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**Impacts of Geographical Indications  
Review of Methods and Empirical Evidences**

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# Impacts of Geographical Indications

## Review of Methods and Empirical Evidences

### **Abstract**

This paper focuses on methods for assessing the territorial impact (economic, social and environmental) of geographical indication systems. First, in a review of methods, methodological difficulties and choices are discussed and major studies are briefly presented. We highlight that it is necessary to identify a clear reference point and a relevant set of indicators and that this question has led to an active and rich research corpus. In a second part, we present some of the results of a recent European research program, SENER-GI. We analyze the impacts of 14 case studies in a common methodology. The results show significant differences of the priorities of the stakeholders between established geographical indications and geographical indications in progress. For a first group of geographical indications in progress, which we called “enthusiasts”, the most important expected impacts are the market stabilization or increase, the value added in the region, but also the preservation of local breeds or varieties. For a second group of geographical indications in progress, that we called “socio-environmentalists”, the expectations on economic issues are less important than the social and the environmental ones. Finally, for a third group of geographical indications in progress, that we called “undecided”, we find that the highest scores are given to the expected economic impacts. We can conclude that in general, observed or expected impacts of geographical indication systems are mainly linked with economic or economic-related issues. But the review of the 14 case studies also shows that if the economic concerns are the only motives in the implementation of the GI protection schemes, there are some crucial risks.

Key-words: Geographical Indications, Territorial impact, Food chains

JEL: O34, Q13, R58

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## 1 Introduction

Impacts are observed effects of the implement of a Geographical Indication (GI) system or protection scheme in the three dimensions of the sustainable rural development (economic, social and environmental) and partly on human health.

For established GI systems<sup>1</sup> or protection schemes, effective impacts can be assessed but the factors which are causing the impacts are always complex to identify. For example, many comparative studies show the great influence of general factors such as political support or other policy concerns (Barjolle and Sylvander, 2002). The relationship between environmental values and GI systems, which includes ecosystem pollution, biodiversity, landscape etc., is the least studied dimension. Nevertheless, researchers have started exploring it with great interest.

The aim of this paper is first to review the literature available on impact assessment. Second, we will present a summary of some of the case studies conducted in the frame of the European research program *SINER-GI*<sup>2</sup>, funded by the European Commission and the Swiss Government. Third, we will compare the potential impacts across the 14 *SINER-GI* case studies according to a common methodology and discuss limits and conclusions which can be drawn.

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<sup>1</sup> A GI system is defined in the SINER-GI project as:

*“the set of actors who are effectively engaged in creating value and improving the strategic marketing position of the GI product by spontaneous individual or organized collective action and those who are engaged in the activation and reproduction of those local resources (natural resources, knowledge, social capital) which make the GI product specific”*

<sup>2</sup> SINER-GI - Strengthening International Research on Geographical Indications: from research foundation to consistent policy

## 2 Review of Methods

This section proposes a literature review on the impacts of GIs on the related territories, based on the review made by Révion & Paus (2006). After highlighting the methodological difficulties and choices, major studies are briefly presented.

### 2.1 Generalities

“Objective methods” provide a picture of the impact differential between two states allowing the comparison between farms, regions or supply chains. This differential can either be calculated for two different moments in time or for two objects “other things being equal”.

1. The first approach - the diachronic evaluation - consists in looking at the situation of a GI product before its registration and afterwards.
2. The second approach - the synchronic evaluation - compares two similar products, one with and the other one without a GI. These methods are based on the comparison of indicators which can be measured directly (hard data such as volumes, prices, number of employees). The main sources are statistical data, accounts data, enquiries and field observations. Nevertheless, more qualitative indicators can also be introduced (for example education level) with data collected during expert and stakeholders interviews.

“Subjective methods” are based on the comparison of preferences which measure the level of recognition of positive or negative effects of initiatives by external or internal actors. Interviewed actors can be experts or decision makers. These methods offer the possibility to measure a large number of indicators and to highlight the divergence or convergence in opinion about the impact of GI systems (Paus and Révion, 2009).

### 2.2 “Objective” methods

Many research studies base their assessment on “objective methods”. The first two methods presented hereafter are diachronic evaluations (“before/after historical approach”). Methods 3 to 8 are synchronic (“with/without approach”).

1. *Models and simulations.* Hauser (1997) simulated the evolution of the rural territory after a modification of the code of practice of Saint Marcellin PDO<sup>3</sup> cheese that would oblige the producers to use less than 50% of maize silage in the winter feed ration. The study shows that this new limitation

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<sup>3</sup> PDO means Protected Designation of Origin. It corresponds to the legal regime of *sui generis* protection implemented in the European Union (European regulation 510/06). For more detail see Thévenod-Mottet, 2006.

would reduce the risk of land abandonment and that compared to a set of individual decisions, the mechanism of the code of practice would increase the impact on the territory.

2. *Theories of transaction costs, governance and territorial dynamics.* Barjolle & Thévenod-Mottet (2004) used these theories to evaluate the impacts of the PDO registration of Abondance cheese on the spatial distribution of the supply-chain and the type of production (on-farm vs. dairy production). The study shows that three factors are directly linked with the PDO registration: the delimitation of the area of origin, the notoriety of the product and the possibility to distinguish the labelling according to the different types of production (on-farm processing vs. processing in dairy units).

3. *Economic concept of the territorial rent.* Hirczak et al. (2005) used this concept to determine whether a bundle of local products (basket of goods) can have a positive impact on the territory in terms of attractiveness and image and can be part of a strategy of local development.

4. *Comparison between PDO supply chains and the national supply chain.* Coutre-Picart (1999) compared different PDO cheese supply chains of the northern Alps in France with the national cheese supply chain. The study highlights a clear economic performance of the PDO cheese supply chains, with effects on the territory in terms of value added, employment and investments. Chatellier & Delattre (2003) used the same method and found that the PDO cheese supply chains of the northern Alps have the same income per work unit (in comparison with the national cheese supply chain) despite lower subsidies.

Desbois and Néfussi (2007) compared PDO and non-labelled products with the data of the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN). They underlined for the French dairy production significant differences in the prices paid to the producers, in favour of the PDO. Moreover, they stated that this added value is not totally absorbed by higher production costs.

5. *Comparison between a PDO and an industrial supply chain within a same area or in similar administrative areas.* De Roest & Menghi (2002) compared the PDO Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese supply chain with the industrial milk supply chain. The results show that the PDO supply chain generates higher employment levels because of labour intensive practices and a lower loss of nitrogen per hectare due to different cow feeding regimes.

Dupont (2003) used the same method and compared the PDO Comté cheese with the industrialized Emmental cheese. The study highlights various positive effects of the PDO supply chain: increase in production, higher premiums to the producers, higher farmer incomes, slow down of rural exodus, preservation of an outstanding landscape, development of agro-tourism.

Hauwuy et al. (2006) combined this method and the one mentioned above (comparison with the national supply chain) to find out whether the cheese PDOs in the northern Alps have impacts in terms

of agricultural dynamics, use of space, environmental performance and social relations. They found that the cheese PDO supply chains have a positive impact on agricultural dynamics in the production areas, that the incomes are similar to the French average despite the smaller farm sizes (milk quotas), that the annual worker units employed are higher and the direct subsidies lower.

Paus (2003) compared the Raclette cheese supply chain and the consumption milk supply chain. She found that the Raclette cheese supply chain favoured the upkeep of land and helped maintain local knowledge and regional specificity through the production of typical cheese in many small dairies.

6. *Overlay of environmental indicators and the number of PDO products in the same territory.*

Hirczak & Mollard (2004) used this method of space overlays to determine if the PDO differentiation offers a significant increase of environmental quality in the geographical areas concerned. The results show that a positive correlation can be observed between the cheese designations and the environmental quality.

7. *Benchmarking of PDOs.* Barjolle, Réviron & Sylvander (2007) did a comparison of quantitative data regarding prices of various PDO, and show that PDO cheese organizations can get a premium at the consumer level and distribute this extra value to the producers.

Frayssignes (2005) analyzed contribution of different French PDO in terms of territorial development. He found that the PDO supply chains only had a relatively small impact on the local economy. Nevertheless, he underlined positive effects such as price premium and valorization of the profession of farmer.

8. *Analysis of the environmental components of the code of practices of the Swiss PDO/PGI products.* Thévenod-Mottet & Klingemann (2007) analyzed the code of practices of the Swiss PDO/PGI products. The results show that some rules included in the code of practices could have positive external impacts on the environment.

## **2.3 “Subjective” methods**

Some research studies base their assessment on “subjective methods”. The idea is to ask informed people to grade initiatives regarding various items in order to evaluate their perception on the positive or negative external effects of the marketing of a product.

9. *Benchmarking and Likert scale.* Lehmann & al. (2000) studied the side-effects on the territory of various regional agro-food supply chains in the Valais canton, Switzerland, using the Likert scale method. Paus and Réviron (2009) used the same method to compare the effects of Rye Bread of Valais

PDO on rural development with its main competitors. The study highlights the excellent grades obtained by the PDO supply chain for the economic, social and environmental dimensions.

10. *Analysis of the practices linked to sustainable development in PDO and PGI organizations.* Ollagnon & Touzard (2007) conducted a survey to characterize practices linked to sustainable development in PGI and PDO organizations in France. The results of the 141 PDO and PGI investigated show that their organizations undertake numerous and various voluntary actions in the fields of sustainable development and management of resources.

## **2.4 Discussion about methods**

The literature review presented above provides interesting methods and strong results and shows that the assessment of effects of GI system or protection scheme has become an important research program.

Behind the apparent diversity of studies, clear methodological choices can be identified according to their objective/subjective approach, diachronic/synchronic evaluation and to their reference point.

The research studies clearly identify the ability of GI production systems to create or reinforce positive effects on rural development, which are very welcome in marginal areas. Nevertheless, it also shows that there is no single well established method to measure the impacts of the implementation of a GI system or protection scheme.

Many methodological difficulties arise, such as the choice of a reference point for the synchronic approach, the collection of reliable data, the choice between objective or subjective methods, the sampling procedure adopted in the subjective method, and the separation of causes as many factors work together. The methods have their limits: the specific point of view of the analysis, the size of the territory, the dimensions taken into account for the impacts (economic, social, and environmental), the number of indicators investigated and their prioritization and aggregation, the size of the survey sample.

## **3 Empirical evidences**

### **3.1 Case study methodology for data collection**

In the frame of the European research program *SINER-GI*, a large team of researchers investigated 14 case studies in different countries around the world (at diverse stages between “Origin product” and “recognized GI”, according to the common grid of definition defined at an early stage of the *SINER-GI* program).



The different case studies are the following:

- *Roquefort (cheese, France)*
- *Melton Mowbray Pork Pie (pie, United Kingdom)*
- *Tequila (distilled product, Mexico)*
- *Paprika of Kalosca (spice, Hungary)*
- *Rooibos tea (herbal tea, South Africa)*
- *Argentinean Pampean Beef (fresh meat, Argentina)*
- *Brazilian Pampean Beef (fresh meat, Brazil)*
- *Chontaleño cheese (cheese, Nicaragua)*
- *Pico Duarte coffee (coffee, Dominican Republic)*
- *Jinhua ham (pork, China)*
- *Basmati (rice, India and Pakistan)*
- *Kraljevacki kajmak (dairy product, Serbia)*
- *Bleuets du Lac Saint-Jean (berry, Canada)*
- *Florida Oranges (fruits, United States of America)*

### 3.2 Evaluation of the 14 case studies

We elaborated a common conceptual framework for the assessment of case study results after the case studies had been completed. In order to achieve this harmonised assessment, we established a grid of scoring, in two steps:

- First, we selected relevant items. Per definition, those items had to be comparable and assessable for all the case studies.
- Second, we did a scoring of each item on the basis of the case study reports, in discussion with the person responsible for the case study or its reviewer.

After a complete review of all the case studies, the following items were identified as relevant, comparable and assessable:

#### ***On the economic level***

- Market stabilization / increase
- Price premium
- Value added in the region

#### ***On the social level***

- Local Employment
- Empowerment of producers
- Cultural value / Tradition

#### ***On the environmental level***

- Local breed / variety
- Extensive farming
- Natural resources

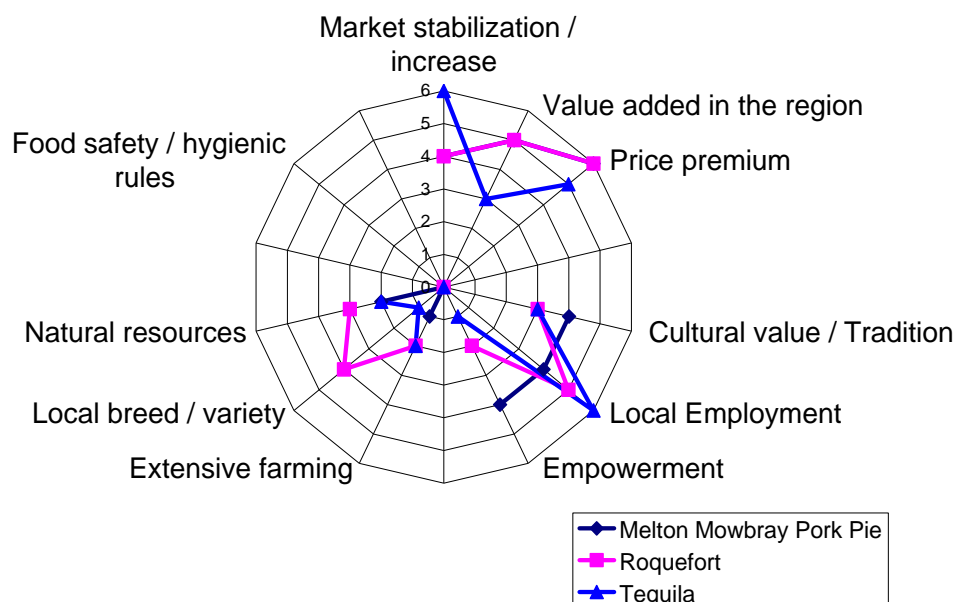
The sanitary / hygienic rules also appeared to be an important item, in terms of potential effects of the GI recognition process.

Then, for each item, a scoring was done between the modality 0, which corresponds to a totally non-relevant item for the considered GI system, and 6, which corresponds to the most expected effect. 1 means that the impact is almost not expected.

It is important to clarify that, as most of these are new or emerging GI systems, almost all the impacts are expected. But certain impacts are prevalent in the motivation of the initiators / supporters.

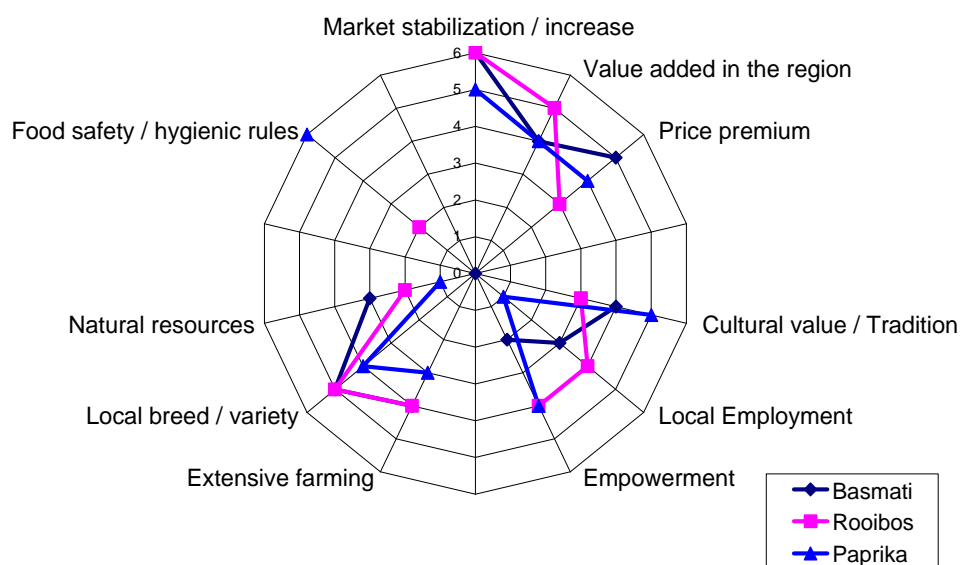
For the established geographical indications, the economic impacts are the most important, and in the social dimension, the local employment is the most relevant for the stakeholders. In fact, the price premium, the value added in the region and the local employment get the highest scores.

**Figure 7: Impacts for established Geographical Indications**



For a first group of geographical indications in progress, which we called “enthusiasts”, the most important expected impacts are the market stabilization or increase, the value added in the region, but also the preservation of local breeds or varieties.

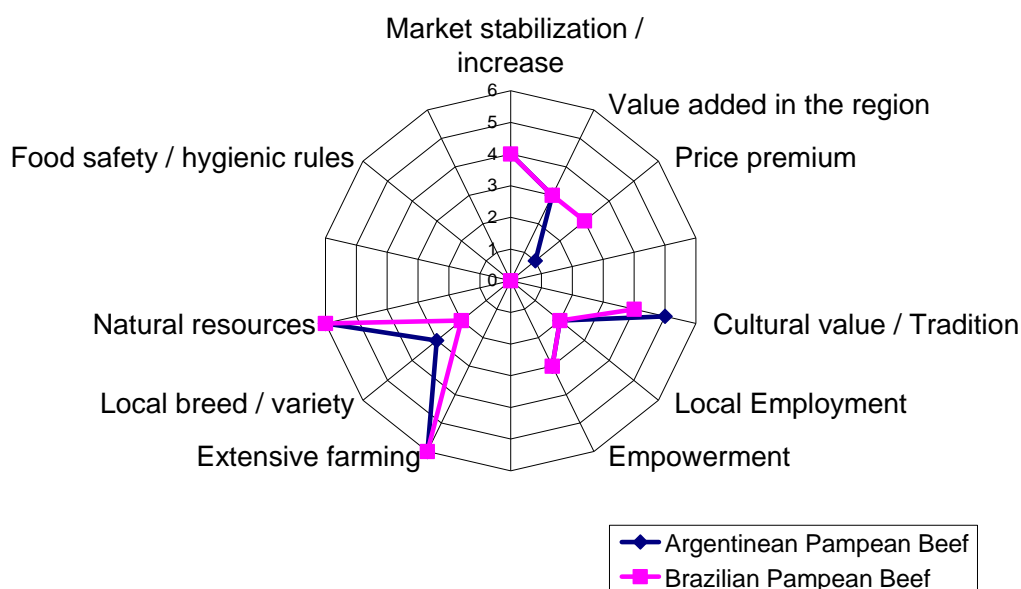
**Figure 8: Expected impacts for Geographical Indications in progress, “Enthusiastic”**



All the dimensions received high average scores. For these products, it seems that the motivation of all actors is high, and that the expectations are high for the three aspects.

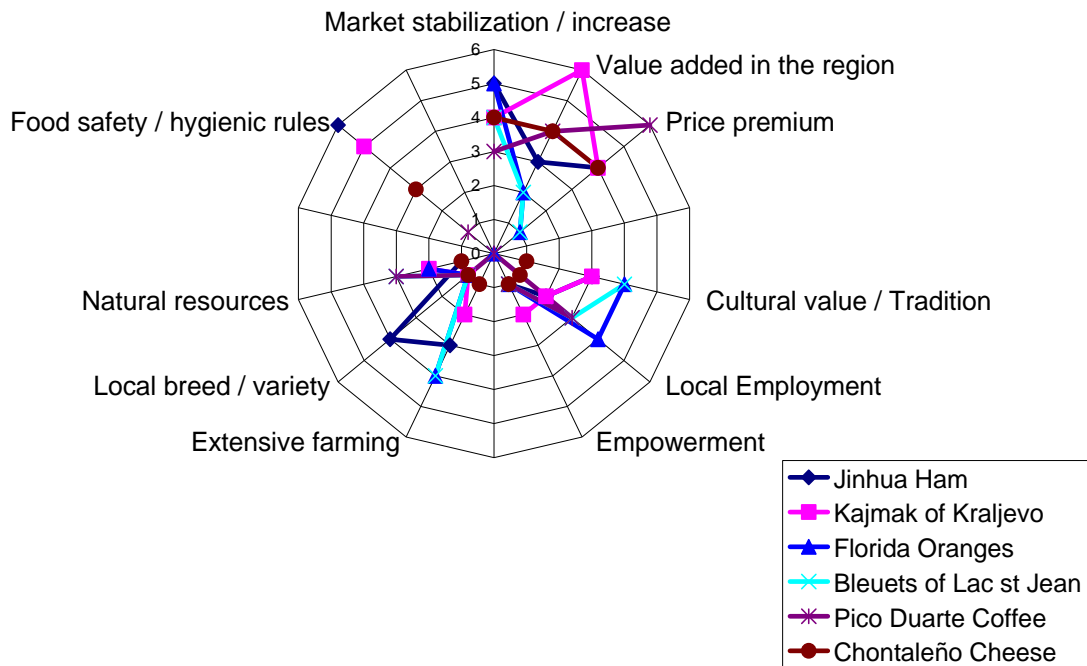
For a second group of geographical indications in progress, that we called “socio-environmentalists”, the expectations on economic issues are less important than the social and the environmental ones. The initiatives stem from mostly one process of recognition of extensive and traditional farming practices well adapted to the area. The two beef meats from the South American Pampa are in this second category.

**Figure 9: Expected impacts for Geographical Indications in progress, “Socio-environmentalists”**



For a third group of geographical indications in progress, that we called “undecided”, we find that the highest scores are given to the expected economic impacts. Nevertheless, for certain products, the food safety and hygienic rules are also important drivers for key actors. This reflects a pressure from the evolution of general standards on the future of these GI products. In general, issues related to the environment or society are considered as less important for the local stakeholders.

**Figure 10: Expected impacts for Geographical Indications in progress, “Undecided”**



For the studied products, there are clearly more expectations in terms of economic effects of GIs. The other dimensions are nevertheless also important but in diverse ways, depending on special concerns in the local context. For the local actors or the external initiators of the GI initiatives, the consensus about the potential impacts is a good starting point as it leads to common objectives. The role of an external facilitator can be precisely to shed some light on the conflicts of interests or the common perceptions of the stakes, in order to facilitate the compromise about the delimitation of a geographical area or the definition of the conditions of production.

## 4 Discussion and conclusion

We can conclude that in general, observed or expected impacts of geographical indication systems are mainly linked with economic or economic-related issues. But the review of the 14 case studies also shows that in the cases where the economic concerns are the only motives in the implementation of the GI protection schemes, there are some crucial risks. For instance, the case of Chontaleño cheese in Nicaragua shows that a registered geographical indication can lead to more monopolistic power in favour of the most powerful actors in the GI system, and have disastrous consequences for small scale farmers and dairies that might lose their access to the market. For the established geographical indication system Tequila, it is obvious that the benefits in terms of premium prices are captured by out-of-area actors.

Therefore, it is a must in our view to seriously consider sustainable agriculture and rural development concerns when defining the roles of the institutions to be involved and the procedures of the geographical indications implementation schemes. First, not only the intellectual property rights have to be taken into account. Other related policies are crucial. The agricultural policy, the rural development policy, the food safety regulations and the anti-trust policies play important roles in the optimization of the positive effects on sustainability. From the beginning of the registration procedure, measures like the publication of the code of practice and the opening of an opposition procedure are important. They legitimate the definition of the product negotiated by the actors themselves (delimitation of the area of origin and definition of conditions of production). Otherwise, given that after the registration, the code of practice becomes mandatory for all the users of the name, there is a risk of serious loss of efficiency of other related policies. For example, when the definition of an area of origin is too large or the conditions of production too vague, the internal competition and stimulation between small scale farmers or processors can be lost very rapidly. Indeed, new producers, which compete on costs with completely different production methods, can easily capture the image of the product. As a consequence, the benefits of other policy measures in favour of protecting natural resources or traditional knowledge can be lost.

Our results have clear limits in terms of broadness. In fact, based on only 12 case studies and 2 control cases, the representativeness is not reached. There is a clear need for further research on impact assessment for a quantitative representative sample of GI systems.

It is obvious that institutional GI legal frames are neither sustainable agricultural policies nor rural development policies. They are policies related to intellectual property rights, as a special case apart from trademark registration, for products which have specific attributes linked to their geographical origin. Nevertheless, in some cases, our results show that the territorial level defined by the GI is sufficiently coherent to host valuable Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) programs.

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