

Sustainability



Protection



Cooperation



Activities Report

2020/2021

I. Introduction: Message from the President and Managing Director

Dear members,

The COVID-19 pandemic has marked the 2020-2021 biennium.

In these unprecedented circumstances, GIs producers, transformers and retailers have been making tremendous efforts to maintain the supply of quality products to consumers. Meanwhile, as the agri-food sector is largely composed of small producers and small and medium-sized companies, they have been facing unprecedented challenges.

The pandemic has also accelerated the debate over sustainability, with the urgency to find new development models, which combine economic growth with environmental and social value. Likewise, consumers have become even more aware and demanding on sustainability attributes, traceability and community impact.

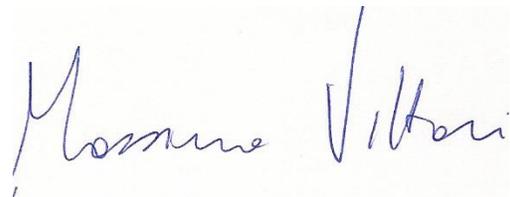
In this context, oriGIn had to reinvent its way of working to remain relevant. That's why in the last biennium we have pursued our advocacy and best-practices exchange objectives mainly through webinars and online meetings. This report provides you with some of the most important results we have achieved over the last two years. For more information, please do not forget to consult **the "Policy & Advocacy" page of our website**, where our activities are regularly reported in details: <https://www.origin-gi.com/uk/activities/policy-and-advocacy/>

In spite of this challenging environment, we are proud to note that in the last biennium **oriGIn has reinforced its role a global reference on GIs**, both in terms of protection and legal issues as well as cooperation and awareness raising among groups with respect to emerging topics of common interest, such as sustainability. Likewise, **thanks to a growing membership and network of partnerships, our financial sustainability is not at risk in the next biennium.**

Finally, as 2021 is coming to an end, we do hope to be able to organize soon events in person, to nurture the bonds and friendship which characterize our global network.



Claude Vermot-Desroches
President of oriGIn



Massimo Vittori
Managing Director of oriGIn

II. Sustainability: The topic of our times

Our partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in the field of sustainability was reinforced.

In 2020 and 2021, our efforts focused in developing and testing the necessary **tools for the implementation of the FAO-oriGIn Sustainability Strategy for Geographical Indications (SSGI)**. In particular, we have developed a **solid sustainability indicator database**. This tool, which is expected to become available to origin members in 2022, connects possible sustainability priorities to 372 indicators that not only can measure the GI performance in each area of interest (economic, social, environmental and governance), but also to other sustainability frameworks, such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). In addition, the sustainability indicator database classifies each indicator characteristics in terms of usability, type, definition and requirements, among several attributes.

Despite the difficulties of the Covid pandemic, we have also been able to **field-test the SSGI draft guides and database in Colombia with the Paipa Cheese GI and in some Colombian cocoa regions**. The insights obtained from these exercises, as well as the input received during the two sessions held (in July 2020 and October 2021) with the scientific taskforce that convened to supervise these efforts have helped improve the guides and toolkits associated.

These efforts have also helped oriGIn become a respected actor in the sustainability debate. As part of these efforts, we have also become engaged in creating content and communicating with several audiences interested in the topic of sustainability. In this respect, always in partnership with the FAO, we have organized a number of online events, such as **an Independent Dialogue on GIs in the context of the UN Food Systems Summit 2021**, in cooperation with Cirad and IPI Switzerland. The FAO and oriGIn have also organized **a series of webinars on "Contributing to SDGs through quality linked to geographical origin"**, with the involvement of international partners: Equalitas, IPI Switzerland, the European Forest Institute (EFI), the project Life TTGG – the Though Get Going, oriGIn France and the WIPO. **The series gathered some 1.000 participants from 90 countries.**

Our work on sustainability has other dimensions: On the one hand, through **the activities of the "LIFE TTGG – the Though Get Going" project**, which aims at improving the efficiency and environmental performance of production chains in the PDO cheese sector through a dedicated software¹. In the last biennium, the test of the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) methodology on a representative sample of Grana Padano PDO producers was finalized and the results will be presented in an online event, scheduled on 10 December. On the other hand, through the organisations of meetings, we allow members to share experience and best practices.

¹ The project is co-financed by the European Commission and coordinated by the Politecnico di Milano with the participation of Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Enersem (Spin-off, Politecnico di Milano), Consorzio di Tutela del Formaggio Grana Padano, Centre National Interprofessionnel de l'Economie Laitière (CNIEL), Comité Interprofessionnel de Gestion du Comté (CIGC), oriGIn and Fondazione Qualivita.

III. Advocacy: oriGIn, a key player in the international scene

A. At the international level

Over the last biennium, **we have pushed our international agenda through online events and meetings with, as well as position papers and letters to, stakeholders**, such as international and regional authorities dealing with GIs, national and regional trademark offices and international associations (to name a few: the WIPO, the IPI Switzerland, the CNIPA-China, INDECOPI-Peru, the EUIPO, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the SIC-Colombia, international law firms, the University of Alicante, ASIPI, INTA, ...).

Our online events, meetings with and position papers covered topics ranging from **the WIPO Geneva Act to the protection against evocations, the systems available in China, the protection of earlier rights, IP office practice in trademarks' applications in conflict with GIs, and the major challenges for the development of GIs in developing countries.**

In the biennium, we have been monitoring **the major bilateral and multilateral negotiations affecting GIs**, with the objective to support effective protection. This includes the WIPO Geneva Act of Lisbon Agreement as well as the EU negotiations with Chile, Mexico, Mercosur, Australia, New-Zealand and the United Kingdom following Brexit. In the last two years, the WIPO Geneva Act, the EU/China GI agreement and the FTA between the EU and Vietnam have entered into force, enhancing protection for GIs from the signatories.

In recognition of its global dimension, oriGIn has been regularly participating in the main international and regional events on GIs (WIPO, FAO, EU institutions, EUIPO, IPI Switzerland, Indonesian IP Office, INPI Mexico, IP-Key, AfriPI, CariPI, ARISE +, BTSF), **not only on legal matters, but more and more on the other key factors for the success of GIs, such as the creation of groups, the establishment of effective controls and how GIs can respond to sustainability challenges.**

B. At the European Union level (through oriGIn EU)

We have worked on the reform of the **reform of the 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, as well as the regulation of supply for all GIs; the further simplification of registration procedures; and the adoption of new rules to protect GIs in the context of e-commerce and the Internet. We have been quite successful in getting our ideas taken on board, and the final compromise which should be adopted by the end of the year will represent an important improvement for EU GIs.

Moreover, we have been involved in the discussions on the **EU Farm to Fork strategy** (the new European Commission flagship to transition to more sustainable food system). This strategy includes topics such as **promotion, labelling** (origin, nutrition, animal welfare, sustainability), but also the **revision of the EU quality schemes** – including geographical indications. We have been working together to

develop oriGIn EU's position and have then organized a round table with the European Commission and Members of the European Parliament to present our priorities: Enabling GIs to better respond to quality and sustainability challenges; Strengthened role of GIs as a tool for rural development; Better consumer information and awareness while respecting GI specificities; An improved PDO/PGI protection. The message was well received by MEPs, who expressed their support on this dossier.

We have also kept on raising awareness among national authorities and trademark offices on the CJEU and national courts' positive decisions on **evocation, a powerful tool against subtle attempts to mislead consumers and benefit unfairly from the reputation of GIs.**

Finally, we have gathered comments from our members and provided regular feedback to the Commission **in the process of discussion and elaboration of a legislative proposal for the recognition of craft and industrial GIs in the EU.**

IV. Continuous innovation: Offering services to our members and the worldwide GIs community

In September 2021, we have launched **a new website to provide our members with a more intuitive, user-friendly experience and easier access to information and content produced at oriGIn.** You have now more visibility and benefit from a dedicated area. We also revamped the **"oriGIn Alert"**, which provides updates on GIs developments, oriGIn policy & advocacy activities and includes members' initiatives (**"Members' Voice"**).

During the biennium, we have also pursued **the development and regular update of the oriGIn worldwide GIs compilation**, which provides today, information on some 9.000 GIs protected in the jurisdictions around the world, including protection in third countries. The FAO, in its recently established dedicated webpage on GIs, makes direct reference to our compilation to present the key figures related to the GIs recognized in the jurisdictions around the world. Likewise, trademark offices regularly contact oriGIn to explore ways to use our compilation to improve the practice.

This year, in collaboration with the EUIPO cooperation project AfriPI, we have also finalized a **"Manual for GIs in Africa"**, which aims to conduct this stock-taking exercise in light of the factors that are considered crucial internationally for a GI to be successful. Furthermore, it aims to provide conceptual (economic literature) and practical tools (examples of successful GIs from developing countries outside Africa). We hope that it will offer local and international stakeholders a practical tool to assist in the implementation of the Continental Strategy for Geographical Indications in Africa (2018-2023). Likewise, in collaboration with the "Asociación Interamericana de la Propiedad Intelectual" (ASIPI), we are in the process of publishing the manual on **"Consejos Reguladores de Indicaciones Geográficas: Casos de éxito"** (expected before the end of the year).

Finally, in 2020-2021, oriGIn has continued the e-learning course **"Adding Value to the Origin of Products Through Geographical Indications (GIs)"**, launched with the International Trade Center (ITC) in 2017, which attracted more than 600 students worldwide.