



METRICS That Matter

Driving Accountability, Visibility, and Impact in GI Associations



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PREFACE

Geographical Indications (GIs) are powerful tools that connect products to their cultural roots, traditional practices, and regional identity. In a country as diverse as India with over 650 registered GIs and countless more deserving recognition, the need for a structured and meaningful evaluation system has become critical. While registration under the GI Act provides a legal shield, it does not by itself ensure sustainability, market success, or socio-economic transformation for producer communities.

To bridge this gap, we propose the GI Association Evaluation Metrics, a standardized reporting and assessment framework designed specifically for both agricultural and non-agricultural GIs in India. This framework aims to evaluate not just legal compliance, but also governance, financial transparency, quality control, branding & its dilution, innovation, community impact, future readiness, and sustainability. The ultimate goal is to enable GI Associations to measure, improve, and strategically develop their ecosystems. One of the key motivations behind this

initiative is the growing number of potential GIs across India that remain unregistered or face rejection due to the inability to meet minimum legal and procedural requirements such as proof of historical usage, organizational structure, quality standards, geographical linkage, or documentation of collective activity. These challenges often arise not from lack of merit, but from lack of capacity, guidance, and structured evaluation mechanisms.

This model also draws upon the European GI evaluation practices, particularly those under the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy, where GI governance is regularly assessed through indicators related to traceability, value addition, sustainability, and socio-economic impact. Our metrics adapt these global standards to the Indian context, creating a practical, checklist-driven evaluation tool for both registered and emerging GI Associations.

By introducing this framework, we aim to transform GIs from symbols of heritage into engines of prosperity, while also supporting more prospective GIs to meet legal thresholds and enter the formal system. This is not only a step toward strengthening India's IP ecosystem, but also toward realizing the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, rural development, and inclusive economic growth.

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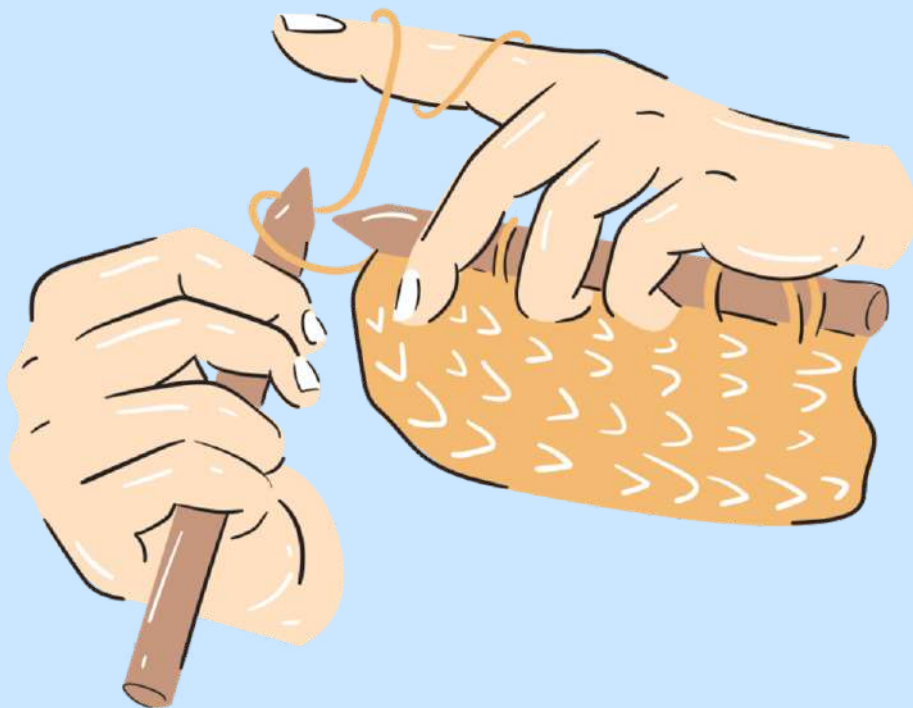
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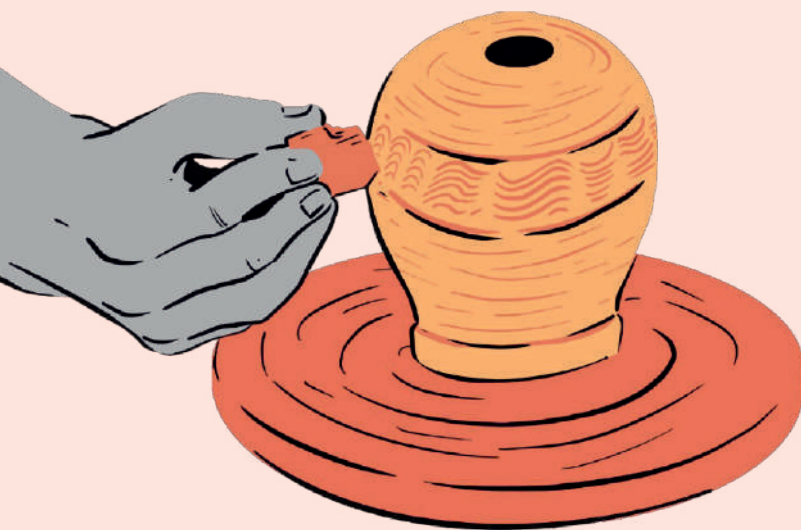
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1. INTRODUCTION





What are GI Associations?

GI Associations are legally recognized bodies or representative collectives that are formed to oversee and manage the interests of a particular Geographical Indication. These associations may be composed of artisans, producers, cooperatives, or a combination of stakeholders who are involved in the production and marketing of GI-registered goods. In the Indian context, such associations are responsible for applying for GI registration, maintaining quality standards, facilitating the registration of Authorized Users (AUs), promoting the GI brand, and protecting it against misuse. These bodies serve as the legal and organizational backbone for sustaining the identity and value of GI products in the domestic and international markets.

For example, the Darjeeling Tea Association has played a pioneering role in global branding and legal enforcement, including international certification and traceability systems. Similarly, the Pochampally Handloom Weavers Cooperative Society actively supports design innovation, training programs, and product promotion for the iconic Ikat fabric.

Importance of Evaluating GI Performance

Despite a robust legal framework for GI registration in India, the post-registration journey of many GI Associations remains unstructured and under-supported. Evaluating the performance of these

associations is crucial to understanding how effectively they fulfill their responsibilities and deliver benefits to member communities. Without proper evaluation, associations may fall short in areas like quality control, market access, financial transparency, brand enforcement, compliance with statutory obligations, effective member engagement, innovation capacity, digital visibility, training and capacity-building initiatives, documentation practices, and institutional governance. These gaps, if left unaddressed, can weaken the GI ecosystem, limiting the product's market potential and the community's ability to derive sustainable socio-economic benefits. A standardized performance evaluation allows for benchmarking, capacity building, and corrective actions. It also helps government bodies and donors make informed decisions about policy support and funding allocations. In essence, evaluating GI performance ensures that legal recognition translates into real socio-economic outcomes.

Role in Upliftment, Enforcement & Market Access

GI Associations are central to realizing the true potential of GIs in uplifting communities. By organizing producers and artisans, these associations create opportunities for collective bargaining, value addition, and access to broader markets. Through consistent branding and promotion, they enable GI products to stand out in competitive environments. Associations also play a pivotal role in enforcement—monitoring misuse, initiating legal actions, and maintaining the integrity of the GI in commercial use. When well-functioning, a GI Association becomes not only a guardian of heritage but also a driver of economic empowerment, skill development, and rural entrepreneurship. Evaluating and strengthening these associations is thus essential to achieving inclusive and sustainable development through GIs.

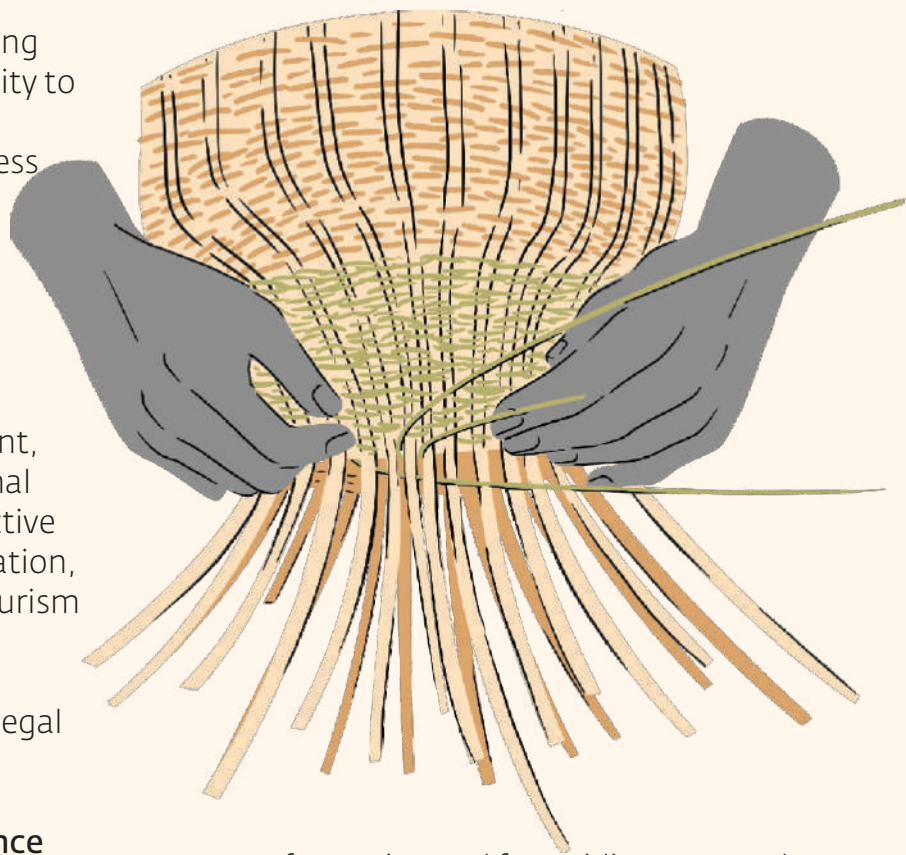
2.

OBJECTIVES OF THE METRICS FRAMEWORK



Measuring Impact Beyond Registration

One of the central objectives of the proposed evaluation framework is to expand the lens of GI assessment beyond legal registration. While registration marks the formal recognition of a GI, it is merely the starting point. The real value of a GI lies in its ability to enhance livelihoods, preserve cultural heritage, improve market competitiveness and ensure sustainable community development. This framework aims to quantify and qualify these outcomes by evaluating tangible socio-economic indicators such as income growth, employment generation, value addition across the supply chain, skill development, women and youth participation, artisanal retention, rural entrepreneurship, collective bargaining power, price premium realization, financial inclusion, and linkages with tourism and local economic development. These metrics help capture the broader developmental role of GIs beyond mere legal protection.



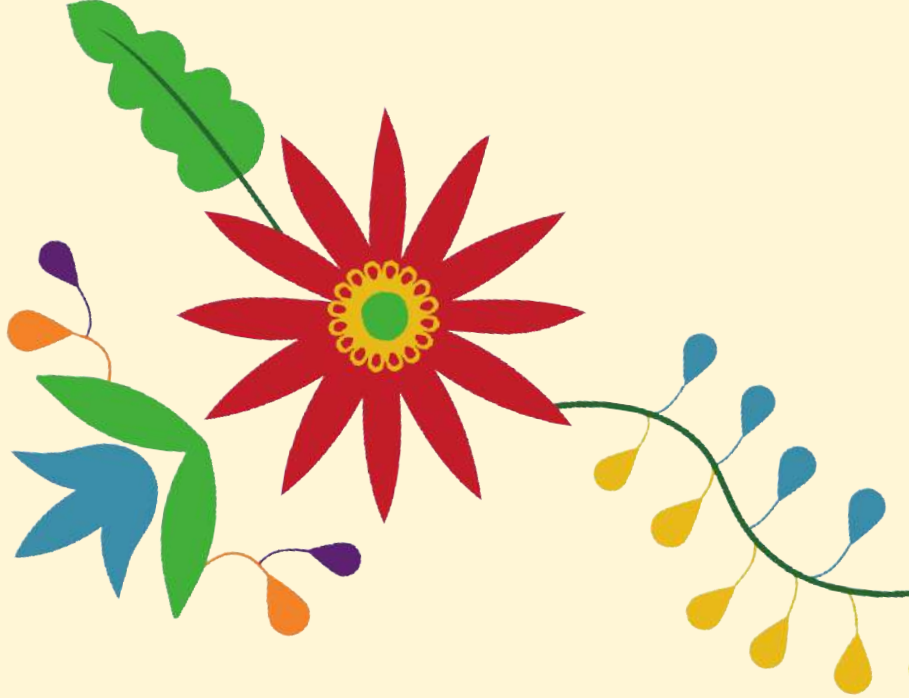
Standardizing Governance & Compliance

There is significant variation in how GI Associations function across India. Some are well-governed and compliant, while others operate without proper documentation, elections, or financial audits. This framework seeks to introduce a standardized set of governance and compliance metrics that every GI Association can benchmark against. These include parameters such as adherence to the GI Act, organizational structure, AU registration practices, meeting frequency, decision-making transparency, and audit compliance. The goal is to bring consistency, credibility, and accountability to the operational fabric of GI institutions.

Enabling Policy and Capacity-Building Interventions

A structured evaluation framework can serve

as a transformative tool for guiding targeted policy interventions and tailored support programs across the GI ecosystem. By systematically uncovering gaps in areas such as skills development, infrastructure readiness, branding capacity, quality assurance, and enforcement mechanisms, the framework enables data-driven decision-making at both institutional and governmental levels. It lays the foundation for designing need-specific interventions including capacity-building modules, access to financial grants, socio-economic surveys, market facilitation schemes, and digital enablement strategies aligned with the unique challenges of each GI cluster. Furthermore, it offers credible, evidence-based insights that empower both public and private stakeholders to invest in GI development with greater clarity, accountability, and strategic focus.



3.

STRUCTURE OF THE EVALUATION METRICS

Scope: Agri & Non-Agri GIs

This framework is thoughtfully structured to evaluate both Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Geographical Indications, acknowledging their distinct production systems, community dynamics, and market pathways. Agricultural GIs—such as tea, basmati rice, or turmeric—typically revolve around farming cooperatives, post-harvest handling, and agro-ecological traceability systems. On the other hand, Non-Agricultural GIs—like handlooms, woodcrafts, and traditional textiles—are artisan-led, embedded in regional culture, and function through more decentralized, legacy-driven networks.

To ensure sectoral sensitivity, the framework retains a uniform set of 10 parameters but allows for adaptive scoring based on sectoral nuances. For instance, while both agri and non-agri GIs require quality protocols, the evaluation of SOPs for food safety in agri-GIs differs from weaving standards or design lineage in handlooms. This balanced approach allows for comparative benchmarking, while remaining grounded in context-specific realities. The framework also enables integration of GI narratives, cultural value, and tourism potential, especially important in non-agri segments.

Target Stakeholders: Associations, Institutions & Ecosystem Enablers

This evaluation system is built as a multi-stakeholder tool to support diverse users within the GI ecosystem:

- GI Associations are the core users, applying the framework for self-assessment, improving internal governance, enhancing visibility, and reporting member impact.
- Government agencies including DPIIT, Ministry of MSME, DC-Handicrafts, state IP

Cells, and industry boards can apply this tool for policy prioritization, funding eligibility, scheme planning, and monitoring progress across clusters.

- Supporting institutions such as NGOs, design and innovation centres, industry chambers, and academic bodies may use the framework for capacity building, research, community development planning, and evaluation of collaborative programs.
- Market-facing actors including export councils, e-commerce platforms, tourism boards, and private investors can use the data to identify compliant, growth-ready GI clusters with strong branding, heritage integration, and scale potential.

In essence, the framework serves as a common language to align decisions, resources, and responsibilities across the GI value chain—from grassroots to global platforms.

Methodology: Scoring, Weightage & Benchmarking

The evaluation is built on a standardized, evidence-based scoring system, offering both quantitative consistency and qualitative depth. Each of the 10 parameters is broken into 5 sub-criteria, with a structured scoring scale of 0–1, 0–2, or 1–3, depending on the nature and priority of the metric. This allows differentiation between core compliance indicators (e.g., legal validity, branding) and developmental markers (e.g., digital adoption, cultural outreach).

Each parameter is assigned a weight aligned with its strategic relevance. For example, Legal & Registration Compliance, Promotion & Branding, and Legal Protection carry higher weight (15 points each), while Advocacy and Sustainability carry moderate weights to ensure balance without diluting importance.

This structured methodology enables:

- **Periodic benchmarking**—to track year-over-year performance and maturity.
- **Cross-comparison**—among associations within the same sector or across regions.
- **Gap identification**—to highlight areas needing support such as training, funding, or policy intervention.

- **Informed decision-making**—for stakeholders to support GI-based development through targeted investment, tourism planning, and heritage promotion.

By linking institutional governance with branding strength, legal defense, and community outcomes, this metrics framework transforms GI evaluation from a compliance checklist into a tool for strategic growth, legacy preservation, and national pride.

Scoring And Weightage

Assessment Category	Max Points	Rationale
Legal & Registration Compliance	15	Foundational compliance, critical for recognition and enforcement
Statutory & Financial Compliance	10	Core to transparency, accountability, and institutional eligibility
Governance & Organizational Structure	10	Drives democratic participation and leadership stability
Operational Hygiene & Quality Control	10	Ensures product authenticity and reputation
Legal Protection, Enforcement & Counterfeit Risk	15	Vital due to high GI misuse and counterfeit risks in India
Promotion, Branding & Commercialization	15	Essential for value addition, visibility, and global access
Socio-Economic Impact & Member Benefit	10	Measures real outcomes for communities and inclusiveness
Representation & Advocacy	5	Supporting but necessary for institutional voice in policymaking
Future Readiness & Sustainability	5	Encourages innovation, climate resilience, and long-term vision
Digital Enablement & Information Management	5	Emerging need for modern governance, traceability, and outreach

| Total | 100 | |



BENCHMARKING

1. Legal & Registration Compliance (15 Points)

1. Validity of GI Certificate and accessibility of historical GI documents (e.g., original application, inspection reports)
2. Authorized User registration and renewal status
3. Use of GI symbol/logo as per legal guidelines on products and packaging
4. Trademark/domain protection linked with GI and its active use
5. Timely submission of required legal documents to authorities and GI Registry

2. Statutory & Financial Compliance (10 Points)

1. Registered legal status (society/trust/cooperative/producer company)
2. Submission of annual audit reports and financial statements
3. GST and tax compliance with documented records
4. Maintenance of financial records and verifiable transaction receipts
5. Public accessibility of legal declarations, audits, and disclosures

3. Governance & Organizational Structure (10 Points)

1. Functional governing body with active and inclusive participation
2. Frequency and documentation of meetings (minutes available)
3. Election process conducted as per by-laws
4. Representation of artisans/producers including women and marginalized groups
5. Availability of an updated member register with regular verification

4. Operational Hygiene & Quality Control (10 Points)

1. Presence of inspection committee or quality control body
2. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for production or process adherence
3. Enforcement of quality benchmarks among members

4. Internal feedback and grievance redressal mechanism
5. Record-keeping of complaints, inspections, and actions taken

5. Legal Protection, Enforcement & Counterfeit Risk (15 Points)

1. System to monitor misuse or counterfeits in the market
2. Legal actions initiated or enforcement letters sent to violators
3. Collaboration with enforcement agencies, legal counsel, or IP experts
4. Documentation of past infringements, legal disputes, and resolutions
5. Member training on IP rights, GI misuse reporting, and cultural awareness

6. Promotion, Branding & Commercialization (15 Points)

1. Use of GI branding/logo on packaging, labeling, and promotional materials
2. Participation in trade fairs, exhibitions, or buyer-seller meets
3. Active social media, website, or e-commerce presence
4. Marketing materials and brochures incorporating GI origin story and cultural identity
5. Collaboration with institutions, retailers, or tourism boards for branding and outreach

7. Socio-Economic Impact & Member Benefit (10 Points)

1. Documented improvement in member income or livelihood
2. Inclusion of women, youth, and marginalized groups in activities and benefits
3. Access to government schemes, artisan welfare programs, or subsidies
4. Member skill development, capacity building, or training programs
5. Member satisfaction measured via surveys, feedback sessions, or outreach

8. Representation & Advocacy (5 Points)

1. Association presence in national/state GI-related events or forums
2. Participation in consultations, stakeholder meetings, or policy advocacy forums
3. Membership in national or international GI networks
4. Public/media representation promoting GI identity and cultural legacy
5. Collaboration with industry associations, FPOs, NGOs, and local bodies

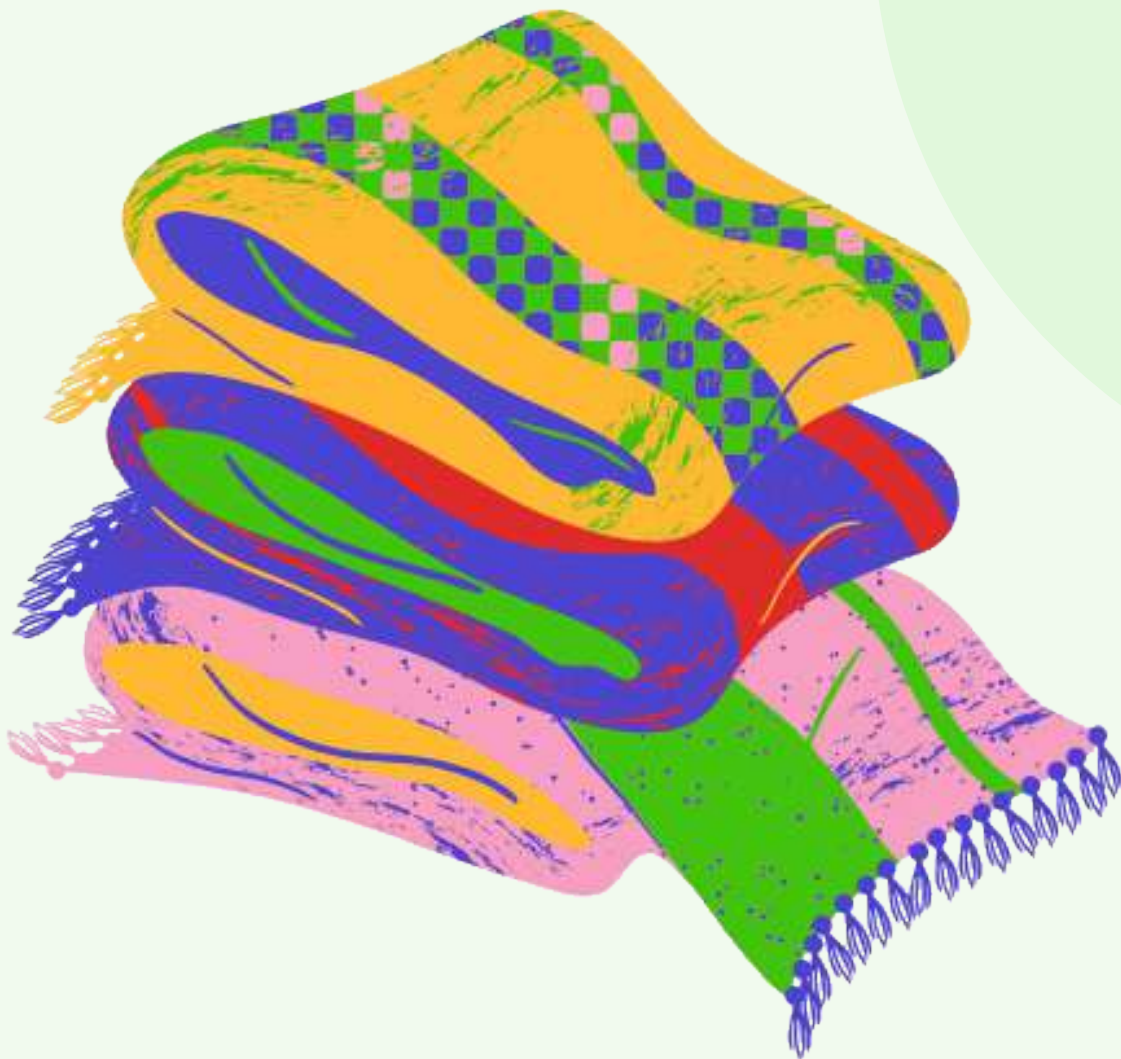
9. Future Readiness & Sustainability (5 Points)

1. Innovation in design, process, packaging, or technology use
2. Partnership with design, academic, or innovation institutions
3. Adoption of eco-friendly or sustainable production methods
4. Strategy or vision document addressing future growth and cultural continuity
5. Action taken toward climate adaptation or supply chain resilience

10. Digital Enablement & Information Management (5 Points)

1. Functional website and/or active social media presence
2. Use of WhatsApp or digital tools for member/internal communication
3. Digitized AU/member database regularly updated
4. Use of QR code, traceability, or online product verification tools
5. Public sharing of reports, promotional content, and GI stories online





4. CORE EVALUATION PARAMETERS

1. Legal & Registration Compliance

This parameter assesses whether the GI Association adheres to the legal standards prescribed under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. It evaluates the validity and renewal status of the GI certificate, maintenance of an updated list of Authorized Users, and proper use of the GI logo in all branding and packaging. It also reviews linkages with supporting IP instruments, such as trademarks or domain names, and verifies procedural compliance including timely filing of legal documents and availability of historical GI documentation. A fully compliant association is expected to proactively safeguard the legal identity and legacy of the GI.

15 Points; Score Scale: 1–3

Sub-Criterion	Score = 3 (Satisfactory)	Score = 2 (Needs Improvement)	Score = 1 (Poor)
Validity of GI Certificate	GI certificate is active, renewed on time, and available for verification	Certificate is valid but renewal may be pending or documentation not readily available	Certificate expired or missing; no evidence of renewal or registration
Authorized User registration and renewal status	AU list is updated regularly and includes active producers/artisans	AU registration done partially or outdated list	No AU registration maintained or list unavailable
Use of GI symbol/logo as per legal guidelines	GI logo is properly used on product labels, promotional materials, and packaging	GI logo used inconsistently or incorrectly in some places	GI logo not used or completely missing from materials
Trademark/domain protection linked with GI	Trademark/domain name filed and linked clearly to GI; active protection strategy in place	Trademark/domain filed but not actively monitored or partially documented	No trademark/domain secured or not aligned with GI
Timely submission of required legal documents	All legal filings and updates submitted on time to GI Registry or authorities	Submissions done but often delayed or irregular	No submissions made or filing obligations not met

2. Statutory & Financial Compliance

This parameter measures the association's compliance with legal and financial norms. It includes registration under a formal legal entity (e.g., society, trust, cooperative, or producer company), submission of regular audit reports, GST and tax compliance, and transparent financial record-keeping. Proper financial governance not only ensures accountability but also strengthens the association's credibility to access public funding, training schemes, or export support.

10 Points; Score Scale: 1–2

Sub-Criterion	Score = 2 (Compliant)	Score = 1 (Non-Compliant / Inadequate)
Registered legal status	Association is legally registered and certificate is current	No formal registration or expired/ incomplete documentation
Submission of annual audit reports	Annual audits are conducted and reports are available for review	No audit reports, outdated audits, or none conducted
GST and tax compliance	GST and income tax filings are up to date with necessary receipts	No tax compliance or filing records available
Maintenance of financial records and receipts	Ledger books, transaction proofs, and receipts are well-maintained and accessible	Poor or no documentation of financial transactions
Legal declarations/disclosures publicly accessible	Required disclosures are available to members or authorities	No public or internal access to disclosures

3. Governance & Organizational Structure

This metric evaluates the association's internal governance systems. It considers the presence of an active and functional governing body, the frequency and documentation of meetings, and adherence to a democratic election process. Emphasis is placed on fair representation of artisans, producers, women, and regional diversity. Transparent decision-making and participatory leadership are critical indicators of a robust and sustainable GI institution.

10 Points; Score Scale: 1–2

Sub-Criterion	Score = 2 (Compliant)	Score = 1 (Non-Compliant / Inadequate)
Functional governing body with active participation	Governing body is constituted and meets regularly	Governing body is absent, inactive, or exists only on paper
Frequency and documentation of meetings	Regular meetings held with accessible minutes	Meetings rarely held or undocumented
Election process as per by-laws	Elections held periodically following by-laws	No formal elections or not per by-laws
Representation of artisans/ producers	Artisans/producers are well represented	No meaningful participation of producers/artisans
Availability of an updated member register	Register is complete and regularly updated	Outdated, incomplete, or not maintained

4. Operational Hygiene & Quality Control

This parameter focuses on the association's internal discipline and ability to maintain consistent product quality. It includes the presence of an inspection or monitoring committee, implementation of SOPs, and quality checks among members. Mechanisms for member feedback, grievance redressal, and recorded complaint resolutions are also considered. A high-performing association will demonstrate strong internal coordination and reliable production standards.

10 Points; Score Scale: 1–2

Sub-Criterion	Score = 2 (Compliant)	Score = 1 (Non-Compliant / Inadequate)
Presence of inspection committee	Committee exists and monitors quality regularly	Committee not formed or inactive
SOPs for production	Documented, available, and followed	No SOPs exist or not shared/applied
Enforcement of quality benchmarks	Practices implemented consistently	No consistency in enforcement
Internal feedback/redressal mechanism	System for member feedback and complaints exists	No formal feedback or redressal system
Record-keeping of complaints and actions taken	Complaints are documented and resolved	No records or actions maintained

5. Legal Protection, Enforcement & Counterfeit Risk

This parameter assesses the association's ability to protect the GI from misuse. It reviews the existence of systems to monitor counterfeit risks, issuance of legal notices or enforcement letters, and collaboration with law enforcement or legal experts. It also considers documentation of past infringements and member training on GI rights and misuse reporting. Proactive legal protection helps preserve the GI's reputation and economic value.

15 Points; Score Scale: 1–3

Sub-Criterion	Score = 3 (Satisfactory)	Score = 2 (Needs Improvement)	Score = 1 (Poor)
System to monitor misuse/counterfeits	Structured mechanism exists and is used	Informal/occasional monitoring	No monitoring system exists
Legal actions/enforcement letters sent	Legal notices issued regularly with follow-up	Isolated enforcement actions taken	No enforcement actions taken
Collaboration with enforcement/legal counsel	MoUs or active collaboration in place	Some informal engagement	No collaboration with legal bodies
Documentation of past infringements	Infringements tracked and resolved with records	Some documentation exists	No records maintained
Member training on IP rights	Regular workshops conducted	One-time/single training held	No training provided

6. Promotion, Branding & Commercialization

This metric assesses the association's effectiveness in marketing and promoting the GI identity. It includes use of the GI logo on labels, integration of the GI's origin story or cultural legacy into branding, and participation in trade fairs, exhibitions, and digital platforms. The presence of e-commerce listings, marketing collaterals, and partnerships with retailers or promotion councils are also evaluated. Associations that connect the GI with national pride, cultural identity, and global markets score higher in this area.

15 Points; Score Scale: 1–3

Sub-Criterion	Score = 3 (Satisfactory)	Score = 2 (Needs Improvement)	Score = 1 (Poor)
Use of GI branding on labels	GI logo consistently used on packaging and communication	GI logo used inconsistently	No use of GI branding/logos
Participation in trade events	Regular participation in key trade shows	Occasional or local-level presence	No event participation recorded
Digital presence	Updated website and/or active social media and e-commerce listing	Some digital presence but outdated	No digital footprint or presence
Marketing materials developed	Professionally made brochures, banners, videos exist	Some basic promotional material available	No marketing materials developed
Collaboration with institutions	Active partnerships with retailers or tourism/design bodies	Limited or informal collaboration	No branding collaborations

7. Innovation, Design & Capacity Building

This parameter examines how the association fosters creativity, adaptability, and upskilling. It includes collaborations with design or academic institutions, the introduction of new product lines, sustainable practices or eco-friendly packaging, and the organization of training programs and IP awareness sessions. Associations that embed storytelling, traditional knowledge, and community heritage into their design or innovation efforts are rated more favorably.

10 Points ; Score Scale: 0–2

Sub-Criterion	Score = 2 (Strong Evidence)	Score = 1 (Partial Evidence)	Score = 0 (Absent)
Income/livelihood improvement	Measurable impact with supporting data	Anecdotal or informal reports	No evidence of improvement
Inclusion of women/youth	Active roles/benefits to diverse groups documented	Some participation noted	No inclusion efforts visible
Access to schemes/subsidies	Scheme benefits accessed with proof	Awareness but informal access	No access or awareness present
Member training & capacity building	Regular training or workshops held	One-time or infrequent initiatives	No capacity building activities
Member satisfaction	Feedback system in place and reviewed	Informal/unstructured feedback exists	No system or record of feedback

8. Socio-Economic Impact & Member Benefit

This metric evaluates the tangible outcomes of the GI on its members and the community. It includes evidence of improved income levels, employment generation, and inclusion of women, youth, and marginalized communities. It also considers access to government schemes and alignment with tourism and heritage-based economic development. GI clusters contributing to local prosperity, cultural tourism, and community wellbeing are considered high-impact.

5 Points ; Score Scale: 0–1 in 0.5 Intervals

Sub-Criterion	Score = 1 (Active)	Score = 0.5 (Occasional)	Score = 0 (Absent)
Event participation	≥2 events in past year	1 event or irregular	No participation
Policy consultation	Actively engaged or submitted input	Attended but no contribution	Not involved in consultations
GI network membership	Member of national/ international forums	Informal or inactive member	Not affiliated with any network
Public/media engagement	Featured in media or authored articles	Mentioned occasionally	No media presence
Collaboration with enablers	Ongoing joint initiatives or MoUs	Some informal ties	No collaboration initiated

9. Representation & Advocacy

This parameter reviews the association's external engagement and leadership in the GI ecosystem. It considers participation in national and state GI events, membership in platforms such as oriGIn or WIPO, and involvement in policy consultations. Public visibility through media coverage, heritage campaigns, or national branding initiatives is also valued. Associations that position their GI as a symbol of cultural heritage and national identity are recognized for their advocacy.

5 Points; Score Scale: 0–1 in 0.5 Intervals

Sub-Criterion	Score = 1 (Present)	Score = 0.5 (Partial)	Score = 0 (Absent)
Innovation in design/process	New practices in place	Pilots or trials underway	No innovation undertaken
Partnership with institutions	MoUs or formal projects signed	Informal engagement	No partnership efforts made
Eco-friendly production	Adopted eco-materials or clean tech	Partial or seasonal adoption	No effort towards sustainability
Vision/strategy document	Roadmap drafted and implemented	Draft exists or discussed	No planning document present
Climate/supply chain resilience	Resilience initiatives underway	Initial exploration stage	No steps taken or awareness lacking

10. Digital Enablement & Information Management

This final parameter evaluates the association's use of digital tools and platforms. It includes maintaining a functional website, active social media or e-commerce presence, use of WhatsApp or internal communication tools, and digitized AU/member databases. Implementation of QR code or traceability systems and online sharing of reports, promotional materials, or educational content also contribute to the score. Digital maturity reflects the association's readiness for scale, transparency, and global access.

5 Points; Score Scale: 0–1 in 0.5 Intervals

Sub-Criterion	Score = 1 (Present)	Score = 0.5 (Partial)	Score = 0 (Absent)
Website/social presence	Regularly updated and functional	Exists but outdated/inactive	No digital presence
Internal communication tools	WhatsApp/email/tools used routinely	Limited or selective use	No digital coordination tool
Digitized AU/member data	Maintained and updated database	Partial/incomplete data	No digital record maintained
Traceability/QR use	QR/traceability implemented	Pilots or trials started	No such system implemented
Online content sharing	Regular digital release of reports, brochures	Limited third-party sharing	No online outreach or content posting





5.

CHECKLIST-BASED ASSESSMENT TOOLS

5.1 Parameter-wise Sub-Criteria

The foundation of the evaluation tool lies in its structured parameter-wise sub-criteria system. Each of the ten core parameters is broken down into five clearly defined sub-criteria, enabling granular, focused, and evidence-backed assessments. These sub-criteria address both statutory requirements and performance indicators. For example, the parameter “Legal & Registration Compliance” includes the verification of the GI certificate's validity, the maintenance of an updated AU register, the correct use of the GI symbol/logo on packaging, protection via trademarks or domain names, and the availability of historical legal documents. Similarly, “Promotion, Branding & Commercialization” is evaluated based on criteria such as participation in trade fairs, storytelling integration in packaging, online visibility, development of marketing materials, and collaboration with retailers and tourism boards. These sub-criteria ensure that each evaluation is transparent, comprehensive, and sector responsive.

5.2 Sample Scoring Sheet

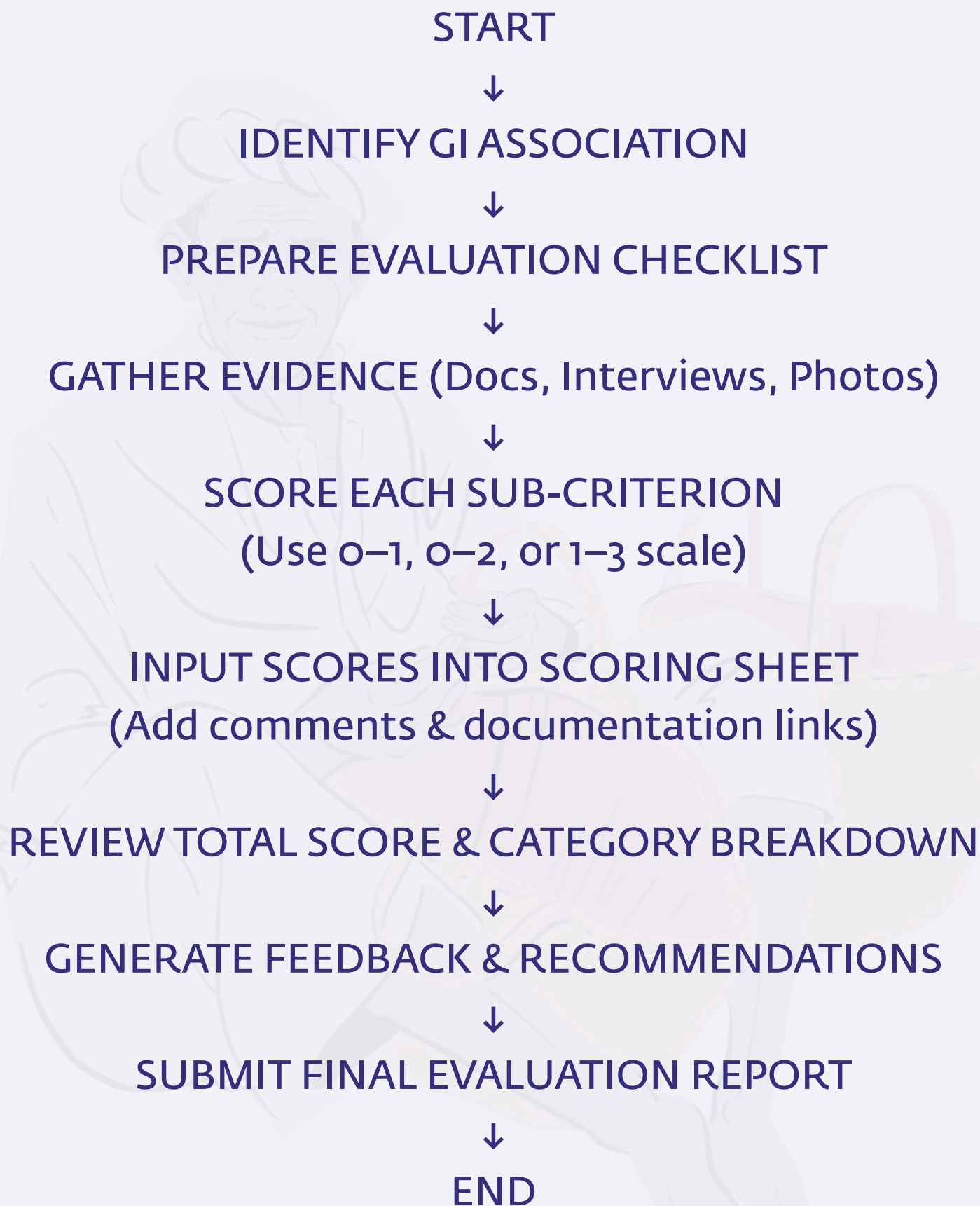
To translate qualitative observations into measurable outcomes, the tool is supported by a sample scoring sheet. Each sub-criterion is scored on a predefined scale—such as 0–1, 0–2, or 1–3—according to its strategic weight. The scoring sheet includes dedicated fields for entering numeric scores, along with justifications, references to supporting documents, and evaluator comments. For instance, a GI Association with a functioning governing body that meets quarterly and publishes minutes would score high under “Governance & Organizational Structure.” Conversely, an association with no election records or documented meetings would receive a lower score. The sheet also computes the total cumulative score (out of 100) and provides parameter-wise summaries, enabling year-on-year tracking

and cross-comparative benchmarking. This format encourages both clarity and accountability.

5.3 Guidance Notes for Evaluators

To maintain uniformity and credibility, the tool includes detailed guidance notes to assist evaluators in conducting fair and effective assessments. These notes outline procedures for document verification, stakeholder interviews, field observations, and score interpretation. They also emphasize the importance of ethical conduct, objectivity, and cultural sensitivity, especially when engaging with artisan-based or legacy-driven associations. Evaluators are encouraged to go beyond ticking boxes—to offer constructive feedback and recommend targeted interventions that could strengthen the association's capacity, compliance, and community impact. These notes also help resolve ambiguity when evidence is partial or when contextual judgment is required.





This structured tool goes beyond compliance monitoring—it facilitates strategic development, ecosystem alignment, and community empowerment. It helps transform GI Associations into future-ready institutions that not only preserve heritage but also thrive in a competitive, digital, and impact-driven world.



6.

CASE STUDIES & FIELD EXAMPLES

Agri GI: Basmati and Darjeeling Tea

India's agricultural GIs offer contrasting examples of organizational maturity and enforcement success. Darjeeling Tea, registered in 2004, is often cited as a benchmark GI model due to its well-established institutional governance, active Inspection Body, and successful global trademark registration. It has implemented traceability systems, mandatory AU registration, and a consistent branding strategy across domestic and export markets. The Tea Board of India oversees its regulatory functions, ensuring compliance with quality, altitude, and origin standards. The alignment with European Union GI protocols has further enhanced its global presence. Yet, even Darjeeling Tea faces constraints in price realization for growers, increasing input costs, and limited participation of smaller producers in marketing decisions. In contrast, Basmati Rice, although globally

recognized for its unique aroma and long grains, suffers from enforcement fragility, particularly in international markets. The geographic spread across multiple North Indian states, including Punjab, Haryana, UP, and Delhi, has created governance fragmentation. Multiple exporter associations, farmer groups, and regional interests often operate in silos, complicating consensus on standardization and quality protocols. The misuse of the term “Basmati” in non-origin countries—particularly in the U.S., Pakistan, and Southeast Asia—poses a persistent threat. While India has filed GI cases abroad (e.g., against Pakistan's attempt to register Basmati in the EU), the lack of a unified enforcement body and inconsistent use of GI branding remain challenges. However, sustained government backing, exporter advocacy, and growing consumer awareness have helped in keeping the GI status economically relevant.

Criteria	Darjeeling Tea (Agri)	Basmati Rice (Agri)
Legal & Registration Compliance	Strong compliance with active GI certification, AU tracking, and global trademark protection.	Moderate compliance; fragmented AU management and gaps in logo usage.
Statutory & Financial Compliance	Regular audit practices and statutory filings are in place with transparency.	Statutory compliance in place, though documentation is uneven across regions.
Governance & Organizational Structure	Robust governing body with frequent meetings and balanced stakeholder participation.	Decentralized governance with varying implementation quality across states.
Operational Hygiene & Quality Control	Standard SOPs implemented; inspections are regular and responsive.	Quality control exists but lacks consistency and audit rigor.
Legal Protection & Enforcement	Consistent legal action and proactive enforcement infrastructure.	Weak enforcement overseas; misuse common in international markets.
Branding, Storytelling & Commercialization	Established branding strategy with cultural storytelling and premium positioning.	Brand recognition high, but storytelling and GI linkage are not consistently applied.
Socio-Economic Impact & Inclusion	Tangible livelihood impact; inclusive producer participation and export benefits.	Widespread farmer impact, but less visible structured member benefit programs.
Representation & Advocacy	Frequent presence in global forums and national advocacy spaces.	Some exporter-driven advocacy; low unified representation at national/ international level.
Future Readiness & Sustainability	Moderate innovation adoption; some work on sustainability in production.	Limited innovation; scattered sustainability initiatives.
Digital Enablement & Information Management	Functional digital presence including traceability and consumer outreach.	Basic digital tools used, but coordination and traceability mechanisms are weak.



Non-Agri GI: Varanasi Wooden Toys and Pochampally Ikat

Varanasi Wooden Toys, a traditional craft from Uttar Pradesh, received GI recognition in 2015, but its journey post-registration has highlighted significant challenges. The managing association lacks a clear governance framework, and documentation of AU membership and SOPs is minimal. Despite the cultural richness of the toy-making tradition, artisans struggle with branding, digital promotion, and quality standardization. Most artisans sell through informal channels, and product authentication is weak, leading to confusion in the local and tourist markets. However, pilot initiatives, such as GI melas, artisan recognition events, and awareness sessions conducted by local universities, are slowly catalyzing engagement and improving visibility.

In contrast, Pochampally Ikat, a well-established handloom GI from Telangana, reflects long-term cooperative success, underpinned by state-level policy support and design innovation. The presence of weaver societies, training programs, and regular collaboration with design institutions like NIFT and NID have enabled it to thrive. Pochampally's products are often featured in national exhibitions, and the association has made significant inroads into e-commerce platforms. A notable success is the integration of GI-tagged labels and branding elements into mainstream product packaging. Additionally, the region's promotion as a "Handloom Tourism Village" by the state government has added a GI-tourism dimension, which is still largely absent in other non-agri GIs.

Criteria	Pochampally Ikat (Non-Agri)	Varanasi Wooden Toys (Non-Agri)
Legal & Registration Compliance	Well-maintained GI registration; active AU engagement and logo application.	Registered GI with limited AU tracking and low logo utilization.
Statutory & Financial Compliance	Good financial documentation and cooperative audit systems in place.	Basic statutory setup; financial record-keeping is minimal or under development.
Governance & Organizational Structure	Strong cooperative governance with inclusive representation and decision-making.	Governing body exists on paper; minimal participation or recorded decisions.
Operational Hygiene & Quality Control	Quality standards followed; SOPs and inspections are functional.	SOPs are not standardized; quality control is informal or missing.
Legal Protection & Enforcement	Active monitoring of infringements; legal channels engaged when necessary.	No structured enforcement observed; counterfeiting risk unmanaged.
Branding, Storytelling & Commercialization	Effective branding with cultural integration and packaging innovations.	Branding efforts are emerging; limited storytelling or identity promotion.
Socio-Economic Impact & Inclusion	Documented economic benefits, including artisan livelihoods and youth participation.	Artisan income potential exists but remains undocumented; inclusion uneven.
Representation & Advocacy	Consistently represented in state and national level GI forums.	Minimal representation in formal GI platforms or advocacy bodies.
Future Readiness & Sustainability	Ongoing design innovation and eco-friendly weaving practices.	Few structured innovation efforts; some exposure to workshops and design training.
Digital Enablement & Information Management	Robust online presence and digital sales platforms in use.	Weak digital presence; underutilized tools for communication and outreach.

Common Gaps Identified

Through field interactions and early survey findings, several cross-cutting gaps emerge that limit the post-GI potential of both agri and non-agri associations:

- Inadequate documentation, including missing or outdated AU lists and lack of meeting minutes
- Weak awareness of legal and governance obligations after GI registration
- Minimal use of digital platforms for visibility, member communication, or market access
- Underdeveloped branding and packaging strategies, often lacking consistency or story integration
- Low AU engagement, with many associations functioning without meaningful member participation
- Limited outreach to export markets, institutional buyers, or cultural tourism opportunities



Best Practices from the Field

Despite these gaps, some GI associations across India have demonstrated encouraging practices that could be standardized and scaled:

- Regular third-party audits, publicly disclosed annual reports, and financial transparency
- Formal MoUs with academic and design institutions for product improvement and capacity building
- Use of QR codes or NFC tags for traceability and product authentication in both handicrafts and food products
- Community-led training workshops focused on packaging, storytelling, and intellectual property education
- Tourism integration, such as creating heritage tours around GI clusters or artisan villages
- Joint branding campaigns with state departments, cultural bodies, or private enterprises to boost consumer recall



Examples of Indian GIs Demonstrating Best Practices or Having Best Potential

Agri-Based GIs

1. **Darjeeling Tea** – Known for global branding, traceability, and enforcement.
2. **Basmati Rice** – High market value but faces international enforcement challenges.
3. **Alleppey Green Cardamom (Kerala)** – Strong statutory oversight by Spices Board.
4. **Naga Mircha (Nagaland)** – Recognized for GI-farming clusters and tribal branding.
5. **Wayanad Jeerakasala Rice (Kerala)** – Integrated with GI-tourism initiatives.



Handloom & Textile GIs

6. **Pochampally Ikat (Telangana)** – Model for cooperative design, branding, and e-commerce.
7. **Chanderi Fabric (Madhya Pradesh)** – Revival through design partnerships and state branding.
8. **Kanchipuram Silk Saree (Tamil Nadu)** – Strong domestic branding and GI logo use.
9. **Baluchari Saree (West Bengal)** – Storytelling-based weaving integrated with tourism.
10. **Mysore Silk (Karnataka)** – Joint marketing by state board and textile industries.

Handicraft & Non-Agri GIs

11. **Channapatna Toys (Karnataka)** – Known for design partnerships and safety innovations.
12. **Varanasi Wooden Lacquerware & Toys (Uttar Pradesh)** – Recent GI with potential for revival.
13. **Blue Pottery of Jaipur (Rajasthan)** – Cultural branding integrated with artisan training.
14. **Aranmula Kannadi (Kerala)** – Heritage branding with limited but premium market.
15. **Saharanpur Wood Craft (Uttar Pradesh)** – Scalable, export-ready GI with digital training potential.



These examples confirm that while GI registration is a starting point, long-term success depends on active governance, sustained policy attention, digital integration, and community-led innovation. Focused support to underperforming associations—especially in branding, enforcement, and institutional building—could dramatically improve the performance and visibility of India's GI economy.

7.

COMPARISON WITH EUROPEAN GI EVALUATION PRACTICES



KEY LEARNINGS

The European Union (EU) has developed one of the most comprehensive and structured GI ecosystems globally. Under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), GIs are embedded within broader frameworks of rural development, quality assurance, and consumer protection. Key learnings from the EU model include:

- Regular performance evaluations based on clearly defined indicators such as product quality, market impact, traceability, and sustainability
- Institutionalized inspection bodies that monitor compliance across the supply chain
- Strong public-private partnerships, including cooperatives and regional councils, that enhance governance and collective branding
- Integration of GI schemes with promotional policies at national and EU levels
- Emphasis on traceability and consumer trust through transparent labeling and certification systems

What Can Be Adopted in India

While India's legal framework for GIs is robust, operational and post-registration support remain underdeveloped. India can adopt the following EU practices:

- Creation of formal, certified inspection and traceability mechanisms
- Introduction of GI performance benchmarks tied to funding and development programs
- Development of regional or state-level GI promotion boards

- Greater use of digital platforms for market linkage and brand positioning

- Co-branding strategies between local producers and larger institutional stakeholders (e.g., retailers, exporters)

India also has the opportunity to build community-led governance models inspired by the EU cooperative model, promoting collective accountability and equitable distribution of benefits.

EU Indicators vs Indian Context

EU indicators focus heavily on traceability, environmental sustainability, and contribution to rural livelihoods—often supported by policy instruments and subsidies. In contrast, Indian GI indicators need to balance heritage preservation, economic upliftment, and inclusion of marginalized communities. While the EU system emphasizes certification and export readiness, India must also consider informal artisanal sectors and micro-enterprise development.

Therefore, India's evaluation metrics should be inclusive, scalable, and culturally contextualized, while still learning from EU's focus on compliance, transparency, and consumer assurance.

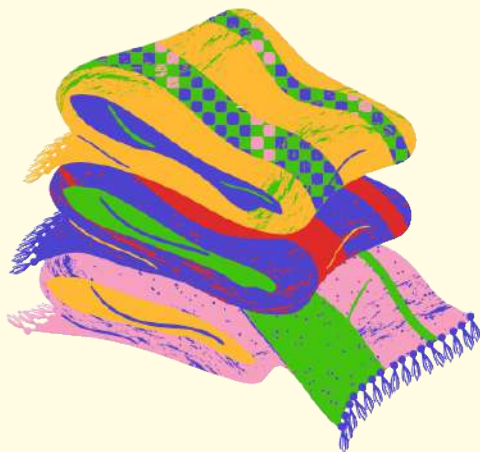


8. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

Capacity And Awareness Gaps

Many GI Associations across India continue to struggle with limited institutional capacity. A large number operate on a voluntary or part-time basis, with no dedicated staff or physical office space. Often, the secretariat is led by a few individuals without professional administrative or legal training. This impacts everything from day-to-day record keeping to participating in government schemes or responding to infringement cases.

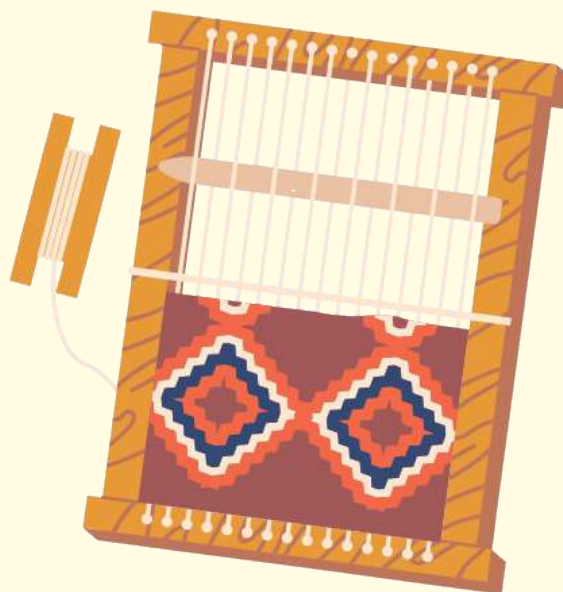
There is also widespread lack of awareness regarding post-registration responsibilities—such as maintaining Authorized User records, using the GI logo correctly, or complying with audit and governance obligations. In rural and artisan-led associations, this gap is even more pronounced due to low digital literacy, language barriers, and disconnect from policy updates. As a result, GIs that hold immense cultural and economic value remain underutilized or mismanaged, with little accountability or measurable growth.



Data Availability and Documentation

The absence of basic documentation systems continues to be a major bottleneck. Many associations have no centralized or digitized records of membership, annual meetings, inspection activities, or financial transactions. For instance, records of elections, grievance resolutions, AU renewals, or branding approvals are either missing or undocumented.

This data vacuum makes performance evaluation nearly impossible, both for internal governance and for external institutions such as DPIIT, Export Promotion Councils, or funding agencies. Moreover, without consistent documentation of quality standards, batch records, packaging norms, or pricing models, associations cannot enforce authenticity, traceability, or consumer trust—especially in export-oriented sectors like spices, textiles, or tea.



Legal, Procedural, and Structural Constraints

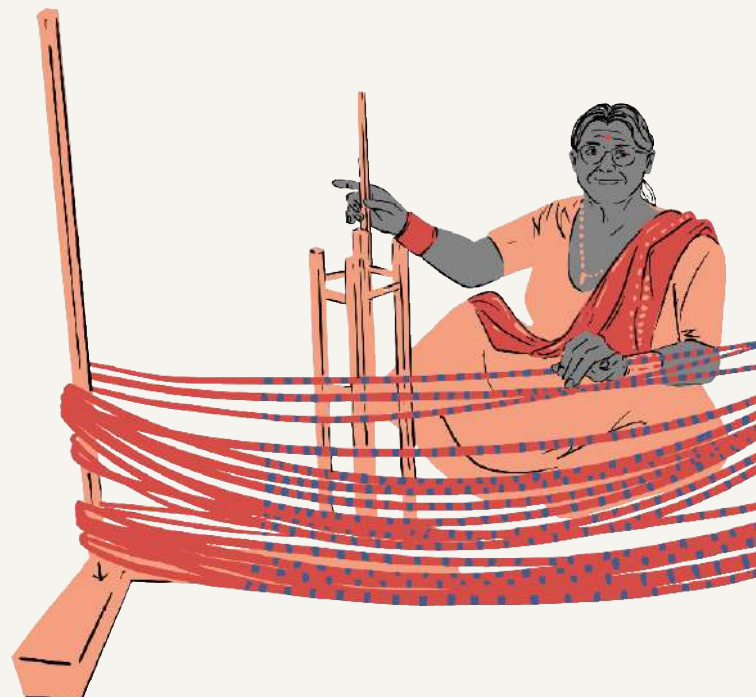
While the GI Act provides a mechanism for registration, there is no statutory monitoring body for post-GI compliance. Many associations are unaware of when and how to renew GI certificates, update the AU registry, or initiate legal actions against misuse. The process of filing infringement complaints is legally complex, expensive, and not easily accessible to rural or artisan-led associations.

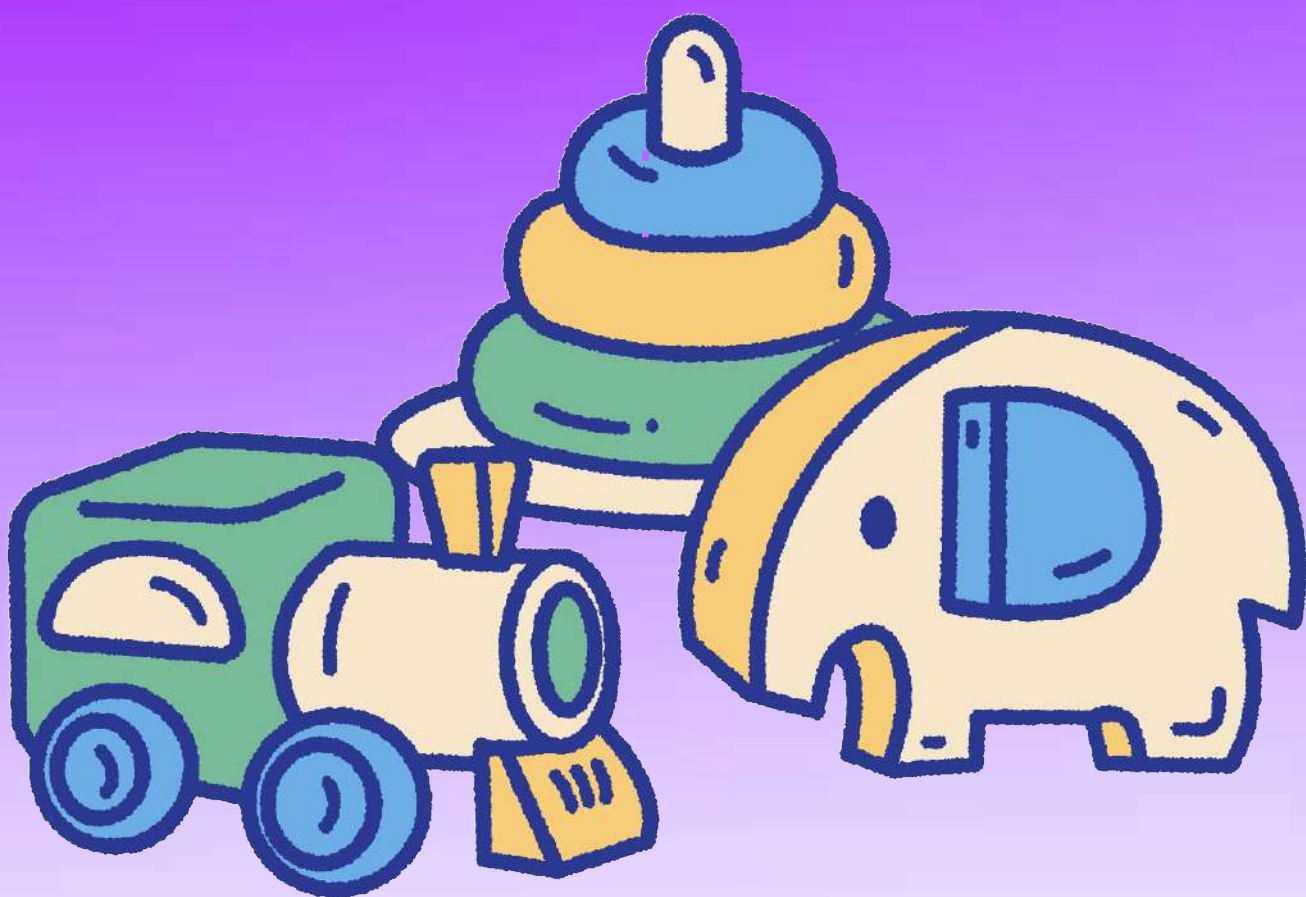
Additionally, there is significant inconsistency in organizational structure. GI associations may be registered as societies, producer companies, cooperatives, or even unregistered collectives, each governed by different legal and compliance norms. This creates confusion over grant eligibility, legal accountability, and representation in policy consultations. Many associations find themselves in a regulatory grey zone, unsure whether they are authorized to collect fees, sign contracts, or participate in government-led schemes.

Market and Ecosystem Disconnection

Another challenge is the disconnect from mainstream markets, industry bodies, and digital ecosystems. Many GIs still depend heavily on local exhibitions or word-of-mouth for marketing, missing out on high-value retail and export opportunities. E-commerce readiness is low, and there is often no visibility on digital platforms such as Indyaat, Amazon, Flipkart, GeM, or state craft emporiums.

Without strategic partners—such as design schools, legal aid providers, incubators, or packaging consultants—even motivated associations fail to scale. Artisans and farmers are often not trained in branding, digital selling, or IP enforcement, which reduces their competitiveness. As a result, counterfeit or lookalike products continue to dominate marketplaces, further eroding the economic value of legitimate GI producers.





RECOMMENDATIONS AND ROADMAP

9.



For GI Associations

GI Associations are the custodians of the Geographical Indication's identity and must evolve from being mere registrants to becoming active institutional platforms that can enforce rights, build brands, and improve member welfare. Key action points include:

- Conduct regular self-assessments using the proposed evaluation metrics to benchmark governance, branding, enforcement, and socio-economic impact.
- Document governance practices, including meeting minutes, financial records, updated AU registers, and election proceedings. Publish these annually to build transparency and attract support.
- Create SOPs for quality control, internal grievance redressal, and packaging norms—especially for associations with diverse and decentralized producer bases.
- Prioritize GI renewal and AU updates as part of an annual compliance calendar, ensuring legal validity and proactive enforcement capacity.
- Leverage digital tools (WhatsApp groups, basic CRM, Google Workspace) to improve internal communication and AU coordination.
- Launch promotional campaigns using local storytelling, regional festivals, and artisan narratives on platforms like Amazon Karigar, Flipkart Samarth, or dedicated GI marketplaces.
- Invest in member capacity-building through regular workshops on branding, pricing, digital selling, and IPR enforcement.

For Government and Policy Bodies

Central and state governments must institutionalize a national GI development strategy that integrates performance evaluation, financial support, and interdepartmental convergence. Key steps include:

- Mandate performance evaluation of GI Associations every 2–3 years using a standardized framework tied to registration renewal, export promotion eligibility, or MSME grant access.
- Link funding and incentives—such as participation in trade fairs, GI melas, or cluster grants—to compliance benchmarks, branding innovations, or digital readiness scores.
- Create dedicated GI Development Cells within departments like DPIIT, MSME, DC-Handicrafts, and state IP cells. These cells can offer handholding, legal aid, training, and market facilitation.
- Simplify procedural formalities—such as GI certificate renewal, change in association office bearers, or updating AU records—through a digitized interface with clear guidance.
- Converge GI policies with schemes like ODOP (One District One Product), PM-FME, Skill India, and National Livelihood Missions to ensure cross-functional benefits.
- Support enforcement by sensitizing local police, customs officers, and district collectors on GI rights and counterfeit risks. Recognize high-performing GI Associations with national awards or inclusion in priority export promotion lists.

For Supporting Institutions (NGOs, Academia, Incubators, Industry Bodies)

Non-state actors are critical in bridging knowledge gaps, catalyzing innovation, and ensuring local participation. Their involvement must be structured around enabling deep, sustained engagement with GI ecosystems. Key interventions include:

- Offer institutional mentorship to GI Associations for record management, financial reporting, digital tool adoption, and IP documentation.
- Deploy third-party evaluations or social audits to validate the performance of GI clusters and generate baseline data for future interventions.
- Facilitate partnerships between GI Associations and academic/design institutions (e.g., NID, NIFT, IIMs) to develop branding kits, packaging standards, and promotional content.
- Pilot traceability and authentication systems (QR codes, NFC tags, geotagging) with selected GIs to build consumer confidence and address counterfeit risks.
- Support thematic tourism models around GI crafts and agro-products in collaboration with state tourism boards and travel platforms.
- Develop open-source learning material, GI toolkits, templates for documentation, and infographics in local languages to support capacity building.
- Help scale storytelling and awareness, by organizing exhibitions, webinars, social media campaigns, and youth engagement programs on GI heritage and innovation.

Towards a Synergized GI Ecosystem

When these recommendations are implemented in a coordinated manner, India can transform GIs from symbolic designations to functional development tools. This shift requires moving from a registration-led approach to a performance-led ecosystem—where legal recognition is followed by operational excellence, member benefit, market success, and cultural pride.





ANNEXURE

CASE STUDIES

DARJEELING TEA:

GI – EVALUATION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Darjeeling Tea holds the distinction of being the first product in India to receive Geographical Indication status in 2004. Globally renowned for its unique flavor and high-altitude cultivation, Darjeeling Tea is not only a symbol of premium quality but also a critical economic lifeline for West Bengal's tea-growing regions. This evaluation was undertaken to systematically assess the current performance of the Darjeeling Tea GI ecosystem using a structured, 10-criterion framework that covers legal compliance, financial governance, enforcement, branding, socio-economic impact, and digital readiness.

The objective is to gauge how the Darjeeling Tea GI has matured over two decades of registration, the extent of value delivered to stakeholders, and how it aligns with India's broader goal of building a future-ready, equitable, and commercially successful GI ecosystem.

1. Legal & Registration Compliance (Max 15 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Validity of GI Certificate	Registered as the first GI in India (Application No. 1). GI status actively maintained and renewed.	3
Authorized User Registration	Tea Board of India has enabled registration of hundreds of AUs including gardeners and exporters.	3
Use of GI Symbol/Logo	Indian GI logo and the Darjeeling logo are used prominently on packaging and export cartons.	3
Trademark/Domain Protection	Darjeeling is a registered certification trademark in multiple jurisdictions; domain protection in place.	3
Timely Legal Submissions	All filings, including AU lists and GI status reports, are actively updated by the Tea Board.	2

Total Score: 14 / 15

2. Statutory & Financial Compliance (Max 10 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Registered Legal Status	Tea Board is a statutory body; legally recognized GI custodian	2
Audit Reports	Public audits and CAG reviews available	2
GST/Tax Compliance	Compliant across estates, especially for exports	2
Financial Records	Maintained by both Tea Board and individual AUs	2
Legal Declarations	Some disclosures public though not all updated regularly	1

Total Score: 9 / 10

3. Governance & Organizational Structure (Max 10 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Governing Body	Tea Board has functional Governing Body with periodic meetings	2
Meeting Documentation	Reports and decisions made accessible selectively	1
Election Process	Tea Board governed by central appointment; industry body not fully democratic	1
Artisan Representation	Small growers are not fully represented compared to large estates	1
Member Register	AU database maintained digitally	2

Total Score: 7 / 10

4. Operational Hygiene & Quality Control (Max 10 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Inspection Committee	Dedicated enforcement and monitoring team active.	2
SOPs for Production	SOPs laid down by Tea Board, followed by certified units.	2
Quality Enforcement	Mandatory origin and batch checks done.	2
Feedback Mechanism	Some feedback system through estate associations; not centralized.	1
Complaint Records	Maintained at AU level; limited central access.	2

Total Score: 9 / 10

5. Legal Protection & Enforcement (Max 15 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Misuse Monitoring	Strong monitoring for domestic and export markets.	3
Enforcement Actions	Enforcement in Germany, France, US, and India.	3
Agency Collaboration	Works with Customs, IP offices, and WIPO.	2
Infringement Records	Many documented actions.	2
Member Training	Conducted but limited to specific clusters.	2

Total Score: 12 / 15

6. Promotion, Branding & Commercialization (Max 15 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
GI Branding	Widely used and mandated for packaging.	3
Trade Fair Participation	Regular participant in global and national trade shows.	2
Digital/E-Commerce	Online presence through Tea Board, not optimized.	2
Marketing Materials	Brochures, videos, and campaigns exist, but dated.	2
Retail/Institutional Collaboration	Limited formal partnerships with brands or retailers.	2

Total Score: 11 / 15

7. Socio-Economic Impact & Member Benefit (Max 10 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Income Impact	Documented export benefits for estates; less data for small growers.	2
Inclusion of Women/Youth	Present, but not uniform across estates.	1
Government Scheme Access	Access to GI-related schemes exists.	2
Skill Development	Training through Tea Board & FSSAI programs.	1
Member Satisfaction	No formal feedback system available.	1

Total Score: 7 / 10

8. Representation & Advocacy (Max 5 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Event Participation	Regular in GI events nationally.	1
Policy Consultation	Tea Board has participated in national IP consultations.	1
Membership in GI Networks	Member of oriGIn and WIPO-linked initiatives.	1
Media Engagement	Moderate media coverage of GI efforts.	0.5
Collaboration with NGOs	Few MoUs or documented partnerships.	0.5

Total Score: 4 / 5

9. Future Readiness & Sustainability (Max 5 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Innovation	Some estates have adopted bio-packaging.	0.5
Academic Collaboration	Limited partnerships for branding or R&D.	0.5
Eco-Friendly Practices	Organic Darjeeling Tea gaining ground.	1
Vision Document	No formal 5-year strategy available.	0.5
Climate Resilience	Early initiatives by NGOs and estates.	1

Total Score: 3.5 / 5

10. Digital Enablement & Information Management (Max 5 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Website/Social Media	Active Tea Board site and Twitter presence.	1
WhatsApp/Digital Tools	Used informally by some AUs.	0.5
Digitized Database	Available, though updates vary.	1
QR/Traceability	Pilot QR codes launched for certain exports.	0.5
Online Reports	Some reports shared; not frequent.	0.5

Total Score: 3.5 / 5

TOTAL SCORE SUMMARY

Parameter	Max Score	Score
Legal & Registration Compliance	15	14
Statutory & Financial Compliance	10	9
Governance & Structure	10	8
Operational Hygiene & Quality	10	9
Legal Protection & Enforcement	15	12
Promotion & Commercialization	15	11
Socio-Economic Impact	10	7
Representation & Advocacy	5	4
Future Readiness	5	3.5
Digital Enablement	5	3.5

Total Score: 81 / 100

Comments & Observations

1. Pioneering Legal Framework and Compliance

Darjeeling Tea continues to maintain its legal standing as a registered GI and has also secured trademark protection in multiple international jurisdictions. The proactive registration of AUs by the Tea Board of India has helped institutionalize the use of the GI label and improve traceability and enforcement.

2. Strong Governance Backed by Public Institutions

Being governed by the Tea Board of India lends regulatory strength and credibility. However, the governance is top-down, and grassroots participation from small growers, tribal tea workers, and women remains underrepresented. There's a need for democratization and decentralization in GI-related decisions.

3. Operational Hygiene and Quality Enforcement Is High

The operational framework—especially in terms of SOPs, inspection mechanisms, and batch-level authentication—is one of the strongest among Indian GIs. The estate-level enforcement is consistent, although quality benchmarks and SOP adherence among small growers could benefit from capacity-building support.

4. Legal Enforcement Is Active but Not Widely Visible

The Tea Board has successfully prevented unauthorized use of the Darjeeling name across several countries. However, enforcement within domestic markets and the informal sector is comparatively weak, and brand dilution still exists in certain retail chains.

5. Promotion and Branding Need Modernization

While Darjeeling Tea enjoys premium status globally, its marketing efforts—especially digital outreach, influencer campaigns, and new-age packaging—lag behind modern branding practices. The lack of structured collaboration with design institutions or e-commerce players also limits its visibility to younger consumers.

6. Socio-Economic Impact Is Unevenly Distributed

Large estates benefit significantly from GI-linked exports, but small growers and workers see limited direct gains. Inclusion of women, youth, and marginalized groups exists but is not formally documented or leveraged as a strategic strength.

7. Future Readiness Needs Strategic Investment

Some estates have embraced organic and sustainable practices, and QR code traceability pilots have been launched. However, there is no published 3–5 year roadmap for climate resilience, market diversification, or innovation. The GI ecosystem would benefit from a collective vision document aligned with evolving consumer and environmental trends.

8. Digital Enablement Is Functional but Fragmented

Basic digital infrastructure exists, including a website and social media presence. However, regular updates, AU-level digital coordination, and content publication are inconsistent. A centralized digital communication platform could improve transparency and outreach.

Conclusion

The Darjeeling Tea GI continues to serve as a flagship model for India's GI journey—earning an impressive score of **81 out of 100**. Its robust legal infrastructure, public sector-backed governance, and international recognition make it one of the most mature GIs in the country. The Tea Board of India has institutionalized best practices in legal protection, AU registration, and export quality control, setting benchmarks for other Indian GIs.

However, this legacy GI must now move beyond protection to **inclusion, innovation, and modernization**. The value derived from the GI must reach deeper into the small grower and artisan base. Branding and promotional efforts must be reimaged to capture younger and digital-native audiences, while future readiness must be grounded in strategy, sustainability, and stakeholder participation.

Darjeeling Tea is a global brand born from local heritage. With the right policy, design, and collaborative push, it can evolve from being India's first GI to becoming India's most **inclusive, impactful, and future-ready GI success story**.





SCOTCH WHISKY: GI EVALUATION REPORT



The Scotch Whisky Geographical Indication (GI), filed in India in 2009 by the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA), represents one of the most iconic and internationally protected GIs in the spirit's sector. This evaluation was conducted to assess the implementation, compliance, enforcement, and value delivery of the Scotch Whisky GI in the Indian context. Using a structured, multi-parameter framework covering 10 distinct criteria, the survey aimed to evaluate not only legal and operational readiness but also the socio-economic impact, promotional strategies, and future sustainability of the GI's presence in India.

This assessment is intended to support policymakers, enforcement bodies, and GI custodians in understanding the on-ground performance of foreign GIs and how their presence contributes or may be enhanced to fit within India's broader vision for a robust GI ecosystem.

1. Legal & Registration Compliance (Max 15 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Validity of GI Certificate	Active GI registration (Application No. 151) renewed in 2019 No lapse	3
Authorized User Registration	No AU registrations recorded in India beyond SWA	1
Use of GI Symbol/Logo	Indian GI logo not used (not mandatory for foreign GIs), though Scotch branding conforms globally	2
Trademark/Domain Protection	Strong international and Indian trademark enforcement.	3
Timely Legal Submissions	Legal formalities and representation appear compliant	3

Total Score: 12 / 15

2. Statutory & Financial Compliance (Max 10 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Registered Legal Status	Scotch Whisky Association is a well-established legal entity	2
Submission of Annual Audit Reports	Not applicable within Indian jurisdiction. Global transparency available, but no Indian-specific disclosures	1
GST and Tax Compliance	Not applicable as SWA is not engaged in direct sales or local income in India.	1
Maintenance of Financial Records	Financials are managed globally; Indian operations limited to representation.	1
Public Legal Declarations	No specific public disclosures within Indian GI ecosystem.	1

Total Score: 6 / 10



3. Governance & Organizational Structure (Max 10 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Functional Governing Body	SWA operates with a defined board and governance model internationally	2
Meeting Documentation	Public reports on policy, standards, and global updates are available	2
Election Process	Membership-driven with structured leadership; no Indian unit	2
Artisan/Producer Representation	Scotch producers are part of the governance. No Indian producer involvement (not relevant).	2
Member Register	Membership is clearly defined, but not applicable in the Indian GI Association sense.	1

Total Score: 9 / 10

4. Operational Hygiene & Quality Control (Max 10 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Inspection Committee	SWA enforces strict quality controls internationally	2
SOPs for Production	Defined and regulated under UK Scotch Whisky Regulations	2
Quality Benchmark Enforcement	Consistently enforced for all exporters	2
Feedback/Redressal Mechanism	Member-based support mechanism exists in the UK	2
Complaint Records	UK-focused records available; no known Indian redressal	1

Total Score: 9 / 10

5. Legal Protection, Enforcement & Counterfeit Risk (Max 15 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Market Misuse Monitoring	SWA has monitoring teams and customs alerts in India	3
Enforcement Actions	Known cases of trademark and GI enforcement in India	3
Collaboration with Agencies	Coordinated actions with Indian Customs and legal representatives	3
Infringement Documentation	Well-documented global and Indian cases.	3
Member IP Training	Internal focus: no known training extended to Indian stakeholders	2

Total Score: 14 / 15

6. Promotion, Branding & Commercialization (Max 15 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
GI Branding on Labels	Widely used Scotch Whisky branding globally	3
Trade Fair Participation	Participates in global and some Indian events (FICCI, CII & various International Forums).	2
Digital/E-commerce Presence	Strong global presence: Indian digital targeting limited	2
Marketing Materials	Extensive brochures and campaigns globally; limited India-centric.	2
Institutional Collaboration	Some ties with FSSAI and legal stakeholders; no commercial branding alliances	2

Total Score: 11 / 15

7. Socio-Economic Impact & Member Benefit (Max 10 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Livelihood Impact	Benefits apply to UK-based producers; not directly relevant to Indian stakeholders	1
Inclusion of Marginalized Groups	Not applicable in Indian context	0
Government Schemes Access	Not applicable	0
Capacity Building	Internal to UK ecosystem	0
Member Satisfaction	Well-documented within SWA, but no Indian member base	1

Total Score: 2 / 10

8. Representation & Advocacy (Max 5 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Event Participation	Represented at national GI and IP forums in India	1
Policy Consultation	Active participant in IP policy and customs enforcement dialogues	1
Network Membership	Member of origin, INTA and global GI groups	1
Media Engagement	Active media presence via IP news and industry platforms	1
Collaboration with NGOs/ Associations	Some alignment with enforcement agencies; limited NGO engagement.	0.5

Total Score: 4.5 / 5

9. Future Readiness & Sustainability (Max 5 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Innovation in Process/ Packaging	Advanced labeling, authentication, and packaging used	1
Partnerships with Institutions	Collaboration with design, compliance, and sustainability organizations	1
Eco-Friendly Practices	Certified sustainability and climate-conscious practices in UK	1
Vision Document	Published strategic reports on Scotch Whisky sustainability	1
Supply Chain Resilience	Efforts in traceability, water usage, and carbon reduction	1

Total Score: 5 / 5

10. Digital Enablement & Information Management (Max 5 Points)

Sub-Criterion	Observations	Score
Website/Social Media	Strong digital presence with active global updates	1
WhatsApp/Digital Tools	Internal coordination in UK; not India-specific	0.5
Digitized Member Database	Maintained globally	1
QR/Traceability	Track & trace tools used in export packaging	1
Online Content Sharing	Active publication of reports and news	1

Total Score: 4.5 / 5

TOTAL SCORE SUMMARY

Parameter	Max Score	Achieved
Legal & Registration Compliance	15	12
Statutory & Financial Compliance	10	6
Governance & Organizational Structure	10	9
Operational Hygiene & Quality Control	10	9
Legal Protection & Enforcement	15	14
Promotion & Branding	15	11
Socio-Economic Impact	10	2
Representation & Advocacy	5	4.5
Future Readiness	5	5
Digital Enablement	5	4.5

Total Score: 77 / 100

Comments & Observations (Expanded for Indian Context)

1. Legal Registration Reflects Strategic Market Importance

The decision of the SWA to seek GI protection in India reflects the growing importance of India as a key export market. India is one of the largest consumers of Scotch Whisky outside the UK, and obtaining GI status here not only strengthens legal protection against counterfeits but also underlines SWA's strategic interest in long-term market positioning.

2. Absence of Local Stakeholder Engagement

The Scotch Whisky GI operates in India through representation and legal enforcement, but there is a notable absence of Indian stakeholder participation. No Indian entities have been registered as Authorized Users, nor is there any known effort to localize value through licensing, retail partnerships with GI cooperatives, or knowledge-sharing initiatives. This creates a one-way benefit model, where the GI operates in India largely for brand protection without reciprocal ecosystem development.

3. Selective Policy Engagement without Ecosystem Contribution

While SWA has engaged with Indian authorities in matters of customs enforcement and IP infringement, there is limited visibility in broader policy discussions around GI promotion or trade facilitation with local industries. Unlike EU GIs like Champagne or Roquefort which sometimes participate in trade diplomacy and events, the Scotch Whisky Association's engagements are mostly defensive (protection-oriented) rather than developmental (promotion- or awareness-oriented).

4. Limited Contribution to GI Literacy or Consumer Awareness in India

Despite its visibility in premium retail segments, Scotch Whisky as a GI has not been actively involved in public campaigns in India about GI rights, consumer awareness, or responsible labeling practices. This is a missed opportunity, especially as India is home to a growing middle-class market that is becoming increasingly quality-conscious and origin-aware.

5. Opportunities for Knowledge Exchange & Twinning Programs

SWA's sophisticated systems of internal governance, quality enforcement, and sustainability offer valuable learning potential for Indian GI associations. However, such models have not been introduced or shared with Indian GI producers through formal knowledge exchange or twinning programs. A partnership-based approach could significantly boost GI maturity in India while allowing Scotch Whisky to position itself as a responsible global GI player.

6. Enforcement Practices Seen as a Model—But Without Localization

The SWA has been successful in customs recordation and enforcement of counterfeit Scotch Whisky in Indian ports and markets. These actions are well-documented and serve as a potential model for Indian GIs seeking to protect their products abroad. However, the impact remains largely restricted to Scotch itself, with little cross-learning support extended to Indian GI associations facing similar challenges.

7. Missed Potential in India's GI-Linked Tourism or Retail Platforms

Despite its global appeal, Scotch Whisky has not been linked to any GI-related tourism, cultural, or luxury experience platforms in India, such as curated retail chains or GI festivals supported by the government. Integration into such platforms could help set a benchmark for other imported GIs and elevate India's overall GI visibility.

8. No Documented CSR or Value Addition in Indian Market

There are no known Corporate Social Responsibility programs or community benefit projects by the SWA in India, even though the association benefits from Indian regulatory protection. GIs operating in emerging economies are increasingly expected to demonstrate shared value models not just legal compliance.

CONCLUSION

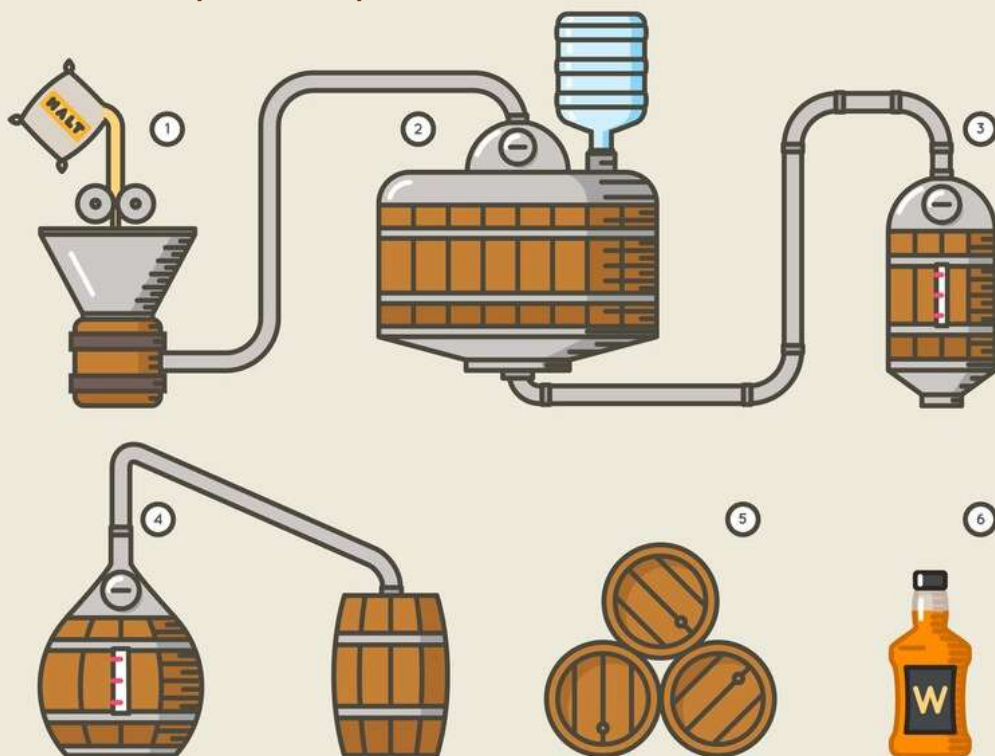
The evaluation of the Scotch Whisky GI in India highlights a well-structured, highly compliant, and globally managed system of origin protection. With a strong score of **77 out of 100**, the Scotch Whisky Association demonstrates excellence in legal registration, trademark protection, quality control, and enforcement practices. Its engagement with Indian authorities on counterfeit risk mitigation and customs enforcement reflects its commitment to maintaining the integrity of the Scotch Whisky brand within a growing and strategically important market.

However, the assessment also reveals important gaps in **local ecosystem engagement**. Despite India offering legal GI protection, the presence of Scotch Whisky remains predominantly defensive, focusing on brand protection rather than ecosystem participation or shared value creation. There are **no Authorized Users** registered in India, **no visible outreach** to the Indian GI community, **no contribution to consumer awareness**, and **no involvement in training, policy shaping, or collaborative promotion platforms**.

Furthermore, Scotch Whisky's **absence from India's GI-based cultural, artisanal, or**

tourism economy highlights a lost opportunity to align with India's broader vision of leveraging GIs for inclusive development and rural empowerment. In contrast to this inward-looking approach, India's domestic GI policy increasingly emphasizes value chain participation, artisan inclusion, and community benefits—parameters where Scotch Whisky's footprint remains minimal.

In conclusion, while Scotch Whisky's GI status in India remains a strong example of international brand enforcement, it falls short of reflecting the inclusive and participatory GI philosophy that India seeks to promote. For India to become a global model for GI-driven development, even foreign GIs must be encouraged to move from protection to participation, from legal status to local contribution. Future policy reforms, including conditional benefits or collaborative mandates, could help align foreign GI operations with India's developmental objectives.



LEGAL CHECKLIST (as per GI Act, India)

The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 provides a legal foundation for protecting and managing GIs in India. GI Associations must adhere to several compliance-related requirements to retain legal validity and unlock the commercial benefits of registration. Below are the core legal obligations:

1. Validity of GI Certificate and Renewal Timeline

- A GI registration is valid for 10 years and is renewable indefinitely in 10-year increments.
- GI Associations must ensure timely application for renewal under Section 18 of the GI Act.
- Failure to renew may lead to lapsing of the GI, undermining legal enforceability (e.g., some handloom GIs in India lapsed due to non-renewal).

2. List and Status of Authorized Users

- Each producer/entity that wants to use the GI must be registered as an AU under Section 17.
- Associations must maintain and update AU records, which should be made available for inspection.
- In many cases (e.g., Banarasi Saree, Muga Silk), AU lists are outdated or inactive, weakening community representation and enforcement capacity.

3. Proof of Usage and Evidence of Historical/Geographical Linkage

- Associations must retain documentation of:
 - Traditional practices,
 - Historical trade routes,
 - Unique features attributable to the region.
- This is essential when defending against infringement or when applying for international recognition (e.g., EU GI protection for Darjeeling Tea or Basmati).

4. Proper Use of GI Symbols/Logos in Trade

- The **GI logo** and the **India GI tag** must be used on certified products in compliance with branding rules.
- Misuse or absence of logos in trade weakens brand visibility and can lead to counterfeit proliferation.
- Associations should develop SOPs for authorized use and logo placement on packaging.

5. Maintenance of Standard Quality Parameters as per GI Application

- GI applications include a description of product specifications, processing methods, and geographical characteristics.
- Associations must implement quality control mechanisms often through an Inspection Committee to ensure members comply with the original specification.
- Non-compliance can lead to dilution of the GI's value and may be contested by buyers or regulators.



RESOURCES AND REFERENCES



A list of key documents and online sources that support the development of this evaluation framework:

- WIPO Manual on Geographical Indications
- FAO Guidelines on GI Evaluation
- EU Common Agricultural Policy Evaluation Framework
- oriGIn's GI Sustainability Roadmap
- Government of India GI Registry portal (ipindia.gov.in)

In addition to relying on global best practices and institutional frameworks, RIPA has conducted a comprehensive national-level engagement exercise aimed at understanding the ground realities of GI governance and operations in India. This involved a series of field tours, on-site assessments, structured interviews, and in-depth discussions with over 25+ registered GI Associations spanning diverse categories from crafts and handlooms to food products and natural goods.

The associations covered in this exercise included prominent names such as TAHAFUZ (Kashmir), representing multiple crafts like Pashmina and Paper Mâchié; Kannauj Attars and Perfumers Association; Mainpuri Tarkashi Samiti; Varanasi Wooden Toy Cluster; Rajasthan Kathputli Association; Muga and Eri Silk Clusters in Assam;

Uttarakhand Associations; Madhubani Paintings Association; Gaya Misthan Samiti (Tilkut); JASCO (Jharkhand Lac Products); Sidhkofed, Jharkhand, among others. Each engagement served as a case study for exploring the strengths, weaknesses, and unique socio-cultural factors influencing the functionality of GI institutions across India.

These real-world interactions provided a rich, ground-up understanding of the operational ecosystems from registration validity and Authorized User (AU) maintenance to quality enforcement, branding, financial practices, and legal compliance. Through this multi-state outreach, RIPA was able to map out the diversity in governance models, uncover compliance bottlenecks, examine branding and commercialization practices, and analyze enforcement gaps related to misuse and counterfeiting.

The key outcome of this exercise was the formulation of the **"Metrics That Matter"** - a structured evaluation tool specifically designed to measure the performance, sustainability, and impact of GI Associations in the Indian context. While international benchmarks from WIPO, FAO, and oriGIn informed the foundational principles, the parameters and sub-criteria of this framework were indigenized and localized to reflect the Indian socio-economic, cultural, and legal environment.

As a result, this framework is not a mere replication of global standards, but a contextualized evaluation matrix tailored to strengthen India's GI ecosystem. It aspires to guide policymakers, supporting institutions, and associations themselves in ensuring GIs evolve from static legal designations into dynamic economic assets, capable of delivering sustainable livelihoods, market recognition, and cultural preservation - all from the grassroots to the national policy level.

<https://www.wipo.int/en/web/geographical-indications>
https://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo_pub_941_2019-chapter5.pdf
<https://openknowledge.fao.org/>
<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/da4cf329-0d88-4184-8249-54d411d25307/content>
https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy-overview_en#:~:text=Evaluating%20the%20CAP,policy%20performance%20against%20CAP%20objectives.
www.ipindia.gov.in
<https://www.teaboard.gov.in/>
<https://www.scotch-whisky.org.uk/>
<https://www.origin-gi.com/>

Glossary of Terms

Definitions of commonly used terms in the context of GI evaluation:

GI (Geographical Indication): A sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or reputation due to that origin.

Authorized User (AU): An individual or entity legally permitted to use the registered GI.

Traceability: The ability to track a product's production and supply chain journey.

Inspection Committee: A designated group responsible for overseeing quality control and compliance within a GI association.

Self-Evaluation: Internal review mechanism carried out by the association to assess its own performance.

The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA): The Scotch Whisky Association is a trade organisation that represents the Scotch whisky industry.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO): A specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security.

About Organizations:

RIPA (Reinforce Intellectual Property Association)

RIPA (Reinforce Intellectual Property Association) is a not-for-profit organization committed to advancing India's indigenous Intellectual Property (IP) ecosystem, with a distinct emphasis on the promotion, protection, and prosperity of Geographical Indications. RIPA plays a pivotal role in ecosystem building by conducting field studies, compliance assessments, and grassroots engagement to empower associations and their members. By nurturing linkages among government, academia, industry, and communities, RIPA ensures that India's GI heritage is not only preserved but positioned as a driver of inclusive economic growth and cultural pride.

Patentwire

Patentwire is a specialized technology and intellectual property consulting firm dedicated to providing high-end services in the field of patents, innovation, and commercialization. Established with a vision to bridge the gap between invention and market realization, Patentwire supports inventors, startups, academic institutions, and industries in harnessing the value of their intellectual assets. The firm's expertise spans the entire IP lifecycle - from idea evaluation, patent drafting, and prosecution to licensing, technology transfer, and strategic IP advisory.

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