

A PROPOSAL TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE SUCCESS OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS AT LOCAL LEVEL

Authors

Francisco José Mitidieri 1

Felipe Ferreira de Lara 2

Danielle Mendes Thame Denny 3

Gustavo Verruma Bernardi 4

Membership

1-Federal Superintendence of Agriculture and Livestock in São Paulo - Piracicaba/SP Unit-Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Brazil

2-Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of São Paulo, Boituva campus, São Paulo, Brazil

3-Centre for Carbon Research in Tropical Agriculture, Piracicaba, São Paulo, Brazil

4-Master's student in the Graduate Program of Applied Ecology, Luiz de Queiroz College of Agriculture (ESALQ) - University of São Paulo (USP), Piracicaba, São Paulo, Brazil

E-mail

francisco.mitidieri@agro.gov.br

fflara@ifsp.edu.br

danielle.denny@gmail.com

gustavobernardi@usp.br

Summary

The document provides insights into the importance of leveraging geographical indications (GIs) to increase the value of local resources and promote sustainable development. It proposes a guide to emphasise the importance of involving local communities in GIs as tools for economic and cultural empowerment, containing strategies such as the involvement of strategic partnerships, the identification of local leaders, the exchange of knowledge, the use of the Internet and the promotion of a culture of associations and collaboration, which play an essential role, which was successfully observed empirically in the case study of the GI niagara pink grape from Jundiahy (Brazil) and is being proposed here as recommendations for extending the impact of GIs and the value of products. The qualitative research approach, especially the use of case studies, is highlighted as essential for understanding the intricate social dynamics related to GIs. By emphasising the need for and importance of the awareness-raising phase of stakeholders, cooperation and effective strategies, this guide highlights the fundamental role of GIs in promoting sustainable economic growth and preserving cultural heritage in local communities.

Keywords: *Sustainable development; Community awareness of GIs; Local promotion strategies; Collaboration between regional players; Valuing geographical resources.*

1. Introduction

Geographical Indications (GIs) play a fundamental role in protecting and promoting products, whether agri-food or manufactured, and the know-how of the communities and territories where they are located. By ensuring that the three conceptual pillars - products, people and territory - of certain geographical regions can be recognised and differentiated from their counterparts by means of a seal of origin, GIs, if properly established, can provide added value, strengthening the cultural and economic identity of producing communities. GIs safeguard traditions and production

techniques specific to certain regions that have gained notoriety for their typicality and can help these products compete and enter the national and international markets, generating income, care for the environment and social development.

Although it is a concept that is widely used on the European and Asian continents, as studies that address different aspects in territories in the Northern Hemisphere point out, such as the role of GIs for innovation (Stranieri et al., 2023), for territorial development (Sgroi, 2021) or for commercial development (Duvailex et al., 2021), for territorial development (Sgroi, 2021) or for commercial development (Duvailex et al., 2021), among others, in Brazil the studies that point out the strategic and socio-economic development aspects that GIs provide are more recent, since the first GI recognised was the Vale dos Vinhedos in 2002 for wines.

In the context of GIs as a factor in territorial development, distinguishing products on the basis of their geographical origin is intrinsically linked to promoting producing regions, adding value to products and effectively communicating quality, tradition, typicality and cultural heritage requirements to the consumer market. But above all, producers and manufacturers in the territory need to be made aware of the existence of this intellectual property asset. In general, the earning potential for small producers in agri-food chains is low or very diluted. GIs play a fundamental role in this process, as they have the potential to add value through differentiation, legally protect the authenticity of products by preventing false indications of origin and offer consumers a tangible guarantee of their origin, sustainability and quality. In addition, by highlighting the distinctive characteristics of a region, GIs encourage local economic development, promoting tourism, raising self-esteem and preserving traditional agricultural practices that are often an integral part of Brazil's cultural heritage.

In this context, this article discusses the importance of raising awareness of the GI concept among stakeholders in the territory and its main objective is to identify the guidelines for success in this endeavour. It presents a practical model for raising awareness among stakeholders based on the practical experience of a case study.

2. Geographical indication

According to the National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI) (2024), the body that regulates the subject in Brazil, the GI is an industrial property instrument that seeks to distinguish the geographical origin of a particular product or service. According to Article 176 of Law No. 9,279 of 14 May 1996 - the Industrial Property Law (LPI), the GI is made up of an Indication of Origin (IP) or a Denomination of Origin (DO). Thus, the GI is divided into two types, defined in articles 177 and 178 of the LPI:

Art. 177 - An indication of origin is the geographical name of a country, city, region or locality in its territory that has become known as a centre for the extraction, production or manufacture of a certain product or the provision of a certain service.

Art. 178 - An denomination of origin is the geographical name of a country, city, region or locality in its territory, which designates a product or service whose qualities or characteristics are exclusively or essentially due to the geographical environment, including natural and human factors.

The first type, IP, protects the geographical name that has become known due to a product or service. The second, DO, assumes that the qualities or characteristics of a given geographical area, including natural and human factors, exclusively or essentially influence a product or service, typifying it (INPI, 2024).

To register an IP, a specific geographical area must have become demonstrably known as a centre for the extraction, production or manufacture of a specific product or the provision of a specific service. In other words, recognition is based on the fame and notoriety acquired over the years. A geographical name is considered to have become known when it is expressly mentioned, by different sources, as a centre for the extraction, production or manufacture of the product or provision of the service indicated, under the terms of §4 of art. 9 of INPI Ordinance no. 4. 9 of INPI Ordinance no. 4/22 (INPI, 2024).

An extraction centre is understood as the geographical area from which a specific product is extracted or removed in its original form, be it animal, vegetable or mineral. Mechanised or industrial extraction processes also fall under this type of activity. A production or manufacturing centre is understood as the geographical area where a specific product is produced or manufactured, including manufacturing processes, craft processes and those related to animal husbandry and plant cultivation (INPI, 2024).

To register a DO, the qualities or characteristics of the product or service designated by the GI must be due exclusively or essentially to the peculiarities of the geographical environment, including natural and human factors (INPI, 2024).

Natural factors are understood to be the elements of the geographical environment related to the environment, such as soil, relief, climate, flora, fauna, among others, which influence the qualities or characteristics of products or services from a given geographical area, such as colour, taste, texture, differentiating them from others from a different geographical area. Human factors are understood as the characteristic elements of the community that produces or provides the service, such as local know-how, including the development, adaptation or improvement of specific techniques linked to the culture and tradition of the locality. It is therefore necessary to prove the causal link between these factors and the characteristic or attributes of the final product (INPI, 2024) in order to register a DO.

3. Research Method

A qualitative approach was used, which seeks to interpret and understand the nature of a social phenomenon, analyse the interaction of variables, understand and classify dynamic processes experienced by different social groups.

For this article, the central research problem is understood to be the presentation of a practical model for sensitising stakeholders based on the practical experience of a case study. For this reason, the qualitative approach can best describe the complexity of the research problem.

For both Martins (2004) and Gunther (2006), since the qualitative approach works with social units, it favours case studies. Yin (2001) defines a case study as a research method that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly defined".

We therefore opted for a case study as the research procedure, analysing the experience gained during awareness-raising and subsequent registration of the Geographical Indication of the Niagara Rosada de Jundiahy grape, produced in the territory of Jundiaí, Jarinú, Louveira, Itatiba and Itupeva, municipalities located in the state of São Paulo.

In addition, according to Yin (2001), the case study uses two sources of evidence in particular: direct observation and a systemic series of interviews. The techniques used to collect data were direct observation of the related facts.

This work was also based on the methodology proposed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for the establishment of GIs (FAO, 2012), which is comprehensive and structured, comprising the "prospecting", "awareness-raising" and "strengthening" stages (MAPA, 2024). "Awareness-raising" is a crucial stage, which seeks to involve and inform all the actors in the value chain, all stakeholders, from producers to consumers, about the benefits and requirements of GIs. Over time, the more the community in general participates in the process, the better the concept will be understood and the more effective it will be.

Therefore, this work focused on the "sensitisation" phase, based on observations and practical field experiences, applied in various territories in which the promotion of potential geographical indications has been conducted in the state of São Paulo over the last 12 years and in particular in the case study of the GI Uva Niagara Rosada de Jundiahy in the Indication of Provenience (IP) category.

4. Results

The biggest challenge of the "sensitisation" phase is, as the name implies, to make those involved aware of it. In particular, the producers/manufacturers of the product or service in question, who are the most interested actors in this tool for valorisation and protection. But not just them, as other links in the territory's value chain could benefit. There is no pre-defined deadline for this phase, which permeates the other "prospecting" and "strengthening" phases and continues after the GI is officially registered. The important thing is that the players mature and that, once they have obtained the register and its seal, it is effectively used on a daily basis and promotes the expected benefits. In this sense, in order to reach the different profiles of producers involved in a given potential Geographical Indication (GI), it is essential to adopt awareness-raising strategies adapted to the specific characteristics of each group. Here the maxim "each case is different" applies very well.

The pink niagara grape is a natural somatic mutation of the white Niagara grape (*Vitis lambrusca*), first seen in 1933 in a rural neighborhood known as Traviú, district of Louveira city, then in the municipality of Jundiaí. These are bunches of grapes with the typical "foxy" aroma of the variety, uniformly pink in colour with an intensity and tone indicative of adequate ripeness. The geographical area of Jundiahy is made up of the municipalities of Jundiaí, Louveira, Itupeva, Jarinu and Itatiba, in the state of São Paulo.

The applicant for this GI is the Jundiaí Agricultural Association. There are records that the first meetings began in 2009 with technicians from the Institute of Agricultural Economics (IEA), of the São Paulo State Department of Agriculture and Supply, and after a period without events, they resumed in 2014. Registration was granted on 04/04/2023 under INPI process BR402021000005-4 and approved in RPI publication no. 2726/2023 (INPI, 2023).

The Jundiaí Agricultural Association currently has 250 members. Of these, 180 are pink niagara grape producers. Total grape production stands at 100,000 tonnes per year in two harvests, the first season in November/December and the second season in June/July. The average price per kilogram of niagara grapes in November 2024 was R\$10.00/kg. Turnover this year was estimated at R\$1.0 billion. Or US\$180 million (exchange rate 1 US\$=R\$5.60) (Jundiaí Agricultural Association, 2024).

The methodology for the proposed "sensitisation" phase was devised based on what was observed during the process of document construction for the GI "Jundiahy for niagara pink grape", based on the following steps and actions to increase efficiency and engagement.

a) Meetings with local stakeholders

The basic way in which experts communicate the concepts and potential benefits of GIs to interested parties is through meetings. There is no set number of meetings with producers/manufacturers. Getting a large presence or "quorum" of as many actors as possible is key. In view of the need to internalise the understanding of those involved regarding: the conceptual and legal bases; the appropriation and operationalisation of the use of the seal and its expected benefits; the importance of associativism, the governance of the association representing the producers who will be the "procedural substitute" or applicant before the INPI; and communication to end consumers.

An effective awareness-raising strategy should involve holding several meetings with those involved and training courses aimed at rural communities, highlighting the benefits of the GI in terms of adding value to products, access to new markets and preserving traditional practices and good production/manufacturing practices. It's important to provide the environment for the producers themselves to discuss the documents needed to file the GI with the INPI, including the Technical File, or "Caderno de Especificações Técnicas-CET", which is the basic "recipe" for how the typical product that has gained notoriety over the years should be produced or manufactured.

It should be emphasised that, like the other documents, the CET must be built with the active participation of the producers, i.e. in a "bottom-up" process. It is recommended that these meetings take place at a time and place that makes it easy for those involved to attend. They can be itinerant, in the late afternoon or evening and often in the rural community centre of the various neighbourhoods and municipalities that will make up the territory. Awareness-raising can involve establishing partnerships with local associations and cooperatives.

b) Anchor stories

In order to ensure that meetings with interested parties are well attended and attractive, it is recommended that other subjects of interest to the group are addressed in addition to issues related to geographical indications, such as technical lectures on good production/manufacturing practices, labour legislation, environmental legislation, tax issues, aspects of associations, management training, among other topics of interest to the group.

In Jundiáhy, the initial experience showed a low level of support and interest from producers at the initial meetings. One tactic used to get producers to participate more was to select agendas of collective interest as a means of ensuring attendance and jointly raising GI issues. One agenda that had a positive impact and brought the producers to listen was the possibility of building a bridge in a traditional grape-growing neighbourhood, at which point it was possible to jointly raise awareness of the importance of the GI and the need to work on all aspects of association.

c) Leaders and influencers

Based on the theory of the innovation adoption process advocated by Everett Rogers in 1962, which considers the pattern and profile of people's behaviour when it comes to adopting an innovation, awareness-raising can begin with the innovative producers, who account for 2.5% of the total population studied. This is followed by the first adopters, referred to by the author as "early adopters", who account for 13.5 per cent respectively. Over time, they try to inform the followers until they reach the majority in the territory (Rogers, 1962). And so on until all those interested are aware of

the subject and become involved with the GI. It is considered here that geographical indications can be likened to an innovation in concepts and product management strategies.

Figure 1: Illustration of the innovation curve.



Source: Everett Rogers in Kotler; Keller (2019).

A point that was well explored in the awareness-raising activities to build the Jundiahy GI process was to seek out local leaders as real influencers in raising producers' awareness. Throughout the process, it was possible to observe the importance of raising awareness among producers and not just one-way from producer support institutions, in a situation where it was clearly noted that the endorsement of respected producers among peers had the greatest power to raise awareness, a behaviour pointed out by E. Rogers in his work.

d)"Layered" or "levelled" approach to sensitisation

Since communication takes place gradually throughout this process, experience shows that a good strategy is to sensitise the territory's actors in layers of producers. The first layer refers to the leaders, who generally represent the group that is in charge of the day-to-day administration of the association representing the community, its president, vice-president, titular fiscal councillor, among others. The second layer is represented by the other members who, as they become aware of the movement towards the GI seal of recognition, start attending association meetings, taking part in working groups to study a particular subject - for example, types of packaging, forming a new board for the next period, etc. The third layer is represented by other producers/manufacturers in the area who are not members or who are part of the tourism "trade" in the area.

And as the subject becomes a topic of conversation in the community, these players become interested and are expected to take part. In the end, the aim is for a greater number of people in the area to take ownership of the geographical indication, be they producers, local traders, tourism agents and operators, public authorities, and be able to obtain the expected benefits, such as added value, job and income generation, tax collection and an increase in the flow of tourists.

Among the new tasks for the Jundiaí Agricultural Association and its grape producers, the local government and other technicians involved in promoting GIs, it is recommended that from now on we focus on sensitising the second and third layers of actors in the territory to strengthening the GI for Jundiahy's niagara pink grape.

e) Internet use

All communication tools to increase participation should be used. The internet and video meeting apps have proved very effective for informing, updating and keeping the group together. In the Jundiahy Grape GI process, the use of the internet was based on five pillars:

- Access to information: the Internet provides quick and easy access to a vast amount of information on geographical indications. Producers can learn about the process of obtaining a GI, its economic and social benefits, and examples of successful GI products from around the world. This includes encouraging producers to take part in meetings of the São Paulo State Geographical Indication and Collective Trademark Forum;
- Sharing experiences: through online forums, social networks and blogs, producers can share their experiences about the process of obtaining and maintaining a GI. This creates a community where producers can learn from each other and support each other;
- Marketing and Promotion: the Internet offers a global platform for promoting products with Geographical Indications. Producers can create websites, social networks and online marketing campaigns to highlight the unique characteristics of their products and reach a wider audience, including local and international consumers;
- Consumer and Producer Awareness: through online educational content, consumers and producers can learn about the importance of Geographical Indications and how they guarantee the quality and authenticity of products. This can lead to greater demand for GI products, encouraging producers to seek this recognition;
- Facilitating collaborations: the Internet allows producers to establish connections with other interested parties, such as producer associations, research institutions and government agencies. These partnerships can be key to the development and promotion of products with Geographical Indications.

f) Liaising with strategic partners to support with financial, intellectual or physical resources the endeavour to develop and manage a GI well

Structuring a geographical indication is a multidisciplinary endeavour. In addition to raising awareness among the players, it is necessary to draw up a "dossier" with the documentation required by legal regulations, such as those laid down in INPI Ordinance No. 04/2022 (INPI, 2022). Therefore, in addition to the producers/manufacturers of the product in question and their representative association, the participation of various public and private institutions is desirable, such as the local government, the municipal tourism and agriculture departments of the municipalities in the territory, the municipality's commercial and industrial association (especially when it comes to manufactured products), the state's official technical assistance body, federal

institutes and universities, research institutions, Sebrae, the State Secretariat for Economic Development, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (when it comes to agri-food products).

Throughout the construction of the GI niagara pink grape process in Jundiahy, it was possible to observe the importance of partners. Particularly around specialist knowledge, such as the Federal Institute of São Paulo, Jundiaí campus, the Agronomic Institute of Campinas-IAC/APTA and the Jundiaí Fruit Centre/APTA, technicians from the State Secretariat of Agriculture and Supply-SAA-SP, The micro and small businesses support-Sebrae-SP, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock-MAPA, Embrapa-Territorial, among others, who brought specialist knowledge on the legal, technical and market requirements for obtaining a GI.

In addition, it is important to emphasise that the process of obtaining a GI requires significant resources, such as funding for territory identification studies, market research and promotion. Strategic partners can provide access to these resources, whether through direct funding, research partnerships or access to government support programmes. In the case of Jundiaí, the local City Hall, through the Department of Agriculture and Tourism/Agribusiness, Supply and Tourism Management Unit, was involved and invested in a major way, also making it possible to carry out the activities.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that working with institutionally respected strategic partners can increase the legitimacy and credibility of the process of obtaining a GI. Associating with renowned institutions and recognised experts can help the authorities responsible for granting the GI and increase consumer confidence in the authenticity of the product, an element that was also much explored throughout the process.

g) identify the local strategic partner

Every territory has a local leader for this work, which varies from case to case. Often they are the representatives or leaders of the producers/manufacturers themselves, which is more desirable. But this is not always the case. It could be the local government, official technical extensionist, trade and industry associations. Strategic partners often have established networks and access to markets that can be vital to the success of GI products.

They can help with the promotion and distribution of products, facilitating entry into new markets and broadening the reach of products to potential consumers. The town halls of Louveira, Itupeva, Jarinu and Itatiba, which are part of the territory, actively participated in the meetings. The municipality of Jundiaí is an important logistics centre on the national stage and is home to major distributors of domestic fruit. The participation of these partners is considered fundamental in the process of commercialising fruit with the identification label. An example of this was the meetings with this segment to suggest future packaging for pink niagara grapes with the label.

h) Knowledge exchange

This action can take place in two ways:

h.1) visits by producers of the product/territory being raised awareness to other GIs that are already registered and in operation. There they exchange information, types of governance, how the control body operates, how the GI recognition label is issued and distributed to members, etc.

h.2) The arrival of leaders of already registered GIs, either a producer or the executive secretary of the producers' association that holds the governance of the GI already in

operation, to visit and talk to the producers/manufacturers of the product in the territory being raised.

It's interesting to note that these leaders generally speak with knowledge of the cause, they are usually the producers themselves or their second or third generation, who were born and raised with the challenges and achievements of the product. They are therefore passionate about what they do and speak "from the heart".

In the case of raising awareness of the GI of Jundiahy niagara pink grape, the leaders of the producers, together with technicians from the Agribusiness, Supply and Tourism Management Directory of the Jundiaí city council, visited the territory and the association of the Geographical Indication Guayava from Carlópolis, in Paraná state, a GI that was already registered at the time. On another occasion, the executive director of the Association of Banana Producers of Corupá-ASBANCO of the GI Banana from the region of Corupá/Santa Catarina state and daughter of banana producers from that region came to visit. The visit included a talk on the history of banana production and how the process of raising awareness, building and valuing associations and their externalities has taken place and is still taking place in the quest for the GI label.

i) Quality festivals and/or competitions

It is very desirable to revive, encourage and value the participation of the players in traditional festivities related to the product. For example, the Jundiaí Grape Festival, which has been held in the town since 1934 and attracts visitors from all over the region. It features the election of the queen and princesses, a niagara pink grape quality contest with prizes, dances and typical decorations that recall the Italian immigrants who brought the tradition. After the GI was recognised by the INPI, a ceremony was held at the 2024 Jundiaí Grape Festival in the presence of the mayor of Jundiaí and other regional authorities.

j) The "basket of territorial goods and services" approach -CBST

Encourage producers and all the links in the product chain in the territory to use the "basket of territorial goods and services" approach over the years. Idealised by French researchers led by Prof. Bernard Pecqueur¹ (Janin; Perron, 2020), this concept values local resources, producing an environment for creating uniqueness in the territory, triggering a process of social construction and economic development.

The authors treat it as a tool for sustainable territorial development (STD). Here in Brazil, this work has been replicated and adapted by the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) in territories with typical products, many of which have the potential or have already been recognised as geographical indications in the state of Santa Catarina (Pecquer, 2007).

To summarise, some of the questions to be answered by community actors are - what can attract outsiders to our territories? - what can come from the territory's geography to enhance an original production? - how can we do what others are already doing in a different and better way? or how can we do what nobody else is doing?

All this in relation to highlighting and taking advantage of the climate, landscape, natural beauty, culture, customs and gastronomy. In the words of the authors: "discovering and highlighting the nuggets hidden in the territory". And they also suggest an indicator called territorial quality income-RQT.

l) Develop a culture of association

The last item in this paper's proposal that should perhaps be placed first on the list in order of importance: geographical indications are a collective good. In other

words, once they have been recognised by the state, they belong to all producers/manufacturers or providers of a certain service (in the case of Brazilian legislation) established in the defined territory (INPI, 2022). Associativism is at the basis of the concepts and functioning of geographical indications.

Inclusive in terms of the positive externalities of working together. It's hard to find a strong GI anywhere in the world without a strong, representative and participatory producers' association. To do this, people have to see themselves represented in the association, have a sense of belonging to the territory and the product/service and that the association really represents them. Collective purchases of inputs, participating in fairs together, sharing advertising costs are some examples of externalities that are easier and more economical to do together than alone (INPI, 2022).

It can be seen from the above that the "sensitisation" phase is not a simple job, but it is possible. It involves technical issues, interpersonal skills and psychology, since GIs represent the link between Product/Service-Persons-Territory. It may seem curious, but it is interesting to note that from empirical experience, since the very first "sensitisation" meetings with producers, three questions invariably arise among the group participants: 1) how long does the process take to get the GI recognised by the INPI; 2) what will the group gain from this? and 3) how much will it cost the producers? The answer to all three questions is always: it depends. The answer to questions 1 and 2 will vary according to the degree of engagement that those involved will have throughout all the phases of the process.

5. Final considerations

The aim of this article is to reinforce the importance of the "sensitisation" phase for those interested in the territory and to propose a structured methodology for more effective stakeholder engagement in the context of GIs. The geographical indication is a powerful tool for recognising an existing reputation with the aim of protecting and promoting local products, adding economic, cultural and social value to the producing regions. And much more than that, it is a symbol of pride and belonging to a territory around a specific product.

A process that is always conducted "from the bottom up", sensitising and engaging the links in the value chain, as well as developing a culture of associativism are fundamental pillars for developing and strengthening GI systems. By raising awareness of the importance of GI and encouraging the active participation of those involved, it is possible to preserve cultural diversity and promote sustainable development in all three pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental).

Future research is recommended to explore in greater depth the best practices for raising awareness and engaging producers in relation to the GI, identifying the challenges faced and proposing innovative and sustainable solutions in multi-case studies or studies that quantitatively address the multiple variables identified and proposed in this study.

As this is a single case study of an exploratory nature, this research does not expect to make generalisations, but rather to stimulate debate on such a sensitive issue in GIs. Bearing in mind that "each case is different".

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