

# Policy Brief

## Accelerating African Green Inclusive Growth: the VALOR project and policy options.

### *Executive summary*

The Danish funded VALOR project (2014-2018) aimed to help accelerate African *green inclusive growth* through research capacity building in fields of relevance for added valorization of *in casu* Ghanaian, Kenyan and Tanzanian agricultural sector origin products through geographical indications (GI's). VALOR results are relevant for African development policy-making for multiple reasons, including and not limited to the following:

- The AU Continental Strategy for Geographical Indications in Africa (2017-2022) and the [now 14th] Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)<sup>1</sup> provides a context for promoting wise use of market forces - and thus market instruments such as GI's - to pull Agri-environmental policies in Africa and so work as institutional vehicles for culturally, economically and environmentally sustainable development in accordance with UNSDGs.
- VALOR is based on a UNESCO inspired transdisciplinary science paradigm, including development studies and ecological economics, favoring visibility and *inclusion* of cultural diversity and collective immaterial rights as well as eco-systemic environmental services, landscape and biodiversity values, in monetary valorization of agricultural products.
- Resulting so far in two Ph.d degrees (four to come), 5 articles published (and additionally 10 manuscripts submitted) in international peer reviewed journals, VALOR already contributed significantly to the state of art literature on geographical indications in Africa, with additional case studies of origin products having potential for registration with geographical indications, and analyses of institutional environments for the same. VALOR also facilitated three double stakeholder conferences on African geographical indications.

In a context of deepening glocalisation, current development policies and programs often show difficulty in insisting to address root causes of uneven development, particularly in agriculture and rural areas. For instance, most donor programs aims to strengthen value chains per se, rather than reversing the orientation of monetary valorisation towards locally available cultural, natural and social capitals. The effect is wealth asymmetries and rural areas marked by resource extraction and exodus, instead of rural development.

Based on a transdisciplinary and mixed methods approach, VALOR investigated the institutional environment for geographical indications in Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania. Among a wide range of African origin products considered for GI potential, a selection was investigated from a broad economic, institutional, market and development perspective: Aloe Vera, Coffee and Sugar from Kilimanjaro, Zanzibar Cloves, Kyela Rice as well as Honey from Manyoni, indigenous Silk from Kakamega, Baringo Goat Meat and Honey, Volta River Clams, Ghanaian Cocoa Beans, Shea Butter and Ghana Savannah Yam as well as Honey from North Ghana.

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<sup>1</sup> While the EU Quality Regime (which includes the EU GI regime) is part of the tax payer funded EU CAP, Africa has no [tax payer funded] CAP, instead Africa has CAADP which is a very different story.

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The essence of VALOR research findings is that while most of the above mentioned origin products represents a potential for formal registration with geographical indications, the institutional environments in which alliances of origin product producers are expected to evolve for GI price premiums to materialize, are wanting.

## Introduction

Coordinated from the Food and Resource-Economics Department of the Faculty of Science at University of Copenhagen, and involving research partners from five african universities, one international organisation and the Danish Beekeepers association, the VALOR project was carried out with an overall aim of contributing to accelerate green inclusive growth in Africa, through research capacity building in the field of valorization of agricultural products based on geographical indications (GI's). Specifically, VALOR investigated institutional requirements related to geographical indications, and conditions for African origin product producers to add value to their products, by incorporating territory specific cultural, environmental and social qualities. In the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) context the project provided knowledge of relevance to policy options for wise use of market forces to pull agri-environmental policies.

## Background

In the context of continued glocalisation – a process challenging local communities and nations everywhere to cope with forces and phenomena of globalisation – the tension increases between a perception of african lands as growth media for standardized agri-business cultivars destined for integration and processing within the so-called value chains of the global energy, fibre, food and feed industry, and a different perception of the same lands as culturally and biogeophysical unique landscapes with high values and development potentials beyond simply producing bioethanol, starch, fats and protein as standard products for world markets in low value products. The transdisciplinary, including ecological economics and development studies, approach and mixed methods applied in VALOR enabled the research undertaken to add value to the state of the art of research on the institutional conditions for African agricultural developments in crossroads between food security and food sovereignty perspectives. African countries face a very real danger of missing out on institutionalizing opportunities for benefitting better from its rich cultural and natural resource diversity, in domestic, regional and global agricultural markets. The situation is characterized on one side by opportunities inherent in the so-called 'quality revolution' evolving strongly in Europe, within a food sector partly re-orienting itself towards local and short value chains, slow food and food sovereignty. On the other side is the inertia of the conventional views on food and natural resources, backed by outmoded scientific, institutional and technological paradigms, including outmoded conceptions of 'food security', dating from and rooted in a unipolar world<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Conventional economics, for instance, has limited scientific value in an interdependent, highly globalized multicultural world of human and other lifeforms sharing only one planet, where the laws of thermodynamics apply within a biodiverse biosphere, the life support or environmental service systems of which depends on the same diversity and laws of nature. However, the number of practitioners trained in conventional economics is so high that conventional economic paradigm is unlikely to implode fast enough to allow humanity adjust its unsustainable human economy towards a steady state (Daly 1989).

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UNESCO speaks of a coming post-disciplinary age in which social sciences and hard [natural] sciences integrate. VALOR is based on a transdisciplinary approach and its Ph.d students and local supervisors were recruited on the basis of experience and passion with interdisciplinarity, including ecological economics which - unique among economic disciplines by including nature's cycles and processes - was applied in VALOR, as a transdisciplinary field drawing insight from both social and natural sciences, and one featuring a plurality of values.

## VALOR Results

A habit of reading food labels is increasing among the youth in *Ghana*. While the average Ghanaian consumer has limited, if any, knowledge about geographical indications, Ghanaian consumers are interested in certified food products and familiar with at least two national certifying bodies. At the same time, institutional environments in Ghana for GI registration is yet to become functional. To comply with her TRIPS obligations Ghana enacted GI's in 2003 (Act 659). However, the act remains without accompanying regulation. So the bill is still not operational and to date no Ghanaian GI product is formally registered. The Act has no section to address duration, renewal and restoration of GI registration, in case the registration is withdrawn. At ministerial levels, no institutional structures exist to support GI protection. Awareness about Act 659 in particular and GIs in general, are low among origin product stakeholders. Analysis of selected Ghanaian origin products suggested potential exists for formal registration of GI products in Ghana. *Ghana cocoa beans* have high reputation and national economic significance. Production is export oriented and Ghana cocoa organoleptic properties are recognized by the chocolate industry and consumers worldwide. A large number of stakeholders are involved, however, and foreign food industries using Ghana cocoa beans are not keen to share the higher margins already resulting from origin. Ghana cocoa beans trade is business to business, and protecting beans with GI's would hardly promote the Ghanaian cocoa at end consumer level. Ghana Savannah Poona yam has a high reputation among consumers, with its specific characteristics concerning starch, taste, aroma and size, attributed to local environments and human factors. Poona Yam trade is controlled & operated by traders. It can prove difficult to mobilize nearly 1 million producers, who are mostly illiterates, to initiate collective action. Currently there is a low degree of value chain integration by yam producers and the financial capacity of producers is limited as well. In contrast, the Ghanaian Shea Butter GI potential is reflected in that 900,000 pickers and 7,200 processors are organised in 219 associations, operating to coordinate production and commercialization. Shea Network Ghana (SNV) organize pickers, processor groups, market aggregators, cosmetic companies and researchers. SNV has potential as a possible umbrella organisation to manage shea butter GIs. However, small scale extractors are in competition with large manufactures – often creating raw material scarcities and increasing costs of production. (Kuuwaabong 2018, Kuuwaabong, Egelyng and Yaro 2015).

The Kenyan studies showed that with the exception of fish, origin product producers were willing to pay in order to make adjustments that would enable protection and marketing of unique products as GIs. Producers proved willing to pay to protect their products with geographical indication at either factory (Tea) or County (Coffee and Apple Mangoes) level. The producers viewed GI protection as a possible means to reduce market failures and enhance governance of good production practices. (Maina et al 2018). In particular, Kitui, Baringo

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and West Pokot honeys were identified to have potential for GI registration based on human and natural links (cf. figure 1) to product quality and product reputation. Pollen analysis demonstrated origin based quality that can facilitate GI labelling. Physicochemical analysis showed 18 out of 21 honey samples analyzed complied with local and international honey standards. Potentials to enhance producer association membership through extension services and other development partners were identified. (Warui et al. in press).

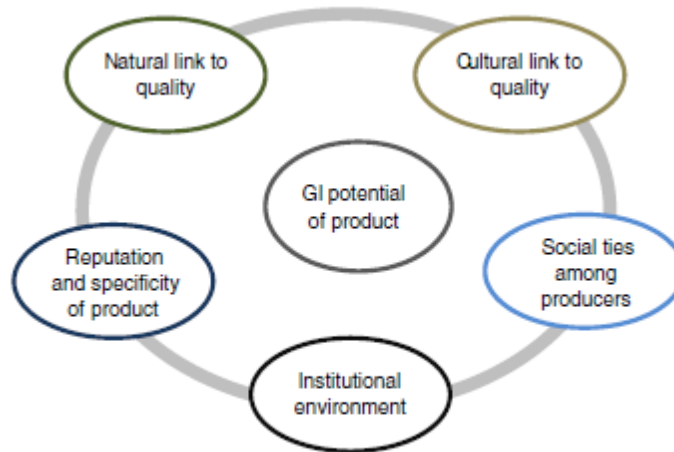


Fig 1. A simplified representation of the five major elements of GI potential.

Tanzania has no specific policy and legislation governing protection of GIs, however Tanzania is now in pipeline towards having a new national Intellectual Property Rights Policy, to provide for protection of GIs. A draft proposal incorporates GI in the policy – where Kyela Rice and other potential GIs have been earmarked for a national branding strategy. Cloves from Zanzibar, Kyela Rice, Kilimanjaro Coffee, Aloe Vera and Sugar from Kilimanjaro are all origin products with varying degrees of potential as GI products (John, Egelyng and Lokina 2017). Human factors – specific local knowledge and skills – were found significant in enhancing reputation and quality of honey from Rungwe mountains. Cool climate, volcanic soils and high rainfall supports endemic tree species providing a basis for honey with specified unique traits. A local beekeepers’ association significantly contributed to production of honey with reputable quality, not reflected however in gate prices. Considerable initiatives to improve quality & reputation of Tanzanian honey, including traditional skills employed in honey production and unique Itigi thickets vegetation in Manyoni area, was found significant for enhancing production of honey with unique reputation: whitish milk colour, thicket flower aroma and sweet sour test. Honey samples collected from same area were found to qualify for Codex Alimentarius, EU and Tanzania honey standards. (Mwakaje et al. 2018, Nyunza 2018). The prospects for GI to help conserve biodiversity is one important asset. Producing evidence to support this prospect in an African setting, is one example of VALOR results inviting more. VALOR work on GI Honey prove a relationship exist between biodiversity and GI’s,

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however there are perhaps 30.000 bee species, so exactly to what extent GI's can help protect those of them that are not considered 'Honey Bees' remains an important research question.

## Conclusions, implications and policy options

In conclusion, VALOR built African research capacity and human resources enabling at least three African nations to strengthen their institutional environments for valorisation of origin products through geographical indications. In a continent of cultures with strong traditions of collective action and collective ownership, surprisingly trademark legislation were found to dominate the modern landscape of formal legislature, while contemporary institutions decisive for allowing for and facilitative towards collective ownership of in casu geographical indications, by producer alliances, were found emerging and inoperational.

One implication is that the capacities created and the knowledge produced can be used to identify concrete and actionable policy options combining macro-institutional and micro-institutional (producer alliance oriented) approaches to facilitate a co-evolution of the existing regional with emerging national GI regimes - to allow collective action and further valorisation of African origin products and prove feasibility as policy instruments for sustainable development.

One example of an actionable policy option for development donors is to support, for instance, the Ghanaian, Kenyan and/or Tanzanian government administrations, in making operational existing GI regulations (Ghana), or enacting or building an operational GI legislative regime (Kenya, Tanzania). Another example is the option for policy-makers to ensure the food sovereignty approach is prioritized in supporting the agricultural sector. Finally, a larger set of concrete options exist with regard to supporting a high diversity of origin product producer alliances in different agro-ecosystems, in undertaking the collective action needed to protect integrity of prospective collectively owned GI certifications, including those of Kakamega Forest Silk, Rungwe mountain Honey, Ghana Savanna Yam and others, identified through VALOR.

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