

2016-2017 Action Plan

1. Lobby

1.1 Trade negotiations covering GIs

In spite of the WTO deadlock, the attention on multilateral negotiations should remain high at the WIPO level. Following the recent adoption at WIPO of the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications, oriGIn will encourage countries to sign and ratify this new Treaty.

Together with a sound multilateral legal framework for GIs, which must set in a transparent way a solid level of protection as a guarantee for all businesses and consumers around the world, oriGIn will follow the ongoing bilateral negotiations covering GIs (Free Trade Agreements - FTAs, GIs Agreements, Cooperation Agreements, etc. ...). oriGIn will follow the major ongoing bilateral negotiations (see <http://www.origin-gi.com/117-uk/news/8381-05-05-2015-eu-agreements-impacting-on-gis.html>) to ensure the highest protection for GIs is granted and will study in depth the implications for GIs of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), recently concluded by the U.S., Japan, Australia, Peru, Malaysia, Vietnam, New Zealand, Chile, Singapore, Canada, Mexico and Brunei Darussalam (<http://www.mfat.govt.nz/downloads/trade-agreement/transpacific/TPP-text/18.%20Intellectual%20Property%20Chapter.pdf> see Section E, page 16).

1.2 Trademark applications conflicting with GIs

While trademark offices around the world have recently made some improvements in applying correctly the relevant laws on GIs, in particular with respect to trademark applications conflicting with GIs, several inconsistencies still remain (see some recent decisions at the EU level @ http://www.origin-gi.com/fr/?option=com_flexicontent&view=item&cid=237:origin-alerts-2014&id=8516:origin-alerts-28-october-2015-origin-tpp-gis-tm&Itemid=1924).

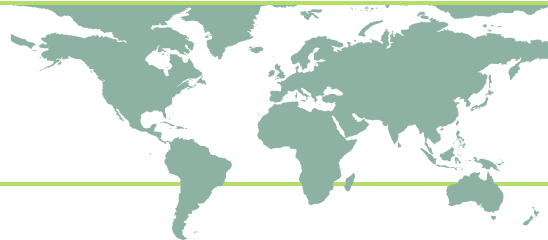
In close partnership with its members affected by such decisions, oriGIn will continue its efforts to promote a correct and consistent application of the relevant GI laws by trademark offices around the world (the OHIM in particular).

1.3 Generic Top-Level Domains (gTLDs)

The ICANN process of attribution of new gTLDs has dramatically increased the challenges in terms of counterfeiting and misappropriation for GIs (e.g.: new delegated strings such as “.food”, “.pizza”, “.wine” and “.coffee” just to name a few).

Following the encouraging precedent of the “.wine” and “.vin” strings (where a private agreement was reached between the company delegated to assign the 2 strings and the US and EU wine industry), oriGIn will continue its lobby to ensure that new gTLDs - as well the system of traditional gTLDs, such as “.com”, “.int”, “.org”, etc. – take into account GIs as prior rights deserving protection in case of irregular use a second level domains. In particular, oriGIn will push countries – in the context of the Internet governance debate – to promote at the global level a thorough discussion on the most effective ways to ensure the effective protection for GIs in gTLDs.

1.4 Extension of the EU GI protection to non-agricultural products



On 06 October 2015, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the possible extension of geographical indication protection of the European Union to non-agricultural products. In 2016, the Commission will probably start preparing a legislative proposal on this topic.

oriGIn will interact with the Commission to make sure that any new *sui generis* community system of recognition and protection of non-agricultural GIs will require a strong link between the products' qualities and their respective geographical areas (not to weaken the overall GI concept) and will not create confusion with the existing well-established European GIs systems.

1.5 Other topics

oriGIn will monitor any other policy at the national, regional and international level that might affect GIs, to make sure it does not encroach in an unjustified way on GIs protection and sustainability.

2. Information and Experience Sharing

oriGIn will continue to regularly inform its members about the most important developments on GIs at the global level, with its traditional tools: Alerts, press releases, etc.

Moreover, three new studies will be finalized by oriGIn:

- A publication on the recognition and protection of GIs within the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI) which covers 17 member countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Republic of Congo, Senegal and Togo) with a total population of some 150 million people;
- A publication on the current (limited) tools to protect GIs in the gTLDs;
- A research on GIs and sustainability.

oriGIn will also encourage its members to think about the opportunity to create national and regional sections of oriGIn to further strengthen its global network.

Finally, oriGIn will complete its project of compilation of all GIs protected in the world.

3. New Tools and Services

On the one hand, oriGIn will continue to explore the possibility to find its niche in the area of access to finance for GI groups, with the goal to promote the consolidation and/or further development/optimization of sustainable business models.

On the other hand, oriGIn will become a “match-making” platform for GI groups from different countries interested in launching joint promotional campaigns (for instance Regulation 1144/2014/EU on information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products implemented in the internal market and in third countries provides up to 80% of EU co-financing for multi programs targeting third countries).