



## Background

Over the years, GIs have achieved commercial and economic prominence while benefiting producing and consumers alike, as indicators of a geographical origin and qualities, and a means for value-added marketing differentiation. GIs also serve other goals, such as the promotion of rural economic development, environment, food quality, food safety and traceability.

In the age of the Internet, increasing global commerce requires adequate protection for consumers and producers alike. While the protection of GIs in the Internet domain names system has been traditionally a challenging task, the recent introduction of new domains has made the situation even more problematic. Literally thousands of new domains have emerged, with a corresponding increase in expense to GI owners and beneficiaries, which must monitor and enforce intellectual property rights against third parties. GI beneficiaries or other legal entities in charge of a given GI, which has not otherwise obtained a relevant trademark registration to show unregistered trademark rights in that geographical term on the basis of secondary meaning, cannot benefit from the dispute resolution mechanisms provided in the context of the Internet domain names system, in particular the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP).

In March 2014, a number of WIPO Member States presented a proposal for the full protection of GIs and countries names in the domain name system at the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications<sup>1</sup>.

In January 2016, oriGIn published a manual describing the existing, while limited, mechanisms to protect GIs in the Internet domain name system, including the potential increase in legal expenses for GI groups, which must monitor and enforce intellectual property rights against third parties filing top level as well as second level domains corresponding to, or conflicting with, the GIs they represent.

## oriGIn

The Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network - oriGIn - is a non-for-profit Non-Governmental Organization based in Geneva. Established in 2003, oriGIn is today a truly global alliance of Geographical Indications (GIs) from a large variety of sectors, representing some 500 associations of producers and other GI-related institutions from 40 countries.

oriGIn's goals are to:

- Campaign for the effective legal protection and enforcement of GIs at the national, regional and international level, through campaigns aimed at decision-makers, the media and the public at large;
- Promote GIs as a sustainable development tool for producers and communities.

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/sct/en/sct\\_35/sct\\_31\\_8\\_rev\\_5.pdf](http://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/sct/en/sct_35/sct_31_8_rev_5.pdf)