

ExPost

Overview

Evaluation

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Looking back at 15 years of
AFD support for geographical
indications: what contribution
to sustainable development?
How to do better?

The full evaluation report
can be downloaded from the AFD website:
<https://www.afd.fr/fr/ressources-accueil>

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Cover page

Teb Vy, Kampot pepper grower
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1. Origins

There is a long history behind the use of origin marking. Producers and consumers are familiar with products such as Parma ham, Darjeeling tea, Colombian coffee or Champagne. These are just some examples of many origin-marked products. The World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights defines geographical indications (GIs) as "indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a Member, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin."

As the WTO Members are free to choose their method of protection, the implementation of the Agreement in the area of GIs has led to very diverse modes of protection. Among these, the sui generis system promoted by France and the common-law approach based on the trademark system are the two main institutional approaches to protect GIs. These two protection systems reflect different legal and political approaches.

Countries that have adopted a sui generis system generally consider GIs as common goods or public goods belonging to the State. Their protection, which is underpinned by a public or administrative act, is based on a formal registration process requiring the identification of a link between the origin of the good and its quality, its characteristics and/or its reputation. By asserting that "GIs are essential for cultural heritage, traditional production methods and natural resources in the EU and in developing countries," the European Union (EU), and a large number of countries in Africa and Asia, claim that GIs are not only an intellectual property right (IPR) generating economic benefits for producers and facilitating consumers' choices, they can also be used as development tools to favour public policy objectives in all dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, social and economic).

Contrary to the sui generis system, collective and certification marks place the focus on the communication purpose of GIs to protect consumers and producers' interests against

fraud and unfair competition practices. They are private property rights not originating in governmental initiatives, which do not usually require strict conditions with regard to the link between the product and its geographical origin.

Having adopted the sui generis system, France has developed a strategy to promote GIs around the world. The latter aims to ensure good protection of its GIs in importing countries, in particular for wines and spirits such as Champagne and Cognac. The creation of alliances with other countries outside the EU to defend the sui generis protection approach is strategic.

1.1 Justification of "geographical indications" projects

GI projects funded by France are justified by the link between trade and development. Since 2005, they must be included in French Aid for Trade and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. In 2015, the latter evolved, with Strategies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing countries (DCs). GIs meet both requirements. France's strategy on GIs is led by the General Directorate of the Treasury (DGT, Ministry of Economy and Finance) and the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MAEE), as part of the Trade Capacity Building Programme (TCBP) that funds interventions in favor of GIs, which are appraised by AFD. GIs were therefore considered by AFD both as a "possible means for differentiation, better valorisation and protection of agricultural and agrifood product denominations" in DCs^[1], and as a contribution to France's strategy for promotion of the sui generis system.

For its part, FFEM (French Facility for Global Environment) considers that the development of GIs "represents a promising opportunity for preservation of biological diversity in ecosystems and conservation of species, which are key elements in any environmental conservation system ^[2]"

[1] Agence française de développement and French Facility for Global Environment (2010), « Indications géographiques, développement local et préservation des diversités biologiques et culturelles » in *Savoirs communs*, n° 9.

[2] *Ibid.*

1.2 AFD group's interventions in favour of geographical indications

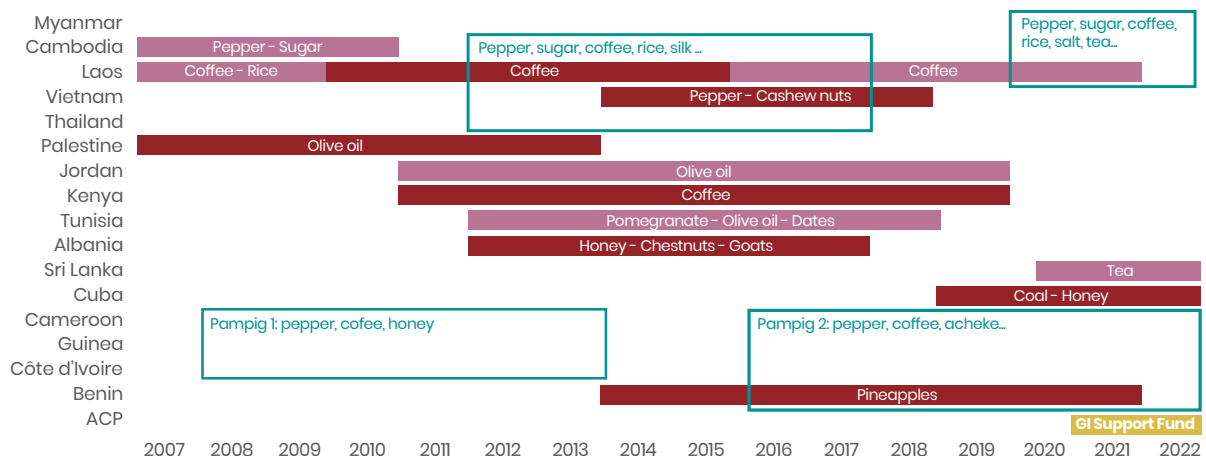
To date, AFD group's interventions in favour of GIs cover 18 projects (13 completed projects, 5 projects in progress – see below). For the 13 completed projects, the total amount of net liabilities was 24 M€, and almost 27.2 M€ for all 18 GI projects. These projects are therefore modest in size for AFD (1.4 M€ on average).

AFD's first project in favour of GIs was identified in 2003, after Cambodia requested technical assistance following its accession to the WTO. Subsequent projects concerned South-East Asia, Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans, Cuba

and Sri Lanka. This portfolio also includes two regional projects currently in their second phase of implementation. The products covered by these projects are cash-generating agricultural products (coffee, pepper, cinnamon, tropical fruit, olive oil...), local agrifood products (milk-, yam- or cassava-based products for example) and artisanal products (silks or traditional cloths).

In 2021, a new form of intervention was implemented: the "GI Support Fund."

Graph 1 – History of AFD's interventions in favour of GIs



Box 1 – The GI Support Fund

The **GI Support Fund** provides technical and financial support for the development of GIs, in the African, Caribbean and Pacific States.

Over a 4 year period (2021-2024), the 5 M€ GI Support Fund must enable provision of support to between 8 and 15 projects (maximum duration 36 months). These projects should be "small" (100K€) to "medium," with three modalities that can be cumulative:

- help with project design (start-up);
- technical or scientific assistance (Cirad);
- direct financial support.

The GI Support Fund also makes it possible to support action-research programmes.

It is managed by Cirad (project design). AFD, MAEE and the DGT are closely associated. The project initiator (State, NGO, Producers' organisation...) is the final beneficiary of the operation. It is the sole owner of its project, with technical assistance from Cirad. It must be supported by a sponsor that can include, for example, regional organisations specialised in intellectual property, technical and/or financial partners involved in GIs, or the French Embassy.

2. Evaluation methodology

2.1 Objective of the evaluation

AFD already had evaluations on five projects supporting GIs, but did not yet have an overall evaluation. The objective of this evaluation was to provide an overview of the effectiveness and coherence of AFD's interventions in favour of GIs and of their contribution to the SDGs, in relation with AFD group's strategic commitments in this regard. This evaluation was conducted by GRET in 2022, based on the analysis of three projects (GIs sub-component of the RECOSeL Project in Laos, PA-GIs in Tunisia, and the GIs sub-component of the Parasep project in Benin), the five projects already evaluated and a documentary database on projects underway at the time the GI Support Fund began operating. The documentary collection was mobilised notably to respond to cross-cutting questions on France's strategy, monitoring and evaluation systems, and the context of implementation. It also enabled the key issues of some projects in progress (Pampig 2, Asean 2, GI Support Fund) to be understood.

This evaluation responds to important issues in terms of official development assistance accountability and capitalisation of the experience's achievements regarding support for GIs in AFD's countries of intervention.

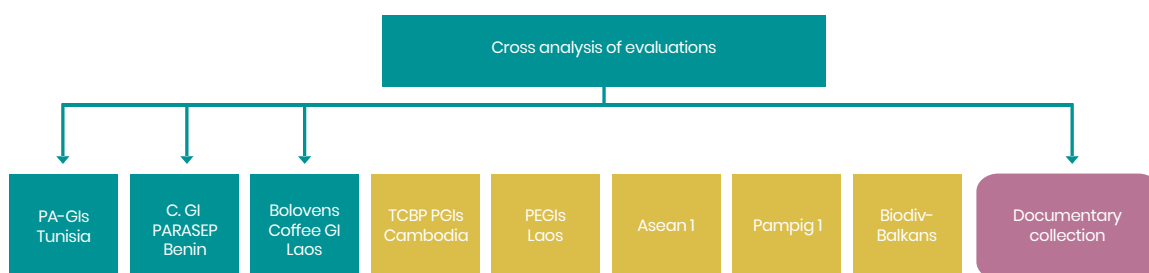
2.2 The cross-analysis

The cross-analysis was conducted based on new evaluations for the three above-mentioned projects and on additional further reading for the other projects (in particular the final evaluations of the five projects). Twelve evaluative questions were drawn up based on classic evaluation criteria and the sustainable development analysis benchmarks that have been used for appraisal of AFD projects since 2015^[3]. The sub-questions, indicators, methods of collection and sources were centralised in an evaluation matrix.

Projects are analysed according to AFD's current benchmarks and objectives at the time of their identification and appraisal. Some questions are relatively well documented in final evaluations of projects. In this case, the analysis can be carried out in greater depth. Other questions relate to more recent conceptual frameworks and strategic commitments (climate change, gender, biodiversity) and are poorly or not answered in final evaluations of old projects. A retrospective analysis is sometimes possible but quickly hampered by a data gap that is impossible to fill.

[3] Mechanism for ex ante qualitative evaluation of the impacts of sustainable development projects <https://www.afd.fr/en/ressources/sustainable-development-analysis-grids>

Graph 2 – Perimeter of the cross-analysis



This Ex-Post format summarises a more comprehensive study including a cross-analysis report and three project evaluation reports. These documents are based notably on around sixty interviews related to the transversal analysis, on 3 field missions in Benin, Laos and Tunisia between March and June 2022, and on a literature review of AFD's GI projects. The 3 project evaluations are based on information generated by the monitoring and evaluation (ME) systems and the interviews in the field. There was no additional research or specific mission on the 5 projects already evaluated. By construction, the projects evaluated focus mainly on the GIs pre-registration phase, as these are the first GI projects funded.

2.3 Presentation of projects

2.3.1 – Oil, pomegranate and dates in Tunisia (new evaluation)

AFD's first reflections on support for GIs in Tunisia took place in the middle of the 2000s. A feasibility study was conducted in 2010 to set up an organisation in charge of quality marks, and registration of Registered Designations of Origin (RDOs) and Indications of Provenance (IPs). Based on a diagnosis in the field, pilot products identified were: olive oil from Tébourouk, pomegranates from Gabès, and dates from Kébili/Nefzaoua. One M€ in funding was intended to enable recognition of the three PGIs (Protected Geographical Indications) and strengthening of the Directorate General of Agricultural Production between 2012 and 2018.

2.3.2 – Sugarloaf pineapple from the Allada plateau – Benin (new evaluation)

The project to support registration of the "Sugarloaf pineapple from the Allada plateau in Benin" was conducted by the interbranch pineapple association (AIAB) over a 21-month period (2019–2021), as part of a call for projects issued by the Project to support strengthening of private-sector stakeholders in Benin (PARASEP). The grant, which was approximately 300K€, was intended to enable support of the GI group and official registration with the African Intellectual Property Organisation (OAPI), based on the PGI specifications that had already been drawn up thanks to a previous FAO project.

2.3.3 – Bolovens coffee – Laos (new evaluation)

As one of the first exported agricultural products, coffee is of major economic importance in Laos. Nevertheless, its valuation by export market prices is still extremely low. The Bolovens Coffee value chain has received successive funding from AFD for around twenty years now. The Project to strengthen and expand the coffee value chain in Laos (RECOSeL) started in 2017 and ended in December 2021. Registration of the Bolovens coffee GI was one of the value chain's structural activities. The project had a total budget of 1.5 M€ in grants from AFD, including approximately 26K€ for the GI sub-component (excluding the cost of technical assistance).

2.3.4 – Kampot Pepper and Kompong Speu Sugar – Cambodia (already evaluated)

Within the context of Cambodia's accession to the WTO in 2003, the project intended to enable, between 2007 and 2010, (i) the development of a legislative framework and (ii) the implementation of two pilot GIs for Kampot pepper and Kompong Speu sugar cane.

2.3.5 – Petit poussin rice and Bolovens coffee – Laos (already evaluated)

The project aimed to strengthen the comparative advantage of Laos with certain niche products, based on the Cambodia PGI project model, i.e. institutional support and provision of support to two pilot value chains: Bolovens coffee and petit poussin rice (Khao Kay Noy). With 1 M€ in funding, the project was conducted between 2005 and 2009.

2.3.6 – Ziama coffee, Penja pepper and Oku honey – Guinea, Cameroon (already evaluated)

The project was conducted between 2008 and 2014, with a 1M€ budget, by the African Intellectual Property Organisation (OAPI). It enabled recognition of 3 GIs (Ziama Macenta coffee in Guinea, and Penja pepper and Oku white honey in Cameroon), and the implementation of 9 GI National Units (GINUs) in Africa.

2.3.7 - GIs in South-East Asia (already evaluated)

The regional GIs project covering Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam aimed to strengthen institutions and pilot value chains: petit poussin rice (Laos), Bolovens coffee (Laos), Kampot pepper (Cambodia), Kampong Speu sugar cane (Cambodia), Mak Mao juices and fruit from Sakon Nakhon (Thailand), silk yarn from Isan (Thailand), Hai Hau rice (Vietnam), Moc Chau Tea (Vietnam) and Van Yen cinnamon (Vietnam). With an AFD budget of 1.5 M€, the FAO conducted the project between 2012 and 2017.

2.3.8 - Biodiversity in the Balkans (already evaluated)

The project received total funding of 3.8 M€, including 1.2 M€ from FFEM, to promote protection of biodiversity in the Balkan mountains by developing valorisation of local products, including kid goat meat from Has, blueberries from Kukës, chestnuts and chestnut honey from Rec, chestnuts from Tropoja and blueberries from Tropoja, in Albania. It was conducted between 2012 and 2017.

3. Relevance and coherence of interventions

3.1 Relevance: well aligned with countries' priorities, less so with those of producers

The evaluations of the various projects demonstrate their relevance to governments' orientations and strategies. In the majority of cases, being rooted in administrations with national project ownership, the projects are clearly integrated in the implementation of national policies (or regional policies for OAPI). This coherence is even stronger when the projects contributed to the development of legislative frameworks (GIs in Cambodia, PEGI in Laos...), thereby ensuring the coherence of future projects.

Normative frameworks and national strategies on quality marks regularly mention GIs among other quality marks. The evaluations sometimes show that the choice, a priori, of the GI as a quality mark to be promoted should be better argued (see the case of Cambodia below).

The relevance of the GI tool as a means to increase family farms' incomes is quite widely questioned in the final evaluations. The evaluators indicate that the projects should have better characterised producers' needs and the most appropriate quality marks before focusing on the promotion of GIs, which remains complex.

Box 2 – The Bolovens coffee project (RECOSeL)

The final external evaluation indicates that the Bolovens coffee project is fully coherent with the government's orientations. The national strategy for development of the coffee value chain was adopted in 2014 with the objective of favouring the production of quality, market-oriented coffee, by maintaining the role of small producers in the production process and ensuring they obtain a better share of the sector's added value. The strategy explicitly mentions registration of the GI. The MAF's agricultural development strategy (2010–2020) mentions the GI as an interesting option to market speciality coffee and improve its quality. The strategy for the development of agriculture by 2025 and MAF's 2030 vision (2015) mention registration of the Bolovens coffee GI. Lastly, the road map for exportation of the coffee, which was adopted in July 2021, supports the objectives of the strategy to develop the coffee sector in Laos by 2025.

Box 3 – The GIs Project in Cambodia

The **GIs project in Cambodia** was implemented just after Cambodia's accession to the WTO, generating profound changes in the legislative framework and justifying Cambodia's request to France for technical assistance. The national plan for strategic development (2006–2010) indicates that improvement of productivity and diversification of the agricultural sector require parallel development of the rice sector and other cash crops with high potential added value (for niche markets). Although various stakeholders consider the project is aligned with the government's priorities, the final external evaluation questions AFD's choice to focus solely on GIs. In fact, Cambodia's request was broader in scope and covered numerous areas of Aid for Trade.

Box 4 – Extracts from the final external evaluations on alignment with the needs of value chains

Cambodia GI: "The subject of the GI is validated without validation" "This nevertheless prevented testing a series of other quality marks (trademarks, PDOs, organic certification, fair trade label, environmental labels...), all deemed to be just as relevant for agricultural diversification and exportation by the Royal Government of Cambodia."

PEGI Laos: "The real needs of end beneficiaries (stakeholders in the supply chain) do not seem to have been taken into account." "compatibility with producers' needs (in particular for Khao Kai Noy) is questionable, given the newness of the concept of GIs and needs that seem greater for other aspects of the value chain's strengthening."

For Pampig (Ziama-Macenta coffee): "For the moment, purchasers of export are not particularly interested in the GI, but more interested in the quality that the GI makes it possible to achieve by complying with specifications."

Asean 1: "When a project has a GI slant from the outset, this leads to an approach that is not based on value chains' needs in terms of strategic development, but on the need to ensure the operation and justify the existence of a legal and administrative framework."

3.2 Relevance: very consistent with France's GI strategy

The benefit for France of supporting GIs is fundamentally linked to its willingness (and that of the EU) to promote the *sui generis* system in contrast to the trademarks system. To avoid a blockage in international negotiations within the WTO, the main strategy in France and Europe was to promote *sui generis* protection of GIs through bilateral agreements. GI projects make it possible to create alliances with third-party countries to defend the *sui generis* protection approach while promoting development of beneficiary countries and achievement of the SDGs. They also make it possible to defend France's economic interests, with the implementation of legislation favouring protection of GIs, including French GIs. It is in fact remarkable that the first GI recognised by OAPI was Champagne, which was registered in 2006 [4], well before registration of the first two African GIs in 2013 as part of the Pampig project.

AFD's interventions in favour of GIs are perfectly consistent with the policies of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, the DGT and the Ministry of Agriculture, for which GIs are both:

- an instrument enabling creation of value and provision of access to new markets for beneficiaries (Sustainable Development Goals to eliminate poverty: SDG1; to eliminate hunger and improve nutrition: SDG2; to promote decent employment: SDG8; to ensure sustainable consumption and production practices: SDG12...),
- and a tool for protection making it possible to fight against usurpation of French GIs and improve their visibility. Cooperation projects in favour of GIs are considered as "an act of influence" aimed at having the *sui generis* system recognised.

[4] Michel Gonomy, "Institutional considerations in the administration of geographical indications – the Case of the OAPI", Worldwide Symposium on Geographical Indications (WIPO/HIPO, 20-22 October 2015), 3. Available here: https://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/geoind/fr/wipo_geo_bud_15/wipo_geo_bud_15_5-annex1.pdf

The interventions also make it possible to valorise the concept of local terroirs (which is inherent in GI products), while promoting French products on foreign markets.

The role of the National Institute of Origin and Quality (INAO) should be highlighted here. The latter is specifically dedicated to the recognition, verification and defence of GIs, in particular internationally, and it regularly intervenes in GI projects as a technical and/or legal expert.

3.3 Internal coherence: some intervention procedures need to evolve

The TCBP funded a series of projects with good internal coherence. The objectives are generally structured around two main areas (i) institutional strengthening of States, and (ii) the promotion of pilot GIs. The various projects are relatively homogenous and have coherent intervention strategies. These strategies evolved with the spread of GI systems: from support for development of legislative frameworks to strengthening of value chains post-registration currently.

However they suffer from limited resources to strengthen GI value chains. The GI projects have budgets between 1 M€ and 1.5 M€ since 2005, making it possible to fund institutional strengthening, support for value chains and technical assistance. These are limited amounts for relatively long implementation periods (between 4 and 6 years). The amounts actually available to fund GI value chains are, ultimately, relatively low: 26 K€ for Bolovens coffee (excluding technical assistance), around 200 K€ per value chain in Tunisia, around 80 K€ in South-East Asia, and around 90 K€ for each of the three African GIs. GI projects with higher budgets are in fact those that focus on a limited number of countries and products (Cambodia, Laos, Benin). Apart from these approximate average amounts, these budgetary limits are regularly highlighted in external evaluations (for example, they are considered as "clearly insufficient" for Asean 1).

Box 5 – The GIs Project in South-East Asia

The GIs project in South-East Asia aims to strengthen 8 products in 4 countries with a budget of 1.5 M€, combining national and regional interventions. The final evaluation indicates that the resources allocated do not enable appropriate support, nor ownership of the project by stakeholders, or the creation of a sustainable dynamic. Ad hoc support and advice, and the provision of tools are not sufficient for structuring of value chains.

In fact, this low level of funding limits ME systems, which are particularly insufficient. It is difficult therefore to rigorously document the impacts of pilot GI value chains and hence to justify, or not, the extension of the systems.

The projects evaluated are implemented over an estimated average period of 6 years (from the date of allocation to closure). However operational durations are shortened and discontinuous. Operation in successive projects does not enable continuity of interventions: (i) the duration of appraisal generates substantial intervals between interventions (see Graph 1) and (ii) each “new” project must necessarily include a start-up phase (contractual arrangements, recruitments, procedures...) and a closure phase (reports, audits...). These stages reduce the operational duration and prevent continuity of interventions. So, within the operational phase, the duration of actual support for value chains is particularly shortened and discontinuous. An extreme case is that of Benin, where AFD funding was implemented between 2014 and 2021, but where support for the value chain was in fact reduced to a 9-month operational intervention, due, among other things, to the Covid context.

3.4 External coherence: inter-donor coordination needs to be strengthened

Various donors and agencies support the implementation of quality marks, including GIs: the Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IPI), the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the FAO, and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

The objective of promoting the sui generis system mainly concerns the Swiss and European intellectual protection bodies. For these stakeholders, the goal is to win DCs over to the sui generis GI cause in multilateral, regional or bilateral trade negotiations. On the contrary, it is not the purpose of international organisations such as WIPO and the FAO to favour GIs and the sui generis system in particular.

In terms of activities, WIPO, the Swiss IPI and the EUIPO focus on the two components (legal/ value chain), as does AFD, while the activities of the FAO and the UNIDO are limited to pilot projects supporting value chains (with the gateway being

producers’ organisations for the FAO and processors for UNIDO) and to raising awareness among local authorities. With the exception of the Swiss IPI, these projects focus mainly on technical assistance and training, and do not enable broad funding of the infrastructure component in pilot projects. AFD’s capacity to fund infrastructure was systematically highlighted. This added value at AFD ties in with other donors’ intervention strategies.

Stakeholders insist on the necessity to put co-funding in place for the success of pilot GIs, drawing on the strengths of the various donors and coordinating interventions. This co-funding requires formal coordination of interventions to avoid unnecessary duplications (see the case of pineapple GI in Benin, where a coordination plan enabled complementarity of actions that had initially been competitive).

Donors appreciate the partnership with AFD. In Cambodia and Laos, WIPO considers for example that AFD’s projects made it possible to create a “GIs culture” that facilitated their work on Koh Trung grapefruit and Kampot salt.

The choice of project managers remains complicated, due to the specificity of GI projects and of the donors’ partnership procedures. The projects are not limited to support for value chains and collective dynamics, they require activation of often complex administrative workings and mobilisation of expert legal knowledge. Project management by national intellectual property offices in Asia or regional offices in Africa (the case of OAPI) have shown their limits, particularly in terms of slow administrative workings and “top-down” processes.

The GI Support Fund currently enables provision of support to value chain stakeholders more quickly and more flexibly. This mechanism of the GI Support Fund enabling direct funding for local partners is lauded by the various partners and enables them to be involved as “sponsors,” which is coherent with their activities (in particular for WIPO and the FAO). Lastly, a real need for coordination between the various donors in the choice of countries and products to support was identified.

4. GIs for sustainable development

4.1 An increase in income is difficult to demonstrate

An increase in added value and income for producers is systematically sought in projects. However, none of the projects supported documented or was able to measure the project's effect on the increase in added value or income after registration of the GI, which was the primary objective targeted. At the end of the projects, quantities marketed with the GI label (or through associations supported by the project) often seem limited. When the projects ended, there was no use of, and still less sales, with the GI label for: Bolovens GI coffee in Laos; the sugarloaf pineapple from the Allada plateau in Benin; petit poussin rice in Laos; Lamphun silk, Mak Mao berry juice from Sakon Nakhon, Thai Issan silk yarn (Thailand); Van Yen cinnamon, Shan Tuyet tea from Moc Chau (Vietnam); white honey from Oku (Cameroon); goats, blueberries, honey and chestnuts (Albania). GI sales are limited for Ziamá-Macenta coffee in Guinea, and oil, pomegranate and dates in Tunisia. They were concentrated among several stakeholders for Penja pepper in Cameroon.

Two products stand out distinctly: Kampot pepper and Kampong Speu sugar. For these two Cambodian value chains, real quantities are marketed with GIs. For the pepper, the quantities produced and exported increased significantly. Prices for producers also seem to have increased (including in proportion to growth of the world price), with the GI having a real effect on the price (+25% on the retail price, +15% on the price for producers). International recognition of Kampot pepper seems to have secured markets and boosted the value chain.

GI products' market access is the central issue in support for these value chains. It will only be possible to create added value if a sufficiently large market exists. Where applicable, producers' income and employment can increase.

Traceability systems and the fight against usurpation can be funded and implemented if the value chains are dynamic, with access to new remunerative markets. This crucial issue, which is a prerequisite for the success of a GI, seems to be insufficiently taken into account in the selection of pilot products and the implementation of projects. The quality mark can only be developed if the market recognises and remunerates the GI. But market access is not limited to recognition of the GI by purchasers. It is also necessary to have structured stakeholders and organisations capable of ensuring quality (independently of the GI), of respecting contracts and having them respected.

By focusing on the implementation of the GI (drawing up of specifications, description of typicity, registration, setting up of traceability, fighting against fraud, link with the territory), projects are regularly diverted from the essential prior stages of structuring value chains (strengthening of groups, access to markets).

4.2 A risk of exclusion related to the implementation of GIs?

Reduction of social inequalities and secured access to resources (production factors, markets) are very rarely explicit objectives in projects. In addition, the absence of ME systems and the low quantities of GI certified products marketed make the a posteriori analysis difficult. Some external evaluations did however examine the issue. None of the evaluations mentions the effects of reducing inequalities or better inclusion of stakeholders (in particular the most fragile). On the contrary, actual or potential risks are highlighted by the evaluators.

Box 6 – The pineapple GI project in Benin

For the Pineapple GI project in Benin, the evaluation mentions tensions between stakeholders during implementation of the GI by the inter-branch organisation. These tensions arose in particular between the different producers' federations, which denounced the latter's lack of legitimacy, and processors, who felt excluded from the project. Ultimately, they led to the exclusion of processors from the PGI, which was restricted to the fresh product, and to registration being limited to 300 producers and two exporters. The evaluation of the BiodivBalkans project also identifies real risks regarding capture of resources by intermediaries, who sometimes have a monopoly.

Surprisingly, preservation of traditional know-how from terroirs is not much highlighted by projects, even though it is a social cohesion tool^[5]. It is mentioned for (i) pomegranates from Gabès, in Tunisia, with regards know-how related to oasis agriculture, and (ii) for petit poussin rice in Laos, where producers realised the value of the cultural heritage related to this rice crop. It should also be noted that the Pampig project aimed explicitly to promote exportation of "traditional African" products, without this objective leading to maintenance of specific know-how. The most emblematic project regarding the maintenance and dissemination of traditional know-how is probably the BiodivBalkans project, which focused on picking activities (blueberries), and particularly the "Has goats" value chain, with a very strong cultural base related to pastoralism. Support provided to GI value chains creates or strengthens feelings of pride around the recognition of producers' traditional know-how. This dimension could be better highlighted by projects.

4.3 Inclusion of gender equality is becoming stronger

The systemisation of gender analyses in projects is relatively recent. None of the 5 project evaluations already available has a specific focus on gender: evolution of the distribution of income within households, distribution of workloads, or women's roles in governance bodies. In addition, projects' effects on reduction of gender inequalities are difficult to analyse, as the ME systems do not disaggregate indicators. Nevertheless, the following effects were observed:

- The projects do not seem to have had effects on control of resources and income by women.
- The Bolovens coffee GI project encouraged women's contribution to decision-making in producers' groups. Similarly, in Tunisia, two women date producers' groups were created, as well as some artisanal pomegranate processing activities by women.
- Women's participation in training seems to have been good in the Bolovens coffee GI project and the Pineapple GI project in Benin (without this necessarily being a directly targeted objective).

Inclusion of gender is therefore evolving over time. The older projects do not mention women, whereas those currently being evaluated are starting to include gender-related inequalities. The situation is continuing to improve, with the Asean 2 project having conducted a Gender evaluation when it started.

[5] WIJESURIYA G. and COURT S. (eds), *Traditional Knowledge Systems and the conservation and management of Asia's heritage*, (Rome: ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property), 2020), <https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/publications/2020-10/traditional-knowledge-systems.pdf>

4.4 Heterogeneous impacts on biodiversity and natural resources

Inclusion of biodiversity and natural resource management is quite heterogeneous in the various projects. It is also very poorly monitored. Analyses are generated by a cross-cutting reading of project documents, with specific attention to biodiversity and natural resource management.

The BiodivBalkans project put this dimension at the core of its intervention. Pilot products were chosen based notably on biodiversity criteria (“originating from the biodiversity in the mountainous region of northern Albania”). However, as the GIs are not operational, the impact on biodiversity is rather theoretic. The evaluation points out that it could even be negative if the GI is promoted without respecting specifications, and therefore without a system of verification. This could create greater pressure on the resource (wild blueberries).

Other projects contribute to the promotion of biodiversity or sustainable management of natural resources, without this being an explicit project objective. In particular, projects supporting GIs whose system of production contributes to conservation of biodiversity and the surrounding environment. The coffee and honey GIs, for example, promote agroforestry models enabling natural resources to be protected.

For the majority of GIs analysed, the specifications do not mention the necessity of organic certification, but impose or advise practices that respect biodiversity (Bolovens coffee, Kampot pepper, Teboursouk oil, Deglet Nour dates from Nefzaoua, Gabès pomegranate...). Lastly, some GIs can have controversial effects on conservation of natural resources and biodiversity due to insufficiently stringent specifications on these aspects: conventional pineapple growing consumes a considerable quantity of chemical inputs and the specifications do not reduce these uses.

In conclusion, the impact on conservation of natural resources and biodiversity is intrinsically linked to the choice of GI. The specifications can consolidate or protect (and marginally improve) existing practices, but they do not systematically include these aspects.

4.5 A tool that is under-used to respond to climate change

This part focuses on the links between the GI projects evaluated and climate change, with regard to resilience (adaptation) and transition to a low-carbon trajectory (mitigation). As with gender, this dimension is poorly documented in final evaluations and project documents. The projects did not conduct specific actions to move towards a low-carbon trajectory or improve resilience to climate change. Yet, the GI value chains supported are directly threatened by climate change. In Tunisia for example, irregularity of rainfall is having impacts on olive oil production (quantity), and on the quality of Gabès pomegranates and dates.

Promotion of agroforestry systems (coffee, honey), or development of improved uses in households (sugar) can, a posteriori, be considered as low-carbon or climate change adaptation strategies. However, they were not designed with this in mind.

The projects mostly aim to promote exportation value chains, which can conflict with countries' orientations and commitments (Tunisia for example). They can also conflict with orientations in France and Europe on imported emissions. One could consider that favouring importations of highly emissive products is not in line with the national low-carbon strategy, nor with the IPCC's objective.

A carbon footprint type analysis of the project and the value chain could be conducted at the start of projects, in order to inform decision-makers' choices regarding the relevance or non-relevance of supporting these value chains. In the absence of a carbon footprint, criteria could be implemented to exclude value chains emitting the highest levels of CO₂ (in particular, value chains aimed at exportation via air travel, such as the sugarloaf pineapple in Benin).

4.6 Sustainable institutions but fragile value chains

The sustainability of interventions is analysed through (i) institutional sustainability of GI governance frameworks and (ii) strengthening of value chain operators' capacities.

4.6.1 – Support for institutions with lasting effects

Although institutional sustainability seems relatively well-established, in particular via support for standard-setting frameworks, institutions can be further strengthened. The process for developing or revising legal frameworks that favour GIs until their adoption can often take longer than the duration of the first project (Cambodia GIs, Laos PEGI, Tunisia PA-GIs). Nevertheless, these legal frameworks (laws, implementing decrees...) end up being adopted with all the associated standards. The institutions in charge of their application are also created and strengthened (department of intellectual property, National GIs unit...). The establishment of laws and standards on GIs, and the strengthening of support structures, are guarantees of institutional sustainability for projects. The numerous training sessions, in particular international training, are useful and effective, but cannot train all stakeholders in countries (in particular due to movement of staff). States and regional organisations must be able to ensure the sustainability of support provided to the institutions put in place by the projects, by allocating them funding and human resources.

4.6.2 – Fragile value chains, despite support

Strengthening of value chains is still mainly an implicit objective in projects. Some projects even focused specifically and explicitly on registration activities, leaving strengthening of value chains to other projects.

The final evaluations frequently mention that GI associations face huge challenges to ensure their sustainability. Their economic model, which must ensure their financing, is rarely solid. Yet, there is no unique approach making it possible

to ensure sustainability of organisations. The evaluation points out the importance of some complementary factors:

- **Existence of collective capacities for action by local stakeholders** (structuring of the value chain, level of motivation for the GI, etc.). This criteria for choosing GIs to be supported is too often abandoned during the selection phase (see in particular the BiodivBalkans project, where the criteria on pre-existence of associations was abandoned, as no value chain met all the selection criteria: biodiversity, potential GIs, mountain produce...). Yet, it is acknowledged that associations created during projects are particularly fragile and require continuous support over time. Some Tunisian cooperatives were set up during the project and nevertheless seem sustainable. By contrast, Oku white honey was promoted by an association called Kiwha that existed before the project, which is still facing significant governance difficulties on its closure.
- **Existence of economic opportunities.** GI groups that manage to market their product have a greater incentive to make the GI, and therefore their organisations, work. When there are opportunities, GI groups' economic model is more robust and sustainable.
- **Support over a long period, without discontinuity, from donors, projects or governmental structures.** The organisations involved in pepper and sugar in Cambodia have been benefitting from regular support for more than ten years. The new Tunisian cooperatives are supported by State services, and honey in Albania will likely be maintained because of other donors and projects. Nevertheless, donor support over a long period does not always guarantee organisations' sustainability: the petit poussin rice value chain has been supported for many years without its sustainability being guaranteed.

Box 7 – The Pampig 1 Project in West and Central Africa

The final evaluation of Pampig 1 indicates: "The intervention by Pampig is limited to the cost overrun of the GI (organisation and advice to the GI inter-branch organisation, support for delineation of the GI zone, support for definition of the verification plan). This way of working makes it possible to support the creation of GIs with a relatively low budget. The consequence is that the value chains supported need more support than Pampig can provide."

5. Conclusions

Historically, AFD structured its GI interventions around two main areas, (i) institutional strengthening of States (Ministries of Agriculture, Department of intellectual property) in order to identify, register and defend GIs, and (ii) support for GI value chains.

5.1 Institutional strengthening

Project evaluations generally recognise the substantial **relevance** of institutional objectives in projects. They are aligned with the international commitments of the beneficiary States, with intellectual property laws, with national strategies for promotion of exportations or the fight against poverty. These objectives are relevant vis-à-vis AFD group's orientations, in particular the TCBP and, to a lesser degree, FFEM. They are also perfectly aligned with France's influence strategy, and that of its allies, for the promotion of the sui generis system. It should however be noted that new international commitments by States (Paris Agreement, national low-carbon strategy...) aimed at reducing CO₂ emissions call the relevance of these tools for promoting exportations into question.

Apart from their relevance, **the effectiveness** of projects aimed at institutional strengthening is relatively good. Laws end up being adopted, sometimes after the project, due to different timelines between duration of projects and duration of legislation. The national GI units and departments of intellectual property are set up. Training, the quality of which is unanimously acknowledged, is delivered to intellectual property stakeholders.

Similarly, **the sustainability** of the intervention is satisfactory. Laws, strategies, and implementing decrees are durable. Institutions are set up sustainably. However, effective development of GI value chains and political leadership is sometimes insufficient, thereby limiting the sustainability of these institutions. This low level of political investment is leading to a lack of resources in the institutions set up and a lack of training for new staff when (normal) turnover of teams occurs.

5.2 Development of GI value chains

The relevance of GIs as a tool to develop value chains raises more questions. Although strengthening of quality value chains seems relevant to achieve the SDGs, the establishment of GIs is not necessarily the most appropriate tool for producers. The implementation of a GI does not systematically correspond to beneficiaries' priorities, which are not always identified during selection of products. The projects sometimes focus on the implementation of GIs (characterisation, identification, verification systems, registration...), and are diverted from groups' primary needs (structuring, governance, improvement of quality, search for markets...). Similarly, the relevance of the choice, a priori, of the GI as a quality mark, can be questioned. The existence of markets with a real price premium must be established before validating the quality mark (as with Organic and Fair Trade). In addition, the implementation of a GI requires a substantial level of expertise (identification, qualification...), necessitating significant technical assistance. Lastly, registration of a GI requires links with the administration, which slow down processes for promotion and market development.

The effectiveness and impact of pilot projects supporting GI value chains are relatively limited. Projects do generally lead to official registration of GIs (sometimes after several phases), but few projects led to effective marketing of GI products. The impact on income and its distribution is therefore limited. In addition, risks of exclusion are sometimes identified when value chains develop. The impacts on biodiversity and natural resources are variable and depend intrinsically on the nature of the value chains supported (positive on agro-forestry crops, negative on input-intensive monocultures). It is not possible to precisely measure the effects on gender at this stage of the interventions. The impact on climate depends on the value chains and on their marketing opportunities (exportations of pineapple by plane or local marketing of honey). These analyses must however be mitigated because the absence of a robust evaluation system limits precise analysis of projects' effectiveness and impacts.

Lastly, the **sustainability** of pilot value chains depends on various complementary

factors: (i) the existence of well-structured value chains, (ii) the existence of remunerative markets for GIs, and (iii) continuous support over time, especially post-registration (marketing support). For all of the GI value chains and associations analysed, only some emblematic examples demonstrate real sustainability (Kampong Speu sugar, Kampot pepper, Tunisian cooperatives...).

Two main objectives were targeted in the support provided by AFD to GI value chains. The GIs should make it possible (i) to penetrate new export markets and (ii) increase small producers' incomes. Although penetration of new export markets is possible (but nevertheless rare and complex), the overall impact of a fair increase in small producers' incomes is more questionable.

6. Recommendations

For each transversal issue, recommendations at various levels of intervention are made. The general recommendations for the implementation of GI projects are structured around three areas: design of projects, their implementation and AFD group's intervention strategy.

6.1 Design of projects

During design of projects and at latest when they start, specific actions must be conducted in order to take environmental and social issues into account.

6.1.1 – Choose value chains with high environmental value

The choice of GI value chains to be supported is decisive for the project's impact on biodiversity and natural resources (apiculture in an agro-forestry system or intensive pineapple monoculture). While in new AFD projects, the value chains are no longer systematically identified during internal appraisal of projects, **it is in fact when selecting value chains, during the project, that it is necessary to be vigilant regarding their environmental impact.**

The choice of GI value chains to be supported is also decisive for the project's impact in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and resilience to climate change. It is important to be able to question the "climate" impact of the products pre-identified for GI registration. The GI Support Fund does not sufficiently integrate the climate criterion in its project evaluation grid. **The climate criteria** (such as Carbon footprint, low-carbon trajectory to avoid high emission value chains, mal-adaptation) **should be strengthened during selection of projects by the GI Support Fund.** In the absence of in-depth analysis, in order to maintain the flexibility of the appraisal, simple exclusion criteria could be put in place (do not fund value chains exporting via air travel, for example).

6.1.2 – Integrate gender in all project dimensions

Integration of gender in projects has significantly improved since the first GI projects. The GI Support Fund gives particular attention to this issue when selecting projects. Gender Action Plans are also becoming more widespread in projects (RECOSeL, Asean 2). **These plans should be systematically included**, with particular attention being given to distribution of income generated by the GI and distribution of workloads within households.

6.2 Implementation of projects

6.2.1 – Improve project monitoring

The support provided to value chains is often identified as pilot support. Yet, the projects do not implement stringent ME systems, due to insufficient budgets. There is a lack of reference data, and of data on effects and impacts, for income, quantities marketed, gender, biodiversity... So, demonstration of the effect of pilots is not possible due to a lack of accurate information.

The implementation of a coordinated (if not harmonised) monitoring and evaluation system should be a priority. This work could be based on the evaluation methodology for the effects of GIs, produced by the Swiss IPI^[6].

This monitoring and evaluation system is particularly important when it comes to analysing the exclusion phenomena that can arise between economic operators. As with many projects creating value, exclusion phenomena may appear. These can be manifested in a large number of manners (price of land, cornering of markets, monopolisation of income within households, exclusions related to specifications...). Nevertheless, it is difficult to anticipate the phenomenon before substantial gains are generated, especially before the project starts. So, **projects' ME systems must give specific attention to these exclusion phenomena in order to adapt intervention strategies accordingly.**

6.2.2 – Let the groups choose their quality mark

Strategies for collective structuring and organisation should be designed independently and prior to the implementation of a GI. A certain number of actions often take priority over the registration of a GI. Strengthening of value chains is a basis on which to construct strategies to differentiate products, potentially including GIs. **The choice of quality mark (PGI, Organic, Fair, collective trademark...) should not be predetermined when preparing the project. It should be based on informed decisions by value chain operators** in accordance with the characteristics of the various marks (typicity, fraud risks, costs, complexity...) and proven existence of markets. In all cases, the quality mark must be chosen by organised stakeholders.

6.2.3 – Provide support to groups over time

The weakest GI associations need continuous support, over time, without substitution, with means for operational and transitional investment. Discontinuous or intermittent support does not enable the emergence of solid associations. They need predictability in support, to construct a close, trusting relationship with the supervisory structure (whether it is technical assistance, an NGO, a State service...). GI associations need budgetary support (diminishing) and the means to invest. This support must be well thought out, in relation with the support structure, in order to ensure it is appropriate for the association's needs and capacities.

The projects evaluated focus regularly on the pre-registration phase. Projects currently underway and future projects no longer focus solely on this first phase, but also on the post-registration phase. This support is crucial to ensure sustainability of value chains. In particular, it is essential to strengthen and secure access to markets and ensure that verification systems are operating. Market research and the search for purchasers should be made systematic at the start of projects. Verification plans, which are drawn up when the GI is registered, are rarely implemented. Yet, ensuring respect of specifications is vital to maintain consumer trust. **Projects supporting "post-registration" of GIs should place particular focus on effective implementation of verification plans and access to markets.**

[6] BELLETTI G., MARESCOTTI A., PAUS M., REVIRON S., DEPPELER A., STAMM H. and THÉVENOD-MOTTET E., *The Effects of Protecting Geographical Indications Ways and Means of their Evaluation* (Bern: IPI, 2011), https://www.ige.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/dienstleistungen/publikationen_institut/publication_no_7_2nd_ed_Effects-of-Protecting-Geographical-Indications.pdf

6.3 AFD's intervention strategy

AFD's GIs strategy evolved over time, from conducting successive projects per country for some products, to regional projects directly supporting GIs (old and new), and lastly through the GI Support Fund. AFD is building expertise on funding of GIs with specific, recognised procedures. These various evolutions are gradually improving AFD's intervention. This centralisation of project management at the GI Support Fund enables greater coherence in support provided and gives flexibility to funding, in particular by moving away from negotiations with national project owners. It also makes it possible to strengthen stakeholders in the field and ensure better ownership of projects.

6.3.1 – Long-term funding

Some value chains have been receiving support for almost ten years through ad hoc, discontinuous support (the Pampig value chains, Cambodian GIs, Laos). Yet, these successive projects have different modes of operation and intervention strategies. It seems important that AFD acquire tools making it possible to fund a strategy to support a value chain over the long term. Predictability, the coherence of the intervention strategy, uniqueness of interlocutors and continuity of the intervention are fundamental factors for the success of projects. **Systems of recurring funding (three years, renewable three times) could be implemented**, similarly to funding by Swiss development cooperation or AFD funding of NGOs.

The projects' limited budgets are also significant constraints for their implementation. Monitoring and evaluation systems cannot be funded. Investments in value chains are limited. Technical assistance often consumes an excessively large portion of the budget. It seems difficult for small GI projects to achieve the same level of requirements, in terms of impacts and accountability, as classic AFD projects, given the substantial difference in budgetary envelopes. **To achieve results, for continuous, coherent and recurrent projects, it is necessary to increase projects' budgets to a level higher than the average amounts allocated to GI projects (between 1 and 2 M€ since 2004).**

6.3.2 – Strengthen coordination

Numerous stakeholders contribute to the support provided to GIs (sometimes the same ones), with different, and sometimes

complementary, support methods and tools. The challenges with regards to **coordination of technical and financial partners** are: (i) to have coordinated intervention strategies with these stakeholders at country and value chain level, (ii) sharing of methods and tools between the various donors, and (iii) pooling of promotional activities. The OriGIn association, which represents stakeholders in GI value chains worldwide, could for example ensure the secretariat of such coordination. At national level, it would also be relevant to strengthen **technical and operational coordination of French stakeholders** working on the promotion of GIs abroad. It is important to ensure better discussion between MAEE, MAA, INAO, the DGT, AFD, Expertise France, INPI, Cirad and all the technical partners and GI experts. Systems such as the land and development technical committee or the forest committee could be used as consultative body models.

6.3.3 – Set up a single window to fund quality value chains

AFD group's strategy must evolve, placing collective strategies for structuring and organisation of quality value chains and market access at its core. It is essential that support for a GI is provided alongside improvement of product quality and crop management sequences. **The quality mark to be promoted (GIs, Organic, Fair Trade, GlobalGAP...) should not be predetermined when project applications are submitted.** Although some highly structured groups know what marks they want to promote, they could be supported for their certification. For all other groups structuring quality value chains, the choice of quality mark should be decided on during implementation of projects, by the groups, in accordance with product specificities (typicity, existence of markets, levels of structuring...). The quality marks developed by the groups should not, in any case, depend on procedures for access to funding (Fair programme procedures, the GI Support Fund, other projects).

List of acronyms and abbreviations

AIAB	Inter-professional Association of Pineapple in Benin
AFD	French Development Agency
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Cirad	French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development
DC	Developing Country
DGM	Directorate General of Global Affairs-France
DGT	General Directorate of the Treasury-France
EU	European Union
EUIPO	European Union Intellectual Property Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFEM	French Fund for World Environment
GI	Geographical Indication
GINUs	GI National Units
INAO	National Institute of Origin and Quality-France
INPI	National Institute of Industrial Property-France
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPR	Intellectual Property Right
IPI	Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property
MAA	Ministry of Agriculture and Food-France
MAEE	Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry-Laos
ME	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAPI	African Intellectual Property Organisation
PA-GI	Project Actions Geographical Indications in Tunisia
PAMPIG	Project to support the establishment of Geographical Indications in African countries
PARASEP	Project to support strengthening of private sector stakeholders in Benin
PDO	Protected Designation of Origin
PEGI	Project for the Establishment of Geographical Indications in Laos
PO	Producers' Organisation
RECOSeL	Reinforcement & Expansion of the Coffee Sector in Laos
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TCBP	Trade Capacity Building Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

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