

## Summary: GIFT Transnational Webinar 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026

### Overview

The latest GIFT transnational webinar brought together experts and producers to explore the power of **Geographical Indications (GIs)**. Hosted as part of the Interreg Northern Periphery and Arctic (NPA) initiative, the session highlighted how "provenance" can be transformed into a competitive edge for SMEs in Northern and rural regions. 30 attendees from Belgium, Finland, Iceland, Spain and Ireland attended the webinar

### Turning Regional Identity into Market Value

The webinar opened with a clear focus on the GIFT Project (2025–2028). While Northern SMEs face unique hurdles—like distance from markets and high costs—the GI system offers a way to stand out. The project's mission is to move from "Awareness" to "Market Expansion," ensuring that local products are not just special, but commercially successful.

### Insights from the Experts

- **EUIPO (Thorsten Ickenroth):** Focused on the new frontier of Craft and Industrial GIs (CIGI). The "Single Document" is the heart of an application; success hinges on proving a rock-solid link between the product's character and its specific home.
- **European Commission (Katarina Barathova):** Reminded participants that GIs are powerful Intellectual Property rights. With a €75 billion market value, GI products can often command double the price of non-certified goods, providing a vital boost to rural jobs.
- **Muiris Kennedy (Ireland):** Highlighted the huge potential for the craft and design sector. While administrative hurdles exist, the rising consumer demand for authenticity and storytelling makes GI registration a strategic win for rural employment.

### Panel Discussion: From Marble to Textiles

The panel session explored real-world applications, featuring stories from Connemara Marble Producers Association, Icelandic Lamb and University of Helsinki Ruralia Institute. A recurring theme was the untapped potential of non-food products, such as textiles and woodwork. The experts agreed: GIs are a driver for regional identity and a massive magnet for niche tourism.

## Key Takeaways

- **Collaboration is King:** Success depends on producers working together rather than in isolation.
- **Storytelling Sells:** A GI label is more than a logo; it is a narrative of quality and origin that attracts modern consumers.
- **Bridge the Gap:** While GIs offer legal protection and premium pricing, there is still work to be done to increase consumer awareness.

## What's Next?

The GIFT project is now moving into its second year, focusing on advancing **pilot groups** and supporting new GI applications. Stakeholders and producers are encouraged to engage with the project resources to help embed Northern identity into global marketing strategies.

## Webinar Programme:

### Welcome

- Ms Grace Korbel (Assistant Head of Enterprise, Local Enterprise Office Donegal, Ireland)

### Update on GIFT project

- Mr Cormac Coghlan (Local Enterprise Office Donegal)

### Craft and Industrial Geographical Indications and the EUIPO

- Mr Thorsten Ickenroth (EU Intellectual Property Office)

### EU Geographical Indications for Agri-Food Products

- Ms. Katarina Barathova (European Commission)

### Craft and Industrial Geographical Indications in Ireland

- Mr Muiris Kennedy (Business & Marketing consultant with Design & Crafts Council Ireland)

### Panel Discussion:

- Mr Stephen Walsh (Secretary, Connemara Marble Producers Association)
- Ms Marjo Särkkä (Researcher, University of Helsinki Ruralia Institute)
- Mr Hafliði Halldórsson (Managing Director, Icelandic Lamb)



GIFT PROJECT WEBINAR -  
PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (PGI):

FROM REGIONAL IDENTITY  
TO MARKET VALUE

 **LOCAL  
ENTERPRISE  
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AGENDA 09/03/2026

TIME*	TOPIC	SPEAKER
10.00 – 10.05	Opening words	<b>Grace Korbel</b> (Assistant Head of Enterprise, Local Enterprise Office Donegal)
10.05 – 10.15	Update on <b>GIFT project</b>	<b>Cormac Coghlan</b> (GIFT project, Local Enterprise Office Donegal)
10.15 – 10.30	Role of the EUIPO in the Craft and Industrial Indications (CII) scheme in the EU	<b>Thorsten Ickenroth</b> (Team Leader, GI Division of the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO))
10.30 – 10.45	European Commission - Overview of the GI system and EU application process for agri-food products	<b>Katarina Barathova</b> (European Commission, DG Agri)
10.45 – 11.00	An Experts View - current outlook on PGI and application process	<b>Muiris Kennedy</b> (Marketing Consultant and GI expert)
11.00 – 11.25	Panel Discussion Q&A Chaired by Cormac Coghlan	<b>Johanna Autio</b> (Wood From Finland) <b>Stephen Walsh</b> (Connemara Marble) <b>Marjo Saarikka</b> (University of Helsinki Rarelia Institute) <b>Hannu Heikkilä</b> (Icelandic Lamb)
11.25 – 11.30	Closing words	<b>Cormac Coghlan</b>

\*ALL TIMES ARE GMT - IRISH TIME

