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## MYANMAR STRENGTHENS ITS GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION FRAMEWORK FOR A NEW ERA OF PRODUCT ORIGIN PROTECTION

### OVERVIEW

Myanmar has entered a significant new stage in its intellectual property development with the issuance of comprehensive regulations governing geographical indications (GIs). Following the enactment of the Trademark Law in 2019, the Ministry of Commerce has now formalized detailed procedural rules to ensure the effective registration, oversight, and enforcement of GI rights. These measures mark an important advancement for producers of traditional agricultural goods, natural resources, and handicrafts whose products derive unique qualities from Myanmar's diverse geographical regions. They also signal Myanmar's intention to integrate more deeply into international systems of IP protection and promote the recognition of its local products abroad.

The newly issued GI rules clarify the steps for obtaining GI protection, define the responsibilities of both domestic and foreign applicants, and introduce formal processes for objections, cancellations, and quality-control mechanisms. This development aligns with Myanmar's broader effort to modernize its IP landscape as the country prepares for increased participation in regional trade frameworks.



## A STRUCTURED APPLICATION PATHWAY FOR LOCAL AND FOREIGN ENTITIES

Under Myanmar's new GI regulatory structure, a wide range of organizations may apply for GI registration. Eligible applicants include producer associations, cooperatives, and groups representing manufacturers of agricultural, natural, or artisanal products whose characteristics originate from a defined geographical area. Government departments responsible for specific regions or protected natural resources may also file applications when the product is linked to public heritage or environmental attributes.

Applications may be submitted in either English or Myanmar language and can be lodged electronically, in person, or by post. Each application must include a clear description of the GI product, its geographical boundaries, its unique qualities or reputation, and evidence demonstrating the link between the product and the region. Myanmar's Intellectual Property Department (IPD) conducts a formal examination to ensure that the product meets the legal criteria for GI protection established under the Trademark Law.

Foreign organizations intending to register a GI in Myanmar are subject to additional procedural requirements. They must provide proof that the GI is already recognized or registered in their home jurisdiction and submit a certified document that clearly identifies the GI name and the protected item. This ensures that only legitimately protected foreign GIs can obtain recognition in Myanmar, consistent with international practice.

A crucial element of the process is the appointment of a local representative. Non-Myanmar applicants must designate a representative located within Myanmar to receive official correspondence, manage communications with the IPD, and handle appeals or administrative matters. The authorization for this representative must be notarized in the applicant's home country, ensuring its legal validity.



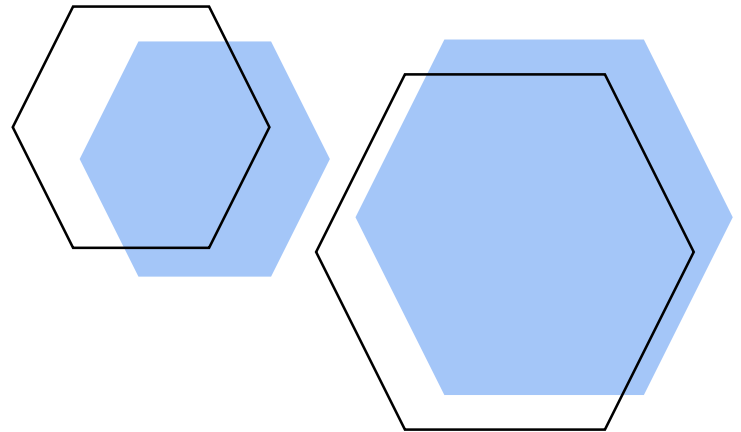


## EXAMINATION, OPPOSITION, AND LEGAL REMEDIES

Once accepted for filing, each GI application undergoes both formal and substantive examination. The IPD reviews whether the application meets the documentary requirements and whether the product indeed possesses distinctive characteristics arising from its geographical environment. This evaluation may involve analysis of scientific data, historical usage, traditional production methods, or documented consumer reputation.

If the application satisfies the examination criteria, it is published for public notice. This stage invites any interested party to oppose the registration if they believe the GI does not meet statutory requirements or conflicts with an existing protected indication. The opposition procedure is a critical safeguard for ensuring market transparency and preventing misuse of geographical names.

Myanmar's GI framework also provides mechanisms for cancellation or invalidation of registered indications. These remedies may be used when a GI is found to be misleading, improperly granted, or when the product no longer meets the specifications that justified its protection. Such procedures reflect Myanmar's intention to maintain high standards of authenticity and protect consumers from deceptive or inaccurate origin claims.



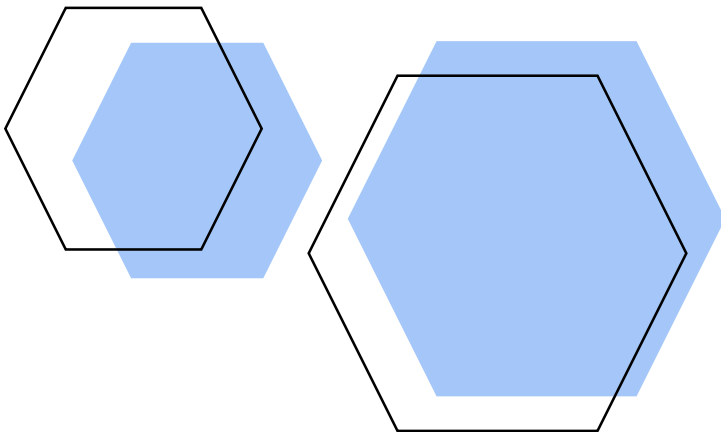


## AUTHORIZATION TO USE THE GI LOGO AND QUALITY CONTROL MEASURES

In addition to registration procedures, Myanmar's GI regulations introduce a structured system for authorizing use of a national GI logo. Producers and traders may apply for permission to use the logo on packaging, labels, or marketing materials associated with a registered GI. To qualify, applicants must be actively involved in producing or distributing the GI-protected goods within the recognized geographical region, must belong to the organization responsible for the GI, and must comply fully with the technical and quality specifications established for the product.

The GI logo serves as a guarantee of authenticity, assuring consumers that the product meets the standards that define its regional identity. The Intellectual Property Department and the relevant producer organization share responsibility for monitoring compliance, conducting inspections, and addressing cases of improper logo use. Violations may result in suspension of logo-use rights or other administrative action, reinforcing the integrity of Myanmar's GI system.

Through this framework, Myanmar seeks not only to preserve traditional knowledge and cultural heritage but also to support economic development by enhancing the commercial value of region-specific goods. The GI logo is expected to play a particularly significant role in strengthening the branding of Myanmar's agricultural and artisanal products in export markets.





## CONCLUSION

Although the GI rules are now in force, the Ministry of Commerce has not yet issued the official fee schedule for GI applications, oppositions, and related procedures. Likewise, the government has not formally announced the opening date for accepting GI filings under the new system. Nonetheless, Myanmar's issuance of the GI rules signals that implementation is approaching, and potential applicants are encouraged to begin preparing the necessary documentation.

Producer groups in Myanmar are evaluating their internal governance structures to ensure they can meet the documentation and quality-control requirements for GI protection. Foreign applicants, meanwhile, are preparing notarized representative appointments and gathering origin-country GI certificates to ensure smooth filing once the window opens.

Myanmar's move to establish a comprehensive GI regulatory framework represents an important milestone for its intellectual property development. As regional and global markets increasingly value authenticity, traceability, and cultural identity in goods, Myanmar's strengthened GI system will help elevate the profile of its distinctive local products. By aligning with international GI standards and offering a clear pathway for both domestic and foreign stakeholders, the country is positioning itself to unlock new economic opportunities while safeguarding its unique regional heritage.

### ***Disclaimers:***

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