The code of practices: 
a strategic tool

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• Introduction

• 1 – COP as a Normative Document

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• 3 – COP as a Strategic Tool

• Conclusion
Objectives for GI set-up

- Protection against usurpation and counterfeit
- Marketing tool
- Patrimony conservation
- Production control
- Territorial development

(Source: Siner-GI)
COP - functions

• Internal / external trust
  – Internal : COP = convergent behaviour
  – External : some transparency for all users

• Communication
  – A sign (GI name), a signal (perception), credible
  – COP is a way to put in evidence the technical achievements of the producers themselves
1 – COP = A document

- a set of activities whose purpose is to demonstrate that an entity meets all quality requirements (ISO, 1998)

- Two sets of requirements:
  - How to do / mean obligation
  - What should be obtained / result obligation

- Each rule = a guarantee to give / must be significant and assessable (control)
1.1 – A form to fill in 7 points

• The name
• Description of product (*tipicity*), raw material, and principal characteristics
• Methods (*practices*) to obtain the product
• Definition of geographical area
• Link between quality product and geographical environment / “causal interactions “
• Evidence that the food is originated (source)
• Name of verification body
1.2.a – How to define typicity?

- The typicity of an agricultural product is
- (1) its relevancy to a type (genuineness)
- (2) which is distinguished and identified
- (3) by a reference human group
- (4) possessing knowledge distributed among various actors...

Qualification is not standardization
1.2.b – How to define typicity?

• ...knowledge distributed among various actors includes
• (5) the knowledge to establish a type,
• (6) the knowledge to produce a true-to-type product,
• (7) the knowledge to evaluate that product and
• (8) the knowledge to appreciate it.

Qualification is not standardization
1.3 – How to codify the practices?

- Local knowledge as a main basis for justifying the GI recognition. Rules reflecting this local knowledge?
- But GI producers must comply with general rules for foods
- Debate: Should COP combine implicit rules (for food safety) and explicit rules (due to the GI specialty)?
- Debate: best practices / shared practices
1.4 – How to delimitate an area?

- The name: what geographical interpretation?
- Delimitations available or in progress? And what logic for putting boundaries?
- Product: the main practices and their area?
- Tradition and history of the product as a spatial extension of competencies?
- Current situation and actors location?
1.5 – How to define “terroir”?

A terroir is

1. a delimited geographical area

2. where a human community

3. over the course of history generates and accumulates a collective body of production knowledge

4. based on a system of interactions between biophysical and human factors.

5. The sequence of socio-technical steps involved

6. reveals originality, 7. confers typicity 8. and earns a reputation

9. on a good originating in the geographical area in question.
1.6 – How to prove the link to origin?

• Description of the causal interaction between:
  – details of the geographical area, including natural and human factors
  – characteristics of the agricultural product or foodstuff

• The systemic effects / whole is more than addition of all elements

Some key points to find out
2 – COP = A collective construction

• Main difference with other signs : Organic farming, Fair trade
  GI = local and collective construction

• An elaboration within a set of neighbours, of people competing on the same market, of diverse legitimacies.
  COP = a collective action

• Even being a national recognition, GI application as a bottom-up process.
  COP = a Coordination tool
2.1 – Building up = compromise

• An application is a very complex setting up. Representations and interests are mixing. Knowledge and resources are not equally distributed. **Conflicts** may appear.

• Compromise must be found among **heterogeneous actors**. Agreements have to be stabilized into provisional rules. **Learning process** must be conducted.

• Several successive generations of COP “Blank” periods can be useful.
2.2 – Making choices

• Very often, local productions contain a great variety / how to codify without reducing this richness?

• The more frequent? The best controlled? The one considered as more authentic by local actors? The one chosen by the more powerful actor?

• Only one / too many?

Let the producers make decisions

Expertise reports can be useful.
3 – COP = A strategic tool

- Initiators of an application
  Who is proposing GI as a solution?
  To what kind of problem?
  With what kind of interest?

- Inclusion / exclusion of local operators
  Each rule can be interpreted as such / favor ones and pull out others

- Very often, people building up the GI application
  are not those managing the GI system when registered
3.1 – COP as barriers to entry

- Rules are defining the relevant social network

- If rules are very easy to comply
  All potential people can join the group.
  Product volume is enlarging
  Arguments to justify the protection and market recognition could be weakened

- If rules are very hard to comply
  A little part of potential people is able to join: an “elite”. Product volume is reduced: a “niche”
3.2 – COP as new institution

- GI application = an organizational stake

- In the local landscape, the GI applicants have a new role to assume towards policy-makers.

- What type of farmer or processor are favored? Who is personally in charge to identify the GI?

- Local governance is affected / market prices, land selling, building agreement, and so on.
3.3 – Market approach

• Marketing positioning of the GI product may influence the COP.

• Size, volume, distance, needs of communication

• Changes in the status of the GI product
  Local “terroir” specialty / “luxury” product at high price (escaping to local users)

• Rules for presentation, packaging, ripening, may be affected
3.4 – Scaling up and costs

- COP conception must anticipate the scaling up after recognition. How to insure effective availability of the product according to the expectations of the whole supply chain?

- Seasonal production / Supermarket needs

- Finally, COP is designing the structure of all costs: production, transaction, assessment, marketing
3.5 – Obstacles and traps

- **Obstacles**
  Remain dependant of the initiators or let the room to new users
  Transport into the GI application all the supply chain tensions, GI becoming a new arena for conflicts
  Facing changes of resources status, product status, producers status, organization modes, governance type

- **Traps**
  Maximize the rules inducing unrealistic costs
  Search unanimity for preventing the exclusion process
Conclusion 1

• Time to build up the COP

  not lost time = a learning time, not possible to reduce or contract

• Useful time to reach the appearance of the group able to face responsibility, to make decision and to choose relevant rules and to share a vision of “terroir”.

Not only fulfill a pre-conceived grid
Conclusion 2

- GI application as a process to reinforce trust.
  - Specificity
  - Transparency

- COP = technical rules + social differentiations

- Rules + repeated assessment = new solidarities