



Organización Internacional del Café
Organização Internacional do Café
Organisation Internationale du Café

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Geographical indicators

Executive Board
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**Draft terms of reference for a seminar
on geographical indicators for coffee**

Background

The attached document contains draft terms of reference for a seminar on geographical indicators, as provided for in the programme of activities for 2007/08. Appropriate speakers will be identified and contacted once the terms of reference have been agreed.

Action

The Executive Board is requested to consider and approve the attached draft terms of reference, and to suggest names of speakers who could be invited to participate in the seminar.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A SEMINAR ON GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATORS FOR COFFEE

Introduction

1. Geographical indicators describe a product as coming from a specific geographical territory, region or locality, where quality, reputation or other characteristics are essentially attributable to its geographical origin. In other words, the concept of geographical indicators is used to differentiate a product that has a specific geographical origin and possesses special features that are due to that place of origin. This concept can be used in marketing strategies to develop an image of a product grown or produced in certain geographical areas to enhance consumer awareness and receive premiums above the market price. In contrast with the concept of trademarks, which distinguish products or services of one competitor from those of other competitors, geographical indicators concern a place, region or *terroirs*. A number of coffee producers have followed the lead of many companies and producers of other commodities in implementing this marketing strategy to protect their brands.

2. This issue has been discussed within the World Trade Organization through the so-called Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which specifically states in its Article 22 that Members shall provide the legal means to prevent:

- “(a) the use of any means in the designation or presentation of a good that indicates or suggests that the good in question originates in a geographical area other than the true place of origin in a manner which misleads the public as the geographical origin of the good;
- (b) any use which constitutes an act of unfair competition within the meaning of article 10bis of the Paris Convention (1967).”

Objective

3. The objective of the seminar is to inform Members about the concept of geographical indicators and their development and importance for the coffee industry. It will contribute to raising Members’ awareness about the need for product differentiation, which is an important marketing tool in a competitive market, and can help to increase the revenues of coffee farmers and improve coffee quality by building the reputation of the origin.

Proposed structure

4. The seminar will cover the following issues:

(a) *Definitions and key issues*

This introductory session will look at definitions of geographical indicators; their economic and environmental impact; differences between trademarks and geographical indicators; the effects on coffee quality; and other relevant issues such as the possibility of anti-competitive practices, barriers to new entrants, over-regulation, etc.

(b) *Protection of geographical indicators: various experiences*

Speakers from exporting and importing countries will share their experiences of geographical indicators.

(c) *Issues of labelling, traceability and certification*

This section will consider milestones for the establishment of protection for geographical indicators.

(d) *Current legal issues relating to geographical indicators*

Speakers will review legal issues at the national level, the international level (WTO and international legal protection), as well as enforcement mechanisms of geographical indicators and trademarks.

Suggested speakers

5. It is proposed that organizations from the following categories could be approached to provide speakers:

- Research institutions/universities
- Coffee industry/farmers' associations in exporting countries
- Coffee industry in importing countries
- Legal experts
- Relevant international organizations