



WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY

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EMPOWERING  
COMMUNITIES

IGCAT

**The World Region of Gastronomy programme** is empowering communities by enhancing awareness about their rich cultural and food uniqueness. Good and healthy food for everyone is the mission of IGCAT and by working with a range of international partners we want to help enrich and strengthen regions across the globe.

Key strategies in our work are:

- linking and encouraging stakeholders to find solutions to their regions' challenges;
- creating conditions for people to have quality jobs;
- raising awareness about the importance of traditional food cultures;
- building pride in local sustainable communities;
- endorsing and giving visibility to local communities at an international level.

We owe it to the planet to push the sustainability agenda and we can do this by taking inspiration from our natural environment, supporting the biodiversity of our regions, safeguarding intangible heritage, and innovating foods, recipes and cultural traditions.

We invite you to join our growing world movement of awarded Regions of Gastronomy so that together we can make a positive difference in communities through the celebration of our rich food and cultural diversity.

**Diane Dodd PhD**  
Founder – Executive Director, IGCAT







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# INTRODUCTION

The **World Region of Gastronomy** programme aims to contribute to better quality of life by:

- Raising awareness about the importance of cultural and food uniqueness.
- Stimulating creativity and gastronomic innovation.
- Educating for better nutrition.
- Improving sustainable tourism standards.
- Highlighting distinctive food cultures.
- Strengthening community well-being.

All regions that bid for the title become part of a knowledge exchange Platform and collaborate on international projects facilitated by IGCAT.

**IGCAT** aims to empower local communities by guiding, facilitating, and supporting leaders in regions to understand the potential of their distinct food, culture, arts and sustainable tourism assets. IGCAT is a non-profit institute established in 2012, working with regional stakeholder consortiums in the fields of gastronomy, culture, arts and tourism. It counts on the expertise of a worldwide network of experts and works in partnership with specialised intergovernmental organisations.

IGCAT provides the **World Region of Gastronomy Award** and is the official secretariat for the **World Region of Gastronomy Platform**. Furthermore, the Institute has developed the Young Chef Award, the Local Food Gift Challenge, the Top Visitor Experience, and the Food Film Menu project.



# PRINCIPLES

## UNDERPINNING THE AWARD:



All regions taking part in the Platform need to demonstrate a strong stakeholder base incorporating **public, private, third sector and knowledge institutions**. This stakeholder group must meet regularly and develop the bid together in an inclusive environment.

The Region of Gastronomy title is awarded each year as a stimulus to link **food, hospitality, tourism, culture, health and sustainability**, and to support **economic, cultural, social and environmental development**, as part of a long-term regional strategy. Regions that wish to hold the Region of Gastronomy title are expected to commit to the Platform for a minimum of five years.

← **Sgrassa e vinci** - Innovative dish presented by Daniele Coccetti, IGCAT Regional Chef Ambassador and finalist from Terra di Marca in the European Young Chef Award 2018.







## FOCUS AREAS

# FEEDING THE PLANET

Good and healthy food for everyone is our mission. There is enough food to feed the world if we protect its biodiversity but, food kilometres, changes in farming and food waste are contributing to unsustainable practices that need to be reconsidered. It is estimated that by 2050 the world's population will have exceeded 9 billion people (currently it is more than 7 billion) and considering that currently we have a critical situation in which more than 25,000 people die from hunger every day, we need urgent discussion

and action related to food security, global trade, food distribution, emergency aid, food waste and food production. As an example, in order to support food production, we especially need to take care of bee populations that are responsible for pollinating 70% of the plants that supply our food. In support of the Sustainable Development Goals, IGCAT's Regions of Gastronomy aim to stimulate debate about the production of sufficient and healthy food for everyone.

The Regions of Gastronomy commit to:

- a. Develop awareness-raising events on the importance of food varieties, traditional farming methods and the importance of bees.
- b. Encourage programmes for communities to become self-sufficient in food supply and to keep food waste to a minimum.
- c. Instil pride in cultural diversity and food traditions through events and activities to celebrate regional uniqueness.
- d. Educate about the perils of pesticides for the eco-system, especially for bee populations, and other related areas.
- e. Draw up long-term development plans that consider preventative measures to avoid the loss of local plant and animal varieties, as well as traditional food knowledge.





## FOCUS AREA

# INNOVATION, CREATIVITY AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Inevitable globalisation of food markets poses both threats and opportunities for sustainable regional food systems. Depending on how this is managed, we see the possibility of generating new, flexible and fulfilling jobs in communities. Regional producers can expand their markets, providing they can highlight the added-value of local products and take advantage of growth in specialist and niche food markets. Story-telling and linkage to a region's artists, landscapes, crafts and traditional or contemporary culture can generate both new products and services.

Trends suggest that travellers are increasingly aware of and take responsibility for their actions, and therefore generating information, in creative formats, to enable them to enrich rather than damage local cultures is imperative. Harnessing the opportunities to market products to visitors can be complemented by digital platforms that assist producers in creatively capitalising on their unique food heritage. In order for this to happen, new ways of working and different skill sets are required, and life-long training to ensure future job opportunities becomes paramount.

The Regions of Gastronomy commit to:

- a. Develop events that raise awareness about unique local food and cultural diversity.
- b. Support story-telling, creative design, sustainable packaging, cross-marketing and export of local producers' products and services.
- c. Protect and promote traditional food and craft production as well as explore contemporary visitor experiences
- d. Take steps to increase the amount of protected GI products in the region.<sup>1</sup>
- e. Develop and use digital tools such as apps and online platforms that facilitate the promotion and valorisation of the region's cultural and food diversity, as well as encourage responsible consumerism.

<sup>1</sup> "A Geographical Indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin" (World Intellectual Property Organization - WIPO. Geographical Indications. An introduction) [accessed 29\_05\_2017].





## FOCUS AREA

# EDUCATING FOR OUR FUTURE

Supporting calls by intergovernmental bodies<sup>2</sup> for gastronomy and food to be re-integrated into education curriculums,<sup>3</sup> the Regions of Gastronomy is based on principles of collaboration with the education and knowledge sectors. These collaborations are vital for the dissemination of information about the importance of regional gastronomy, not just for our economies but for our future health and well-being. Ensuring good

food for everyone starts with understanding the importance of local and healthy food options. Educating for responsible production and consumption as well as instilling pride in local food culture is crucial for its long-term survival. Obtaining quality education in food is the foundation to improving people's lives and sustainable development. It is the only way to ensure that good food can reach everybody.

The Regions of Gastronomy commit to:

- Increase children's access to creative subjects, gardening and cookery both in and outside of school, thus raising awareness and pride in schools about the region's cultural and food uniqueness.
- Make steps to ensure where possible that public procurement procedures prioritize healthy options (including locally sourced and natural foods).
- Encourage cooperation with the agricultural and educational sectors, so that local food knowledge is shared.
- Ensure children have access to at least one healthy meal per day and make efforts to regulate sugar and salt content.
- Improve knowledge about plastic and food waste as well as encourage responsible behaviour towards recycling.

<sup>2</sup> Food and Agricultural Organization <http://www.fao.org/school-food/areas-work/based-food-nutrition-education> and <http://www.fao.org/3/a-c0064e.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> European Parliament Resolution 2013, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A7-2014-0127+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>





## FOCUS AREA

# BALANCED AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Regional gastronomy provides a wealth of diversity, not just in terms of different foods, but also in the many ways of eating, presenting and serving those foods. Traditions developed over centuries form the vital 'DNA' of food cultures and represent important potential sources of innovation in the service and hospitality industries. Raising awareness in hospitality industries about the advantages of integrating local food, recipes and traditions into the tourism offerings and collaborating with food and cultural events services in the region will contribute to greater environmental, economic and cultural sustainability. Quality and

responsible tourism benefits communities when it is managed well, because visitors to the region are potential customers for food products longer-term. Visitors are also the best marketeers for the region thanks to social media. Smart strategies to provide exciting visitor experiences and incentives to post on social media will give the region unprecedented visibility for a fraction of the costs of traditional promotional methods. Supporting quality gastronomy tourism initiatives therefore can have the added advantage of ensuring that tourism income can reach rural areas where it is often needed more.

The Regions of Gastronomy commit to:

- a. Promote opportunities for the emergence of quality and creative food experiences devoted to surprise visitors, as well as meet sustainability educational goals.
- b. Support new cultural and food festivals and markets with a focus on local and healthy food, as well as increase the variety of local foods in existing festivals and public events.
- c. Encourage chefs in restaurants and hotels to use and promote local products, innovate on traditional recipes, as well as share and promote stories about the region.
- d. Consider policies to rebalance tourism objectives to meet quality rather than quantity targets and thus aim to ensure a balanced approach to tourism.
- e. Increase the sale and export of local food gifts by encouraging innovative and locally designed products such as kitchenware, ceramics and recipe books.





## FOCUS AREA

# LINKING URBAN AND RURAL

Recent years have seen a growing divide between rural and urban areas, particularly in the fields of food and culture. People in urban settings are increasingly no longer aware where the food they eat comes from and lack knowledge to understand the spiritual and cultural significance of food related rituals that have often sustained their communities for centuries. The aim is therefore

to re-connect rural and urban environments by bringing the countryside to the city and the city to the countryside, thereby encouraging a re-valorisation of traditional and indigenous knowledge of food customs and systems. Projects that provide an opportunity to re-connect rural and urban environments also connect citizens and foster social cohesion.

The Regions of Gastronomy commit to:

- Carry out programmes to demonstrate and educate citizens on where their food comes from.
- Increase the amount of land dedicated to clean, natural and traditional farming.
- Provide opportunities for urban gardening programmes and projects.
- Support the development of infrastructure needed to encourage urban dwellers and visitors to explore the rural landscape and reconnect to nature in a sustainable and responsible manner.
- Encourage private and public initiatives to become energy independent by using their own energy management systems.





## FOCUS AREA

# WELL-BEING AND HEALTHIER LIVING

Food is vital for health, culture and well-being and therefore efforts to protect local biodiversity should be a priority. Gastronomy is the art of eating well and, by using creativity to showcase wholesome and healthy regional and local food, we hope to contribute to a more holistic approach to well-being. Awareness campaigns on the value of natural farming, food traditions and quality produce can stimulate pride in local communities. Local food often has properties that, over centuries, our bodies have been genetically programmed to function with, and so encouraging the consumption of local food is a benefit for our health. What we put into our bodies is more important than we often acknowledge and yet many people have little

understanding of the ingredients that are listed on processed food products. Allergy and property information helps, but a better understanding of food labelling is needed. The nutritional value of local food needs to be revalorised, alongside the health benefits of green and natural spaces. Attention to our natural environment extends to the need to protect land and sea. For example, the need to reduce single-use plastics is urgent, in light of the fact that micro-plastic is now widely acknowledged to contaminate marine life and our food systems.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, we advocate for the promotion of healthier lifestyles through greater citizen engagement.

The Regions of Gastronomy commit to:

- a. Showcase regional and local foods that are wholesome and healthy through sustainable events, rituals and celebrations.
- b. Encourage well-being related practices and promote investigation into traditional cures and remedies, based on local plants and rituals.
- c. Promote campaigns to eliminate single-use plastics and find local sustainable alternatives for food packaging.
- d. Build awareness about the importance of honey and ensure wild flowers are preserved for healthy bee populations.
- e. Encourage green spaces and the planting of trees to keep air clean and support a vibrant and nourishing environment.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2018/07/ocean-plastic-pollution-solutions/> (en inglés)



# JOINING THE PLATFORM

In order to be able to bid for the Region of Gastronomy title, regions need to be a member of the IGCAT World Regions of Gastronomy Platform. This section outlines the process of becoming a Platform member:

1. Prospective regions should first convene a stakeholder meeting in the region and **create a Regional Stakeholder Committee**. This committee of founding stakeholders should include public, private, third sector and knowledge institutions (normally a university). Later this group will likely grow to include many more stakeholders.

2. The region should appoint two representatives to attend Platform meetings and **request in writing** the region's interest to become a member. These representatives agree to share information from the Platform with all regional stakeholders.

3. The Regional Stakeholder Committee must **sign a protocol agreement** with IGCAT (the administrative body for the World Region of Gastronomy Platform). Only one or two representing institutions need to sign the protocol with IGCAT but there needs to be evidence of the stakeholder agreement to sign. By signing the protocol agreement with IGCAT, the regional stakeholders agree to jointly join the Platform, promote the Award and take part in partner meetings each year.

4. Once a membership **has been approved**, an invoice will be sent to the applicant region for payment of a joining fee and once payment has

been received, their "candidate status" membership to the World Region of Gastronomy Platform will be announced.

The minimum time commitment to the Platform is 5 years.



## JOINING PROCESS AND COSTS

# COSTS AND BENEFITS



From 2021, IGCAT Board has proposed a new structure for regional payments to, on the one hand, be means adjusted to ensure equal access to resources and spread solidarity across the globe. On the other hand, to be more flexible for regions given the economic difficulties we are all facing as a result of the global pandemic.

### PLATFORM MEMBERSHIP

Please consult IGCAT to find out how much the joining fee will be for your region. The joining fee may be paid in up to five monthly instalments however, it must be paid in full at the time of submitting a bid book.

The joining fee and yearly membership fee benefits include:

- A candidate logo, including the entitlement to use the Region of Gastronomy logo with the heading CANDIDATE, the region's name and the Award year that the region proposes to hold the title.

NB: Membership fee does not cover travel and accommodation costs to and from meetings. These variable costs need to be covered by member regions.

- Webinars for the candidate team and main stakeholders in the region to share good practise and ideas for a successful bidding process. The webinars include building governance of the Award, citizen engagement and each of the 6 focus areas.

- Invitation to join Platform meetings to learn from the other regions that have already gone through the transformation.

- Possibility to take part in joint high-visibility international projects such as Young Chef Award, Food Film Menu, Food Gift Challenge, World Bee Day Celebrations and Top Visitor Experience (note this is subject to availability and might incur additional registration costs).

- Access to toolkits, templates and best practice examples from other Regions of Gastronomy.

- Online support from IGCAT secretariat.

- Visibility on IGCAT's websites and social media tools.





# COSTS AND BENEFITS

Please consult IGCAT to find out how much the bidding fee will be for your region. The bidding fee is set to ensure transparency and credibility regarding the independence of the jury members. An IGCAT Board member will also accompany the jury. The jury will consist of experts from at least four different sectors and where possible they will be familiar with one or more Regions of Gastronomy so that they can support learning and exchange in and between the regions.

\*The costs referred to above should not represent more than 2% of the budget set aside to host the Award year.



- IGCAT's coordination of an Award Ceremony and framed certificate.

- Hosting costs for the Award Ceremony and travel costs for at least one IGCAT representative regions.



# BIDDING FOR THE **AWARD**

After joining the Platform, the region will need to produce a bid book that includes the following:



**Cover page** - a title and the candidate logo and candidate year.

**Theme** - describing the needs, opportunities and expectations on what could be achieved by being given the title.

**Brief description of the programme** - outlining key activities and flagship events (including start and closing ceremonies). If a call for projects will be launched the timeframe should also be indicated.

**List of main partners and stakeholders** - including public, private, third sector and education/research organisations working across different sectors (agriculture, heritage, hospitality, health, education etc.).

**Focus areas** - demonstrating how the region will reflect the 'Focus Areas' of the Regions of Gastronomy (which of these areas will be particularly highlighted and how).

**Platform collaboration** - highlighting foreseen collaborations with other awarded or candidate Regions of Gastronomy.

**Joint projects** - explaining how the region will collaborate in the Young Chef Award, Film Food Menu, Local Food Gift Challenge and Top Visitor Experience and/or other joint initiatives of the Platform.

**Legacy** - indicating how activities organised for the Region of Gastronomy title year will be sustainable over the longer term.

**Sustainability** - outlining methodology and timeline for developing a sustainable/gastronomy development plan.

**Citizen engagement** - explaining how the minds and hearts of local citizens will be touched (local communication campaigns).

**Education** - outlining projects with school children and other educational courses.

**SMEs** - outlining steps that will be taken to ensure that SMEs are involved and can also benefit from the title's outcomes.

**Budget** - detailing the economic provision for each activity foreseen and funding sources.

**External marketing plan** - outlining the main target groups and main means of communication with these groups.

**Evaluation programme** - agreement with an independent local university or research institute on methodology to assess the short- and long-term impacts.



# FUTURE COLLABORATION PROGRAMMES

The World Region of Gastronomy Platform is an umbrella project for many different initiatives. A number of these are already being explored and are listed below. This list is non-exhaustive, new regions are welcome to join existing projects and are encouraged to elaborate new ones. As international-collaborative actions, these initiatives might also be eligible for external funding.

## Young Chef Award

Regional Young Chef competitions are held annually in collaboration with hospitality schools. The World Region of Gastronomy Platform proposes that winners are then sent to a final held in one of the regions holding the title that year. The aim is to promote the use of local products, encourage innovation of traditional recipes and create chef ambassadors for the region.



## Local Food Gift Challenge

The region selects quality local food and crafts products from the region to be branded as “official food gifts for the year.” The aim is to support small and medium sized producers of traditional products and create added-value for the territory by linking the products to the stories from the region. Regions are encouraged to train trainers to work with local food producers and link their products to associations of hotels.



## Top Visitor Experience

The aim is to encourage creative, artistic and sensory experimentation to build new and unique food experiences that are new initiatives or start-ups; innovative, creative and positive food experiences; permanent or semi-permanent in nature and therefore suitable to promote to international visitors. IGCAT promotes internationally the best initiatives with the aim to: increase quality visitor food experiences; give international visibility to niche food tourism experiences; and reward sustainable initiatives.



## Food Film Menu

The Food Film Menu project fosters the development of fictional food films, located in the Regions of Gastronomy and featuring regional food with the aim to place a spotlight on the Regions of Gastronomy; provide opportunities to promote local food and craft products internationally and; encourage young film directors to become ambassadors for their regions.





# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **What is meant by 'Gastronomy'?**

Gastronomy refers holistically to agriculture, culture, hospitality, production, traditions and food cultures.

## **What is meant by 'Region'?**

The Region can be a province, county or country defined by the partners (including at least three municipalities and adjoining rural areas).

## **What are the start and end dates - do we need to organise a full year of activities?**

The partners can decide when to celebrate the opening and closing of their official year. Flagship events that engage wide stakeholders should take place throughout the year.

## **What happens after you have held the title of Region of Gastronomy?**

Awarded regions complete a minimum 5-year commitment to the World Region of Gastronomy Platform. Regions are expected to develop a lasting legacy from the Award and thus continue activities and membership well into the future.

## **How many regions can hold the title each year?**

Up to 3 regions per continent can be selected each year by an external jury of experts.

## **What is the title that will be awarded?**

The awarded title will be [CONTINENT NAME] REGION OF GASTRONOMY – [REGION'S NAME] – AWARDED [YEAR].



**IGCAT\*** is the administrative body and official secretariat for the World Region of Gastronomy Platform and Award.

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\* IGCAT is registered as non-profit institute at the Department of Justice in Barcelona. Inscription number 43994.





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