

## **Minutes of the Meeting**

**21 December, 2024**

**We are pleased to inform you that the meeting was held on the Geographical Indications (GI) Program at NLUJA dated 21st December 2024 which was jointly organized by NUJS Kolkata, NLUJA Assam, and Tezpur University.**

**Date: December 21, 2024**

**Time: 12:00 PM to 02:00 PM**

**Venue: Conference hall, First floor, Administrative Block, National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam (NLUJA Assam)**

**This meeting aims to foster collaborative efforts between DPIIT-IPR Chair at NUJS Kolkata, DPIIT IPR Chair at NLUJA Assam, DPIIT-IPR Chair at Tezpur University, and Government officials for the strategic implementation of the GI program.**

**Some of the key participants included Mr. P.K. Saikia, SEO, Assam Food & Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd., Govt. of Assam; Mr. Ashim Kumar Das, General Manager, NEDFI, Guwahati; Mr. Gautam Goswami, Agricultural BZNZ Specialist, Project APART; Mr. Hiren Talukdar, Additional Director, Office of the Commissioner of Industries & Commerce, Govt. of Assam; Mr. Pallab Bhattacharyya, Retd IPS & HM of NGIDM of WBNLUJS; Mr. Victor Baishya, Assistant Director, Commissionerate of Industries & Commerce, Assam and i/c Sr. Quality Control Officer, Deptt. of Industries & Commerce, Govt. of Assam; Ms. Sangita Saika, Joint Secretary, Food PD & Consumer Affairs, Govt. of Assam; Dr. Nalanda Bala Murugan, Co-founder & MD, NAM IP Boardroom and Consultant, BIONEST; Mr. Partha Chakraborty, GI Coordinator, NUJS Kolkata, etc.**

**The discussion focused on the following aspects:**

- Facilitating product owners in obtaining GI recognition and promoting their products globally.**
- Addressing national priorities to contribute to a vibrant Assam.**
- Promoting cluster development through various GI sectors.**
- Enhancing the rural economy by commercializing GI products and creating employment opportunities.**

**The meeting commenced with a welcome address on Geographical Indications and its Potential in the NE Region by Dr. Pankaj Kumar, DPIIT-IPR Chair Professor, NLUJA, Assam.**

**Dr. Pinki Ghosh, DPIIT-IPR Chair Professor, NUJS, Kolkata introduced the house about GI and its significance. He also discussed the prospects of showcasing the GI tagged products of Assam and the North East by means of trade fairs or exhibitions with a view to bolster the prospects of exports. Dr. Ghosh emphasized about organising a GI Mela in Guwahati in line with the GI Mela held at NUJS, Kolkata and further discussed about the funding prospects for the same.**

**Mr. Pallab Bhattacharyya, Retd IPS & HM of NGIDM of WBNLUJS supported the idea of organizing a GI Trade Fair in Guwahati and suggested contacting the producer groups in this regard.**

**Mr. P.K Saikia, SEO, Assam Food & Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd., Govt. of Assam pointed out some of the challenges faced in Assam with respect to GI goods, such as lack of labeling, coding issues, lack of buyers for the GI**

**tagged products, issues relating to GST billing, exports of GI goods, etc. Mr. Saikia discussed the potential of providing some sort of identification mark or label to GI goods such as HBN Code apart from the GI tag to recognize as well as boost exports of GI products.**

**Mr. Ashim Kr. Das, General Manager, NEDFI discussed the issues relating to registration of Authorized Users (AU), marketing challenges and stressed about the need to increase the numbers of AUs. Mr. Das narrated incidents of AUs who have been benefited by AU registration Certificates.**

**Mr. Gautam Goswami, Agricultural BZNZ Specialist, Project APART discussed the ground realities faced during export of some GI products particularly GI tagged Ginger in Assam. He stated about the major issues like lack of compliance and cooperation from the custodians/proprietors.**

**Dr. Nalanda Bala Murugan, Co-founder & MD, NAM IP Boardroom and Consultant, BIONEST informed that even if the custodians/proprietors are not initiating and providing the consent letter, one can directly approach the GI Registry.**

**Lastly, Mr. Partha Chakraborty, discussed the loopholes in the GI regime. Citing example of West Bengal's GI regime, he stated that there should be limited monopoly in the State and that the community should be benefitted. He pointed out there is a lack of associations/groups in Assam working towards GI registration. Mr. Chakraborty also highlighted the need to enroll more AUs in order to boost the benefits for the producer groups and stressed on conducting integration processes to sensitize the producer groups. He further pointed out that a few products which have been identified from Assam such as, bamboo products, sweets, handicraft items need to be looked into.**

**The participants discussed various steps to resolve the challenges pertinent in the GI regime, particularly with respect to Assam and the NE region, some of which included:**

- 1. Some sort of harmonised system of nomenclature which would be very helpful for export purposes of such GI tagged goods,**
- 2. Subsidy/concession for commercialization of GI registered goods,**
- 3. Need to imprint mark of GI like need Laser tools etc for marking on metallic goods**
- 4. Consideration in GST/IST, etc.**