TECHNICAL FILE

SETTING OUT THE SPECIFICATIONS WITH WHICH

IRISH WHISKEY/UISCE BEATHA EIREANNACH/IRISH WHISKY

MUST COMPLY

Food Industry Development Division
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
October 2014

Number of pages : 17
File reference: FD/36/073
Language: English

(As registered by the European Union Commission Services)

Table of Contents

1. NAME AND CATEGORY OF SPIRIT DRINK INCLUDING THE GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION:

1.1. Name:

Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky

1.2. Category of spirit drink:

Whisky/Whiskey (Category 2 in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 110/2008).

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SPIRIT DRINK INCLUDING PRINCIPAL PHYSICAL, CHEMICAL AND ORGANOLEPTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRODUCT:

2.1. Principal Physical Characteristics:

2.1.1. Product description

"Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky", having been distilled since the 6th century, is one of the oldest spirit drinks in Europe. The spirit ranges in colour from pale gold to dark amber.
The product is distilled from a mash of malted cereals, with or without whole grains of other cereals.

The general classification "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" also contains three varieties, "Pot Still Irish Whiskey", "Malt Irish Whiskey" and "Grain Irish Whiskey". These varieties can also be called "Irish Pot Still Whiskey", "Irish Malt Whiskey" and "Irish Grain Whiskey". The above varieties can also be combined to form a "Blended Irish Whiskey/Irish Blended Whiskey"

"Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" is a spirit distilled on the Island of Ireland, including Northern Ireland, from a mash of malted cereals with or without whole grains of other cereals and which has been:

a) saccharified by the diastase of malt contained therein, with or without other natural enzymes;

b) fermented by the action of yeast;

c) distilled at an alcoholic strength of less than 94.8% by volume in such a way that the distillate has an aroma and taste derived from the materials used;

d) subject to the maturation of the final distillate for at least three years in wooden casks, such as oak, not exceeding 700 litres capacity.

The distillate, to which only water and plain caramel colouring may be added, retains its colour, aroma and taste derived from the production process referred to in points (a) to (d).

2.1.2 Characteristics of Irish Whiskey compared to other whiskies

The common character of all whiskies is the distillation from cereals in a way which retains the aroma and flavour derived from the raw materials together with years of maturation in wooden casks which add complexity.

The following factors have a significant effect on the quality and characteristics of Irish Whiskey and distinguish it from other whiskeys.

- The practice of using both unmalted and malted barley to produce pot still Irish Whiskey is unique from other whiskies. The unmalted barley is an essential ingredient as it gives both a distinctive spicy flavour to the whiskey and influences the texture by giving the whiskey a distinct creamy mouth–feel. The practice of using 100% malted barley to produce malt Irish Whiskey gives Irish Whiskey its distinctive fruity, floral and malty character.

- Both malt Irish Whiskey and pot still Irish Whiskey are produced in copper pot stills which results in a more fuller flavoured spirit in comparison to spirits distilled through the alternative column stills. The size and shape of these copper pot stills is unique to each distiller in Ireland. The spirit obtained from each still shape will have subtle differences whilst still retaining the overall Irish Whiskey character.
- The traditional practice is to triple distil Irish Whiskey. Triple distillation produces a lighter and smoother spirit. The majority of Scottish and American distilleries double distil their spirit.

- Wooden casks can be used for the maturation of Irish Whiskey whereas Scotch Whisky must be matured in oak casks. New casks as well as casks which may have been previously used to store other alcoholic beverages, for example Madeira, Sherry, Port or Bourbon can be used as part of the maturation process. The use of seasoned casks means that the spirit is not overpowered by excessive wood extracts and tannins. Bourbon and Tennessee whiskeys from American must be matured in charred new oak casks.

There are currently 16 whiskey distilleries on the island of Ireland with many different brands being marketed by each distillery, each with their own character. All of these Irish Whiskey brands whether malt, pot still, grain or a blend of different whiskies share the characteristics of Irish Whiskey, which sets them apart from whiskey produced in other countries

For the effect of the geographical environment and natural factors on the character and quality of Irish Whiskey, please see "*link with geographical environment or the geographical origin*" section below.

For the effect of the stills and expertise of the maltster, distiller, stillman and blender on the character and quality of Irish Whiskey, please see *"link with geographical environment or the geographical origin"* section below.

2.2. Classifications of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky":

The name "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" applies to spirits distilled and matured in Ireland including Northern Ireland and which complies with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008 and the requirements of the Irish Whiskey Act 1980 and its amendments. Adherence to these stipulations enables such spirits to comply with the requisite category whisky/whiskey, i.e. Product Category 2 Annex II of the Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 and merit the Geographic Indicator: "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" as outlined in Annex III of the Regulation EC) No 110/2008.

The general classification "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" also contains the following three varieties, each with their own specific technical specifications, namely "Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey", "Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey"and "Grain Irish Whiskey/Irish Grain Whiskey". Where the variety name is used to describe an "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/ Irish Whisky" then the production method for this whiskey must strictly adhere to the technical specification defined for that whiskey.

The production processes for each of the varieties are given in Section 4 and use of the varietal labelling terms is set out in Section 10.

2.3. Principal Chemical Characteristics:

2.3.1. Alcoholic Content:

"Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" has a minimum alcoholic strength by volume of 40%.

2.4. Principal Organoleptic Characteristics:

"Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" has great complexity of aroma, taste and silky smoothness. "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" tends to be smooth, soft and mellow, with a range of flavours which could include fruity, honey, floral and woody flavours. They are famed for having a light and silky mouth feel.

3. DEFINITION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA CONCERNED:

Production of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" must take place in the geographical area of the island of Ireland.

4. THE METHOD FOR OBTAINING THE SPIRIT DRINK:

4.1. Stages in the Production Process:

There are four stages in the production process for "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky": Brewing, Fermentation, Distillation and Maturation.

The **Brewing Stage** involves the preparation of a mash from cereal grains;

The **Fermentation Stage** enables the fermentation of the brewing liquor by the action of yeast;

The spirit is obtained by a process of **Distillation**

The product is then **matured** in wooden casks, such as oak for a period of not less than three years.

4.1.1. Stage 1: Brewing

During the brewing process whole cereals are firstly milled and mixed with water/recycled brewing liquor. Other natural enzymes may be used at the brewing and fermentation stage. The resulting mash is then converted and the brew liquor (wort) is prepared for fermentation. Traditionally "Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey" as well as "Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey" is brewed in a batch system. Batches are processed in a conversion vessel and or a mash tun; following this a brew liquor is collected from the mash tun or mash filter.

"Grain Irish Whiskey/Irish Grain Whiskey" is normally brewed from wheat or maize and malted barley. These whole cereals are milled into a flour and heated to a high temperature prior to conversion. The brewing system uses

continuous and/or batch cooking/conversion and produces an ongoing stream of fermentable liquid.

4.1.2. Stage 2: Fermentation

The resulting liquid from the brewing processes is cooled and pumped to fermenters where yeast is added and the sugars in the wort are converted to alcohols and other congeners. This fermented liquid is traditionally termed "wash".

4.1.3. Stage 3: Distillation

Distillation enables the separation and refinement of spirits from the incoming wash. There are two separate technical processes related to the type of spirit distilled - the more traditional approach obtains a distillate by the use of Pot Stills, while a lighter style spirit is obtained through distillation in Column Stills. No alteration to the design and/or use of stills is permitted that would alter the flavour profile of the spirit to a profile that is not typical of Irish Whiskey new make spirit.

4. 1.3.1 Distillation using Pot Stills

Distillation in Pot Stills results in more fully flavoured spirits in comparison to spirits distilled through the alternative Column Stills. The fermented liquid (the 'Wash') is added in discreet batches into the first copper pot still. As the temperature in the still is raised, alcohols and congeners are removed. These vapours are condensed in a condenser and collected into a receiving vessel. This resulting first stage distillate is termed 'Low Wines'. The application of particular cutting strengths, as identified by the Distillers, determines the character of the Low Wines in terms of flavour intensity.

The traditional practice in individual distilleries determines the choice to opt for either a three stage or a two stage process:

- Where a two stage process is adopted, the first stage distillates ('Low Wines') and some recycled second distillates are assembled and pumped to a second stage pot still. Once heat is applied to the pot still, an initial distillate is obtained. The first runnings, called Foreshots or Heads, are collected separately. The middle cut or heart of the distillate is selected as the spirit to go for maturation. The middle cut determines the character of the spirit in terms of taste, smoothness and flavour. After obtaining this 'middle cut', the distillation continues and the resulting alcohol, called feints, is collected and recycled in subsequent distillation sequences.

- ✦ Where triple distillation is employed the first distillate (low wines) is distilled into a second stage spirit called Feints. This second distillate is then distilled for a third time in a Spirit Still. Triple distilled spirit obtains its character from the choices and methods used to select the centre cut at the third stage rather than at the second stage.

The shape of the stills is particular to individual distilleries and is a factor in determining aroma and flavour of spirit. "Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey" is usually distilled in large pot stills. The large stills contribute to a unique range of reflux ratios that lead to the formation of a distinct flavour and aroma profile in the spirit. "Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey" is usually distilled in smaller pot stills. These contribute to an intensity of flavoured spirit of great complexity and diversity.

4.1.3.2 Distillation using Column Stills

There are various designs of column stills. A two stage column distillation system typically consists of a beer column and rectifying column, whereas a typical three column distillation involves the use of a beer column, an extractive distillation column and a rectifying column. This enables the removal of more fractions and the resulting spirit can be quite fragrant and more lightly flavoured.

"Grain Irish Whiskey/Irish Grain Whiskey" can only be distilled through column stills. This method of distillation involves:

- Passing a continuous flow of wash down through a series of perforated plates within the distilling column.
- Steam is applied at the base of the column this results in vapour moving up through apertures on each plate, removing alcohols and other congeners from the wash. The alcohol laden vapour is cooled in a condenser at the top of the column.
- This first stage vapour is distilled a second time through a secondary column. The flavour intensity of this spirit is influenced by removal of overheads from the condenser section of this column. Side stream fractions are also removed.
- Grain spirit is much less intense in flavour when compared to Pot Still distillates.
- Final spirit is removed from the second or third column at a strength of c. 94.5% vol.

The operational techniques of columns vary. The spirit draw off point on the final column, and the volume of side streams removed enable production of a wide range of spirit from very light and delicate to more heavily flavoured spirits. The skills of the distiller are most important.

The final spirit is assessed by a trained quality control panel before release for subsequent maturation. This guarantees a uniform quality check on the consistency of the distillate.

4.1.4. Stage 4: Maturation

Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" must be matured in wooden casks, such as oak, only on the island of Ireland, such maturation being for a minimum of three years. New casks as well as casks which may have been previously used to store other alcoholic beverages, for example Madeira, Sherry, Port or Bourbon, are used. The moderate Irish climate influences the rate of maturation and enables the development of particular flavour attributes. This even maturation creates a smooth tasting and mellow product.

The use of seasoned casks means that the spirit is not overpowered by excessive wood extracts and tannins but delivers a complex but balanced character to the spirit and enables the development of particular flavour attributes. Colour development, which varies in colour from pale gold to dark amber, depends upon the maturation casks chosen.

Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" shall not be exported from Ireland in wooden casks, such as oak or other wooden containers, which may result in further maturation of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" outside of Ireland or Northern Ireland.

4.1.5. Stage 5: Bottling

The four production stages for "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" as outlined in 4.1. takes place on the island of Ireland. Bottling may take place outside Ireland. Where "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" is bottled offshore, it is shipped in inert bulk containers. The subsequent water used in the final product is demineralised to preserve the organoleptic characteristics of the "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky". Any bottling taking place outside of the island will be subject to company controls and official verification, which will ensure the products' safety and integrity.

4.1.5.1: Chill filtration

All Irish whiskey is filtered prior to bottling to remove any particles of wood which have accumulated in the spirit during the maturation process. It is also common, but not always the case, that Irish whiskey will be chilled filtered prior to bottling. The purpose of chill filtration is to remove what is referred

to as 'haze floc'. When subjected to low temperatures, certain of the long chain esters in Irish whiskey may come out of solution and form a haze or sediment in the bottle. Because most consumers expect Irish whiskeys to be clear and 'bright', many are filtered at a particular temperature to remove haze floc, and to ensure that the final product remains clear even when subjected to changes of temperature. The filtration used must be only for the purpose of, and go no further than, preventing haze floc. It must not be used in order to remove colour, flavour or aroma, which is prohibited by the definition of Irish whiskey.

4.1.5.2: Caramel colouring E150a

If so desired and prior to bottling, the blender may use the only additive which is permitted for Irish whiskey, namely plain caramel colouring (E150a). Irish Whiskey acquires its colour through its maturation in oak casks. However, each cask of Irish Whiskey will have a different colour. As part of the blending process the blender will seek to produce a final blend which is as close in colour to the previous batches of the brand which has been produced over the years. However, to produce exactly the same required colour, it may be necessary to use very small quantities of plain caramel colouring to adjust the colour. The use of plain caramel colouring to adjust colour has been traditional since the 19th Century. Plain caramel (E150a) is a colouring, and is not for flavouring or a sweetening.

4.2. Production Processes for the varieties of Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky

4.2.1. Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey

Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey" is made from natural raw materials, currently nonpeated malted barley and includes unmalted barley and other unmalted cereals, water and yeast. Other natural enzymes may also be used at the brewing and fermentation stages. The unmalted barley is an essential ingredient of "Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey" as it gives both a distinctive spicy flavour to the whiskey and influences the texture by giving the whiskey a distinct creamy mouth-feel.

"Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey" is defined as a spirit distilled from a mash of a combination of malted barley, unmalted barley and other unmalted cereals. The mash must contain a minimum of 30% malted barley and a minimum of 30% unmalted barley and be:

a) saccharified by the diastase of malt contained therein, with or without other natural enzymes;

b) fermented by the action of yeast;

c) distilled in pot stills in such manner that the distillate has an aroma and taste derived from the materials used.

The Production Process

Brewing involves preparation of a mash from a proportional mix of malted and unmalted barley with up to 5% of other cereals such as oats and rye added if required. Each distillery has its own recipe within the parameters outlined above. The method for the separation of wort, which occurs during the brewing process, plays a significant role in the type of resulting flavour which develops during fermentation and subsequent distillation.

"Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey" is batch distilled usually in large pot stills. The large stills contribute to a unique range of reflux ratios that lead to the formation of a distinct flavour and aroma profile in the spirit. Distillation in Pot Stills enables the modification of flavour depending upon the distillation time, fractions collected as heads and tails, volumes of fractions recycled and the range of distillate cutting strengths. All of these variables influence the character of the heart of the distillate. Individual distilleries adhere to specific practices to maintain uniformity of flavour characteristics for varying types of "Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey" styles.

One of these practices is the approach taken to address residual alcohol remaining on completion of the standard distillation sequence. Still residues may be collected and redistilled in column stills with the resulting feints subsequently distilled along with recycled pot still feints in a pot still.

The final spirit is assessed by a trained quality control panel before release for subsequent maturation. This guarantees a uniform quality check on the consistency of the distillate.

The traditional practice is to triple distil "Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey" although this practice is not exclusive and double distillation may also be employed. Triple distillation results in a higher strength final spirit and contributes to a particular ratio of 'total higher alcohols to ester' concentration. This is manifested by a spirit which is light in aroma yet particularly sweet in taste.

The maturing whiskey is stored for a minimum of three years in large, dark, and aromatic warehouses on the island of Ireland. The whiskey is contained in wooden casks, such as oak which may have been previously used to store other alcoholic beverages, for example Madeira, Sherry, Port or Bourbon. During the maturation phase interactions take place between the spirit and the cask which influences the flavour of the final product.

4.2.2. Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey

"Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey" is made from natural raw materials, 100% malted barley, water and yeast. Other natural enzymes may also be used at the brewing and fermentation stage. Malted barley is produced to individual specification by dedicated malting companies, which may be un-peated or peated in character. By using 100% malted barley, "Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish

Malt Whiskey" has distinctive smooth, velvet, full and oily texture with a malty and sweet taste.

"Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey" is defined as a spirit made from a mash of 100% malted barley and:

a) saccharified by the diastase of malt contained therein, with or without other natural enzymes;

b) fermented by the action of yeast;

c) distilled in pot stills in such manner that the distillate has an aroma and taste derived from the materials used.

The Production Process

Brewing involves preparation of a mash from 100% malted barley. The type of mash tun or mash filter used and the method employed for wort collection all play a significant role in the flavour development during fermentation and subsequent distillation.

"Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey" is batch distilled usually in smaller pot stills which enables the modification of flavour depending upon the distillation time, fractions collected as heads or tails, volumes of fractions recycled and the range of cutting strengths. These contribute to an intensity of flavoured spirit of great complexity and diversity. "Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey" may be double or triple distilled, the choice to double or triple distil depends upon the tradition of individual distilleries.

The maturing "Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey" is stored for a minimum of three years in large, dark, and aromatic warehouses on the island of Ireland. The whiskey is contained in wooden casks, such as oak, which may have been previously used to store other alcoholic beverages, for example Madeira, Sherry, Port or Bourbon. During the maturation phase interactions take place between the spirit and the cask which influences the flavour of the final product.

4.2.3. Grain Irish Whiskey/Irish Grain Whiskey

"Grain Irish Whiskey/Irish Grain Whiskey" is produced from malted barley (not exceeding 30%) and includes whole unmalted cereals usually maize, wheat or barley. Other natural enzymes may be used at the brewing and the fermentation stage.

a) saccharified by the diastase of malt contained therein, with or without other natural enzymes;

b) fermented by the action of yeast;

c) distilled in column stills in such manner that the distillate has an aroma and taste derived from the materials used and the column distillation method.

The Production Process

In this process, the grain is first milled into flour. Water is mixed into the flour to make a mash which is then cooked to gelatinise the cereal starch. The mash is then cooled and the malted barley is added to allow conversion of the starch to fermentable sugars by releasing the enzyme diastase. The converted mash, which usually does not undergo any solid-liquid separation, is then cooled and pumped into fermentation tanks. The fermented mash, called either beer or wash, is continuously distilled through column stills.

While most "Grain Irish Whiskey/Irish Grain Whiskey" is currently triple distilled, the choice to double or triple distil depends upon the practice of individual distilleries. The spirit, typically around 94% alcohol, is reduced with local water to typically 63-70% alcohol, filled in wooden casks, and matured in warehouses on the island of Ireland for a period of at least three years.

Operational techniques of the columns vary. The spirit draw off point and the volumes of side streams removed are used to produce a wide range of spirit from very light and delicate to more heavily flavoured. The skills of the distiller are most important.

4.2.4. Blended Irish Whiskey/Irish Blended Whiskey

"Blended Irish Whiskey/Irish Blended Whiskey" means a blend of two or more different whiskey types from the "Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey", "Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey" and "Grain Irish Whiskey/Irish Grain Whiskey" varieties. The whiskey used must be produced in Ireland in accordance with the methods outlined above. The use of any "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" in combination with any of the above varieties shall also be entitled to the description "Blended Irish Whiskey/Irish Blended Whiskey".

Historically, blending whiskey is thought to have been undertaken to smooth out irregularities in supply from the numerous distilleries on the island and provide the customer with a consistent product. Later, as lighter "Grain Irish Whiskey/Irish Grain Whiskey" became available the blender was able to produce a range of "Blended Irish Whiskey/Irish Blended Whiskey" which appealed to a wider audience and to which he could attach a brand name.

The Production Process

Today with only three styles of whiskey and a handful of distilleries producing them, the art of blending is more important than ever not only to support the wide range of existing brands but to create new ones as tastes change.

The blender uses his or her experience of flavours to choose from a range of parameters including whiskey type, distillery of origin, cask finish and age to

produce each of the finished products. It takes years to acquire the skill and knowledge to become a master blender and the apprentice must have both the basic sensory aptitude and descriptive language to even begin their training.

The blender will use one or two lighter whiskeys (usually "Grain Irish Whiskey/Irish Grain Whiskey") and overlays one or more "Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey" or "Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey" to achieve their desired flavour and consistency. The skill is to achieve a new taste that retains or enhances the component flavours but the whole is inseparable from the parts.

Starting with a profile supplied by a customer or by market research the blender will produce a number of test blends before conducting consumer tests. On feedback, he or she will adjust the components or even introduce a new one until a favourable result is obtained.

It is no surprise that master blenders are in short supply and gain the same respect in the industry as master distillers. They are responsible for ensuring the quality of existing brands and for innovating to create new ones.

4.2.5. Impact of Production Method on Final Product

"Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey" is batch distilled usually in large pot stills while "Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey" is batch distilled in smaller pot stills. Distillation in Pot Stills enables the modification of flavour depending upon the distillation time, fractions collected as heads and tails, volumes of fractions recycled and the range of distillate cutting strengths. All of these variables influence the character of the heart of the distillate.

The traditional practice is to triple distil although this practice is not exclusive and double distillation may also be employed. Triple distillation results in a higher strength final spirit and contributes to a particular ratio of 'total higher alcohols to ester' concentration. This is manifested by a spirit which is light in aroma yet particularly sweet in taste.

The maturing whiskey is stored for a minimum of three years in large, dark, and aromatic warehouses on the island of Ireland. The whiskey is contained in wooden casks, such as oak which may have been previously used to store other alcoholic beverages, for example Madeira, Sherry, Port or Bourbon. During the maturation phase interactions take place between the spirit and the cask which influences the flavour of the final product.

5. DETAILS BEARING OUT THE LINK WITH THE GEOGRAPHICAL ENVIRONMENT OR THE GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGIN:

The 6th century is believed to be when the technique used to create "Eau de Vie" was brought to Ireland. The principles of creating "Uisce Beatha" have not changed over the years. This long and proud heritage has led to the creation of products, whose characteristics are renowned around the world.

These qualities, characteristics and reputation are directly attributable to its geographical origin. This is as a result of a number of influencing factors that define the character of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky":

5.1. History and Reputation:

Distilling in Ireland probably began in the 6th century when religious monks brought the technique they used to create perfumes and "Eau de Vie" "Water of Life" to Ireland. The Gaelic translation of Water of Life "Uisce Beatha" evolved into the English word Whiskey as early as the 16th century when The Red Book of Ossary records Uisce Beatha being produced for consumption. Popular amongst the elite, Queen Elizabeth I was known to be fond of the beverage and it is said that Peter the Great Czar of Russia stated "of all the wines, the Irish spirit is the best". In the 19th Century, production evolved and the availability of steam power led to bigger pot stills and more distilleries with numbers growing from 40 in 1823 to 86 in 1840.

In 1830 Aeneas Coffey, a former Inspector General of Excise in Ireland, developed and patented a more efficient method of distilling. Coffey's "Patent Continuous Distilling Apparatus" revolutionised the industry introducing continuous production which became widely adopted by the Scottish whisky industry in the late 19th Century. However, in Ireland traditional Pot still distillation continued to be used usually in larger stills, as the industry was reluctant to enter the blended whiskey market. By the early 20th century, the "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" industry began to decline as a result of increased excise and the closure of the US market due to prohibition, compounded by the industry's eschewing of new technology. In addition the conflicts of World War I and the Irish Easter Rising and civil war exacerbated the decline and the number of distilleries dropped dramatically.

Beginning in the 1980s the Irish Whiskey sector has been undergoing a global resurgence with increasing exports and ongoing investment taking place in the expansion and development of distilleries. The unique nature of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" was recognised internationally in, for example, the EU/US 1994 Spirits Agreement:

"The USA agrees to restrict, within its regulatory framework (27 CFR 5.22 or an equivalent successor regulation), the use of the product designations... "Irish Whiskey"/"Irish Whisky"...to distilled spirits/spirit drink products of the Member States of the EC [Ireland and UK], produced in compliance with Council Regulation (EEC) No 1576/89 and with the laws of the Member States [Ireland and UK] in which those products originate."

The popularity, reknown and global reputation of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" is reflected in the high numbers of visitors from abroad, some 600,000 each year, who visit the five "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" visitor centres in Ireland. (Source: Irish Whiskey Association). A visit to a whiskey distillery consistently features in the top twenty most visited attractions in Ireland (Source: Failte Ireland).

In 2013 more than 6.2 million 9 litre cases were exported to over 100 countries reflecting the ongoing double digit growth in exports of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" (Source: Bord Bia Export Performance & Prospects 2013/14/Central Statistics Office) and it has been the fastest growing premium spirit category over the previous five years (Source: IWSR 2012).

5.2. Production process

"Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" is a distinctive whiskey which uses numerous different grain formulae, based on a distillate of a mash made from malted barley and unmalted cereals, it utilises differing production processes and is produced in a temperate climate. Each step of the distilling process plays a vital role in establishing the Irish character of the whiskey:

5.2.1. Cereals

Barley imparts a distinctive character to "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" while further significant factors are the process of mashing/fermentation, the style of distillation and maturation and the skill employed to optimise traditional techniques.

5.2.2. Stills

The size of still used in the production process helps impact a distinctive flavour and aroma profile to the "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky". Different companies use various size stills to create their own unique set of whiskeys.

5.2.3. Maturation

The moderate Irish climate influences the rate of maturation and enables the development of particular flavour attributes. This even maturation creates a smooth tasting and mellow product, which varies in colour from pale gold to dark amber. This colour development depends upon the type of maturation casks chosen.

5.3. Natural Factors

Natural factors have a significant effect on the quality and characteristics of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky". This applies whether the distillate is "Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey", "Grain Irish Whiskey/Irish Grain Whiskey" or "Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey".

5.3.1. Water

The naturally occurring mineral composition (hard or soft water) of the local water supply to the distillery will impart a particular flavour to the grain during the mashing process. Water quality and quantity play an important role in the character of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky".

5.3.2. Climate

Ireland is affected by the mild and damp Gulf Stream. Climate plays an important part in the maturation process. The mild and warm weather enables the spirit to evenly extract wood derived compounds and colour from the cask. The Gulf Stream currents helps keep Irish winters milder and Irish summers cooler which mean "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" avoid temperature extremes during maturation.

5.4. Human Factors:

Individual experience and expertise is essential in the production of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky". The following key personnel in every distillery help to impart the key individual characteristics of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky":

5.4.1. Maltster

Like all stages of the distilling process, malting barley requires the skill of an expert. In this case the Maltster is the person who insures that the barley is properly malted. The length of time it takes to moisten the barley so as to begin germination and the knowledge needed to know when to stop the process is a skill acquired over time. The majority of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" is produced using unpeated malted barley. However, some peated malted barley is used in the industry.

5.4.2. Distiller

The distillers manage the whole whiskey production process. This is where science and art complement each other. The traditional touch of the master distiller is needed to produce the perfect "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky". The entire distilling process must be directed with instinctive skill and judgment.

A major turning point in the history of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" came in 1830 when Aeneas Coffey, a former Inspector General of Excise in Ireland, developed and patented a more efficient method of distilling. "Coffey's Patent Continuous Distilling Apparatus" (effectively a column still) revolutionised the whiskey industry and is a process used throughout the world to make whisk(e)y to this day.

5.4.3. Stillman

The role of the Stillman is to decide the appropriate point to switch between spirit cuts as the distillation sequence proceeds. This demands great skill. Different parts of the sequence impact different flavourings to the whiskey. If the cut is made too late, too high a proportion of the tails will result in an unbalanced whiskey with unpleasant aromas. Conversely, if the cut is made too early, the spirit will be deprived from some of its components indispensable to achieve a whisky with satisfying character. The stillman can produce a heavy whiskey by capturing a greater portion from the latter part of the distillate. Lighter spirit comes from the more central portion of the run. The unique essence of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" depends on these cuts. The stillman has to be satisfied by sight and test before switching the runs. This skill and tradition is passed through the generations to maintain the unique properties and flavours of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky".

5.4.4. Blender

Blending is a skill that requires the person to know how whiskey smells, tastes and how the flavours all work together. Whiskeys vary from cask to cask therefore it is important for consistency that the blender has sufficient knowledge to achieve the perfect "Blended Irish Whiskey/Irish Blended Whiskey".

6. ANY REQUIREMENTS LAID DOWN BY COMMUNITY AND/OR NATIONAL PROVISIONS AND/OR REGIONAL:

6.1. Legislation:

Spirit Drinks: Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15th January 2008, COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) No 716/2013 of 25 July 2013 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks.

National legislation enforcing these including S.I. No. 429/2009 - European Communities (Spirits Drinks) Regulations 2009 amended by S.I. No. 118 of 2013 EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (SPIRITS DRINKS) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2013 and any subsequent amendments or replacements.

Whiskey: Irish Whiskey Act 1980.

Colours: Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of 16th December 2008 of the European Parliament and of the
Council.

Hygiene and Food Safety: Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004, amending Regulation (EC) 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002.

6.2. General Labelling Rules:

Labelling Advertising and Presentation of Foodstuffs: Directive () 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 March 2000 as amended by Directive 2003/89/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 November 2003 and Commission Directive 2007/68/EC of 27 November 2007.

Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006, of the European Parliament and the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission regulation (EC) No 608/2004.

7. APPLICANT DETAILS:

7.1. Name:

Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine

7.2. Address:

Food Industry Development Division
Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine
Agriculture House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2
Ireland

8. Official Controls

Controls on “Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky” are based on meeting legislative requirements, implementing quality control systems and ongoing systems supervision of the control of the Geographical Indication “Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky” by the competent authorities.

Verification of compliance with the provision of this technical file in the Member States Ireland and the United Kingdom will be carried out respectively by the Revenue Commissioners and Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs.

With regards to the bottling of Irish Whiskey outside of the island of Ireland, where bottling takes place in another EU country, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will provide the relevant details to those Member States to allow them carry out the necessary compliance checks as part of their muitiannual control plans.

Where Irish Whiskey is bottled in a non-EU country, authorised Department officials will, in consultation with the relevant authorities in that country, carry out selective site visits to ensure compliance with the technical file requirements.

8.1. Competent Authorities

"Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" is an island of Ireland geographical indication. The Departments responsible for geographical indications in the two jurisdictions are:

- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, IRELAND;

- Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Area 7E Millbank, c/o Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR, UNITED KINGDOM.

9. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

9.1. History:

Distilling in Ireland probably began in the 6th century when religious monks brought with them the technique they used to create perfumes and "Eau de Vie" - "Water of Life". Rather than using grapes and other fruits, the Irish used the local cereal crops as ingredients. "Uisce Beatha", the Irish for "Water of Life", was born. Throughout the years, as Ireland became more anglicised, the pronunciation of "Uisce Beatha" ultimately evolved into Whiskey.

The Red Book of Ossary dating from the early 16th century records uisce beatha being produced for consumption, but the art was still the preserve of the religious orders. It is only following the dissolution of the monasteries in the Tudor period that whiskey ceased to be the drink of the elite. Queen Elizabeth I was known to be fond of the beverage, and she wasn't alone. It is said that Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, mentioned that "of all the wines, the Irish spirit is the best".

The early 19th century saw dramatic growth in "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" from 40 distillers in 1823 to 86 in 1840. Demand grew rapidly with rising incomes and the availability of steam power led to more distilleries and bigger pot stills. A wide variety of production processes, e.g. one, two or three stills, and product types, e.g. malt, peated malt and products using varying percentages of malted and unmalted cereals were in evidence in the country. In 1823, the biggest pot still recorded could hold just 750 gallons. By no later than 1867, Midleton Distillery had the world's largest still (a record that still stands today) with a capacity of 31,500 gallons.

Between 1823 and 1900, the output of Ireland's distilleries quadrupled. Dublin whiskey, with its six powerhouse distilleries, dominated the Irish and world stage,

employing hundreds of workers with their own cooperages, stables, blacksmiths and carpenter shops and they exported around the globe. Indeed it was about this time that the Dublin distilleries, intent on forging their uniqueness amongst other whiskies from Scotland and provincial Ireland, introduced the idea of spelling their whiskey with an e. This phase of history is regarded as a golden era of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky".

The whisk(e)y industries in Ireland and Scotland were extremely close for most of the 18th and into the early part of the 19th Century, with considerable movement of people between the industries of the two countries and some owners having distilleries in both.

A major turning point in the history of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" came in 1830 when Aeneas Coffey, a former Inspector General of Excise in Ireland, developed and patented a more efficient method of distilling. "Coffey's Patent Continuous Distilling Apparatus" (effectively a column still) revolutionised the whiskey industry.

Most of the "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" distilleries did not embrace the new distilling technique until towards the close of the nineteenth century with the establishment of large scale double distilling facilities in Belfast, Dundalk and Derry. Dublin distillers, in particular, were proud of their distilled "Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey" which sold at a premium and traditional pot still distilling continued, usually in larger stills. A significant consequence of the new production method was that many smaller traditional pot still distillers struggled to survive against the cheaper continuous production afforded by the new Coffey still.

In some cases a 100% malted barley mash was used to produce "Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey", but most used a mash of malted barley, unmalted barley and other cereals grown in Ireland to produce
"Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey". In the early 19th century both double and triple distillation took place in Ireland. Towards the end of the century a majority of the pot still distillers adopted and modified the art of triple distilling whilst the balance continued the practice of double distilling.

Just as "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" was riding a wave, the beginning of its decline was just around the corner. Recession and the onslaught of the World War I, found the Irish whiskey industry in the eye of a storm. In 1916, the Irish Easter Rising happened along with the economic turmoil which accompanied it and in 1917, all distilling in Ireland ceased as all barley was required for the war effort.

Up to this time, the largest whiskey market in the world was the USA, which also happened to be the largest export market for "Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still

Whiskey". In 1919, the Volstead Act was passed and Prohibition was enacted and overnight the single most important market for "Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey" was shut down.

The Irish War of Independence in 1921 was followed by the Irish Civil War from 1922 to 1923. As the 1930s came to a close, the Irish whiskey industry had been decimated.

Further damage was caused when bootleggers during Prohibition era USA cashed in on the Irish whiskey reputation. Much of this whiskey was of such an extraordinarily poor standard that it caused every right minded drinker to treat with extreme caution anything which purported to be "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky".

By the time Prohibition had ended in 1933, the Irish whiskey industry was reeling and unable to cash in on the pent-up demand that the US market now represented. The Irish distillers had reduced their stocks of maturing pot-still whiskey, the reputation of which had been irrevocably damaged by the bootleggers, while the Scots were ready to expand with their stocks of ready available blended whiskey.

To compound matters, in 1932 the recently emancipated Irish government entered into a Trade War with its former landlord and largest trading partner, Great Britain, culminating in exclusion to 25% of world markets. This meant that the remaining exports for "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" disappeared behind a wall of duties and levies.

By 1953, there were only six distilleries on the island, mainly based on domestic demand. These were the Jameson and Powers distilleries in Dublin, Cork Distilleries Company (CDC) in Cork, Tullamore distillery in Offaly and the Bushmills and Coleraine distilleries in Northern Ireland.

By 1966, the number of distillers in Ireland had dropped to four. This became two as Jameson, Powers and Cork Distilleries merged to form Irish Distillers, then known as United Distillers of Ireland, and then finally in 1973 to one company when Bushmills merged into Irish Distillers. A new distillery was commissioned by Irish Distillers in Cork in 1975 to replace the Jameson, Powers and Midleton Distilleries which were all closed in the same year.

This marked the beginning of the revival of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky". In 1987, Cooley Distillery was established and was the first independent distillery to begin distilling "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" in over 100 years. In 1988, French multinational Pernod Ricard took over Irish Distillers and began to invest heavily in its Irish Whiskey portfolio.

From a low of 400,000 cases in the 1970s, production rose from 4.4 million cases in 2008 to 6.2 million in 2013. Between 2002 and 2012, exports grew by 220% (Eurostat, COMX). According to the Distilled Spirits Council, in the US alone from 2003 to 2010, sales of "Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" grew 246%.

9.2 Irish Whiskey Association

The Irish Whiskey Association represents the Irish whiskey industry in Ireland. The Association was established in 2014 to promote and protect Irish whiskey, including registration of Irish whiskey as a Geographical Indication, appellation of origin, collective trademark or certification trademark.

10. SPECIFIC LABELLING RULES:

"Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" cannot be labelled, packaged, sold, advertised or promoted in a way that includes a reference to the year of distillation of the whiskey.

An exception to this rule is allowed if the presentation of the whiskey also

includes a reference to: a) the year of bottling of the whiskey;

b) the period of maturation of the whiskey; or

c) the age of the whiskey.

If such a reference is made, it must appear in the same field of vision as the reference to the year of distillation.

"Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky" cannot be labelled, packaged, sold, advertised or promoted in a way that includes any reference to a period of maturation or age of the whiskey unless it is to the period of maturation or age of the youngest whiskey in the drink expressed in years and consisting of one number (which may be expressed either as a numeral or as a word), and provided that the whiskey was aged under appropriate control and verification.

The term 'Single' can only be applied to the varieties of "Pot Still Irish Whiskey/Irish Pot Still Whiskey", "Malt Irish Whiskey/Irish Malt Whiskey" and "Grain Irish Whiskey/Irish Grain Whiskey", provided all of the whiskey in the product is distilled totally on the site of a single distillery and comes from one of these three varieties. The varieties may use either the spelling 'Whiskey' or 'Whisky'.

Irish Whiskey must bear on the label the geographical indication Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/ Irish Whisky. The terms Pot Still, Malt, Grain or Blended may be included in this description where the production/method set out for that specific variety in point 4.2 are strictly adhered to and fulfilled.

This must:

- appear on the front of the bottle and on packaging or materials used for display purposes during the marketing of the Irish whiskey;

- be prominent, printed in a conspicuous place in such a way as to be easily visible and legible to the naked eye and indelible so that it is clear that it is the sales description of the whiskey;

- be printed in a way that gives equal prominence to each word making up the name of the category;

- be as prominent as any other description of the whiskey on the container or packaging.

This must not be:

- overlaid or interrupted by other written or pictorial matter

- used in conjunction with any other words.

Spirit drinks must not be labelled, packaged, sold, advertised or promoted in such a way to suggest they are Irish Whiskey or any of the sub -varieties unless they meet the relevant requirements set out in the technical file.

In English, the Geographical Indication allows for two spellings, “IRISH WHISKEY” and “IRISH WHISKY”; Irish Whiskey with an “e” is the customary term. The customary term for the plural of Irish Whiskey is ‘Irish Whiskeys’.