



# Activities Report

2018/2019

Dear members,

The 2018-2019 has been another positive biennium for oriGIn.

In this activities' report, we are proud to share with you some of the most important results we have achieved over the last two years:

## **I. A global network in continuous expansion**

### **oriGIn membership continued to grow over the last biennium.**

Prestigious GIs groups and institutions from all over the world – such as the “Confederazione Nazionale dei Consorzi Volontari per la Tutela delle Denominazioni dei Vini Italiani” (FEDERDOC), the Irish Whiskey Association (IWA), the Consorzio Fontina, the National Office of Vine and Wine (ONVV) of Moldova, the Agriculture and Food Authority of Kenya and the French Industrial Property Office (INPI) – have joined the organization. Likewise, national GIs associations bearing our name have been created (“oriGIn Mongolia”) or changed their name (“oriGIn Italia”) to strengthen the common identity of, and messages conveyed by, GIs movements. We have received similar requests from other countries, which will be dealt with in the next biennium. In this respect, we remind you that oriGIn national antennas are independent organizations, to whom oriGIn licenses the use of its logo in exchange of their commitment to remain oriGIn collective members and carry GIs campaigns vis-à-vis national authorities.

**We are glad to see oriGIn growing as a reputed opinion-maker and crucial actor for GIs worldwide. We are the global platform where the most important issues affecting GIs are discussed and action is taken to ensure awareness and protection.**

## **II. Advocacy campaigns: we made the voice of GIs heard at national, regional and international level**

**In the biennium 2018-2019, oriGIn carried out several initiatives to ensure the protection of GIs at national, regional and international level.**

### **A. National level: we have analysed and provided comments to the relevant authorities concerning new GIs laws under discussion in several jurisdictions around the world. Some example:**

In May 2018, oriGIn has provided comments to the Industrial Property Institute of **Mexico** (INPI) concerning the new national Industrial Property Law, in particular the provisions that, in our view, were in contradiction with the TRIPs Agreement, the Lisbon Agreement and its Geneva Act.

In November 2018, in the context of a public consultation launched in **Brazil** on the draft rules concerning the national procedures to register GIs, oriGIn has raised an issue faced by some of its members in the country, concerning the restrictive interpretation given by the national authorities to the GIs definition, which seems not to be in line with the relevant international rules and practice.

Before the **Myanmar** Trademark Law and Industrial Design Law was enacted earlier in 2019, oriGIn had submitted its comments to the competent national authorities to welcome the provisions concerning GIs registration and to request the explicit extension to GIs of administrative, civil and criminal remedies against infringements. GIs, including foreign ones, can now obtain recognition in Myanmar.

In the context of “**Brexit**”, oriGIn has consistently pushed the UK negotiators to preserve the existing level of GIs protection in the country (for instance in the consultation on establishing UK GI schemes after Brexit).

**B. Regional level: we have pushed a GIs agenda in various areas.** Some example:

**In the European Union (EU)**, the regional antenna **oriGIn EU** was established in March 2018. This has contributed to increase the effectiveness of our campaigns at the European level. A few examples: in May 2019, in the context of the European Parliament elections, we have prepared and presented to the EU policy makers **our priorities for the 2019-2024 legislature**. In particular, we have mentioned the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the need to adapt existing GIs schemes to sustainability concerns, such as the preservation of the environment and the fair remuneration of actors within the value chain; the further simplification of registration procedures; and the adoption of new rules to protect GIs in the context of e-commerce and the Internet. Moreover, we have played an important role in the process of adoption of the **new Spirits Regulation (EU, 2019/787)** – its GIs provisions entered into force at the beginning of June 2019. Positive advancements for GIs are: Enhanced protection for GIs vis-à-vis goods in transit in the EU territory and when used as ingredients; Simplification of registration procedures; The obligation of market controls by Member States and the creation of a register of competent authorities responsible for controls. During the biennium, we have also contributed to raise awareness among national authorities and trademark offices on the CJEU and national courts' decisions on **evocation**, a powerful tool against subtle attempts to mislead consumers and benefit unfairly from the reputation of GIs.

**In Africa**, the regional antenna **oriGIn Africa** has been operational in Casablanca since 2018, thanks to a partnership with the “Office Marocain de la Propriété Industrielle et Commerciale” (OMPIC). oriGIn Africa has been pursuing the following objectives: help African GIs to obtain recognition and technical assistance funds and support oriGIn members to obtain institutional contacts for GIs related issues in Africa.

**In North America**, our cooperation with the **American Origin Products Association (AOPA)** have been strengthened over the biennium. In this context, several GIs campaigns have been carried out in the region. As an example, in the framework of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) negotiations, it was crucial to ensure that GIs rules confirm the principle that names' genericity is evaluated by competent authorities exclusively with respect to the jurisdiction where protection is sought.

**C. International level: we have focused our campaigns on the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications,**

### **the major bilateral negotiations affecting GIs and Internet Top-Level Domains (TLDs).**

At several occasions during the biennium, oriGIn has encouraged the WIPO Member States to join the **Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement**. The Geneva Act, in fact, formally includes GIs under its scope of application, providing a solid level of protection for both appellations of origin and GIs. Likewise, it introduces elements of flexibility in the Lisbon Agreement, which makes it attractive for a variety of legal systems. As a result, the Geneva Act represents a unique opportunity to set-up a truly international registry for all GIs, increasing transparency, legal certainty and reduction of costs for groups. Cambodia, Cote d'Ivoire and Albania have already acceded to this treaty, while the EU has completed its internal procedures (its accession is expected to be finalized before the end of 2019). We are proud to note that the concerns previously expressed by oriGIn on the modalities of the European accession (concerning in particular the prior rights of appellations of origin protected under the existing Lisbon Agreement) were taken into account by the EU institutions.

On the other hand, in the biennium, we have been monitoring **the major bilateral negotiations affecting GIs** (Free Trade Agreement with a GIs chapter, "stand alone" GIs Agreements, cooperation agreement with implications for GIs, etc. ...) with the objective to support effective protection (for instance the involvement of groups in the elaboration of GIs lists and the limitation of "exceptions" to full protection for individual GIs). With specific regard to the bilateral agreements to which the EU is a party, we have elaborated a comprehensive summary for our members. It provides an overview on the ongoing negotiations, finalized agreements (but not yet in force) and ratified agreements.

**With respect to Internet TLDs**, over the biennium oriGIn has consistently encouraged the WIPO Member States to recommend the ICANN (the private company in charge of the generic TLDs management) to give GIs groups the possibility to benefit from the Uniform Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) for disputes related to the registration of second level domain names in conflict with GIs.

### **III. Innovation: we have consolidated/developed an expertise in strategic areas for GIs beyond protection**

**In the biennium 2018-2019, oriGIn has consolidated/developed its expertise in strategic areas for GIs beyond protection.**

First of all, with respect to **the global debate on sustainability**. With a growing world population, and its implications in terms of quantity and quality of available food, use of water and impact on the overall environment, GIs cannot ignore the challenges associated with sustainability. Commercial considerations are also playing an important role in the debate, as sustainability is becoming a major factor influencing consumer behaviour. In this respect, we have reinforced the partnership with the Food Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and implemented our "GIs and Sustainability Strategy" in Honduras with our member "café de Marcala". Moreover, it has been agreed that, starting from June 2020, a FAO-oriGIn Biannual Forum on GIs and sustainability will be organised.

Likewise, during the biennium, oriGIn has become one of the partners of the LIFE project “The Tough Get Going”, project coordinated by the University “Politecnico di Milano”. The project aims at improving the efficiency of hard/semi-hard PDO cheese production processes in the EU. The main outcome of the project will be the design of a software to assess and reduce the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF). This tool will be calibrated, validated and tested on “Grana Padano” and “Comté”, as well as “Beaufort”, “Abondance”, “queso Mahón-Menorca” and “Stilton”. The goal is to create a solid benchmark to assess and improve the performance of both PDO supply chains. It will help producers to reduce their environmental impact and promote an efficient use of resources.

Moreover, in 2018, oriGIn has been selected to be part of the training team of the EU-sponsored program “Better Training for Safer Food”, aimed at improving knowledge and harmonizing practices in EU Member States with respect to **GIs controls** for wines, spirits and agricultural products. For the purpose of the training, controls include both the ones carried out before products are commercialized as well as administrative market controls (ex officio protection).

Finally, as we are regularly invited to GIs conferences and seminars around the world, during the last biennium oriGIn has strengthened **its role as platform for best practices exchange among GIs groups and associations**. We have collected inputs concerning GIs needs in Mexico, Turkey, Georgia and Australia (in particular the establishment of groups and controls systems) and developed a strategy to respond to them.

#### **IV. Tools and partnerships: a strategy to ensure GIs are understood beyond producer and policymakers circles**

**During the 2018-2019 biennium, we have continued to develop tools and partnerships to ensure the key GIs concepts are understood beyond producers and policymakers circles.**

In 2018, to raise **GIs awareness among academic circles**, oriGIn has signed a cooperation agreement with **the European IP Institutes Network (EIPIN-IS)**, a consortium of five European leading intellectual property research centres (Maastricht University, Queen Mary University of London, Universidad de Alicante, Universität Augsburg, Université de Strasbourg). Fifteen researchers were selected to engage in PhD studies on intellectual property, including GIs – topic for which oriGIn is the focal point.

Moreover, during the biennium, nine editions of the online course “Adding Value to Origin Products Through Geographical Indications (GIs), developed by in cooperation with the **International Trade Center (ITC)**, have taken place. This allowed us to **train more than 1.000 participants (mainly from developing countries)** on the value and benefits in establishing GIs for local products with unique characteristics as well as on the main elements which are involved in GI recognition.

Finally, we have constantly updated the **oriGIn GIs Worldwide Compilation**, which contains today some 8.150 GIs currently protected in the jurisdictions around the world, notwithstanding the legal system and terminology adopted at the national level. While this compilation cannot be considered exhaustive, such an effort is an important step in promoting transparency with respect to GIs and highlighting its global dimension.

**V. Accounts (CHF)**

	Budget 2019	Execution 2018	Execution 2017	Execution 2016	Execution 2015
<b>REVENUES</b>					
Memb. fees	300,000	277,279.06	242,810.33	241,127.22	246,587.01
Donors	140,000	221,823.90	254,928.92	162,437.71	192,278.43
Sundry					
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>440,000</b>	<b>499,102.96</b>	<b>497,739.25</b>	<b>403,564.93</b>	<b>438,865.44</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
Salaries	293,000	289,809.22	282,893.66	281,180.80	270,722.30
Consultants	3,000	7,447.72	12,061.78	47,382.43	51,039.22
Travel / Events	23,000	16,989.21	64,617.13	34,406.58	25,461.96
Projects	37,000	57,799.81	45,406.10	9,252.20	55,276.37
EU Rep	38,000	36,881.85	15,585.94		
Africa Rep	4,000	16,662.10	12,975.54		
US Rep	17,000	47,365.51	47,833.44		
	<b>415,000</b>	<b>472,955.42</b>	<b>481,373.59</b>	<b>372,222.01</b>	<b>402,499.85</b>
<b>OFFICE EXPENSES</b>					
	<b>29,000</b>	<b>28,990.06</b>	<b>28,434.88</b>	<b>30,827.15</b>	<b>35,646.26</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>444,000</b>	<b>501,945.48</b>	<b>509,808.47</b>	<b>403,049.16</b>	<b>438,146.11</b>
<b>Result</b>	<b>- 4,000</b>	<b>-2,842.52</b>	<b>-12,069.22</b>	<b>515.77</b>	<b>719.33</b>

Several challenges remain ahead for GIs, as well as for the consolidation of oriGIn (on this, please see our 2020-2021 Action Plan). We are confident that with your support we will overcome them and take oriGIn to new heights.



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