C/2025/3939

16.7.2025

Publication of the communication of an approved standard amendment to a product specification of a geographical indication in accordance with Article 5(4) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/27 [1]

(C/2025/3939)

COMMUNICATION OF APPROVAL OF A STANDARD AMENDMENT

(Article 24 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143)

'Sel de Guérande / Fleur de sel de Guérande'

EU PGI-FR-0861-AM01 – 24.4.2025

1. **Name of product**

'Sel de Guérande / Fleur de sel de Guérande'

2. **Geographical indication type**

☐ Protected designation of origin (PDO)

☒ Protected geographical indication (PGI)

☐ Geographical indication (GI)

3. **Sector**

☒ agricultural products

☐ wines

☐ spirit drinks

4. **Country to which the geographical area belongs**

France

5. **Member State authority communicating the standard amendment**

Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty

6. **Qualification as standard amendment**

The amendments described and substantiated do not include a change in the name of the protected geographical indication or a change in the use of that name. They do not risk voiding the link referred to in Article 5(2)(b), nor do they entail further restrictions on the marketing of the product. These amendments therefore meet the definition of a standard amendment.

7. **Description of the approved standard amendment(s)**

1. *Responsible department in the Member State*

The 'Responsible department in the Member State' section has been added, giving the contact details for the National Institute of Origin and Quality (Institut national de la qualité et de l'origine – INAO), in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2024/1143.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

[1] Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/27 of 30 October 2024 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council with rules concerning the registration and the protection of geographical indications, traditional specialities guaranteed and optional quality terms and repealing Delegated Regulation (EU) No 664/2014 (OJ L, 2025/27, 15.1.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2025/27/oj).

2. *Applicant group*

The contact details and legal form of APROSELA [association for the promotion of artisanal salt] have been provided.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

3. *Type of product*

The section relating to the type of product, formerly defined by its class, has been deleted from the product specification.

The amendment affects the single document.

4. *Description of the product*

The rules on the pink colour of the *fleur de sel* and its share of total salt production have been removed.

Details have been added regarding the name used for mixtures of salt and *fleur de sel*. In such cases, the name 'Sel de Guérande' is used.

The sentence describing the characteristics of the salt has been reworded to clarify that these apply during the initial packaging stage. The underlying values for the characteristics of the salt are unchanged.

The requirement for the product to be sold in sealed packaging has been removed. It has been replaced by a requirement for the initial packaging to take place in the geographical area. Accompanying this is an indication that the product must be marketed to consumers either in sealed containers or in bulk.

The amendment affects the single document.

5. *Definition of the geographical area*

A number of changes have been made to the wording of this section in order to update the steps which must take place in the geographical area and to comply with the rules in force. Nevertheless, the definition of the geographical area is changed. The harvesting, storage, sorting and initial packaging must all take place in the geographical area.

The amendment affects the single document.

6. *Evidence that the product originates from the geographical area*

A description of the categories of operator and the activities they carry out relating to the product specification, has been added to the section.

The traceability flowchart has been deleted as all the information is contained in the traceability summary table.

The document retention period has been removed as it is included in the arrangements for inspecting the product specification.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

7. *Description of the method of obtaining the product*

Some adjustments have been made to the life cycle, in particular a step has been added to establish rules on the conditions for collection and transport. The step concerning the place of processing has been removed as this step may occur outside the geographical area. The physical characteristics have been removed from the step concerning processing as they already feature with the same values in the steps on the sorting and the marketing of the products. Lastly, the step concerning packaging in sealed containers has become the step concerning initial packaging in sealed containers.

A number of rules describing the marshes and the operation of a salt marsh have been deleted as they are not inspection items. Several rules have been maintained in order to present the tools used by producers during production and the process of turning seawater into salt.

A rule has been added to clarify that tyres and cans for keeping tarpaulins in place, which were already prohibited for post-harvest storage, are also prohibited for storage prior to initial packaging.

A rule has been added requiring materials used during contact with salt at the collection and transport stages to be inert.

The requirement for the product to be sold in sealed packaging has been deleted. Deleting this requirement makes it possible to sell the product in bulk to consumers.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

8. *Details bearing out the link with the geographical environment*

The details bearing out the link with the geographical environment have been re-written and updated without being changed. The link continues to be based on a reputation built on a production method consisting in an age-old technique of concentrating salt from sea water and harvesting 'Sel de Guérande' and 'Fleur de sel de Guérande' manually using hand tools. Human factors have enabled this traditional product to be maintained over the years, as well as the characteristics of the environment which are conducive to salt crystallisation in the salt marshes, underpinning the details bearing out the link with the geographical environment.

The amendment affects the single document.

9. *Labelling*

The labelling rules have been updated to reflect current legislation, with a reference added for clarity stating that the PGI logo must appear in the same visual field as the name of the PGI. It has also been clarified that the website of the applicant group may appear on the labelling.

The amendment affects the single document.

10. *Inspection body*

The contact details of the authorities responsible for inspections at national level are now provided, i.e. the National Institute of Origin and Quality (INAO) and the Directorate-General for Competition, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Prevention (DGCCRF). The name and contact details of the certification body can be found on the INAO website and in the European Commission's database.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

11. *National requirements*

This section is presented in the form of a table showing the main items to be checked and the evaluation methods to be used.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'Sel de Guérande / Fleur de sel de Guérande'

EU No: PGI-FR-0861-AM01 – 24.4.2025

PDO ( ) PGI (X)

1. **Name(s) (of the PDO or PGI)**

'Sel de Guérande / Fleur de sel de Guérande'

2. **Member State or third country**

France

3. **Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff**

3.1. *Combined Nomenclature code*

— 25 SALT; SULPHUR; EARTHS AND STONE; PLASTERING MATERIALS, LIME AND CEMENT

2501 – Salt (including table salt and denatured salt) and pure sodium chloride, whether or not in aqueous solution or containing added anticaking or free-flowing agents; sea water

3.2. *Description of the product to which the name in (1) applies*

'Sel de Guérande' and 'Fleur de sel de Guérande' are hand-harvested sea salts sourced exclusively from salt marshes after the salt in the water has concentrated and crystallised. They are unrefined sea salts which are not washed after they are harvested. They mainly consist of sodium chloride crystals, but also naturally contain other mineral salts and trace elements.

Physical properties:

'Sel de Guérande' has an insoluble matter content not exceeding 1 %, contains no foreign bodies larger than 8 mm and has a moisture content not exceeding 12 %.

'Fleur de sel de Guérande' has an insoluble matter content not exceeding 0,20 %, contains no foreign bodies larger than 3,5 mm and has a moisture content not exceeding 12 %.

3.3. *Feed (for products of animal origin only) and raw materials (for processed products only)*

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3.4. *Specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographical area*

The following operations must take place in the geographical area: harvesting, storage, sorting, initial packaging.

3.5. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc. of the product the registered name refers to*

'Sel de Guérande' and 'Fleur de sel de Guérande' must be packaged in closed, identified containers, even when the packaging is temporary (pending any later processing and/or repackaging), and are marketed to consumers in sealed containers or in bulk.

To ensure the products can be adequately identified, 'Sel de Guérande' and 'Fleur de sel de Guérande' may only be removed from the geographical area after undergoing initial packaging and labelling.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning labelling of the product the registered name refers to*

The label must bear:

— the name 'Sel de Guérande' for the grey salt and products formed by drying or grinding the salt;

— the name 'Fleur de sel de Guérande' for the *fleur de sel* salt;

— the European Union PGI logo in the same visual field as the name of the PGI.

— the name, address and/or website of the [applicant] group.

4. **Concise definition of the geographical area**

The area comprises the following departments and municipalities:

In the department of Loire-Atlantique, the municipalities of Assérac, Batz-sur-Mer, Besné, Bouée, Campbon, Crossac, Donges, Drefféac, Guenrouët, Guérande, Herbignac, Lavau-sur-Loire, La Baule-Escoublac, La Chapelle-des-marais, La Chapelle-Launay, La Turballe, Le Croisic, Le Pouliguen, Malville, Mesquer, Missillac, Montoir-de-Bretagne, Piriac-sur-Mer, Pontchâteau, Pornichet, Prinquiau, Quilly, Saint-André-des-eaux, Saint-Gildas-des-Bois, Saint-Joachim, Saint-Lyphard, Saint-Malo-de-Guersac, Saint-Molf, Saint-Nazaire, Sainte-Anne-sur-Brivet, Sainte-Reine-de-Bretagne, Savenay, Sévérac, Trignac.

In the department of Morbihan, the municipalities of Camoël, Férel, La Roche-Bernard, Nivillac, Pénestin, Saint-Dolay, Théhillac.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

The link is based on the reputation of 'Sel de Guérande' and 'Fleur de sel de Guérande' which was gained thanks to the know-how of the salt workers passed down over generations. The products are the result of a technique whereby sea salt is concentrated through natural evaporation of the water. The defined geographical area and oceanic climate, combined with harvesting by hand using traditional tools, guarantee 'Sel de Guérande' and 'Fleur de sel de Guérande' their unique characteristics which have built up their strong reputation over the years.

Specificity of the geographical area

Situated between the mouths of the Loire and Vilaine rivers, the Guérande region is characterised by an oceanic climate (mild winters, cool summers) and, in summer, registers fewer days of rain and less rainfall (between 500 and 600 mm per year) than most others regions of France.

The Guérande salt marshes are situated behind sandbanks which protect them from the swell on old maritime meadows ('Les Bôles') drained by tideways extended by *bondres** [access channels] and *étiers** [tidal channels].

The clay content of the soils and the fact that this clay is malleable and impermeable, made the construction of man-made salt marshes possible. The heat retention properties of the clay also feed into the production of the salt since, in August, the clay absorbs the daytime heat, which is then transferred to the surface waters of the salt marshes. This heat exchange keeps the night time temperatures high in the *adernes** [salt marshes] and *œillets** [salt pans] and allows evaporation to continue.

Since the production of 'Sel de Guérande' and 'Fleur de sel de Guérande' is exposed to the ups and downs of the climate, it can vary considerably from one year to the next.

The way in which water levels are managed in the different basins of the salt marshes and the techniques used to harvest 'Sel de Guérande' and 'Fleur de sel de Guérande' constitute specific traditional know-how. The skill of the salt worker is in the way they allow the salt in the water – circulating in all the basins of the system – to concentrate over several weeks. In particular, by regulating the flow of water and its thickness, the salt worker must keep a concentrated brine within the salt marshes which is very close to the point of crystallisation.

'Sel de Guérande' and 'Sel de fleur de Guérande' can only be harvested in salt marshes where there is naturally-occurring clay coinciding at a location between high and low tides where there is a large tidal range. The complexity of the water network and the structure of the salt marshes form essential elements of the Guérande landscape and local know-how.

Specificity of the products

'Sel de Guérande' is predominantly characterised by its slightly grey colour and its fairly high moisture content which may not exceed 12 %. 'Fleur de sel de Guérande' is predominantly characterised by its naturally white colour and its fairly high moisture content which may not exceed 12 %. It may sometimes have a slightly pinkish hue due to the presence of microalgae (*Dunaliella salina*) and halophilic bacterial flora. However, this colour disappears during the natural draining of the *fleur de sel*.

Fleur de sel is rarer than grey salt due to its special crystallisation.

Due to their marine origin and the way they are harvested, the products have high levels of bioavailable magnesium as well as calcium, potassium and trace elements.

'Sel de Guérande' and 'Sel de fleur de Guérande' are natural, unrefined products, not washed after harvesting and free of additives. 'Sel de Guérande' may potentially be ground.

The structure of the salt marshes which is specific to the Guérande basin feeds into the traditional know-how. The salt marshes comprise a series of interwoven, geometrically shaped basins. Historical and topographical factors linked to the soil properties are responsible for this structure.

Due to the traditional way the salt marshes are operated, the water is naturally purified and the suspended matter is decanted throughout the entire water circuit until the water reaches the salt pans where the salt and *fleur de sel* are harvested.

The *fleur de sel* is harvested by hand using a special tool called a *lousse**, by skimming the surface of the salt pans which produce grey salt (a process known as the *cueillette*), before it then sinks to the bottom of the basin where it can no longer be harvested as *fleur de sel*.

'Sel de Guérande' is harvested in three stages: the crystals are gathered together at the centre of the salt pans, brought towards the *ladure* [a special platform] and scraped onto it. All three stages take place in brine using traditional tools. The use of a *las** [wooden rake] allows the brine in the salt pans to be stirred and the crystals which settle at the bottom of the salt pan to be moved, while leaving the clay particles behind. The salt which is moved is then gathered at the *ladure** [special platform at the edge of the salt pan] before being pulled onto it.

Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product.

The harvesting method used in the Guérande peninsula salt marshes is different from that used in other production areas.

The complexity of the water network and the structure of the salt marshes form essential elements of the Guérande landscape and local know-how.

The know-how of the Guérande salt workers is characterised by the following:

— use of changes in the tide both to naturally replenish the reservoirs (high tides with a large tidal range) and to empty the salt marshes (low neap tide), with movement of the water from one basin to another driven by gravity.

— use of three types of basin: reservoirs, concentration and evaporation pools, and salt pans. The salt marshes contain concentration pools and salt pans. Embankments always separate the reservoirs from the salt marshes.

— harvest frequency: harvesting is seasonal (generally from mid-June to mid-September) and takes place daily subject to the right weather conditions. Any rain will halt or set back the process of sea water concentration. On the contrary, wind and sunshine is needed to produce grey salt and *fleur de sel*.

— harvesting of the salt from the brine: the salt pans are always covered with water so as not to halt the concentration process every time the salt is collected.

— non-mechanised process of harvesting and transporting the salt to the salt heap.

— individual, family-run or member-run businesses.

These characteristics are essential to the production and typical features of the product.

The first written records of salt marshes in the Guérande region are to be found in the cartulary of Redon Abbey dated 15 December 854. Although the Guérande salt marshes really flourished between the 10th and 14th centuries, the number of salt pans increased considerably as of the 16th century, peaking in the 19th century. Between 1840 and 1960, competition from rock salt from other countries and sea salt from the Mediterranean led to the salt marshes being abandoned or converted to other uses. The decline in the use of salt for food preservation also caused production to fall.

Since 1970, salt production in the Guérande basin has picked up. The salt marshes and production techniques that are used are the same as in past centuries, while traditional techniques are being used to restore the salt marshes.

The Guérande peninsula is home to the only vocational training centre for salt producers (in association with the Loire-Atlantique Chamber of Agriculture). Most professionals working along the French Atlantic coast attended this training centre, which was set up in 1979 by the Guérande salt workers.

The particular taste and nutritional qualities of 'Sel de Guérande' and 'Fleur de sel de Guérande' salt have long been recognised in France and worldwide. For centuries, 'Sel de Guérande' has been recognised as the salt of food lovers. Popular rumour holds that King Louis XIV would only allow salt from the Guérande salt marshes on his table, which he found to have a subtle violet aroma, a reputation that has been passed down to this today.

Fleur de sel has featured in advertising for *fleur de sel de Loire Inférieure* dating back to the 1930s. However, it was only in the late 1970s that the name became well known, gradually replacing the names 'white salt', 'fine salt' or 'Guérande salt' which had previously been used for this product before it enjoyed market recognition.

The reputation of the names 'Sel de Guérande / "Fleur de sel de Guérande" spread with the commercial development of these products in the late 1980s. The name "Sel de Guérande" was marketed to consumers during the commercial and advertising launch of the first collective action recognised by the state under the name *Sel Marin de l'Atlantique* on 8 July 1991. During the same period, the name "Fleur de sel de Guérande" also saw significant commercial development.

Hundreds of articles refer to "Sel de Guérande" and/or "Fleur de sel de Guérande", highlighting the importance of the salt workers' achievements concerning quality, the special nature of the products they harvest (grey salt and *fleur de sel*) and the management of a sensitive coastal area.

Consumer interest in 'Sel de Guérande / Fleur de sel de Guérande' can be seen in studies and surveys undertaken by commercial marketing organisations and distributors. In a market for an extremely common product, 'Sel de Guérande' pioneered the salt market segment which today distinguishes 'original salt'. Many works about food and gastronomy mention the reputation of 'Sel de Guérande / Fleur de sel de Guérande'. Moreover, several renowned restaurateurs in France and in many other countries have voiced their preference for this salt.

Reference to publication of the product specification

https://info.agriculture.gouv.fr/boagri/document_administratif-1c7a07de-26fd-4c3e-b185-5ea26b6fbd69