



TERRITORIAL APPROACH



Territorial approach of mountain products

Cross-fertilising effects of promotion of products and promotion of places help to increase attractiveness of mountain areas. Sometimes it is the reputation of the territory which positively impacts the products, sometimes it is a well-known mountain product which increases the attractiveness of one mountain area. The new optional quality term « mountain product » has defined a geographic area for producers to be allowed to use this term: it gives importance of the territorial dimension of mountain supply chains.

The territory and its products can be combined with **different types of territorial brands**: such as geographic indications (PDOs, PGIs) to regional brands, park brands, brands implemented by LEADER groups... This variety of brands can bring additional value but at the same time can be confusing for the consumer. For this purpose it is **necessary to analyse which is the best strategy and brand for each supply chain** to make the best of use it.

Assessment of the current situation:

Remarks and suggestions of concrete measures to improve links between territorial approaches and mountain products:

- To maintain an area lively, it is essential to involve people in the territory and maintain economic activities, including agriculture.
- Mountain products enable land use and can reinforce the notion of identity of a territory. Their development is related to specific know-how, often linked to the territory, to a potential market and to the involvement of different actors in the food supply chain of this territory.
- Several measures such as "the parks" are used to strengthen the links between product promotion and promotion of the territories.
- A "locomotive" product may help to know a territory and can help to know many other mountain products.
- The mountain is often defined by its weaknesses, but it has always been an innovative area, including for mountain products.
- To have a coordinated territorial approach, it is important to work as a network to involve all stakeholders in a territory.
- When the production volume is sufficient, it is interesting to develop the presence of the products outside the territory to value mountain products in major population centers.
- It is important to work primarily with raw materials produced in the territory.
- EAFRD can help to develop territorial approaches thanks to measures for quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs (article 16), setting up of producers groups (article 27), cooperation measures (article 36) such as the measures linked to Common Market Organisations as the ones for geographical indications.

The main difficulties encountered so far are the following:

- It is difficult to make all actors working together: supply chains actors with those working on territorial development and tourism.
- It is necessary to adapt the volume of production to the market and to the targeted audience: an excessive deployment is useless if the production is not able to have sufficient sales volumes.
- It is difficult to have a consistent marketing approach between all actors of the supply chain in the same territory, the examples shown by the charters of quality, based on rigorous specifications and on a common image, help to overcome this barrier.



Recommendations

To improve the links between territorial approaches and mountain products, we recommend:



At EU level:

- The **opportunities of the new optional quality term "mountain product"** should be disseminated widely at European level to encourage producers to adopt and use it. This term allows connecting a mountain territory to a product. The communication campaign of Euromontana "a new CAP – Mountains of opportunities" is a first step that must be relayed by Member States, regions and local actors.
- Mountain areas generally face difficult and specific production conditions, forcing them to be innovative territories. The EU should promote the **dissemination of innovation in mountain farming** to transfer dissemination to all producers in territories.

At national level:

- **Location of all production steps in the mountain area is the crucial criteria for consumers.** The impact of the purchasing act on the local economy is one of the strongest motives for consumers to buy mountain products. The possibility to describe as 'mountain product' cheeses processed very far from the production area in a completely different setting conveys a major risk for the credibility of the scheme. **We call upon the Member States to assess the situation of their own mountain product market, supply chains and territories and to restrict the use of derogations by adopting a shorter distance where the detrimental impact of these derogations on product quality and territorial development will exceed the effects of distorted competition with Member States applying the full derogation.**
- **Strengthening the link between rural and urban areas:** cities are often cut off from agriculture and their inhabitants have more difficulty to understand the challenges in agriculture. States / regions can encourage links with surrounding areas by strengthening the purchase of local products in schools canteens or restaurants in administrations for instance.

At regional and local levels:

- **Processing in the mountain areas** is a core principle of the European Charter for Mountain Quality Food Products and of regulation 1151/2012 which must be respected if supply chain development is to bring quality (linked to know-how and environment) and territorial added value (employment, heritage...).
- The **development of quality charters** within a territory: these charters, imposing quality standards and the use of local products, can help to add value to mountain products and facilitate their sale to consumers. **The European Charter of mountain products can help to play this role and should therefore be promoted.**
- At regional and local levels, **common territorial approaches should be encouraged** between farmers, actors in charge of territorial development and tourism. A coordinated approach allows better publicising the products in a territory and the territory itself.

Action plan for Euromontana

Action 1: Euromontana should review and boost the promotion of the European Charter of mountain products as a way to support the quality and the territorial approach of mountain products.

Timetable: From the end of 2014 by the secretariat of Euromontana and all its members.

Action 2: Euromontana should follow-up of the application of the optional quality term "mountain product" in the different Member States to see how it is implemented and if States are adopting some restrictions of the derogation.

Timetable: 2015 by the secretariat of Euromontana helped by all its members to lobby and collect feedback on the ground.

Action 3 : Euromontana must reinforce the vision of the mountain as an innovation area at EU level. This can be done by lobbying the European institutions and the development of European projects through Horizon 2020 to promote the transfer of knowledge to mountain territories.

Timetable : 2014-2015 with the project MOUNTAGRINET (Mountain Agriculture Innovation Network) if funded at the end of 2014.



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