

Understanding GIs specifications: a key tool for producers and control bodies

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1. What are GIs specifications? Concept and Purpose



From farm to paper?



**From craft workshop
to paper?**



1. What are GIs specifications? Concept and Purpose

- Absence of definition in the international legal framework.
- In few words. A detailed definition of:
 - A) Product characteristics and method of production
 - B) Geographical area of production
 - C) Link between (A) and (B)

1. What are GIs specifications? Concept and Purpose

- Before the recognition and protection of the GI (as part of the GI application):
 - ✓ Justify that the proposed name deserves protection.
- After the recognition and protection of the GI:
 - ✓ Provide specific instructions to producers on how they must produce the products covered by the GI.
 - ✓ Define what must be checked by control bodies.



1. What are GIs specifications? Concept and Purpose

Any operator marketing a product which has been produced in conformity with the corresponding GI specification should be entitled to use the Geographical Indications



1. What are GIs specifications? Concept and Purpose

- Ideally, GIs specifications should be published or made publicly available. This would provide:

- ✓ Transparency
- ✓ Legal certainty



2. Basic content of GIs specifications

(1) Name of the GI

(ideally, it has to correspond to the name as it is used, whether in trade or in common language)

(2) Description of the product, including

- Type of product
- Raw materials (if appropriate)
- Principal physical, chemical, microbiological or organoleptic characteristics of the product (for agro-food products)
- Specific and distinctive characteristics (appearance, texture...)

2. Basic content of GIs specifications

(3) Definition of the **geographical area of production**



(4) Link between the **geographical area** and **characteristics** of the product (including 'reputation')

- ✓ Natural factors (climate, terrain, etc.)
- ✓ Human factors (traditional knowledge, socio-cultural traditions)



2. Basic content of GIs specifications

(5) Description of the **method of obtaining/manufacturing the product**

- ✓ Local methods/techniques
- ✓ Traditional or specific tools
- ✓ All production steps

¿Do all production steps have to take place in the defined geographical area?

¿Is packaging part of the production steps?

2. Basic content of GIs specifications

(6) Traceability and control system.

Some of the most popular means of traceability/control are...

- ✓ Register of producers
- ✓ Register of goods transportation / dispatch
- ✓ Controls by the Control Body
- ✓ Specific series numbers / numbered labels

2. Basic content of GIs specifications

(7) Identification of Control Body (the authority/entity which will verify compliance with the product specification)

(6) Labelling rules (if any)

- Use of any specific logo



- Regulation of certain terms in the packaging of the product

3. How a GI specification looks like

Let's take a look at some practical examples...



4. Practical tips for drafting useful GIs specifications

- Description of the product:
 - ✓ The product must be specific: it cannot be a generic product, with no characteristics distinguishing it from others
 - ✓ Ask yourself: What makes this product special?
 - ✓ In what ways is it different from another product in the same category? No unique products needed, but if there is nothing to distinguish the product from a commodity product then GI does not make sense...

4. Practical tips for drafting useful GIs specifications

- Provisions of GIs specifications should be **clear**

Avoid subjective and imprecise descriptions such as 'delicious', 'tasty', 'beautiful', etc., and avoid exaggerations and unscientific superlatives: 'best', 'most sought after', etc.

- Characteristics and requirements should be measurable or, at least, **checkable** (avoiding subjective or too vague characteristics)
 - (Not to be confused with clear **sense** perceptions defining organoleptic characteristics)



“unmistakable texture which gives rise to a wonderful experience on the palate”





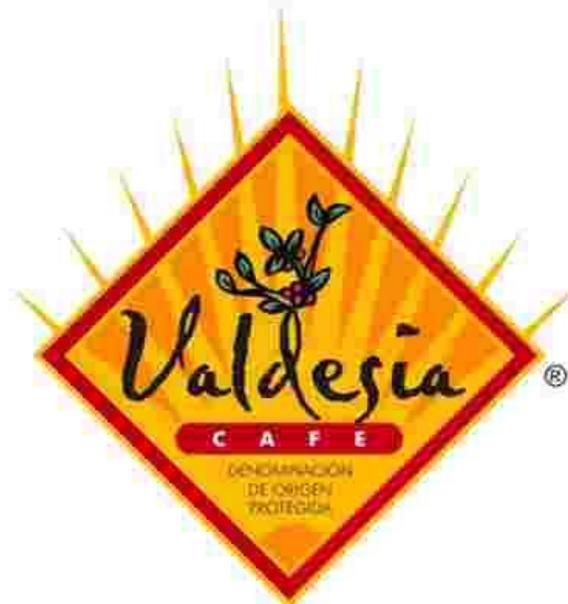
“granular texture which gives rise to its typical flakiness”



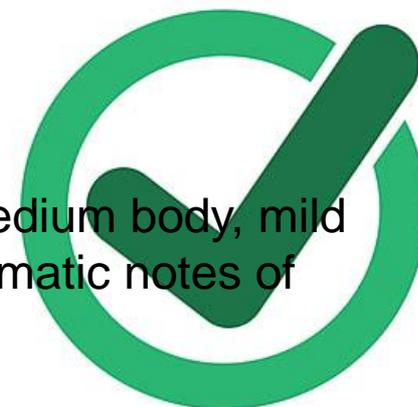


“Medium roast. Organoleptic characteristics: tasty, light flavour, not disgusting at all. To some noses, aromatic notes of soft clouds might be perceived”.





“Medium roast. Organoleptic characteristics: clean cup, medium body, mild acidity, sweet taste, well balanced and with occasional aromatic notes of nuts and chocolate”.



5. Who should take part of the drafting process?

- Operators

They are the ones preserving the traditional knowledge behind the product (the messengers of the geographical uniqueness). They are the only ones who know the details of the method of production from the outset.

- Support and supervision of public authorities

- Guide and ease the drafting process
- Ensure that it fits into the corresponding legal framework

Thank you