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Geographical Indications Register Gains Ground Outside WTO

By William New, Intellectual Property Watch on 30/01/2012 @ 11:14 pm

A private sector-led effort to compile a global register of geographical indications is gaining support, topped by a sizeable donation from the Italian government. The effort is being undertaken outside the World Trade Organization in spite of an agreed – but long stalled – mandate at WTO to create a register.

On 26 January, the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Products announced a donation of €120,000 euros to the project, which was launched in October by the Geneva-based Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network (OriGIN) ([IPW, Trademarks/Geographical Indications/Domains, 10 October 2011](#)^[1]).

“We believe this initiative will fill a gap at the international level. Having the relevant information concerning the GIs protected in the various jurisdictions in one unique source will represent an invaluable tool for producers, consumers, researchers, trademark examiners, officials within Ministries of Agriculture and other public authorities and will facilitate the protection of GIs worldwide,” Riccardo Deserti, Chief of the Minister of Agriculture Technical Cabinet, said in a statement.

Institutions such as the Qualivita Foundation, which is working on an international encyclopedia of agro-food GIs, and the University of California Berkeley School of Law – have expressed a strong interest to join forces and cooperate with oriGIN in this ambitious endeavor, the group said.

Discussions are underway with other potential donors, OriGIN said.

“OriGIN welcomes contributions from all interested parties (governmental authorities, producers’ groups, international organizations, NGOs, trademark offices, law firms, universities, research centers, foundations, etc.) wishing to cooperate in the project of creating an online compilation of all GIs protected in the world,” it said.

Geographical indications, products with particular characteristics named after places, are being positioned as a tool for sustainable development in local communities.

GIs also appear on the agenda of the World Intellectual Property Organization Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks (SCT), which meets this week from [1-3 February](#)^[2].

The creation of a GI register was agreed by all WTO members at the launch of the Doha Round in 2001, and is a regular item on the agenda of the WTO Council on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which meets next on 28-29 February. Last year, discussions continued despite an overall slowdown of the WTO Doha Round ([IPW, WTO/TRIPS, 23 October 2011](#)^[3]).

The [project website is here](#)^[4].

Related Articles:

- [With WTO Stalled, GI Industry Proponents Move To Create Their Own Register](#)^[1]
- [WTO Members Meet Monday On Geographical Indications Register](#)^[5]
- [WTO Talks On Geographical Indications Unable To Achieve Lift-Off](#)^[6]

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URLs in this post:

[1] *IPW*, Trademarks/Geographical Indications/Domains, 10 October 2011: <http://www.ip-watch.org/2011/10/10/with-wto-stalled-gi-industry-proponents-move-to-create-their-own-register/>

[2] 1-3 February: http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=25502

[3] *IPW*, WTO/TRIPS, 23 October 2011: <http://www.ip-watch.org/2011/10/23/wto-ip-committee-to-address-medicines-access-plain-packaged-tobacco-act/>

[4] project website is here: http://www.origin-gi.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=267:origin-database&lang=en&Itemid=0

[5] WTO Members Meet Monday On Geographical Indications Register: <http://www.ip-watch.org/2011/04/15/wto-members-meet-monday-on-geographical-indications-register/>

[6] WTO Talks On Geographical Indications Unable To Achieve Lift-Off: <http://www.ip-watch.org/2011/03/04/wto-talks-on-geographical-indications-unable-to-achieve-lift-off/>