Some challenges in the establishment of collective marketing tools:

Off-seasonal vegetables in Mộc Châu (Sơn La)

Delphine Marie-Vivien, CIRAD
Denis Sautier, CIRAD
Nguyễn Thị Tân Lộc, FAVRI
• Consumers’ concern on food safety and mistrust on respect of food safety rules.
• Demand for better food, enactment of many voluntary standards, at the national and international levels.
• Especially on fresh products such as vegetables.
Several tools exist in Vietnam for collective marketing processes.

Collective tools linked to the territory, to highlight the reputation of a product linked to its geographical origin.

Used by localised producers.
Issue 1

• How to build a collective marketing tool, aiming to create a reputation of the place of production, where:
  – the reputation is based on the compliance with "voluntary" food safety standards such as “safe vegetables” (rau an toan), Viet GAP…
  – the reputation is not based on the sensory quality of product (usually needed for specialty products, geographical indications).

• Combination between food safety standard and certificate of geographical origin.
Issue 2

• Building the reputation of the territory to identify a product requires.
  – a localised group of producers / processors.
  – a localised specification, standard.
• How is such collective local approach included and sustained?
• How are the standards built?

Crucial issue here, as standards are mostly sanitary… generic and not specific to the place!
Collective tools valorising the geographical origin

- **Appellation of origin** since 1995 and **Geographical Indication** since joining WTO, IP law in 2005: need for a qualitative link with the origin (typicity of the product, sensory quality): **38 GIs**.

- **Collective trademark** protecting speciality product: belongs to an association, slight link with the origin; light inspection procedure: **116 collective trademarks**.

- **Certification trademarks** protecting speciality products: belongs to a body able to certify the goods, not manufacturing nor trading such goods: **22 certification TM**.
Voluntary standards for safe food, particularly vegetables

- National standards, not always specific to certain growing areas.
- Freshness of product.
- *Rau an toànn* (RAT), VietGAP,
  - Mard decision 106/2007/QD-BNN.
  - 50 provinces have a *rau an toànn* programme.
  - 907 demonstration areas (2,476 ha) in 2008 = 2% of the cultivated area in vegetables and 8% in the Red river Delta.
Combination origin + sanitary quality

• 1st step: safe and fresh

Mard decision Rau An Toàn 106/2007/QD-BNN;

• 2nd step: geographical origin XX

Trademark defining geographical area = « Rau an toàn XX »
Examples of TM food safety x geographical origin

- Certification trademarks
  - Rau an toàn Da Lat.
  - Rau an toàn Quang Yen.

- Collective trademarks
  - Rau an toàn Sao Mai.
  - Rau an toàn Thần Cửu Nghĩa.
  - Hội An safe vegetables.
  - Rau An Toàn Xã Khánh An...
Examples of TM:
geographical origin x food safety

Certification trademark

Rau an toàn Mộc Châu
Improved market engagement for counter-seasonal vegetable producers in North West Vietnam

Funding Agency: ACIAR
Coordination: Gordon Rogers (AHR)
Pham Thi Sen, Nguyen Phi Hung (Nomafsi)
Tomatoes, Cabbage, French beans, Capsicum, Chinese cabbage, Cucumbers, Lettuce, Kohl Rabi, White Radish
Selection of the collective tool

- **Geographical indication**: not adapted to this case (many products, no sensory difference).

- **Choice between Collective and Certification TM**: Control was a key criteria for decision.

- **Collective TM**: for the members of an association. Control of the “rules of use” by the owner = is done by the association/organisation.

- **Certification TM**: The owner does not produce nor trade. Controls are done = by the owner of the trademark. The capacity of control is a condition to register certification trademarks.
Certification trademark

- Branding = logo + denomination: «rau an toàn Moc Chau».
- Delimitation of the production area: decision according to safe vegetable map (districts of Moc Chau and Van Hô in Son La Province).
- Decision on Standard: only for vegetables complying with Rau an toàn standard: Mard 106/2007/QD-BNN.
- No other requirements: trademark available for use by all producers, processors, traders for vegetables complying with the rules of us.
The stakeholders

- **Rau An Toàn**: Decision of Mard, RAT or VietGap control implemented by the Province DARD.

- **Certification trademark**:
  - Because it includes the geographical name Moc Chau, decision to confer the ownership to the district, which is more local than the province.
Role of public authorities

• 1st level: “safe” vegetables

Mard decision
rau an toan
106/2007/QD-BNN

Son La Province
DARD
Role of public authorities

• 2nd level: Moc Chau geographical origin

Certification trademark Moc Chau geographical origin

Owner of the TM: UNBD Moc Chau district.

(possible agreement with neighbour Van Ho district for producers from Van Ho).

Producers from Moc Chau: control by Moc Chau district who delivers certificate of use.

Producers from Van Ho: control procedure agreed upon by Moc Chau district,
Role of local producers?

- Food safety standards such as rau an toàn or VietGap are public voluntary standards.
  - content is decided and controled by the Public authorities.

- Protection of geographical origin is a voluntary approach based on the practices of producers localised in area:
  - Need to include them.
  - They cannot be involved in the control, which has to be independant control by the owner.
  - Involved in the setting up of the standard?
Which scale for Collective marketing?

• Is it relevant to reproduce the same quality scheme in more and more districts?
  – Urban consumers can memorize only a limited number of commercial names.
  – Need to build some strong brand names, with sufficient volumes for retail.
  – Strong communication is needed.

• Need to foresee coordination mechanisms, beyond administrative borders.
Conclusion

- Marketing tools can create sustainable competitive assets for rural areas.
- Geographical origin adds value to the sanitary quality. There would probably not have been any “branding” of the food safety standard alone.
- Trademark gives value (at the same level and in a unique trademark), to the compliance with a food safety standard and the geographical origin.
- The valorization of geographical origin should be based on local actors who create the reputation: the producers.
Thank you for your attention!