



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



WORLDWIDE PERSPECTIVES ON GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS:

An international conference for researchers, policy makers
and practitioners

6-9 July 2021

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy

**Co-organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the
United Nations (FAO) and the Centre de Coopération Internationale
en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD)**

BACKGROUND

The world's food and artisanal heritage encompasses a multitude of products linked to their origin that rely on the knowledge, skills, practices and traditions developed collectively by local producers over time and transmitted across generations. While the commercial success of origin products has long preceded the use of formal mechanisms for their protection, legal frameworks governing the registration and protection of Geographical Indications (GIs) have mushroomed around the world in a very diverse manner, translating the variety of meanings and objectives attached to them. These range from market-based approaches targeting unfair competition practices, to approaches directed at non-market objectives, including territorial development, and preservation of cultural heritage and natural resources.

Among these approaches, the *sui generis* system and the approach based on the certification/collective trademark system have emerged as the two main institutional ways to protect GIs. These mechanisms provide the legal tools to recognize and preserve the name, typicality, quality and reputation of products linked to their origin, to varying extents. In two decades, numerous new GIs have been recognized in many different countries in all regions of the world. Considering their economic, social and cultural importance, especially for rural areas, the protection of GIs has been put on a foreground space and under the spotlight of international negotiations and debates between international organizations, bilateral relations, national policies and a broad range of stakeholders located at different levels and defending varied interests.

From an institutional viewpoint, lines and perspectives have increasingly moved from the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) Agreement to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement. The nature of GIs itself has evolved from agricultural and rural policies to non-agricultural GIs, and their function has expanded from protecting consumers and producers' interests to underpinning territorial development policies based on cultural heritage.

In this context, and considering the plurality of actors and interests involved, researchers in all parts of the world have explored the connections between GIs and their many dimensions. These include, among others: the nature of the links between the products' qualities and their geographical origin and its translation into specifications; the role of public authorities; the collective organization of producers; quality control systems; governance and enforcement mechanisms; the recognition of the specific know-how of local producers, including women and indigenous and local communities; international and national protection; marketing issues; biodiversity conservation; preservation of environment and cultural heritage; sustainable development; food heritage and healthy diets when related to food products; and tourism.

At the local level, GI producers are empowered through the drafting of the GI specifications, the collective management of supply chains and the organization of quality controls. More recently, GI producers have increasingly faced new issues such as: marketing and promotion of newly created GIs; rapidly changing markets; technical innovations; and adaptation to climate change. Moreover, GI products may underpin territorial development strategies where the local community and the public and private sectors coordinate their efforts.

From a society point of view, the identification and promotion of GI products provide particular guarantees to consumers on the GI related quality and origin, and more specifically in the food sector, this can contribute to diversified and healthy diets, and to preserved food and culinary heritage.

Public authorities at the local, national, regional and international levels have been playing an important role in the identification, registration, control, protection and overall management of GIs. The growing number of international cooperation activities associated to technical assistance in parallel to the negotiations of bilateral trade agreements for the international protection of GIs illustrates such policy intervention.

These new perspectives, approaches and practices have led to an increasingly complex, heterogeneous, dense and evolving picture of GIs that needs to be described, analyzed and questioned.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVE

The objective of this international conference is to allow for dedicated discussions on most recent research and about best practices about GIs, while also sharing views between the academic world, practitioners network and policy sphere.

As the Geneva Act of WIPO's Lisbon Agreement recently entered into force, thereby establishing the first international system of registration and protection of GIs, it is time to wrap up the research outcomes and practical experiences of the last 25 years in all parts of the world and bring new ideas, perspectives and inspiration.

Nature and legal definition, public and private management, impacts in the marketplace and outside the market, sustainable development including social dimensions and the protection of biodiversity and environment, relationships with other intellectual property rights, engagement with other formal and informal forms of norm-making, consumers' welfare, competition policies, technical innovation and *terroir* effect, collective organization and collaboration, participation and empowerment of local actors: these are some of the topics that will feed the debates in this conference, with the objective to grasp the dynamic nature of GIs and understand better their many dimensions and the diversity of their manifestations across the world.

ORGANIZERS

The main organizers are the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD).

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is developing extensive knowledge on GIs and provides guidance and technical assistance to countries in protecting their GIs as a tool to contribute to the development of sustainable agriculture and food systems for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Center for International Cooperation in Agricultural Research for Development (CIRAD) conducts research, organizes training and provides technical assistance on GIs in Africa, Asia and South America, regarding the setting up of the legal and institutional framework, the product identification and selection, the drafting of GI specifications, the role of collective producers organizations, control mechanisms, the market access, or the impacts assessment.

Other partners will contribute to the organization of the conference.

DATE AND LOCATION

When: 6-9 July 2021.

Where: FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy.

CONFERENCE METHODOLOGY

The conference will consist of three days of presentations and discussions at FAO headquarter and one-day field visit (Latium or Tuscany region). The conference will alternate plenary sessions, parallel sessions, feedback and exchange between participants.

Languages: papers and presentations can be submitted in English, French and Spanish, and simultaneous interpretation will be provided in these languages during the conference.

Scientific publication: a special issue from the conference will be ensured in a relevant scientific journal.

Conference website: online registration and more detailed information on submissions and logistic information are available on the conference website: <https://gi2021.sciencesconf.org>.

TARGETED PARTICIPANTS

150 participants from all over the world, including researchers, public authorities, experts, non-governmental organizations and stakeholders of value chains for a combined academics, policy makers and practitioners conference to share and debate about topical issues regarding GIs worldwide.

The participants will include:

- **Researchers**
- **National and regional public authorities**
- **Producers and other stakeholders organizations**
- **International development organizations**

FEES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

As normal practice for international academic conferences, fees will be requested to cover the participation to the full conference with related material, including field visit and lunches.

- Full price: EUR 300
- Students: EUR 100

Sponsors and donors will be approached for providing scholarships for participants from developing countries covering travel expenses and fees in order to ensure participation from developing countries, geographical and sectoral diversity as well as topic coverage.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Guidelines for submission will be posted on the Conference website, hosted by CIRAD.

TOPICS

1. Defining GIs
a. Nature of GIs: GIs as a public good/knowledge commons – Trade Marks vs <i>sui generis</i> institutional forms, legal nature.
b. Origin and originality: product standard, geographical delimitation, link to origin, reputation.
c. GIs and innovation: innovation in all dimensions: processing technology, farming methods, packaging, communication and so on.
2. Managing GIs
a. Governance of GIs: the role of public authorities : i. the role of public authorities at country level; ii. the role of public authorities at international level (multilateral and bilateral agreements on GIs, Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement).
b. Governance of GIs: collective organizations of the value chain for the management of GIs.
c. Control and certification mechanisms for GIs.
d. Enforcement of GIs.
e. GI marketing.
3. GIs and sustainability
a. Adaptation to climate change, agro–ecological transition, biodiversity.
b. Evaluation of impacts of GIs: i. economic; ii. social; iii. environmental; iv. cultural; v. others.
4. GIs and consumers
a. GI food and impact on diets.
b. GIs in a world of differentiation: place-based products, combination between several geographically linked labels and with other labels, and so on.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

	6 July		7 July		8 July	9 July
Morning	Plenary sessions Keynote speakers		Presentation of key outputs from parallel sessions and discussions		Field visit	Feedback/discussion from the field around key topics
	All participants		Parallel sessions on case studies (from scholars and discussions with practitioners) by topics/by regions			Sustainability strategy for GIs
Afternoon	Parallel sessions academics "state of the art"	Parallel sessions practitioners "Main issues and challenges"	Parallel sessions academics	Parallel sessions practitioners on cooperation		Wrap up by topics and by sectors Conclusions and recommendations