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Mountain Partnership Products' certification and distribution: an informative guide for Mountain Partnership initiative and for mountain products

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Mémoire de Mission Professionnelle

présenté pour l'obtention du diplôme de Mastère Spécialisé® Innovations et politiques pour une alimentation durable

**Mountain Partnership Products' certification and distribution:
an informative guide for Mountain Partnership initiative and for
mountain products**



Valeria Barchiesi

Année de soutenance : 2018

Organisme d'accueil:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Mountain Partnership Secretariat



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**Mountain Partnership Products' certification and distribution:
a decision support guide for Mountain Partnership initiative and for
mountain products**



par Valeria Barchiesi

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Résumé

Titre : La certification et la distribution des produits de la *Mountain Partnership* : Guide à la décision pour l'initiative *Mountain Partnership Products* et pour les produits de montagne.

Cette guide a pour objectif de formuler des recommandations pour la distribution et une nouvelle labellisation des produits de montagne reconnus par le *Mountain Partnership Secretariat*, basé à la FAO.

La *Mountain Partnership Products Initiative* (l'Initiative en faveur des Produits de l'Alliance des Montagnes) s'est engagée dans un processus de différenciation des produits de montagne par rapport à d'autres produits, grâce à un label « narrant », afin d'améliorer les conditions de vie et la sécurité alimentaire des populations de montagne et de préserver les écosystèmes montagneux.

La première phase de l'initiative, avec l'attribution du label en support de 17 produits de montagne dans 7 pays, est terminée et cette recherche montre certains impacts du label, grâce aux commentaires et aux *feedbacks* des membres de l'initiative. Après avoir analysé la situation actuelle et les trajectoires des produits labellisés, cette guide se focalise sur la distribution de ces produits et les améliorations que pourraient apporter la définition de stratégies marketing adaptées et la mise en place d'un système de certification.

A partir de ces réflexions, cette étude développe des suggestions pour les prochaines étapes de l'initiative, tout en faisant des considérations plus larges sur les dynamiques des territoires de montagne, leurs écosystèmes et leurs systèmes alimentaires.

Mots clés

Mountain Partnership, Systèmes alimentaires de Montagne, Distribution alimentaire, Certification, Systèmes de Garantie Participatifs, Label.

Abstract

Title: Mountain Partnership Products' label and distribution: a decision support guide for Mountain Partnership Products initiative and for mountain products

This guide has the objective to make technical recommendations concerning the distribution and labelling processes for Mountain Partnership Secretariat, based in FAO.

The Mountain Partnership Products initiative focuses on the differentiation of mountain products from other products, through a « narrative » label, in order to improve livelihoods and food security of mountain peoples and mountain ecosystems. The initiative has completed its first phase, with the attribution of the label to 17 products in 7 countries, and it has been possible to define certain label's impacts, thanks to members' feedbacks and comments. After an analysis of present situation and trajectories of labelled products, the guide focuses on the distribution of these products and the improvements that the development of appropriate marketing strategies and the setting up of a certification system can bring. Starting from these reflections, the guide defines some recommendations for next steps of the initiative, making a broader consideration on mountain dynamics, their ecosystems and their food systems.

Key words

Mountain Partnership, Mountain Food Systems, Food Distribution, Certification, Participatory Guarantee System, Label

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Preface

Avant-Propos

This internship is part of the *Mastère Spécialisé® Innovations et politiques pour une alimentation durable*, a specialization master that has the goal analyze how to reinforce sustainability of food systems. The main issues faced during the Master are related to global food system crisis and its causes, to emerging alternative solutions and to the ways to encourage these innovations.

The activities of the Mastère are conceived and realized by Montpellier SupAgro and Cirad, with the participation of The Chair Unesco «Alimentations du monde».

The mission of the internship had several Terms of References (ToRs). The main activity of the internship has focused on the Mountain Products Initiative and its development, in order to improve the distribution of products, carrying the label and at the same time foster the application of new producers and new products, supporting the application process of the members. These are the reasons why the internship project will concentrate on this initiative and its development.

Other activities that will not be proposed in this report, and have been less developed during the internship, were linked to the development of a work plan for the “coalition of fragile ecosystems” between the Mountain Partnership and the Global Island Partnership.

Another interesting activity, carried on by the MPS, not considered in the ToRs, that required my participation and help in organization and logistic, has been the Summer School “Agrobiodiversity in a changing climate” held in FAO from the 24th September to the 5th October 2018. It has been organized by FAO, in partnership with Sapienza University of Rome and it has focused on several themes concerning biodiversity in agriculture and its relations with variations in climate. The speakers ranged from academic researchers (Bioversity research center, University of Rome, University of Turin) to civil society (Slow Food) and private distribution company (NaturaSi). The participants of the Summer School were activists of the civil society, workers of Ministries of different countries and workers of several institutions, members of the Mountain Partnership. It has been an extremely positive experience, that gave me the opportunity to exchange with people that live in the countries where the Mountain Products Initiative has been developed and that are familiar with mountainous areas and value chains.

The internship and the Master are part of a broader project, financed by the European Union and *Regione Lazio*, through the scholarship called “*Torno Subito*”.

Abbreviations and acronyms

BPM – Buena Practicas Manufactura

ESN – Nutrition and Food Systems Division

EU Lex – European Union Laws

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization

GMP – Good Manufacturing Practices

HACCP – Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points

IFOAM – International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

IFPP – Institutional Food Public Procurement

MPS – Mountain Partnership Secretariat

MPP – Mountain Partnership Products Initiative

PGS – Participatory Guarantee System

ToRs – Terms of Reference

TPC – Third Party Certification

UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme

WCMC – World Conservation Monitoring Centre

Introduction

This research can be considered a guide for the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS) for the implementation of Mountain Partnership Products Initiative (MPP) and, moreover, it tries to enlarge the reflection about mountain products and mountain dynamics.

It raises the question about the capacity of the MPP to reach the ambitious impact of “Livelihoods and food security of mountain peoples and resilience of mountain ecosystems” and it analyzes the obstacles to it. As already said in the preface, the internship was supposed to focus on Marketing and Distribution, a weakness recognized in the project. However, the research couldn’t avoid the fundamental topic of Certification, impossible to neglect when we talk about distribution and in particular in the case of MPP. This research will explain how Distribution and Certification are intertwined and, in addition, it will suggest possible path of improvement for both questions. Despite the difficulty to generalize, in addition to contextual and contingent recommendations, key messages will conclude the research as possible ways to go further and improve projects related with mountains. It is divided in five chapters:

In the first chapter, an initial description of the initiative is done, as well as the background activities and goals of the Phase I. Moreover, the main challenges for the initiative are recognized and introduced.

In the second chapter, the methodology used for the research is explained, presenting the reasons behind the methodology itself and justifying the choices made during the analysis. The first step (STEP I) to be analyzed are the products, the production and their characteristics; secondly (STEP II) the system around the product should be taken in consideration, with the causal linkages among the interventions of the initiative.

The third chapter is focused on the understanding of each product included in the Initiative, excluding non-food products, (for reasons linked with the topics of the Master, the research will concentrate only on food related issues). A categorization of the products is presented and integrated with focal points’ feedbacks for main representative products.

In the fourth chapter, a deep analysis of expected and unexpected impacts of the interventions developed by MPS is shown. Following the methodology of the impact pathway, the relations among Inputs, Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts are highlighted and possible improvement for MPP are proposed. For these reasons, Certification’s scenarii are analyzed with their advantages and obstacles.

The fifth and last chapter summarizes the research and tries to suggest possible practical inputs for the development of MPP initiative, taking in consideration advantages and obstacles of two main axes of analysis: Certification and Distribution

In conclusion, this guide highlights the relations between distribution and certification issues, showing examples of Mountain Partnership Product Initiative members. Moreover, it presents the potential of certification and the differences among typologies of certification and distribution strategies.

This study does not presume to be exhaustive and to cover the totality of mountain-related issues, but it aims to raise the attention concerning some main points that could sustainably improve the initiative.

1 Mountain Partnership Products initiative: what is it?

The first chapter focuses on the initial presentation of the initiative, as well as the background activities and goals of the Phase I. It shows the requirements for receiving the MPP label, the assessment and monitoring process foreseen by the MPS. The achievements and the products (only food products) certified are described, with an example of MP label, its characteristics and sections. Moreover, the main challenges for the initiative are recognized and introduced as starting point of the research.

1.1 PRESENTATION OF THE INITIATIVE

Mountain products and services originated from mountainous ecosystems have a strong potential to foster local economy and to enhance community's livelihood.

Recently high-quality food production, local work-craft and cosmetic production has gained momentum. Moreover, tourism and other services offered by mountains, like cultural heritage, ski, climbing and walkway in nature, allow visitors to discover a unique and specific biodiversity of these places. If carefully and well managed, tourism represents an opportunity to develop mountain regions and to preserve authentic and specific characteristics.

Nevertheless, mountain areas must face a strong marginality, due to their distance from big communication and transport axes. Moreover, the difficult access to markets, to training services and technical advices represents an extreme challenge for the communities who live and base their activities on commercial exchanges.

Furthermore, mountain small-scale agriculture is not able to compete with prices and volumes of large-scale lowland agricultural production, which is far more productive and should face completely different morphological and climatic conditions. Often physical and financial access to markets is difficult for farmers and it makes necessary the presence of intermediaries who can take exaggerate margin on products and do not allow fair remuneration for the producers. Some products and practices are disappearing due to the lack of economic interest of ancient crops varieties and because some traditional production methods cannot compete with industrial production.

In order to face these issues and to focus on mountains marginality, the Mountain partnership has been found. It is a voluntary alliance, developed by United Nations with the goal to improve mountain populations' living conditions and protect mountainous environment all over the world. Founded in 2002, the Mountain partnership is engaged in addressing challenges that the mountain regions are constantly facing and showing the diversity and the richness of the mountains, their resources, the knowledge and know-how of the populations who inhabit these places.

At present, the Mountain partnership comprises more than 300 members; among them, we can list 59 Governments, 7 Subnational authorities, 16 Intergovernmental organizations and 248 Major Groups from civil society, NGOs and the private sector.

These are the reasons why FAO, in particular the Mountain Partnership, and Slow Food, an international grassroots movement that seeks to improve the lives of farmers, launched the initiative Mountain Partnership Products, translated in a label, that has the objective to distinguish mountain products from other products presented, which is not always possible on markets sites.

This label is focused on products, which supports local biodiversity and production methods, which are linked to cultural traditions of mountain communities. For each article, food, beverage or work craft, the label tries to tell their unique and peculiar story to consumers, who are informed on their origin, quality and value.

At present, 17 products are labelled and the main areas of influence of the label are the mountainous Andes in South America and the South Asia countries. This research is focused only on food products, which are 12. (See image 1.1. Mountain Partnership Products map)

Key values and requirements

Those who want to be engaged in the initiative can apply for the label directly to the Mountain Partnership Secretariat or through focal points in their country. The applications are evaluated on different criteria, key values and requirements:

- Altitude: Products mainly produced and transformed in mountain areas; (mountain areas are defined by UN parameters)
- Small-scale: Products from small-scale production; including family farming and/or small mountain producers/cooperatives/organizations; (<10 ha)
- Environmental sustainability: Production processes respectful of the environment, either traditional or innovative; (not compulsory organic production but reasoned and carefully conceived production)
- Equity: Fair returns for the producer, equitable distribution of profits along the value chain.

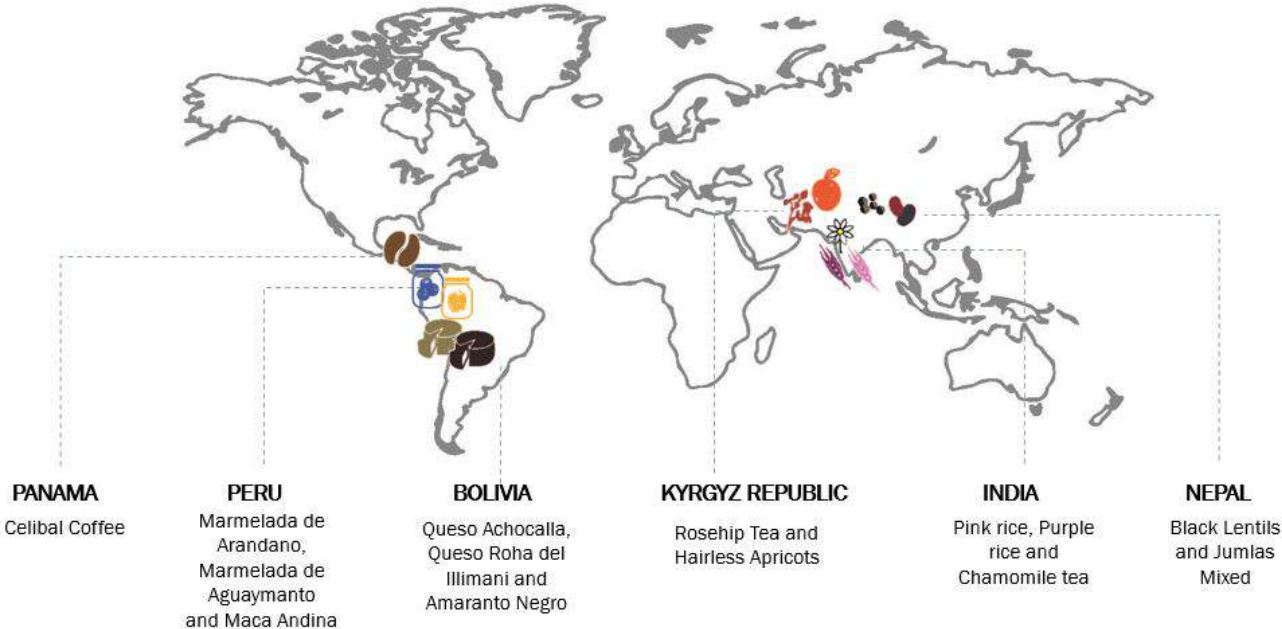


Image 1.1. Mountain Partnership Products map

Assessment and monitoring

The Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS) used to have a system of assessment and monitoring which should prevent unauthorized use of the label. An expert appointed, or an entity authorized by the MPS will assess the compliance of the Product to the Mountain Partnership Products’ key values and requirements and collect any other information that might be useful to evaluate the Product, by visiting the production site, if required by the MPS. The monitoring process was ensured by this expert/entity appointed or authorized, who periodically monitor a random sample of Products on which the Mountain Partnership Product label was authorized.

Based on the results of this monitoring, the MPS may revoke the authorization to use the Mountain Partnership Product label, temporarily or permanently.

For some of the products, including those in Kyrgyzstan and Bolivia, FAO provides additional support. The assistance is mainly technical, aimed at improving yield and adding value to their existing production, as in the case of Kyrgyz apricots. While in the case of Bolivian black amaranth, FAO provided start-up assistance for an entirely new production and distribution chain.

Through product labelling and differentiation, consumers should be willing to pay a little higher price for the quality and value of these products. (See Image 1.2. Label Example front and back)

Moreover, in order to ensure fair compensation to farmers, the idea was to work with engaged and involved retailers to ensure that products could be sold at a higher price at markets.

However, as we can see in the label example, it contains the following text: “This label is for information purposes only and is not intended to make any representations or warranties about the characteristics, quality, suitability or any other feature of this product. The Mountain Partnership or any of its Partners will not be liable for any loss or damages resulting from use of, reference to, or reliance on this Product or any information relating thereto”. (See red asterisk *)


<p>Pink rice is an indigenous crop cultivated by small-scale women farmers in the Indian Himalayas.</p> <p>Believed to be the ancestor of white rice varieties, pink rice is rich in cultural and nutritional value. It is an integral part of local culture for the Bhoi, Garo, Jaintia and Khasi tribes who use the rice for traditional celebrations and ceremonies.</p> <p>For example, the Bhoi wrap pink rice in banana leaves when a newly wedded bride visits the groom's family for the first time as a symbol of building a new family relationship.</p>	<p>The 'Mountain Partnership Product' logo designates a voluntary labelling scheme for high value mountain products from developing countries. Its use is intended to support smallholder mountain producers in maintaining sustainable production processes and better ensure fair compensation for their products.</p> <p>www.fao.org/mountain-partnership</p> <p>* This label is for information purposes only and is not intended to make any representations or warranties about the characteristics, quality, suitability or any other feature of this product. The Mountain Partnership or any of its Partners will not be liable for any loss or damages resulting from use of, reference to, or reliance on this Product or any information relating thereto.</p>	 <p>Pink Rice</p> <p>Himalayan Region India</p> <p>A Mountain Partnership and Slow Food initiative</p>
<p>Producer</p> <p>Mahila Umang Producers Company is a collective of self-help groups and producers promoting sustainable livelihoods through the establishment of micro-enterprises. Producers run the enterprises following fair trade, ecologic, economic and equitable principles.</p> <p>More than 100 women farmers in the Ri Bhoi watershed, Meghalaya are involved in the cultivation of pink rice.</p>	<p>Production</p> <p>Pink rice is cultivated by tribal families through traditional farming systems and permaculture, without the use of chemical fertilizers. In order to adhere to local culture, it must be grown in <i>jhum</i> fields or paddy fields.</p> <p>Production lasts one year. Once the rice grains have been harvested, the entire plant is left in the field for 12 months. After that, it is turned into the soil and rice seedlings are transplanted by hand during the monsoon season.</p>	<p>Territory</p> <p>This pink rice is farmed in the Indian Himalayas in the Ri Bhoi watershed, Meghalaya State at 1 200 - 1 800 metres above sea level.</p> <p>Consumption</p> <p>Easy to cook, tasty and colourful, pink rice is also used to make <i>pudoh</i> (rice cake with meat), <i>pukhleih</i> (fried rice cake) and sweet puddings as it gets creamy when overcooked and combines well with dairy and coconut milk.</p>

Image 1.2. Label Example front and back

1.2 FUTURE STEPS OF THE INITIATIVE

Recently the FAO strategy is changing; the future assessment and monitoring process is in discussion and Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) will be probably included in the labelling process, in collaboration with IFOAM¹.

¹ International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements. Founded in 1972, the international umbrella organization for the organic world,

FAO and IFOAM signed an agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) the past 1st June 2018, with the aim to foster collaboration among these institutions and to define joint activities for the improvement of PGS and Mountain Products Initiative.² These Systems are a process of organic quality assurance locally anchored. They certify the producers through an active participation of the concerned actors and are built on confidence, networks trust and knowledge exchanges. (IFOAM)³ Inquiries are made by producers and consumers themselves, participative inspections and monitoring are carried “by the peers” (peer review) and by consumers, with the objective to reach a more effective transparency.

This certification is considered much more accessible to producers than other formal certification programs. In addition, growers also become members of the Mountain Partnership, which gives them access to other forms of support as well as visibility.

Promoters

The Mountain Products initiative, the development of the label and related supports and services, have been launched as part of a project supported by Italian Development Cooperation, a three-year agreement between FAO and Slow Food, to promote more inclusive food and food systems at local, national and international levels. Moreover, the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture provides support with an Associate Program Officer for two years.

Phase II

The definition of Phase II is still in progress. However, applications from 10 additional countries were received, including Albania, Chile, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lebanon, Madagascar, Morocco, Pakistan, Philippines, Tunisia, Colombia, Ecuador, Iran, Lesotho and Malawi.

This global mountain label, supported by adequate value chains and marketing strategy, can allow small producers to obtain fair compensation for their specific quality products as well as help customers make a more informed purchase.

1.3 MAIN CHALLENGES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The reasons behind the internship and the research were linked with the issue of distribution. As already explained in the *avant-propos*, one of the main concerns for the promoters of the initiative is the distribution of mountain labelled products and the increase of sales. However, marketing and distribution activities cannot be analyzed without a larger reflection about certification and about the meaning of the label itself, which are deeply intertwined with distribution.

Food distribution is generally considered as a subset of the food system; therefore, it is necessary to carry out a comprehensive analysis, which takes into account also the consequences and the reasons behind a particular way of distributing and marketing food products. Moreover, the labels and certifications required for a distribution channel are not the same for another distribution channel, therefore an understanding of the product, of its potential and of the willingness of producers is fundamental in this case, in order to understand if the label is the right support.

² For more information: [http://www.fao.org/mountain-partnership/news/news-detail/en/?dyna_fef\[uid\]=1137657](http://www.fao.org/mountain-partnership/news/news-detail/en/?dyna_fef[uid]=1137657)

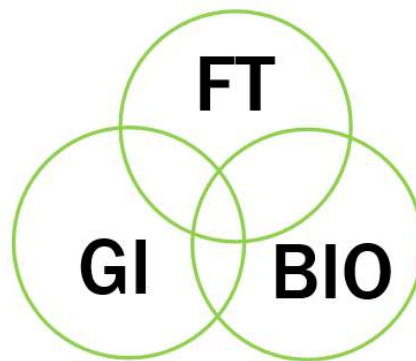
³ Definition given by IFOAM, the international umbrella organization for the organic world, <https://www.ifoam.bio/en/organic-policy-guarantee/participatory-guarantee-systems-pgs>

The MPP label is defined as a narrative label, a label which aim is to tell the story behind the product, concept developed by Slow Food.⁴ According with this concept, “the quality of the product is first of all a narration, starting from the origin of the product (the territory) until the phases of transformation. Only a narration can reflect the real value of the product”.

This perspective about a label collects several issues and enlarge the idea of quality, which is not represented by technical approaches, analysis or degustation, but which is based on a story.

The narration is therefore strongly linked to the territory and the people who are involved in the production, and it is flexible to fit each context and each contingent situation.

If this flexibility represents a strength and an open approach, at the same time it can create confusion in costumers’ eyes and drive to misunderstanding. Indeed the label includes elements of Geographical Indications (GI), because of its attention to the territory and mountain areas; it considers elements of social justice, fair remuneration and Fair Trade (FT); and it testify at the same time a sustainable production, not always 100% organic but with a particular attention to the environment (BIO). In some cases the accent is put on the origin and mountain dynamics, in some other cases on the environmentally sustainable production, in others on producers’ remuneration and social justice.



Geographical indication / Fair Trade / “Organic”

This contextual adaptation of the label, which stresses certain elements of the production according with the story of the product, may represent a new vision of labels, but there are some fundamental aspects to take in consideration.

Therefore, my research has the goal to answer to these issues, firstly understanding the present situation of certified products, thanks to focal points feedbacks collected by interviews, secondly draw the appropriate conclusions and develop recommendations for the future steps of the initiative.

In the following chapters you will understand the methodology used for the study and find out the recommendations, possibly useful also in other projects developed in mountain.

⁴ Find the definition and the article here (in Italian): <https://www.fondazione Slow Food.com/it/cosa-facciamo/etichetta-narrante/>

2 Methodology: How to improve mountain products marketing

In this second chapter, the methodology used for the research is explained, presenting the reasons behind the methodology itself and justifying the choices made during the analysis. After a bibliographic research on mountains and their environments, as first step (STEP I), the product, the production and their characteristics have been considered fundamental for the analysis; secondly (STEP II) the system around the product should be taken in consideration, with the causal linkages among the interventions of the initiative.

2.1 WHAT IS AT STAKE ON MOUNTAINS?

It is complex to define what a Mountain is, due to the diversity in morphology, climate and landscape. Moreover, as explained by Debardieux and Rudaz (2015), the Mountain can be seen as a category of knowledge and as a social construct. Mountains are often used as borders and they have been one of the key elements of the construction of the identity of many nation-states. This is a clear illustration of the social construction of the mountain. We know mountains only through the lenses, theories and equipment that we have constructed as humans and we attribute to mountains several meanings. In some cases, they represent a border, in others a challenge, in others a shared space.

More recently, the processes of decolonization and globalization have been driving forces and have contributed to the diffusion of various conceptions of the mountain and to the emergence of mountain issues on the global agenda. In other words, people livelihoods and ecosystems in mountains are facing marginality and difficulties that bring these territories to compete with other territories like urban areas (due to people migration) or like low land (due to cheaper and easier ways to produce crops).

From the definition of Mountain given by the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP WCMC) the global mountain area is almost 40 million square kilometers, or 27% of Earth's surface.

In Europe mountainous areas are described in art.18 of the European Council regulation 1257/1999⁵, as Less Favoured Areas (LFAs), characterized by a “considerable limitation of the possibilities for using the land and on appreciable increase in the cost of working”.

According to an analysis conducted by FAO, 39% of mountain population is vulnerable to food insecurity in 2012.⁶

People living in mountain areas are particularly vulnerable due to food quantity but also distance from roads, poor infrastructure, combined with social and political marginality. Despite this, a fundamental ecological role is acknowledged to mountains, for the large ecosystem services offered by these areas to peoples (Schuler M, Stucki E., Roque O., Perlik M.), and for their importance for biodiversity. Traditional practices of mountainous production are crucial for the conservation of high-value naturalistic landscapes. Moreover, the optimization of water resources and the sustainability of agricultural practices have beneficial effects on water, air and soil.

However, it is fundamental to understand the peculiarity of each area and the reasons behind the marginality. Two main aspects will be therefore developed for this research: an understanding of the

⁵ European Council regulation 1257/1999 available: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c70dfc8c-6243-4b1a-817e-4673042024c4/language-en>

⁶ For more information: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5175e.pdf>

product (according with production potential, distribution and certification issues) and an understanding of the causal linkages among interventions of projects for mountain areas and their impacts. This study does not presume to be exhaustive; however, it tries to show the actual challenges and to suggest possible advances for projects in mountain areas and in particular for Mountain Partnership Initiative.

2.2 THE UNDERSTANDING OF MOUNTAIN PRODUCTS AND THEIR SYSTEM

A typology of products has been considered as the first step to start with. Even if the number of certified products was not extremely huge (12 food products), a typology of products can be useful to have a deeper analysis of certain of these products and, moreover, to have the opportunity to generalize the results of this research for MPP itself (and scale up the Initiative) or for other projects related with mountains, that could have a reference applicable and appropriate to other cases.

The following elements represent key issues to analyze mountain products, in a product-based perspective and in a broader perspective, considering distribution and certifications:

- Firstly, the **VOLUME** and **QUALITY** of production represent an urgent issue for small farmers, in particular mountain farmers, who have to face larger scale production of the lowland. The strength of the label consists in the adaptability to specific contexts; however, this characteristic may represent a threat for the diffusion of the initiative and for the desired impacts. The differences among production volumes of the labelled products should be taken into account and treated differently. The entry point of volume may not be completely representative or generally appropriated but, in this case, it is determinant for distribution and market possibilities. Although, differences among type of products (vegetal, animal, fresh, transformed, etc.) are crucial for distribution and volume does not represent a comprehensive definition for products, type of packaging, transport requirements and others.
- Secondly, **LABELS** and **CERTIFICATIONS** are critical issues for products in general and for mountain products in particular, due to specific characteristics, qualities or reputations, resulting from their geographical origin, commercialization or production practices. Geographical Indications, Fair Trade or Organic label try to highlight the differences among products and they have the possibility to start a virtuous circle based on sustainable standards, where good products are recognized, well remunerated and therefore able to increase sale and production. (Fournier, Champredonde, 2014)

The creation of value and preservation will improve the virtuous circle, “depending on both the market remuneration and the reproduction of local resources”.⁸

Label processes and certifications are considered a promising way to fill the regulatory vacuum originated by mundialization, often neglected by the states, especially concerning environmental and social issues. (Raynolds, Murray, Heller, 2007)

However, today in several countries, we still witness to the difficulty to recognize and differentiate products, sometimes in spite of and sometimes because of the normalization. (Daviron et Vagneron, 2011)

⁸ For more information on geographical indications labels and their economic impacts: <http://www.fao.org/3/I8737EN/i8737en.pdf>

The case of mountain is even more complex. The project EuroMARC by EUROMONTANA¹¹ has showed that mountain products, with their characteristics and specificity, have the possibility to contribute significantly to territorial development. Quality is one of the most important elements for mountain agro-food products. Clear process of traceability is therefore fundamental to improve quality and economic competition in this case.

Some Mountain origin-related indications have been developed throughout Europe and at national levels. (See Box n.1)

However, in many cases, there is no particular attention to traditional and sustainable practices or fair remuneration of producers. Often it is sufficient to produce and/or transform in mountain to be considered a high-quality mountain product.

BOX 1

Mountain product labels in EU

In 2012, the European Union developed the facultative indication label “Mountain Product”, introduced by Reg (CE)1151/2012 and supplemented by the Delegated Regulation No 665/2014, which establishes the conditions of use of this facultative indication label.¹²

Peter Sardo, president of the Foundation Slow Food for the Biodiversity Onlus, stated "The use of the label "Mountain product", developed by European Union, also on the products PDO and PGI, is an important news, very important. First of all because it breaks one of the most untouchable taboos of the legislation UE: characterizing marks, added to PGI and PDO, were considered an alteration of free competition. It was definitely false because a true information cannot constitute a risk of illegitimate competition!"

France, Swiss and more recently Italy, developed a regulatory framework for the utilization of the term “mountain product”.

In the case of Italy, the label “Mountain product” has been presented by the Ministerial Decree in 2017 and includes several criteria for the application about: production, transformation of products, origin and proportions of animal feed.¹³

There are several ways and options to certify products, ranging from Third Party Certification (TPC) to Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) and Auto-certification. These are tools to ensure a set of standards of quality in terms of practices and crop management techniques. However, while PGS are “based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange”, (as already explained in the previous paragraph 1.2), TPC are based on external expert verifications, who periodically evaluate and define production’s compliance with standards.

- Finally, DISTRIBUTION and MARKETS are fundamental elements to take into account, understanding and highlighting the dynamics related to mountains. Quality, volumes, and certifications should be considered intertwined with distribution. They are highly influenced one by the others. According with production volumes and quality there will be possibilities of distribution and different scales of markets. The categorization of markets, despite geographical and commercial differences, can be categorized in: a-Face to face-Direct, b-

¹¹For more information : <https://www.euromontana.org/projet/euromarc/>

¹² For more information on regulation in several languages : https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2014/665/oj

¹³For more information about the Ministerial Decree (in Italian):
<http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2017/09/13/17A06331/sg>

Spatial proximity-Multichannel (no export) and c-Spatially extended-Multichannel (export included), (Mardsen, et al. 2000¹⁴; Barbera et al., 2014¹⁵).

a- Face-to-face: the producer/processor sell the product to the consumer on a face-to-face basis. Personal interaction mediates the commercial activity through authenticity and trust. Internet can also be considered as a variant of face-to-face contact through on-line trading and web pages.

b- Spatial proximity: products are produced and retailed in the region of production; the “local nature” of the product is an added value for the consumer at the point of retail. Different distribution channels represent possibility of commercialization which maintain the characteristic of spatial proximity

c- Spatially extended: the consumer has no personal experience of the region of production; value and meaning laden information about the place of production and those producing the food is translated to consumers. Even with different strategies of distribution, the main feature is the spatial extension of commercialization.

These categories are useful to analyze products’ trajectories and their influence on the territory. However, several elements should be taken into account in order to define distribution possibilities and improvements: changes in production, number of producers, location, and logistic, packaging and standard meeting capacity.

Thanks to these categories, it is possible to highlight possible changes in distribution choices and to discuss with producers and focal points for each product of the initiative the capacity and willingness of transformations. However, several elements should be taken into account in order to define distribution possibilities and improvement: changes in production, number of producers, location, and logistic, packaging and standard meeting capacity.

¹⁴ Article available here: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1467-9523.00158>

¹⁵ Article available here: <http://www.fupress.net/index.php/SdT/article/view/14322/13303>

2.3 IMPACT PATHWAY

The methodology followed for the second part of the research is based on the impact pathway, on the line of ImpresS method of impacts evaluation¹⁶.

The ImpresS approach relies on “three main principles: the focus on the generation of outcomes, on long term processes and on building a shared vision on the hypothetical impact narrative among partners”, which has been considered fundamental also in the case of this research.

The aim is to better take into account the impact when constructing an intervention, (the intervention can be a research or development project or cluster of projects), formulating hypothesis about impact pathways. It makes explicit the underlying logic of how things happened, will happen and with whom, and the most plausible hypotheses on which the intervention is going to act.

The impact pathway is a tool grounded on the theory-driven evaluation literature (Douthwaite, 2003). It represents the causal process of the interventions; it is based on a detailed description to highlight causality relations among:

Inputs: the resources used to produce results and products; the means of interventions;

Outputs: the direct product of the input intervention or activities: Knowledge, scientific or not (publications, reports, database, methods...), Trainings (academic or technical), Expertise, technology, Network, or other forms of production;

Outcomes: the indirect results, the appropriation of results (outputs) by actors interacting directly or indirectly with the project/research, which leads to new practices (agricultural or managerial), utilization and transformation of outputs, new organizations, new rules; They can be primary and secondary, when there is a scaling out or scaling up of the results.

Impacts: the effects in the long term, positive or negative, intentional or unintentional, led by an action of development. That is what has left after an intervention.

Thanks to this method, it will be possible to define the consequences of the research’s results and to make a critical questioning.

2.4 INTERVIEWS WITH FOCAL POINTS AND RESOURCE PEOPLE

After the selection and analysis of products, interviews with focal points will be fundamental to understand the reasons behind the present situation and the changes in comparison to the past.

The applications to receive MP label for a product start from several and different basis, according to countries, producers’ willingness to change, focal points contacts and others. It is crucial to understand the expectations of stakeholders in applying for MP label, in order to answer appropriately to their hopes and understand the right certification for market improvement and the appropriate system of certification.

Therefore, the interviews have been focused on three main topics:

- Producers and Focal points expectations in the MP label
- Distribution and Market access
- Certifications

¹⁶For more information : <https://www.cirad.fr/en/our-research/the-impact-of-our-research/impres-ex-ante-a-methodological-approach-to-develop-the-impact-culture/principles-and-tools>

In ANNEX III you can find the summary of the interviews which have followed these main topics but, at the same time, have been adapted for each specific case.

In the following paragraph, main issues raised during the interviews and bigger results will be highlighted and examined.

Moreover, doing the internship at FAO gave me the opportunity to discuss with many other actors involved in several ways in the project and with academic researchers focused on mountain territories. Even if the possibility to exchange with them has been limited in some cases, due to time constraints and other, I managed to have discussions, summarized in BOXES, sometimes not properly interviews but formal and informal exchanges, with:

Carlo Murer, agronomist of NaturaSi (largest Italian organic distribution company), with whom I discussed about distribution-related issues;

Diego Rinallo, researcher at Kedge Business School and responsible of the project AlpFoodWay, who is an expert in mountain heritage, marketing and territorial valorization;

Flavia Castro, Organic Policy & Guarantee Specialist at IFOAM, with whom I discussed about PGS and systems of certification.

In the following scheme you can see a brief calendar of activities and the related work time.

	Mai	Juin	Juillet	Août	Septembre
Contextualisation and bibliographic researches					
STEP I and Interviews					
Interviews analysis					
STEP II Impact pathway					
Scenarii of Certification definition					
Recommendation definition					
Mémoire/synthesis finalization					

3 Mountain Partnership products analysis

This chapter develops the STEP I of the methodology and therefore it analyzes the products from different points of view. The interviews with focal points and with the other resource people have been useful in STEP I and they became the basis for STEP II

3.1 PRODUCTS CATEGORIES ANALYSIS

The MPP labelled products, as explained in the second chapter, can be categorized according with

- VOLUMES
- LABEL/CERTIFICATIONS
- MARKET/DISTRIBUTION.

These categories are not fixed but dynamic and the products can pass from one category to the other, according with changes in the èà in technical advancements or costumer tastes. After the introduction of the label some changes have been recorded, therefore, the categorization should be considered as a picture of the present situation of 2018.

In ANNEX I you can see the monitoring of the products with production changes and evolution.

Following the first criteria -Production volumes-, four types of products could be described, ranging from Micro (0-200kg), Small (200kg-1000kg), Medium (1000-50 ton) and Large (more than 50 ton).

These categories have been developed in an empirical way, understanding the threshold production volume that determine the potential of each product. There is a large difference among products (which range from cheese, rice, tea, jams, lentils and beans) and therefore a generalization has been necessary, in order to include this variety.

Black amaranth from Bolivia and Ceibal Coffee from Panama have the smallest production volumes, also due to the recent or new productive process.

The second category includes many more products, the jams from Peru, two varieties of rice and the chamomile tea from India. The third category contains two types of cheese from Bolivia and the Maca Andina (a local food supplement and revitalizing especially for athletes, children and pregnant women, often used for breads and pastry). These products are issues of an older and structured production, one of the reasons of a larger volume. Finally, Black lentils and Mixed beans from Nepal have the larger quantity produced, which passes 50 ton.



Image 3.1. Products categories: volume criterium

According to the second criteria, -Label and Certifications of quality-, it is possible to define four categories, which all refer to organic production. The first category of products has a PGS certification and it includes Chamomile Tea from India and Hairless Apricots from Kyrgyz. The second category involves Pink rice and Purple rice from India that will be soon certified with a PGS, thanks to associations, which will be in charge of the management of the system. The third category, which includes the largest number of products, is the category for products without any certification. This is

comprehensible because the MP label’s goal is to be accessible to a large range of products and producers, who have difficulties to access to expensive certifications. Here we can find two varieties of cheese from Bolivia (Queso Achocalla and Queso Roha del Illimani), Jams from Peru (Marmelada de Arandano and Aguaymanto) the Maca Andina from Peru, the Rosehip Tea from Kyrgyz and Ceibal coffe from Panama.

Finally, the last category include products with at least one certification by an external body (TPC). In the case of Jumlas Mixed beans and Black Lentils from Nepal, they both have the Organic World and Fair Future Certification. However, for Jumla Mixed Beans, it cannot be properly considered an official organic third party certification, while for Himali Black Lentils it is integrated with OCN-Organic Certification Nepal. In this second case the certifier body is nationally and internationally accredited by National Organic Agriculture Accreditation Board (NOAAB) of Nepal.¹⁷

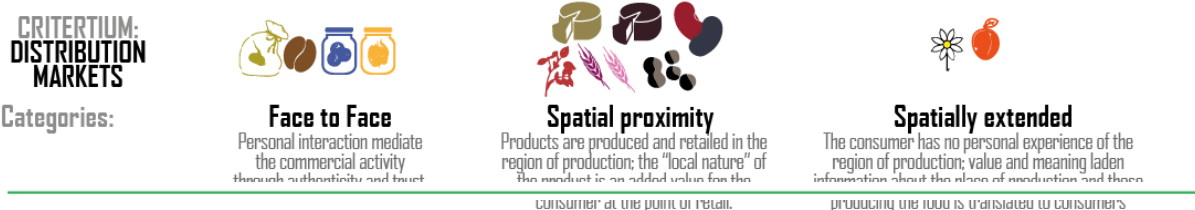


Image 3.2. Products categories: Certification criterium

Finally, the last criteria is related to Distribution and scales of markets, and it is based on the categories explained in the second chapter. Face to face category of market, with direct sales or farmers’ markets sales, includes many products, mainly with smaller productions, like the jams from Peru (Marmelada de Arandano and Aguaymanto) and the Ceibal coffe from Panama. However, it includes also bigger productions like the Maca Andina, which, despite it, maintained a more direct distribution channel.

The second category includes products with multi-distribution channels, but which maintained a spatial proximity, produced and retailed in the region of production, and where the local nature is an added value. We can find in this category two varieties of cheese from Bolivia (Queso Achocalla and Queso Roha del Illimani), Black Lentils and Humlas Mixed beans from Nepal, two varieties of rice from India (Pink rice and Purple rice) and the Rosehip Tea from Kyrgyz.

The last category, with only few products is based on multi-channel spatially extended distribution, and includes part of the production dedicated to export. In this category, we can find only Chamomile Tea from India and the Hairless Apricot from Kyrgyz (which are not very involved in the initiative anymore, as far as the research allowed me to understand). Finally, as expected, there are no products



only for export commercialization.

¹⁷ For more information on OCN certification body and on products: <http://ocn.com.np/>

Image 3.3. Products categories: Markets criterium

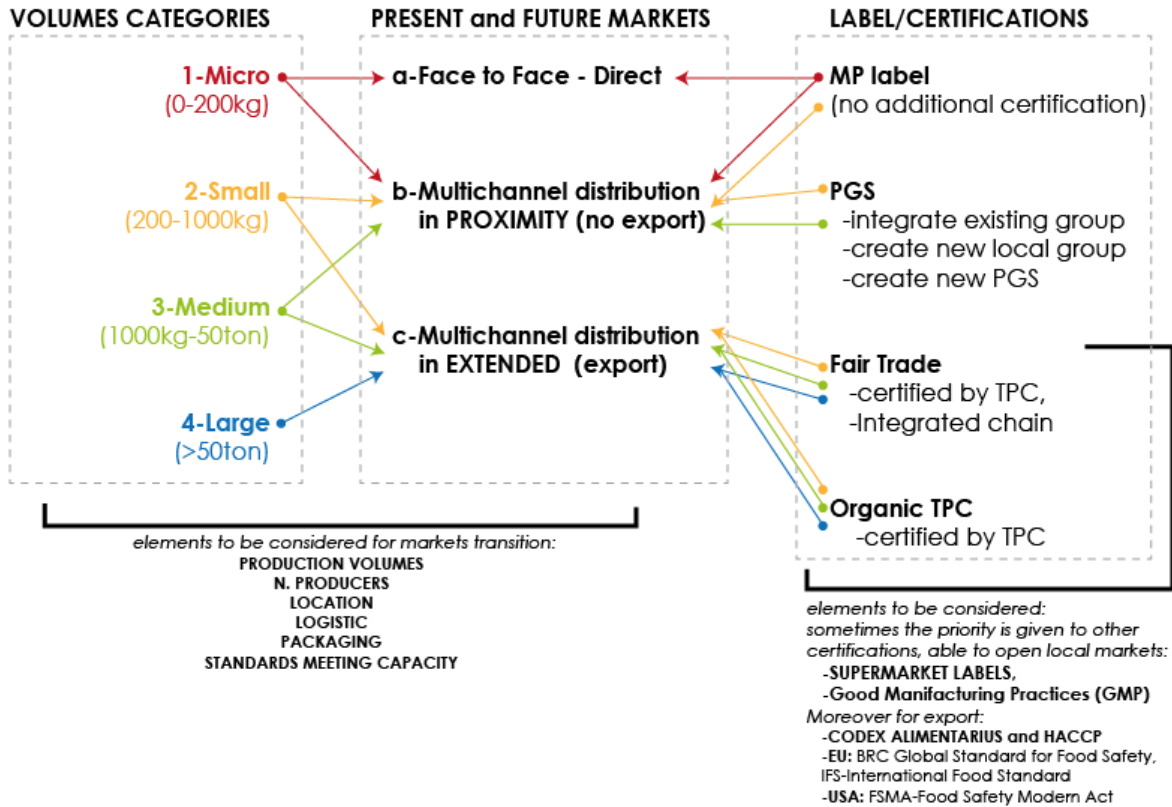


Image 3.4. Volumes, Certification and Markets linkages

As you can see in the Image 3.4, according with these categories and criteria it is possible to highlight linkages among volumes, existing and potential distribution channels and possible or required certifications. There are not strict rules or predefined trajectories of production, distribution and certification; they are based on producers' willingness and their capacity to organize themselves. However, it is possible to see possible trajectories, implications and requirements.

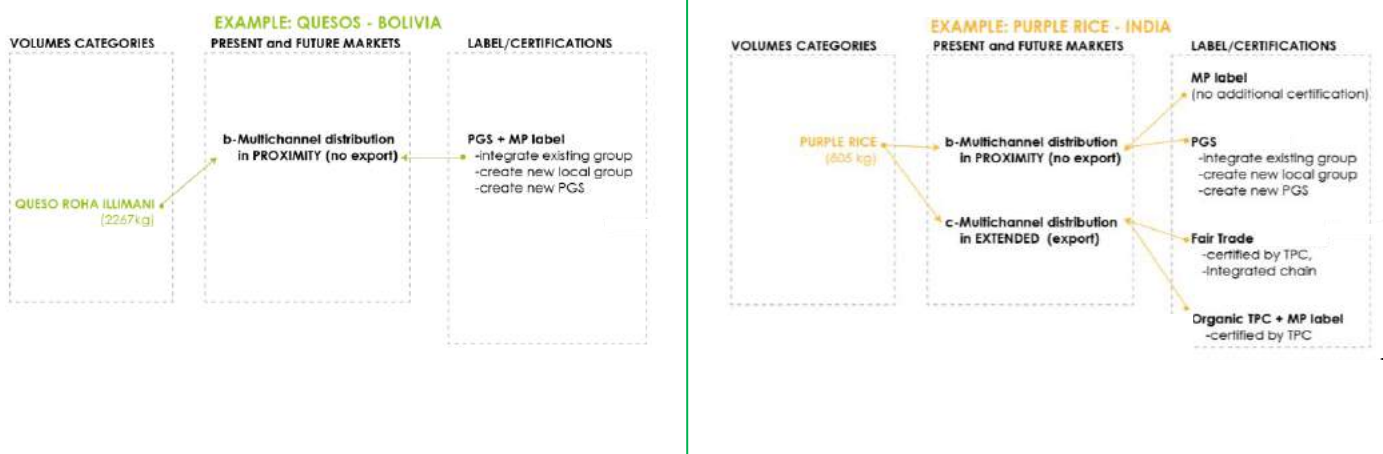


Image 3.5. Products' trajectories example

In these two examples (See image 3.5), considering two MP labelled products, a cheese in Bolivia and a variety of rice in India, we can see the difference of two products, with different priorities and evolutions possibilities.

In the case of multichannel distribution, usually, strict certifications are not required, due to the reputation of a product or of the producers in the area. These are the reasons why a certification system based on a PGS could be a solution in these cases to develop sense of responsibility on sustainable practices and collective action.

However, some distribution channels may require specific standards and labels' characteristics, like the case of supermarkets channels in Bolivia, where energy and resources are probably focused.

PGS organic certification may be considered important in a long-term perspective but the main attention is paid to label and standards certifications that effectively open new markets possibilities.

In the case of Indian rice, production volumes allow different choices and therefore different trajectories and requirements.

Moreover, in the case of c-Spatially extended category, where export is included, specific hygiene standards and certification requirements are mandatory. As explained in the Box 2 - Distribution warning points by NaturaSi, the general normative document to refer to is the Codex Alimentarius. It has several principles, which had inspired the HACCP, a system of procedures to prevent possible contaminations of foods. In specific case of distribution in European Countries, two other main standards have been developed, BRC Global Standard for Food Safety and IFS-International Food Standard .

The categorization has been fundamental to understand deeply the characteristics of the products and to choose the most representative cases for furthers analysis and interviews.

The interviews have been carried out only with focal points of products, which are the responsible and the reference of the product for the relations with MPS. Focal points for products in the same country are most of the times the same person. Unfortunately, producers were not available for the interviews or internet connection possibility was limited.

Volumes: Production volumes in mountain is one of the most important, if not the most important, obstacles. The distribution has serious difficulties due to minimum volumes for transportation requirements and the related economic convenience. Association of producers may be a way to overcome this obstacle. Association of different products and enterprises, Preference of different markets for commercialization (internal market) could be a possibility to face minimum volumes of transportation

Transformation process (onsite or export): It is necessary to evaluate the transformation process in order to understand if it is convenient to transform and pack directly on the production site or to export the raw material, transform and pack outside the producer country.

In the last case, the benefit is transferred and the producers will not take the same advantage from the commercial exchange. However, the packaging process is difficult, quality controls and technical requirements could stop the products at the border stations. Sometimes machineries and facilities for transformation are not available or they do not respond to quality standards. The environmental impacts are also at stake: importing packed products is much more expensive in economic terms but also in environmental terms, due to higher volume.

A contextualization is necessary in order to understand the obstacles to distribution and, at the same time, an efficient and fair exchange.

Concurrence among products and cash crops: In a future perspective, some goods will be rare in west countries (ex. honey due to bee's scarcity). That is the reason why some distributors are positioning themselves on these possible future new markets.

Fair trade stakeholders should be aware of this tendency and try to anticipate possible negative impacts on countries where the production and the stakeholder are not structured and organized.

National and international guidelines or requirements: It is necessary to understand the legislative and technical framework at national level for specific products distribution. The awareness by producers of the requirements, in terms of quality and packaging, is fundamental to achieve an effective distribution. Where export is included, specific hygiene standards and certification requirements are mandatory. As general normative document, it is necessary to refer to the Codex Alimentarius, rules and norms defined by a specific Commission, instituted in 1963 by FAO and WHO, to protect consumers' health and to assure the correctness of the international exchanges. The Codex Alimentarius has several principles, which had inspired the HACCP, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points, a system of procedures to prevent possible contaminations of foods. In specific case of distribution in European Countries, two other main standards have been developed, BRC Global Standard for Food Safety and IFS-International Food Standard

In the following explanation, you can find the products selected for the focal points interviews and the reasons why these products have been chosen:

Ceibal Coffee from Panama has been selected from the category of micro volumes, due to their difficulty in bigger quantity production and in the differentiation of distribution channel. Moreover, the case of Black Amaranth cannot be considered exemplar because it is part of a joint program Slow Food-MPS and it started only one year ago with instable results.

Pink rice and Purple rice from India and **Marmelada de Arandano and Marmelada de Aguaymanto** from Peru have been chosen from the category of Small volumes, because of the potential of a bigger production but at the same time a limited distribution, mainly “proximity” distribution, with a lack in marketing activities. Moreover, a PGS certification is under development in the case of rice in India and the jams in Peru are improving their certifications of quality for applying to Institutional Food Public Procurement (IFPP)

Queso Achocalla and Queso Roha del Illimani from Bolivia have been chosen in the category of Medium volumes, because of the recent large change in production. For both cheese the volumes increased more than 90% in the last three years. Moreover, the Maca Andina has not been chosen because the initiative is not very active anymore and relations with focal points would be harder.

Black Lentils and Jumlas Mixed Beans from Nepal have been chosen because they are the only products present in the last category, large volumes. Moreover, there is potential to extend the distribution channel toward the export and shift from one category to the other according with the criteria Market/Distribution.

Even if there are some non-food products, like scarfs and toys, food products are at the core of the initiative and of this research, therefore, these non-food products have been left aside for other and different analysis.

BOX 3.

Feedbacks on marketing strategies – Diego Rinallo Interview Feedbacks

The Label: a label has an intrinsic meaning but behind a label there are many practical and symbolic meaning that should be communicated. The investment is large if these meanings are meant to be spread globally.

Push and Pull strategy: There are two different approaches in marketing strategy, which are often complementary, but it is important to understand the logic behind them. Push marketing strategy is based on the persuasion of the distributor that will present a product to the public, while Pull marketing strategy is based on the persuasion of the consumer that will buy the product. Communication in both cases need to be planned and developed accordingly.

Understanding of local market: Contextual comprehension of local distribution, transport and communication dynamics is fundamental, and each product requires a specific marketing plan

Agreements with distribution companies: A possibility to support mountain products for FAO could be the development of many local agreements with distribution companies, relying on FAO’s reputation to increase the interest of distributors, create social linkages and improve the food chain.

Business to Business: It could represent the fortune for small producers. Framework agreements relying on FAO’s reputation may stimulate this trend.

3.3 INTERVIEWS MAIN RESULTS

During the interviews, some common points have been raised by the focal points, which could be useful for MPS to implement the initiative. The following paragraphs highlight these issues, analyze and contextualize them in the perspective of MPP Initiative future actions.

The label

The label is generally considered as a sign of distinction, which testify the difference of the mountain products from other products.

The interviewed Focal points testified the necessity to legitimate their products at consumers' eyes and to demonstrate their value, in comparison to other low-quality products. The label is considered as a tool to tell the story behind the production and transformation and/or to gain visibility on markets in order to ask for a higher price or to start commercializing a product, previously only for self-consumption in few cases.

However, it is necessary to pay attention to the actual ability of the label to describe and to transmit the quality and the values behind the product. Often the label is not sufficient to tell the story on its own; frequently, it is not enough to convince the clients, when the MPP label is close to many other labels. The active narrative made by a person (like an informed retailer or producers' representatives), even if it is not a direct sale, is much more impressive and able to express the differentiation from other products.

The expectations

The necessity to receive additional support is always present in all the application sent to the MPS. Marketing and Distribution are the phases of the production cycle, expressed most frequently by focal point's applications, for which additional assistance is needed; some of the applications mention also Storage and Transformation.

Mountain Products initiative has so far supported activities in Bolivia, conducted by Slow Food (with 200 people for the production of Black Amaranth) and in India (with 40 people, for the production of Pink and Purple Rice). The trainings for producers have focused on two main issues: product development/transformation and agro-biodiversity/sustainable production. Marketing, distribution and Storage are therefore still to be covered.

Support in marketing (advertising, communication materials) and in distribution infrastructure are still needed and necessary for the improvement of the initiative.

Monitoring production and distribution

The monitoring process for the labelled products is going on and MP Secretariat have received positive feedbacks from several focal points. During several interviews, the focal points confirmed their positive consideration of MPP.

According to focal point's feedbacks, those labelled products for which information are available to MP Secretariat, they all have increased their production (Cheese in Bolivia, Lentils and Beans in Nepal, Maca Andina and Jams in Peru, lightly increased Coffee in Panama). No information are available for the other products due to lack of feedbacks, just started production or just labelled products.

However, it is necessary to consider that the casual effect is not always direct between the increase of production and the label's impact. For example, in the case of Achocalla and Rocha cheeses, the focal point expressly said that wine and cheese production increased generally in Bolivia.

In some cases, the label helped opening new markets, hotels procurements, niche markets recognition (Jams in Peru, Coffee in Panama, Pink and Purple Rice in India, Lentils and Beans in Nepal), even if some of these distribution channels are not stables or depend on chefs' tastes. Nevertheless, the

expected visibility often is not yet achieved and efforts to gain visibility and recognition should still be made.

Certifications

Certification is one of the most urgent issues of the initiative. For the already labelled products and for new products the strategy should be carefully analyzed and planned, according with the specific situations of labelled products and, as next step, understanding a framework valid answer to new products requirements.

For already labelled products, in many cases, organic PGS certification is not a priority. One of the most frequently required certifications are HACCP, (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points, a system of procedures to prevent possible contaminations of foods), usually required by supermarkets. In some cases, supermarkets do not even accept MP label, because it is not conformed to distribution companies' requirements, like in the case of Bolivia). In some cases, the priority certification is GMP (Good manufacturing practices or BPM, *Buenas Practicas de Manufacturas*) which are the practices required in order to conform to guidelines recommended by agencies that control authorization and licensing for manufacture and sale of food, drug products and active pharmaceutical products. These guidelines provide minimum requirements that a pharmaceutical or a food product manufacturer must meet to assure that the products are of high quality and do not cause any risk to the consumer.

PGS, even if directed only toward organic practices, represent in some cases a suitable solution for certification linked to distribution channels and some efforts are made in order to develop new PGS with allied associations (like in the case of India and Nepal). However, sometimes PGS are difficult not only because of mountain physical marginality, but also because of the typology of the product, like in the case of dairy products, which are more difficult to be monitored and certified organic.

Therefore, PGS could be a way to certify also MP products, but it is necessary to take in consideration that organic production and certification are not always a priority and are not able to open new markets, where other certifications are required. Moreover, an exclusive strategy with IFOAM will lead toward exclusively organic new-labelled products.

Collective action, Contract farming and Territorial development

The collective action among producers is not yet there. The label has increased the producers' pride and the willingness to produce a specific product, but there is still a lack of collaboration and organization. Even if there is the potential to cooperate (some cooperatives are active but not all the producers are involved), often the collective action didn't improve much, despite the introduction of the label. At focal points' eyes, it would represent a considerable change, probably able to face storage and logistic issues, with the economy of scale.

Problems linked to storage and logistic issues are not solved, despite some positive impacts of the label. Often the increased sales and production are not followed by an improvement in infrastructures.

However, some governments express their interest in adopting the label. The recognition of the label by governments as symbol of quality and the sense of pride of producers could push toward a movement of valorization of the areas of production. Applications to other national or international financing programs could be facilitated thanks to the visibility and the recognition of the label.

Therefore, an improvement in collective action, with a probable following improvement in distribution, could be seen as part of a sustainable process toward a territorial governance. Trough collective action and capacity building in distribution of labelled products, it could be possible to foster territorial initiative, multisector and multiscale actions. The obstacles, in the case of interviewed people, is the lack of organization, lack of organizational capacity and lack of interest in those products.

4 Impact Pathway for mountains and MPS Products

After the analysis of interviews and bibliographic researches on mountain people vulnerability and obstacles, it has been possible to develop an impact pathway, on the line of ImpresS method of evaluation, as explained in the second chapter.

The impact pathway is based on a detailed description of a process to highlight causality relations among means of intervention (INPUTS), their direct products (OUTPUTS), the indirect results, as appropriation, utilization and transformation (OUTCOMES) and the effects in the long term (IMPACTS).

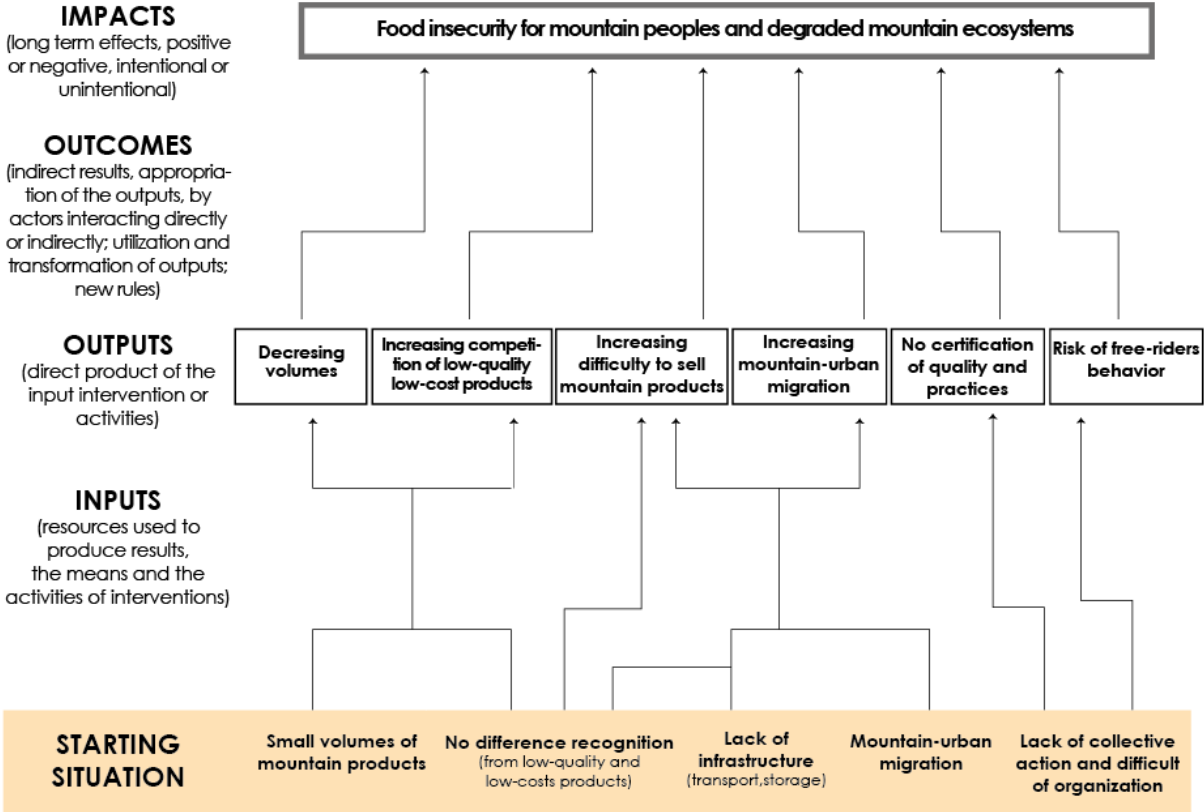


Image 4.1. Impact pathway: No inputs

In this scheme (see Image 4.1), we can see firstly the problems that mountain peoples and ecosystems constantly face and the probable impacts in the long term, if no inputs and no efforts are made in positive changes.

The possible negative outcomes linked to small volumes and to the lack of differentiation from other products are the decreased volumes of production and the increased volumes of low land products. This will continue to deteriorate the situation and to increase economic competition against mountain products. Moreover, lack of organization and collective action, with the related lack of claiming for better infrastructures, will increase the physical marginality of mountain areas and the migration mainly toward urbanized areas.

This scenario makes us clear the serious possible negative impacts that could affect mountain territories if any actions are taken, in order to inverse this trend.

Image 4.2 considers the Phase I of Mountain Partnership Products Initiative as possible inputs given to

overcome problems and obstacles of mountain areas. The activities and the intervention in this case are the provision of the label on several products and some training activities about product development and biodiversity. These inputs produced particular outputs and outcomes, following the Impact pathway definition of these terms, which contribute to the final impact.

The final impacts, the effects in the long term, which are the objective of the entire initiative, are “Livelihoods and food security of mountain peoples and mountain ecosystems”.

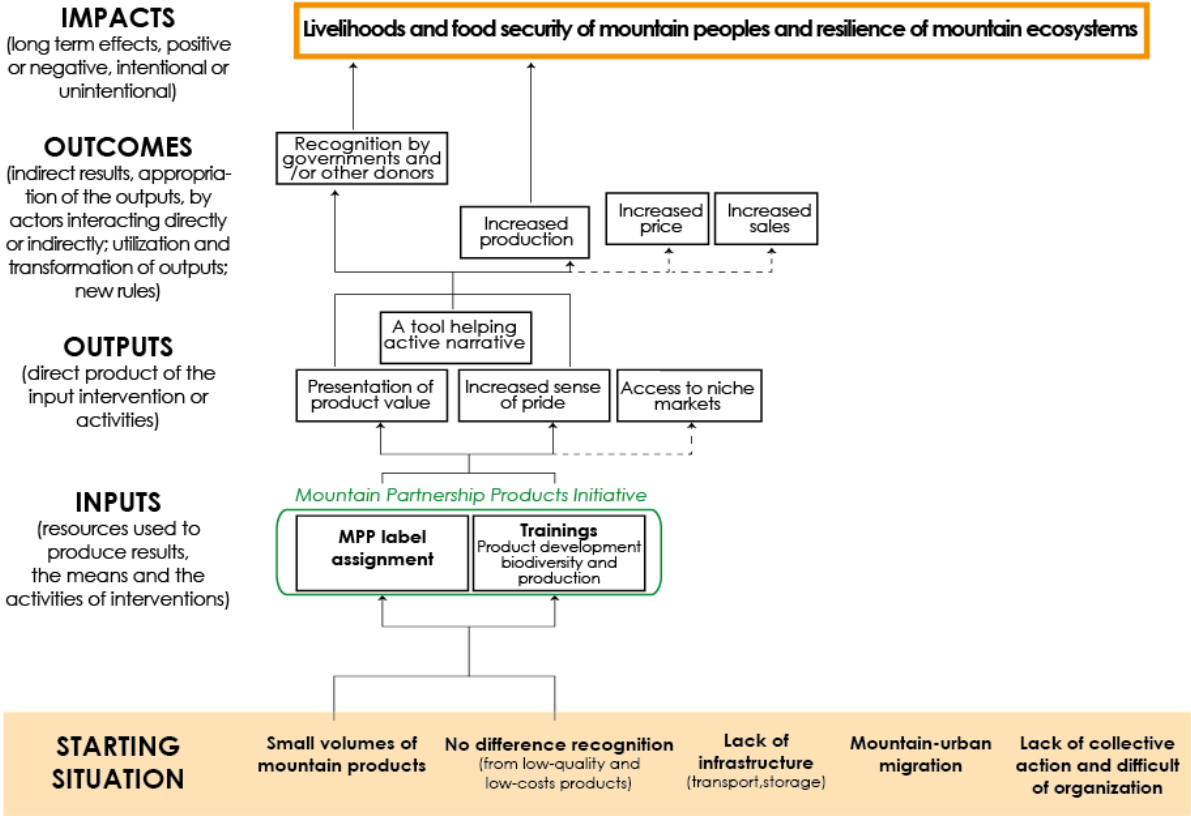


Image 4.2. Impact pathway: Mountain Products Initiative

However, in order to achieve this goal deeply and sustainably, to enhance direct and indirect results of the label and to deliver its potential, two main axes of intervention, or missing inputs, should still be considered for the Phase II of the initiative.

The first one is related to contextual marketing strategy development (See Image 4.3) and the second one is related to certification and label guarantee (See Image 4.4).

In Image 4.3, it is possible to understand the pathway and the contribution that a marketing strategy development may possibly have on mountain farmer’s conditions and mountain environments.

In order to develop a strategy for distribution improvement, a reflection on the food system and the challenges that each place and population is facing are necessary. Therefore, the Handbook for innovative and sustainable Food Systems, co-written by ESN Division (Florence Tartenac, Allison Loconto, Marcello Vicovaro) and “innovators” from several countries may be a useful support for trainings on this issue.

The participative understanding of present challenges and the development of a strategy may help to increase production and sales, but first, it would contribute to have a balanced development of activities and diversity of crops in the area. Often visibility and gain possibility produce a shift in production patterns, which could affect food security and ecosystem sustainability. A prior reflection on the system and on marketing may help to avoid these unattended results.

Moreover, a participative process in understanding challenges and ways to face them could improve

collective action and bargaining power of smallholder farmers. Thanks to a renewed collaboration, storage and transport infrastructure could be improved and could contribute to the final expected and long-term impacts.

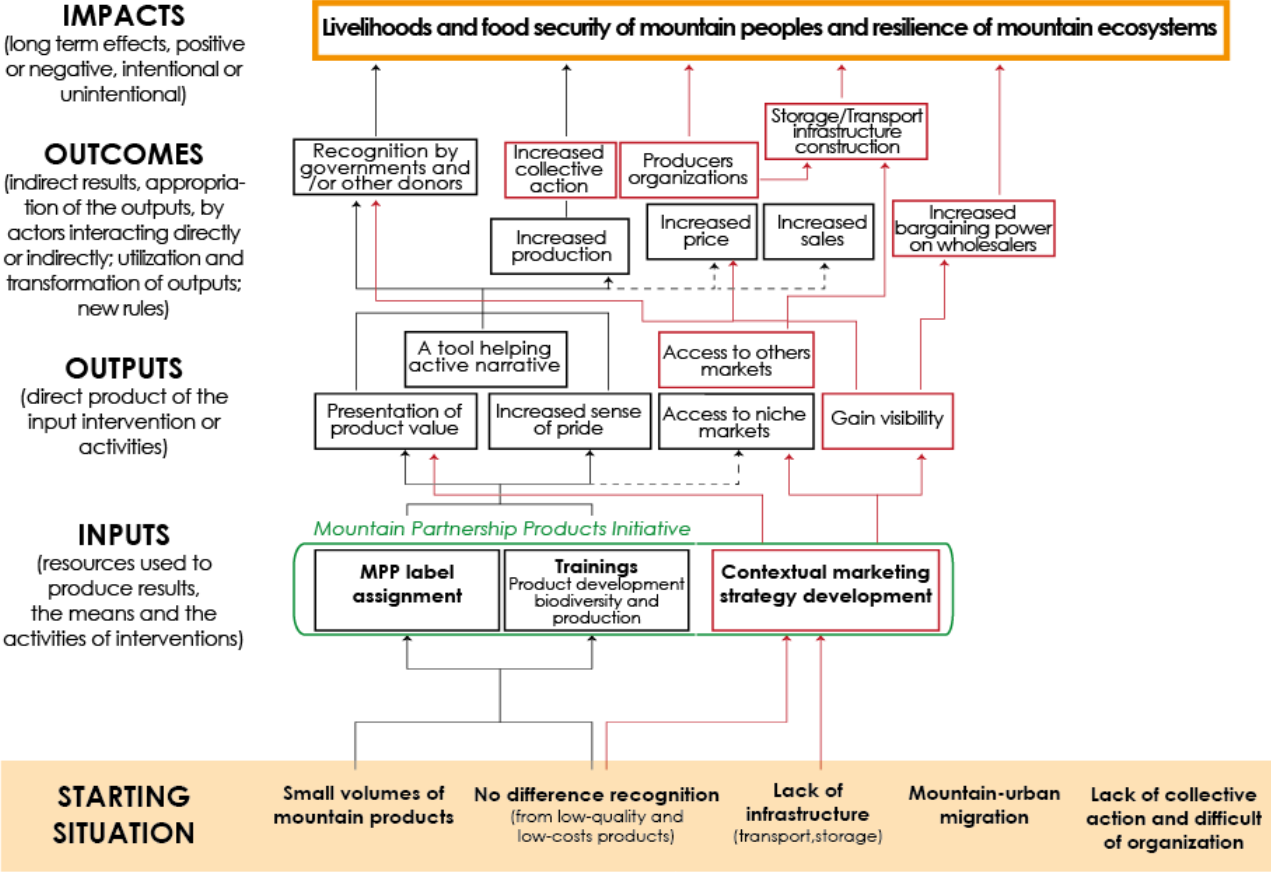


Image 4.2. Impact pathway: Input I

In image 4.4, we can see how the certification through a PGS of the Mountain Partnership Label will have a positive influence. We can recognize a double interest in PGS certification. The first interest is for the farmers, who will see their reputation increased and protected by this system. The second interest is for the MPS, that will harmonize the meaning behind the label and, at the same time, it will avoid the risk of free-riding behavior at large scale (one case of non-respecting rules, taking advantage from reputation of the others).

We can see also from the Impact pathway scheme, other direct outputs, like the access to other markets, the gain in visibility and an improved organization of farmers. In some cases, the participation to a PGS may contribute to have fiscal recognition for smallholder farmers and may increase bargaining power with wholesalers. Moreover, it can help to strength the collective action of farmers and improve linkages with consumers. The food environment, storage and conservation facilities may also experience positive changes thanks to this improved organization and collaboration.

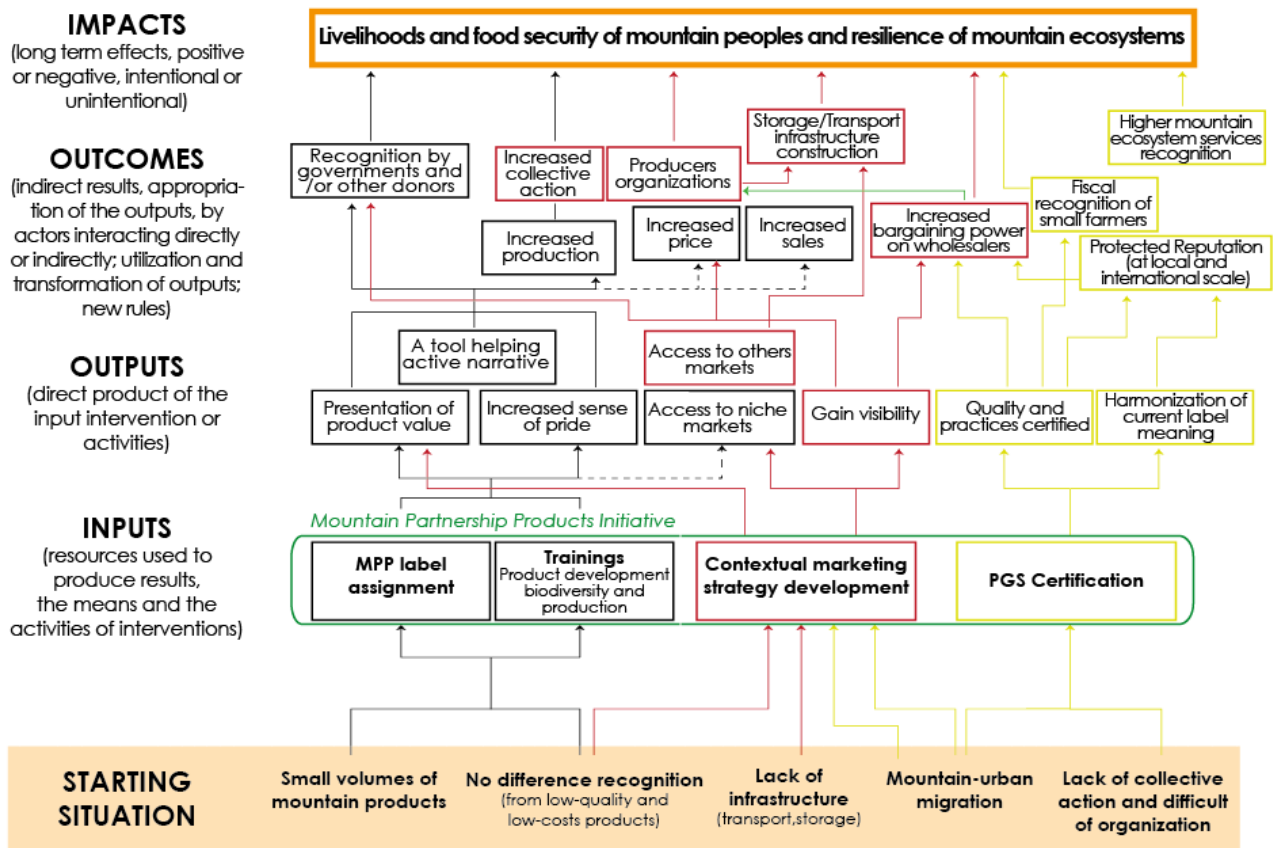


Image 4.4. Impact pathway: Input II

However, before jumping to the conclusion that PGS is the only and best solution to certify these products, it is necessary to analyse different options of certification and understand possible scenarios, in order to develop a strategy for future labelled products.

In the table below, we can see the advantages and the obstacles for several certification methods, ranging from no certification to Third Party Certification.

BOX 4
Scenarii of Certification

	ADVANTAGES	OBSTACLES
Existing PGS or New Mountain Groups in Existing PGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing in easier way thanks to existing organisational structures (not always) • Reinforcing existing community links and exchanges. • Learning process • Consumers inclusion: step toward a participative governance of food systems • Avoiding risk of free-rider behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing new balances in an already structured organization. Creating possible disagreements in the community (not always) • Organic practices (even if contextually defined) will become compulsory • May not be sufficient to open distribution channels for national or distributional requirements (HACCP for supermarkets, BPM for IFPP for example) • Introducing different standards (MPP: Altitude and traditional/innovative practices) in a structured PGS • Difficulties in consumer-producers relations (still possible to call them PGS?) and in improving administrative structure
New Mountain PGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing in easier way thanks to flexibility and no imposed pre-existing rules (not always) • Differentiating mountain products and highlighting mountain dynamics and value. • Implementing mountain/urban exchanges (producers/consumers) • Highlighting mountain role in non-timber products • Organic practices are not compulsories. (specifications of production are defined by each Mountain PGS) • Learning process • Consumers inclusion represent a step toward a participative governance of food systems • Approaching the label as system oriented, not product oriented • The mountain nature of the PGS is highlighted, instead of focusing on organic practices. Enhanced traditional/innovative practices (vs. others mountain labels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing programs to highlight PGS-mountain characteristics may be expensive and time demanding (not always) • Developing PGS mountain related activities (with education and tourism integration) requires territorial governance. • Differentiating territory may produce a circle of differentiation. Why not to differentiate other territory? (islands, deserts-Fragile Ecosystems) • Difficulties in consumer-producers relations (still possible to call them PGS?) and in improving administrative structure
TPC (Third party certification)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid certification for export (as ICS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economically hard to afford • No learning process in action, just certification oriented • Not sufficient for export (other hygiene standards and certifications are required. For example: BRC Global Standard for Food Safety, IFS-International Food Standard for EU, FSMA for USA and HACCP for supermarkets)
No certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing label process easily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only for local markets • Label based on the application (no difference with Slow Food Products)

As we can see from this table, for each type of certification it is possible to highlight pros and cons, according to the implementation of the initiative, time and resources required, having clear the relations between certification and distribution. The certification depend on the objectives of producers and the markets of each product.

As already said, MPS signed a Memorandum of understanding with IFOAM in June 2018, to provide a framework for future collaborations and for the implementation of PGS. This system of certification will certainly improve the impact of the label and it will provide a stronger guarantee of the quality of the product and of the production practices. However, IFOAM focus is on organic production and, if “Livelihood and food security of mountain peoples and resilience of mountain ecosystems” is the long-term impact attended, the value of mountain ecosystem should be highlighted in each intervention done by MPS. Therefore, instead of limiting PGS development to existing organic PGS, other kind of PGS could be considered and developed. Sometimes it is harder to integrate an existing PGS system than to stimulate the creation of a new PGS, with different standards and structures. Moreover, activities to push Mountain-related PGS may influence the political recognition of mountains and the attention to their people and ecosystems.

In conclusion, the main messages for MPS, following this research, could be summarized in the next paragraph, and they will drive the discussion in the last chapter toward possible implementation actions, related to two missing inputs, highlighted by the Impact Pathway Scheme: Contextual certification system strategy and contextual marketing strategy.

BOX 4

Feedbacks on PGS development - Interview with Flavia Castro

PGS are contextual and flexible: Flexibility and context-sensitivity are fundamental characteristics of PGS. It should be considered as a tool to avoid potential risks of development, in the hands of producers that will themselves define what they want to achieve.

Consumers-Producers relations: The base of this certification system is the relation among producers and consumers. However, this relation could be harder to achieve in some conditions. IFOAM is working on these issues and supporting the development of PGS even in particular contexts. In specific situations, the regulation could integrate the limitations in these exchanges and the certification system could be better adapted to these realities. There are cases of hard consumers-producers relations in India, Brasil and USA; interestingly, the strategies to overcome these obstacles are different.¹⁸

Involvement of new producers in a PGS: There might be obstacles in the inclusion of new producers, in addition to hard consumers-producers relations: transition toward organic practices (that should be attentively considered for an evolution of these practices); additional economic and administrative resources, that may represent an extra burden on energies and economic assets.

Territorial governance: PGS, as interesting tool to increase consumers-producers relation, could be one of the bases of urban/rural linkages. Regarding urban/rural planning initiatives, still in the agricultural area, there is an interesting project, currently being implemented in South Africa and Maputo.¹⁹

¹⁸ For more information on consumers' involvement in PGS: <https://www.ifoam.bio/en/pgs-updates>. And a compilation of case studies: <https://www.ifoam.bio/en/pgs-publications-english>

¹⁹ For more information see the article by Nicole Paganini: https://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/pgs_newsletter_may_june_2018_final.pdf

5 Results discussion and recommendation for MPS

The last chapter aims to define practical recommendation for MPS, following the analysis done during the research. It summarizes the issues that should be taken in consideration and it highlights two axes of actions and the related strategies. The first one is a contextual certification strategy that, starting from an ideal situation, tries to compromise with the complexity of reality; the second one is a contextual Marketing and Distribution Strategy, which demonstrates the necessity to work with the specificities of each case but at the same time suggests general approaches to deal with distribution.

5.1 MAIN MESSAGES FOR MPS

In conclusion, there are few key points, that should be considered by MPS and that could be useful to examine and go further in the initiative.

- MPP Label do not speak for itself. Active narrative is still necessary. In the current situation, without a well-known and controlled label, direct sales or informed retailers are the best channel for mountain products marketing.
- Marketing and distribution cannot be managed or driven by Rome. Local context understanding is fundamental. Support from Rome could be developed in other forms: Online Marketing material development, ESN Guide Workshops²⁰, Internship programs facilitation. Global marketing campaign is resource demanding and success is proportional to spent resources.
- Problems linked to storage and logistic issues are not solved. Often the increased sales and production are not followed by an improvement in stock holding or materials handling equipment.
- Improvement of local collective action is not yet there and it is fundamental for avoiding risks of free-riding behaviors and to improve cooperation that could be facilitated thanks to PGS certification.
- The recognition of MP label by governments as symbol of quality and the sense of pride of producers could push toward a movement of valorization of the areas of production. Applications to other national or international financing programs for territorial development could be facilitated thanks to the visibility and the recognition of the label.
- Organic PGS are not always a priority as certification method to open new markets. Other certifications are more frequently required or necessary. Organic PGS strategy with IFOAM for MP labels certification will lead toward exclusively organic new-labelled products.

In conclusion, thanks to focal points' feedbacks, based on everyday fieldwork, and thanks to the impact pathway method, that provided a theoretical framework to the analysis, the research tries to highlight some conceptual and practical suggestions for MPS.

At this stage of the initiative, it is necessary to develop a pro-active attitude, trying to anticipate possible future needs and avoiding unexpected outcomes.

As result of the previous analyses, we have seen what is fundamental to improve and to make effective the label: 1) a contextual marketing strategy developed in loco, with improved collective action and distribution infrastructure, and 2) a light strategy of certification, that does not require a heavy,

²⁰ Adventures in Sustainable Food Systems: A handbook (vademecum) of innovative local experiences from around the world, developed by ESN, FAO. (Florence Tartanac, Alison Loconto, Marcello Vicovaro)

imposed *ex-novo*, system of guarantee, but at the same time that does not drive toward exclusively organic products and is able to develop a broader approach on mountain governance.
How to deal with these two missing inputs and how to translate them in practice?

In the following paragraph, we can find advices and proposals, as possible next steps for future products and for already labelled products:

5.2 INTEGRATED CERTIFICATIONS STRATEGY

As we have seen in the previous chapters, certifications are strictly linked with the distribution channels considered for each product and with the affordability of the certification itself. However, it is possible to define some general conclusions for already labelled products and for the future products, understanding the goals and the strategy of certification to receive MP label, in complement to existing certification methods:


- **Future product strategy:**
 - **Products in existing PGS:**
 - understand if there are already products in existing organic PGS, which may receive the label, adding MPP specifications, considering obstacles and defining case by case strategy. (In ANNEX IV is showed possible existing PGS, in MPS areas of interest)
 - **Mountain Products that could be included in existing PGS:**
 - understand time of conversion (usually three years)
 - understand the minimum number of producers per local group (depending on countries national PGS rules. For example: for India is 5, for Peru is 6, for Kyrgyzstan is 3 or 5)
 - develop a strategy to integrate the existing PGS, considering obstacles in integration (See Box 3: Scenarii of Certification)
 - **Products that could not be included in existing PGS for several reasons:**
 - consider other kinds of PGS: Agroecological PGS (ex Maroc)²¹
 - consider MP label's assignment with the condition to organize a new PGS within 5 years.


The possibility to leave the certification of MP standards for a next moment, according with expectation on the label, will represents the flexibility and farmers' priorities understanding of this system of certification. It will push toward local cooperation, without excluding territories or producers. It will enhance collective action and potential of territorial governance and multisectoral activities. Generally, a system of certification would avoid risks of free-riders' behaviors (at local and at global scale), while this system would also consider time and organizational constraints.


²¹ Example of other kind of PGS with different standards and practices: <https://www.cirad.fr/en/news/all-news-items/articles/2018/science/participatory-agro-ecology-guarantee-system> and http://www.bothends.org/uploaded_files/document/LR_PGS_case_hyperlinks.pdf



- **Labelled products:**


Case by case strategy developed thanks to mail exchanges and interview's feedbacks and updating.

-  **INDIA:** Pink and Purple rice are becoming part of PGS thanks to a local association, called NESFAS, which deals with indigenous practices and culture. Mountain features and dynamics are not at the core of their action but PGS groups in mountains should be mapped, recognized and supported in their activities. Letter of agreements with IFOAM local offices could be developed, in order to define practical support. Chamomile tea is already certified by PGS.

-  **NEPAL:** For Black lentils and Mixed beans a PGS certification is under development in collaboration with an Italian association called OIKOS (www.istituto-oikos.org) (Rossella Ross-President, T+39 3356874995), in particular, Andrea Ricci is the reference person (andrea.ricci.bridge@gmail.com).

-  **BOLIVIA:** The case of Queso Achocalla and Queso Illimani is peculiar. PGS for products derived by milk are more complex in comparison to other food products because in Bolivia cows feeding practices are difficult to be monitored and basically cows eat what is available. The association PRO RURAL, Flor de leche's partner, is working on the definition of PGS for milk products and future collaborations are possible. (<http://www.prorural.org.bo/>)

-  **PERU:** Marmelada de Aguayamanto and Marmelada de Arándano are increasing their production but PGS certification is not yet considered. Other certifications are a priority, like BPM (Buona Pratica Manufactura, required to participate to public food procurement calls, schools in particular, for which the receipt of the jam has been already modified, with a reduced quantity of sugar) and HACCP (required for supermarkets and distribution chains).  Therefore, in this case, the support should prioritize certifications to improve the distribution, where organic quality is not the first concern.

-  **PANAMA:** Celibal Coffee has small volumes and it is sold to niche markets close to the area of production. Initially PGS where not considered necessary, but recently the focal point participated to trainings, organized by La Ciudad del Saber (<http://ciudadelsaber.org/en/work-areas/human-development>) about certifications and the product has been included in the database of products interested in organic certification. Even if the certification may not be considered as a priority, becoming part of a larger process on organic practices may improve positively the production and the livelihood of producers.

5.3 CONTEXTUAL MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY

First, in order to understand label's possible impacts it is necessary to:

- **Understand expectations in the application:**

Is the label the right support? Alternatively, is it necessary additional complement support?

- If the label will be a support to tell the story behind the production in an already structured distribution channel
 - No additional support in marketing is required (case of Bolivia)
- If the label will demonstrate and guarantee the quality of the product
 - A stronger guarantee system is required, according with certification priority and distribution channels
- If the label will help to gain visibility and to open new markets
 - A support in marketing strategy is required, not only with communication materials but also with structured marketing planning
- If the product has other certifications priorities to open distribution channels
 - Certification for MP label can have time conditions

- **How to provide a support in the development of marketing strategy and distribution planning?**

General suggestions for MP labelled products, also valuable for other mountain products:

- **BtoB contracts.** In some cases, even only one company may represent the fortune of small farmers. (Push-Marketing strategy. See Box 3. Feedbacks on marketing strategies)
- **Institutional Food Public Procurements** may be a possibility for smallholders due to their advantaged position in some programs²²
Swensson, Luana (ESN) Luana.Swensson@fao.org is a resource contact to understand different approaches in countries
Mountain Weeks Procurements and education programs may be a possibility to engage public sector in mountain procurements.
- **Online marketing training** may help the product to gain visibility, spread recipes and cooking advices. Training or support with focus on online advertisement are often required (Peru, Panama, India)
- **Internships for students with focal points associations.** Mountain partnership secretariat could spread information about Internship call to Universities and research centers.
- **Informed retailers:** awareness raising activities for retailers and communication materials devoted to them may help to increase sales and allow retailers to tell themselves the story of the products.

- **Is a global marketing campaign a good move?**

A global marketing campaign is resource demanding and the commercial impacts are limited if there are not enough resources to charge the label of significance and to gain visibility.

The success is directly proportional to the resources spent for the campaign.

Moreover, Quality, Fair Trade and Geographical Indication labels are spread all over western countries and these labels are overlapping in consumers' minds.

²² For more information: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7636e.pdf>

Alternatively, it is possible to make agreements with distribution companies, relying on FAO reputation; however, distribution companies should be identified by a marketing strategy for each product. Interesting agreements could be developed with small-medium private local companies.

The Handbook for innovative and sustainable Food Systems, developed by ESN Division, as already explained in the third chapter, is a useful support for trainings and workshops with a systematic approach. This kind of workshops could be an important step for the improvement of MP initiative, with a particular attention to distribution, as a comprehensive issue and as entry point to look at the entire local food system.

Finally, recognizing the necessity to face both these issues Certification and Distribution, it is crucial also to understand their relations. For all the products, according with distribution channels, different standards and requirements need to be met and the system of certification is to be defined consequently. For face-to-face, spatial proximity and spatially extended exchanges the required certifications are completely different; in the first case it is not even necessary, because the exchange is based on trust or on the reputation of producers. While in the case of spatially extended, the market often requires certification (like Fair Trade or Organic certification) in order to access to it, to differentiate your product and to increase sales.

In these aspects relies the strength and the weakness of the MPP Initiative, which deals with complexity and contextuality that should not be neglected or underestimated but, at the same time, should be recognized as a potential.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research tried to provide recommendations for the improvement of Mountain Partnership Products initiative, highlighting the relations between distribution and certification issues. These two elements are deeply intertwined, and it is necessary to consider them at the same time, understanding their potentially positive interdependence.

The ideal solution for the Certification would be a certification system for mountain products, applicable to all MPP products. However, there are several obstacles to this ideal situation, like low budget, small volumes of production or access difficulties to certain areas.

The credibility of the label would be reduced due to the contextual definition of control but, at this stage, a case by case strategy is necessary for products already certified by MPP. Even if the certification system is not the best, these products will have however the opportunity to improve their positive impacts. Organic PGS (the system of certification FAO and IFOAM are focused to) have the bias of controlling only the organic aspects, leaving away the issues of varieties, post-harvest transformation and fair exchange. Moreover, organic PGS are not always a priority as certification method to open new markets. Other certifications are more frequently required or necessary in order to open markets and increased sales. In addition, IFOAM's organic PGS will lead toward exclusively organic new-labelled products.

In any case existing organic PGS are interesting as certification method for MPS because it ensures a sort of traceability useful for MPP label, they could enlarge marketing channels, lead to a broader recognition by governments and they are a good frame to reinforce collective action local capacity

Moreover, certification itself has a particular potential for territorial development through the improvement of collective action, despite the cost and the resources to create a certification system.

MPP label, certified and supported with distribution strategy, could be considered as a tool and part of a broader strategy to stimulate an entire territory. The sense of pride of mountain producers would be integrated with a sense of responsibility, based on the interrelationship of producers. If well managed, the certification is in producers' interest because it improves loyalty among them on production practices and it avoids free riders' behaviors. At the same time, it is in MPS's interest because it harmonizes the meaning behind different region of the world and avoid free riders' behaviors at global scale. Once trust is solid among producers, collective action and territorial governance have rich soil to grow.

Finally, concerning the support provided by MPS in distribution issues, a global marketing campaign has low chances to succeed, due to the direct proportion between spent resources and impacts.

Other activities could be developed in order to stimulate and support local marketing campaign. (like Online Marketing materials, Guide Workshops for ex.ESN-FAO, Internship programs facilitation).

Alternatively, it is possible to make agreements with distribution companies, relying on FAO reputation; however, distribution companies should be identified by a marketing strategy for each product. Interesting agreements could be developed with small-medium private local companies.

Problems linked to storage and logistic issues are still not solved. Often the increased sales and production are not followed by an improvement in infrastructures like stock holding or materials handling equipment.

A deep comprehension of local context is fundamental to develop a strategy. Therefore an initial activity could be an assessment of the food system around the product, to understand challenges and weak points and to face them with an integrated approach.

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For more information:

Mountain Partnership Secretariat website: <http://www.fao.org/mountain-partnership/about/en/>

Memorandum of Understanding MPS-IFOAM: [http://www.fao.org/mountain-partnership/news/news-detail/en/?dyna_fef\[uid\]=1137657](http://www.fao.org/mountain-partnership/news/news-detail/en/?dyna_fef[uid]=1137657)

EU regulation on mountain products: EU Council regulation 1257/1999 available: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c70dfc8c-6243-4b1a-817e-4673042024c4/language-en>

Italian Ministerial Decree about Mountain label: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2014/665/oj

PGS definition. IFOAM website: <https://www.ifoam.bio/en/organic-policy-guarantee/participatory-guarantee-systems-pgs>

Euromontana Euromarc Project: <https://www.euromontana.org/projet/euromarc/>

Impress Method: <https://www.cirad.fr/en/our-research/the-impact-of-our-research/impress-ex-ante-a-methodological-approach-to-develop-the-impact-culture/principles-and-tools>

Agro ecological PGS and examples: <https://www.cirad.fr/en/news/all-news-items/articles/2018/science/participatory-agro-ecology-guarantee-system> and http://www.bothends.org/uploaded_files/document/LR_PGS_case_hyperlinks.pdf

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Annex I: Monitoring summary of labelled products

Products part of the research

Product name	Origin country/region (big and medium cities nearby)	Production features (cash crop/staple, n/type producers)	Trade Supply Chain (Volume, Processed/Unprocessed, Packed/Unpacked)	Producers Organisation (Quality control, External support, Regional and local programs, existing national certification)
Black Amaranth	Bolivia/South America	VEGETAL cash/staple (50%self consumption) 20 producers from 4 communities ->?	Packed (training)	FAO training Foundation Pasos
Queso Achocalla	Bolivia / South America (Municipio de Achocalla, Nevado de Illimani) LA PAZ 15km main road	ANIMAL cash/staple 180fam producers 70%women fam collectors	60 550 -> 1930 kg (+98%) already high	(microempresa eco-social Flor de Leche Independent/Prod. organization) member of Asociación de Organizaciones de Productos Ecológicos de Bolivia AOPEB, with a developed PGS
Queso Rocha del Illimani	Bolivia/South America (Municipio de Achocalla, Nevado de Illimani)LA PAZ 15km main road	ANIMAL cash/staple 180fam producers- 70%women fam collectors	60 324 -> 2267 kg (+91%) (=€ already high)	(microempresa eco-social Flor de Leche Independent/Prod. organization) * same
Himali Black Lentils	Nepal/Asia and the Pacific (Goljung and Gatlang of Resuwa district, 1800 metres, 5000h) KATHMANDU 50 km main road	VEGETAL cash/staple 375->438 producers (W increased)	55 -> 69 ton (135 ->> 162 kg/pack) (1,3->>1,58rupi/pack)	Snow Land Organic Company (Cooperative, Producers organization) OCN
Jumla Mixed Beans	Nepal/Asia and the Pacific (Sinja, Jumla District, Sinja Valley Group includes 5000h) 800km Kathmandu	VEGETAL cash/staple 468->600 producers (W increased/)	60 -> 120 ton (125->>175 kg/pack) (1,2 -> 1,5 rupi/pack) financed Grinder machine and grain packing machine	Sinja Valley Group (Family farmer, Cooperative, Producers organization) Not YET OCN
Maca Andina	Peru/South America (Valle del Mantaro) 50 Km Huanacayo 200Km Lima	VEGETAL cash/processed 120 producers -> ?	2400-> 6000 kg	Granovita Andina (Family Farmer), Red de Agroindustria Rural (REDAR)

Blueberry jam Marmelada de Arandano	Peru/South America (Región de Conchucos)	VEGETAL cash/processed	1596->1920 jars		Red de Agroindustria Rural (REDAR) Ally Mishky (Association's project)
	140 km trujillo 900000ha	400 producers -> ?	1,85 -> 2,3 dollar/jars		SGP Ancash close +SGP Huánuco auth. (Consejo Nacional SGP Peru)
Physalis Jam Mermelada de aguaymanto			1596->1920 jars		
	Peru/South America (Región de Conchucos)	VEGETAL cash/processed	1,85 -> 2,3 dollar/jars Same info for both jams. Usually sold paired		Red de Agroindustria Rural (REDAR) Ally Mishky (Association's project)
Pink Rice					
	India/Asia and the Pacific (Ri Bhol watershed, 80km Shillong 150000km)	VEGETAL cash/staple >50 people 2500 rural women (all the company not for rice)	253Kg ->? USD - pack(400g)	198	Mahila Umang Producers Company (family farmers producers organisation) Fair Trade Forum India PGS in process
Purple rice					
	India/Asia and the Pacific (Ri Bhol watershed, Himalayan Region)	VEGETAL cash/staple >50 people ??? 100 W	805 Kg ->? 1055USD pack(400g) 210 Rps / 1 kg	Price: \$3.25/kg	Mahila Umang Producers Company (family farmers producers organisation) PGS in process
Chamomille tea					
	India/Asia and the Pacific (Uttarakhand, Himalayan Region, tiny land holdings in the Gagas river basin) town of Ranikhet	VEGETAL cash/domestic >50 people 100%W 2500 rural women	500 kg -> 500 kg >3000 rupi/kg dollars/kg)	2500- (38,5->46	Mahila Umang Producers Company (family farmers producers organisation) Pan Himalayan Grassroots Development Foundation (non profit organisation. In PGS)

Products not included in the research

<i>Felt toys and ornaments</i>	Mongolia/ Asia and the Pacific (Tsagaan Shuvuut and Jargalant Khairkhan Mountains, Altai Republic)	CRAFT cash people 100%W	10 ????????? ?????	Snow Leopard Trust, Family farmers and community, (main commitment is protecting snow leopards)
<i>Silk and Felt Scarf TopchuScarf</i>	Kyrgyz/ Asia and the Pacific (Barskoon, Issyk-Kul)	CRAFT cash people 100%W (Topchu Art Group)	7 720 pieces (700-900 scarfs per year) => ??	Agency of Development Initiatives (ADI) - ADI Self Help group- network of community-based organizations. Cooperative, Women association,
<i>Silk and Felt Scarf</i>	Kyrgyz/ Asia and the Pacific (Kulanak, Kara-Too Mountains, Naryn Region) Margilan Fergana Valley	10 people 100%W (Bai El Self-Help Group)	????????? ?????	Agency of Development Initiatives (ADI) - ADI Self Help group (Bai El Self-Help Group)

Rosehip tea

Kyrgyz/ Asia and the Pacific (Jalal-Abad, Turgen canyon, close Ak-Bulun village)

VEGETAL cash?/staple nomad diet
10 people 100%W

1- sale just started ??????????
?????

Agency of Development Initiatives (ADI) - ADI Self Help group- network of community-based organizations. Cooperative, Women association, **NO certification but organic** Farmer cooperative Alysh-Dan, (Family farmer, Cooperative, Community, Producers organization) GIZ Organic certification not renewed (Too expensive) national network Federation of organic development NGO Fundación CoMunidad, He calls it in the application form

Dried Apricot

Kyrgyz/ Asia and the Pacific (Tien-Shan Mountains, Bakhten region, village of Kara-Bak)

VEGETAL cash/domestic >50 people (1200 producers including 63 family farmer ->???)

24 tons -> ??

Process/packed in situ (FAO construction of the storage/warehouse facility at the production site -> still in construction?)

Ceibal Coffe

Panama, North and Central America and the Caribbean (Central

VEGETALcash/domestic 11-20 people (49 family farmers or 30

60->40->70 pack \$=same 20,4->16,6->23,8kg 5doll/340g bag =??

Gipah Tea and Ice cream coffe

Philippines/ Asia and the Pacific

Annex II: Products typologies

VOLUMES	CERTIFICATIONS	Actual MARKETS - Food Networks
Micro 0g - 200kg Black Amaranth Bolivia (starting production) Ceibal coffe - Panama (23kg)	Organic PGS Chamomille Tea -India Apricot - Kyrgyz (in the past Organic production certified, not confirmed today)	Face to face Direct sale or farmer's markets Maca Andina -Peru Marmelada de Arandano Blueberry and Aguaymanto Physalis - Peru Ceibal coffe - Panama
Small 200kg - 1000kg Marmelada de Arandano Blueberry and Aguaymanto Physalis - Peru (760Kg) Pink rice - India (253kg) Purple rice - India (805 kg) Chamomille Tea -India (500kg)	Organic PGS in progress Pink rice - India Purple rice - India	Multi channel distribution - proximity (Spatial proximity/Face to face) Queso Achocalla - Bolivia Queso Roha del Illimani - Bolivia Black Lentils-Nepal Jumlas Mixed beans-Nepal Pink rice - India Purple rice - India Rosehip Tea - Kyrgyz
Medium 1000kg-50 ton: Queso Achocalla - Bolivia (1930kg) Queso Roha del Illimani - Bolivia (2267kg) Maca Andina -Peru (6000kg)	NO Certification yet Queso Achocalla - Bolivia (AOPEB) Queso Roha del Illimani - Bolivia (AOPEB) Marmelada de Arandano Blueberry and Aguaymanto Physalis - Peru Maca Andina -Peru Rosehip Tea - Kyrgyz Ceibal coffe - Panama	Multi channel distribution - extended (Spatial proximity/export) Chamomille Tea -India Apricot - Kyrgyz
Large >50 ton: Black Lentils-Nepal (69ton) Jumlas Mixed beans-Nepal (120ton)	Organic external expert certification Black Lentils and Jumlas Mixed beans-Nepal (OWFF Organic World Fair Future/ OCN-Organic Certification Nepal)	Spatially extended /

Out of category:
 Rosehip Tea Kyrgyz?, Apricot Kyrgyz?, Mongolia? 2 Kyrgyz Scarfs

Out of category:
 Black Amaranth (slow food) , Mongolia, 2 Kyrgyz Scarfs,

Out of category:
 Black Amaranth,

Annex III: Focal points' Interviews Summary

LABELLED PRODUCTS	PERU (2 Jams)	BOLIVIA (2 cheese)	PANAMA (coffee)	NEPAL (Lentils and beans)	INDIA (2 rices)
ANALYSIS	Legitimate the product, demonstrate value, obtain higher price SUPPORT: Marketing and Distribution	Demonstrate the value, tell a story, SUPPORT: Process, Marketing	Differentiation from low quality coffee, open niche markets with higher prices SUPPORT: other (?)	Differentiation SUPPORT: Production, Transformation, Storage, Marketing, Distribution	Gain visibility (Not yet achieved) Increase production not only self consumption SUPPORT: Storage, Marketing, Distribution.
EXPECTATIONS/APPLICATIONS	Products recognized by hotels, stores (still limited), production increased, Tourists sales increased	Label is a support to tell a story behind the production, but DIRECT contact is fundamental. Increase direct sales (not only caused by the label)	Niche markets recognition (thanks to label and packaging)	Sense of pride of producers, Open markets, supermarkets	Increased sales (not yet recognized and well known label and products)
DIFFICULTIES SOLVED	Sustainable Production intensification, Transformation and logistic, Online marketing, Recognition of the label still necessary (fairs)	Regularisation of small farmers (fiscal point of view), Trainings on client oriented approach and attention, Commercialization and direct sale (label do not speak for itself)	Online platform, support finances of farmers and organisation (to allow them to make investments and not sell to wholesalers) Join other programs (climate change, ecosystem services)	Upscale the production, Join other programs for farmers (Prime minister) Organisation of farmers, Recognition of the label still necessary (fairs, events), Storage Facilities necessities (facilitate sales in city), Online marketing	Orientation for retailers and consumers. Online Marketing, Recipes on packaging or cook-video, Events and Fairs, Gain Visibility (Proposal: MP Online Platform,, improve Global feature)
ADDITIONAL SUPPORT REQUIRED	BPM (Buona Practica Manufactura), HACCP Some stores requires officially organic	PGS for milk more difficult, MP label not possible for supermarkets	Certification is not a priority but he will attend trainings	PGS efforts in place (Oikos) ICT better for export (more expensive)	Already Import/Export licence PGS Under development with NESFAS
CERTIFICATION NEEDED	>PGS to be recognized organic (?) >PGS to certify Mplabel >Online marketing Trainings >Interns for marketing and certifications; >Work on value chain-STORES local, ensure market (PUSH strategy) > IFPP (with certifications) >IFOAM (organic,IFPP)	>PGS already in place for fruits and vegetables, PRO RURAL (allied association) working on milk toward PGS >IFOAM (and Pro Rural PGS Mountain) >Work on Policies (milk producers)	>Capacitation trainings, cooperatives organization > Online Marketing Trainings >Increase of production possible with low interest loans and ensure market (Push strategy) >JOIN other programs national or intergouvernemental	>Capacitation trainings, cooperatives organization > Online Marketing Trainings >JOIN other programs national (thanks to political stability) or intergouvernemental >PGS possibly under development in collaboration with OIKOS (Andrea Ricci)	> Marketing support Materials for retailers and consumers orientation > Publicity and Events (Fairs) >Slow Food Outlet? >PGS Nesfas IFOAM

Legend:

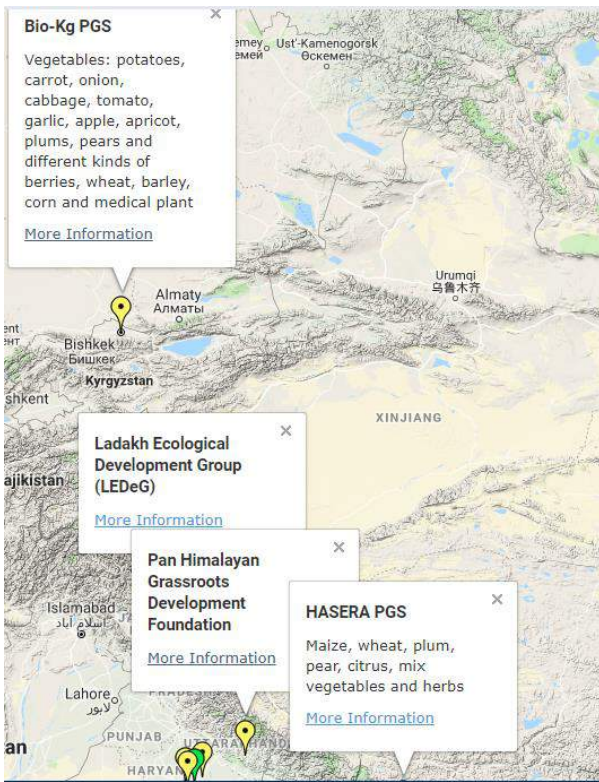
- National and international programs
- Marketing
- Certifications
- Collective action-Logistic/Productio

Annex IV: Existing organic PGS

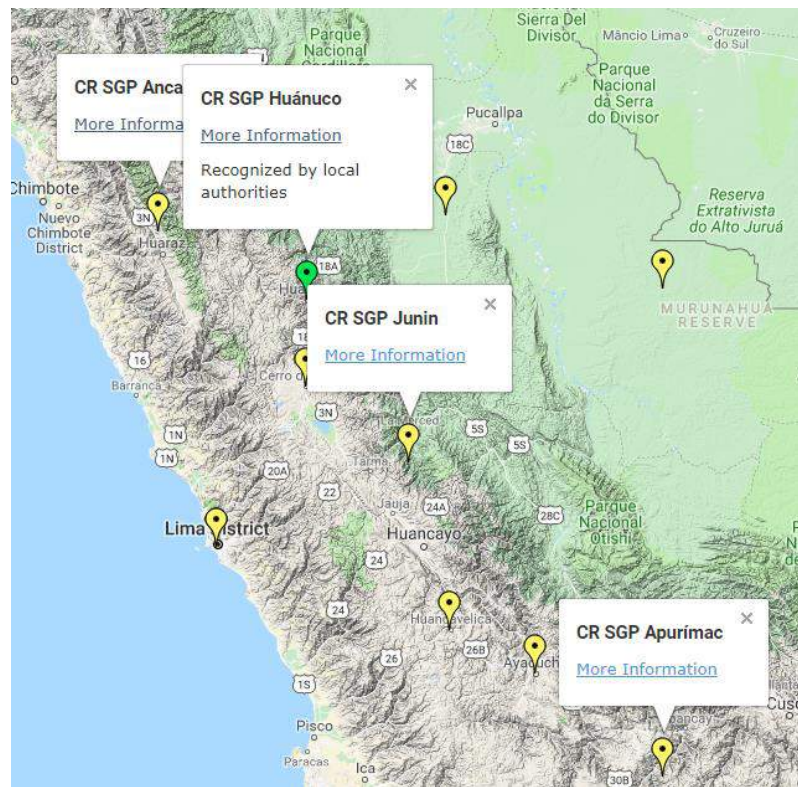
The following maps highlight PGS in mountain regions, which could be interesting for the research of new products to be labelled.

They have mainly raw materials and products that are not transformed. However, an analysis of existing or possible transformations of these products may be useful for the development of Phase II of the Initiative.

INDIA, NEPAL, KYRGYZSTAN



PERU



BOLIVIA



Résumé

Titre : Certification et distribution des produits de la *Mountain Partnership* : Guide à la décision pour l'initiative *Mountain Partnership* et pour les produits de montagne.

Cette guide a pour objectif de formuler des recommandations pour la distribution et une nouvelle labellisation des produits de montagne reconnus par le *Mountain Partnership Secretariat*, basé à la FAO.

La *Mountain Partnership Products Initiative* (l'Initiative en faveur des Produits de l'Alliance des Montagnes) s'est engagée dans un processus de différenciation des produits de montagne par rapport à d'autres produits, grâce à un label « narrant », afin d'améliorer les conditions de vie et la sécurité alimentaire des populations de montagne et de préserver les écosystèmes montagneux.

La première phase de l'initiative, avec l'attribution du label en support de 17 produits de montagne dans 7 pays, est terminée et cette recherche montre certains impacts du label, grâce aux commentaires et aux *feedbacks* des membres de l'initiative. Après avoir analysé la situation actuelle et les trajectoires des produits labellisés, cette guide se focalise sur la distribution de ces produits et les améliorations que pourraient apporter la définition de stratégies marketing adaptées et la mise en place d'un système de certification.

A partir de ces réflexions, cette étude développe des suggestions pour les prochaines étapes de l'initiative, tout en faisant des considérations plus larges sur les dynamiques des territoires de montagne, leurs écosystèmes et leurs systèmes alimentaires.

Mots clés

Mountain Partnership, Systèmes alimentaires de Montagne, Distribution alimentaire, Certification, Systèmes de Garantie Participative, Label.

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Ce diplôme ingénieur spécialisé est une formation labellisée par la Chaire Unesco Alimentations du monde



Formation accréditée par la Conférence des Grandes Ecoles (CGE)



Mountain Partnership Products' certification and distribution

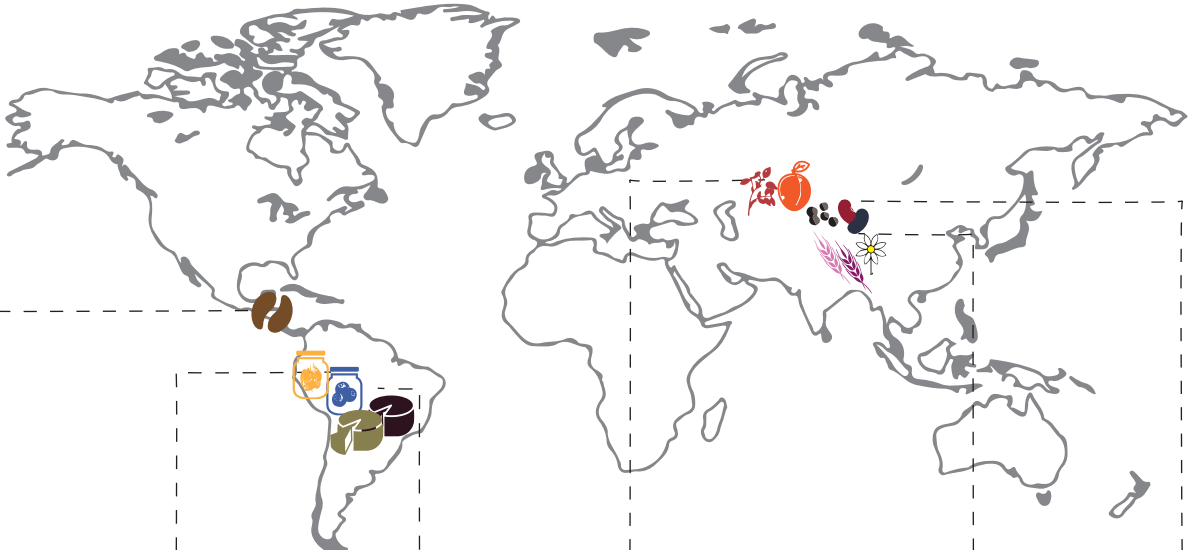
An informative guide for Mountain Partnership initiative and for mountain products



Mountain Partnership Products Initiative (MPP): what is it?

The Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS) and Slow Food launched the initiative with the objective to distinguish mountain products from other products. It is translated in a voluntary label for mountain products' quality to promote access to markets for small mountain producers.

This label is focused on products, which supports local biodiversity and production methods, which are linked to cultural traditions of mountain communities. At present, 17 products are certified with MPP. For each product MPS is in contact with a Focal Point. This research will focus only on food products



PANAMA	PERU	BOLIVIA	KYRGYZS REPUBLIC	INDIA	NEPAL
Celibal Coffee	Marmelada de Arandano, Marmelada de Aguaymanto and Maca Andina	Queso Achocalla, Queso Roha del Illimani and Amaranto Negro	Rosehip Tea and Hairless Apricots	Pink rice, Purple rice and Chamomile tea	Black Lentils and Jumlas Mixed beans



Main Challenges: Distribution and Certification

Marketing and distribution activities cannot be analyzed without a larger reflection about the certification and the meaning of the label itself, which are deeply intertwined with distribution. Food distribution is generally considered as a subset of the food system, therefore it is necessary to carry out a comprehensive analysis. The MPP label is defined as a narrative label, which aims to tell the story behind the product. This perspective about a label collects several issues and enlarge the idea of quality, which is not represented only by technical approaches, analysis or degustation, but which is based on a story. This flexibility represents a strength and an open approach, but at the same time it can create confusion in costumers' eyes and can drive to misunderstanding.

The multiplication of label with unclear definition of standards have driven many consumers to mistrust the entire system of certifications. The MPP label includes elements of Geographical Indications (GI), because of its attention to the territory and mountain areas; it considers elements of social justice, fair remuneration and Fair Trade (FT); and it testify at the same time environmentally friendly production, not always 100% organic (BIO).



Methodology: How to improve mountain products marketing?

It is complex to define what a mountain products is, due to the diversity in techniques and in morphology, climate and landscape of mountains. It is fundamental to understand the peculiarity of each area and the reasons behind the marginality. Therefore, two main aspects will be developed for this research: an understanding of the product, according with production potential, distribution and certification issues (STEP I) and an understanding of the causal linkages among interventions of the projects for mountain areas and their impacts (STEP II). It does not presume to be exhaustive; however, it tries to show the actual challenges and to suggest possible advances for the projects in mountain areas and for MPP.

STEP I: An understanding of the products

The following scheme summarize for all the food products, the analysis of production potential (with the main criterium of volume), of certifications and of distribution (with a geographical differentiation of markets). The scheme is to be read horizontally by criterium.

CRITERIUM: VOLUME



Categories:

MICRO
0-200kg

SMALL
200kg-1000kg

MEDIUM
1000kg-50ton

LARGE
>50ton

CRITERIUM: CERTIFICATION



Categories:

PGS
Participatory Guarantee System
Certified products

PGS in progress
Participatory Guarantee System
under development by other associations

NO Certifications
Not certified products (except for supermar-
kets mandatory certifications-few cases)

TPC
Third Party Certification

CRITERIUM: DISTRIBUTION MARKETS



Categories:

Face to Face
Personal interaction mediate
the commercial activity
through authenticity and trust.

Spatial proximity
Products are produced and retailed in the
region of production; the "local nature"
of the product is an added value for the
consumer at the point of retail.

Spatially extended
The consumer has no personal experience of the
region of production; value and meaning laden
information about the place of production and those
producing the food is translated to consumers

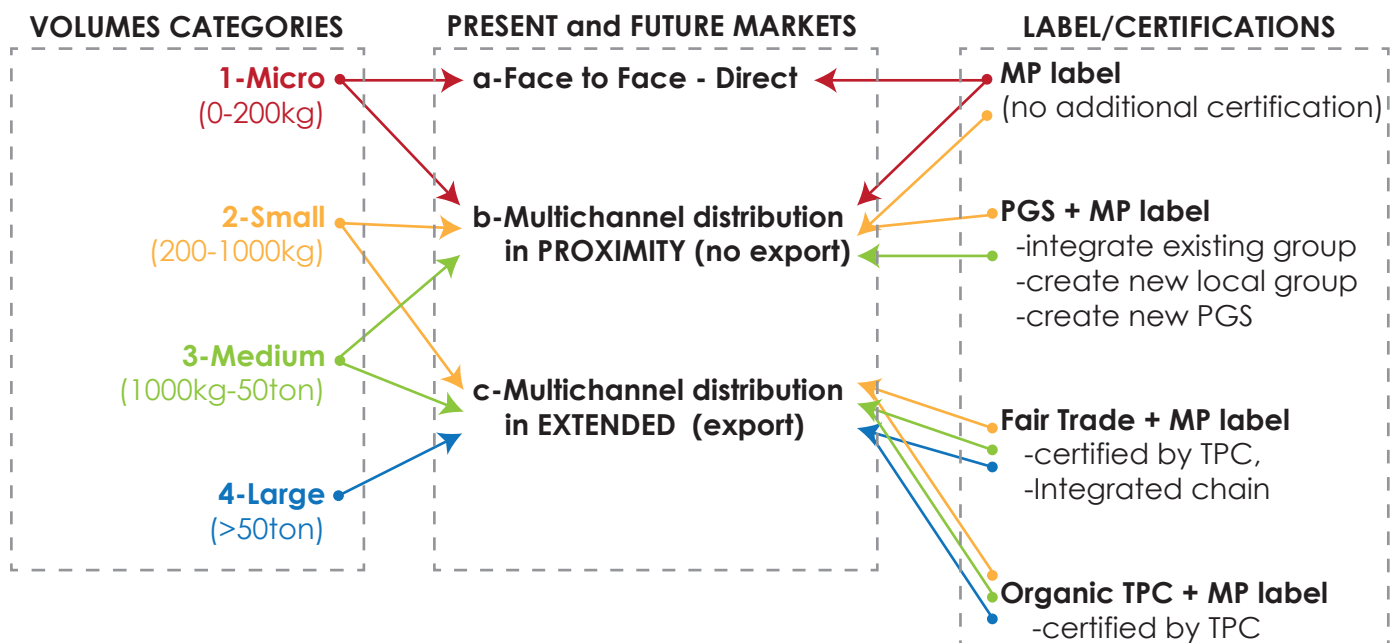
MP label: Focal points interviews main results

THE LABEL - The label is generally considered as a sign of distinction, which testify the difference of the mountain products from other products and as a tool to tell the story behind the production and transformation. Often the label is not sufficient to tell the story on its own. MPP Label do not speak for itself. Active narrative is still necessary.

THE EXPECTATIONS - All the applications received by the MPS (necessary to get the MPP label) marked the necessity to have additional support in Marketing and Distribution; some cases also mention also Storage and Transformation.

MONITORING - The monitoring on going. MPS has received positive feedbacks from several focal points. Almost all have increased their production. However, the casual effect is not always direct between the increase of production and the label's impact.

Therefore the following scheme shows possible linkages among volume categories, markets and certifications, which are dynamic. We can see how one element's change brings to the others elements' changes and how systems of certification are linked with markets and distribution

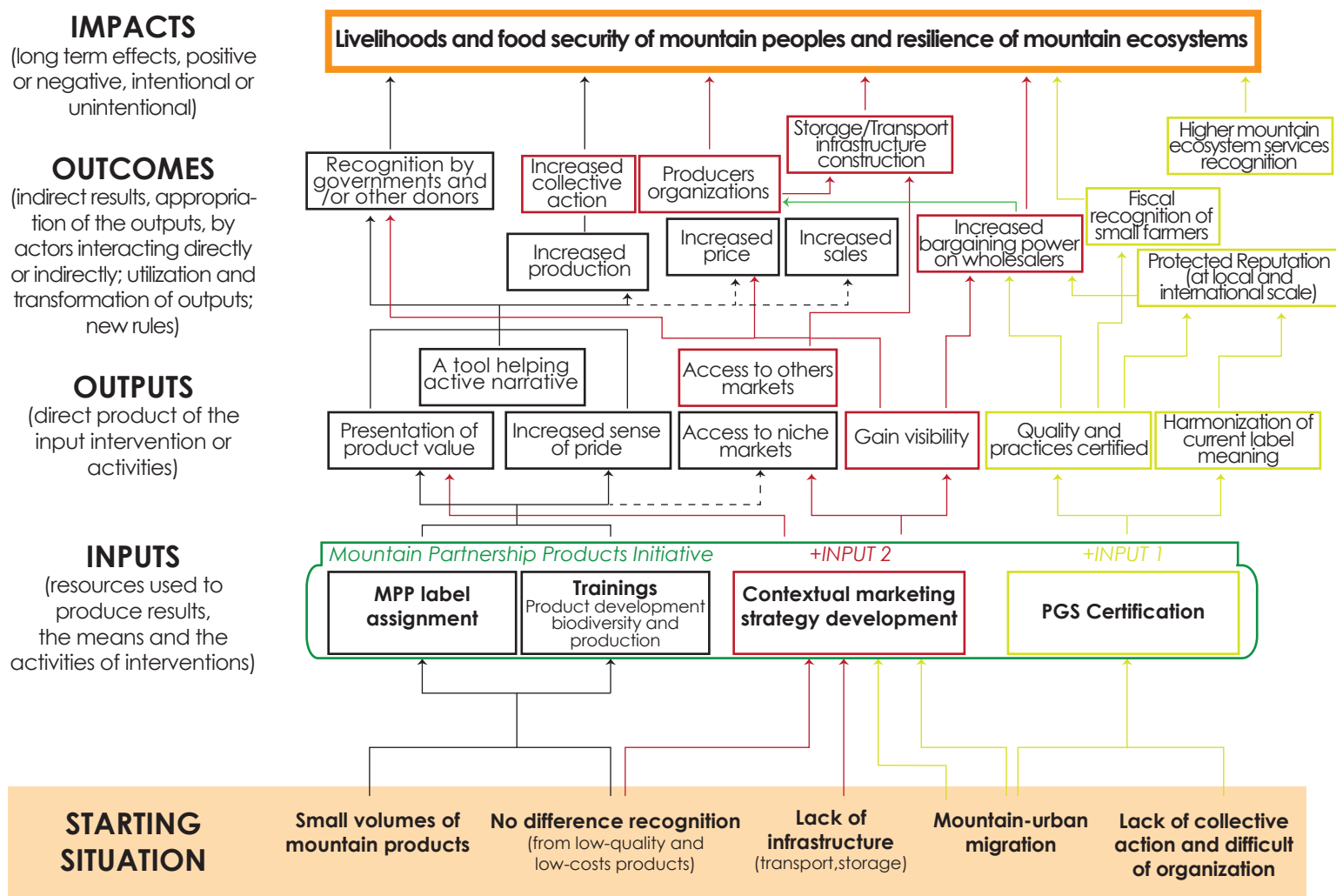


STEP II: Impact Pathway

The Impact Pathway tries to make explicit the underlying logic of how things will happen and with whom, and the most plausible hypotheses on which the intervention is going to act. It represents the causal process of the interventions; it is based on a detailed description to highlight causality relations among:

INPUTS, OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES and IMPACTS.

In order to achieve the expected long term impacts deeply and sustainably, to enhance direct and indirect results of the label and to deliver its potential, two main axes of intervention should still be considered for the Phase II of the initiative: a contextual marketing strategy (INPUT 1) and an integrated certification system (INPUT 2).



In this scheme we can see firstly the problems that mountain peoples and ecosystems constantly face as **STARTING SITUATION**.

MPP Initiative is proposed as possible input given to overcome problems and obstacles of mountain areas. The activities and the intervention in this case are: the provision of the label for several products and some training activities about product development and biodiversity. These inputs produced particular outputs and outcomes, which contribute to the final impact "Livelihoods and food security of mountain peoples and mountain ecosystems".

However, in order to achieve this goal deeply and sustainably, to enhance direct and indirect results of the label and to deliver its potential, two main axes of intervention, or missing **INPUTS**, should still be considered for the Phase II of the initiative.

INPUT 1 shows the contribution that a marketing strategy development may possibly have on mountain farmer's conditions and mountain environments. The participative understanding of present challenges and the development of a strategy may help to increase production and sales, but first, it would contribute to have a balanced development of activities and diversity of crops in the area. A prior reflection on the system and on marketing may help to avoid these unattended results.

INPUT 2 presents possible outputs and outcomes of the certification of the MPP Label through a PGS. We can recognize a double interest in PGS certification. The first interest is for the farmers, who will see their reputation increased and protected by this system. The second interest is for the MPS, that will harmonize the meaning behind the label and, at the same time, it will avoid the risk of free-riding behavior at large scale (one case of non-respecting rules, taking advantage from reputation of the others).

We can see also from the Impact pathway scheme, other direct outputs, like the access to other markets, the gain in visibility and an improved collective action among farmers and with consumers.

For each certification and way to certify it is possible to highlight pros and cons, according to the implementation of the initiative, time and resources required. However it is necessary to have clear in mind the relations between certification and distribution. The certification depends on the objectives of producers and the markets of each product.

Thanks to the analysis of products, production and commercialization conditions and focal points' feedbacks, based on everyday fieldwork (STEP I), and thanks to the impact pathway method (STEP II), the research tries to highlight some conceptual and practical recommendations for MPS as new INPUTS for the Initiative. (+INPUT 1 and +INPUT 2)

1 INTEGRATED CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

The ideal solution would be a certification system for mountain products, applicable to all MPP products. However, there are obstacles to this ideal situation, like low budget, small volumes of production or access difficulties to certain areas.

The credibility of the label would be reduced due to the contextual definition of control but, at this stage, a case by case strategy is necessary for products already certified by MPP. Even if the certification process is not the best these products will have however the opportunity to improve their positive impacts.

Organic PGS (the system of certification FAO and IFOAM are focused to) have the bias of controlling only the organic aspects, leaving away the issues of varieties, post-harvest transformation and fair exchange. Moreover Organic PGS are not always a priority and they will lead toward exclusively organic new-labelled products.

In any case existing organic PGS are interesting for MPS because they ensure a sort of traceability, they could enlarge sale channels, lead to a broader recognition by governments and they are a good frame to reinforce collective action local capacity.

Case by case strategy for labelled products

INDIA: Pink and Purple rice are becoming part of PGS thanks to a local association, called NESFAS. Letter of agreements with IFOAM local offices could be developed, in order to define practical support.

BOLIVIA: PGS for products derived by milk (like Queso Achocalla and Queso Ilimani) are more complex in comparison to other food products. Cows feeding practices are difficult to be monitored. However, the association PRO RURAL, Flor de leche's partner, is working on the definition of PGS for milk products.

PERU: Marmelada de Aguayamanto and Marmelada de Arándano are increasing their production but PGS certification is not yet considered. Other certifications are a priority, like BPM and HACCP. In this case, the support should prioritize certifications to improve the distribution, where organic quality is not the first concern.

2 CONTEXTUAL MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY

Marketing and distribution cannot be managed or driven by Rome. Local context understanding is fundamental.

Global marketing campaign is resource demanding and success is proportional to spent resources. Support from Rome could be developed in other forms.

Alternatively, it is possible to make agreements with distribution companies, relying on FAO reputation; however, distribution companies should be identified by a marketing strategy for each product.

Problems linked to storage and logistic issues are still not solved. Often the increased sales and production are not followed by an improvement in infrastructures like stock holding or materials handling equipment.

Improvement of local collective action is fundamental against free-riding behaviours.

The recognition of MP label by governments, as symbol of quality, and the sense of pride of producers could push toward a movement of valorization of the areas of production.

How can the label improve its impacts?

If the label will be a support to tell the story behind the production in an already structured distribution channels

→ No additional support in marketing is required

If the label will demonstrate and guarantee the quality of the product

→ A stronger guarantee system is required, according with certification priority

If the label will help to gain visibility and to open new markets

→ A support in marketing strategy is required, not only with communication materials but also with structured marketing planning.

Certification of future products strategy:

Products in existing organic PGS: understand if there are products already in the system which may receive the label.

Products that could be included in existing organic PGS:

- understand time of conversion (usually three years)
- understand the minimum number of producers per local group (depending on countries national PGS rules)
- develop a strategy to integrate the existing PGS, considering obstacles: CONSUMER-PRODUCERS relations
ORGANIC PRACTICES
RESOURCES and ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES.

Products that could not be included in existing PGS for several reasons:

- consider other kinds of PGS: Agroecological PGS
- consider to start a process for a new PGS, with the condition to organize a new PGS within 5 years. If the number of producers is sufficient and if local associations are interested in the management, it may represent an opportunity to push collective action and intersectoral activities and to link PGS process with education and tourism in mountains.

IN CONCLUSION,

- Distribution and certification issues are deeply intertwined. (see p.2)
- Global marketing success is proportional to spent resources. Support from Rome should be developed in other forms
- Certification has high potential, despite resource demand. It helps in avoiding risks and contributes to territorial development.