



IGCAT



WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY

Celebrating local food cultures
to empower communities, spark
innovation, and support
a healthier planet

BROCHURE |

ABOUT IGCAT


IGCAT (Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts & Tourism) aims to empower local communities by raising awareness of the importance of protecting and promoting distinct regional food, culture, arts and natural assets as part of sustainable and balanced tourism and development strategies.

This is essential to safeguard our planet, health, wellness and local economies.

IGCAT is a non-profit institute established in 2012, working with regional stakeholder consortia 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 believes in the
power of cross-sectoral
collaboration to transform
regions around the World

A stylized, dark grey leaf graphic is positioned in the bottom right corner of the dark grey background. It consists of several overlapping leaf shapes, with the largest one being the most prominent, pointing towards the top right.

IGCAT

ABOUT THE WORLD REGION OF **GASTRONOMY** AWARD



THE WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY AWARD

The **World Region of Gastronomy Award** celebrates regions on all continents that embrace their culinary heritage as a driver of sustainable development, strengthening the deep connections between food, the environment hospitality, tourism, culture and health.

It highlights the power of food as a force for positive change, ensuring that gastronomic traditions and innovations thrive whilst protecting the planet and enriching lives for generations to come.

It is more than recognition; it is a call to action for regions across the world to collaborate, exchange knowledge, and champion sustainable food systems. By uniting diverse stakeholders - from small-scale producers to policymakers, chefs to educators - the initiative fosters economic resilience, cultural pride, and environmental stewardship.

By empowering communities to safeguard biodiversity, preserve traditional foodways, and innovate for a more sustainable future, the World Region of Gastronomy Award highlights the essential role of gastronomy in shaping a better world.



THE WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY AWARDS AIMS

01

INSPIRE CULINARY AND CULTURAL EDUCATION

Reconnecting people of all ages with their food heritage and the importance of sustainable practices

04

CREATE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

Supporting creativity, entrepreneurship, and responsible gastronomic innovation

02

SUPPORT KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND COLLABORATION

Connecting rural and urban communities, fostering global connections and best practices in sustainable gastronomy

03

STRENGTHEN FOOD SECURITY, RESILIENCE & COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Promoting local food systems and access to healthy, nutritious diets around the world

05

ADVANCE SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM, HOSPITALITY & AGRICULTURE

Encouraging regenerative practices, responsible consumption and production



THE WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY AWARDS **IMPACT**



GLOBAL RECOGNITION

Showcases the region's distinct cultural and culinary assets by giving global visibility and putting the international spotlight on the region.



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Promotes sustainable tourism by enhancing the quality of local food products and strengthening linkages with the hospitality industry, offering more authentic and enriching visitor experiences.



GASTRONOMIC PRESERVATION

Safeguards culinary traditions by celebrating and preserving local food heritage, ensuring that traditional knowledge, flavours and practices are passed to future generations.

THE WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY AWARDS **IMPACT**



LOCAL FOOD EMPOWERMENT

Encourages the use, promotion and innovation of local food products to strengthen the region's gastronomy and to increase its resilience.



CATALYST FOR DEVELOPMENT

Is a catalyst for development through the regional stakeholder group which fosters public-private and cross-sectoral partnerships and collaboration and improves access to funding and investment.



REGIONAL IDENTITY & PRIDE

Builds regional identity and pride in the local communities by celebrating their distinct culture and food assets.

THE WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY AWARDS **IMPACT**



INNOVATION & LEARNING

Put a focus on innovation and learning to support smart and inclusive growth and thus provide new skills and new opportunities for SMEs and micro enterprises.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Contributes to environmental protection and promotes sustainable food systems by protecting biodiversity, supporting bee populations, promoting regenerative agricultural practices and reducing single-use plastics.



FOOD AWARENESS & EDUCATION

Creates awareness of wider food issues for healthy living and sustainability both through educational programmes and wider citizen engagement projects.

PARTICIPATION BENEFITS



PARTICIPATION

BENEFITS

By engaging in this initiative, regions multiply their connections, increase their international visibility, exchange knowledge, and contribute to a stronger, more equitable and more sustainable World

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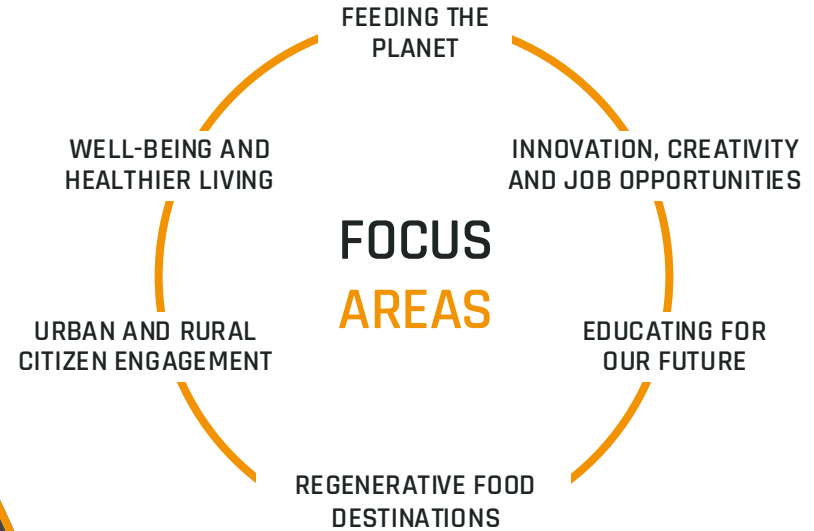
05

ADVANCE SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM, HOSPITALITY & AGRICULTURE

Encouraging regenerative practices, responsible consumption and production



PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE AWARD



FOCUS AREAS

FEEDING THE PLANET



There is enough food to feed the world if we protect the planet's biodiversity. Equity and solidarity are non-negotiable. No transformation of food systems is legitimate if it fails to address hunger, inequality, and access to nutritious, culturally meaningful food.

A just food system requires that all regions, regardless of economic capacity, are able to participate, contribute, and benefit. This includes valuing diverse knowledge systems, from indigenous practices to contemporary innovation, and ensuring that opportunities for exchange, visibility, and development are accessible to all.

To empower local communities, ecosystems themselves must be protected, restored, and valued. Biodiversity, from seeds to landscapes, must be recognised as a strategic asset for resilience, identity, and food sovereignty. Forests, orchards, and small-scale farms are not only sites of food production, but vital custodians of natural habitats, water cycles, carbon storage, cultural heritage, and territorial identity.

Within this, priority must be given to bee populations which are responsible for pollinating 70% of the plants that supply our food. Food kilometres, sustainable farming practices, importance of pollinators and food waste are areas that our regions have addressed.

Gastronomy must be recognised as a tool for solidarity, cultural identity, and human dignity.

World Region of Gastronomy Platform members **commit to:**

- a. Embed in policy the equal value of all food knowledge systems, from indigenous traditions to contemporary innovation and share IGCAT's philosophy that gastronomy is a tool for human dignity, cultural identity, and climate resilience;
- b. Develop awareness-raising events on the importance of food varieties, traditional farming methods and the importance of bees and support breeding and varietal improvement programmes that safeguard native and locally adapted species;
- c. Recognise seeds as a global common good in policy frameworks, ensuring they remain accessible and protected from privatisation or monopolistic control;
- d. Map food products at risk of extinction and register them in initiatives such as Slow Food's Ark of Taste;
- e. Encourage food producers to engage with initiatives such as the Slow Food Presidia, strengthening networks that protect biodiversity and traditional knowledge;
- f. Support training programmes that combine tradition and innovation, enabling producers and professionals to adapt heritage practices to contemporary contexts while maintaining cultural integrity.
- g. Encourage programmes for communities to become self-sufficient in food supply and to keep food waste to a minimum;
- h. Develop mechanisms for cross-marketing and shared commercial opportunities, particularly supporting regions with fewer economic resources to strengthen their food industries;
- i. Educate about the perils of pesticides on the ecosystem, especially for bee populations and promote ecological cultivation systems that reduce dependency on chemical inputs;
- j. Invest in research and innovation to strengthen resilience to climate change through food production, with a particular focus on AI and technological innovation;
- k. 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 including for example Pollinator Impact Assessments;
- l. Support the participation of partners from lesser-economically developed World Regions of Gastronomy in Platform meetings and collaborative funding proposals.

FOCUS AREAS

INNOVATION, CREATIVITY AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

A region's artists, food producers, artisans, and their products are distinctive selling points for a region. Their knowledge, labour, dignity, and continuity are the source for gastronomy, biodiversity, food heritage, creative services and experiences.

Harnessing opportunities to market products to citizens, tourists and local visitors can increase export sales, create cognitive links between a region and its unique products as well as instil pride in local food heritage and traditions.

Creativity in the form of storytelling and visuals can help generate both new products and services.

IGCAT encourages audio-visual storytelling to showcase regional food diversity so that it can be seen as a source of opportunity. Selected films can also be presented internationally through IGCAT's Food Film Menu.

To address generational renewal, IGCAT also encourages regions to identify and document young people who have chosen farming, fishing, or food production as a life path, highlighting these stories as sources of inspiration and continuity (see FoodFilmMenu.org).



World Region of Gastronomy Platform members commit to:

- a. Develop events for visitors and citizens that raise awareness about unique local food and cultural diversity;
- b. Protect and promote traditional food and craft production through business development hubs;
- c. Take steps to increase the amount of protected GI products in the region ("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);
- d. Develop and use digital tools such as apps and online platforms that facilitate the promotion and valorization of the region's cultural and food diversity, as well as encourage responsible consumerism;
- e. Support adult learning and start-up initiatives to encourage new skills such as storytelling, creative design, sustainable packaging, cross-marketing and export of local producers' products and services.
- f. Provide grants and financial support for studies in food sciences and food entrepreneurship;
- g. Address structural barriers and improve access to land, seeds, water, and essential inputs, particularly for small-scale farmers and young producers.
- h. Support direct trade models and facilitate networks connecting stakeholders across the region, including farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture, cooperatives;
- i. Partner with supermarket chains to increase the visibility and presence of local products;
- j. Ensure fair market conditions for local producers, including recognition and rewards for authenticity, biodiversity, and territorial value such as geographical indications and quality labels;
- k. Provide targeted financial support and/or tax incentives for all those promoting biodiverse/ organic food landscapes such as smallholder farms using multi-crop and soil-regenerating practices, land managers maintaining traditional landscapes, orchard owners promoting varieties, forest-based agroecological systems and agroforestry systems;
- l. Set local-sourcing targets such as 70% local sourcing for public sector catering.
- m. Implement IGCAT's Food Commitment (see Technical Guideline);

FOCUS AREAS

EDUCATING FOR OUR FUTURE



Food education must be recognised as a foundational right across all generations, reconnecting people with taste, origin, seasonality, health, and cultural meaning. It is not only about nutrition, but also about climate responsibility, cultural identity, social justice and equity, biodiversity protection, and human dignity.

IGCAT encourages regions to embed food education within cultural and educational frameworks, recognising its power to shape more sustainable and equitable food systems. Initiatives such as the Young Chef Ambassadors programme highlight the importance of valuing local products and strengthening connections between territory, stories, and recipes (see [YoungChefAwards.org](https://www.YoungChefAwards.org)).

IGCAT promotes international exchange programmes to nurture a new generation of culturally aware and responsible food professionals, while continuing to share best practices across regions through webinars and Platform visits.

World Region of Gastronomy Platform members **commit to:**

- a. Advocate for food literacy across all levels of education, linking food to climate, health, and cultural curricula, and placing it at the core of educational practice;
- b. Increase children's access to creative subjects in-school including regenerative farming principles, nutritional education, taste awareness, food literacy, heritage foodways, traditional crops, recipes, preservation methods, storytelling;
- c. Increase children's hands-on learning experiences on farms and in food production environments, bringing children and youth closer to land and sea;
- d. Make steps to ensure where possible that public procurement procedures prioritize healthy options (including locally sourced and natural foods);
- e. Develop healthy school food programmes based on local, seasonal products, ensuring children have access to at least one healthy meal per day and make efforts to regulate sugar and salt content;
- f. Improve knowledge about plastic and food waste as well as encouraging responsible behaviour towards recycling, ensuring that good food can reach everybody;
- g. Create clear career pathways for young people interested in food, hospitality, and agriculture sectors;
- h. Offer lifelong learning opportunities, including programmes for adults in healthy cooking and pathways for re-entry into the hospitality sector;

FOCUS AREAS

REGENERATIVE FOOD DESTINATIONS

Gastronomy and tourism can be powerful drivers of regeneration when rooted in authenticity, community leadership, and respect for local cultures. When aligned with territorial identity, they strengthen local economies, revitalise traditions, and create meaningful connections between visitors and communities.

Rather than extractive models, gastronomic tourism should be understood as a form of cultural exchange, where producers, artisans, and communities are recognised not only as service providers, but as storytellers and custodians of heritage. In this way, value remains within the territory, while visitors experience places through depth, knowledge, and lived culture.

Visitors are the best ambassadors for a region thanks to social media and can increase the client base for food export. Smart strategies give the region unprecedented visibility for a fraction of the costs of traditional promotional methods. Supporting quality gastronomy tourism initiatives have the added advantage of ensuring that tourism income can reach rural areas where it is often greatly needed.



World Region of Gastronomy Platform members **commit to:**

- a. Recognise food heritage as intangible cultural heritage, support the work of relevant NGO's and integrate in cultural and food festivals or other public events (adopting and promoting IGCAT's Sustainable Events Tips among tourism/ cultural events operators and hospitality providers);
- b. Promote opportunities for the emergence of quality and creative food experiences by empowering producers to be hosts and storytellers and/or by designing immersive experiences such as cooking with local families, harvesting in the fields, cheesemaking, olive oil mills, vineyards, fishing experiences etc;
- c. Support agritourism infrastructure, including farmers' markets, visitable farms, and regional food routes;
- d. Encourage chefs in restaurants and hotels to use and promote local products, innovate on traditional recipes, and share stories about the region and its producers in their storytelling by implementing IGCAT's Food Commitment (see IGCAT Technical Guidelines);:
- e. Develop certification frameworks with academic and NGO verification, ensuring authenticity, traceability, and sustainability, aligned with territorial identity;
- f. Consider policies that prioritize less quantity of tourists but that spend more thus aiming to ensure a balanced approach to tourism;
- g. Increase the sale and export of local food gifts by encouraging innovative and locally designed products such as kitchenware, ceramics, and recipe books;
- h. Foster integrated tourism offers, loyalty programmes or guides combining sustainable accommodation, gastronomy experiences, and producer visits that purchase from regenerative food suppliers.

FOCUS AREAS

URBAN AND RURAL CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

IGCAT endeavours to re-connect rural and urban environments by bringing the countryside to the city and the city to the countryside, encouraging a re-valorization of traditional and indigenous knowledge of food customs and systems. There is a growing divide between rural and urban areas, particularly in the fields of food and culture.

People in urban settings are less aware of where their food comes from and are disconnected from the food-related rituals that have sustained their communities for centuries.

We focus on initiatives that provide opportunities to bridge rural and urban environments, connect citizens and foster social cohesion.

Citizens are not passive consumers but active cultural and political actors. Every choice, every bite, contributes to shaping food systems. Empowering citizens means recognising their role in influencing markets, policies, and cultural values—towards healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable food futures.



World Region of Gastronomy Platform members **commit to:**

- a. Carry out programmes to demonstrate and educate citizens on where their food comes from i.e bring the countryside into cities through farmers' markets, urban gardens, and direct sales initiatives;
- b. Empower citizens by adapting regulatory frameworks to support home production, self-economy models, and the easier establishment of cooperatives, while improving access for rural entrepreneurs;
- c. Strengthen public awareness so that consumers understand the impact of their choices on health, circular economies, and ecological responsibilities, for example, develop cultural festivals and campaigns that celebrate orchard varieties, forest products, and seasonal traditions;
- d. Increase the amount of land dedicated to clean, natural and traditional farming;
- e. Provide opportunities for urban gardening programmes and projects;
- f. 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;
- g. Encourage private and public initiatives to become energy independent by using their own energy management systems;
- h. Support seed bank schemes to protect endangered plant species and resuscitate resilient heirloom crops.
- i. Develop public programmes that reward environmentally responsible choices, including sustainable consumption, agroecological production, and community-based initiatives;

FOCUS AREAS

WELL-BEING AND HEALTHIER LIVING

IGCAT advocates for the promotion of healthier lifestyles through greater awareness and citizen engagement in natural farming, outdoor recreation, and culinary and cultural traditions. Developing experiences (farm visits, culinary masterclasses, sensory events, foraging etc.) can be enriching for both visitors and local citizens.

To achieve sustainable healthy lifestyles and food systems, attention must be paid to how food and goods are produced from seed and soil, to packaging and transportation.

Transparency and awareness of product ingredients and the nutritional value of local food need to be re-valorised and we work with local producers to advance consumer knowledge.

By using creativity to showcase wholesome and healthy regional and local food, we contribute to a more holistic approach to well-being.



World Region of Gastronomy Platform members **commit to:**

- a. Showcase regional and local foods that are wholesome and healthy through sustainable events, customs and celebrations;
- b. Encourage well-being related practices and promote investigation into traditional cures and remedies, based on local plants and skills;
- 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.
- f. Adopt measures to prevent speculation over land and water resources;
- g. Develop awareness campaigns, especially within cultural events, that promote healthy, local, and seasonal eating, reinforcing circular economies and disincentivising the consumption of environmentally harmful production.

JOINT PROJECTS



WORLD FOOD GIFT CHALLENGE



TOP FOODIE WEBSITES



FOOD FILM MENU



YOUNG CHEF AWARD



JOINT PROJECT

WORLD FOOD GIFT CHALLENGE


The World Food Gift Challenge is an international competition to award and give visibility to high quality, artisanal food and food-related crafts gifts from the World Regions of Gastronomy.

Through the World Food Gift Challenge, regions can support their local small- and medium-sized producers of traditional products and highlight the stories that link those products to the region, therefore creating an added-value for their territory.

The World Food Gift Challenge allows local producers in the regions to capitalise on the ever-increasing demand from visitors for exceptional local food and food-related craft gifts, paired with their search for authenticity and uniqueness, and enhanced attention for sustainable products.

The World Food Gift Challenge includes two different categories: **food gifts** and **craft gifts** (cooking utensils or equipment) related to the regions' culinary traditions.





Participating products are selected by the regions through local Food Gift contests based on their authentic, natural qualities that mix fine ingredients or quality raw materials with the skills, passion, and care on the part of their manufacturer/s. They are not mass-produced, but developed and delivered on a small scale. Special attention is devoted to their packaging, both in terms of sustainability and ability to communicate the story of the product and the producer.

A registration fee is requested to regions to cover IGCAT's coordination, marketing, and publicity for the event.

Considering high relative costs for local crafts producers, regions are encouraged to set aside a significant budget to support SME's (particularly young entrepreneurs) with design, storytelling, innovation, market testing, packaging and production. This should be a package to encourage producers to market the food region through their products.



All documents related to the World Food Gift Challenge are [available here](#).

A training of trainers module is available for regions hoping to develop a local competition.

WorldFoodGiftChallenge.org

IGCAT encourage hosts of the World Food Gift Challenge to provide forums and exchanges for learning about design, branding, packaging, marketing, distribution etc.

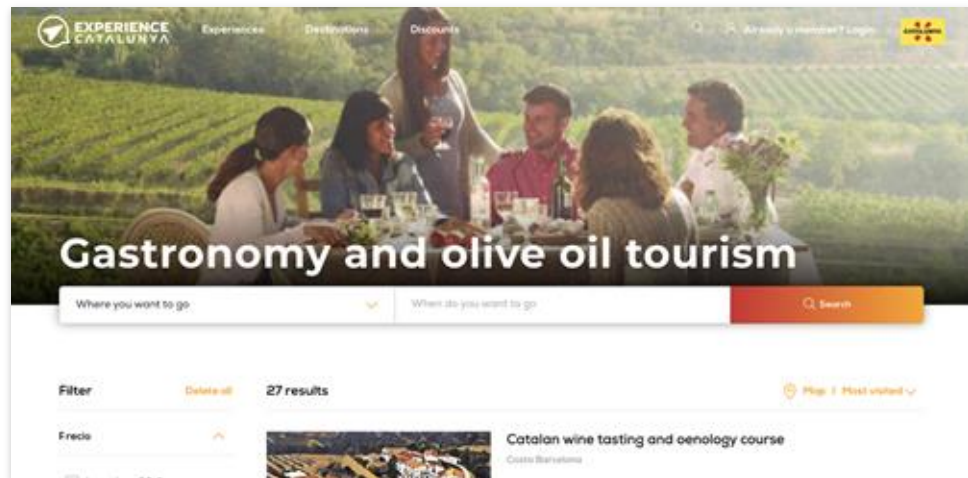
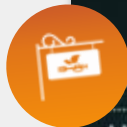
JOINT PROJECT

TOP FOODIE WEBSITES

The Top Foodie Websites Award is a recognition given by IGCAT for the best website providing unique creative, cultural and gastronomical experiences for local and international visitors in the World Regions of Gastronomy.

By means of this project, IGCAT hopes to encourage creative, artistic and sensory experimentation to build new and unique food experiences, as well as strengthen the connection between the territory and actors within the territory that are working to develop sustainable tourism and visitor initiatives.

A jury formed from IGCAT Experts will select the best websites according to a set of rigorous criteria to evaluate different aspects such as sustainability, cross-sectoral cooperation, educational component, uniqueness, inclusiveness and many more.



Eligible websites may provide a variety of experiences including (but not exclusive to): Food/wine tasting; Farm/factory visit; Food/wine or related demonstration or cookery class; Participatory craft-related experience; Food/wine route; Food/wine market or fair; Museum/heritage site related to food.

Websites that encourage cross-sectorial collaboration to create exceptional experiences will be favoured along with those that include unusual or emblematic venues, a theme or story, participatory or sensory experiences and/or provide enchanting experiences.

By publishing an annual list of Top Foodie Websites from the candidate and awarded World Regions of Gastronomy, IGCAT will:

- Increase international visitors access to quality food and cultural experiences;
- Give international visibility to niche food and culture experiences;
- Reward portals and apps that support micro-businesses;
- Contribute to sustainable territorial development.



All documents related to the Top Foodie Websites are [available in this link](#).

A webinar on **Top Foodie Websites Best Practices** is also [available here](#).

TopFoodieWebsites.org

JOINT PROJECT

FOOD FILM MENU



The incredible diversity of food, food cultures, food traditions and food knowledge has influenced cultural, architectural and landscape heritage across the world. As more and more people move to globalized diets it is vitally important to revalue and re-promote our food as cultural heritage for future growth and development.

IGCAT has identified the important role of audio-visual tools in promoting local food products, local food recipes and traditions related to regional gastronomy.

As a result, IGCAT has developed the international Food Film Menu, a collection of short films and videos showcasing footage from awarded and candidate World Regions of Gastronomy, with the purpose to provide visual representations of the cultural and culinary heritage of the regions by local filmmakers.



This project supports interactive and innovative ways of giving visibility to the participating regions and their food heritage by developing creative audio-visual content that can be shared across the regions and used for promotional purposes.

Every year IGCAT launches a call for videos in candidate and awarded World Regions of Gastronomy, and select the best videos to showcase on IGCAT's website and distribute to film and food festivals across the globe. These videos will also be used yearly to promote the World Regions of Gastronomy and to create additional marketing campaigns.

The international Food Film Menu gives visibility to the multiple creators involved from production to consumption focusing on locality, sustainability and authenticity, guaranteeing cross-collaboration and dialogue with the audio-visual and creative sectors.

Given all regions are concerned about aging food producers, Candidate and Awarded World Regions of Gastronomy are encouraged to submit films that focus on young farmers, fishermen and or food producers. The aim is to encourage young people to see these professions as a lifestyle choice.



All documents related to the **Food Film Menu** are [available in this guide](#).

[Food Film Menu Webpage](#).

FUTURE JOINT PROJECT

YOUNG CHEF AWARDS



Once a critical mass of regions on each continent are reached, IGCAT plans to launch the a Young Chef Award for each continent.

In the meantime, and to build up to this, it is strongly recommended that local and regional competitions take place in each region in collaboration with a local hospitality or culinary arts school. In the future, the finalists from all regions ideally will be able to represent the region in an international competition in their continent.

This competition is is a powerful tool to raise young chefs' awareness on the importance of preserving the food and cultural diversity of their regions throughout their professional career, by promoting innovations on traditional cuisine; highlighting sustainable food cultures; and supporting local food products. It also challenges future chefs to contribute to a reduction of the negative impacts of waste on the environment by assessing the young chefs' kitchen-waste management practices. The aim is to inject pride, safeguard old recipes and raise awareness about risk of losing local food knowledge.



THE WORLD BEE DAY INITIATIVE ON 20 MAY

World Regions of Gastronomy should explore ways to promote World Bee Day.

The Association of Beekeepers' in Slovenia 2021 proposed that the United Nations (UN) adopt 20 May as a day to draw attention to the essential role bees and other pollinators play in keeping people and the planet healthy.

Saimaa 2024 have produced business cards and pencils with seeds to encourage people to plant them for bees and other pollinators. Habitat loss, damage and climate change are having a huge impact on bee populations so it is urgent that we encourage bee populations to thrive once more.

01

INVOLVE THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Ask schools or community groups to create Bee Hotels.

02

MAINTAIN GREEN PUBLIC SPACES

Leave green public spaces to grow wild and sow wild flowers (bees love long grass and wildflowers).

03

SHARE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Promote sustainable honey and sustainable beekeeping practices.

04

FOSTER HONEY EDUCATION

Educate on how to know good honey from processed honey.



IGCAT

**ROUTE TO BECOME
A WORLD REGION
OF GASTRONOMY**



JOINING THE PLATFORM

ROUTE TO THE WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY

Outlined on the right side are the process and criteria for selection for the World Region of Gastronomy Award. It includes both the requirements for joining the Platform and the questions that applicants are expected to answer in bidding for the Award. Regions considering joining the Platform and bidding for the Award should read this carefully.

Regions wishing to be awarded are expected first to join the World Region of Gastronomy Platform and shall demonstrate a strong stakeholder base.

Once a region is a member of the World Region of Gastronomy Platform, IGCAT will advise when the region is ready to bid for the title of World Region of Gastronomy.



By joining, regions **commit to:**

- a. Staying in the Platform for a minimum of five years to ensure long-term impact;
- b. Share best practices and knowledge to strengthen collaboration across regions;
- c. Participate in IGCAT's Joint Projects for visibility, supporting actors within their community and forging international contacts;
- d. Evaluate their Award year (if awarded) to document and disseminate insights, successes, innovations and lessons learned, fostering continuous improvement, innovation, and stronger collaborations that benefit all participating regions;
- e. Holding regional competitions that select the winners to go to the international competition are encouraged as they enforce the messages and create transparency in actions;

JOINING THE PLATFORM

ROUTE TO THE WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY

The Platform is open to regions from all continents that declare a moral obligation to ensure improved food quality and support for local cultures and/or traditions.

Given the growing interest in the World Region of Gastronomy Award, only one World Region be selected each year. This approach will not only ensure quality engagement and support but also confer greater prestige and visibility on the selected region.

In the case that multiple regions apply priority will be given to regions not yet represented, to foster global inclusivity and diversity. Once this criterion is met, subsequent priority should follow a rotating cycle of continents, ensuring broad geographic representation over time.



In addition to the geographic and representational considerations, the following selection criteria have been agreed by the members:

- a. Demonstrated readiness to begin work with a stakeholder committee in place, adopting a cross-sectoral governance model (see next page);
- b. A signed protocol agreement outlining the region's commitment;
- c. Payment of the participation fees, in line with IGCA's requirements;
- d. An approved Executive Director;
- e. Public/private fund to support new projects
- f. Participation in IGCA joint projects and willingness to host an IGCA World Gastronomy Summit
- g. Development of a long-term strategic plan



IGCAT ADVOCATES
A **CROSS-SECTORAL
APPROACH**, AS SOLUTIONS
TO THE REGIONS'
CHALLENGES CAN BEST
BE FOUND WHEN
DIFFERENT SECTORS
COLLABORATE

JOINING THE PLATFORM

ROUTE TO THE WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY



Cross-sector governance and collaboration

IGCAT encourages regions to establish inclusive and expanded governance structures that bring together public, private, third-sector, and academic actors working across sectors. We firmly believe that the complex challenges facing regions can only be addressed through collaborative, cross-sector approaches, reflecting the interconnected nature of food systems.

At the international level, IGCAT fosters cross-sector dialogue through Platform meetings, Expert meetings, online webinars, and the World Gastronomy Summit. These initiatives enable the mapping and sharing of best practices across regions and ensure that this knowledge is digitally accessible to all Platform members.

IGCAT already requires regional governance models that engage multiple stakeholders in identifying challenges and co-creating solutions. We remain committed to monitoring regional progress and promoting good governance practices:

- d. Develop strong governance models that include diverse stakeholders from multiple sectors;
- b. Appoint an Executive Director to facilitate stakeholder engagement and drive cross-sector collaboration;
- c. Establish governance models, fostering alliances between producers, chefs, distributors, researchers, educational institutions, communicators, and consumers. These partnerships should function as cultural ecosystems where knowledge circulates and trust is built;
- d. Participate actively in IGCAT events and projects;
- e. Engage with best IGCAT's practice resources (via IGCAT's Dropbox);
- f. Implement cross-sector projects and proposals for the Award year;
- g. Collaborate with partners from other World and/or European Regions of Gastronomy to strengthen international perspectives and cross-marketing opportunities;
- h. Develop a long-term gastronomy strategy to ensure a lasting legacy beyond the Award year

AT THIS **EARLY STAGE** REGIONS SHOULD ASK THEMSELVES :

- What are the main objectives for the region?
- How can these be combined with the focus areas of the World Region of Gastronomy Platform?
- Is there sustainable cross-party political support?
- Is there support from local businesses, educational institutions and local communities?





**THE REGION SHOULD
IMPLEMENT THE
IGCAT FOOD COMMITMENT,
IGCAT FOOD PROCUREMENT
AND IGCAT SUSTAINABLE
EVENTS GUIDELINES WITHIN
THEIR OWN INSTITUTIONS**

JOINING THE PLATFORM

ROUTE TO THE WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY

1

STEP 1

FORM A REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE & DEFINE SHARED OBJECTIVES

Define the region and convene a diverse group of public, private, third-sector, and knowledge institutions to guide the process and ensure broad regional support aligned with the values of the World Region of Gastronomy Platform.

2

STEP 2

SUBMIT OFFICIAL APPLICATION LETTER & SIGNED PROTOCOL AGREEMENT

All members of the Regional Stakeholder Committee must sign and send a letter of interest to IGCAT with a signed Protocol Agreement, demonstrating commitment to at least five years of collaboration, shared learning, and project participation.

3

STEP 3

APPOINT AN EXECUTIVE BOARD & MANAGEMENT TEAM

Designate representatives from each sector and hire a full-time Executive Manager and Assistant(s) to coordinate the bid and programme. IGCAT invites two representatives from each region to attend Platform meetings, webinars and take part in the Annual General Meeting.

JOINING THE PLATFORM

ROUTE TO THE WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY

4

STEP 4

SUBMIT THE AWARD BID BOOK

Work together to design a meaningful bid with a chosen theme, backed by signed Letters of Commitment and alignment with IGCAT guidelines. The bid book is an audit of all the wonderful projects, food and committed institutions as well as a road map for your long-term goals that protect and promote your food and cultural diversity.

5

STEP 5

GAIN APPROVAL FROM IGCAT'S MEMBERS & ORGANISE JURY VISIT

Received a jury visit for them to assess the regions readiness to the host the title year. Receive the recommendations from the jury and submit a final response in the case that IGCAT requests additional information or evidence of commitment to the process.

6

STEP 6

MAKE PLANS FOR AN AWARD CEREMONY

Organise a large-scale inclusive event to celebrate the Award with local stakeholders and invite IGCAT to present the Award to the highest level representative. The event should include the opportunity to explore further areas of collaboration across the region.

IGCAT

COSTS, PROCEDURES & BENEFITS OF THE MEMBERSHIP



PLATFORM MEMBERSHIP

COSTS, PROCEDURES & BENEFITS

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 two instalments however, it must be paid in full at the time of submitting a bid book.

Membership fees **do not cover travel and accommodation costs** to and from meetings. These variable costs need to be covered by member regions.

Deadlines and correct procedures for registration must always be respected. IGCAT waives responsibility for any losses incurred due to incorrect registration. Please refer to the technical guidelines.



The joining fee and yearly membership fee benefits **includes**:

- a. A candidate logo, including the entitlement to use the World Region of Gastronomy logo with the heading CANDIDATE, the region's name and the Award year that the region proposes to hold the title;
- b. Webinars for the candidate team and main stakeholders in the region to share good practices and ideas for a successful bidding process. The webinars include building governance of the Award, citizen engagement and each of the 6 focus areas;
- c. Invitation to join Platform meetings to learn from the other regions that have already gone through the transformation;
- d. Possibility to take part in joint high-visibility international projects such as Food Film Menu, World Food Gift Challenge, and Top Foodie Websites (subject to availability and might incur additional registration costs);
- e. Access to toolkits, templates and best practice examples from other World Regions of Gastronomy
- f. Online support from IGCAT secretariat;
- g. Visibility on IGCAT's websites and social media tools.

IGCAT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is meant by the title 'Gastronomy' - does this mean only high-end cuisine?

'Gastronomy' here is used to refer to a holistic approach, which includes agriculture and food culture relating to place, hospitality, eating, food production, food ways, food traditions and how one feels about one's food culture. The term does not denote exclusivity or high-end cuisine.

What is meant by 'Region' - who can apply?

A 'Region' can be a province, county, country, and/or other territory defined by the partner presenting the bid. It is important that the territory chosen has the support of at least three municipalities and their surrounding rural areas, and that it is able to gain support from multiple academic, third sector, public and private partners.

Is the Award a competition?

No, it is not a competition. The World Region of Gastronomy title is awarded to regions that have joined the World Region of Gastronomy Platform and adhere to the philosophy developed by IGCAT (International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism) that ensures cross-sector working in order to support regional development.

Unlike other awards, only regions that join the Platform can be awarded the title, and joining the Platform requires a series of policy-actions to be in place such as a [Regional Stakeholder Committee](#) made up of public, private, third sector and knowledge institutions. By joining the knowledge-exchange Platform, the aim is to further cross-border collaborations, develop shared initiatives to improve food awareness and provide both external and internal regional visibility.

Once in the Platform, the regions work toward having the conditions required to hold the title. Depending on where the region is in the process, this can take several years of hard work.

What are the starting and end dates if we bid for the World Region of Gastronomy title - is it a full year of activities starting in January?

Since the World Region of Gastronomy is a bottom-up initiative, the regions will decide the starting time of the events of their World Region of Gastronomy year according to their schedule.

However, they will host at least three flagship events to involve fully its citizens throughout the awarded year and a World Gastronomy Summit in collaboration with IGCAT.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How many regions can apply at any given time?

The World Region of Gastronomy Award raises interest across many regions around the world and as such IGCAT and IGCAT Experts maintain conversations with many nominated and candidate regions while they grow a stakeholder group and develop their bid. Each year the title can be given to up to 2 regions (unless exceptional circumstances), provided that they are ready to hold it, meet IGCAT's criteria and comply with all the requirements of the Award. Since our philosophy is to nurture regions, the Secretariat will only put forward a candidate region for assessment by an independent jury once they have a good chance of a successful outcome.

In general, there is a requirement of a 3-year gap between regions from the same country, unless exceptional circumstances warrant otherwise.

What happens if more regions apply for the Award?

IGCAT will advise the regions as to when they are ready to apply for the Award and only then a panel of independent experts will travel to the region not only to assess their candidacy but to provide recommendations and ideas. IGCAT Secretariat will only recommend a region to submit an application if they feel the region is ready to take on the challenge.

When does a region become a candidate for the Award?

Building a stakeholder group takes time and we fully recommend getting involved in the Platform as a nominated / candidate region as soon as possible in the process. Nominations can be made by an IGCAT Expert at any time and from this point we can invite you to up to two meetings or events as an observer region and this is intended to help strengthen your bid. Nevertheless, ideally, aspiring World Regions of Gastronomy should officially join the Platform as soon as possible to receive full benefits of IGCAT secretariat support as a candidate region. Only candidate members of the Platform can be put forward for the title.

What is the title that will be awarded?

The awarded title will be '[WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY - [REGION NAME] - AWARDED [YEAR]'. The title can be used as a long-term legacy of the event (awarded since) as long as the region continues as an active member of the Platform.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can IGCAT Experts nominate and be part of the jury?

No, an IGCAT expert cannot have both roles. Any IGCAT expert can nominate, support a region in joining the Platform as a candidate, and/or provide consultancy support to regions in developing their bid. This is all undertaken either voluntarily or in private contracts between the region and the expert. Only independent experts can take part in the jury visit, and they must be able to sign a 'no conflict of interest' clause. Independent experts taking part in the jury visit are offered a fee from IGCAT for their report - some experts prefer to waive this fee either because they are already salaried or because they prefer the money to support lesser-economically developed regions in which case the monies are accumulated in the FLAG fund for the World Regions of Gastronomy Foundation.

What happens if a region fails to pay the annual membership fee?

To remain an active member of the Platform annual reports, annual membership fee, participation in joint projects and an Executive Manager to coordinate with IGCAT is required. If a region does not pay the membership fee within the first six months of each year, IGCAT will notify the region that they will no longer be able to participate fully in Platform events:

a) Participation in Platform meetings will be restricted to fully-paid members;

b) participation in joint projects will also be sanctioned accordingly if membership payments are not received by the registration deadline;

If a region is not active and/or skip payment for a full year, the region must then re-apply with all the bidding costs that this would imply.

In the interest of maintaining activities in the region and supporting knowledge-sharing across the Platform, IGCAT may allow one or more approved IGCAT experts from the region to attend meetings and individual institutions to join paying the relevant membership fee. However, only experts and representatives from fully paid regions have the right to vote. IGCAT will continue to work with approved IGCAT experts and/or paying stakeholder institutions in order to support the legacy and possible re-entry of the region in the future.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What happens after a region has held the title of World Region of Gastronomy?

The awarded region is required to complete its minimum 5-year commitment to the World Region of Gastronomy Platform. However, many regions chose to stay in the Platform and continue to develop the Award's legacy. By choosing to remain in the Platform beyond the year of their title, the region retains the right to continue to use the title.

Required Events and Budget Considerations

Each region is expected to:

- Host an Award Ceremony, an Opening Event, a World Gastronomy Summit and a legacy event.
- The World Gastronomy Summit is a key flagship project to engage international experts and local stakeholders in wider discussions about our food future and is developed together with IGCAT.
- Flagship events should be organised throughout the award year to encourage citizens to discuss their food future. These are important in building awareness about the importance of protecting and promoting food and cultural diversity.

These may be adaptations of existing events but should involve multiple sectors and stakeholders (preferably doing something new or different for the Award year).

Additionally, regions should allocate a budget to:

- Attend Platform meetings in other regions across the globe from entry into the Platform and for a minimum five year period.
- Participate in joint projects, such as:
 - Food Film Menu (free to participate).
 - World Food Gift Challenge (refer to IGCAT for registration fee).
 - Top Websites for Foodie Travelers (free to participate).

Beyond registration costs (where applicable), regions must also consider expenses for local projects (e.g., candidate/finalist selection), international travel, and accommodations.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who owns the Brand and how to use it?

IGCAT owns the internationally registered brand World Region of Gastronomy.

Fully paid members are granted the rights to use the logo along with their name and candidate or award year.

This is formalized through a contractual agreement, as the primary goal is to maximize visibility—locally, nationally, and internationally.

We encourage event organizers, food producers, restaurants, and hotels to use the logo as a tool to promote sustainable practices through a commitment to responsible business operations.

Can IGCAT Board members or the President attend our international event as a speaker?

IGCAT Board members and the President are only available to attend official IGCAT events in partner regions. These include:

- The 4 joint projects (e.g. Food Film Menu);
- Jury visits
- Platform meetings

What if our event is not an official IGCAT activity?

For non-official events, IGCAT must invoice a speaker fee, which supports the Flag Fund. This fund helps regions with fewer economic resources to participate in IGCAT initiatives.

Is there any flexibility for member regions of the Platform?

Yes. When possible, IGCAT can:

- Offer a virtual address from a representative;
- Try to find an IGCAT Expert who may attend for the cost of travel only.

Why is there a fee or limitation on speaker participation?

This policy helps:

- Ensure fairness and prevent perceptions of regional bias
- Protect Board members' time and well-being by reducing travel stress
- Fund the participation of under-resourced regions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Intellectual Property

IGCAT retains full ownership of the logo and variations of (registered as a trademark according to international law) as well as copyright of all content including database contacts, icons, project concept, the use of the IGCAT, World (and European) Region of Gastronomy, Young Chef Award, Top Websites for Foodie Travelers, Food Film Menu, Food Gift Challenge and other projects' names, logos, registered trademarks and domain names and permits.

Regional stakeholders will use them exclusively in relation to work conducted under the terms of the protocol agreement, these guidelines and while they are fully-paid and active members of the Platform.



GLOSSARY

Executive Board (of stakeholders)

Institutions selected from the Regional Stakeholder Committee, who sign the Protocol Agreement with IGCAT (on behalf of the Regional Stakeholder Committee) and take on financial and administrative responsibility of the bid.

Regional Stakeholder Committee

As a starting point, World regions should form a Regional Stakeholder Committee to endorse the bid including at least one institution from each of the four sectors (public, private, third sector, education) that will help lead in the process of bidding. This group is formed by umbrella entities (e.g. associations of hotels, restaurants, small businesses, festivals, chambers of commerce, etc.) i.e. not individual businesses.

It is not a requirement that they all sign the Protocol Agreement with IGCAT, but they sign separate partnership agreements with IGCAT to be added as annexes to the Protocol Agreement. The Protocol Agreement only needs to be signed by the Executive Board.

Regional Stakeholders

Individual entities that have signed up to the region's Food Commitment and been approved by the Executive Board. This includes restaurants, producers, hotels, cultural groups, tourist experiences, etc.

Protocol Agreement

Agreement signed between IGCAT and the Executive Board for the region to become a member of the World Region of Gastronomy Platform.

Partnership Agreement

Annex to the Protocol Agreement signed between IGCAT and the members of the Regional Stakeholder Committee (additional to the Executive Board).

Annual Membership Fee

Fee that regions pay every year to be part of the World Region of Gastronomy Platform.

GLOSSARY

One-off Joining Fee

Fee that regions pay only once to become a member of the World Region of Gastronomy Platform.

Bidding Fee

Fee that regions pay only once to present their bid for the World Region of Gastronomy Award.

Gastronomy Plan / Strategy Plan

Long-term strategy to develop regional gastronomy and to ensure a legacy of the World Region of Gastronomy title (identification of challenges and goals).

Food Commitment

Written commitment that regional stakeholders (individual businesses such as restaurants, hotels, food producers, etc.) sign with the region in support of the principles of the World Region of Gastronomy.



WORLD REGION OF **GASTRONOMY**

- AWARDED BY -

I G C A T

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
GASTRONOMY, CULTURE, ARTS AND TOURISM