

GIES at the FAO's 80th Anniversary Celebration in Rome

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3974/geodp.2026.01.03>

From October 10 to 15, 2025, the Geographical Indications Environment & Sustainability (GIES) delegation organized by the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences (IGSNRR, CAS), actively participated a series of remarkable activities in the FAO headquarter in Rome, Italy for celebrating FAO's 80th Anniversary, including the GIES products exhibition at the 1st Global Exhibition on From Seeds to Foods of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), demonstration of the OCOP (One Country One Priority Product) Regional Knowledge Platforms in the Asia and Pacific region and the special forum on GIES technical applications, etc.

1 GIES Products at the 1st FAO Global Exhibition

From October 10 to 13, as one of FAO's 80th Anniversary activity for the global celebrations of World Food Day and the FAO's 80th Anniversary, the first FAO Global Exhibition, "From Seeds to Foods" was successfully held at Porta Capena Park in Rome. The GIES technology developed by IGSNRR, CAS and GIES products from 27 cases of 13 provinces of China, were presented at the China Pavilion as one of the OCOP Regional Knowledge Platforms in the Asia and Pacific Region.

With the theme "Better Production, Better Nutrition, Better Environment, Better Life, leaving no one behind", the exhibition brought together over 500 agricultural products from more than 200 exhibitors from over 140 member countries. The GIES delegation was consisted of scientists, professors, local government officers, entrepreneurs, and youth representatives from Beijing, Panshi (Jilin Province), Fuzhou (Jiangxi Province), and Xishuangbanna (Yunnan Province). The delegation displayed more than 50 GIES products, including fish from Panshi City (County), rice from Lanjia Village, ginseng from Changbai Mountains, bamboo shoots from Le'an County, tea from Jinuo ancient tree, black tea from Wuyishan City (County), black-bone chicken from Taihe County, etc. (Figure 1). These products covered planting, livestock, forestry, and fisheries. These products showed the progress of environment protection and socioeconomic development as well as ecological diversities of China.

Received: 26-10-2025; **Accepted:** 30-01-2026; **Published:** 25-02-2026

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Citation: Wang, Z. B., Song, X. F., Zhang, S. D. GIES at the FAO's 80th anniversary celebration in Rome [J]. *Journal of Global Change Data & Discovery*, 2026, 10(1): 13–17. <https://doi.org/10.3974/geodp.2026.01.03>.



Figure 1 China hall at the first FAO global exhibition (2025, Rome)

2 GIES Forum

To share the application experience of GIES technology in depth, IGSNRR, CAS hosted a special forum on GIES technical applications during the exhibition. Representatives from the Le'an (Jiangxi) government (a GIES case), scientists from the GIES planning team, entrepreneurs from Panshi, and representatives from journals and media shared their experience and models for sustainable development of GIES cases from different perspectives (Figure 2).

GIES integrates tools such as geospatial traceability, big data, the Internet of Things, and artificial intelligence, building a full system that links “production-environment-market-consumption”. It is implemented through a multi-stakeholder team work together, with the goals to put into practice both the environment protection and socioeconomic development with Four Betters framework. At present, 27 GIES cases have been successfully identified in China. The GIES technology has also understood and to be used in OCOP countries in the Asia and Pacific Region, including Bhutan’s quinoa, Nepal’s large cardamom, Panama’s coffee and Cambodia’s mungo. FAO representatives from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America also expressed their willingness to apply this technology in their regional OCOP Initiative.

Dr. Ken Shimizu, FAO representative for Bhutan and Nepal, said that Bhutan and Nepal are the first countries in the world besides China to use GIES technology to support the implementation of OCOP Initiative. He said: “This system will greatly benefit quinoa farmers in Bhutan and cardamom farmers in Nepal, while also protecting the environments of origin of these products. We thank IGSNRR, CAS for providing capacity-building support to both countries, which continues our long-term cooperation”. Rachmat Pambudy, Indonesia’s Minister of National Development Planning, also said: “Applying the GIES approach is expected to improve the recognition, value, and market competitiveness of special agricultural products. Indonesia is now working to apply GIES comprehensively to drive agricultural modernization”.



Figure 2 Group photo at the special forum on GIES technical applications (2025, Rome)

3 Keynote Speech at the High-Level Event

On October 15, the Fifth World Food Forum 2025 was held at FAO headquarters in Rome. Professor LIU Chuang from IGSNRR, CAS, Chief Scientist of the Geographical Indication Research Center, and Vice-Chair of the OCOP Asia and Pacific Regional Organizing Group, was invited to attend the High-Level Forum on OCOP Implementation, and delivered a keynote speech on “GIES Supporting OCOP Implementation” (Figure 3). She pointed out that GIES is a comprehensive technology package and tool chain, which is based on the principles of open science, using big data, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things to trace and identify geographical products and their environments of origin, and to add brand value. It's measure of success is a “triple-win” model: farmers win income, consumers win health and the environment of origin win beautiful. She indicated that the GIES tool chain has become an accelerator for FAO's global OCOP Initiative. Through promotion and application in OCOP member countries, people learned more OCOP knowledge, tasted more OCOP products, and bring more OCOP into people's daily live and spirit.



Figure 3 Professor LIU Chuang delivered a keynote speech at the FAO High-level Forum on OCOP Implementation ©FAO/Giulio Napolitano

4 Enhancing International Trade

On October 12, at the EU-China Forum on Geographical Indications Agreement between EU-China was held. The trade agreement of Le'an bamboo shoots between Jiangxi Guangya Food Co., Ltd. and an Italian international trading company was signed. According to the agreement, the Italian international trading company order for Le'an bamboo shoots worth up to USD 6.22 million (Figure 4). This is a vivid example of the EU-China GI Agreement being put into practice. It shows strong recognition of China's GIES products in the European market. It also marks the formal, large-scale entry of GIES products into the international high-end market, creating a new milestone for EU-China GI cooperation.

New partners for South-South cooperation were expanded to deepen global development collaboration. On October 14, the GIES delegation held talks with the delegation from Bangladesh's Ministry of Agriculture at FAO headquarters (Figure 5). The Bangladesh side clearly expressed its willingness to build long-term cooperation with the GIES project. They hope to jointly promote progress in food security, better nutrition, higher livestock productivity, and sustainable agricultural development in Bangladesh. On the same day, the delegation also attended the “Hand-in-Hand Initiative” Bangladesh Investment Plan and Opportunities Forum, laying a solid foundation to expand cooperation in more areas.



Figure 4 The signing of the export order for Le'an bamboo shoots (2025, Rome)



Figure 5 The IGSNRR, CAS delegation holds talks with the Bangladesh Ministry of Agriculture delegation (2025, Rome)

Strategic alignment with FAO was further strengthened to build new cooperation mechanisms. On October 15, the IGSNRR, CAS delegation met with Dr. XIA Jingyuan, Secretary of the FAO global OCOP action and Special Adviser to the Director General. Dr. XIA introduced FAO's overall work and the OCOP action plan in detail. He highly praised the GIES project and looked forward to deeper cooperation in technology promotion, capacity building, and regional pilots, to jointly advance sustainable agricultural development.

5 Youth Forum and GIES Future

At the special forum on GIES technical applications during the FAO Global Exhibition, youth representatives from middle schools demonstrated their activities and understand about the Jinuo tea, Lanjia Village rice, and Yangxian black rice, etc. From the unique youth perspective, they shared their deep understanding of the relationship among the “From Seeds to Foods”, GIES and the Four Betters (Figure 6). Through real experiences and vivid storytelling, they told the world the ecological and cultural stories behind GIES products. They showed the awareness and responsibility of the younger generation in China toward sustainable development, and received strong recognition and praise from guests on site.

The GIES technology has organized international forums for 3 consecutive years and deeply participated in UN cooperation. It has built a systematic and regular platform for international exchange and capacity building for youth to take part in global governance. It has helped cultivate outstanding young talents with a global vision. This shows GIES's important role in youth capacity building and talent development, and brings strong youth power for the future of sustainable development.



Figure 6 School students tell GIES story at the “From Seeds to Foods” (2025, Rome)

6 GIES for a New Journey

Professor SONG Xianfang, Director of the Geographical Indication Research Center in IGSNRR, CAS, said that the GIES system shows China's commitment to innovation-driven sustainable development. It turns local agricultural knowledge into a globally traceable and environmentally responsible value chain, and vividly puts into practice FAO's vision of Four Betters.

From China's local communities to FAO headquarters in Rome, the GIES progress had been steady and strong. Through the exhibition showcase, knowledge sharing in special forums, innovative expression by youth, and a series of high-level meetings, GIES not only shows China's innovative solutions in linking ecological protection with rural revitalization, but also reflects the shared responsibility of FAO and China in using international cooperation to support the theme of global agriculture: Four Betters. It also marks that its capacity building to support FAO's OCOP implementation is already among the leading efforts globally, contributing practical "China solutions" to building a community with a shared future for humankind (Figure 7).

As Professor LIU Chuang indicated: "In the coming years, on the basis of technology transfer, capacity building, and open sharing of data and knowledge, we will further strengthen the work on case impact. Under the 'triple-win' model for farmers, consumers, and the environment, we will practice the FAO Four Betters vision: Better Production, Better Nutrition, Better Environment, Better Life, leaving no one behind".



Figure 7 Group photo of the IGSNRR, CAS delegation with FAO headquarters and representatives from various countries (2025, Rome)