



ST. CHRISTOPHER AND NEVIS

CHAPTER 18.39

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS ACT

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GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS ACT

Act 6 of 2007 ... in force 1st November 2016

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GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS ACT

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CHAPTER 18.39
GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS ACT

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE PROTECTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS AND TO PROVIDE FOR RELATED OR INCIDENTAL MATTERS.

PART I
PRELIMINARY

Short title.

1. This Act may be cited as the Geographical Indications Act.

Interpretation.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

“Court” means the High Court;

“geographical indication” means an indication which identifies any goods as originating in the territory of a country, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin;

“goods” means any natural or agricultural products or any products of handicraft or industry;

“Minister” means the Minister responsible for Intellectual Property;

“Paris Convention” means the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property of March 20, 1883, as last revised;

“producer” means—

- (a) the producer of any agricultural product or any other person exploiting natural products;
- (b) the manufacturer of any product of handicraft, or industry; and
- (c) any trader dealing in the said products;

“Register” means the Register of Geographical Indications;

“spirits” means a strong distilled liquor.

PART II
PROTECTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

Availability of protection regardless of registration.

3. Protection under this Act shall be available—

- (a) regardless of whether a geographical indication has been registered; however, registration of a geographical indication under Part III of this Act shall, in any proceedings under this Act, raise a presumption that

such indication is a geographical indication within the meaning of section 2; and

- (b) against a geographical indication which, although literally true as to the territory, region or locality in which the goods originate, falsely represents to the public that the goods originate, in another territory.

Homonymous geographical indications for wines.

4. (1) In the case of homonymous geographical indications for wines, protection shall be accorded to each indication, subject to paragraph (b) of section 3.

(2) The Registrar shall, in the cases of permitted concurrent use of such indications, determine the practical conditions under which the homonymous indications in question will be differentiated from each other, taking into account the need to ensure equitable treatment of the producers concerned and that consumers are not misled.

Exclusion from protection.

5. The following shall not be protected as geographical indications—

- (a) indications which do not correspond to the definition in section 2;
- (b) indications which are contrary to public order or morality;
- (c) geographical indications which are not or cease to be protected in their country of origin, or which have fallen into disuse in that country.

PART III

REGISTRATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

Application for registration.

6. (1) An application for the registration of a geographical indication shall be filed with the Registrar.

(2) The following persons may file an application with the Registrar—

- (a) any person or group of persons carrying on an activity as a producer in the geographical area specified in the application, with respect to the goods specified in the application;
- (b) any group of consumers; or
- (c) any competent authority.

(3) Where an applicant's ordinary residence or principal place of business is outside Saint Christopher and Nevis, he shall be represented by an attorney-at-law resident and practising in Saint Christopher and Nevis or one who is qualified to practise in the State.

Contents of application.

7. (1) An application for the registration of a geographical indication shall specify—

- (a) the name, address and nationality of the natural person or legal entity filing the application, and the capacity in which the applicant is applying for registration;
- (b) the geographical indication for which registration is sought;
- (c) the geographical areas to which the geographical indication applies—
 - (i) the goods to which the geographical indication applies;
 - (ii) the quality, reputation or other characteristic of the goods for which the geographical indication is used.

(2) The application referred to in subsection (1) of this section shall be accompanied by the prescribed fee.

Examination of application.

8. (1) The Registrar shall examine the application to determine whether it complies with the requirements of sections 6 and 7 and the Regulations pertaining thereto or whether it falls under one of the categories provided in section 5.

(2) Where the Registrar finds that the conditions referred to in subsection (1) hereto are fulfilled, he shall accept the application and cause it, as accepted, to be published in the prescribed manner.

Opposition to registration.

9. (1) Any interested person or competent authority may, within the prescribed period and in the prescribed manner, give notice to the Registrar of opposition to the registration of the geographical indication on the grounds that one or more of the requirements of section 6 and 7 have not been fulfilled or that the application falls under one of the categories provided in section 5.

(2) The Registrar shall send a copy of such a notice to the applicant, and within the prescribed period and in the prescribed manner, the applicant shall send to the Registrar a counter-statement of the grounds on which he relies for his application.

(3) The applicant shall, if he does not file a counter-statement, be deemed to have abandoned the application.

(4) Where the applicant files a counter-statement, the Registrar shall furnish a copy thereof to the person giving notice of opposition and, after hearing the parties, if either or both wish to be heard, and considering the merits of the case, shall decide whether the geographical indication should be registered.

Registration of geographical indication.

10. (1) Where the Registrar finds that the conditions referred to in sections 6 and 7 are fulfilled, and—

- (a) the registration of the geographical indication has not been opposed within the prescribed time limit; or
- (b) the registration of the geographical indication has been opposed and the opposition has been decided in the applicant's favour,

he shall register the geographical indication, publish a reference to the registration and issue to the applicant a certificate of registration.

(2) Where the requirements for registration have not been fulfilled, the Registrar shall refuse the application.

Right of use.

11. Only producers carrying on their activity in the geographical area specified in the Register shall have the right to use a registered geographical indication, in the course of trade, with respect to the products specified in the Register, provided that such products possess the quality, reputation or other characteristic specified in the Register.

Cancellation or rectification of registration.

12. (1) The Court may, on the application of any interested person—

- (a) invalidate the registration of a geographical indication on the ground that it does not qualify for protection as such having regard to section 5; or
- (b) rectify the registration of a geographical indication on the ground that—
 - (i) the geographical area specified in the registration does not correspond to the geographical indication; or
 - (ii) the indication of the products for which the geographical indication is used or the indication of the quality, reputation or other characteristic of such products is missing or unsatisfactory.

(2) In any proceedings under this section—

- (a) the person referred to in subsection (1) shall serve notice of the application for invalidation or rectification on the person who filed the application for registration of the geographical indication or his successors in title; and
- (b) the Registrar shall, by a publication in the prescribed manner, of the application for invalidation or rectification, give notice to all persons having the right to use the geographical indication.

(3) The person referred to in subsection (2) and any other interested person may, within a period which shall be specified in the said notice and publication, apply to join in the proceedings.

Proceedings for unlawful use of geographical indications.

13. (1) Any interested person or group of persons may institute proceedings in the Court to prevent, in respect of any geographical indication—

- (a) the use of any means in the designation or presentation of any goods, which indicates or suggests that the goods in question originate in a geographical area other than the true place of origin in a manner which misleads the public as to the geographical origin of the goods;
- (b) any use which constitutes an act of unfair competition within the meaning of Article 10*bis* of the Paris Convention;
- (c) the use of a geographical indication identifying wines for wines not originating in the place indicated by the geographical indication in question, or identifying spirits for spirits not originating in the place indicated by the geographical indication in question, even where the

true origin of the goods is indicated or the geographical indication is used in translation or accompanied by expressions such as “kind”, “type”, “style”, “imitation” or the like.

(2) In proceedings under this section, the Court may, in addition to issuing an injunction, award damages and grant any other civil remedy or relief as it shall consider appropriate.

PART IV

SPECIAL PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKS

Misleading marks.

14. The Registrar shall, *ex officio* or at the request of any interested party, refuse or invalidate the registration of a trademark which contains or consists of a geographical indication with respect to goods not originating in the territory indicated, if use of the indication in the trademark for such goods in Saint Christopher and Nevis is of such a nature as to mislead the public as to the true place of origin of such goods.

Marks conflicting with a geographical indication for wines and spirits.

15. The registration of a trademark for wines which contains or consists of a geographical identification identifying for wines, or of a trade mark for spirits which contains or consists of a geographical indication identifying wines and spirits, shall be refused or invalidated by the Registrar, *ex officio* or on the application of an interested party, with respect to such wines or spirits not having this origin.

Exceptions regarding prior users.

16. (1) Nothing in this Act shall prevent the continued and similar use, in Saint Christopher and Nevis, of a particular geographical indication of another country identifying wines or spirits in connection with goods or services by any nationals or domiciliaries of Saint Christopher and Nevis who have used that geographical indication continuously with regard to the same or related goods or services in the Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis—

(a) for at least ten years preceding the 15th of April, 1994; or

(b) in good faith preceding that date.

(2) Where a trademark has been applied for or registered in good faith, or where rights to a trademark have been acquired through use in good faith—

(a) before the date of entry into force of this Act; or

(b) before the geographical indication is protected in its country of origin,

this Act shall not prejudice the registrability of, or the validity of, the registration of a trademark, or the right to use a trademark, on the basis that such a trademark is identical to, or similar to, a geographical indication.

(3) Nothing in this Act shall apply in respect of a geographical indication of any country with respect to goods or services for which the relevant indication is identical to the term customary in common language as the common name for such goods or services in Saint Christopher and Nevis, or in respect of a geographical indication of any other country with respect to products of the vine for which the

relevant indication is identical to the customary name of a grape variety existing in Saint Christopher and Nevis as of the 1st of January, 1995.

(4) Any application for relief made under Part III of this Act in connection with the use or registration of a trademark shall be made—

- (a) within five years after the unlawful use of the protected indication has become generally known in Saint Christopher and Nevis; or
- (b) after the date of the registration and publication of the trademark in Saint Christopher and Nevis, provided that—
 - (i) the date of registration in paragraph (b) is earlier than the date on which the unlawful use became generally known in Saint Christopher and Nevis; and
 - (ii) the geographical indication is not used or registered in bad faith.

(5) This Act shall in no way prejudice the right of any person to use, in the course of trade, that person's name or the name of that person's predecessor in business, except where such name is used in such a manner as to mislead the public.

PART V

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Registrar.

17. The Registrar shall perform the functions and exercise the powers conferred on him by this Act and any other enactment.

Register.

18. (1) The Registrar shall maintain a Register of Geographical Indications in which he shall record all matters required by this Act or the Regulations to be recorded.

(2) Any person may, upon payment of the prescribed fees, and in accordance with the prescribed conditions, consult, inspect or make a copy of, or obtain an extract from, the Register.

(3) The Register shall be *prima facie* evidence of anything required or authorised by this Act to be registered, and shall be admissible as sufficient evidence of any such thing.

(4) A certificate purported to be signed by the Registrar and certifying that any entry which he is authorised to make by this Act has or has not been done, shall be *prima facie* evidence, and shall be admissible and sufficient evidence, of the matters so certified.

(5) Each of the following, that is to say, a copy of—

- (a) an entry in the Register or an extract from the Register which is supplied under subsection (2) of this section; or
- (b) any matter which has been published under this Act,

which purports to be a certified copy or a certified extract shall be admitted in evidence without the original, and such evidence shall be sufficient evidence of the matters stated therein.

(6) In this section, “certified copy” and “certified extract” mean a copy and extract certified by the Registrar and sealed with his seal.

Correction of errors.

19. (1) The Registrar may of his own volition or upon the written request of any person, correct any clerical error or error of translation or transcription in any application filed under this Act, or in any document filed in pursuance of such application, and the Registrar may also correct any clerical error in the Register.

(2) Subsection (1) shall not be construed as giving the Registrar the power to correct the Register, any application or document in a material way.

Extension of time for applications.

20. (1) Where the Registrar is satisfied that the circumstances justify it, he may, upon receiving the written request of any interested person, and upon such terms as he may direct, extend the time for doing any act or taking any proceeding under this Act or the Regulations, and shall give written notice to the parties concerned.

(2) The extension may be granted even though the time for doing the act or taking the proceeding has expired.

Exercise of discretionary powers.

21. The Registrar shall give any party to a proceeding before him the opportunity of being heard before exercising any discretionary power vested in him by this Act if the exercise thereof might adversely affect that party.

Jurisdiction of Court.

22. The High Court shall have jurisdiction in cases of dispute relating to the application of this Act and the Regulations and in matters which, under this Act, may be brought before it.

Offences.

23. (1) Any person who knowingly performs any act referred to in section 13 commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding forty thousand dollars, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve years, or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

(2) Any person who, knowing the same to be false—

(a) makes or causes to be made a false entry in the Register;

(b) makes or causes to be made any document falsely purporting to be a copy of an entry in the Register; or

(c) produces, tenders or causes to be produced in evidence any such entry or copy thereof,

commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding thirty thousand dollars, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years, or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

Regulations.

24. The Minister may make Regulations providing for any matter which is to be prescribed under this Act, or for giving effect to the purpose of this Act.
