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Italy expands food consortium powers under new geographical indication rules

The decree gives DOP and IGP consortia broader authority over supply chains, sustainability oversight and tourism development.

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Italy has introduced new rules for the consortia that oversee protected food and drink names, expanding their role beyond brand protection and promotion to include broader supply-chain governance, sustainability planning and tourism development.

The measure, a decree issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forests on June 3, aligns Italy’s system with European Union Regulation 2024/1143, approved in April 2024. The EU framework covers geographical indications for wines, spirits and agricultural products, as well as traditional specialties and optional quality terms for farm goods.

Under the new Italian rules, consortia for DOP and IGP products — the national labels tied to protected designation of origin and protected geographical indication — are expected to take a stronger coordinating role across production chains. That includes helping organize supply, supporting shared strategies among operators and contributing to the economic development of the territories linked to those products.

The change matters for the beverage sector because many of Italy’s best-known wines and spirits depend on geographical indications, and the decree could reshape how those denominations are managed, promoted and monitored. For producers of appellation wines, grappa and other protected drinks, the reform may lead to tighter coordination, more structured oversight and a stronger link between denomination management and tourism.

One of the main changes is that multiple geographical indications may now be represented within a single consortium structure while preserving decision-making autonomy for each denomination. The idea is to allow smaller or mid-sized DOP and IGP systems to pool technical expertise, promotional work and monitoring services instead of operating in isolation.

That approach is intended to address fragmentation in sectors where scale can affect competitiveness. In practice, it could help some producers reduce costs and improve collective action in domestic and export markets, especially where individual denominations lack the resources to sustain large promotional or compliance structures on their own.

The decree also gives formal weight to sustainability as part of consortium activity. In this framework, sustainability is not limited to environmental performance. It also includes economic sustainability for producers and social sustainability for local communities and workers. The broader interpretation reflects a policy view that a

protected denomination remains viable only if it can preserve natural resources while also supporting farm income, employment and generational continuity in rural areas.

Another area strengthened by the reform is tourism tied to geographical indications. Consortia are expected to play a more active role in turning certified products into entry points for travel experiences connected to place, culture and local production. For wine regions in particular, that could reinforce the role of consortia in wine tourism planning, visitor itineraries and coordinated storytelling around appellations.

The decree also tightens rules on representativeness, verification and oversight. As consortia gain wider powers, the government is seeking stronger guarantees that they genuinely reflect the supply chains they represent. The aim is greater transparency and accountability in bodies that increasingly influence commercial strategy, territorial promotion and denomination management.

For restaurants, hotels and other hospitality businesses, the shift could mean dealing with consortia that act less as passive custodians of certification marks and more as organized territorial partners. That may translate into broader access to certified products, joint promotional initiatives, stronger traceability assurances and more coordinated food-and-drink tourism projects.

The reform comes at a time when Italy is trying to defend the value of its geographical indications in a more competitive global market while also responding to pressure on sustainability, fraud prevention and rural development. In that context, stronger consortium governance is being positioned as a tool not only to protect names but also to manage them as economic assets tied to local identity.

The new framework also fits into a wider tightening of protections around Italian food products, including recent moves on food-related crimes aimed at countering fraud and counterfeiting. Together, those measures point to a more interventionist approach in how Italy governs certified origin products across agriculture and beverages.