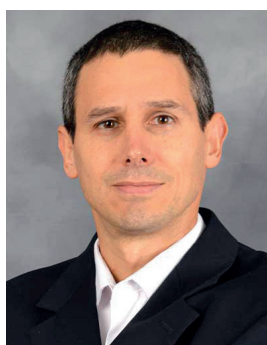


# The TSG route: a tool to promote gastronomic tourism

Gino Piaggio of Colmenares explores the role of Traditional Specialities Guaranteed (TSG) as a specialized intellectual property tool, and how although the implementation of this regime in Peru is still in its early stages, it offers a transformative opportunity to strengthen cultural identity and enhance the nation's appeal as a premier destination for gastronomic tourism.



Gino Piaggio

**TSGs offer a powerful way to transform traditional recipes into economic assets, strengthening cultural identity while promoting gastronomic tourism and local development.**

**T**raditional Specialities Guaranteed (TSG) are presented as an intellectual property tool aimed at safeguarding traditional production methods and compositions, distinguishing themselves from other figures in that they do not depend on geographical origin. Although their development in Peru is still incipient, their implementation offers opportunities to strengthen cultural identity, promote gastronomic tourism, and stimulate local economies, thereby demonstrating their potential as an instrument for economic and tourism development.

## Introduction

Gastronomy has become one of the main elements of cultural identity and tourism promotion for countries. In the case of Peru, internationally recognized for its culinary diversity, this sector also represents one of the most dynamic components of the economy due to its capacity to generate employment. According to the General Office for Impact Evaluation and Economic Studies, the restaurant and related activities sector contributed approximately PEN 14.567 billion to the national economy in 2024, recording a growth of 3.5% compared to the previous year, which demonstrates its relevance within the service sector.

In this context, the protection of traditional recipes emerges as a key strategy

to preserve cultural heritage and generate economic value in communities. One of the intellectual property tools aimed at this objective is TSGs, which allow for the protection of traditional production methods and convey to consumers the authenticity of certain foods or preparations.

The TSG system seeks to recognize and safeguard recipes that are part of a community's cultural tradition. Unlike other forms of protection linked to geographical origin—such as appellations of origin or geographical indications—TSGs focus on the traditional method of production or the composition of the product, regardless of where it is produced. In this way, culinary knowledge passed down from generation to generation is protected.

Although the development of this regime in Peru is relatively recent, its potential is significant. In addition to contributing to the preservation of cultural identity, TSGs can promote gastronomic tourism, strengthen local economies, and foster fair competition among producers. In this regard, this article analyzes the legal framework of TSGs, their development in Peru, and their economic and tourism relevance, as well as some comparative experiences, particularly in Europe.

### Concept and purpose of TSG

TSGs constitute a distinctive sign identifying an agricultural or food product with specific characteristics derived from a traditional recipe, composition, or method of production. Their main purpose is to preserve culinary tradition and guarantee consumers that the product complies with traditional practices.

Under the applicable regime, a TSG identifies a food preparation that has specific characteristics clearly distinguishing it from other preparations in the same category, as it is made from traditional ingredients or through traditional or artisanal processes.

The establishment of this regime responds to several objectives:

1. To protect traditional recipes and production methods.
2. To help producers market their traditional products.
3. To inform consumers about the characteristics and attributes of such products.
4. To generate added value in the commercialization chain.
5. To promote fair competition among producers.
6. To contribute to rural development.

Additionally, recognition as a TSG allows the use of the indication “Traditional Speciality Guaranteed” or the acronym “TSG” on labeling or advertising, which serves as a sign of authenticity and quality for consumers.

An important aspect is that TSGs do not grant exclusive rights over the production of the food; rather, they protect the recipe or traditional method described in the product specification. Therefore, any producer who complies with that method may use the protected designation.

### Characteristics and eligibility criteria

For a food preparation to be registered as a TSG, it must meet certain requirements. First, it must have characteristics that clearly distinguish it from similar preparations. These characteristics may relate to:

1. The raw materials used.
2. The composition of the product.
3. The method of production.
4. The traditional production or processing process.

Furthermore, the traditional character must be demonstrated through continued use of the recipe over a significant period, allowing its transmission across generations. Under the Peruvian regime, a culinary practice is considered traditional if it has been used for at least 20 years, although some international standards usually require a

minimum of 30 years.

An important requirement is that the specific characteristics of the product cannot be based solely on its geographical origin. This distinguishes TSGs from appellations of origin and geographical indications.

### Legal framework of TSGs in Peru

The recognition of TSGs forms part of the country’s industrial property system. The National Institute for the Defense of Competition and Protection of Intellectual Property (INDECOPI) is the authority responsible for their administration, through the Directorate of Distinctive Signs.

The Peruvian regulatory framework was consolidated through Legislative Decree No. 1397, which amended Legislative Decree No. 1075, a regulation containing complementary provisions to Andean Community Decision 486. This amendment expressly incorporated TSGs as a component of industrial property.

The legislation establishes that the registration of a TSG must be filed before the Directorate of Distinctive Signs, accompanied by a product specification describing:

1. The name for which protection is sought.
2. The elements demonstrating the traditional character of the preparation.
3. A detailed description of the product, including its physical, chemical, or organoleptic characteristics.
4. The method of production, specifying ingredients and processes.

Once registered, the TSG may be used by any producer who complies with the conditions set out in that specification.

### Control and protection of the system

The protection of TSGs is not limited to

“Traditional Specialities Guaranteed protect recipes, not regions—preserving culinary heritage while allowing any producer who follows the method to benefit from the designation.”

registration. There is also a control and enforcement system aimed at preventing misuse of these designations.

Any interested party may submit an alert to the group of producers or manufacturers of the TSG when they consider that there is misuse or consumer deception. In such cases, measures must be adopted to ensure the authenticity of the product.

Likewise, the improper use of a TSG may give rise to administrative proceedings before INDECOPI, applying, where appropriate, the rules on trademark infringement set forth in industrial property legislation.

### TSGs granted in Peru

Peru has begun implementing the TSG system in recent years as part of a strategy to promote gastronomic tourism and protect traditional recipes.

Among the recognized specialties are:

1. Anise bread from Concepción (2023): This was the first TSG granted in the country. This artisanal bread, originating from the Junín region, is characterized by its traditional preparation using locally sourced wheat flour, anise, and wood-fired baking.
2. Huancaína potato according to the Huancayo tradition (2025): This emblematic Peruvian dish was recognized for its traditional recipe, which includes the use of a stone grinder to achieve the sauce's characteristic texture.
3. Ocopa from Arequipa (2025): This traditional preparation from southern Peru, originating in Arequipa, stands out for its creamy sauce, traditionally ground using a stone grinder, and for the techniques preserved by the traditional female cooks of Arequipa.
4. "Sopa de novios" according to the Cura Mori tradition (2025): A typical dish from Piura made with chicken broth, bread, noodles, and spices, closely linked to traditional celebrations.
5. Butter rings from Cajamarca (2026): A traditional product from Cajamarca whose recipe and preparation method have been passed down through generations.
6. Prestiños from Huánuco (2026): A typical sweet made from fried dough, usually served with syrup, whose preparation reflects culinary practices deeply rooted in local identity, especially in festive contexts.
7. Chacayano bread / Usa Tanta (2026): Its recognition highlights an ancestral production method

preserved since approximately 1925, maintaining techniques such as natural fermentation, resting the dough in wool blankets, and baking in wood-fired clay ovens.

Additionally, there are ongoing initiatives to recognize other traditional preparations, such as fish in paca from the Madre de Dios region.



*Pictures taken by Fernando Rojas; Andrea Larios. Public Relations Department of Estudio Colmenares.*

## Comparative experiences: the case of the European Union

The TSG system originated in the European Union, where it forms part of the quality schemes for agricultural and food products. It coexists with other figures such as Protected Designations of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indications (PGI).

In Europe, various TSGs have been recognized as part of the gastronomic heritage of their countries of origin. Among them, Neapolitan pizza from Italy stands out, as its preparation follows techniques and traditions that have been carefully preserved over time. Traditional mozzarella, also from Italy, is likewise valued for its production method. In Spain, serrano ham constitutes another emblematic example, recognized for its curing process and strong cultural roots. Finland, for its part, contributes sahti beer, a traditional beverage that reflects ancestral production practices.

These cases show how the protection of traditional recipes can help position products in international markets and strengthen gastronomic tourism.

## Economic impact and regional development

TSGs can generate various economic benefits. First, they help differentiate traditional products in the market, which may increase their commercial value.

Likewise, official recognition can strengthen the cultural identity of producing communities, encouraging local production and the transmission of culinary knowledge.

In the Peruvian case, the recognition of the anise bread from Concepción made it possible to highlight the baking tradition of the Mantaro Valley and promote gastronomic events linked to the product.

On the other hand, the certification of emblematic dishes such as huancaína potato can boost demand for local agricultural inputs, such as potatoes, yellow chili peppers, and regional cheeses.

## TSGs and gastronomic tourism

Gastronomic tourism is one of the fastest-growing forms of cultural tourism worldwide. Travelers increasingly seek authentic experiences linked to the culinary culture of the destinations they visit.

In this context, TSGs can become a strategic tool to promote gastronomic routes and culinary experiences based on traditional recipes.

The recognition of a TSG makes it possible to highlight the authenticity of a dish or product, emphasizing its distinctive

characteristics and cultural value. At the same time, it helps build trust among consumers and tourists, who can more clearly identify the quality and origin of what they consume. Additionally, such recognition promotes the organization of gastronomic festivals and fairs, strengthening the dissemination of culinary traditions. Finally, it facilitates the integration of gastronomy into tourism development strategies, turning it into a key element for attracting visitors and stimulating local economies.

In this way, the "TSG route" can become a tourist circuit connecting producing communities, traditional restaurants, and gastronomic events.

## The need for an Andean regime

Although Peru has a national regulation for TSGs, there is still no specific community regime within the Andean Community, composed of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.

The creation of an Andean regulatory framework would:

1. Ensure the protection of TSGs in all four member countries.
2. Establish uniform criteria for their registration and control.
3. Strengthen enforcement in the subregional market.
4. Promote the dissemination of Andean gastronomy internationally.

A community regime would also facilitate cooperation among countries to protect traditional recipes shared by various cultures in the region.

## Challenges and perspectives

Despite its significant potential, the development of the TSG system in Peru faces various challenges that limit its consolidation.

Among these, the limited awareness of this mechanism among producers and communities stands out, reducing opportunities for the recognition and protection of their culinary knowledge. Likewise, there is a lack of organized associations to promote registration applications, hindering collective access to this type of tool. In addition, there is limited coordination with tourism and rural development policies, which prevents fully leveraging its strategic value.

Overcoming these challenges requires strengthening producer training, promoting associativity, and aligning the intellectual property system with cultural and tourism policies.

## Conclusions

TSGs represent an innovative tool within the intellectual property system. Their purpose is not to protect a specific territory, but to preserve recipes and traditional production methods that form part of the cultural heritage of communities.

In Peru, the development of the TSG regime is recent, but it already shows promising results with the recognition of emblematic products and dishes such as anise bread from Concepción, huancaína potato, and butter rings from Cajamarca.

In addition to preserving culinary tradition, TSGs can generate economic value, strengthen cultural identity, and promote gastronomic tourism. If consolidated as part of a territorial development strategy, these figures can become a true route for promoting Peru's gastronomic heritage.

In this regard, the expansion of the system, its articulation with tourism policies, and the eventual creation of an Andean community regime could further enhance the impact of TSGs, turning them into a key instrument for the sustainable development of the regions.

## RÉSUMÉ

**Gino Piaggio**, lawyer, graduated from Universidad de Lima, specialized in Intellectual Property, and holder of a master's degree in creative writing from Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. He has over 13 years of professional experience and has served as a board member of the Peruvian Association of Industrial Property and Copyright (APPI) during the 2023-2025 term.

## CONTACT

**Estudio Colmenares**  
Bolognesi 125, Floor 9, Miraflores,  
Lima 18, Peru  
Tel: +(511) 4465793  
Email: [email@colmenares.com.pe](mailto:email@colmenares.com.pe)  
[www.colmenares.com.pe/en/](http://www.colmenares.com.pe/en/)

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