

**MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION OF THE REPUBLIC
OF KAZAKHSTAN**

MAQSUT NARIKBAYEV UNIVERSITY

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**Identifying and Assessing Uganda's Potential Geographical
Indications for Agricultural Products: A Framework for Expanding the
National Geographical Indications Register**

According to the Educational Program 7M04210 -Intellectual Property
and Business Law”

Project for Academic Degree of Master of Law

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**MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN
MAQSUT NARIKBAYEV UNIVERSITY (MNU)**

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PhD, Abay Abylaiuly

MASTER'S PROJECT

On the Topic:

“Identifying and Assessing Uganda’s Potential Geographical Indications
for Agricultural Products: A Framework for Expanding the National
Geographical Indications Register”

According to the Educational Program
7M04210 - Intellectual Property and Business Law

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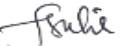
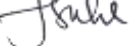
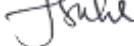
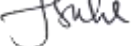
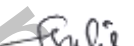
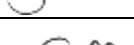
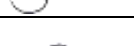
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The calendar plan for the preparation of a master's (project)

Name of the project stages	Period	A note on the implementation the project stages			
		Actual completion date	The degree of readiness of the completed stage of the project	Signature of the postgraduate (postgraduate)	Signature of the supervisor (supervisors)
Review of literature and practical materials	24 Nov 2025	26 Dec 2025	100%		
Methodology development	31 Dec 2025	2 Feb 2026	100%		
Data Collection And processing	05 -31 Jan 2026	11-19 April 2026	100%		
Analysis and interpretation of the results obtained	01-15 Feb 2026	23 April 2026	100%		
Development of project recommendations	16-20 Feb 2026	25 April 2026	100%		
Preparation of the introduction and conclusion	21-25 Feb 2026	26-17 April 2026	%100		
Preparation of thesis (project): Preparation of the first section of the project	26 Feb - 05 Mar 2026	10 Mar 2026	100%		
Preparation of the II section of the project	06-15 Mar 2026	20 April 2026	100%		
Preparation of the III section of the project	16-15 Mar 2026	20 -22 April 2026	100%		
Receiving feedback from the supervisor (scientific supervisors)	01 April- 17 May 2026	14 -19 April 2026	100%		
Preparation of a report, visual aids and presentations	18- 23 May 2026	20 - 28 April 2026	100%		
Defense of the master's thesis (project)	25 May- 30 Jun 2026	22 May 2026	100%		

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The plan was accepted for execution:  **Apolot Juliet Scovia**

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List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AFD	French Development Agency
AO	Appellation of Origin
APEDA	Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority
ARIPO	African Regional Intellectual Property Organization
CIRAD	French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development
CNIPA	China National Intellectual Property Administration
FY	Financial Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GI	Geographical Indications
ICOYACA	Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council on AfCFTA
IPRs	Intellectual Property Rights
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government
MoJCA	Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
MoTIC	Ministry of Trade Industry and Cooperatives,
NARO	National Agricultural Research Organization
NDP IV	Fourth National Development Plan
NPA	National Planning Authority
NUCAFE	National Union of Coffee Agribusinesses and Farm Enterprises
PDOs	Protected designations of origin
PGIs	Protected geographical Indications
PSFU	Private Sector Foundation Uganda
TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UFZEPA	Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotions Authority
UNBS	Uganda National Bureau of Standards
UNFFE	Uganda National Farmer's Federation
URSB	Uganda Registration Services Bureau
USD	United States Dollars
UTB	Uganda Tourism Board
WTO	World Trade Organization
NWG	National Working Group
INAO	National Institute of Origin and Quality

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Context

Uganda is a predominantly agrarian economy, with 68% of Ugandans engaged in agriculture, and the sector contributing about 24.6% to the country's GDP (NPA, 2025).¹ With the growth in the agriculture sector averaging 3.5% over a 14-year period from FY2010/11 to FY2024/25, during which GDP per capita increased from USD 894 to USD 1,154, the sector has been earmarked as one of the eight (8) high-impact growth areas that will propel the country's double digit growth and contribute to the ambitious ten-fold increase in the size of the economy, from USD 53.2 billion in FY2023/2024 to USD 581 billion and per capita income of USD 9,500 in FY2039/2040 (NPA, 2025).²

The Agriculture system in Uganda is characteristically defined by a diversity of territorially-based agricultural products, reinforced by the Government's policy of promoting particular agricultural products in ten agro-ecological zones that have been distinctly recognized based on their climate, soil types, land use, cropping patterns and socio-economic and cultural factors (MAAIF, 2018).³ These territorial zones include; (i) North Eastern Dry Lands where Cassava, Goats and Beef Cattle are promoted; (ii) North Eastern Savannah Grasslands where Cassava, Poultry and Goats are promoted; (iii) North Western Savannah Grasslands where Coffee, Beans and Poultry are promoted; (iv) Para Savannahs where Coffee and Cassava are promoted; (v) Kioga Plains where Fish, Maize, Poultry, Pineapples and Citrus are promoted; (vi) Lake Victoria Crescent where Coffee, Poultry, Fish, and Dairy Cattle are promoted; (vii) Western Savannah Grasslands where Maize, Tea and Beef Cattle are promoted; (viii) Pastoral Rangelands where Goats, Dairy Cattle and Beef Cattle are promoted; (ix) South Western Farmlands where Coffee, Irish Potatoes, Banana, and Tea are promoted, and; (x) the Highland Ranges where Coffee, Tea, Apples, Poultry, and Dairy Cattle are promoted.⁴

The Government's policy of promoting specific products in agro-ecological zones creates physical conditions and production stories that enhance value through production of agricultural products with distinct quality and reputation tied to specific geographical territories. With the emergence of territorial-linked agricultural products in Uganda, including the Bugisu Coffee, Arua Honey, Ankole Long-horned Cattle, Masaka's

¹ Republic of Uganda, National Planning Authority (NPA) 'The Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV). FY 2025/26 – 2029/30' (NPA, 2025)\

² Ibid

³ Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), 'National Adaptation Plan for the Agriculture Sector'. (MAAIF, 2018)

⁴ Ibid

Passion Fruits, Kabale Irish Potatoes and Northern Uganda Moo Yaa (Shea Butter), Masaka and Mubende Grasshoppers and Uganda Waragi among others. The stage is set for the implementation of Geographical Indications (GIs) for the Agricultural products in Uganda.

Geographical Indications (GIs) are unique signs *“including geographical and non-geographical names/words, symbols and other figurative elements or specific appearance or shape”* used on products to associate them with a specific geographical origin for purposes of identifying and distinguishing the products on the market.⁵ GIs are typically used for agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts and industrial products, and help to identify the particular products as possessing qualities or reputations due to their places of origin. GIs are therefore a form of intellectual property right which, when acquired for particular products, bestows rights to the users to prevent their use by a third party whose product does not conform to a given set of standards (WIPO, 2025).⁶

Globally, the Legal protection of Geographical Indication is provided for under key legislations including; (i) the 1994 Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO) which introduced GIs into international trade rules; (ii) and the WIPO Geneva Act of 2015, which provides for the international registration of GIs⁷. Different countries and regions protect their GIs using different legislations that are relevant to their respective legal traditions, as well as historical and economic conditions.

In Uganda, GIs are protected under the Geographical Indications Act of 2013,⁸ currently cited as Act. Cap. 223 *seventh edition revised laws* operationalized by the Geographical Indications Regulations of No. 42 of 2018.⁹ The GI Act, among other provisions, provides for establishment of a registration system administered by the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), a Government of Uganda's Agency for Intellectual Property Rights Registration that has established a National Geographical Indications Register.¹⁰

The Protection of GIs, especially for Agricultural products in the case of Uganda whose economy largely depends on Agriculture is very critical because they boost and promote the value addition of products in the

⁵ Geographical Indications Act 2013, new 7th Edition Cap. 233

⁶Geographical Indications' [World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), 2025] <<https://www.wipo.int/en/web/geographical-indications>> accessed 4 November 2025

⁷ World Trade Organization (1995), Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, April 15, 1994, Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, Annex 1C, 33 I.L.M. 1144 (1994).

⁸ Geographical Indications Act 2013, new 7th Edition Cap. 233

⁹ Republic of Uganda, The Geographical Indications Regulations, 2018 (Statutory Instrument No. 42 of 2018), (accessed November 3, 2025)

¹⁰ Ibid 8- Section 7; Uganda Registration Services Bureau Act Cap. 217

market while preserving cultural heritage and enhancing rural economic development.¹¹

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Despite Uganda's rich diversity of territorial based agricultural products, and existence of a legal "sui-generis" and institutional framework for the protection of Geographical Indications, the concept of GI remains relatively new, particularly within the agricultural industry that is still a long way from harnessing the potential benefits of GIs. The implementation and practical application of the GIs legal framework in the agricultural sector remains limited, with the Rwenzori Mountains of the Moon Coffee (in February 2023) having been the first and only Agricultural related GI Certification to be issued since the establishment of the GI system (URSB, 2025).¹² The identified gap of limited implementation of the GI system undermines Uganda's ability as a founding member of WTO to (i) comply with obligations of the TRIPS Agreement or (ii) strategically position its Agricultural products to fully benefit from domestic and international markets.

While the available literature attributes the limitations to the adoption and use of GIs in Uganda to factors including, but not limited to; (i) limited awareness among producers, about the benefits of GIs; (ii) lack of technical capacity by producers, to meet certification standards; (iii) inadequate coordination between regulatory institutions; (iv) insufficient technical capacity by regulatory entities to document product specifications; (v) weak enforcement mechanisms and; (vi) the lack of clear assessment criteria (URSB, n.d; Walusimbi, 2025)¹³; there has been limited empirical and analytical studies to facilitate evidence-based arguments for addressing the gaps in GIs implementation, especially in the Agricultural sector.

This background therefore points to the need for scholarly inquiry into the legal and institutional framework for identifying and evaluating the potential for GIs with a view of expanding the National GI Register and strengthening GI protection to enhance market access and value addition in the Agricultural sector for the advancement of sector's potential contribution in Uganda's economic development

¹¹ "How the use of geographical indications will promote value addition in Uganda's agricultural sector," by Mercy K. Kainobwisho; Registrar General of Uganda Registration Services Bureau.

¹² URSB and Partners Champion Uganda's first Geographical Indication: Rwenzori Mountains of the Moon Coffee. 20 May 2025< <https://ursb.go.ug/2025/05/20/ursb-and-partners-champion-ugandas-first-geographical-indication-rwenzori-mountains-of-the-moon-coffee/>> accessed on 20 March 2026

¹³ Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) 'URSB Strategic Plan IV: 2025/26 – 2029/30' (Uganda Business Facilitation Centre, 2025)

1.3 Research Purpose and Objectives

The overall objective of this research was to examine the implementation of the Geographical Indications System in Uganda through a review of the country's legal and institutional framework for identifying and assessing Geographical Indications for Agricultural products to generate strong recommendations towards expanding Uganda's National Geographical Indications Register. In particular, the research sought to achieve the following objectives;

1.3.1 Hypothesis of the Study

The legal and institutional frameworks in place are not sufficient to promote the expansion of the Geographical Indications Register in Uganda. Accordingly, in rejecting or confirming of this null hypothesis, the study seeks to answer to the following objectives namely;

1. To review the legal and institutional frameworks in place that support implementation of Geographical Indications in order to identify existing gaps for improvement.
2. To identify and assess agricultural products in Uganda with potential for GI protection.
3. To generate recommendations on the legal and institutional interventions for expanding the National Geographical Indications Register.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the research purpose and objectives as outlined above, the researcher sought to answer the following questions;

1. What is the existing legal and institutional framework governing Geographical Indications in Uganda, and how effectively does it support the identification and registration of potential Agricultural GIs?
2. Which Agricultural products in Uganda possess the attributes of eligibility for GI protection?
3. What legal and institutional interventions can be adopted to guide Uganda in expanding its National Geographical Indications Register?

1.5 Significance of the Study

As a WTO member, Uganda, under the TRIPS Agreement, has an obligation to adopt national frameworks on the protection of Geographical

Indications.¹⁴ The findings and recommendations from this study's review of the existing frameworks for legal protection of GIs shall be useful particularly to the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), the National Intellectual Property Office mandated to administer the Geographical Indications (GI) system in the Republic of Uganda while ensuring the country's compliance with the GI obligations under the TRIPS Agreement.¹⁵

The study shall document findings of potential GIs in Uganda and offer practical recommendations on approaches of systematic identification, assessment, and registration of these potential GIs thereby enabling key players including URSB and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), MoJCA, NARO, UNBS, UFZEPA, MoTIC among other stakeholders in their quest towards expansion of the National GI Register for the enhancement and commercialization of Uganda's agricultural products.

The study is expected to generate insights that shall empower agricultural producers or organized groups along respective value chains in Uganda to pursue value addition through deliberate promotion, protection and commercialization for their origin-based products thereby positioning them for access to local and international markets for improved incomes and rural economic development.

The study is also expected to greatly contribute to the scholarly literature on the role of Geographical Indications in agricultural transformation and rural development in Uganda, given the country's heavy reliance on Agrarian economy.¹⁶

1.6 Scope of the Study

The technical scope of the study was limited to Geographical Indications (GIs) as a form of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) within the broader sense of a marketing tool for transformative economies, with a focus on potential GIs products within Uganda's Agricultural Sector, given the country's economic structure and comparative advantage compared to the non- agricultural sector.

The geographical scope of the Study was limited to Uganda as the primary jurisdiction, with comparative reference to the international legal and institutional frameworks of select well developed GI systems in countries such as European Union, China, India, Kazakhstan and Cameroon for benchmarking purposes.

¹⁴ Ibid 7

¹⁵ Uganda Registration Services Bureau Act Cap. 217

¹⁶ Ibid 11

The product scope of the study was further limited to the comparative inquiries of the status in terms of numbers of the agricultural geographical indications products that these countries have championed and registered in understanding the uniqueness and best practices.

1.7 Research Approach and Methodology

1.7.1 Research Design

The research adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining Applied Legal Research, and the Qualitative Research designs. According to Torres (2025),¹⁷ Applied Legal Research design is characterized as a problem-oriented approach that seeks to find solutions to specific and practical legal dilemmas, with the primary aim of assisting decision-making, informing policy formulation, and providing actionable recommendations. It involves utilization of Policy Analysis Methodology to generate an understanding of legal principles and practical considerations. The researcher found the Applied Legal Research design applicable to the current study especially as far as evaluation of the effectiveness of existing legal policies was concerned.

The Researcher also utilized the Qualitative Research design,¹⁸ focusing on collection and analysis of non-numerical data to gain an understanding of concepts, opinions and experiences within the legal field (Torres, 2025).¹⁹ This involved utilizing the Case Study Methodology to generate an in-depth examination of Uganda's potential GIs for Agricultural products. Furthermore the researcher also delved in case law rating to matters of infringements amount agricultural protected GI, indicating that even where there is increase in GI registrations. This has reversely encouraged mismanagement by third parties. This design was applicable to the current study especially as far as understanding the relevant legal and policy issues was concerned.

The Researcher conducted Comparative Analysis of Uganda's Legal and Institutional framework for GI protection against the legal and institutional frameworks of other jurisdictions with well-developed GI systems including; the European Union, China India, Kazakhstan and Cameroon from Africa. This methodology was handy in understanding

¹⁷ Torres, J. R., 'Navigating Legal Knowledge: A Comparative Analysis of Quantitative, Qualitative, Applied, and Descriptive Research Methodologies in Law' (May 17, 2025). Available at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5258015>>

¹⁸ Webley, L. 'Qualitative Approaches to Empirical Legal Research' In book: 'Oxford Handbook of Empirical Legal Research (pp.927-950). 1st Edition, January 2010. Cane, P., and Kritzer, H., (eds). Oxford University Press. Available on <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259339842_Chapter_38_Qualitative_Approaches_to_Empirical_Legal_Research>; Fredrick Etyang. 2018 *M step by step practical guide to mastering research*; pages 31-32

¹⁹ *ibid* 17

working approaches highlighting similarities and differences with the studied GI systems as well as appreciating best practices that can be applied in Uganda in the context of legislation and robust strategies would promote the identification and assessment of potential agricultural product GIs as a means of broadening the National GI Register and achieving the economic transformation.

1.7.2 Data Collection Methods

The researcher collected data for this study through;

(i) Document review; involving systematic review of the existing legal and policy documents, including but not limited to, Regulations, Acts, Case Law, and other related Policies and Reports to facilitate the understanding of how they apply to promotion of Geographical Indications for agricultural products in Uganda, the focus area under the study;

(ii) Semi-structured questionnaire survey; this was conducted using google forms which were carefully designed and formulated to support collection of empirical data. Furthermore, as respondents were hard to reach within the limited timeframe of this study, the forms were shared with the respondents via emails and social media platforms, targeting key stakeholders along the agricultural sector as well as other relevant players in the fields of research, academia, civil society and intellectual property in Uganda.

(iii) Individual interviews; lasting 45 to 60 minutes were conducted via zoom/In-person to gather in-depth, qualitative data.

1.7.3 Participants and Sampling Techniques

The study used purposive sampling to select 48 participants/respondents who had direct experience with “Identifying and Assessing Uganda’s Potential Geographical Indications for Agricultural Products: A Framework for Expanding the National Geographical Indications Register.”

The inclusion criteria targeted participants with at least minimum three (03) years of experience of association and working with the GI implementation projects and initiatives within the agricultural sector. The participants were clustered into three (3) categories namely; (i) the farmer or and producer groups as they are the first line of generators and beneficiaries in the value chain. (ii) traders and exporters were also considered as processors of the GI products and a strong bridge to market avenues both locally and internationally; (iii) Government stakeholder (NWG), URSB, Private Sector and Civil Society who are central in the utilization of the GI system through promotion, protection, commercialization and enforcement.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Procedures

The Researcher employed the thematic analysis technique, to systematically identify and interpret the content of documents reviewed, and interviews transcribed, following the six-step approach as advanced by Braun & Clarke (2006), i.e. (i) Familiarization with data, (ii) Generating initial codes, (iii) Searching for themes, (iv) Reviewing themes, (v) Defining and naming themes, and (vi) Producing the report.²⁰

1.7.5 Trustworthiness and Credibility

To be relevant, all research should ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings²¹, the following strategies were used;

(i)Credibility: Member-checking was conducted by sharing transcripts with participants to verify accuracy.

(ii) Transferability: Thick description of the context is provided to enable comparison.

(i)Dependability: An audit trail of all research decisions was maintained.

1.7.6 Ethical Considerations

Approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw at any time. Informed consent forms were signed by all participants.

²⁰ Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <<https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>>

²¹ R.H. Adler, Trustworthiness in qualitative research, *J. Hum. Lact* 38 (2022) 598–602, <https://doi.org/10.1177/08903344221116620>.

2. THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

2.1 The Concept of Geographical Indications (GIs)

The origin of the concept of Geographical Indications (GIs) can be traced to the ancient folklore about the Roquefort Cheese, where legend has it that thousands of years ago, a young shepherd in France forgot his lunch of bread and cheese in a cave only to return days later and found it covered with a blue-green mould that created a flavour like he had never tasted before. Based on this legend, the French have kept producing this Cheese to-date, and it must be matured in the natural limestone caves of the Combalou Mountain in Roquefort-sur-Soulzon for at least three months, adhering to requirements of use of raw milk, specific terroir, and dry salting, with cutting and packaging also happening in the cave environment as a way of ensuring its authenticity and unique qualities (Academy of Cheese, 2020)²².

Article 22.1 of the TRIPS Agreement, which to-date is the most comprehensive multilateral agreement on Intellectual Property, defines Geographical Indications 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”.²³ (WTO, 1994). A number of attributes can be deduced from this definition. *First*, the definition does not specify the kind of sign that should qualify as a GI, and therefore it can be word, symbol, graphical representation, an image, or a map as long as it can be used to identify a specific good as coming from a specific geographical territory. *Second*, while the definition refers to geographical territories in the sense of WTO member nations, it implies that the territory can either be the entire nation, or a region within the nation, or any other locality e.g. a town or village within that nation. *Third*, the identification covers only goods, without limiting it to any particular kind of goods. This implies that each WTO member nation is free to decide the scope of goods to benefit from GI protection. *Fourth*, GI protection does not cover any good from a given territory, but rather the good must possess any of the three requirements of quality, reputation or other characteristic that is directly linked to the territory.

The World Intellectual Property Organization defines Geographical Indication as “the international protection of names and symbols which indicate a certain geographical origin of a given product” (WIPO 2004). By

²² <https://academyofcheese.org/roquefort/>

²³ World Trade Organization (1995), Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, April 15, 1994, Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, Annex 1C, 33 I.L.M. 1144 (1994).Articles 22-1

providing that a product can merely indicate the place of origin without necessarily specifying whether any characteristic of the product is due to the geographical location, this definition seeks to provide the widest protection to goods.

According to the European Union Intellectual Property Office, a Geographical Indication is “an intellectual property right. It protects a name of a product that has a specific geographical origin and owes its qualities and/or reputation to its particular origin” (EUIPO, 2026a).²⁴ This definition, while providing for protection of products possessing qualities and/or reputation to its particular origin, it also emphasizes that GIs are a type of Intellectual Property right.

The EU, while indicating that their GIs system is reserved for names of craft and industrial products, agricultural products, wine and spirit drinks managed by the European Commission goes ahead to provide different quality schemes of GIs, namely; (i) *Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)*, a higher level of protection where the particular product must come exclusively from a specific geographical area with every part of the production, processing and preparation process taking place in the specific area; (ii) *Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)* for most products requiring that at least one of the stages of production, processing or preparation takes place in the region, and; (iii) *Geographical Indication (GI)* protection specifically reserved for Spirit Drinks requiring that at least one of the stages of distillation or preparation takes place in the region, though raw products do not need to come from the region.²⁵

The Uganda National IP Policy (MoJCA, 2019)²⁶ defines Geographical Indication to mean “an IP right pertaining to a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin”. This definition uses the word “sign” as a broader concept that encompasses distinctive names, symbols, or any other indicators used for the purpose of attributing a product quality or reputation to a specific geographical origin.

From the litany of definitions provided above, it is clear that GIs is a form of intellectual property right that seeks to protect products of a given quality, reputation or other characteristics that are directly linked to a particular geographical origin. It is also clear that while the concept has predominantly been used in reference to protection of wines and spirits, the

²⁴“What is a Geographical Indication?”. European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO). <<https://www.euipo.europa.eu/en/gi-hub>> accessed 21 January 2026<
https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/farming/geographical-indications-and-quality-schemes/geographical-indications-and-quality-schemes-explained_en> accessed 27 January 2026

²⁵Geographical indications and quality schemes explained
<https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/farming/geographical-indications-and-quality-schemes/geographical-indications-and-quality-schemes-explained_en#aims.

²⁶ Ministry of Justice and Constitutional affairs, national intellectual property policy May 2019

product scope extends to other products including agricultural products, the subject of the current study.

2.2 International Legal Framework on Geographical Indications for Agricultural Products

World over, GIs for agricultural products are increasingly gaining recognition as a powerful tool for helping the products to stand out in a competitive market place for the benefit of farmers that have preserved their traditional production skills and know-how, while also providing consumers with reliable information for identifying particular products.

Notable cases of GIs for Agricultural products can be found in the European Union where, in addition to the GI quality schemes related to PDOs and PGIs as illustrated in Section 2.1 above, special GI schemes have been created for Agricultural Products.

The special agricultural product GI schemes include; (i) '*Mountain Product*', a quality term for EU agricultural primary products whose raw materials come from mountain areas or processed products whose production has taken place in such areas; (ii) "*Product of EU's Outermost Regions*", a dedicated GI reserved for Agricultural Products from EU's outermost regions (i.e. Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique, the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands) (EUIPO,2026b)²⁷. The specific EU agricultural products that have received the GI protection include Milk, Eggs, Meat, Honey, Olive Oil, Sugar, Tobacco among others.

The EU has gone further and adopted applicable regulations to facilitate implementation of GIs for Agricultural Products. Examples of these regulations include; (i) *Regulation (EU) 2024/1143*²⁸ on geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products, as well as traditional specialties guaranteed and optional quality terms for agricultural products (European Union, 2024); (ii) *Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No.665/2014*²⁹ which clarifies the characteristics for products of animal origin, feedstuffs, products of beekeeping, and products of plant origin that qualify to use the term 'mountain product' for purposes of preventing consumers from being misled by ensuring that agricultural products essentially come from mountain areas or possess required quality even when processed outside mountain areas or when some ingredients have to be sourced outside the mountain areas (European Union, 2014);

²⁷ Regulation (EU) No 228/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 13 March 2013.

²⁸ Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products, as well as traditional specialties guaranteed and optional quality terms for agricultural products

²⁹ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 665/2014 of 11 March 2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to conditions of use of the optional quality term 'mountain product'. Official Journal of the European Union, L 79/23, 18-21

and (iii) *Regulation (EU) No 228/2013*³⁰ which specifies the characteristics for agricultural products to qualify for use of the term ‘product of EU’s outermost regions’ for purposes of maintaining the development and strengthening the competitiveness of traditional agricultural activities in these regions, given the unique difficulties they face related to extreme remoteness, isolation, small surface areas, terrain, difficult climate and economic dependence (European Union, 2013).

The Basmati rice, a special long aromatic rice grain that has been cultivated by farmers in the Indian subcontinent located within the north-western foothills of the Himalayas³¹ for over 250 years is another global example of GIs for Agricultural products due to its geographic specificity regarding manifestation of its unique quality features (Mahajan et al., 2018)³². Given that Basmati rice trades as a premium rice variety on the global market owing to its exquisite aroma and unique cooking properties, the Governments of India and Pakistan have taken various steps towards protection of the rice species both locally and abroad.

The Government of India, in 2016, registered Basmati Rice as a GI product with the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), the Government body charged with the responsibility of putting in place a system for administration of GI and authentication of protected products (APEDA, 2026)³³ while the Republic of Pakistan secured its registration of Basmati rice as a GI in 2021 under the nation’s Geographical Indications (Registration and Protection) Act 2020³⁴. As a way of enhancing their share in the International market, both countries have gone ahead to apply, separately, for registration of the Basmati rice GI in the European Union, with India filing its EU GI application in 2020 and Pakistan filing hers 3 years later in 2023 (Geethanjali and Atmaram, 2026)³⁵. The EU is, however, yet to grant these independent registrations given that they are countering each other for a commodity that has a shared heritage, with each nation providing different descriptions of the Basmati rice features, and making claims of the product’s geographical exclusivity.

³⁰ Regulation (EU) No 228/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 March 2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 247/2006. Official Journal of the European Union, L 078, 1-40

³¹ This area covers the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, and Western Uttar Pradesh in India, the Punjab Province in Pakistan, and parts of Nepal and Sri Lanka.

³² Mahajan G., et al., Basmati Rice in the Indian Subcontinent: Strategies to Boost Production and Quality Traits, In *Advances in Agronomy*, Volume 151, 2018, pp. 159-213. Available at <<https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.agron.2018.04.002>>

³³ Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA). Basmati.Net <<https://apeda.gov.in/basmati-net>> accessed 21 January 2026; <https://search.ipindia.gov.in/GIRPublicSearch/Application/Details/145>

³⁴ Geographical Indications (Registration and Protection) Act, 2020 (Act No. XVIII of 2020)

³⁵ Geethanjali K. V., and Atmaram Shelke., ‘The Conundrum of Protecting Basmati Rice as a Geographical Indication: A Recount of Legal Proceedings’. *Journal of Intellectual Property Rights*. Vol 31, March 2026, pp. 248-258. <DOI: 10.56042/jipr.v31i2.18005>

Another important international framework is the system administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), particularly the Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and their International Registration, and its updated version, the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement. These instruments provide a mechanism for the international registration and protection of appellations of origin and GIs, allowing member states to secure recognition of their products across multiple jurisdictions.

Example of successful GI agricultural products can also be seen central Asia, in the Republic of Kazakhstan with its legal framework on geographical indication dating back to four years³⁶, one would be intrigued to delve into more interrogation of how this system has achieved remarkable success translating into registration of 165 geographical indication products with Almaty Apot Apples³⁷, being famous in the region.

Examples of successful GI agricultural products on the African Continent include; (i) the *Oku White Honey* produced from Kilum Mountain Forest in the North West Region of Cameroon and has gained international prominence due to its unique characteristics of being soft and cream, with a slightly grainy texture and possessing a fresh taste, marked by a touch of acidity and aromas of flowers and citrus fruits, all being associated to the ancestral know-how and distinctive environment in the geographical area, with its price per kilo reportedly increasing by nearly 40% in just a few years after registration of its geographical indication (AfrIPI, n.d.);

(ii) the '*Rooibos*' or '*Red Bush*' healthy aromatic herbal tea from the Cederberg Mountain region in the South-Western Part of South Africa which was originally grown by the Khoi and San as an indigenous fynbos shrub, but was later transformed into tea through a unique bruising and fermentation process, and its growth is favored by the specific geographical conditions in Cederberg region i.e. arid climate with hot dry summers and cooler wet winters, sandstone and shale rock formations, floral diversity of fine bush and succulent karoo plants, and high altitudes of 200 to 1,000 metres above sea level (WIPO, 2026). In May 13 2021, the '*Rooibos*' tea domestically registered as GI protected product in 2013 and later became the first product from Africa to be awarded the 'PDO' status in the EU's Register of Geographical Indications.³⁸ Approval of the GI registration with the EU was reportedly a long and complicated process that began four years earlier in 2018 and involved several amendments of comments from the EU Commission as well as engagements with several objectors to the

³⁶ Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Trademarks, Service Marks, Geographical Indications and Appellations of Origin of Goods"

³⁷ One village-one product-one geographical indications

<https://kazpatent.kz/en/media/6242/one-village-one-product-one-geographical-indications>.

³⁸ <https://www.wipo.int/en/web/ip-advantage/w/stories/disputing-a-name-developing-a-geographical-indication>

application following its publication in the EU Journal (Trosakie et. al., 2022).³⁹

2.3 Uganda's Legal and Policy Framework for Geographical Indications

In Uganda, the principal law for geographical indications is the Geographical Indications Act, No. 8 of 2013. Defining a GI as “any indication which identifies goods as originating in a particular country, region or locality where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the goods is essentially attributable to its geographic origin”.⁴⁰ The Act provides a dedicated legal regime for the registration and protection of GIs in Uganda, and the goods protected under the Act include natural or agricultural products, animal products, or products of handicraft or industry.⁴¹ The Act establishes a registration-based protection system for GIs that involves creation of a national GI register through receipt of applications for search, examination of the applications, publications objection to the applications and GI registrations where successful. Entry of the GI is made into the register once approved. The Act further stipulates eligible applicants for GI registration to include; legal entities or representative groups operating as producers, farmers, or artisans in respect to any product, and any competent authority in respect to an indication with national character, reflecting the intention to have a collective ownership of GIs.

In addition to the Act, the Government, through the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, has put in place The Geographical Indications Regulations, No. 42 of 2018 to operationalize the GI registration system by articulating the Classification of goods eligible for GI protection, the GI registration application process, the applicable fees for different GI registration, enforcement of rights, related services and the management of the GI register.⁴²

The Government has also put in place the Uganda National Intellectual Property Policy 2019 which provides the formal framework to among other things, identify, protect, and commercialize GI products or goods linked to Ugandan regions. The further policy further stipulates the necessary institutional infrastructure necessary to register and enforce GI rights.⁴³

³⁹ Troskie D., Biénabe E., and Swart M., 'Rooibos' / 'Red Bush': The first African GI included in the EU Register. Worldwide Perspectives on Geographical Indications, Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement [Cirad], Jul 2022, Montpellier, France. Conference Proceedings < <https://hal.science/hal-03791361v1> >

⁴⁰ The Geographical Indications Act, No. 8 of 2013. Under Section 2

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Geographical Indications Regulations, No. 42 of 2018

⁴³ Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs Uganda National IP Policy, MAY 2019

The institutional framework for GIs in Uganda is spearheaded by the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) as the Lead Implementing Agency who's Registrar General and other Officers of the Bureau are responsible for performing duties necessary for the establishment and maintenance of a Geographical Indications' Register and registration of GIs⁴⁴.

In order to promote GI registration and awareness, the URSB has established a National Working Group (NWG) comprised of representatives from key Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) including the former Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA), Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Ministry of Trade Industry and Cooperatives (MoTIC), former Uganda Export Promotions Board (UEPB), Uganda National Farmer's Federation (UNFFE), Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU), Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), National Union of Coffee Agribusinesses and Farm Enterprises (NUCAFE), National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) and Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs (MoJCA) as well as private sector players including producer organizations. These stakeholder institutions play a big role in conducting nationwide consultations and capacity building for local producers in quality standards, compliance and GI protection.

2.4 Assessment of the Effectiveness of the GI System in Uganda

The review conducted during the study indicates that Uganda has gone a long way in establishing a comprehensive GIs legal regime and policy framework to wit the Geographical Indications Act No. 8 of 2013, Regulation of No. 42 of 2013 as well as the National IP Policy aligned with international obligations under the TRIPS Agreement to which the country subscribes as a WTO member and providing for registration of enforceable GI rights for different goods including agricultural products to ensure their protection against misleading use and unfair competition.⁴⁵

It was however evident that while the legal structure or the sui- generis for GI protection was formally established in 2013 through the enactment of the Act of Parliament,⁴⁶ it only became operational years later, in 2018 with the creation of the Regulations and development of an IP Policy in 2019 thereby creating a delay in practical implementation of the country's GI regime.⁴⁷

Uganda has further put in place a coordinated multi-stakeholder institutional structure that is crucial in supporting GI development and

⁴⁴ Geographical Indications Act No .8. of 2013 . Section 6

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶

⁴⁷

implementation otherwise known as the National Working Group (NWG). The involvement of institutions such as UFZEPA, MAAIF, UNFFE, NUCAFE, NARO, UNBS as well as farmer cooperatives and producer groups is an indicator for a deliberate strategy for providing an Agricultural focus that is critical for promotion and protection of Agricultural GIs.

Conclusion

From the literature reviewed, the researcher has noted that there have been more successful GI initiatives for agricultural products in the French-speaking African countries in the West Africa and Central Africa Regions largely because of the existence of a regional intellectual property organization, the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), established in 1962, that has facilitated advancement of intellectual property protection collectively across its member states (OAPI, 2026).⁴⁸ On the contrary, other African countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa region like Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia and Ethiopia are taking up the journey of GI implementation independently as ARIPO member states (AfriPI, n.d.).⁴⁹ Uganda is an ARIPO member state with its on legal framework for the protection of geographical indications.

⁴⁸ African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI). About OAPI. Retrieved from < <https://oapi.int/en/>> accessed on 26 January 2026

⁴⁹ <https://www.aripo.org/success-stories/aripo-member-states-discuss-gi-protection-approach-2927>

3. IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL GIs IN UGANDA

3.1 Criteria for Qualification of Geographical Indications

The criteria for qualification of a geographical indication to be entered on the register of GIs in Uganda is stipulated under Section 7(2) of the Geographical Indication Act, 2013 and is further elaborated in the Geographical Indications Regulations 2018 which among other things specifies these criteria in GI Form 2, a document that an applicant for registration of a GI must fill and submit to the Registrar of GIs for consideration⁵⁰.

First, the indication must identify the goods to which the indication pertains, and the goods must originate from a specific country, region or locality. According to the regulations, an applicant must provide the demarcation of the territory of origin to which the GI applies, in graphical forms and maps as well the detailed description of the product's characteristics in terms of colour, shape, texture, size, weight, taste and any other relevant description⁵¹.

Second, the goods must possess a given quality, reputation or other characteristics such as soils conditions, climate characteristics, human factors, and traditional production techniques that are essentially attributable to their geographical origin⁵².

The regulations indicate that an applicant for GI registration is expected to demonstrate the causal link between the geographical area and the product's characteristics by providing documentation of, among other things; the natural environmental factors that directly affect the product's raw materials and these factors affect the product's characteristics, and the human factors of the production process for example unique traditional knowledge and local practices, demonstrating how these human factors give the final product its unique characteristics, and the mechanisms for ensuring that the quality, standard, integrity and consistency of these characteristics is maintained throughout the production process⁵³. This requires an applicant to provide evidence of these quality standards from compliance verification bodies. The evidence about the product's reputation can be generated through surveys, market research or any other historical documentation to indicate how the product has been linked to the specific geographical area for a long time.

⁵⁰ The Geographical Indications Act No. 8 of 2013 and Geographical Indications regulations No. 42 of 2018

⁵¹ Ibid Schedule 2 to the Geographical Indications Regulations., section 8 (2) (a) –(e) of the Geographical Indications Act

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Ibid

The study however notes that the causal link between the specific geographical area and the product cannot be complete without demonstrating how the product's characteristics are unique to that geographical area. This ordinarily requires an applicant to provide a comparative analysis by indicating how the product is distinct from similar products in other areas, and how producing the same goods outside the linked geographical area, even when similar ingredients and methods are applied, would not produce the same product quality.

The study sought to establish, from sampled respondents, the awareness about the GI qualification criteria in Uganda and the presence of unique characteristics among their products. Respondents consistently highlighted factors such as altitude, climate, and ecological conditions as key determinants of product characteristics. Altitude was frequently associated with enhanced quality attributes such as flavor, aroma, and texture, particularly for products like coffee and honey while climatic conditions, including rainfall patterns and temperature variations, were perceived to contribute to the distinctiveness of products from specific regions. Respondents further noted that products grown in their specific regions exhibit identifiable characteristics, emphasizing variations in soil composition and natural conditions as responsible for shaping the unique attributes of their products in terms of taste, color, and overall product quality. Research findings further revealed that the respondents perceived the products from their regions to be widely recognized in both local and regional markets due to their consistent quality and the reputation they have built over time.

From the above discussion, it can be seen that while some of the products may align with the criteria for qualification of geographical indications in Uganda, fulfilling the qualification criteria can be expected to be a challenging process especially for smallholder farmers or producers acting alone particularly given its technical requirements for detailed evidence that is scientific and historical in nature.

3.2 Analysis of Selected Ugandan Agricultural Products

The available literature indicates that despite the existence of a GI legal, policy and institutional framework in Uganda, actual GI registration remains very limited. According to URSB (2024),⁵⁴ The Rwenzori Mountains of the Moon Coffee, an Arabica coffee type from the Rwenzori region, was the first product to receive a GI Certification in February 2023. According to URSB (2025),⁵⁵ The Rwenzori Arabica coffee is renowned for its sweet, fruity aroma

⁵⁴<https://ursb.go.ug/2025/05/20/ursb-and-partners-champion-ugandas-first-geographical-indication-rwenzori-mountains-of-the-moon-coffee/#:~:text=Renowned%20for%20its%20sweet%2C%20fruity,at%20altitudes%20exceeding%201%2C200%20meters.>

⁵⁵ URSB and Partners Champion Uganda's first Geographical Indication: Rwenzori Mountains of the Moon Coffee. 20 May 2025 < <https://ursb.go.ug/2025/05/20/ursb-and-partners-champion-ugandas-first-geographical-indication-rwenzori-mountains-of-the-moon-coffee/>> accessed on 20 March 2026

and rich chocolate undertones, is cultivated organically at altitudes exceeding 1,200 meters, and scores above 80 percent in global cupping standards. It has therefore been positioned as a high-value, origin-specific product with strong export potential.

The second is a foreign registered GI for Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne (CIVC) of France which was granted on January 28, 2026 to legally restrict the use of the name “Champagne” within Uganda to sparkling wines genuinely produced in the designated French region and in compliance with approved production standards (URSB, 2026)⁵⁶. There are, however, more local GIs in Uganda, with most of the potential products still unregistered or in the pipeline stage. Nevertheless, the Government’s Policy of promoting specific products in agro-ecological zones provides ground for strong potential for Agricultural GIs and there is ongoing product profiling work to support registration of local agricultural products.

The Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) under a pilot project “Empowering Small Businesses Through IP: Developing Strategies for Supporting Geographical Indications or Collective Marks in the Post-registration Period in collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).⁵⁷ The French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD) and the French Development Agency (AFD) is supporting coffee farmers in the Rwenzori region with the structuring and popularization of the “Rwenzori Mountains of the Moon Coffee” as Uganda’s first local GI. To-date, these stakeholders have concentrated on improving the coffee post-harvest quality in the region through various training sessions and technical support, while also supporting the coffee producers’ participation in several national and international events for purposes of raising the profile of Rwenzori Mountains of the Moon Coffee⁵⁸. The stakeholders intend to further focus on deployment of a traceability system and marketing structure for the Rwenzori Mountains of the Moon Coffee with the objective of strengthening it as the first GI in Uganda (GI Support Fund, 2026).⁵⁹

Clearly therefore, whereas the GI Certification of Rwenzori Mountains of the Moon Coffee only provides proof of authenticity and quality assurance of the product especially in international markets and does provide the legal recognition of the name and origin as a GI Registration would, it should be

⁵⁶URSB Registers “Champagne” as a Protected Geographical Indication < <https://ursb.go.ug/2026/02/04/ursb-registers-champagne-as-a-protected-geographical-indication/>> accessed on 20 March 2026

⁵⁷ WIPO-Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP) Thirty-Sixth Session Geneva, May 4, 2026

⁵⁸ WIPO GI Workshop & Exhibition during CDIP 35th Session 17-18 November 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland

⁵⁹ Uganda - Rwenzori Mountains of the Moon Coffee GI: training, equipment, and strengthened governance at mid-term. GI Support Fund. < <https://www.facilite-ig.fr/en/news/gi-support-fund-uganda-ig-cafe-rwenzori#:~:text=Uganda%20%2D%20Rwenzori%20Mountains%20of%20the,entered%20a%20fully%20operational%20phase.>> accessed on 20 March 2026

seen as a critical milestone towards attaining status as the first registered local GI in Uganda.

URSB (2024) however notes that Uganda has a number of other potential GI Agricultural products, including Yellow Bananas, Shea Butter from Acholi and West Nile regions, Arabica Coffee from Bugisu region, Vanilla from the Mukono area, Pineapples from Luwero area, Passion fruits from Kisoro District, Honey from Arua District, as well as Dairy, Meat, and the distinctive horn products of the Ankole cow.⁶⁰

For the purpose of this study, 3 potential agricultural products were sampled namely the Bugisu coffee, Nilotica shea butter and Rwenzori honey. The findings reveal that Uganda possesses substantial untapped potential for GI development, particularly within its agricultural sector. The products including Bugisu coffee, Nilotica shea butter and Rwenzori honey demonstrate strong linkages between product characteristics and geographical origin, supported by both natural factors such as climate and soil, and human factors including traditional knowledge and production practices. These products also exhibit distinctiveness established or emerging market reputation, which is a key requirement for GI protection.

From Table 1⁶¹, the findings indicate that respondents largely associated the uniqueness of products such as Rwenzori Honey and Bugisu Arabica Coffee to their geographical origin and natural environmental conditions. The most frequently cited factor was geographical identity/origin (33.3%), suggesting that many respondents understood that these products derive their distinctiveness from the specific regions in which they are produced.

In conclusion, it has been noted that even when implementation of GIs is still at an early stage, characterized by limited domestic registrations and reliance on pilot projects, Uganda has laid a strong legal, policy and institutional foundation for the protection of geographical indications for Agricultural products. The case of Rwenzori Mountains of the Moon Coffee GI Certification stands as a landmark achievement, demonstrating the transformative potential of GIs in Uganda, and the registration of Champagne reflects the Country's alignment with international standards, while ongoing initiatives for supporting GI identification for other products indicate the potential for future expansion⁶². The Government therefore needs a deliberate focus on the existing challenges that are not necessarily legal and policy related including producer level and institutional challenges, for successful GI implementation.

⁶⁰<https://observer.ug/viewpoint/integrate-protection-of-geographical-indications-in-fight-against-poverty/>

⁶¹ Analysis of the findings. Table 1 category A of Respondents.

⁶² Wipo- Assessment Report - Shea Butter from Northern Uganda ; November 2024 ,Angele Postelle

3.3 Challenges in Identification and Registration of GIs

A review of the study literature revealed a number of challenges that have impeded the identification and registration of agricultural GIs thereby confirming the null hypothesis that the existing legal and institutional framework on GIs are not sufficient for the effective expansion of the GI register thereby necessitating a more strategic approach to counter other factors have also limited its effective performance as elaborated here below;

3.3.1 Limited and Uneven Awareness of Geographical Indications among Farmers and Producers

The findings reveal that awareness and understanding of Geographical Indications (GIs) among farmers and local producer groups remain generally low and uneven. A significant proportion of 22.2% of the respondents demonstrated only a basic or fragmented understanding of origin-based labelling systems, often associating them loosely with product quality or place of origin, but without a clear grasp of their legal or commercial implications⁶³.

In several instances, respondents were able to identify that certain products are “known for coming from a specific area,” yet lacked awareness of formal certification mechanisms such as GIs or their role in intellectual property protection and market differentiation. This suggests that while indigenous knowledge of product uniqueness exists, it has not been effectively translated into formal awareness of GI systems.

Policy actors also acknowledged that this knowledge gap constrains the ability of producers to initiate or participate in the GI registration process. This suggests that the absence of structured awareness and training programs significantly limits grassroots engagement in GI development.

URSB and other implementing partners are however concentrating their efforts towards addressing these challenges for successful GI system implementation in Uganda.

3.3.2 Weak Institutional Coordination and Fragmentation of Responsibilities

Findings from the study indicate that the institutional framework governing GIs in Uganda suffers from weak coordination among key stakeholders. Respondents from policy and institutional backgrounds highlighted challenges related to overlapping mandates, limited collaboration, and unclear roles among agencies responsible for agriculture, intellectual property and trade promotion.

This fragmentation undermines the efficiency of the GI registration process and creates bottlenecks in decision-making, documentation, and

⁶³ Table 2 under category B Respondents.

implementation. The lack of a clearly coordinated institutional approach limits the effectiveness of the GI system as a whole.

3.3.3 Complex and Resource-Intensive Registration Processes

The findings suggest that the process of registering GI products is perceived as complex, technical, and resource-intensive. Policy actors identified procedural challenges, including the need for detailed product specifications, documentation of geographical linkages, and compliance with regulatory requirements.

For farmers and producer groups, these requirements are often beyond their current technical and financial capacity. This creates a barrier to entry, particularly for smallholder producers who lack access to the necessary expertise and resources.

3.3.4 Limited Technical Capacity for Documentation and Standardization

The study reveals a significant gap in the technical capacity required to document and standardize GI products. Effective GI registration requires detailed specifications outlining product characteristics, production methods, and geographical boundaries.⁶⁴

However, both farmers and institutional actors indicated that there is insufficient expertise to develop such documentation. This includes limited skills in product specification development, quality standardization, and traceability systems.

This capacity gap hinders the transition from informal recognition of product uniqueness to formal GI registration.

3.3.5 Weak Enforcement Mechanisms and Risk of Misuse

The findings highlight concerns regarding weak enforcement of existing GI-related protections. Policy actors noted that even where legal frameworks exist, there are limited mechanisms to effectively monitor and prevent unauthorized use or misrepresentation of products.

Traders' reliance on informal verification methods further reinforces this vulnerability, as it increases the risk of counterfeit or falsely labelled products entering the market. Weak enforcement reduces trust in origin-based claims and undermines the potential benefits of GI certification.

⁶⁴ Table 2, page 55 Category B

3.3.6 Market-Level Challenges Including Middlemen and Price Distortions

Farmers identified several market-related challenges that affect the quality and reputation of their products. These include exploitation by middlemen, price inconsistencies, and limited bargaining power.

Such challenges can compromise product quality and weaken the link between producers and markets. This, in turn, affects the ability to maintain consistent standards required for GI certification and reduces incentives for producers to invest in quality enhancement.

3.3.7 Environmental and External Threats to Product Quality

The findings also reveal that environmental factors, including climate change, pose a significant threat to the sustainability and quality of agricultural products. Farmers reported changes in weather patterns, which affect production cycles, yields, and product characteristics.

These environmental challenges can undermine the consistency and distinctiveness required for GI products, making it more difficult to maintain the standards necessary for certification and long-term reputation⁶⁵.

3.4 Comparative Analysis with Other Jurisdictions

A comparative analysis is important in assessing Uganda's Geographical Indications (GI) system because it helps identify institutional and legal practices that have supported effective GI development elsewhere. Comparative experience shows that successful GI systems are usually characterized by clear legal frameworks, well-defined product specifications, strong producer organization, quality control mechanisms, and credible market protection.

3.4.1 The European Union

The European Union provides one of the most developed GI systems globally. Its framework protects product names through schemes such as Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). The EU system distinguishes between products whose production, processing, and preparation are all tied closely to a place of origin, and those where only part of the process must occur in the designated area. This structured classification has helped create clarity in registration, quality control, and market protection.

The EU experience demonstrates the value of precise product specifications and a robust institutional framework. For Uganda, this

⁶⁵ Table 11 of category A- Summary of the findings

provides an important lesson: strong legal recognition alone is not sufficient unless it is supported by clear standards, traceability, and administrative systems capable of maintaining the link between product and territory. In the Ugandan context, where many products already possess distinct territorial characteristics, adopting a more structured approach to product specification and control could significantly strengthen the effectiveness of the GI regime. This is an inference drawn from the EU model and the field findings.

3.4.2 China

China has emerged as one of the most advanced jurisdictions globally in the development, protection and commercialization of geographical indications (GIs). According to recent data from the World Intellectual Property Organization, China had approximately 9,946 GIs in force in 2024, making it the leading jurisdiction globally in terms of GI registrations.⁶⁶ This figure reflects a dramatic expansion over the past two decades and underscores the country's level of development in the GI implementation.

A key feature of China's GI landscape is the predominance of domestic products. Over 94% of GIs in China are national, indicating a strong domestic orientation in GI protection and development.⁶⁷ In parallel, China has also recognized over 4,100 GI products under its administrative system as of 2025, with an increasing number gaining protection abroad.⁶⁸

As a civil system, China is positioned as a global leader in this area thanks to its GI system, which incorporates a hybrid legal structure, robust state coordination, and an ever expanding portfolio of protected products.⁶⁹

Notably like Uganda, China's GI regime is grounded in international norms, particularly the TRIPS Agreement, which establishes minimum standards for GI protection under Articles 22–24.⁷⁰ These provisions require member states to prevent misleading use of geographical names and provide enhanced protection for certain categories such as wines and spirits.

The geographical indications (GI) system in China has evolved into one of the world's most ambitious and state-driven systems. At its best, it reflects a well-defined national strategy, safeguarding local products, boosting rural economies, and increasing the global reputation for Chinese foods. The immense amount of GI registrations shows how seriously China takes this tool, not only as a type of intellectual property but also as a component of a larger cultural and economic strategy. Here, the government through its central administrator CNIPA coordinates with many agencies striving to

⁶⁶ World Intellectual Property Organization, *IP Facts and Figures 2025* (2025).

⁶⁷ World Intellectual Property Organization, *World Intellectual Property Indicators 2025 Highlights* (2025)

⁶⁸ International Trademark Association, "Know Before You Go – GI Report Series" (2025).

⁶⁹ Li, Y. & Chen, M. (2021). *Dual Protection Systems for GIs in China*. Asian IP Review; measure on the protection of Geographical Indications products entered into force on 1st February 2024.

⁷⁰ WTO TRIPS Agreement, Articles 22–24.

connect GI protection with agriculture policy, regional branding, and export promotion which occasionally fails, but frequently successfully.⁷¹

On the other hand, such success is sifted with challenges. The presence of China's dual approach, whereby GI protection exists under trademark legislation as well as a sui generis system, may generate legal difficulties. Not only producers but also foreigners might experience confusion regarding which regulation to refer to and how to enforce their rights.⁷² The process of enforcement differs drastically from region to region due to local differences in administrative capacities. What looks robust on paper does not always translate into consistent protection in practice.⁷³

Instead of adopting a totally multilateral approach for GI protection, China has adopted a pragmatic one. It has concentrated on bilateral agreements most notably with the European Union to ensure mutual recognition of GIs rather than adopting systems like the Lisbon Agreement.⁷⁴ This approach restricts China's ability to create unified international standards while granting it flexibility and maintaining some degree of regulatory sovereignty. As a result, China is therefore significant but not completely incorporated into the multinational GI system.⁷⁵

A huge number of GI registrations is another major cause for concern. Although many regions have benefited from this expansion, there is an increasing risk of over-extension. When too many products receive GI status, the label can lose its signaling power, making it harder for truly distinctive products to stand out in the marketplace.⁷⁶ If China wants its GIs to continue to be valuable in the long run, both at domestic and international levels, it will be crucial to maintain quality and distinctiveness.

Uganda faces almost the opposite challenge. Rather than over-extension, it struggles with under-utilization of the GI framework. Many potentially eligible products have yet to be registered or commercialized effectively. The priority in Uganda is therefore not to limit expansion, but to build recognition, ensure quality control, and develop market access so that GI status translates into tangible economic benefits for producers.

⁷¹Zhang, L. (2022). *Geographical Indications and Rural Development in China*. Journal of Intellectual Property Law.

⁷² ibid

⁷³ WTO (2023). *Trade Policy Review: China – Intellectual Property Section*

⁷⁴ European Commission (2020). *EU–China Agreement on Geographical Indications*.

⁷⁵ Rangnekar, D. (2019). *Global Governance of Geographical Indications*. WIPO Journal.

⁷⁶ Hu, X. (2024). *Over-Registration and the Value of GIs in China*. China Economic Review.

3.4.3 India

India offers a useful comparative example from the Global South because it has a dedicated Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999⁷⁷ and maintains a formal public GI registry with over 700 registered products.⁷⁸ The Indian system demonstrates the importance of a specialized legal framework and an active registration structure that gives visibility to registered products. Official public records show that India has a large number of GI applications and registrations across agricultural goods, handicrafts, and other products.⁷⁹

The Indian experience suggests that legal certainty, an accessible registration system, and official product recognition can support wider participation in GI protection. For Uganda, the lesson is that expanding the National GI Register will require not only identifying suitable products, but also making the registration pathway more visible, technically supported, and administratively accessible to producer groups. This comparison is especially relevant because Uganda, like India, relies heavily on products whose identity is closely connected to place, tradition, and local know-how.

With the development of the geographical indications comes the wake of abuse or rather misuse of the rights by third parties. According to Article 22.1 of the GI Act⁸⁰, “A registered GI is infringed by a person who not being an authorised user (AU) thereof (a) uses such GI by any means in the designations or presentation of goods that indicates or suggests that such goods originate in a geographical area other than the true place of origin of such goods in a manner which misleads the persons as the geographical origin of such goods: or (b) uses any GI in such manner which constitutes an act of unfair competition including passing off in respect of registered GI”.

Thus in *Comite Interprofessionnel Du Vin De Champagne v. Chinar Agro Fruit Products*⁸¹ (2017): The plaintiff, *Comite Interprofessionnel Du Vin De Champagne* (“CIVC”), is a public body established under French law and responsible for protecting and regulating the geographical indication “CHAMPAGNE” worldwide. Although the organization itself does not manufacture wine, it represents producers and traders of CHAMPAGNE and is entrusted with protecting the reputation and legal rights associated with

⁷⁷ The geographical indications of goods (registration and protection) Act, 1999:

⁷⁸ <https://search.ipindia.gov.in/GIRPublicSearch/>

⁷⁹ Malladagudda, Sangeetha & R S, Manjusha. (2025). Twenty Years of Geographical Indications in India: Progress, Problems and Policy Recommendations. *Archives of Current Research International*. 25. 365-374. 10.9734/acri/2025/v25i31128.

⁸⁰ Ibid 40

⁸¹ *Comite Interprofessionnel Du Vin De Champagne v. Chinar Agro Fruit Products*; *MANU/DE/2940/2017*, *Equivalent/Neutral Citation: 2017:DHC:5251, MIPR2018(1)24*.

the geographical indication. The plaintiff filed a suit against the defendant, Chinara Agro Fruit Products, an Indian company engaged in manufacturing beverages such as fruit beer, juices, soft drinks, and non-alcoholic sparkling drinks.

The dispute arose when the plaintiff discovered that the defendant was selling nonalcoholic sparkling beverages under the name “CHAMPAGNE.” According to the plaintiff, CHAMPAGNE is a naturally sparkling wine produced exclusively in the Champagne region of France through a specialized process of double fermentation using grapes grown in that region. The distinctive qualities of Champagne wines arise from a combination of natural conditions such as soil composition, climate, rainfall, temperature, and the traditional methods used by wine producers. Over time, the name CHAMPAGNE has acquired a strong reputation and goodwill in international trade. The plaintiff also pointed out that CHAMPAGNE is a registered geographical indication in India.

The plaintiff argued that the defendant’s use of the word “Champagne” on non-alcoholic sparkling drinks was misleading and constituted infringement of a registered geographical indication under Section 22 of The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 (“GI Act”). It was contended that consumers were likely to believe that the defendant’s products have some association with or originate in the Champagne region of France, even though they were manufactured in India. The plaintiff further alleged that the defendant had adopted bottles similar in shape and appearance to those used for CHAMPAGNE wines, thereby creating a false impression of authenticity and taking unfair advantage of the reputation associated with the geographical indication.

After examining the evidence and submissions made by the plaintiff, the Honourable Delhi High Court held that use of the term “CHAMPAGNE” on products that did not originate from the Champagne region clearly amounted to infringement of the registered geographical indication under Section 22 of the GI Act. The court observed that such use was likely to mislead consumers and dilute the distinctive character and reputation of the geographical indication. It also noted that allowing such practices could eventually lead to the term “CHAMPAGNE” becoming generic, thereby harming the interests of producers in the Champagne region.

Consequently, the court granted a decree in favour of the plaintiff and issued a permanent injunction restraining the defendant from manufacturing, selling, advertising, or distributing any product under the name “CHAMPAGNE” or any expression suggesting a connection with the Champagne region of France. The court also ordered the defendant to surrender all infringing goods, including bottles, labels, cartons, and

packaging materials, for destruction. Although the plaintiff had initially sought damages, this claim was later withdrawn.

In contrast, in the case of *Tea Board of India v ITC Limited* (2011)⁸². The Tea Board of India challenged ITC Limited's use of the name "Darjeeling Lounge," claiming it infringed the Geographical Indication (GI) of Darjeeling tea and misled consumers. The Calcutta High Court ruled in favor of ITC, holding that the use of "Darjeeling Lounge" did not constitute GI infringement. The court reasoned that using the term for a lounge was distinct from selling tea, causing no consumer confusion or unfair competition regarding the tea's origin. As the court held that there was no infringement.

3.4.4 Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan has quickly become a prominent developing jurisdiction in the application of geographical indications (GIs), showing how institutional cooperation and legal reform can hasten GI development. Kazakhstan has established geographical indications as a distinct category of intellectual property protection after amending its Law on Trademarks, Service Marks, Geographical Indications and Appellations of Origin in 2022. A more flexible GI framework that reduced evidential criteria and made registration more accessible to farmers and regional businesses took the role of the previously strict appellation of origin system.

The nation established simplified digital registration processes that allowed for effective application processing through the management of the Ministry of Justice and the National Institute of Intellectual Property (Kazpatent). Consequently, Kazakhstan apparently registered and acknowledged over 100 GI-related rights and applications in about four years, demonstrating the efficacy of its standardized and state-backed strategy. The example of Kazakhstan further demonstrates the wider developmental function of geographical indication in fostering economic diversification, regional branding, and rural development. Products like Almaty Aport apples⁸³ Kyzylorda rice, and Kostanay honey have become instances of regional identity associated with intellectual property protection as a result of the government's aggressive promotion of GIs as instruments for safeguarding traditional goods and boosting competitiveness in export markets.

The country's inclusive legal framework also permits both domestic and foreign GIs to receive protection and allows collective use by multiple producers, thereby encouraging participation and compliance with international standards under the TRIPS Agreement. Despite challenges

⁸² *Tea Board of India v. ITC Limited* (2011)

⁸³ Astana Times (2024). All Roads Lead to Rome: Legendary Almaty Aport Apple Hits Global Spotlight, 20 January 2024. <https://astanatimes.com/2023/11/almaty-apor-kazakh-signature-apple-achieves-global-recognition-with-geographic-indication-status/>

relating to enforcement, producer awareness, and long-term commercialization, Kazakhstan's model demonstrates that strong governmental involvement, flexible legislation, and efficient administrative systems can significantly expand GI registration and utilization. Its experience therefore provides valuable lessons for developing countries seeking to strengthen agricultural value chains, preserve cultural heritage, and modernize intellectual property systems through geographical indications.

3.4.5 African Experience and the Case of Oku White Honey in Cameroon

Within Africa, the case of Oku White Honey in the Republic of Cameroon as its first registered GI is particularly instructive. WIPO describes Oku White Honey as a product whose success is linked to the unique ecological conditions of its production area and to its distinct reputation, illustrating how GI protection can be used as a development tool for rural communities.

The Cameroonian experience is relevant to Uganda because it shows that African products with strong environmental and cultural linkages can successfully build a GI identity when these qualities are properly documented and protected. This comparison is especially important for products such as Rwenzori Honey, Bugisu Coffee and Nilotica Shea Butter which similarly derive their distinctiveness from localized ecosystems and traditional practices. The lesson for Uganda is that the challenge is less about whether qualifying products exist, and more about whether supporting institutions can document, organize, and protect them effectively⁸⁴.

3.4.4 Regional Institutional Lessons from Africa

At the regional level, ARIPO emphasizes cooperation among member states in intellectual property matters and has also discussed approaches for GI protection among African member states. While regional GI harmonization remains less developed than in the EU, the African discussion reflects growing recognition that GIs can support economic development, heritage protection, and value addition.

For Uganda, this regional experience suggests that GI development should not be treated as a purely legal exercise. It should also be linked to agricultural policy, rural development and branding and regional trade strategies. This is consistent with the findings of the present study, which show that successful GI implementation in Uganda will depend on cross-sectoral coordination rather than isolated legal reform alone.

⁸⁴ Table A, Comparatives Analysis of the GI System, in EU, China, India, Kazakhstan and Cameroon.

3.4.6 Comparative Implications for Uganda

The comparative analysis reveals several lessons for Uganda. First, successful GI systems rely on clear legal procedures and credible product specifications. Second, strong institutions are needed to support producer groups through registration, quality assurance and enforcement. Third, market success depends on transforming informal origin-based reputation into formally protected commercial value. Finally, comparative experience shows that GI protection can play a wider developmental role by strengthening rural livelihoods, market access, and product identity when properly implemented.

In Uganda's case, the evidence from this study suggests that the country already possesses many of the raw conditions found in successful GI jurisdictions: distinctive products, localized knowledge, and market reputation. What remains underdeveloped are the systems for documentation, coordination, certification and enforcement. Comparative experience therefore supports the argument that Uganda's priority should be to build an operational framework capable of converting existing product potential into formal GI protection and commercialization. This is an inference based on the comparative material and the empirical findings.

Conclusion

The comparative review demonstrates that Uganda is not constrained by the absence of suitable products, but by the limited operationalization of its GI system. Experiences from the European Union, China, India, Kazakhstan and African examples such as Oku White Honey show that effective GI regimes require more than legislation. They require coordinated institutions, producer support, clear product standards, traceability, and market-oriented protection mechanisms with deliberate government efforts as an enabler as has been demonstrated by China and India. Moreover if the producers must participate, competent authorities must spearhead the identification, promotion, registration processes in order to boost the value addition in the agricultural sector⁸⁵. These lessons provide a strong foundation for designing a practical framework for expanding Uganda's National GI Register.

3.5 Conclusion

This section has examined the identification and assessment of potential Geographical Indications (GIs) in Uganda through an analysis of legal criteria, empirical data, and comparative perspectives⁸⁶. The findings

⁸⁵ Geographical Indications Act No.8 of 2013 Section 8 (3)(c)

⁸⁶ Ibid 84

reveal that Uganda possesses significant potential for the development and expansion of GI protection, particularly within its agricultural sector.

The analysis of qualification criteria established that GI protection is grounded in the existence of a clear link between product characteristics and geographical origin, supported by both natural and human factors, as well as an established reputation as established in its legal framework. In applying these criteria to selected Ugandan agricultural products, including Bugisu Coffee, Nilotica Shea Butter and Rwenzori Honey, the study found strong evidence of compliance with these requirements. These products demonstrate distinct qualities shaped by environmental conditions such as soil, altitude, and climate, alongside traditional knowledge and localized production practices.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that many Ugandan agricultural products already enjoy informal recognition in the market based on their geographical origin. This is reflected in consumer preferences, demand patterns, and perceived quality differentials. However, this recognition remains largely unstructured and is not supported by formal certification mechanisms such as GIs, limiting the ability of producers and traders to fully capture the associated economic benefits.

Despite this strong potential, the study identified several critical challenges that hinder the effective identification and registration of GI products. These include limited awareness and technical knowledge among producers, weak institutional coordination, complex and resource-intensive registration procedures, and insufficient technical capacity for documentation and standardization. Additionally, weak enforcement mechanisms and market inefficiencies further constrain the effectiveness of the GI system. The comparative analysis reinforced these findings by demonstrating that successful GI systems in other jurisdictions are characterized by strong institutional frameworks, clear product specifications, effective enforcement mechanisms, and well-developed market linkages and government support. In contrast, Uganda's GI system remains underdeveloped in its operational aspects, despite the existence of a legal framework.

Overall, the findings of this section confirm that the primary challenge in Uganda is not the absence of products eligible for GI protection, but rather the lack of a systematic and coordinated approach to identifying, registering, and commercializing these agricultural products. This underscores the need for a comprehensive framework that addresses the legal, institutional, technical and market-related dimensions of GI development.

The insights generated in this section provide a strong foundation for the next chapter, which proposes a structured framework and targeted interventions aimed at expanding Uganda's National Geographical Indications Register and strengthening the overall GI system.

4 FRAMEWORK AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXPANDING UGANDA'S GI REGISTER

4.1 Proposed Framework for Identification and Assessment of GIs

Building on the findings of this study, there is a clear need for a structured and systematic framework to guide the identification, assessment, and registration of potential Geographical Indications (GIs) in Uganda. The proposed framework seeks to address the gaps identified in awareness, institutional coordination, technical capacity, and procedural complexity, while leveraging the existing strengths in product potential and market recognition.

The framework adopts a multi-stage approach, integrating legal, institutional, and technical processes to ensure a coherent and practical pathway for expanding the National Geographical Indications Register.

4.1.1 Stage 1: Identification of Potential GI Products

The first stage involves the systematic identification of agricultural products with potential for GI protection⁸⁷. GIs link people, places, and products.⁸⁸ This process should be led by relevant institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), in collaboration with the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), local governments, and research institutions.

Identification should be based on:

- Evidence of a link between product quality and geographical origin
- Presence of unique natural factors (soil, climate, altitude)
- Existence of traditional knowledge and localized practices
- Established or emerging market reputation

This stage should incorporate participatory approaches, involving farmers, cooperatives, and local communities to ensure that indigenous knowledge is captured and documented.

4.1.2 Stage 2: Preliminary Assessment and Screening

Once potential products have been identified, a preliminary assessment should be conducted to determine their eligibility for GI protection. This stage should involve technical experts in agriculture, intellectual property, and quality assurance.

⁸⁷ Bagal, M., Vittori, M., and Samper, F. L., Manual for Geographical Indications in Africa, 2nd Edition, (European Union Intellectual Property Office, 2023)

⁸⁸ FAO Guide. Linking people, places and products, a guide for promoting quality linked to geographical origin and sustainable geographical indications, 2009, <http://www.fao.org/3/i1760e/i1760e00.htm>

Key assessment criteria include: distinctiveness of the product, strength of the geographical link, consistency of production practices, market recognition and demand.

This stage serves as a filtering mechanism to prioritize high-potential products for further development and registration.

4.1.3 Stage 3: Development of Product Specifications

The third stage involves the preparation of detailed product specifications, which are essential for GI registration. This includes:

- Description of the product and its characteristics
- Definition of the geographical area
- Documentation of production methods
- Identification of quality standards and control mechanisms

Given the technical complexity of this stage, it is critical to provide support to producer groups through technical experts, extension services, and research institutions. This stage directly addresses the capacity gaps identified in the study.

4.1.4 Stage 4: Institutional Review and Registration

Following the development of product specifications, the application for GI registration should be submitted to the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB). This stage involves:

- Legal and technical review of the application
- Verification of compliance with GI requirements
- Approval and entry into the National GI Register

To enhance efficiency, this stage should be supported by streamlined procedures and clear guidelines to reduce delays and administrative burdens.

4.1.5 Stage 5: Certification, Monitoring and Enforcement

Registration alone is insufficient without effective post-registration systems. This stage focuses on:

- Certification of producers and products
- Monitoring compliance with product specifications
- Enforcement of GI rights to prevent misuse

Institutional mechanisms should be strengthened to ensure continuous quality control and protection of registered GIs.

4.1.6 Stage 6: Commercialization and Market Development

The final stage involves leveraging GI certification for economic benefit. This includes:

- Branding and promotion of GI products
- Development of domestic and export market linkages
- Support for value addition and product differentiation

This stage ensures that GI protection translates into tangible economic gains for producers and contributes to rural development.

Interpretation of the Framework

The proposed framework provides a holistic and integrated approach to GI development in Uganda. It addresses the entire value chain, from product identification to market commercialization, and responds directly to the challenges identified in the study.

By structuring the process into clear stages, the framework enhances:

- Accessibility for producers
- Coordination among institutions
- Efficiency in registration
- Sustainability of GI systems

Implication for Policy and Practice

The adoption of this framework would enable Uganda to move from a fragmented and underutilized GI system to a more structured and functional model. It provides a practical roadmap for expanding the National GI Register and strengthening the role of GIs in agricultural development and trade.

4.2 Legal and Institutional Recommendations

Building on the findings of this study and the proposed framework, this subsection outlines key legal and institutional reforms necessary to strengthen the identification, registration, and protection of Geographical Indications (GIs) in Uganda. These recommendations aim to address the systemic gaps identified across awareness, coordination, technical capacity, and enforcement.

4.3 Implementation Strategies

The successful operationalization of the proposed framework and legal recommendations requires a set of clear, practical, and phased implementation strategies. These strategies are designed to translate policy into action by outlining specific interventions, responsible actors and priority areas for execution.

4.3.1 Phased Implementation Approach

Given the complexity of GI development, a phased approach is recommended to ensure manageable and sustainable implementation.

Phase I: Pilot Phase

- Identify and prioritize a small number of high-potential products for instance; Bugisu Coffee, Nilotica Shea Butter, Rwenzori Honey

- Conduct detailed product assessments and develop specifications
- Support initial GI registration for selected products

Phase II: Expansion Phase

- Scale up identification and registration to additional products

Strengthen institutional systems and coordination mechanisms

- Expand awareness and training programs to more regions

Phase III: Consolidation Phase

- Strengthen enforcement mechanisms
- Enhance market integration and branding of GI products
- Monitor and evaluate system performance

This phased approach allows for learning, adaptation and gradual capacity building.

4.4 Expected Economic and Development Impact

Geographical Indications protection has been promoted due to its significance in protecting intellectual property and preventing misleading practices like imitation and counterfeiting, and preserving cultural heritage and creating a sense of pride and identity to farmers and local communities, available literature also indicates that GIs, particularly for Agricultural products, greatly contribute to agricultural development. For developing economies like Uganda where agriculture remains a key pillar of the economy, GIs therefore have a role to play towards improvement in agricultural productivity and economic wellbeing, especially for rural populations, to ultimately reduce poverty and stimulate national economic growth.

GIs provide a mechanism for producers of agricultural products to differentiate their products from others in the market by capturing their unique quality and distinctive characteristics, and connecting them to their origins thereby distinguishing the products in the eyes of the consumers. According to Blakeney (2021)⁸⁹, this kind of market differentiation gives an opportunity to Agricultural producers especially in developing and low developed countries, to access wider and high value markets for their goods in Industrialized countries thereby overcoming the ordinary challenge of accessing such markets when producing general commodity categories of goods.

Related to the differentiation of goods through GI registration, Blakeney (2021) further indicates that origin labelling, even for homogeneous products, has been found to capture premium pricing on the market partly because of the consumers' view of the positive impact of the GIs on the local

⁸⁹ Blakeney M. The Role of Geographical Indications in Agricultural Sustainability and Economic Development (2021). *Annals of Agricultural & Crop Sciences*. 2021; 6(1): 1069

economy.⁹⁰ Also, given that GIs registration requires adherence to a strict specification that details the production methods and ingredients to ensure a given product, and in a bid to maintain product quality, it has been noted that producers ultimately improve productivity over time.

Importantly, GI registration has been identified as a key contributor to rural development through among other things⁹¹; promotion of collective market access as opposed to individual producer competitions thereby creating better returns especially for small producers who would ordinarily struggle with an individual producer market access system; and contributing to the sustainability of rural communities by preserving agriculture and creating employment in these areas, retaining the rural population especially the young people, creating agro-tourism with its associated impacts on investments into the areas, and generally improving the incomes of the rural communities.

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Bramley, C. and J. Kirsten, 'The Economics of Geographical Indications: Toward a Conceptual Framework for Geographical Indication Research in Developing Countries', Contributed Paper for the International Roundtable on the Economics of Intellectual Property Rights, WIPO, Geneva, November 26-27, 2007.

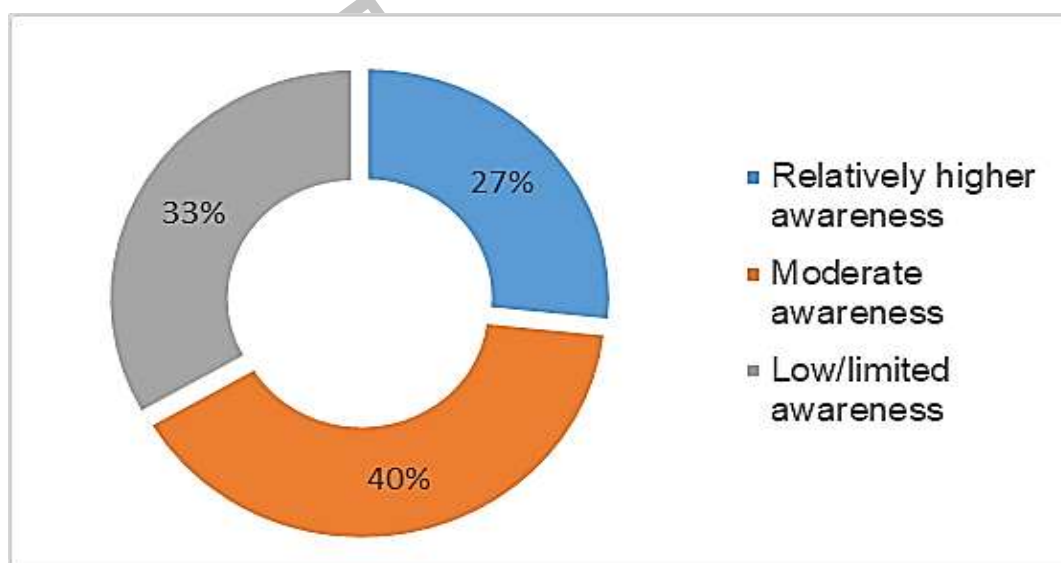
5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

This section presents and discusses the findings of awareness and understanding of geographical indications (GIs) across the three categories of farmers and producers, policy makers and institutional actors traders and exporters.

THEME 1: AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS (GIs)

Figure 1: Awareness of Geographical Indications among Farmers and Producers

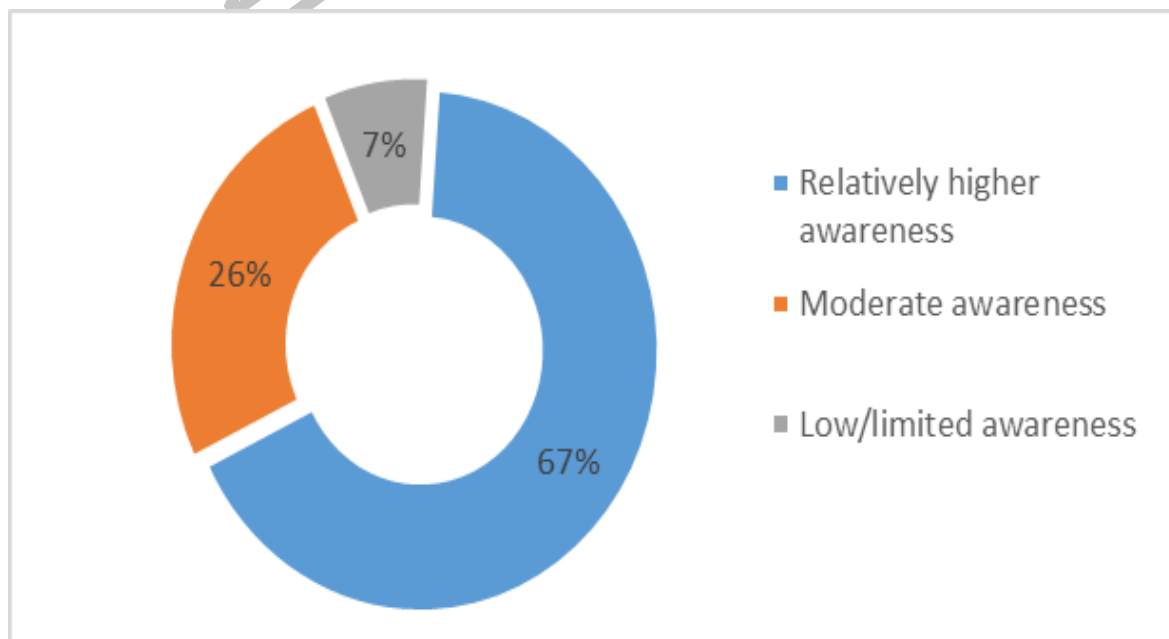


From Figure 1 above, the findings reveal that awareness and understanding of Geographical Indications (GIs) among farmers and local producer groups remain moderate and uneven. About 40% of respondents demonstrate a moderate level of awareness, meaning they generally understand the concept of origin based products, but lack a comprehensive understanding of the full GI concept, particularly the link between quality, reputation, and geographical origin. A smaller proportion, 27% of the respondents, exhibit relatively higher awareness levels indicating a strong conceptual clarity of GIs and their functional significance. However, a significant share (33%) still demonstrates low or limited awareness, reflecting basic or in some cases incorrect understanding of GI principles.

One of the respondent is quoted to have defined Geographical indication as “when a product can be associated with a unique and particular region or place”, while another one defined it as “The general location of a certain product in a special area”

This distribution suggests that although there is some level of awareness of origin-based labeling, a substantial proportion of farmers and producer groups lack adequate and in-depth knowledge of GIs. The relatively high percentage of low awareness further highlights gaps at the grassroots level, underscoring the need for intensified sensitization, practical training and continuous capacity-building initiatives to enhance understanding and effective participation in GI systems, particularly among grassroots farmer or producer groups.

Figure 2: Awareness of Geographical Indications among Policy Makers and Institutional actors



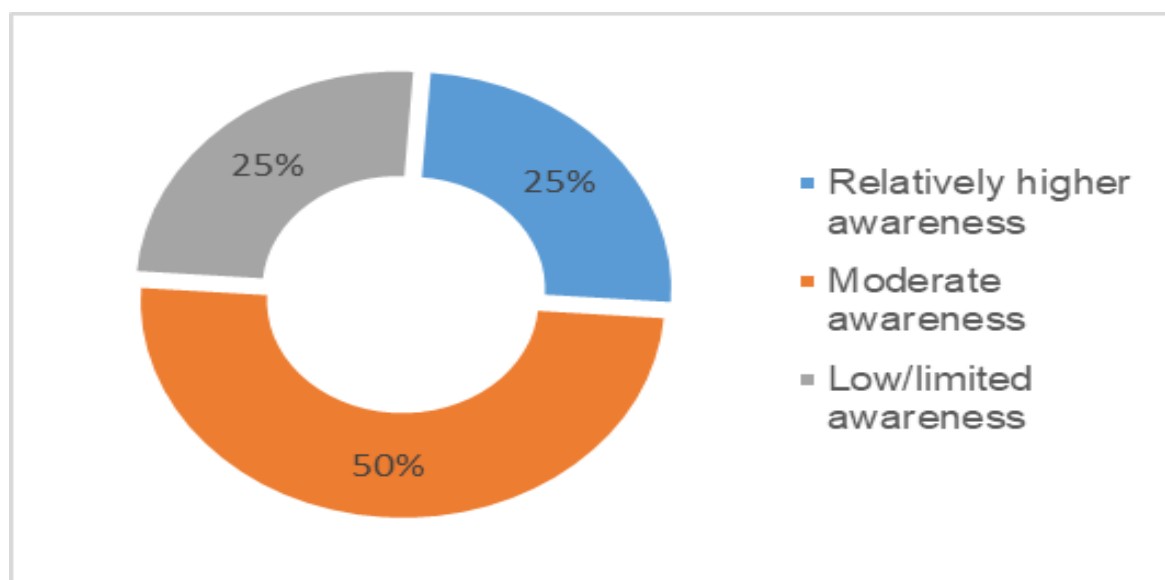
From Figure 2 above, the findings indicate that awareness and understanding of Geographical Indications (GIs) among Policy Makers and Institutional actors is relatively high, though still not fully uniform. A majority, about 67% of respondents, demonstrate relatively higher awareness, indicating strong conceptual clarity and a good understanding of the GI framework, including the link between product quality, reputation, and geographical origin.

Approximately 26% of respondents exhibit moderate awareness, suggesting that while they understand the basic idea of origin-based labeling, their knowledge of the full GI concept remains incomplete. A small proportion (7%) shows low or limited awareness, indicating minimal or unclear understanding of basic GI principles.

Overall, these findings suggest that Policy Makers and Institutional Actors are more knowledgeable and better exposed to GI concepts compared to other groups. However, the presence of moderate and low awareness levels highlights the continued need for targeted training,

awareness campaigns, and technical capacity building to ensure a more consistent and comprehensive understanding across all stakeholders in Uganda.

Figure 3: Awareness of Geographical Indications among Traders and Exporters



From Figure 3 above, the findings indicate that awareness and understanding of Geographical Indications (GIs) among Traders and Exporters remain moderate but limited in depth. About 50% of respondents demonstrate a moderate level of awareness, suggesting that they understand the general concept of origin-based products but lack a comprehensive grasp of the full GI framework, particularly the link between quality, reputation and geographical origin.

A smaller proportion, 25% of respondents, exhibit relatively higher awareness, indicating a clearer and more advanced understanding of GI concepts. However, an equal proportion (25%) shows low or limited awareness, reflecting minimal or unclear understanding of basic GI principles.

These findings suggest that while there is a basic level of awareness within this group, in-depth knowledge of GIs remains limited. The distribution between moderate and low awareness highlights the need for targeted sensitization, technical training, and awareness programs to strengthen understanding and ensure more effective engagement with GI systems.

These findings suggest that although traders and exporters have some exposure to origin-based labeling, their depth of understanding of GIs is not as strong as expected given their critical role in commercialization and market access linkages. This highlights a gap in knowledge related to certification, branding, marketing and legal protection of GI products. It

therefore highlights the need for a robust collaborative approach for targeted, market-oriented training and sensitization programs to enhance their capacity to effectively promote trade and commerce and promote GI products in both domestic and international markets.

CATEGORY A: FARMERS/ PRODUCER GROUP RESPONSES

2. What makes product name, e.g. Bugisu Arabica Coffee, Nilotica Shea Butter from North Eastern Uganda, and Rwenzori Honey from this specific area different from the same product grown elsewhere in Uganda? (Choose one product provided here)

Table 1:

Factor Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Environmental/Climatic factors (climate, altitude, terrain)	3	20.0%
Biological/Ecological factors (flora, vegetation, nectar sources)	3	20.0%
Geographical identity/origin	4	26.7%
Product quality/Sensory attributes (taste, quality)	2	13.3%
Branding/labeling factors	2	13.3%
Other (unclear responses)	1	6.7%
Total mentions	15	100%

From Table 1 above, the findings indicate that respondents largely associate the uniqueness of products such as Rwenzori Honey and Bugisu Arabica Coffee to their geographical origin and natural environmental conditions. The most frequently cited factor was geographical identity/origin (33.3%), suggesting that many respondents understand that these products derive their distinctiveness from the specific regions in which they are produced.

One respondent explained: *“Rwenzori Coffee is different from other coffees due to the fact that it originates from the Mt Rwenzori which is the highest mountain in Uganda with snows and equator crossing which leads to better formation of a coffee beans hence better cup test compared to other coffees”*

Environmental and ecological factors were also strongly highlighted, with 20.0% of responses referring to climatic conditions (such as altitude and

temperature) and another 20.0% pointing to biological/ecological factors, including vegetation and nectar sources.

Another respondent reported: *“Rwenzori Honey is unique because of mountainous and savanna vegetation cover that is a source of nectar used by bees.”*

This reflects a fairly good appreciation of the natural elements that contribute to product differentiation. However, only 13.3% of respondents linked uniqueness to product quality or sensory attributes, such as taste, while a similar proportion (13.3%) mentioned branding and labeling aspects. Additionally, some responses (6.7%) were unclear.

The findings suggest that while respondents have a strong awareness of the role of geographical link and natural factors in shaping product uniqueness, there is still limited understanding of the full Geographical Indication (GI) concept, particularly the connection between origin, quality, and formal certification mechanisms. This highlights the need for further sensitization and education to deepen stakeholders’ understanding of GI systems beyond basic geographical associations.

a. How does altitude influence quality of the product in this area?

Table 2:

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Climate & temperature effects (cooler temperatures, weather conditions, rainfall)	5	35.7%
Biological/ecological effects (vegetation, tree species, flowers, nectar sources)	4	28.6%
Product quality attributes (taste, size, ripening, coffee cup quality)	3	21.4%
General/geographical uniqueness statements	2	14.3%
Total	14	100%

From the analysis above, the findings show that respondents generally understand altitude as a key determinant of product quality, particularly through its influence on environmental and ecological conditions.

The most frequently cited factor (35.7%) relates to climate and temperature effects, where respondents noted that higher altitudes lead to cooler temperatures, increased rainfall patterns, and slower crop maturation processes. These conditions are perceived to enhance product quality, particularly for coffee and honey.

Closely related are biological and ecological factors (28.6%), where respondents emphasized that altitude influences the types of vegetation, trees, and flowers available. These ecological differences determine the nectar sources for bees and the plant characteristics that shape product uniqueness.

Additionally, 21.4% of responses linked altitude directly to product quality attributes, such as improved taste, better coffee bean size, and superior cup quality due to slower ripening processes. This reflects a practical understanding of how altitude affects final product characteristics.

One respondent puts it this way: *“On high altitudes there are cooler conditions and these lead coffee beans to ripen at a slow pace, forming better coffee cup attributes.”*

The findings indicate a fairly strong but uneven understanding of the role of altitude in shaping Geographical Indication (GI) product quality. While most respondents recognize its importance, there is still a need for deeper technical interpretation of the scientific interplay, linkages between altitude, ecology resulting in unique attributes for product differentiation to strengthen GI awareness and appreciation.

b. How do soils characteristics influence flavor, taste or color?

Table 3:

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Enhances flavor/taste	7	50.0%
Improves quality/yield	4	28.6%
Other (general or indirect statements)	3	21.4%
Total	14	100%

The findings indicate that respondents generally recognize soil characteristics as an important determinant of product quality, particularly in relation to flavor and taste development.

The most dominant response, “enhances flavor/taste” (50.0%), shows that half of the respondents associate soil properties with the sensory qualities of agricultural products. This reflects a strong perception that soil composition directly contributes to the distinctive taste profiles of Geographical Indication (GI) products such as coffee and honey.

A further 28.6% of responses indicated that soil improves quality and yield, suggesting an understanding that soil fertility and structure influence both productivity and overall product performance.

However, 21.4% of responses were general or indirect statements, indicating limited technical explanation of the specific soil properties that drive differences in flavor, taste, or color.

One respondent noted that: *“The soils, cool climate and high altitude improve the taste, color and quality of the product.”*

This response highlights the perceived role of natural environmental conditions, specifically soil characteristics, climate, and altitude in shaping the quality attributes of local agricultural products.

Overall, the findings demonstrate a moderate level of understanding of the role of soil characteristics in shaping GI product attributes. While respondents clearly recognize the importance of soil, there remains a need for deeper technical knowledge and capacity building to strengthen understanding of the scientific link between soil composition and product quality differentiation.

c. What traditional knowledge or know how influences production?

Table 4:

Response category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Traditional knowledge and localized practices (hive making, harvesting methods, bee care)	8	57.1%
Seasonality knowledge (seasons, rainfall patterns, timing)	3	21.4%
Indigenous farming practices (intercropping, organic farming, post-harvest handling, etc.)	2	14.3%
Other (general or indirect statement)	1	7.1%
Total	14	100%

The findings indicate that traditional knowledge plays a central role in shaping production practices for Geographical Indication (GI)-related agricultural products.

The most dominant response category, traditional knowledge and localized practices (57.1%), shows that more than half of the respondents rely on inherited community knowledge systems passed down through generations. These practices guide key production activities such as cultivation, harvesting, and general farm management.

One respondent highlighted the cultural and historical significance of coffee production, and noted that: *“The fact that coffee was first planted by our elder grandparents ... coffee beans were used by two people who would want to become friends... a bean seed would be used to pick blood... and be swallowed by another likewise...”*

A further 21.4% of responses highlight seasonality knowledge, indicating that farmers depend on understanding rainfall patterns, seasonal changes, and timing of agricultural activities to optimize production outcomes.

Additionally, 14.3% of responses refer to indigenous farming practices, including intercropping, organic farming methods and traditional post-harvest handling techniques. These practices are viewed as important in maintaining product authenticity and supporting sustainable production.

Only 7.1% of responses fall under general or indirect statements, suggesting that most respondents were able to link traditional knowledge to specific production practices.

One respondent stated: *“Early planting not beyond a specific date ensures crops mature before the dry season.”*

This demonstrates that traditional knowledge serves as a climate adaptation mechanism.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that production systems are strongly embedded in traditional and indigenous knowledge systems, particularly through localized practices and seasonal understanding. However, there is still a need for systematic documentation and integration of this knowledge with modern agricultural and GI standards to enhance productivity, consistency, and market competitiveness.

d. Are there historical reputations from this area?

Table 5:

Response category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	14	93.3%
No	1	6.7%
Total	15	100%

The findings indicate a very strong perception of historical reputation associated with products from the study area. An overwhelming majority of respondents, 93.3%, affirmed that there is a historical reputation linked to their area of origin, while only 6.7% disagreed.

These results suggest that respondents strongly associate their locality with a long-standing reputation for producing distinctive agricultural products, particularly coffee and honey. However, the qualitative findings provide

deeper insight into the nature and sources of this perceived historical reputation.

One respondent noted: *“Yes, our ancestors used to participate in hunting for honey for cultural and medicinal purposes.”*

This response highlights that the area’s historical reputation is deeply rooted in indigenous practices and traditional knowledge systems, particularly honey hunting. It reflects the cultural and medicinal significance of honey production, which has been transmitted across generations and continues to shape local identity and perceptions of product value.

Other respondents emphasized the strong link between product identity and place of origin, stating: *“The area is known for producing natural high quality honey.”*

These responses demonstrate a clear perception that the study area has a recognized reputation for producing high-quality honey, reinforcing the concept that product uniqueness is strongly tied to geographical origin and environmental context.

Some respondents associated historical reputation with long-term agricultural production systems, particularly coffee, with one respondent noting that: *“Our area is a mixed story both positive and challenges: high altitude (good for Arabica). About 85% of farmers in Kasese grow coffee; it contributes significantly to Uganda’s exports.”*

This reflects a historical and economic reputation linked to coffee production, highlighting both favorable agro-ecological conditions (such as high altitude) and the region’s significant contribution to national export earnings. It indicates that the area is widely recognized as a major coffee-producing region with established historical production systems.

Overall, while the quantitative data confirms a strong consensus on the existence of historical reputation, the qualitative findings show that this reputation is understood in experiential and cultural terms rather than formal GI or historical documentation terms. This highlights the need for further sensitization on how historical reputation is defined, documented, and utilized within Geographical Indication systems.

4. Are there specific traditional methods of planting, harvesting, or processing that have been passed down through generations in this village?

a) Planting methods

Table 6:

Response category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Beekeeping practices (hive setting, swarm capture, local hives, honey hunting)	4	30.8%
Planting techniques (spacing, hole preparation, seed planting methods, zig-zag/broadcasting)	4	30.8%
Agro-ecological practices (flower planting, plant diversity influencing taste)	2	15.4%
Farm establishment practices (site selection, land preparation, manure application)	2	15.4%
Input/quality control practices (use of certified planting materials)	1	7.7%
Total	13	100%

The findings indicate that a variety of traditional methods of planting, harvesting, and processing are practiced and passed down through generations within the study area, reflecting both crop production and beekeeping systems.

The most prominent categories are beekeeping practices (30.8%) and planting techniques (30.8%). Respondents highlighted traditional knowledge such as the use of local bark hives, swarm capture techniques, honey hunting systems, and skills in hive placement. These practices demonstrate strong indigenous knowledge in managing bee populations and honey production.

Similarly, traditional planting methods were widely cited, including spacing (e.g., 2m×2m for Arabica, 3m×3m for Robusta), zig-zag planting, broadcasting, and whole preparation techniques. These practices indicate a structured approach to crop establishment informed by local knowledge.

Additionally, agro-ecological practices (15.4%) were noted, particularly the planting of specific flowers to attract bees and the recognition that plant diversity influences the flavor and taste of products such as honey. This reflects an understanding of the link between biodiversity and product quality.

Farm establishment practices (15.4%), including site selection, land preparation, and manure application, further highlight the role of traditional agronomic knowledge in optimizing production conditions.

A smaller proportion (7.7%) emphasized input and quality control practices, such as sourcing planting materials from authorized suppliers, indicating some integration of traditional and modern approaches.

b) Production/ processing methods;

Table 7:

Response category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Honey processing & handling methods (fern use, hand harvesting, filtering, separation, bee knowledge)	5	41.7%
Coffee processing methods (dry, wet, semi-dry, husking, pulping)	3	25.0%
General post-harvest & quality management practices	2	16.7%
Traditional/local equipment use	1	8.3%
Agronomic production practices (cropping systems, pruning, soil management)	1	8.3%
Total	12	100%

The findings show that traditional production and processing methods are widely practiced and vary across product types, particularly between honey and coffee.

The most dominant category is honey processing and handling methods (41.7%), where respondents highlighted practices such as processing honey using ferns, hand harvesting, separating honey from bee grubs and pollen, and filtering using nets or sticks. Additionally, knowledge of bee behavior was emphasized, indicating that production is not only technical but also experiential and skill-based.

Coffee processing methods (25.0%) were also prominently mentioned, including dry (natural), wet (washed), and semi-dry (pulped natural) processing techniques, as well as activities like beating coffee to remove husks and using pulper machines. These methods demonstrate a mix of traditional and semi-modern processing approaches that influence product quality.

A smaller proportion (16.7%) emphasized general post-harvest and quality management practices, such as ensuring proper harvesting at maturity and maintaining standards for quality output.

Some respondents (8.3%) highlighted the continued use of traditional equipment, while another 8.3% referred to broader agronomic production practices like intercropping, pruning, and soil fertility management, which indirectly influence processing outcomes.

Notably, one response pointed out poor processing practices (e.g., processing on bare ground using substandard materials), indicating variability in adherence to quality standards.

c) Harvesting method;

Table 8:

Response category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Coffee harvesting methods (selective picking, red ripe cherries, hand-picking, strip picking)	6	46.2%
Honey harvesting methods (smoking, buckets, traditional smokers, hive handling)	4	30.8%
Quality-oriented harvesting practices (harvesting capped honey, ripe produce, clean handling)	2	15.4%
Other/modern or unclear methods	1	7.7%
Total	13	100%

The findings reveal that traditional harvesting methods are widely practiced, with clear distinctions between coffee and honey production systems.

The most dominant category is coffee harvesting methods (46.2%), where respondents emphasized practices such as selective picking of red ripe cherries, hand-picking, and strip picking. These methods highlight a strong awareness of the importance of harvesting maturity in determining product quality. However, some responses indicated less optimal practices, such as harvesting mixed ripe and unripe cherries, which may negatively affect quality.

Honey harvesting methods (30.8%) were also prominent, particularly the use of smoke, buckets, and traditional smokers. These practices demonstrate indigenous knowledge in safely harvesting honey while managing bee behavior. Some respondents further emphasized preparation techniques and the need to protect bees during harvesting, reflecting sustainable harvesting practices.

A smaller proportion (15.4%) focused on quality-oriented harvesting practices, such as ensuring only capped honey is harvested and using clean baskets for coffee, indicating awareness of post-harvest quality control.

Only 7.7% of responses referred to modern or unclear methods, suggesting that traditional approaches still dominate the harvesting process.

5. How do buyers or traders perceive products from your district/region and does its origin influence the price or demand?

Table 9:

Response category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High quality/value perception (taste, aroma, texture, color)	8	57.1%
Strong demand and market preference	4	28.6%
Reputation and consistency (historical quality performance)	1	7.1%
Origin-based differentiation affecting price/demand	1	7.1%
Total	14	100%

From the table above, the findings indicate that buyers and traders generally have a positive perception of products from the study area, with the majority of responses (57.1%) emphasizing high quality and value attributes. These include characteristics such as taste, aroma, color, texture, and overall product purity, particularly for honey and coffee.

One respondent reported that: *“Our product is admired by most people because of its sweetness and scent.”*

A significant proportion (28.6%) highlighted strong demand and market preference, indicating that buyers actively seek products from the region. This suggests that origin plays an important role in shaping consumer trust and repeat purchasing behavior.

A smaller number of responses (7.1%) pointed to reputation and consistency, where buyers base their perceptions on past performance and reliability of quality. Another 7.1% explicitly noted that origin influences price and demand, with differences in taste, color, and scent contributing to price variation.

However, a few respondents mentioned external factors such as packaging and marketing, suggesting that while origin is important, market presentation and promotion also influence buyer perception.

The results demonstrate that quality is the primary driver of demand, while reputation plays a supporting role in shaping buyer preferences.

Together, these factors suggest that geographical origin contributes to a strong market position, even though respondents do not explicitly frame this in formal Geographical Indication (GI) terms.

6. In what ways has your role in producing this agricultural product influenced your household's well-being and the broader community?

Table 10:

Response category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Increased income / economic improvement	10	31.3%
Improved household welfare (education, health, basic needs)	9	28.1%
Community development (infrastructure, schools, cooperation)	5	15.6%
Employment creation (direct and indirect)	3	9.4%
Environmental & sustainability benefits (tree planting, pollination, safe practices)	3	9.4%
Social cohesion / collective action	2	6.3%
Total	32	100.0%

The findings from the above table demonstrate that agricultural production has had a broad and transformative impact on both household welfare and community development.

The most dominant category is increased income (31.3%), with respondents highlighting improved economic status, regular cash flow, and better market returns. This income has directly translated into improved household welfare (28.1%), particularly in the ability to pay school fees, access healthcare, and meet daily domestic needs.

For instance, one respondent noted: *"I am able to meet my domestic expenses and pay school fees for my children..."*

Another emphasized: *"It has helped me to get school fees and medicine."*

These responses illustrate how agricultural production contributes directly to human capital development, especially education and health.

At the community level, 35.7% of responses highlighted broader development impacts, including support to schools, improved sanitation and water access, and better road networks for market access

One respondent explained: *“Premium funds after selling coffee have contributed to good sanitation by connecting water to the communities and supporting schools.”*

Additionally, employment creation (21.4%) was noted as a key benefit, particularly in value chains such as honey production (e.g., beehive makers, sellers, and field workers).

Environmental and sustainability benefits (21.4%) also emerged, with respondents mentioning planting bee-friendly trees, pollination benefits and adoption of safer farming practices.

For instance, one respondent noted: *“Bees also pollinate plants.”*

Social cohesion (14.3%) was reflected in collective actions such as community programs, farmer cooperation, and shared production standards.

These findings highlight that agricultural production, especially when linked to high-value or origin-based products, is a multidimensional driver of rural development, supporting both economic and social well-being at household and community levels.

7. What are the biggest threats to the reputation or quality of your product today (e.g., climate change, middle-men, or fakes)?

Table 11:

Response category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Climate change & environmental challenges (drought, rainfall variability, loss of flora)	6	21.4%
Market-level challenges (middlemen, price distortions, exploitation)	6	21.4%
Adulteration / fakes / product mixing	5	17.9%
Pest and diseases	2	7.1%
Poor processing, handling & storage	2	7.1%
Limited knowledge /lack of awareness	2	7.1%
Use of chemicals/ environmental contamination	2	7.1%
Loss of biodiversity (important plant/flower species)	2	7.1%

Weak standards enforcement / non-compliance	1	3.6%
Total	28	100.0%

The most dominant threats are climate change and environmental challenges (21.4%) and market-related challenges (21.4%), particularly the role of middlemen. Respondents highlighted issues such as irregular rainfall, drought, and destruction of key plant species, all of which directly affect production quality especially for honey and coffee. At the same time, middlemen were reported to exploit farmers, distort prices, and mix high-quality products with lower-quality ones, thereby undermining both quality and reputation.

One respondent reported: *“Since our coffee from the Rwenzori is of high quality, middle men from other places always compete so much for it since they want to always mix it with their other coffees at a low altitude and this leads to hiking prices”*

A closely related concern is adulteration and product mixing (17.9%), where respondents noted that: *“High-quality products are blended with inferior ones, fake products are sold under established regional names and new entrants misuse established names (e.g., “Rwenzori Honey”) despite differences in quality.”* This presents a direct threat to consumer trust and brand integrity.

Other important threats include pests and diseases (7.1%), particularly affecting coffee (e.g., coffee wilt disease), poor processing and storage practices (7.1%), leading to quality deterioration, limited awareness and technical knowledge (7.1%), which affects adherence to standards, use of chemicals (7.1%), especially harmful to bees and product purity and loss of biodiversity (7.1%), such as disappearance of key flowering plants for bees.

Additionally, weak enforcement of standards (3.6%) was identified as a concern, pointing to broader systemic and institutional challenges in ensuring compliance, maintaining product integrity, and effectively protecting product reputation in the market.

One respondent emphasized this concern by noting: *“Not considering the parameters that can keep our product standards safe can affect the quality because there you will miss the GI.”*

This statement underscores the importance of strict adherence to established standards and specifications, highlighting that failure to comply not only compromises product quality but also risks losing the integrity and protection associated with Geographical Indications (GIs).

8. What measures or initiatives do you believe could be adopted to better support farmers in producing origin based agricultural products?

Table 12:

Response category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Capacity building/ training & extension services	8	29.6%
Sensitization / awareness creation on GIs & best practices	5	18.5%
Strong farmer cooperatives / GI associations (collective action)	5	18.5%
Improved tools, equipment & infrastructure	3	11.1%
Establishing and enforcing quality standards	3	11.1%
Policy/institutional support (by-laws, government support)	2	7.4%
Market access / linkages (reliable buyers)	1	3.7%
Total	27	100%

The findings strongly emphasize capacity building and training (29.6%) as the most critical intervention needed to support farmers. Respondents consistently pointed to the need for Technical training in production practices, extension services, skills in modern and safe farming methods (e.g., beekeeping).

Closely linked to this is sensitization and awareness creation (18.5%), particularly on the importance of Geographical Indications (GIs), best agricultural practices, organic and quality-focused production.

Another major theme is the importance of collective action through cooperatives or GI associations (18.5%).

The desire for regional solidarity was a recurring sentiment among participants: “By coming together as different groups of farmers from the Rwenzori region... we get one voice under Rwenzori Honey GIs.”

Support for infrastructure and equipment (11.1%), such as better tools and beekeeping equipment, was also highlighted as essential to improving productivity and quality.

Similarly, establishing and enforcing quality standards (11.1%) emerged as a key requirement to ensure product consistency, safety, and protection of GI identity.

Other important but less emphasized areas were policy and institutional support (15.4%), including by-laws and government involvement and market access (7.7%), particularly the need for reliable buyers.

Bottom of Form

CATEGORY B RESPONSES.

2. What specific approaches are currently used to determine if a Ugandan agricultural product qualifies for the National GI Register?

Table 1

Approach	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Origin and quality link assessment	10	21.7%
Scientific and technical verification	9	19.6%
Legal and regulatory assessment	7	15.2%
Field verification and stakeholder engagement	6	13.0%
Producer group/Collective organization	5	10.9%
Evidence and documentation	4	8.7%
Public scrutiny & awareness	3	6.5%
Market reputation & sensory attributes	2	4.3%
Totals	46	100.0%

As presented in the above table, the top three approaches are Origin–Quality link assessment (22%), scientific & technical verification (20%), and legal & regulatory assessment (16%). Together, these three account for 58% of all mentions, showing they are the backbone of Uganda’s GI qualification process.

One person of the policy makers responded: “Currently, such products are being identified and profiled to confirm their uniqueness and their linkage to their places of origin.”

Field verification (13.0%) and producer group involvement (10.9%) are also significant, highlighting the importance of on-ground validation and collective management.

Public awareness and market reputation are less frequent but still part of the broader framework.

4. In your view, what are the primary bottlenecks in the current registration process for local potential agricultural GI products?

Table 2

Bottlenecks Identified	Frequency	% (Approx.)
Low awareness and knowledge gaps	18	22.2%
Technical complexity and limited expertise	12	14.8%
High cost and resource constraints	11	13.6%
Weak producer organization	10	12.3%
Limited scientific evidence and research gaps	9	11.1%
Institutional and administrative constraints	7	8.6%
Complex and lengthy processes	5	6.2%
Market and incentive constraints	4	4.9%
Weak quality control and traceability mechanisms	3	3.7%
Geographical/boundary challenges	2	2.5%
Total	81	100.0%

As identified by the respondent, the most prominent constraint is low awareness and knowledge gaps (22.2%), indicating that many stakeholders, especially farmers and local producers lack sufficient understanding of what GIs are, their benefits, and the registration process.

Technical complexity and limited expertise (14.8%) was identified as another bottleneck facing GI registration. The registration requires specialized skills such as product specification development, traceability systems, and scientific validation. The relatively high percentage implies that even when awareness exists, stakeholders often lack the technical capacity to move forward.

High costs and resource constraints (13.6%) also emerge as a major bottleneck. The financial burden associated with research, certification, documentation, and compliance makes it difficult for smallholder farmers and producer groups to participate effectively in the GI system.

Another critical issue is weak producer organization (12.3%). Since GIs rely on collective action, fragmented or poorly coordinated producer groups limit the ability to standardize production practices, enforce quality controls, and submit joint applications.

In addition, limited scientific evidence and research gaps (11.1%) point to insufficient data to substantiate the link between product quality and geographical origin, an essential requirement for GI registration. This reinforces the earlier finding on technical capacity constraints.

Institutional and administrative constraints (8.6%) and complex, lengthy processes (6.2%) suggest procedural inefficiencies and possible bureaucratic delays, though these are less dominant compared to knowledge and capacity issues.

Less frequently mentioned but still relevant are market and incentive constraints (4.9%), which imply that weak commercial incentives may discourage stakeholders from pursuing GI registration, and weak quality control and traceability systems (3.7%), which undermine compliance with GI standards.

Geographical and boundary challenges (2.5%) appear to be the least significant bottleneck, indicating that defining production areas is not a major issue relative to other constraints, particularly where products are spread across regions or lack clear identity in the market.

4. To what extent does the current legal framework governing Geographical Indications support and reinforce the implementation of the GI system in Uganda?

Response category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Moderate extent (Partial effectiveness)	6	24%
To a large/great extent (Strong Support)	13	52%
Neutral/unclear responses	3	12%
Low/limited extent	3	12%
Total	25	100%

From the table above, the majority of the respondents believe the framework supports GI implementation to a large extent (52%). However, a significant portion indicates moderate effectiveness, due to low awareness, weak enforcement and limited funding and capacity.

Very few see it as fundamentally weak (12%), suggesting the issue is not the law itself, but implementation.

The empirical findings indicate that while Uganda's legal framework for Geographical Indications is widely perceived as robust and aligned with international standards, its effectiveness in practice is constrained by implementation challenges. These include limited awareness, weak enforcement mechanisms, insufficient institutional capacity, and resource constraints. This suggests that strengthening operational and institutional aspects of the GI system is critical to fully realizing the potential of the existing legal framework.

5. What key support mechanisms are necessary to strengthen the capacity of regional farmer or producer groups to manage and commercialize their registered GI products effectively?

Support mechanisms	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Capacity building, training and awareness	11	20.4%
Market access, branding and commercialization	10	18.5%
Quality assurance, certification and traceability	9	16.7%
Institutional strengthening and governance	8	14.8%
Financial support and resource mobilization	6	11.1%
Legal protection and enforcement	4	7.4%
Research, innovation and technical support	3	5.6%
Infrastructure and value chain development	2	3.7%
Policy coordination and multi-stakeholder support	1	1.9%
Total	54	100%

From the table above, the most dominant need from the findings is capacity building, training, and awareness (20.4%), showing that skills and knowledge gaps are the primary constraint for GI commercialization. Market access and branding (18.5%), indicating strong demand for commercialization and visibility support. Quality assurance and certification systems (16.7%) highlight the importance of maintaining GI standards and credibility. Institutional strengthening and governance (14.8%) shows the need for well-structured producer organizations.

Financial support (11.1%) remains a key enabler but is less frequently emphasized. Legal protection and enforcement, research innovation and technical support, and infrastructure and value chain development are less frequently mentioned but remain important enabling factors.

6. Once a product is registered, what legal and institutional mechanisms are in place to prevent its unauthorized use or misrepresentation by third parties?

Legal and institutional mechanisms	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Legal protection and exclusive rights framework	10	21.7%
Civil, criminal & judicial enforcement mechanisms	9	19.6%
Institutional oversight & regulatory bodies	8	17.4%
Certification, inspection & quality control systems	6	13.0%
Market surveillance & anti-counterfeit systems	5	10.9%
Producer group/self-regulation mechanisms	4	8.7%
Border control & international protection	2	4.3%
Public awareness & sensitization	2	4.3%
Total	46	100%

From the findings, the most frequently cited mechanism is legal protection and exclusive rights (21.7%), showing that respondents strongly view GI protection as anchored in statutory rights. Enforcement mechanisms (19.6%) such as courts, injunctions, penalties, and criminal sanctions are also highly emphasized, reflecting the importance of deterrence. Institutional oversight (17.4%) highlights the role of agencies and related bodies in managing GI systems.

Certification and inspection systems (13.0%) are seen by government officials, policy makers, civil society and academia as essential for ensuring compliance with GI standards. Market surveillance (10.9%) reflects concern about counterfeit and misleading products in circulation. Producer self-regulation (8.7%) shows the importance of CMOs and associations in internal control. And finally border measures and awareness creation (each 4.3%) are less frequently mentioned but still relevant supportive mechanisms.

7. From your professional experience, what policy, institutional measures or strategies would you propose to promote the recognition

and registration and enforcement of geographical indication (GI) related to agricultural products?

Policy/institutional Measures	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Awareness creation and capacity building	11	18.6%
Institutional coordination and governance structures	10	16.9%
Policy and legal framework development/reform	8	13.6%
Enforcement systems (legal, customs, judiciary, admin)	8	13.6%
Registration systems and national GI frameworks	7	11.9%
Market development, branding & commercialization	6	10.2%
Producer organization strengthening (CMOs/cooperatives)	4	6.8%
Financial support and funding mechanisms	3	5.1%
Research, innovation and technical support	1	1.7%
Trade integration and international cooperation	1	1.7%
Total	59	100.0%

From the table above, awareness creation and capacity building (18.6%) are the most critical priorities for promoting Geographical Indications (GIs) in Uganda. Respondents emphasize the need for widespread sensitization and training of farmers, institutions, and consumers, highlighting that knowledge gaps remain the biggest barrier to GI uptake and enforcement.

Institutional coordination (16.9%) is another key area, with calls for stronger collaboration among government agencies such as URSB, MAAIF, NARO, MoTIC, UFZEPA among others. Weak coordination and fragmented roles currently limit effective implementation, pointing to the need for a centralized or well-structured governance framework.

Respondents also emphasized the importance of policy and legal reforms and stronger enforcement systems (each 13.6%). While legal frameworks exist, they require simplification, better integration into national policies, and more effective enforcement through courts, customs, and market surveillance.

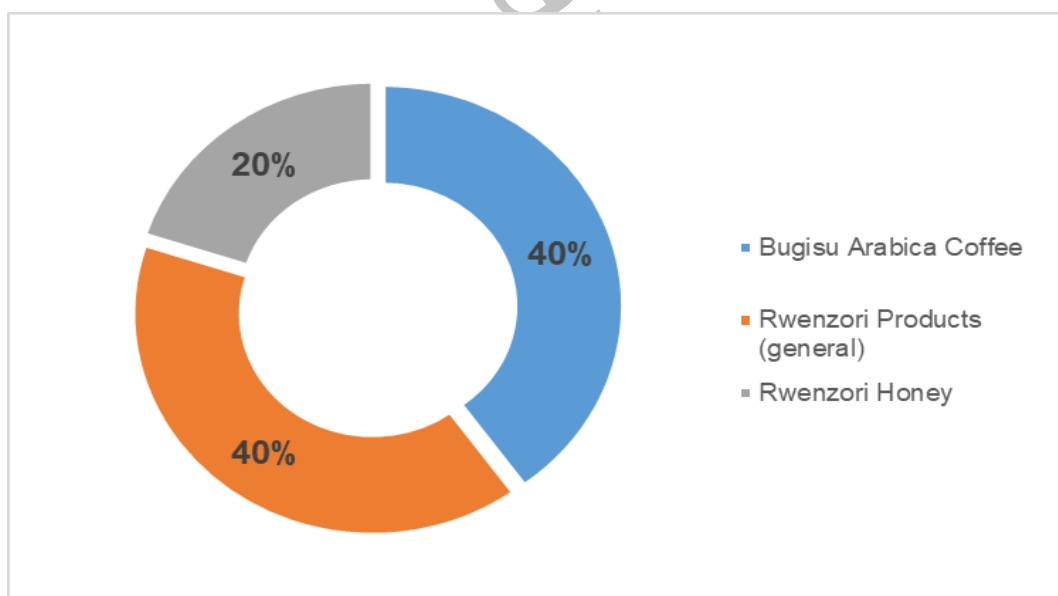
One respondent highlighted three key, interrelated priorities for strengthening Geographical Indications (GIs). “Mass sensitization on Geographical Indications, coupled with strong product marketing to enhance visibility and celebrate quality, as well as strict quality control mechanisms, is essential for promoting effective registration, market success, and credibility of GI products.”

Improving registration systems (11.9%) and promoting market development and commercialization (10.2%) are also seen as essential. This includes simplifying registration processes, profiling GI products, and linking them to premium markets through branding and export strategies.

Producer organization strengthening and financial support, though less emphasized, remain important for sustainability. Research and international cooperation receive minimal attention, suggesting that immediate focus is on building foundational systems rather than expanding globally.

CATEGORY C RESPONSES

2. Do buyers demonstrate demand for region-specific agricultural products in Uganda? If so, which regions are most frequently requested, and what drives this demand? (Please choose from either Bugisu Arabica Coffee, Nilotica Shea Butter from North Eastern Uganda.



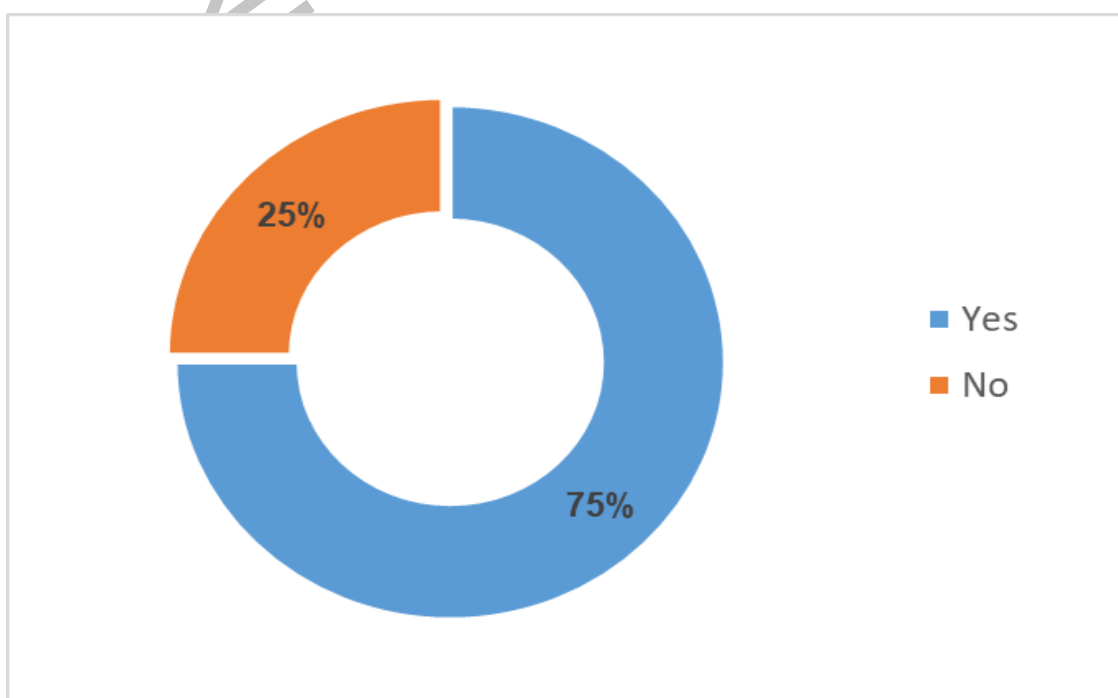
Bugisu Arabica Coffee accounts for 33% of the responses, indicating a relatively strong and consistent recognition among buyers for this product as a region-specific Ugandan coffee.

Rwenzori products also account for 33%, showing that the Rwenzori region as a whole is equally recognized in terms of demand, though not always tied to a specific product category.

Rwenzori Honey represents 17%, suggesting that while it is specifically recognized, it is less frequently mentioned compared to broader references to Rwenzori products or Bugisu coffee.

These results indicate that Rwenzori and Bugisu regions dominate buyer demand for origin-based agricultural products, with Rwenzori having broader recognition while Bugisu Arabica Coffee stands out as a clearly defined and consistently demanded product.

3. In your experience, does a certified origin-based label (e.g., GI) contribute to increased export prices compared to non-certified products?



From the responses, there is a clear majority view that certification of origin-based products (e.g., GI labels) contributes to increased export prices compared to non-certified products.

Most respondents answered "Yes", pointing to the premium potential of certified products, emphasizing that GI certification enhances intrinsic product qualities and supports market differentiation, which can lead to premium.

In contrast, one respondent disagreed, pointing to the early stage of GI adoption and the need for greater awareness to build market recognition. This suggests a strong perception that GI certification positively influences export prices, although its full impact may still be emerging.

3a. Please elaborate on the underlying reasons, including any market, institutional, or value chain factors that shape this outcome.

The responses provided reinforce both sides of the debate. Supporters of GI certification emphasize that *“Attract special premium due to the unique quality”* and *“Specific regions determine specific qualities for certain products.”* These statements suggest that the distinctiveness tied to a geographical location and its traditional know how is a key driver of higher prices.

On the other hand, the dissenting view highlights market and institutional challenges, noting that *“GI products are not required by our buyers... Most selling certification is organic followed by Fair trade.”* This indicates that while GI has potential, its effectiveness depends on buyer awareness, institutional promotion and value chain organization to compete with established certifications.

4. What means do you use to prove the exact source of the agricultural products you sell locally or export to international markets?

Methods of Source Location	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Quality attribute verification (use of product-specific characteristics)	2	50.0%
Traceability/sourcing from origin	1	25.0%
Market-based verification and exposure	1	25.0%
Total Responses	4	100.0%

The above responses indicate that traders and exporters rely on a combination of product quality attributes, traceability and market knowledge to verify the origin of agricultural products.

Quality attributes were the most emphasized as evidence of origin. For coffee, one respondent explained *“Special coffee cup quality particularly the Aroma, body, fragrance, sweetness and bitterness of the coffee.”*

By physical quality attributes such as bean size, shape and colour.” Similarly, another pointed to sensory markers like *“Colour, Taste, Flavour, Aroma etc.”*

One noted simply *“We source from the origin,”* emphasizing reliance on direct geographical sourcing as proof of authenticity.

Others highlighted market-based validation, such as *“Through International exhibitions,”* which allow buyers to verify origin through exposure and trade events.

Collectively, these responses show that proof of origin is established through a mix of direct sourcing, international visibility, and product-specific sensory qualities that reflect the unique characteristics of a particular region against a known product.

5. In your experience as a trader or an exporter, what are the benefits and challenges associated with origin- based labels such as GIs for agricultural products in the market?

The responses highlight both market-related benefits and practical challenges associated with origin-based labels such as GIs.

On the benefits side, respondents note that GIs can build trust through strong traceability systems and enhance product credibility, as reflected in the response *“It builds trust because of the strong traceability system.”* This trust can also support access to premium markets, as indicated by *“You access premium markets.”*

However, several challenges limit these benefits. A key issue is that buyers are often hesitant to pay higher premiums, as noted in a quote *“Buyers are hesitant in offering extra premiums for unique products.”* Similarly, the response *“No defined premium that can motivate a producer”* points to the lack of clear determinant of financial incentives for producers.

Additionally, respondents highlight difficulties in maintaining consistent quality and sufficient supply, as captured in *“Attaining consistency of the product on the market as well as sufficient volume required by the consumers.”*

6. What strategies or interventions do you consider most effective in minimizing the challenges identified in Question 5, and why?

A dominant strategy/intervention identified is the need to ensure consistency in quality, as emphasized by respondents who noted *“Ensuring consistency in quality management strategies”* and *“Consistency in maintaining quality.”* Strengthening quality management systems helps maintain standards, build buyer confidence, and enhance the credibility of GI products.

Another important strategy is market promotion and advocacy, particularly highlighted in the response *“Present GI coffees at exhibitions and also advocate for a defined premium.”* This approach can increase product visibility, educate buyers, and support the establishment of clearer price premiums.

Respondents also stressed capacity building for farmer groups, as reflected in the response *“Building the capacity of collective farmers' associations to provide farmers' support in meeting quality and quantity requirements consistently.”* Strengthening these associations enables better coordination, improved quality control, and reliable supply.

The responses suggest that combining quality assurance, market promotion, and producer capacity building is essential for effectively minimizing the challenges associated with GI products.

This study further examined the implementation of the Geographical Indications (GI) system in Uganda, with particular focus on the effectiveness of the existing legal and institutional framework to support the identification and assessment of agricultural products eligible for GI protection and the development of a structured approach and strategies for expanding the National GI Register.

The findings revealed that Uganda possesses substantial untapped potential for GI development, particularly within its agricultural sector. Several products, including Bugisu coffee, Nilotica shea butter and Rwenzori honey demonstrate strong linkages between product characteristics and geographical origin, supported by both natural factors such as climate and soil, and human factors including traditional knowledge and production practices. These products also exhibit established or emerging market reputation, which is a key requirement for GI protection⁹².

Despite this potential, the study finds that the utilization of the GI system in Uganda remains significantly limited. The gap between potential and actual registration is primarily attributed to systemic challenges, including limited awareness among producers, weak institutional coordination, insufficient technical capacity for product specification and standardization, and complex registration procedures. In addition, weak enforcement mechanisms and reliance on informal market structures further constrain the effectiveness of the GI system.

The study also finds that while geographical origin already influences market demand and product value, this advantage is not fully harnessed through formal GI certification. As a result, producers are unable to fully capture the economic benefits associated with their products' unique geographical identity.

⁹² Ibid

5.2 Answers to Research Questions

The study addressed three key research questions.

First, regarding the legal and institutional framework, the study finds that Uganda has established a GI system that is broadly aligned with international standards under the TRIPS Agreement.⁹³ However, its effectiveness is limited due to challenges in practical implementation, including weak institutional coordination, limited awareness, and inadequate technical support.

Second, with respect to the identification and assessment of GI qualifying products, the study confirms that the case study of three sampled Ugandan agricultural products namely the Bugisu coffee, Rwenzori Honey and Northern Uganda shea butter Nilotica meet the criteria for GI protection. These agricultural products exhibit clear geographical linkages, distinct characteristics, and recognized market reputation, indicating strong potential for inclusion in the National GI Register.

Third, the study identifies multiple barriers affecting the identification, registration, and utilization of GIs. These include low levels of awareness among producers, fragmentation of institutional responsibilities, technical capacity gaps, procedural complexity, weak enforcement mechanisms, and market inefficiencies.

Fourth, the study finds that expanding Uganda's GI system requires a comprehensive set of legal, institutional, and strategic interventions. These include the development of a structured framework for GI identification and registration, strengthening institutional coordination, enhancing technical capacity of stakeholders, simplifying registration procedures, and promoting market integration of GI products.

5.3 Policy and Legal Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for policy and legal reform in Uganda. While the current legal framework provides a foundation for GI protection, there is a need to move beyond formal compliance with international standards toward effective implementation.

From a policy perspective, the study highlights the importance of integrating GI development into broader agricultural and trade strategies. GIs should be recognized not only as legal instruments but also as tools for value addition, rural development, and export promotion.

From a legal perspective, there is a need to strengthen the operational aspects of the GI system, including formulation of clearer procedural guidelines, improved enforcement mechanisms, and enhanced support for producer groups. The collective nature of GI rights also requires policies that

⁹³ Ibid 7

promote internal organization and cooperation management among producers.

Institutionally, the study highlights the importance of coordinated action among key stakeholders, including URSB, MAAIF, NARO, UNBS, MoTIC, UFZEPA and MoJCA. This is so as actors that are charged with the responsibility of creating the conducive environment such strengthening collaboration, advocacy for finance and human resources, clarifying roles will be essential for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the GI system.

5.4 Final Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several key recommendations are proposed.

First, there is a need to implement a structured framework for the identification, assessment, and registration of GI products, supported by clear institutional roles and technical guidelines. These will remedy slow administrative process and the low staffing levels at the Registry.

Second, targeted awareness and capacity-building programs should be developed to enhance understanding of GIs among producers and other stakeholders such as the National Working Group along the value chains while strengthening technical expertise in GI product specification, documentations and quality control mechanisms.

Third, Bugisu coffee, Rwenzori Honey and Northern Uganda shea butter Nilotica meet the criteria for GI protection evidenced by clear geographical linkages, distinct characteristics and recognized market reputation, indicating strong potential for inclusion as protected GIs on the National Register. URSB therefore, needs to closely engage organized producer groups to realize registration and commercialization of their products.

Fourth, the GI registration process should be simplified and supported through technical expertise and provision of financial assistance by government to support massive Implementation through sensitization capacity building, support of the registry, product profiling exercises as evidence to support origin- linked registrations.

Fifth, enforcement mechanisms should be strengthened to protect registered GIs from misuse and to maintain consumer trust in origin-based products.

Finally, GI development should be integrated into national agricultural and trade policies, with a focus on promoting market access, branding, and value addition for agricultural GI products.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that Uganda has both the resources and the legal foundation necessary to develop a functional and impactful GI system. The key challenge lies in transforming this potential into practice through government budget allocations to the GI sector. Robust stakeholder coordination. Well supported and strategically implemented

interventions across the GI value chain. By strengthening its GI system, Uganda can enhance the value of its agricultural products, support rural development, and improve its competitiveness in both domestic and international markets.

The study affirms that the objective of the Project has been successfully accomplished within the prescribed guideline and timeframe. From the above, it concludes that the topic of Identifying and Assessing Uganda's Potential Geographical Indications for Agricultural Products: A Framework for Expanding the National Geographical Indications Register is broad and requires more research from multiple perspectives especially where non- agricultural products are concerned. The researcher believes that the proposals and conclusions presented make a meaningful contribution to the development of the agricultural sector through utilization of GI as a tool for value addition leading to rural economic transformation. It further provides insights for all GI actors such as URSB, the Uganda National IP Office and key implementing agency in collaboration with partners such as MAAIF, NARO, UNBS, UFZEPA, MoTIC, MoJCA, UTB, NPA and producers group to mutually contribute to the growth of Uganda's National GI register.

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Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

My name is Apolot Juliet Scovia and I am a Student of Master of Laws (LL.M) in Intellectual Property and Business Law at Maqsut Narikbayev University (MNU) in Kazakhstan. I am currently conducting a research study titled: " Identifying and Assessing Uganda's Potential Geographical Indications for Agricultural Products: A Framework for Expanding the Geographical Indications Register"

As part of this study, I am collecting data from Traders and Exporters involved or dealing in agricultural products with special qualities due to their geographical area/village or district. I would be grateful if you could take a few Minutes from your busy schedule to complete this questionnaire. The information you provide will be used strictly for academic purposes only.

Please be assured that all responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and by choosing to participate, you are giving consent for your responses to be used for the purposes of this research. You are free to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or negative consequence.

Please note that there is no monetary compensation for participation in this study.

Thank you very much for your time, support, and valuable contribution to this research.

Should you have any questions or require any clarification regarding this study, please feel free to contact the researcher:

Apolot Juliet Scovia

WhatsApp: +256 773 502982.

Email: j_apolot@mnu.kz or apolotjuliet@gmail.com

Demographics

1. Date of interview _____
2. District/City _____
3. Sub-county (*where applicable*) _____
4. Parish & Village _____
5. Cooperative name (*where applicable*) _____
6. Age
☐ 20 - 25 years ☐ 26 - 30 years ☐ 31 - 35 years ☐ 36 - 40 years
☐ 41- 45 years ☐ 46 + years
7. Level of Education Completed
☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ University

Category A: Farmers & Local Producer Groups

8. What do you understand by the term origin- based labels certifications e.g Geographical Indications (GIs)? _____

9. What makes product name, e.g. **Bugisu Arabica Coffee**, **Nilotica Shea Butter from North Eastern Uganda**, and **Rwenzori Honey** from this specific area different from the same product grown elsewhere in Uganda? (Choose one product provided here) _____

10. How do the local soils, climate, or altitude in this region affect the taste, size, or quality of your agricultural product in question 1? _____

- a) How does altitude influence quality of the product in this area? _____
- b) How do soils characteristics influence flavor, taste or color? _____
- c) What traditional knowledge or know how influences production? _____
- d) Are there historical reputation from this area? _____

11. Are there specific traditional methods of planting, harvesting, or processing that have been passed down through generations in this village?

- a) Planting methods
- b) Production/ processing methods;
- c) Harvesting method;

12. How do buyers or traders perceive products from your district/region and does its origin influence the price or demand? _____

13. In what ways has your role in producing this agricultural product influenced your household's well-being and the broader community? _____

14. What are the biggest threats to the reputation or quality of your product today (e.g., climate change, middlemen, or fakes)? _____

15. What measures or initiatives do you believe could be adopted to better support farmers in producing origin based agricultural products? _____

Category B: Policy Makers, Civil Society, MDA's, Academia, GIs National Working Group, ULS IP Cluster

16. What do you understand by term origin based labels such as geographical indication (GIs)? _____

17. What specific approaches are currently used to determine if a Ugandan agricultural product qualifies for the National GI Register? _____

18. In your view, what are the primary bottlenecks in the current registration process for local potential agricultural GI products? _____

19. To what extent does the current legal framework governing Geographical Indications support and reinforce the implementation of the GI system in Uganda? _____

20. What key support mechanisms are necessary to strengthen the capacity of regional farmer or producer groups to manage and commercialize their registered GI products effectively? _____

21. Once a product is registered, what legal and institutional mechanisms are in place to prevent its unauthorized use or misrepresentation by third parties? _____

22. From your professional experience, what policy, institutional measures or strategies would you propose to promote the recognition and registration and enforcement of geographical indication (GI) related to agricultural products? _____

Category C: Traders & Exporters

23. What do you understand by the term origin-based labels products for example Geographical indication (GIs)? _____

24. Do buyers demonstrate demand for region-specific agricultural products in Uganda? If so, which regions are most frequently requested, and what drives this demand? (Please choose from either **Bugisu Arabica Coffee, Nilotica Shea Butter from North Eastern Uganda, and Rwenzori Honey**) _____

25. What strategies or interventions do you consider most effective in minimizing the challenges identified in Question 5, and why? _____

26. In your experience, does a certified origin-based label (e.g., GI) contribute to increased export prices compared to non-certified products? _____

(Please elaborate on the underlying reasons, including any market, institutional, or value chain factors that shape this outcome.)

a. Please elaborate on the underlying reasons, including any market, institutional, or value chain factors that shape this outcome. _____

27. What means do you use to prove the exact source of the agricultural products you sell locally or export to international markets? _____

28. In your experience as a trader or an exporter, what are the benefits and challenges associated with origin-based labels such as GIs for agricultural products in the market? _____

29. What strategies or interventions do you consider most effective in minimizing the challenges identified in Question 5, and why? _____

Comparative Analysis of Geographical Indications (GI) Systems across the EU, China, India, Kazakhstan and Cameroon

Table A.

S/N	PARAMETERS	EU	CHINA	INDIA	KAZAKHSTAN	CAMEROON
1	Legal framework	Sui Generis System. Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012. Distinguishes between PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) & PGI (Protected Geographical Indication)	Hybrid System. Multi-track: <i>Trademark Law</i> (CNIPA), <i>Provisions on GI Products</i> (SAMR), and <i>Measures for Agri-GIs</i> (Ministry of Agriculture).	Sui Generis System. GI of Goods & (Registration Protection) Act, 1999.Compliant with TRIPS Agreement.	Hybrid/Transitioning. Civil Code & Law on Trademarks/Appellations of Origin.Moving toward broader GI definitions.	Regional/Sui Generis. Bangui Agreement (OAPI) & Law No. 2013/003.Heavy reliance on regional IP framework.
2.	Registered GIs	3,300+ (Highest global volume; includes wines, spirits, food).	2,500+ (Rapid growth; leading in annual applications).	430+ (Strong focus on foods, handicrafts and textiles).	100+ (Niche portfolio; focused on Apple, honey, melons).	<10 (Emerging; Peña Pepper is the flagship success, Oku Honey,).
3.	Certification & Control Bodies	Public-Private Mix. Member State authorities (e.g., INAO) manage scrutiny; independent private bodies conduct audits. High compliance cost but high trust.	Government-Led. CNIPA, SAMR, and local Quality Supervision Bureaus. Top-down enforcement structure.	Registry-Led. GI Registry (Chennai) handles registration. Post-registration monitoring relies heavily on producer associations; external auditing is weak.	State-Centric. Kazpatent and Ministry of Justice. Certification infrastructure is still developing.	Community-Based. Ministry of Trade "Defense Groups" (producer associations). Supported by international development agencies (e.g, CIRAD, AFD).
4	Promotion & Marketing	Global Trade Policy. EU Quality Logo; bilateral trade agreements; "Enjoy, it's from Europe" campaigns.	Rural Revitalization. GI Tourism; E-commerce zones (Alibaba/JD.com); government subsidies for rural brands.	Heritage Branding. Linked to "Incredible India" tourism and state-specific textile expos. Focus on "Legacy Goods"	Export Diversification. Government-led promotion at international fairs; branding as "Organic/Natural."	Niche Export Strategy. Targeting luxury gourmet markets in EU; reliance on donor funding for initial branding.
5	Enabling Factors	- High consumer awareness. - Strong infrastructure.	- Massive domestic market. - Strong state support	- Rich biodiversity & culture. - Strong NGO/Civil	- High potential for organic produce. - State support for	- Unique tropical products. - International donor

		• Mature precedents.	• Digital integration.	• society involvement. • Cost-effective registration.	• agriculture. • Proximity to China/Russia markets.	• support. • Regional IP protection (OAPI).
6	Infringement Cases	• Strict Enforcement. - Case: Feta Cheese (ECJ reserved name for Greece); Champagne (Global defense of name).	• Improving Enforcement. - Case: Scotch Whisky (SWA successfully sued local counterfeiters); ongoing anti-counterfeiting drives.	• Landmark Litigation. - Case: Darjeeling Tea (Successful global defense against blending/misuse); Basmati disputes.	• Administrative Focus. - Currently focused on defining specifications; limited case law history.	• -
7	Key Challenges	• High administrative burden. • High compliance costs for SMEs.	• Fragmented agency structure. • Prevalence of counterfeits. • Consumer confusion over labels.	• Registry-Led. - GI Registry (Chennai) handles registration. - Post-registration monitoring relies heavily on producer associations; external auditing is weak.	• Low domestic consumer awareness. • Underdeveloped producer associations. • Technical expertise gaps.	• Organizing informal farmers. • Financing certification. • Competition from informal markets.