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Innovating and Organising Research, Education and
Training for Sustainable GIs

The valorization of origin products through GIs: research issues

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Preliminary considerations

What we are speaking about?

- Origin-linked products and Geographical indications: different interpretations
- Links with traditional, multifunctional food systems: commodity and non-commodity outputs are inextricably linked
- What does valorization mean? Market and non-market dimensions, reproduction of local specific resources as key issue

GIs are complex research objects:

- Different relevant perspectives: economic, social, environmental → GI legal protection has many impacts on OP production systems
 - Huge diversity of products and of contexts
- A wide and society-driven interpretation of GIs as valorization tools is needed, not only legal, not only company, nor only marketing oriented.

GIs valorisation and local rural development strategies:

- GIs offer the opportunity to local agrifood systems to escape from price-competition and to support traditional food systems
- Their potential is still underutilized, both in the EU and in Third countries

Key findings (1)

- OP and GIs are **social constructions**: they are shaped by the interaction of different actors, not only belonging to the local production system and supply chain.



Producers working on the code of practice for Kampong Speu palm sugar (Cambodia).



Key findings (2)

- **Legal protection** of origin products by means of Geographical Indications offers interesting **opportunities** for valorisation but generates also **problems** ...



European Community PDO and PGI logos



Common logos for Swiss GI products managed by the Association suisse des AOC-IGP

... but, as a matter of fact, the **level of knowledge** about the real effects that the registered GIs exert in the economic, social and environmental spheres is up to now very limited.

Key findings (3)

- OP and GIs can be analyzed as **common / collective goods**: how stakeholders can manage them, which are the different options for their governance
- The writing process of the **Code of practice** is of paramount importance in shaping if and how different actors can benefit from GI valorization
- Producers' **collective organization** play a key role both before and after the legal registration



Key findings (4)

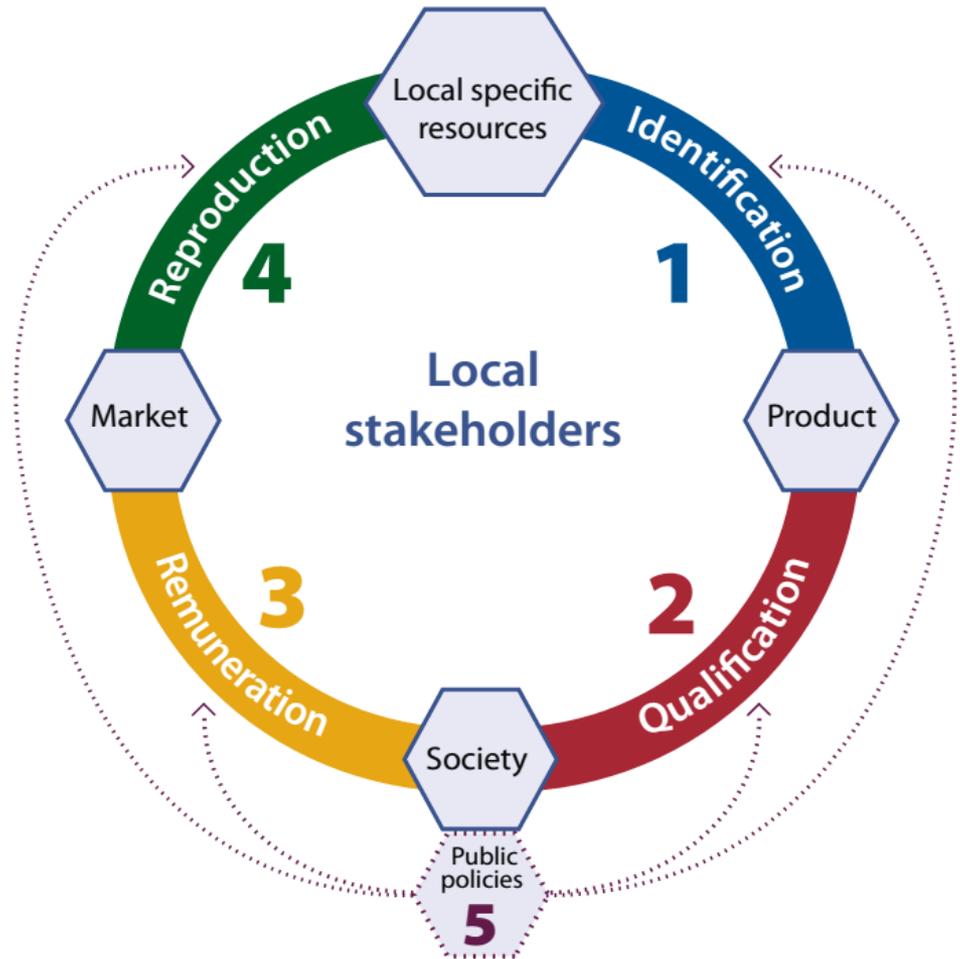
- GI protection is often part of more general strategies aiming at valorizing Origin products.
- An effective valorization asks for collective action and public policies able to remove blocking factors at company and value chain level



Key findings (5)

- Origin products valorization by means of GIs is the result of different activities and steps that can be grouped in 4 main phases
- Ex-ante phases (up to GI legal registration) and ex-post phases (after the GI legal registration) are strictly interrelated: the first ones affect the results of GI valorization
- Valorization can be conceived as circular process is one of the research results

The origin-linked quality virtuous circle



Some uncovered themes

- Consumption and “intermediate consumers”: what do we really know?
- Economic performance: how important is the price?
- How GIs enter in companies’ strategies

- Horizontal distribution of costs and benefits
- Vertical distribution of costs and benefits

- Valorization and consequent de-valorization
- GIs and poor and less empowered people (producers and consumers)

- GIs in transnational value chains: which real contribution to de-commodification
- GIs and alternative agri-food networks: contradictory results
- GIs and other qualification schemes: synergies or conflicts?

Main issues for research

- Multidisciplinarity of the approach: how to integrate different perspective of analysis (and different languages and mental attitudes?)
- Multilevel approach: company, local production system and value chain
- Accountability about the (multiple) effects of GI legal protection and valorization: key issue at political level both at EU and international level.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effects of GIs at companies, production system and territorial level → evaluation of ongoing processes
- Linking GI valorization to food security issues
- Integration of research results in territorial development strategies and in related public policies
- In a wider sense: integration of IPR policy with other (national-regional) policies able to support the “*origin-linked quality circle*” following a sustainable rural development approach



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