



# Criteria for Regional Marketing Systems

## RegioMarket: Tourism & Gastronomy

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### **RegioMarket Criteria for a Good Regional Market System in the Tourism Sector**

The members of the working group on regional marketing systems in the tourism and gastronomy sector have developed a RegioMarket criteria set aiming at a process consisting of several steps.

There are good reasons for developing a minimum set of common requirements to be applied to tourism and gastronomy activities in the Alpine Space:

- They increase coherence and identity of different tourist activities and services that operate in different countries but share a similar environment in terms of endowment of natural resources.
- They contribute towards building new systemic relationships and strengthen existing networking systems, both internally and externally.
- They improve communication towards the final consumers by enhancing transparency and credibility of the marketing systems and of the products traded through it.
- They help to increase the quality of the products and services supplied, both for existing ones and for those 'under construction', for which they can represent important guidelines for orienting the development of the activity.
- Finally, therefore, they can contribute towards the valorisation of the Alpine territory, of its environmental resources and of its human and social capital.



The set of common criteria which should characterise “good” RegioMarket Tourist and Gastronomy products comprises four categories:

1. **System Criteria:** this category includes the general criteria controlling the development of the system, the main rules of governance and the actions to be undertaken to involve stakeholders and build stable relationships amongst them.
2. **Partner Criteria:** this category includes the set of criteria that each partner should comply with in order to be part of the system, thus using its network and enjoying its benefits. It also includes criteria paying attention to using production techniques and processes that contribute to the conservation or improvement of the general environmental quality of the Alpine territory. This is important, if we want to establish a marketing system that has relevance also in terms of sustainable development.
3. **Product Criteria:** these criteria are those used and ascertain the link between the food served and the territory in which it is produced.
4. **Service criteria:** this group includes all those criteria defining the quality of the catering environment and of the services through which the regional products are offered to the client.

The common set of criteria can be equally used whether the regional marketing system entails the development of *regional recipes and menus* (as in the case of the German and Slovenian examples) or is approached through the creation of *Itineraries and Roads* for food and eno-gastronomy products, as it is more common in the Italian situation.

## System Criteria

A RegioMarket Tourist and Gastronomy system

- creates value added in the Region: This means that the activity or the service has positive economic spill-overs on creation of employment and on the activation of other productive activities in the region. In being so, it acts as an engine to the endogenous development of the region.
- distributes value added fairly along the production chain: This implies that participants of an initiative share a common vision on the distribution of profits generated through the production chains, which should not remain with one or few final segments but are redistributed to all those who have entered in the process according to their contribution to it.



- contributes towards the creation of a clear regional identity: This means that the typologies of production methods and of the offered services are rooted in the cultural and traditional values of the region.
- contributes towards the creation of a positive image of the region: This entails that the initiative is able to implement strategies and processes so that it “sells the territory” with all its cultural and environmental and not only an economic activity physically based on it. The “image” can be seen as a proper “brand” of the region.
- is able to create collaborative relationships in the region: This is essential for a good functioning of the initiative, which should be able to create connections between its participants by building the conviction that they are all working for a common interest.
- contributes to the preservation and development of the natural and cultural heritage of its region: This is essential for activities that take place in regions which are endowed with important natural resources like the Alpine Space. It also means that the initiative should not be focused on promoting economic activities that are completely unrelated to the tradition and culture of the Alpine systems.
- is open to cooperation with other institutions or initiatives in Alpine Space: This open attitude is essential for amplifying the positive relationships and networks created through the single initiatives.
- has a control system based on ex-ante, ongoing and ex-post control and monitoring performed either through a technical panel or an independent audit institution: The inclusion of this criterion is based on the acknowledgment that a well-functioning monitoring and auditing system is vital for the creation of a credible and stable reputation of the initiative with regard to the final consumer.
- is able to implement a strong communication strategy: Communication is an indispensable condition for the success of the initiative. The strategy must be able to communicate clearly all the positive values created by the initiative. The communication means, at least at a system level, should be based also on innovative instruments like the world wide web.



## Partner Criteria

A “good” partner of a RegioMarket Tourist and Gastronomy system:

- has the seat of activity located in the region: This is an essential condition for building up an authentic regional market system, as its participants must be strongly related to the regional environment and have a direct interest in its sustainable development.
- carries out an activity coherent with the general image of the territory and of the regional marketing strategy, so that it adds to strengthening the regional identity: This implies that each participant to the initiative shares common interests and that participants are aware that they are working for achieving mutual benefits.
- uses sustainable production methods: This means that the initiative promotes positive attitudes towards products obtained from cultivations respecting good agricultural practices established at a regional level and paying attention towards the use of water and energy.
- respects local architecture style: Participants should be aware of the importance of following an architecture style well harmonised in the regional landscape and follow this principle when restoring existing structures or building new ones.
- is transparent in communicating production practices and processes: The Participants’ attitude is open to disclose production and processing methods to control institutions and to consumers whenever requested.
- is open to receiving training measures: Participants should be available to receive training that supports developing capacities, attitudes and behaviours consistent with the general RegioMarket Tourist and Gastronomy system and its criteria.

## Product Criteria

A product under a RegioMarket Tourist and Gastronomy system:

- is based (completely or to a defined extent) on the use of traditional or conventional products from the region for the preparation of dishes: This criterion helps to establish links between the RegioMarket Tourist and Gastronomy system and the RegioMarket Food Product System in a holistic approach.
- is prepared (completely or to a defined extent) following traditional recipes from the region: This criterion represents the value-added of a RegioMarket



system in comparison with any other indistinct gastronomy product offered in the region.

### **Service Criteria**

A service under a RegioMarket Tourist and Gastronomy system:

- offers menus including a choice of regional dishes and recipes from the region: This criterion represents the link with the product criteria mentioned above.
- uses serving equipment suited to the food and beverages (e.g. wines in wine regions) offered: This particular criterion is important to attract more sophisticated clients and help give them the perception that the system is well harmonised in all its aspects.
- is trained to give advice on the choice of the most appropriate beverages (e.g. wines in wine regions) to accompany the food: This criterion helps creating a positive and satisfactory relationship with the client who feels well catered and enjoys the full benefits of a meal where the different tastes are well-matched.
- provides information to clients about the products and the production techniques: This adds to the transparency of the whole system and gives the client the perception that he/she is active part of the system and can positively contribute to it with his/her choices.
- keeps menus and the price lists in a visible position: Also this criterion contribute towards the transparency of the system.
- is trained to 'tell stories' about the history and cultural heritage of the region: This criterion creates a perception for the client that, by eating a dish, he is relishing a full region, with its traditions and cultural heritage.
- makes available to the client brochures, travel guides, maps and books on the cultural and tourist features of the area: This criterion again helps creating for the client the specific image.
- provides staff able to speak one or more European languages: This criterion builds an international reputation of the system, in the perspective of an Alpine Space system.