



RÉPUBLIQUE
FRANÇAISE

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INSTITUT NATIONAL
DE L'ORIGINE ET DE
LA QUALITÉ



THE INAO, THE PUBLIC BODY FOR PRODUCTS UNDER OFFICIAL QUALITY AND ORIGIN SIGNS



France's National Institute of Origin and Quality (INAO) is responsible for implementing **French policy for products under official signs identifying their quality and origin** (SIQO).

The institute works with nearly **1,200 SIQO products** (excluding organic farming). All French regions are involved, and **one in three farms** is engaged in SIQO production. **Twenty percent of Europe's registered Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) products** are produced in France. In 2020, revenue from SIQO products when first placed on the market was **€32 billion**.

A PUBLIC INSTITUTION WITH A UNIQUE DUAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

INAO is a public institution attached to the French Ministry of Agriculture. It has a dual governance structure that links public authorities and bodies comprising **more than 200 industry professionals** invested in SIQO products, qualified individuals, and government representatives. **Professional, technical and legal expertise hence play a prominent role.** The aim of this unique structure is to achieve **a consensus through dialogue that serves the general interest.**

The bodies rely on the 246 agents working within the INAO departments, whose head office is located in Montreuil (93), and in the eight territorial delegations covering **the whole of mainland France and the French overseas departments.**

INAO's quality policy is based on **close collaboration** with defence and management organisations (ODGs), or sectoral groups in the case of organic products, and approved inspection bodies federated in France, as well as other government departments.

THE 5 OFFICIAL ORIGIN AND QUALITY SIGNS

GUARANTEE OF ORIGIN



Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) refers to a product whose production stages are all carried out in a precisely defined geographical area and based on recognised know-how in a precisely defined geographical area, which gives the product its particular characteristics. Its name is that of the place symbolising its geographical origin. This is a European sign that protects the product name throughout the European Union.

The French "Appellation d'origine contrôlée" (AOC) identifies a product that meets the criteria for PDO products and protects the name on French territory. It is a step towards the PDO label, and also applies to products not covered by European regulations (e.g. wood).



Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) confirms the know-how specific to a particular region. The development stages that give a product its unique characteristics are carried out in a defined geographical area. This is a European sign that protects the product name throughout the European Union.

GUARANTEE OF SUPERIOR QUALITY



Label Rouge is a French national sign identifying a product of higher quality than standard products due to its production or manufacturing conditions. This superior quality is monitored over time using regular sensory analyses and organoleptic tests to compare the Label Rouge product with the standard product. Label Rouge accreditation is open to all foodstuffs and non-food, unprocessed agricultural products, regardless of their geographical origin (including outside the European Union).

GUARANTEE OF RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND ANIMAL WELFARE



The **Organic Farming (AB)** label identifies a product whose production method contributes to protecting the environment and the climate, respect for biodiversity and the preservation of natural resources, which promotes short supply chains, and which provides assurance of high levels of animal welfare.

GUARANTEE OF A TRADITIONAL RECIPE



Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) is for products developed according to a traditional production method, recipe or composition. This is a European sign that protects the product name throughout the European Union.

A WIDE RANGE OF EXPERTISE FOR VARIED TASKS

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS FOR RECOGNITION UNDER OFFICIAL SIGNS

INAO supports project owners with their initial applications or proposed changes to specifications. The competent bodies review the proposals from industry professionals and issue an opinion on the specifications, setting the production conditions and the production area where applicable.

PROTECTION OF SIGNS AND PRODUCT NAMES

In France and abroad, INAO ensures that the names of products covered by official signs are not used fraudulently or misappropriated. For international protection, INAO relies in particular on industry professionals and inter-professional organisations, an international network of lawyers, and the French diplomatic network. INAO follows European and international procedures for the protection of PDO

and PGI product names. Working together with the French Ministry of Agriculture, it monitors negotiations on bilateral EU/third country agreements.

SUPERVISION OF CHECKS ON OFFICIAL SIGNS

INAO is the competent authority tasked with checking SIQO products. It is responsible for supervising the control system for all SIQO products prior to market entry. It approves and assesses the independent and accredited bodies responsible for monitoring compliance with specifications, to which it delegates official control procedures. For each SIQO product, a control plan must be submitted to INAO for approval. The departments rely on the work of the Approvals and Inspections Council, which sets the control guidelines. It must be consulted on joint control provisions, and may be called upon to accredit control bodies and approve control plans.

DELIMITATION OF PRODUCTION AREAS AND PROTECTION OF "TERROIRS"

Delimitation is an essential step in obtaining a geographical indication (AOC/PDO or PGI). It is based on established scientific criteria in the fields of geology, pedology, agronomy, history, geography, sociology, ethnography, etc. This expertise-based task uses new technologies for ever greater efficiency and to adapt to the characteristics of new SIQO productions.

INAO also works to protect the "terroirs", thereby contributing to the preservation of high-quality agriculture and the productivity and vitality of rural areas. The regulations provide that draft urban planning and planning documents for a delimited area must be the subject of an advisory opinion from the institute.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

As part of the French Ministry of Agriculture's influencing strategy, the INAO is developing international cooperation initiatives to promote the concept of geographical indication and present the French and European SIQO system to third countries seeking to create or develop their own.

COMMUNICATION ON OFFICIAL SIGNS AND TRAINING

INAO is tasked with keeping the general public and industry professionals informed about SIQO policy. The institute is also a training organisation. It offers corporate seminars, group training sessions or personalised support on multiple themes, from learning about SIQOs (e.g. juror training for general agricultural competitions) to a presentation of the agri-food, wine-growing and cider-making sectors.

ECONOMIC MONITORING OF SIQO PRODUCTS

INAO collects and analyses economic data on SIQO products working together with numerous public partners (INRAE, SSP, FranceAgriMer, Agence bio, IRQA, etc.) and industry professionals (inter-professional organisations and trade unions). The institute uses a range of comprehensive and educational publications to disseminate this information (key figures, regional reports, sector data, etc.).

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