

# Collective action and geographical indications

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# OUTLINE

- Why is collective action important to GIs?
- Success factors
- Conclusion

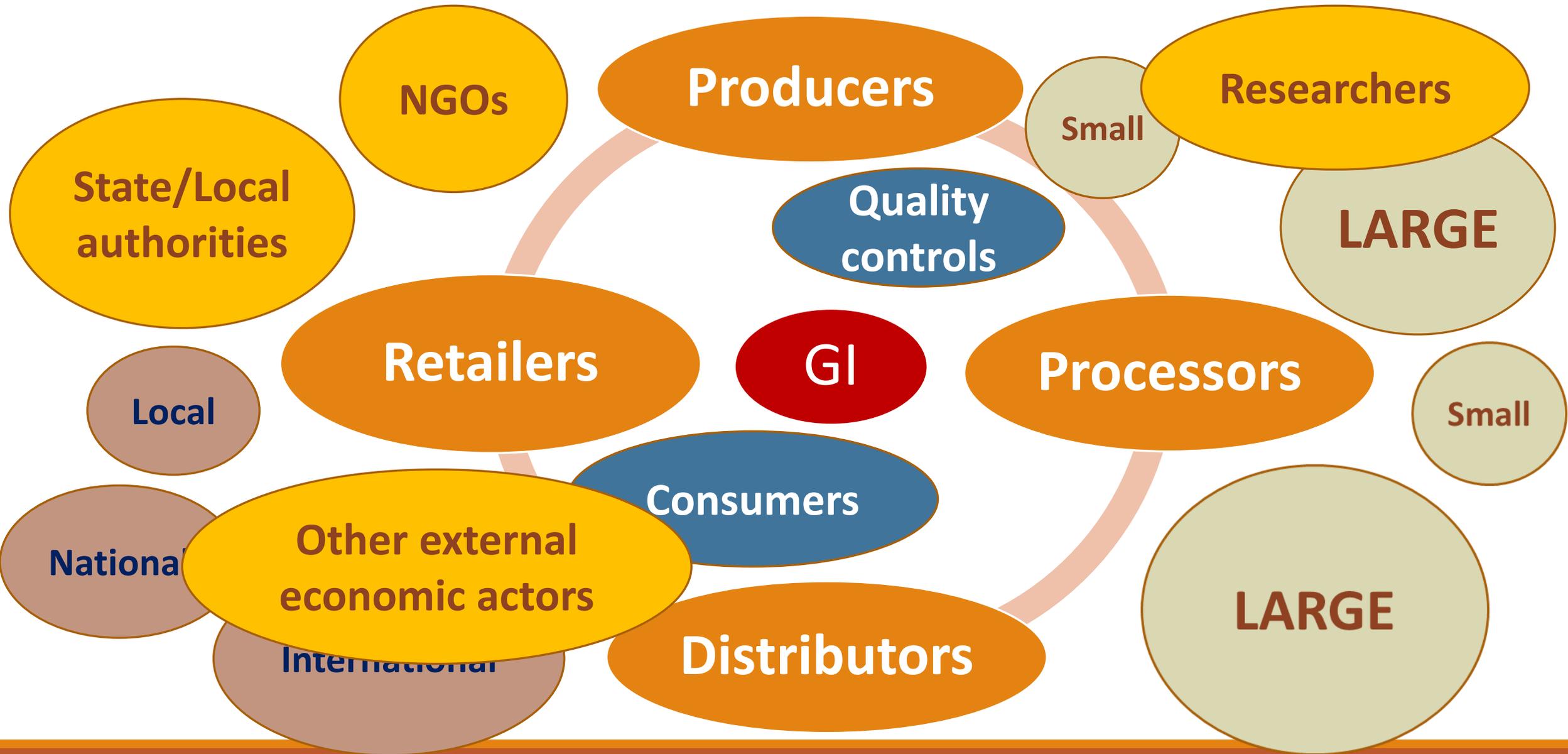
Why is collective action  
important to GIs?

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# The collective dimension of GIs from a legal perspective

- GIs signal origin and thus have close ties with places and territories where people have developed the product over time
- GIs are usually considered as collective goods: all and only the stakeholders located inside the area and who satisfy the GI rules are entitled to use the GI
- Collective right: GIs cannot be licensed or transferred outside the region

# The collective dimension from a practical perspective



# Collective action and coordination are needed ...

## *Before* the GI is granted

- Grouping of local stakeholders
- Definition of common rules and objectives: geographical area, production norms, etc.
- Application process

## *After* the GI is granted

- Collaboration for production, packaging, marketing and joint promotion
- Management of the GI, including quality controls
- Exchange of information, good practices
- Participation in decision-making and distribution of benefits

# Success factors

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# 5 critical steps where collective action is needed

- Elaboration phase
- Marketing and promotion
- Quality controls
- Participation in decision-making and distribution of benefits
- Exchange of good practices

# 1. Elaboration phase

- Definition of common objectives: fight against usurpation, price premium, etc.
- Definition of common rules: delimitation of the geographical area, raw materials, specific methods of production, name of the GI
- Active involvement of all actors who have the right to define the common rules that will apply to them for using the GI: participatory approach that empowers local actors
  - Mobilisation and awareness raising of local actors on the potential for development and their role
  - Practical activities: producer meetings, studies, visit exchanges with other GI systems
  - Mediation to reconcile different visions and interests (NGOs, State, researchers)
- Collective rules should not be seen as a constraint but as a condition for efficiency

## 2. Marketing and promotion

- Balance between cooperation and competition – unlike most value chains, all stakeholders share a common asset: the GI reputation
- Interdependence of all stakeholders: the behaviour of each producer can benefit the GI as an asset - or diminish its value and affect the reputation of the GI if the producer does not respect the rules
- Promotion can be collective: small producers and firms can obtain a good added-value with little investment in promotion and advertising for an already existing product (no need to create new products/new production practices)
- Other collective actions to reduce costs: market research and information
- Responsibilities such as customer relations, price and distribution can remain the responsibility of each producer who maintains his financial and commercial autonomy
- Use of both GI logo and producer's logo

# 3. Quality controls

- Quality controls are essential for ensuring consumer confidence in the GI
- Quality controls are first based on a system of self-enforcement by producers
- Controls also at the initiative/collective level and external controls on the market (shared costs/mutual fund for smaller producers)
- Example of Gari (cassava semolina) from Savalou (Benin): quality controls are carried out at the processing and trading stages by a group of Savalou women processors. They only allow women whom they know and trust into their processing. Within the group, a social control is imposed to respect correct processing rules and marketing practices. A lack of respect for the rules entails the risk of being expelled from the group.

# 4. Participation in decision-making and distribution of benefits

- The fair distribution of benefits along the supply chain depends on whether the CoP/production rules includes all the stakeholders by referring to the know-how and skills of all actors, including farmers (and not only processors for instance) – example of fried calamari from Halong
- Balanced and representative composition of the governing body of the GI organisation (association, trade union etc.)
- Definition of democratic internal rules for decision-making (secret vote with majority rule in the general assembly etc.)

# 5. Exchange of good practices

- GI initiative provides a platform for exchange of good practices, provide technical assistance and information – sometimes with an external technician
- Example of green lentils of Berry and Mussels from Mt St Michel
  - Increase the product quality
  - Decrease the individual costs of services like research and development, technical advice and information relating to competitors, quality and production volumes etc.

# Conclusion

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- Strong collective and social dimension of GIs
- GI result from a shared knowledge and collective expertise
- The success of GI initiatives requires the will, motivation, capacity and coordination of all stakeholders involved in the production, processing, packaging and marketing of the products
- Opportunity to empower local actors

# One final word on the role of other actors and other sectors

- Although they are not directly involved in the production or processing of the product, external actors like traders, sellers, restaurant owners etc. can play a very important role in supporting marketing and promoting activities like tourism
- Example of Saffron of Taliouine: French chefs collaborated to raise awareness of the local community and the product's value by promoting it in their restaurants
- In turn, GI initiatives can strengthen other economic activities, especially in the tourism and gastronomy sectors – example: development of Stellenbosh wine route in South Africa and touristic trail around Café de Colombia in Colombia – Argan oil

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=euXYde1Dxz4>

Thank you for your  
attention

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