Indications and Designation of Origin, but Administrative Instructions on determining the geographical area and on controlling of product specifications still need to be developed. Group of experts needs to be established in accordance with the GI Law and geographical areas of potentially GIs need to be defined. The role of the controlling authority should be set out. A national GI Strategy should be considered accompanied by an awareness campaign. The full presentation is provided in **Annex 5**.

In **Macedonia** main constraints are seen in the problems with registration of food production facilities (lack of knowledge and recourses for implementation of hygiene rules); insufficient knowledge/information on how to protect traditional products and benefits of traditional production; lack of interest in cooperation, insufficient mutual trust among farmers, as well as insufficient cooperation and understanding with the relevant authorities. The full presentation is provided in **Annex 6**.

In **Serbia** the national legislative framework for implementing the system of protection of geographical indications of origin of agricultural products and foodstuffs is not fully in compliance with the EU *acquis*. There is no legal basis for development of other quality schemes besides PDO and PGI, such as TSG or mountain products.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the Directorate for European Integration has established partial compliance of the rules on quality systems for food products with the EU *acquis* with

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

commitment to be "fully harmonized" on the day of EU accession. By the entry into force of the new Regulation, in January 2019, the first application for the registration of the protected designation was officially received.

Montenegro has fully harmonized the legislation with the EU regulations regarding quality schemes. So far, five products have been protected by geographical indications on the national level. Same as with the rest of the Western Balkans, there is no products with geographical indications of origin on EU level. The full presentation on the quality policies in Serbia, BiH and Montenegro is provided in **Annex 7**.

3. EU quality policies

Three EU schemes known as PDO (protected designation of origin), PGI (protected geographical indication) and TSG (traditional speciality guaranteed) promote and protect names of quality agricultural products and foodstuffs. In order to qualify for PDO the product should be produced AND processed AND prepared within the delimited area, while for PGI it should be produced AND/OR processed AND /OR prepared within the delimited area. In the EU the number of Geographical Indications is constantly growing. That is an indication of an extremely dynamic and continuously growing food sector, both in terms of the number of products and the number of countries involved. The full presentation is provided in **Annex 8**.

4. Methodology and outline

The Senior Expert supported by the International Expert proposed methodology to be used by the experts of the REAWG in completing the assignment, as well as a draft outline of the specific chapters. The presentation of the methodology is provided in **Annex 9** and the final outline will be shared with the experts by 8 February.

5. Activity plan for completion of the assignment

What	When	Who
Methodology for assessment of the state of the art and existing gaps in the legislative, strategic, policy and institutional framework	28 January 2019	SE supported by IE
Participation at the kick-off meeting	28 – 30 January 2019	All
Final outline of the report	8 February 2019	SE supported by IE
Contribution to the first draft report, according to the provided outline, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of key problems and challenges requiring policy interventions in the respective country/territory • Identification of products from the respective/country/territory, which fulfill criteria and have potential to be registered under the schemes of geographical indications and traditional specialties and cost-benefit analysis • Identification of good examples and practices of the implementation of quality in the respective country/territory • Assessment of possibilities to apply digital approaches in promotion of the schemes of geographical indications and traditional 	8 March 2019	RE

<p>specialties policy and schemes of geographical indications and traditional specialties in the respective country/territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy recommendations and actions to overcome the challenges and ease the approximation process in the respective country/territory. 		
Feedback on the contributions to the first draft report	22 March 2019	SE supported by IE
Improved contributions to the first draft report	5 April	RE
<p>First draft compiled report including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of key problems and challenges requiring policy interventions in SEE • Identification of products from SEE countries which fulfill criteria and have potential to be registered under the schemes of geographical indications and traditional specialties and cost-benefit analysis • Identification of good examples and practices of the implementation of quality • Assessment of possibilities to apply digital approaches in promotion of the schemes of geographical indications and traditional specialties policy and schemes of geographical indications and traditional specialties • Policy recommendations and actions to overcome the challenges and ease the approximation process. 	30 April 2019	SE supported by IE
Participation at the interim meeting	15 – 17 April 2019, Albania	All
Preparation of guidelines on the steps and procedures for registration of products with geographical indications and traditional specialties based on the EU regulations	31 May 2019	SE supported by IE
Final meeting	2 – 4 July 2019, Andrevlje, Serbia	All
Final report and final guidelines	15 September 2019	SE supported by IE
Presentation of the findings at the Agricultural Policy Forum 2019	7 – 10 October 2019, Macedonia	SE

Legend:
NEs – National Experts
RE – Regional Expert
IE – International Expert

6. Wrap-up

In the wrap-up the present ministries' representatives expressed their satisfaction with the concept and direction of the REAWG's future work and their commitment to support the experts within their capacity. The objectives of the REAWG are in line with the ministries' needs and the final results would contribute to improved evidence-based policy making.