

# Partnership on GIs to boost rural development, exports of traditional food products and wine

A workshop recently hosted by the Embassy of Italy in South Africa, in collaboration with the European Union Delegation in South Africa, Wesgro and the Department of Trade and Industry hosted a workshop on the Protection and Promotion of Geographical Indications (GI) aimed to create awareness on the benefits that can be derived from the effective protection and use of GIs in South African and EU for the development of small-scale, local and rural economies, particularly in the agro-food sector, and for enhancing export opportunities and boosting international trade flows.



Image Supplied by Wesgro

Pier Giovanni Donnici, Ambassador of Italy, underlined “the equal benefits for South Africa and Italy – both exporters of agri-food products renowned for their quality and tradition – of promoting and strengthening the GI system. Geographical Indications favour consumers, who are more informed on what they buy, boost our economies, defending our producers from imitations, and preserve our rural traditions.”

## GI systems can have significant benefits for rural development

Tim Harris, Wesgro CEO said: “Harnessing the value of GI systems can have significant benefits for rural development in the Cape and South Africa. GIs add value to products and promote the origin and heritage of the products. South Africa abounds with unique and high quality agricultural and traditional products that evoke the rich heritage of our country’s diverse regions.”

“GI systems are a way in which to capture the emotions, natural attributes and unique production methods that make our products special. GIs can bring value to a region, not only by generating jobs and additional income for producers, but also by promoting the region as a whole and stimulating tourism, wine tourism, and gastronomy.”

## Opportunity to boost exports the EU

Massimo de Luca, EU Delegation in South Africa said: "Extending GI protection of South African products to the vast EU market creates an excellent opportunity of boosting exports to the EU for higher value South African products. Under the SADC-EU EPA, preferential market access is provided for a number of agri-food products and wines meant to foster growth and increase bilateral trade."

A GI is a sign or a name used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possesses qualities, characteristics or a reputation that are exclusively or essentially due to its geographical location. GIs are typically used to protect and promote agricultural products, wines and spirits famous for their particular qualities which are closely linked to the traditional production methods and natural characteristics of the region of origin.

Under the SADC-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), a bilateral protocol grants protection in the EU to 105 GIs from South Africa – 102 wine GIs and three non-wine GIs (Karoo meat of origin, Rooibos and Honeybush).

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