



Worksheet

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Building the causal link with the geographical area

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What is the causal link and why is it needed?

The causal link is the core justification for CIGI registration. The objective characteristics (quality, reputation or others) that make the product different from other products of the same kind should be clearly identified and summarised. However, they are not sufficient on its own. A thorough and coherent explanation on it must be provided. The causal link should be easily identifiable, and it is the relationship between the particularities of the defined geographical area that have a direct impact on the specificities of the product (its quality, reputation, or other characteristics).

How is the causal link described?

Write the description in step 3 of the application: ‘Link with the geographical area’

First action: GIportal offers three options for stating the basis of the link. Multiple selections are possible.

- Quality
- Reputation
- Other characteristics

Second action: GIportal offers a space for describing the basis of the link.

If the GI is based on quality or on both quality and reputation

Quality

Describe the objective qualities that distinguish the product (e.g. colour, structure, style, raw materials).

For example: *Vulcanian Hats’ are characterised by their lightweight and breathable yet robust material (Mibro) and fine braiding as well as by the particular width of the brim (cannot be wider than 8 cm at its widest part and narrower than 2 cm at the narrowest)*

Add quality.

→ **e.g.** *The exterior of the ‘Vulcania Hat’ is smooth because the reed straw has been braided with its softer outer side facing outwards.*

Add other features that make it different from products of the same kind.

→ **e.g.** *Thanks to the use of very fine straws of Mibro, the hats become lighter; the material dries much less and becomes more resilient while being more flexible. The specific braiding techniques used by local craftsmen allow the creation of hats with a brim of a particular width.*

Reputation

Substantiate reputation with supporting documents (e.g. press cuttings, reference books, awards, mentions in specialised publications, as well as online publications). You may also include information stemming from national schemes for the protection of geographical indications for craft and industrial products.

For example: *The reputation of 'Vulcania Hats' is supported by the Hat Festival, which is held every year in summertime. It features various talks, competitions and activities to do with hand-made hats*

Describe how the product is recognised / reputed.

→ (**E.g.** consumer trust, awards, market presence, historical reputation, recognition)

There is a handicraft market trail around the old town of Vulcania city where craftsmen of 'Vulcania Hats' display their creations.

In 2015, 2022 and 2024, 'Vulcania Hats' received the award for 'Best Summer Hat' at the Sustainable Headgear Awards organised every year in Lisbon, Portugal.



Caution:

What cannot be accepted as proof of reputation?

- unacceptable reputation evidence: search engine hits and hyperlinks, self-generated publicity or references to other schemes such as TMs organic/eco-production;
- images and screenshots of self-generated publicity about possible registration as a CIGI in the EU.

Expert tip

- It is essential that the product characteristics outlined in the 'Description' section are clearly connected to and aligned with the relevant factors that support the indicated basis for the link.

Check your entry

- Is it consistent with other parts of the application? The information must be coherent and supported by data mentioned in the single document under 'Description of the product designated by the name'.
- Is the description backed by scientific or technical data? Use industry-specific language as a professional would when describing the product.

If the GI is based on other characteristics or on other characteristics and reputation

Explain how human know-how or natural conditions influence the characteristics of the product, including its quality and other characteristics. Where reputation is also claimed, describe the basis for that reputation, including historical references that contributed to the reputation, and provide supporting evidence.

Quality/other characteristics

Human factors

→ Detail specific know-how + natural conditions influencing the product.

The know-how of craftsmen in the region, combined with years of experience, has developed appropriate braiding techniques for the successful production of hats that are braided with very fine straws. Where placemats are used, these need to be carefully unravelled by cutting the stitching to obtain long strands of braided reed. If starting from scratch, the reed must be cut and braided into a long cord.

During the production process, emphasis is placed on creation of the brim. To add the brim, a new piece of braid must be attached. Then the braid is pushed towards the needle of the sewing machine while slightly pulling the upper braid to shape it. Finally, the braid must be sewed flat to create a smooth brim.

Natural Factors

→ Direct impact on product specificity: soil, topography, rainfall, exposure, altitude, climatic conditions.

The local environment, where reed plants have flourished ever since they were introduced by the Arabs, offers a Mediterranean climate, characterised by summers that are not too hot with predominantly humid winds. This benefits the reed plants and the soft texture and robustness of the Mibro, which is more water repellent than other materials used for hand-braided hats. This makes 'Vulcania Hats' water resistant.

Reputation

Mention present-day **geographical factors (human or natural)** that support today's reputation (e.g. longstanding production tradition, cultural recognition).

A number of sources refer to 'Vulcania Hats' as a traditional craft product from Vulcania; for example, Javier Garcia's travel guide 'The Mediterranean' (Valencia 1995), which describes them as an 'indispensable accessory for any summer lunch due to its light and soft Mibro feel, in 'Accessories Magazine Europe' (2001) or in 'Natural Fashion' (Rome, 2009).

The history of 'Vulcania Hats' anchors the product in the Vulcania Island as early as the 16th century. The name 'Vulcania Hats' dates back to the 18th century, and the majority of hat manufacturers in Vulcania have always been located in Vulcania city, particularly in the province capital. 'Vulcania Hats' was therefore linked to the Island of Vulcania in Eastern Mediterranean Sea and became a symbol of local identity.

Mention **historical factors** that support today's reputation (e.g. longstanding production tradition, cultural recognition).



Caution:

What does not qualify?

- Regular production skills or methods common to products of the same kind are not sufficient.
- Historical references that do not demonstrate a current reputation linked to the name applied for cannot be accepted.

Expert tips

- You may include brief historical references.
- Remember not to exceed the 2 500-word limit. If you do, a justification must be provided. This can be entered in the field 'Any other information considered appropriate by the Member State or the applicant'.

Check your entry

- Are the factors specific and evidence-based?
- Do they clearly affect product or reputation?

Finally, in each case, ensure that you provide a clear and concise description of the **causal relationship** between the unique characteristics (human / natural) of the geographical area and the specific characteristics of the product. In particular, explain how the specificities of the defined geographical area directly influence the product.

If the link is based on reputation, include supporting evidence, scientific research and publications proving reputation. Historical data may be added where necessary to provide context.

Quality/ Other characteristics

Human, causal link

→ Producer

→ know-how directly shapes product outcome.

***Human factor:** braiding techniques. Causal link – hats are braided with very fine straws. Manufacturing techniques. Causal link – give hats its smoothness and specific brim measures*

Natural causal link

→ Local conditions

→ directly affect quality/traits.

***Natural factor:** materials – local reed plants, [...] which is more water repellent than other materials. Causal link – makes hats water resistant.*



Caution:

- Avoid vague sentences. Every causal link must be backed by clear evidence from recognised sources.
- The causal link must demonstrate how specific human or natural factors – such as the expertise of local producers or climatic conditions – directly influence the product.
- If reputation is not the main basis for the GI application, any references to reputation will be treated as secondary information and will not be assessed as part of the causal link. However, information about the product's reputation may still be included in the application to:
 - show that the product is recognised on the market;
 - provide historical context.

Check your entry

- Is the link logical, specific, and supported by data?