



# **STATUS REPORT ON THE LẠNG SƠN STAR ANISEED GI IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

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# Summary

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- The National Office of Intellectual Property of Vietnam (NOIP)
- The Provincial People's Committee of Lạng Sơn Province (PPC)
- The Department of Science and Technology of Lạng Sơn Province (DOST)
- The Department of Standard, Management, and Quality of Lạng Sơn Province (STAMEQ)
- The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Lạng Sơn Province (DARD)
- The Department of Industry and Trade of Lạng Sơn Province
- Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association
- The companies processing, trading and exporting of Lạng Sơn star aniseed: VINA SAMEX JSC and LANG SON AFOREX CO, LTD

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Our gratitude also to the EU-MUTRAP project's team that efficiently organized and supervised the field visit to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI area as well as the implementation of the entire assignment: Thank you for your efficient support, key part for the success of our assignment.

## I. Overall background

Since 1996 Viet Nam has developed the protection of GIs, counting at present with an increasing number of Vietnamese GIs registered by the competent authority, the National Office of Intellectual Property of Viet Nam (NOIP), the agency under the Ministry of Science and Technology, assuming the functions of exercising the State management and providing services in the field of Intellectual Property.

However, the GI route is a relatively new issue and still in the process of consolidation in Viet Nam. For this reason and since 2014, NOIP has been requesting yearly support from the European Trade Policy and Investment Support (EU-MUTRAP) project<sup>1</sup>. This support has been mainly focused on assisting 4 Vietnamese localities to take the necessary steps for the consolidation and further development of their GIs. The products selected by NOIP to be supported by the EU-MUTRAP project are Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, Buôn Ma Thuột coffee GI, Bình Thuận dragon fruit GI and Hoà Lộc mango GI.

The implementation of this support by the EU-MUTRAP project has been provided through the Activity EU-16, which consisted in assignments of international and local GI experts in 2014 and 2015 so far, with the following actions and outcomes:

- In 2014, the EU-MUTRAP project organized 2 workshops in different parts of the country (Lạng Sơn province and Dak Lak province) on the GIs registration conditions and procedures in the EU, providing *ad hoc* advice to local stakeholders regarding the documents needed to apply for the registration of each GI in the EU. As a result of this assignment, EU-MUTRAP GI experts assessed serious weaknesses in terms of GI management by GI holders as well as by territorial administrative agencies in charge of supporting the development of these products. Hence, they recommended further assistance to tackle these challenges.
- In 2015, the EU-MUTRAP project continued supporting the development of the 4 selected Vietnamese GIs, seeking to create organizational and institutional capacities to ensure that the multi-year process of developing GIs moves forward and evolves in an appropriate manner. To this end, the EU-MUTRAP project organized 4 workshops in the localities of the 4 GI products, providing technical and legal guidance to local stakeholders for improving their GI management, as well as for setting up traceability and control systems, in order to promote the development of their respective GIs. EU-MUTRAP GI experts gathered the

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<sup>1</sup> The European Trade Policy and Investment Support Project (EU-MUTRAP) is an EU-funded project that is executed by the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (MOIT) in partnership with the European Commission. Succeeding to the three previous MUTRAP projects, the overall objective of EU-MUTRAP IV is to further Vietnam's integration into the global, regional (ASEAN) and sub-regional trading systems, and to enhance the EU-Vietnam trade and investment relations, as well as to maximize the benefits from the country's economic development for an inclusive growth and poverty reduction. The purpose of the Project is to support the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT) in facilitating sustainable international trade and investment through improved capacity for policy making, policy consultation, and the negotiation and implementation of related commitments, particularly vis-à-vis the European Union (EU). For further information, you may consult the project's website: [www.mutrap.org.vn](http://www.mutrap.org.vn)



necessary data and met with relevant stakeholders (producers, local authorities and representatives of the GI association) in order to identify the weaknesses of the overall GI management as well as the challenges ahead to ensure their sustainability and further development. As a result, they prepared an assessment and implementation plan for the 4 selected Vietnamese GIs (one per GI), through which defining a road map to foster their consolidation and further development. The Implementation Plans were translated into Vietnamese and sent to all 4 localities between April and May 2016, for their implementation by all involved parties (producers / processors / traders, GI Association, local authorities and NOIP).

The assignment in 2016 constitutes the follow up on the previous work, intended to assess the progress made by local stakeholders on the Implementation Plans received by localities in May 2016, as well as to continue guiding local stakeholders on the consolidation and further development of the 4 selected GIs.

## II. Status Report

### A. Purpose and Methodology

The present document is the **Status Report regarding the Implementation Plan for the development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.**

Such document constitutes the outcome in 2016 of the Activity EU-16 within the framework of the EU-MUTRAP Project, which overall objective is to support NOIP in improving the capacity of GIs owners to manage and promote 4 selected GIs, the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI among them.

The **purpose** of this Status Report is assessing the progress made by involved stakeholders as regards to the improvement of the GI management (the traceability system and control plan) as well as the sustainability and further development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, following the Implementation Plan prepared by EU-MUTRAP GI experts and provided to local stakeholders in May 2016.

The **main outcome of this report** will be **providing a selected number of priorities to be implemented by all related stakeholders within the framework of a provided timetable**, seeking to make tangible progress on the management as well as on the consolidation and development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI. Please note that the selected priorities are not the only actions to be implemented for the consolidation and development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI. On the contrary, with these priorities, EU-MUTRAP GI experts seek to provide a clear orientation to all involved stakeholders on the actions to be implemented first, which shall be followed by other to be defined after these first have been completed.

In order to elaborate the present Status Report, international and local GI experts of the EU-MUTRAP Project have used the following **methodology** and undertaken the following **actions**:

#### 1) Planning:

- Prepare a **work plan of the assignment**, including the draft agenda for the Policy Networking Session in Lạng Sơn and the timetable for implementing the overall assignment.
- Gather and analyze the background report provided by government authorities (NOIP and Lạng Sơn PPC DOST)
- Hold **preparatory meetings** and dealing with **organizational arrangements** in Hanoi prior to the visit to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI area in the Lạng Sơn province.
- Prepare a **check list** to be completed by all involved stakeholders on the status of performance of the Implementation Plan that was delivered to local stakeholders in May 2016.

#### 2) Implementation:

- Travel to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI area in the Lạng Sơn province.
- Hold **meetings with two companies** in charge of processing, trading and exporting Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI on 31 November 2016, to discuss the status, level of progress and involvement of these organizations on the GI and its use.
- Hold a **Policy Networking Session** on 1 December 2016 with local authorities (different departments of the Lạng Sơn PPC), representatives of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association (GI association), representatives of the processors/traders (one company), to discuss the level of progress on the execution of the Implementation Plan provided to them in May 2016, as well as to provide them with guidance for solving the challenges to reach tangible results for the consolidation and further development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI. You may find the delivered **presentations by the International GI Expert**:
  - **Management by the GI Association as ANNEX I**
  - **Sustainable development of the GI: Labelling & Promotion as ANNEX II**
  - **GI Protection: The use of the GI right as ANNEX III.**
- Hold a **meeting with representatives of the Bureau of Accreditation (BoA)** to discuss the progress made by localities on the accreditation of qualified bodies to control and certify the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI as well as to brainstorm on the steps to take for having a competent entity to control and certify the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI before being placed in the market.

### 3) Assessment and drafting:

- As a result of the working meetings in the Lạng Sơn province, **assessing the progress made by involved stakeholders** on the GI management (the traceability system and control plan) as well as the sustainability and further development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.
- **Identifying the weaknesses and challenges** that involved stakeholders face for fulfilling the recommendations set on the Implementation Plans provided by EU-MUTRAP GI experts in May 2016.
- **Identifying the priorities to move forward** making progress on the GI management (traceability system and control plan) as well as on the consolidation and development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.
- Prepare a **first draft of the Status Report**, to be completed with further data to be provided by relevant stakeholders.

### 4) Reviewing and completing:

- Working with the relevant stakeholders on the **data gathering of the check list**, in order to assess the level of progress on the performance of the Implementation Plan, to evaluate the current status of the GI as well as to propose the priorities to be implemented by all related stakeholders in the short term. You may find the **Check List on the Status of the Implementing Planning of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI completed by the local GI expert as ANNEX IV.**
- As a result of the previous actions, **reviewing and finalizing the Status Report** regarding the Implementation Plan for the development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.

## B. Findings

Thanks to the work undertaken by the EU-MUTRAP local and international GI experts in collaboration with local authorities and related stakeholders before, during and after the field visit to the GI area, it has been possible to **assess the progress made by involved stakeholders on the GI management as well as on the sustainability and further development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI**, following the Implementation Plan prepared by EU-MUTRAP GI experts and provided to local stakeholders in May 2016. Such assessment analyses the **progress made regarding:**

- The GI product
- The awareness and interest in the GI by involved stakeholders
- The management of the GI by the GI association
- The traceability system and control plan of the GI
- The labelling and promotion actions undertaken by involved stakeholders
- The marketing of the GI product by GI stakeholders
- The protection of the GI product
- The impact of the GI for producers, consumers and the local community

The **main findings** regarding the current situation of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI can be summarized as follows:

### B.1. The GI product

Based on the gathered information, together with the discussions with stakeholders during the Policy Networking Session and the visit to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI area, **there has been no particular progress on the challenges identified on the Implementation Plan regarding the the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI product, in particular as regards to the guarantee of the product's quality and the improvement on production and processing practices by involved stakeholders.**

- Based on the most updated information (2016) provided by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association during the Policy Networking Session, the area of the star aniseed plantation is around 36.000 hectares concentrated in 6 districts of the Lạng Sơn province, which constitutes the 70% of the country's total. However, there is
- According to Lạng Sơn Statistical Yearbook, the annual average production output of star aniseed fluctuates between 5.000 and 8.000 tons, having the target to achieve over 55.000 tons of harvested star aniseed by 2030.
- Despite the high productivity potential of the plantation area, the quality of star aniseed seeds remains low, due to the difficult location of anise forests (high hilly remote areas), the unpredictability of the climate, the lack of sustainable production practices by producers, the limited technical and technological advancements for post-harvesting and processing, and an overall lack of awareness and attention to the quality of the product.
- Based on the provided information, many schemes and projects of scientific research and application of scientific and technological advancement in star aniseed production and processing have been implemented by the initiative of local authorities over the past



years, allowing for the improvement of the productivity and quality of Lạng Sơn star aniseed products. These projects have contributed to improve awareness of the high economic value brought by anise trees as well as to maintain the prestige in the domestic and international markets. However, the introduction of technical and technological advancements to the star aniseed plantation, production and development seems rather limited; hence these projects have had an insufficient impact so far to tackle the challenges to consolidate the quality of the star aniseed.

- Producers lack of the knowledge and interest on caring, management and protection of the production, focusing only on collecting the seeds as soon as possible to sell them, hence not paying much attention to consolidate the quality of the product.
- The processing by farmers is done through old techniques that lower the quality, while the processing by enterprises is more advanced, so quality is more stable, but there is still a lack of modern technology and proper equipment to guarantee the quality of the star aniseed.
- In addition, there are producers or processors mixing the GI star aniseed with non-GI star aniseed to sell it with no specific origin name.
- As regards to the GI, the product specifications are unclear about the product or products bearing the geographical indication, because it refers only to the star aniseed product (as registered at NOIP) but describes the star aniseed products currently marketed existing in two types: dried and screwed fruits, often referred to as “anise” (which is mainly consumed product in the market), and refined oil of star aniseed (distillates from twigs, leaves and fruits of star aniseed). In addition, some companies even commercialize the Lạng Sơn star aniseed in the forms of star aniseed and star aniseed oil, but also broken star aniseed and star aniseed powder. Up to now, DOST is preparing to amend the GI certification to add the Lạng Sơn star aniseed essential oil as GI, but such work has not been completed yet.
- Provisions on the production method for the elaboration of both types of products (Star aniseed and star aniseed essential oil) should be clearly provided to producers and processors to ensure homogeneous elaboration practices of the GI.
- No guidelines for GI stakeholders on the implementation of the GI product specifications, their rights and duties have been prepared by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.
- DOST has regularly as well as training courses for producers on the implementation of the product specifications. However, these initiatives do not seem to be sufficient to raise their awareness on the production practices that they must follow according to the product specifications.
- The Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association have also concerns about the quality control and food safety of the GI, claiming for regulations to ensure food safety during the phases of planting, caring, producing, collecting preliminary processing and processing.

## **B.2. Awareness and interest in the GI by involved stakeholders**

Based on the gathered information, together with the discussions with stakeholders during the Policy Networking Session and the visit to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI area, **the awareness about the GI concept, its implications and potential benefits remains weak, while the**

**commitment of some stakeholders** (especially the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association and the local authorities) **constitutes a positive asset for the consolidation and development of the GI.**

- Some involved parties (mainly local authorities) seem aware of the Implementation Plan sent by EU-MUTRAP GI experts on May 2016, while some producers and some representatives the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association have not seen the implementation plan nor followed on the recommended activities therein.
- With the support of DOST, DARD and NOIP, the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association has organized awareness raising actions for stakeholders, buyer and consumers on the GI concept, its implications and benefits, through the organization and participation in trade fairs, exhibitions, leaflets' distribution, etc. However, little attention has been paid to these communication actions and there is still a general lack of knowledge or insufficient understanding about the GI, its impacts and benefits by most related stakeholders.
- Most producers still have limited awareness and knowledge about the GI, selling the star aniseed with no consideration or reference to the GI.
- According to interviewed stakeholders (processing and trading companies), some recognize the reputation of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed while others consider that the bad production and processing practices of some stakeholders have undermined the prestige of the star aniseed from the Lạng Sơn province, and therefore they prefer to avoid mentioning the province of origin on their packaging.
- In any case and as regards to producers, processors and traders, they do not seem to understand the intellectual property that is the GI.
- Awareness raising for traders and exporters has not been implemented due to the lack of operational funds and professional skills to do so.
- According to the provided information and in comparison with the information gathered in November 2015, there has not been a significant increase on the number of stakeholders within the GI. Furthermore, the number of companies granted with the GI certificate still remains very limited.
- Regarding producers, it still seems difficult to involve them directly in the GI process, especially because most contacts and exchanges regarding the GI are done through the 3 companies granted with the GI certificate.
- The Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association seems interested in consolidating and further developing the GI, but internal problems among the 3 only enterprises granted with the GI certificate prevents from achieving significant progress.
- There is a close cooperation between the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association and the related local authorities (DOST, DARD and related agencies), which is a positive sign of endorsement and support of local authorities to the GI management by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.
- Local authorities (DOST and related agencies) remain interested and committed to contribute to the development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, but have not created a multidisciplinary team of officials from involved agencies, that could be very useful not

only to implement activities on control and management, but also other actions addressed to promote, protect and develop the GI at regional, national and international levels. The current cooperation between the different departments may facilitate the creation of such working group.

- Meantime and very useful for the creation in the suggested multi-disciplinary team, the Lạng Sơn DOST has already regulated clear responsibilities of some of local authorities involved on the GI (DARD, Department of Industry and Commerce, People's Committee of Districts and Communes in the GI area). Other agencies and departments shall be identified to take part on the working team for the development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.

### **B.3. Management of the GI**

Based on the gathered information, together with the discussions with stakeholders during the Policy Networking Session and the visit to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI area, **some improvements on the management of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI have been assessed, but there are still important challenges as regards to the consolidation of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, the representativeness of all relevant stakeholders therein and the support by local authorities.**

- The number of members does not seem to have increased and the number of companies granted with the right to use the GI remains very limited, comprising only 3 companies that face internal disagreements that make difficult their cooperation.
- Producers do not seem to be represented within the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, as only companies are represented therein while producers remain unidentified.
- There are even companies involved on the development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI but not members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association yet.
- Some partnerships between farmers and enterprises to establish a network for production and consumption of star aniseed have been established but they have not had an impact on the amount of members within the association.
- With the support of DOST and DARD, the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association has considerably improved in terms of structure, with then election of a new Standing Committee for the term 2015 – 2020 that includes 9 members representing the different sectors: producers, processors, exporters and local authorities. However, as regards to personnel to daily manage the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, so far they only count with 4 people working part-time in the association, hiring external experts for training and having voluntary members in all districts.
- The missions of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association seem to include multiple activities, including representation of members, support members for developing their markets, acquiring resources for the association and its members, strengthen the respect of production practices, improve the quality of the star aniseed that is used as ingredients in food, promote star aniseed at national and international levels, strengthen capacities of its members, etc. Unfortunately, the lack of

financial means and skilled human resources prevent the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association to fully and properly implement all these activities.

- The Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association has received financial support from local authorities since 2008. Concerning the means to auto-finance its activities, the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association has passed to receive fees paid only by the 3 companies that have the GI certificate, while producers fail to pay the yearly fees that they should pay to the association.
- Despite the amount by fees paid by the 3 companies, the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association lacks of total independence from local authorities, as even if the Chairman of the association is an enterprise director, the head office of the association is located at the Department of Forestry Development of the Lạng Sơn province under DARD, having a financial dependence to local authorities for the regular management of the association.
- Other means of financial support, such as increasing the number of members within Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association have not been explored yet.
- Management tools for the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, guidelines on production practices as well as guidelines on the implementation of the GI product specifications by stakeholders have not been developed, either because of limited financial resources and skilled human resources to do so or because they wait for NOIP to issue some guidelines or provisions for implementing the GI management.
- Some training actions on the implementation of the GI product specifications, producing and processing procedure as well as capacity building for producers and business on the maintenance and improvement of the quality of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI have been implemented by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, with the support of DOST and NOIP.
- Capacity building actions on GI management for officers of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association have been undertaken through their participation in GI workshops and training courses organized by DOST and NOIP. However, their knowledge and understanding still seems to need improvement.
- The training mission of members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association to learn from other GI with a strong and well-settled management system has not been implemented due to the limited resources.
- Local authorities remain committed to the support of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association. However, most local officials involved on the GI management take this task as a part-time job, therefore cannot consecrate enough time to work on the development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.
- Local authorities claim some official guidelines or provisions from NOIP for implementing the GI management and control of GIs, to be applied to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.

#### **B.4. Traceability system and control plan of the GI**

Based on the gathered information, together with the discussions with stakeholders during the Policy Networking Session and the visit to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI area, **the traceability**

system remains an important challenge for the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association and related local authorities, as most plantations are located in remote areas and processing companies mix the star aniseed that they buy from undifferentiated farmers, making these reasons very difficult to trace the GI product back to the plantation. The control plan is not implemented yet in any of its stages (auto-control, internal control and external control), hence the yearly production of Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI is not certified before being placed in the market, putting into risk the credibility of the entire GI.

- The Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association refers to the existence of a register of GI stakeholders but does not seem to be as complete as it should be for setting up the traceability system of the GI. Such register should include all necessary data on producers (individual or members of farmers groups, cooperatives or other structures), plantations, production, processors, traders, etc., in order to jointly compose a traceability code that could trace the GI product from the market back to the plantation where it was grown. Besides the lack of human and financial resources to build up the register, the major challenge for the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association is the lack of awareness and interest in the GI by producers.
- According to the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, the traceability system for Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI is established in 6 districts planting star aniseed and has been implemented in 33 communes/towns in the protected GI area. However and in light of the interviews held with stakeholders, it seems that the traceability system has not been implemented yet. In some cases, certain companies are setting up their own traceability system or use traceability for certification schemes under which they operate, but so far there is no coordination to set up a traceability system for the GI.
- The Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association has received capacity building on traceability and internal control by local authorities, but it seems insufficient for understanding how to set up a traceability system and internal control plan.
- There is no auto-control by producers on their plantations, and as they are not directly registered as members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, it is difficult to follow up on their respect of the product specifications on their production practices. There was a regulation in 2008 but it is not implemented in practice because of limited awareness of producers and limited resources of the association to be able to monitor its implementation.
- No guidelines for the auto-control by GI stakeholders in respect of the product specifications have been prepared and disseminated by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.
- GI stakeholders have received capacity building on auto-control as part of the regular training courses by DOST, but they have had no impact on the establishment of the auto-control.
- The Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association is responsible for the internal control of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.
- During 2016, the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association has carried out the following activities:
  - Managing, monitoring members' production plans.



- Managing, monitoring members' use of product labels, packaging for star aniseed bearing GI Lang Son
- Exchanging information among members to produce and trade in a way that suits market needs.
- Connecting members who are producers, processors and traders to management product quality and traceability.

However, these activities cannot be considered as the implementation of an annual internal control plan, which has not been formulated by the association yet, as the main elements affecting the quality of the GI product have not been identified to be controlled.

- Lạng Sơn DOST has delegate the external control to the Lạng Sơn Division of Standards, Metrology and Quality (STAMEQ), which includes examining, assessing origin, quality of the star aniseed bearing the GI Lạng Sơn from the production stage to the circulation stage. In 2016, DOST and STAMEQ have examined the use of GI labels in the 3 companies granted with the right to use the GI, surveying, examining conditions and sampling to assess the quality for star aniseed and star aniseed oil.
- However, it seems that external control by the STAMEQ is limited to the laboratory analysis, while the DARD should be in charge of controlling the production practices, the traceability of the product and the management by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.
- Both, the Lạng Sơn DARD and the Lạng Sơn STAMEQ should jointly prepare and implement and external control plan to be able to certify the yearly production of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.
- It is important to note that if the DARD and STAMEQ assume the external control of the production process, management and final product, the BoA shall clarify if only DARD or both DARD and STAMEQ must have the technical capacity complying with international regulations (ISO 17065) by receiving the accreditation by the BoA or, at least, shall proof their independence and impartiality, having the qualified personnel to control and certify the yearly production of the GI before being placed in the market. DOST is asking the BoA for the detailed procedure to receive the accreditation.
- The STAMEQ has received capacity building on external control by DOST through regular trainings, but both the STAMEQ and the DARD shall ensure the resources and appropriate expertise to fulfil their tasks.
- As the external control is not in place yet, there is no certification and supervision of the yearly production of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI before being placed in the market.
- According to DOST, NOIP should issue some clear regulations on GI management and control.

## **B.5. Labelling and promotion actions**

Based on the gathered information, together with the discussions with stakeholders during the Policy Networking Session and the visit to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI area, **the reputation of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed seems unstable due to the irregular quality of the product. However, the use of the GI logo is very limited and, when used, it is wrongly used for all sorts of products other than the Lạng Sơn star aniseed and Lạng Sơn star aniseed essential oil. Labelling remains an issue, as the regulation on the use of the GI logo has not been reviewed yet, in order to meet the demand when the GI is certified by the external control and**

**certification body. As regards to promotion, some actions have been undertaken, but they are still insufficient to raise awareness about the benefits to commercialize and buy the GI.**

- According to interviewed stakeholders, some companies state that the reputation of Lạng Sơn province for star aniseed is very high, while others claim that a very bad reputation has been built due to the low quality of the product as a result of bad production and processing practices.
- The use of the GI logo is based on the Decision n<sup>o</sup> 03/QĐ-CTH of 2009, but has not been reviewed ever since, in order to adapt to the labelling once the external control is implemented.
- DOST is preparing to amend the GI certification to add the Lạng Sơn star aniseed essential oil as GI, but such work has not been completed yet. The Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association shall prepare specific rules on labelling for the essential oil once the amended product specifications are approved by NOIP.
- DOST is the entity responsible for providing the stamps for labelling by the companies granted with the right to use the GI, but this provision does not seem to respond to any certification of the yearly production assessing that it has passed the control by an external and independent control and certification body.
- According to the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, only 1 of the 3 companies granted with the GI certificate, use the GI logo and the mention “Lạng Sơn star aniseed”, excluding the mention to the “GI” on their products.
- In light of the labelling seen during the visits to stakeholders, some companies include only the name “star aniseed” on their packaging, sometimes referring to “Lạng Sơn” as the place of origin or sometimes only indicating Vietnam as the place of origin.
- Most traders and exporters do not mention the “Protected Geographical Indication” or “PGI” on their packaging. They themselves do not see the benefit of including the GI mention and logo, hence are unable to prove the specific quality and differences between the GI product and non-GI product. Including the mention “Protected Geographical Indication” or “PGI” on the packaging of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI or on the logo should be considered.
- Furthermore, companies often put the logo on the company before the GI logo or considerably bigger than the GI logo, which is very small if at all there. The lack of guidelines on the packaging of the GI product results on a lack of rules to set up the size of the logo, the place where it must be located or its shape in relation to other information on the packaging, in an homogeneous manner for all GI users.
- As relevant examples of the irregular practices on labelling, the Chairman of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association does not use the GI logo or the mention “PGI” on the products of his own company; while only a few companies include the GI logo on their packaging, but not only on star aniseed or star aniseed essential oil, but also on all sorts of other products, such as lamps, pillows, etc.
- Due to the lack of a traceability system and control plan as well as to the referred irregular practices by traders, there is still no exact data on the number of hectares and consumption volume that is labelled as “Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI”.
- No measures have been adopted to encourage the use of the GI logo, through awareness raising activities for traders and exporters on the importance to include the GI mention and logo for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.

- NOIP is working on the preparation of a national GI logo for registered Vietnamese GIs. According to NOIP, the national GI logo in preparation will be a useful tool to improve the image and awareness on GIs, as well as to enforce their protection.
- As regards to consumers and general public, awareness raising actions have been undertaken to explain the GI concept and its benefits for them, through the organization and/or participation in trade fairs, exhibitions, leaflet distribution, etc.
- Local authorities have implemented promotion actions towards buyers and consumers, consisting in links with promotion activities by exporters as well as a large show-room in Lạng Sơn city to introduce and advertise the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI. However, they are still insufficient to raise awareness about the benefits to commercialize and buy the GI. Products are mainly wholesaled without any GI label or specific origin name.
- The Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association considers that trade promotion should be further enhanced to foster the product consumption and encourage the production development.
- Local authorities have also put an accent on tourism, intending to strengthen the promotion of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI through tourism.
- By now, NOIP has not defined or prepared a National GI Promotion Strategy to support the promotion of Vietnamese GIs at national and international levels, but it is foreseen to include a GI Promotion Strategy in the framework of the National IP Strategy in preparation at present.

## **B.6. Marketing of the GI product**

Based on the gathered information, together with the discussions with stakeholders during the Policy Networking Session and the visit to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI area, **the consumption market of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI depends mainly on the international market, with dramatically fluctuating prices and a low export turnovers. Companies develop their own market strategy regardless the GI. Some actions have been undertaken so far to define a market strategy for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed G, but no results have been assessed so far.**

- So far, there are no official trading and marketing channels for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI products (star aniseed and essential oil) and producers still fully depend on the traders when selling GI product. There the added value of the GI product compared to the non-GI products in terms of price has not been created yet.
- According to the information provided by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, the market price for 1 kilo of dry star anise is about 60,000 – 80,000 VND, making the total revenue of more than 400 billion VND.
- According to DOST, the Lạng Sơn star aniseed has gradually consolidated its position in the international market, identifying the Lạng Sơn province as the “star aniseed homeland”.
- In fact, the consumption of star aniseed depends on foreign markets, more than on the domestic market.
- However, the consumption market appears quite unstable, with dramatically fluctuating prices and a strong dependence on the Chinese market.
- As there is no pricing mechanism for star aniseed products, the price is often depressed by private traders.



- The major markets are the foreign ones, such as China, Korea, Japan, Germany, Russia, India and Southeast Asian countries.
- Over the last years, DOST in coordination with DARD and the Health department, has worked with relevant enterprises, to search for the potential markets to create links for the star aniseed consumption. These projects have allowed for the establishment of a link between farmers and enterprises in the process of product consumption, setting up fresh star aniseed purchasing/collecting points in the raw material plantation area that has allowed for a useful network for production and consumption of star aniseed.
- These efforts have resulted on the introduction of star aniseed in foreign markets like Japan, America, Dubai of UAE, Korea, Thailand, Russia, etc. leading to an increase of export volume by companies to India, Taiwan, Japan, Germany, Netherlands, US, Russia, etc.
- Some companies base their business philosophy on establishing long lasting mutual beneficial relations with clients globally, serving them the highest quality products.
- Despite the vast export volume, some companies claim that export turnover is still low, and some are interested in increasing the amount of essential oil exported to the global market besides the raw product.
- Up to present, each company/cooperative has its own market strategy, not having a market strategy for the GI, thus causing difficulties in the GI management and development in general level, both domestically and internationally. To overcome this weakness, companies claim for support to undertake market research, to work on procedures to satisfy quality and safety requirements, to develop new ideas for effective and attractive designs as well as to participate in foreign commercial fairs.
- According to the information provided by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, a project to prepare a market strategy for the commercialization of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI took place in 2014, with the support of an external sponsor (SNV – Netherlands Development Organization). However, no results have been assessed from such project.
- Recently, the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association has drafted and submitted to the Lạng Sơn PPC the General Strategy for the Development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, focusing on high quality and high added value product in order to increase the export turnover on some of the biggest markets, such as EU, Japan, USA, etc.
- It is important to note that during the Policy Networking Session with stakeholders in the Lạng Sơn province on 1 December 2016, the Department of Trade and Commerce showed its interest to know the plan of DOST to increase the commercial value of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, so that they may define some actions to cooperate on such initiative. The multi-disciplinary team may be a good channel to exchange information and cooperate on common actions for the development of the GI.

## **B.7. Protection of the GI product**

Based on the gathered information, together with the discussions with stakeholders during the Policy Networking Session and the visit to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI production area, **the protection of the GI product and its enforcement at national and international remains a pending issue.** The main challenge is that **as long as the GI is not properly controlled and certified, it will not be possible to ensure the enforcement of the protection, since it will be**

**as difficult to identify the real product that respects the product specifications or the fake product. Furthermore, possible infringements are not identified nor tackled because there is a general lack of attention by producers with no interest in using the GI themselves, as well as an insufficient understanding and resources by local authorities.**

- Even if DOST has the responsibility to grant and retrieve the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI certificate to use the GI, the purpose of the GI certificate as a guarantee of protection remains unclear, as it is granted once but there is no follow up on the respect of the product specifications or any control on its use by the company that received the certificate. At present, NOIP is working on the review of the current regulation regarding the procedure for granting the certificate to use the GI, in the framework of the preparation of the amendment to the IP law.
- Up to present, the Government's Decree n° 99/2013/ND-CP is the regulation for sanctioning violations in industrial property (IP) rights including GIs, but so far there are no specific guidelines on sanctions against GI infringements. Even if the legislation foresees general actions against infringements, NOIP has not yet provided localities with a concrete methodology for the actions that can be taken against infringements as well as the sanctions to apply to those infringements. At present NOIP is considering the preparation of such guidelines for GIs. This methodology would be very useful for stakeholders and could be one of the results of the National GI Protection Strategy to be included in the National IP Strategy in preparation.
- In parallel, the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association has not prepared either the guidelines on sanctions against infringements to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, which should allow members of the association to react against abuses to the GI. Undoubtedly, this will not be an easy task as long as the lack of knowledge of the GI product specifications persists and the traceability system and control plan are not in place, as these guidelines should be agreed by all members within the GI.
- Awareness raising actions, consisting in workshops, seminars, technical meetings and training courses on GI related matters, including GI protection and enforcement, have been undertaken by DOST with the support of NOIP for GI stakeholders, the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association and the Office of Market Surveillance.
- However, there is still a general lack of knowledge about the GI protection and enforcement by GI stakeholders and local authorities, who confuse protection and enforcement of the GI with the use of the GI right, and even consider that the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI does not face cases of infringements.
- Most stakeholders do not have a clear understanding about the different cases of infringements that may occur against a GI. In fact, infringements are the use of the GI name or logo by third parties not part of the GI, but also the use of the GI name and logo by those within the GI that do not respect the product specifications.
- Apparently, there could be some companies carrying out abuses against the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI but no sanctions have been worked out so far to handle such infringements.
- The enforcement of the GI has not been implemented as the commercialization of the product still faces several challenges, due to the lack of legal basis regarding the GI control, the lack of human resources for its implementation. As long as the control of the GI product is not implemented, the compliance of the GI with the product specifications and

related provisions is very difficult to ensure, hence it will be very difficult to fight against infringements, from stakeholders that may not respect the elaboration process of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI or from third parties that use the name “Lạng Sơn star aniseed” for star aniseed that is not the real Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.

- NOIP tries to accompany the companies and groups raising awareness about the role of the GI but it is also necessary the coordination between DOST, Market Surveillance, Market Police, etc. to provide a warning to the infringers. If the infringements persist, there are other measures available, such as imposing fines and disposing fake products causing confusion among consumers. Furthermore, NOIP is working with an international organization in order to develop a mechanism within a National IP Strategy in preparation that will comprise GIs.
- According to NOIP, the national GI logo in preparation will be a useful tool to improve the image and awareness on GIs, as well as to enforce their protection. Likewise, including the mention “Protected Geographical Indication” or “PGI” on the packaging of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI needs to be considered.
- No data has been provided about the protection of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI in other countries.
- The analysis regarding the need to protect the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI in foreign markets has not been undertaken yet, due to the lack of human and financial resources.
- Likewise, the analysis regarding the need to register the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI logo (especially in the EU) has not been undertaken yet, due to the limited funds and capabilities to do so.
- The supervision of the protection of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI at national level is assigned to DOST and related local authorities, who have the responsibility of examination and inspection of IPR products in general and Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI in particular. However, not much supervision can be undertaken due to the lack of human and financial resources.
- The supervision of the protection of Vietnamese GIs at national and international level in the framework of a GI Protection Strategy has not been set up yet. It is possible that this strategy may be included in the National GI Strategy in preparation.

## **B.8. Impact of the GI**

Based on the gathered information, together with the discussions with stakeholders during the Policy Networking Session and the visit to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI area, **the impact of the GI has not been appreciated so far**. This may be due to several reasons:

- The unsolved issue of having the Lạng Sơn star aniseed essential oil included in the scope of protection of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.
- The general lack of knowledge or insufficient understanding about the GI, its impacts and benefits by most related stakeholders.
- The lack of a strong GI management by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, which is still undeveloped and weak in terms of members, resource and capacities, while also faces conflicts among the very few members involved.
- The lack of a traceability system and a clear control plan, comprising auto-control, internal control and external control to certify the GI product before being placed in the market.

- The insufficient awareness raising towards all stakeholders directly or indirectly involved and affected by the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI on the efforts to be made for achieving tangible results in the future.

The aforementioned deficiencies make very difficult to develop market strategies, awareness raising or promotion actions to foster the benefits of the GI for producers, consumers and the local community.

## C. Conclusions

In light of the documentation analysis, the information provided and the meetings with all related stakeholders during the field visit to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI area, EU-MUTRAP IV GI international and local experts reached the following **conclusions**:

- There is a general lack of knowledge by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, its members and some local authorities about the **implementation plan**, hence assessed actions were either implemented in the past or are still to be implemented.
- There has been **no particular progress on the challenges identified on the Implementation Plan regarding the the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI product**, in particular as regards to the guarantee of the product's quality and the improvement on production and processing practices by involved stakeholders.
- The **awareness about the GI concept, its implications and potential benefits remains weak, facing some challenges of financial and human resources as well as of autonomy on their management**.
- On other hand, **the commitment of some stakeholders** (especially the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association and the local authorities) **constitutes a positive asset for the consolidation and development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI**.
- **Some improvements on the management of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI** have been assessed, **but there are still important challenges** as regards to the consolidation of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, the representativeness of all relevant stakeholders therein and the support by local authorities.
- **The traceability system remains an important challenge for the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association and related local authorities**, as most plantations are located in remote areas and processing companies mix the star aniseed that they buy from undifferentiated farmers, making these reasons very difficult to trace the GI product back to the plantation.
- **The control plan is not implemented yet in any of its stages (auto-control, internal control and external control)**, hence the yearly production of Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI is not certified before being placed in the market, putting into risk the credibility of the entire GI.
- **The reputation of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed seems unstable** due to the irregular quality of the product.

- **The use of the GI logo is very limited** and, when used, it is wrongly used for all sorts of products other than the Lạng Sơn star aniseed and Lạng Sơn star aniseed essential oil.
- **Labelling remains an issue**, as the regulation on the use of the GI logo has not been reviewed yet, in order to meet the demand when the GI is certified by the external control and certification body.
- **Some promotion actions have been undertaken, but they are still insufficient to raise awareness about the benefits to commercialize and buy the GI.**
- The **consumption market of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI depends mainly on the international market**, with dramatically fluctuating prices and a low export turnover.
- **Companies develop their own market strategy** regardless the GI.
- **Some actions have been undertaken** so far to define a market strategy for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed G, **but no results have been assessed so far.**
- **The protection of the GI product and its enforcement at national and international remains a pending issue**, as there is a **lack of clear knowledge about the risk of infringements** or, in some cases, if the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI even faces any infringements at present or how they should act against them.
- The main challenge is that **as long as the GI is not properly controlled and certified, it will not be possible to ensure the enforcement of the protection**, since it will be as difficult to identify the real product that respects the product specifications or the fake product.

The field visit to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI area was very interesting and stakeholders were very committed and cooperative. They provided experts with a good overview of the current situation, their achievements and challenges, as well as allowed for very useful exchanges between participating stakeholders to improve their GI. Furthermore, the use of practical examples proved to be very useful and appreciated by participants, as they could profit these examples to apply to their own case, as regards to GI management, Labelling and Promotion and GI Protection.

However, several aspects need to be tackled to make tangible progress in the near future, being crucial to maintain a regular follow up on their actions as well as to provide them with short term “tasks” on the priorities that they need to address in the next months.

### III. Recommended Implementing Priorities

The Implementation Plan prepared by EU-MUTRAP GI experts and provided to local stakeholders in May 2016 responded to the request of the Vietnamese Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to create the capacity of selected GI associations (Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI among them) to carry out all the relevant steps to establish and maintain their geographical indications (GIs) locally, including, among the others, the identification of an adequate plan to manage all the relevant steps to be completed before, during and after receiving the protection as a GI.

Such implementation plan included a wide range of actions to be implemented by all involved stakeholders in order to improve the GI management (the traceability system and control plan) as well as to foster the sustainability and further development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI. However, after six months of its delivery and through the present status report, it has been assessed that **stakeholders need to be provided with a selected number of priorities to be implemented within the framework of a provided timetable, seeking to make tangible progress on the management as well as on the consolidation and development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.**

Therefore, EU-MUTRAP GI experts propose herewith the **recommended implementing priorities to be undertaken in the coming 6 months**, from March to August 2017, which will seek to solve the first challenges that the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI faces to consolidate as a GI and make progress on its development in the future.

It is important to note that the following selected priorities are not the only actions to be implemented for the consolidation and development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, hence they will not bring immediate tangible results. On the contrary, **with these priorities EU-MUTRAP GI experts seek to provide a clear orientation to all involved stakeholders on the actions to be implemented first, which shall be followed by others actions to be defined after these first have been completed.**

The **recommended implementing priorities** are the following:

#### **BY THE LẠNG SƠN STAR ANISEED PRODUCTION, PROCESSING AND TRADING ASSOCIATION:**

##### **1) Improving the management of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI:**

The **objective** of this priority is strengthening the structure of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, in order to enforce some aspects that difficult the development of the GI.

Regardless other actions to be implemented at a later stage, this priority **includes** assessing the number of stakeholders currently involved in the GI, identify, approach and welcome other stakeholders in the GI area to join the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and



Trading Association, set up an efficient database of GI stakeholders within the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI area that will serve to develop the traceability system for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, and improve the capacities and resources of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association for a better management of the GI.

In order to implement this priority, some of the **following steps** as well as others to be identified are advised for their implementation by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association:

**A. Involving all stakeholders in the consolidation and development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI**, through participatory actions led by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association:

- **Organize an agenda of meetings with all stakeholders of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI**, members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association as well as potential members involved on the GI (including households, cooperatives, farmers' associations, processors, traders, ...), to explain the GI right and the importance to work together on its consolidation and development. Several meetings shall be organized to reach all interested stakeholders and differences between participating stakeholders shall be discussed in order to overcome them.
- **Undertake the planned meetings with identified stakeholders of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI**, members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association as well as potential members involved on the GI. Further to explaining the GI concept, its benefits and implications, as well as the importance to work together for its defence and promotion, other issues to be discussed at these meetings may be:
  - The structure of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association to include representativeness of all involved stakeholders and sufficient personnel to fulfil its missions.
  - The role and functions of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association to provide useful services to all members.
  - The membership fees and yearly fees that all members may be ready to pay to receive the services, representation and defence by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.
  - New voluntary stakeholders ready to collaborate on the work of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, especially to set up the GI database of the GI area.
  - Calendar for volunteers to gather the information to build up the database.
  - Budget to build up the database (payment to volunteers gathering the data), which shall be covered with the fees from members if at all possible.
  - Other means to look for other financial support for the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.
  - Other aspects that may arise.

The results of these meetings must be gathered by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, achieving as results: an increase on the number of

members, an agreement on the fees for the association and a system to collect them, a pool of voluntaries to gather the information to set up the database, a timeframe for gathering the information, a budget to build up the database, a list of possible options to gather additional financial resources for the association.

**B. Set up the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI's database: The database of members within the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI shall include plantations, production, hectares, etc. In order to build the updated database, it is recommended to:**

- **Elaborate the methodology to build up the GI database**, which may include among other contents:
  - Defining the contents of the database that will serve to set up the traceability system (plantations, name of producers/processors/traders, hectares, production, etc.)
  - Defining the format of the database (electronic or manual, data introduction and update, etc.), reviewing the database already started in order to improve and extend it.
  - Preparing templates to gather the data with contents of data to collect, especially to set up the database from different areas, etc.)
- **Provide training for trainers to the identified volunteers**, which may include among other contents:
  - Preparing a training sessions for identified volunteers, where explaining the GI concept, the purpose of the database, the methodology to gather the data, the area that shall be covered, the budget to gather the data, etc.
  - Providing templates and clarify questions.
- **Prepare and implement a planning to gather the information to build up the GI database**, which may include among other contents:
  - With the pool of voluntary stakeholders and the prepared calendar to gather the information for the GI database, setting up a planning for data collection, based on the proposed implementing period.
  - Assigning volunteers to the task of collecting the data and monitor the process.
  - Following up on the data gathering.
- **Set up the database for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI**, by:
  - Collecting the information provided by volunteers.
  - Inserting on the database
  - Setting up the database.
  - Launching the methodology for regular update as soon as it is complete.

The resulting database for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI will not only serve to properly represent, inform, involve and assist the members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, but also as basis to set up a traceability system for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.

**C. Improving the capacities of the working personnel at the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association:**



- **Set up a training plan:** With the support of the relevant local authorities, set up and implement a plan of regular training for improving the capacities of the officials working in the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, including:
    - The GI concept, its requirements and benefits
    - The GI management and quality control
    - The services to provide to members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.
    - The division of responsibilities for each department or individual within the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.
- 2) Strengthening the basis of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, by reviewing the product specifications and fostering the efficient auto-control of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI by involved stakeholders:**

The **objective** of this priority is ensuring a proper auto-control of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI by all stakeholders involved in the elaboration process, in order to ensure a proper control of the GI at all stages.

Regardless other actions to be implemented at a later stage, this priority **includes** preparing a tool for facilitating the understanding of households, cooperatives, farmers' associations, processors, traders, ... on the production practices they must respect based on the product specifications and other related provisions on the elaboration of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.

In order to implement this priority, some of the **following steps** as well as others to be identified are advised for their implementation by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association:

- A. Reviewing the product specifications of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI,** including the following actions among others possible:
- **Prepare and undertake a meeting with the Lạng Sơn DOST to discuss the review of the product specifications.** The main aspects to be discussed and agreed on shall include:
    - The procedure and requirements of NOIP to present the modification of the product specifications.
    - The modification of the scope of protection of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, to include the essential oil.
    - The rules regarding the elaboration process of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed essential oil.
    - Review the GI area, in case an update is also needed, to include all districts producing the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.
  - **Define and agree on the amendment of the product specifications of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI,** by:
    - Jointly drafting the amendments according to the discussed issues.
    - Submitting the amended product specifications for approval by all members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.
    - Collaborating with the Lạng Sơn DOST on the presentation of the amended product specifications for approval and registration by NOIP.

**B. Setting up an efficient auto-control system by involved stakeholders, including the following actions among others possible:**

- **Prepare a tool for facilitating the understanding of producers and processors on the production practices they must respect based on the product specifications** and other related provisions on the elaboration of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, which shall explain clearly how producers and processors shall verify that they are respecting the rules of the product specifications, while becoming a friendly and accessible instrument to all GI stakeholders for its implementation on their plantations and processing companies. For preparing such tools, it is advisable:
  - Organize and implement an agenda of meetings with all members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, once new members have joined and the database setting has been launched, to collect all relevant information on the elaboration process of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, comprising both the dried star aniseed and the star aniseed essential oil.
  - Based on the collected information, prepare some guidelines on the production practices that all stakeholders must implement on their plantations and trading centres.
  - Based on these guidelines, prepare a tool, easy to understand by all stakeholders, explaining clearly how producers, processors and traders shall verify that they are respecting the rules of the product specifications, while becoming a friendly and accessible instrument to all GI stakeholders for its implementation on their plantations and processing/trading companies.
  - Once the tool is drafted, organize meetings with all members to validate its content.
- **Provide the tool to stakeholders so that they may implement an efficient auto-control system, by:**
  - Once the tool is validated, finding the necessary resources for its editing in a friendly format, printing and disseminating among stakeholders, to have it accessible on their plantations and companies.
  - Editing the tool, with the supporting resources.
  - Once the tool is edited, printing as many copies and formats (flyer, poster, etc.) as members shall have them on their plantations, processing centres or companies.
  - Organizing a planning to disseminate and explain the content of the tool and the importance to comply with it on their daily work elaborating the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.
  - Implementing the planning, disseminating the tool to all stakeholders within the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.

Thanks to the provided tool, producers and processors may undertake auto-controls on their plantations and processing/trading centres, gaining the ability to ensure themselves and prove to others that they produce the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI in conformity with the product specifications.

**3) Setting up the traceability system and the internal control plan of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI:**

The **objective** of this priority is consolidating the traceability system and internal control plan of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, once the database of the GI is updated and the product specifications is reviewed.

This priority **implies** working in close cooperation with the members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association to define a traceability system, adapted to the specificities of all members and compatible with their certification schemes some are involved in, as well as setting up and internal control plan, to supervise the respect of the product specifications by all members.

In order to implement this priority, some of the **following steps** as well as others to be identified are advised for their implementation by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association:

**A. Setting up a traceability system for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI**, comprising the following actions among others possible:

▪ **Define the methodology for the traceability system:**

- Contact all members and gather their information regarding the traceability they apply on their businesses, to ensure that the product originates from the delimited GI area.
- Define a methodology for a common traceability system: This methodology can start from the auto-controls implemented by producers and processing/trading companies; it can also profit the traceability used for certification schemes that some members may apply, as possible synergies may be profited to reduce costs; with such information, the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association shall propose common traceability markers at different stages of the production process that shall be agreed for their use by all members.
- Organize meeting with members to discuss and agree on a common traceability system, to ensure the origin of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI from the start of the production process through to the final product.
- Put the traceability system in place and correct if necessary.

▪ **Agree and launch the traceability system:**

- Organize meeting with members to discuss and agree on a common traceability system, to ensure the origin of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI from the start of the production process through to the final product.
- Put the traceability system in place and correct if necessary.

**B. Setting up an internal control plan for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI**, which may be implemented delegating some of the controls to local producer groups as long as the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association supervises and reports its full implementation. In order to do so, some of the following contents as well as others to be identified are advised:

▪ **Define the parameters of the internal control plan:**

- The control plan specifies how the rules defined for the elaboration of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI are to be checked (in the product specifications as well as in other

- adopted provisions, such as the guidelines on the production practices defined for the auto-control).
- The Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association must define: the critical points to be controlled for each rule, the method used to control (visual, document analysis, etc.), the moment of control, the frequency of controls and the coverage (all producers, sampling), the sanctions depending on the seriousness of the non-compliance (economic, such as fines or prohibition to use the GI name, or social, such as the exclusion from the group).
  - **Prepare and launch the internal control plan:**
    - Draft an internal control plan, to be discussed and agreed by all members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.
    - In case the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association needs orientation for setting up the control plan, it may explore the possible collaboration of a control and certification body, which can assist on the elaboration of the control plan and training of agents within the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association for its implementation. For further information on control and certification bodies that could be contacted for this purpose, you may find the **list of competent control and certification bodies accredited by the BoA in ANNEX V**.
    - In case there are limited human resources to implement the internal control, it is always advisable to profit the synergies within the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, having some voluntary members to rotate for implementing the internal control.

Once these recommended priorities have been implemented by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association and in light of the results, corrections shall be proposed and further actions defined to make progress as regards to labelling, marketing, promotion and protection of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.

## **BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES (LED BY LẠNG SƠN DOST):**

### **1) Setting up an effective GI Multi-Disciplinary Team of local officials for the support and further development of the GI.**

The **objective** of this priority is setting up a multi-disciplinary team of officials from all local agencies directly or indirectly involved in the GI, to jointly define and coordinate the implementation of all actions to be undertaken at local and national level to support the sustainability of and to develop, promote and protect the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, as well as other GIs that may arise in the future in the Lạng Sơn province.

The **tasks** of such team may be the following:

- Design the methodology to programme, prepare, implement and follow up on all actions to support and develop the GIs from the Lạng Sơn province.

- Define the role of each relevant local agency, setting up a coordinated division of competences for the development, promotion and protection of GIs from the Lạng Sơn province.
- Set up an awareness-raising programme for official from local authorities, with regular updates on the GI scheme and its progress.
- Prepare a road map of actions to be implemented at regional level for the development, promotion and protection of GIs from the Lạng Sơn province.
- Based on the road map of actions, define annual work plans, taking into account the views of stakeholders and the competences of each local agency, to ensure implementation of the annual priorities identified in a coordinated manner by all parties involved.
- Coordinate the proposed actions with the relevant national authorities (NOIP and others if necessary)
- Define the skills, duties and resources needed to implement the actions proposed in the annual work plans.
- Identify, contact and recruit the skilled technical personnel, local officials or external experts required to implement the activities proposed in the annual work plans.
- Allocate the required resources and manage the administrative arrangements necessary for the implementation of the activities proposed in the annual work plans.
- Supervise, coordinate and implement the actions set out in the annual work plans.
- Report regularly on the results to the relevant government ministries and agencies (NOIP and others if necessary).
- Follow up on outcomes, identifying the additional activities to be implemented in subsequent annual work plans.

In order to implement this priority, some of the **following steps** as well as others to be identified are advised for their implementation by local authorities (led by Lạng Sơn DOST):

**A. Involving all agencies directly or indirectly involved in the establishment and development of GIs in the Lạng Sơn province**

- **Identify the local agencies that need to be involved:** Based on its contacts with different departments under the Provincial People’s Committee, the Lạng Sơn DOST shall set up a list of all relevant departments and agencies (Agriculture, Trade, Tourism and those that are directly or indirectly involved/interested in the development of GIs).

**B. Setting up the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team:**

- **Organize a meeting of all related local agencies** to agree on the multi-disciplinary team structure, roles and duties, skills and the resources required to set it up.

At that meeting, it is advisable to agree on:

- Structure, functions and resources: what each agency can do, what resources they can allocate, what are the actions that they must undertake as a priority, what may be the support to request from NOIP, what may be the support to the GI Association, etc.
- In terms of actions: how to provide awareness raising of the GI concept, how to support the GI Association, Agriculture,... it terms of quality maintenance and improvement the department of agriculture, in terms of promotion the department of

tourism and trade, in terms of market strategy and contacts with private national and international partners department of trade and DOST.

- Set up a deadline for the appointment of the officials who will make up the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team.
- **Set up the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team**, appointing the proposed members and defining the next steps (training, calendar of meetings, tasks, etc.).
- Provide training to the team members on the GI concept, the GI scheme, its potential benefits and the current challenges in Vietnam.
- Organize and hold the first meeting of the new GI Multi-Disciplinary Team of officials to launch its activities, discussing the road map of actions to be implemented (in terms of awareness raising, quality maintenance and improvement, support the GI association on the development and market strategy for the GI, promotion actions, etc.). Based on the road map of actions, further documents shall be prepared (annual work plan, calendar, follow up meetings, etc.).

Some **additional recommendations** regarding the form and roles of the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team:

- The GI Multi-Disciplinary Team should take the form of a horizontal group of local officials with sufficient skills to implement the specific tasks they are given.
- The team may be made up of lead persons appointed from within each local agency or new officials from outside the agency hired to be part of the team.
- The main role of these officials will be to carry out the tasks assigned to the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team and to channel the actions to be taken by the agencies they represent, when required.
- Each agency involved should ensure that the designated trained officials can undertake their duties within the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team and that their duties and workload are always covered by/transferred to other suitably skilled officials, if they change/transfer jobs.
- In order to ensure the long-term sustainability and efficiency of this team, it should receive both initial as well as regular training on the GI scheme and updates on its progress at national and international levels, with the support of NOIP.

**2) Continuing the support to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, by reviewing the product specifications as well as by supporting its GI management by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association:**

The **objective** of this priority is ensuring the improvement and further development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, by adapting the product specifications to the reality of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, as well as by endorsing and supporting the management by the the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.

This priority **implies** working in close cooperation with the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, on the review of the GI product specifications as well as on the efforts for providing capacity building and financial support on the several actions to be implemented in the coming months.



In order to implement this priority, some of the **following steps** as well as others to be identified are advised for their implementation by the Lạng Sơn DOST:

**A. Adapting the product specifications to the reality of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, including the following actions among others possible:**

▪ **Understand the procedure to amend the product specifications of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, by:**

- Consulting with NOIP the procedure and requirements to present the modification of the product specifications, in order to discuss these requirements with the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.

▪ **Prepare and undertake a meeting to discuss the review of the product specifications, gathering the members from all local agencies that will soon compose the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team to hold a meeting with the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association to discuss the review of the product specifications.**

Discuss mainly:

- The modification of the scope of protection of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, to include the essential oil.
- The rules regarding the elaboration process of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed essential oil.
- Review the GI area, in case an update is also needed, to include all districts producing the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.

▪ **Define and agree on the amendment of the product specifications of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed, by:**

- Jointly drafting the amendments according to the discussed issues.
- Once the amended product specifications are approved by all members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, presenting the amended product specifications for approval and registration by NOIP.
- Assisting the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association on the elaboration of the tool for facilitating the understanding of producers and processors on the production practices they must respect based on the product specifications and other related provisions on the elaboration of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, providing support on the drafting and dissemination among producers and processors.

**B. Supporting the management of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association**

▪ **Brainstorm with the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association on the needs to improve and develop the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI:** Organize a meeting, gathering the members of the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team and the representatives of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.

During such meeting, **discuss the training support and financial resources** that they need to implement the recommended priorities in this report. Among others, it would be needed for:

- Financial support for preparing the database of members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.
  - Financial support for editing and printing the tool on auto-control for stakeholders.
  - Technical assistance for training for officials working in the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.
  - Technical assistance for providing training for trainers to the identified voluntaries, so that they can gather the information for the database of members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.
  - Financial support for hiring a control and certification body to assist on the preparation of the internal control plan.
- **Set up an action plan for the support of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association:**
- Once the needs have been discussed, assess and decide on the means that shall be provided to support the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association and prepare a plan for its provision and supervision of its use.  
It is advisable that the provided financial support is partial, in order to ensure also a commitment by the members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association. As regards to the training, it is advisable to ensure that contents are accessible but complete, in order to ensure that trained professionals may afterwards disseminate their knowledge to others.
  - **Set up an action plan**, including all actions that shall be supported by local authorities, including technical and financial means that each agency within the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team will provide to endorse and support the activities by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.

### 3) Setting up the external control plan of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI:

The **objective** of this priority is completing the guarantee system of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, allowing for the control and certification of the GI production before being placed in the market.

This priority **includes** improving the capacities of the Lạng Sơn Division of Standards, Metrology and Quality under DOST as well as the capacities of DARD, while also setting up the external control plan to certify the yearly production of Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI. It will imply working in close cooperation with the designated entities that shall undertake the external control of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, with the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, as well as with an external control and certification body accredited by the BoA (advisable).

In order to implement this priority, some of the **following steps** as well as others to be identified are advised for their implementation by the Lạng Sơn DOST:

#### A. Ensuring the necessary capacities to undertake the external control and certification of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI:



- As already explained, the Lạng Sơn Division of Standards, Metrology and Quality (STAMEQ) under DOST is in charge of the laboratory analysis of the GI final product, while DARD should be in charge of controlling the production practices, the traceability of the product and the management by the association. In this context, the BoA shall clarify if only DARD or both DARD and STAMEQ must ensure that they have the technical capacity complying with international regulations (ISO/IEC 17065:2012) by receiving the accreditation by the BoA or, at least, by proving their independence and impartiality, having the qualified personnel to control and certify the yearly production of the GI before being placed in the market. In any case, the both entities must have the resources and appropriate expertise to fulfil such task.
- In order to do so, it is advisable to **organize trainings with the BoA** to receive the accreditation or at least to ensure independence and impartiality of the entities as well as the capacities of their personnel. Hiring an external control body to train the designated entity and support on the elaboration of the external control plan may be extremely useful.
- If DOST or the PPC decides that the designated agency/agencies must receive the accreditation by the BoA, they shall contact the BoA and **start the accreditation process** (around 5/6 months minimum).

**B. Setting up and implement an external control plan for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI:**

- **Set up the external control plan for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI (the designated control and certification body):**

In parallel to the accreditation process (if in process) and to avoid delays, the DARD and the STAMEQ shall start setting up the external control plan, including the following elements to control:

- The evaluation of production conditions and quality system, including the elaboration process, the management by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association and its members (to be implemented by DARD).
- The traceability, including the correct application and intervention in case of a system failure by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association (to be implemented by DARD).
- The quality of the final product, including labelling, aspect, taste, etc. through visual controls and laboratory analysis (to be implemented by STAMEQ).

Hence, the external control plan specifies how the rules defined for the elaboration of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI are to be checked (in the product specifications as well as in other adopted provisions), how the management by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association is undertaken, if the traceability of the product is ensured and if the final product complies with the rules for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI (product specifications and other provisions).

- The DARD and the STAMEQ shall **work in cooperation with the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association** to define: the critical points to be controlled for each rule, the method used to control (visual, document analysis, etc.), the moment of control, the frequency of controls and the coverage (all producers, sampling), the sanctions depending on the seriousness of the non-compliance (economic, such as fines or prohibition to use the GI name, or social, such as the exclusion from the group).

- The DARD and the STAMEQ shall **draft the external control plan**, to be discussed and agreed by the Lạng Sơn DOST. The external control plan shall include a certification of conformity or non-conformity of the yearly GI production before the GI is placed in the market.
- **Implement the external control plan for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI (DARD and STAMEQ, together with related local authorities), including:**
  - The implementation of the external control plan.
  - The detection and correction of deviations if needed.
  - The certification of the yearly production of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed as a GI before being placed in the market.

In case the DARD and the STAMEQ need orientation for setting up the control plan, it may explore the possible collaboration of a control and certification body, which can assist on the elaboration of the external control plan and training of agents within the department for its implementation. For further information on control and certification bodies that could be contacted for this purpose, you may find the **list of competent control and certification bodies accredited by the BoA in ANNEX V**.

Once these recommended priorities have been implemented by the local authorities (led by Lạng Sơn DOST) and in light of the results, corrections shall be proposed and further actions defined to make progress as regards to promotion, market surveillance and protection of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.

## IV. Timetable for implementing priorities

### LẠNG SƠN STAR ANISEED PRODUCTION, PROCESSING AND TRADING ASSOCIATION:

#### 1) Improving the management of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI:

STEPS	ACTIONS	CONTENT	IMPLEMENTING PERIOD	EXPECTED RESULTS
A. Involving all stakeholders in the consolidation and development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI	Organize an agenda of meetings with all stakeholders of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify all stakeholders involved in the elaboration of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI (producers, processors, companies, roasters...) and prepare a list</li> <li>- Prepare the calendar of meetings</li> <li>- Prepare and send the invitations for meetings to stakeholders</li> </ul>	1 March – 10 March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List of stakeholders to invite to meetings.</li> <li>- Calendar of meetings depending on the area.</li> <li>- Invitation for meetings.</li> <li>- List of confirmed participating stakeholders.</li> </ul>
	Undertake the planned meetings with identified stakeholders of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explaining the GI concept, its benefits and implications.</li> <li>- Explain the importance to work together on the consolidation and development of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.</li> <li>- Discuss the structure of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association to include representativeness of all involved stakeholders and sufficient personnel to fulfil its missions: open to contributions.</li> <li>- Discuss the role and functions of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association to provide useful services to all members: open to contributions.</li> <li>- Discuss the membership fees and yearly fees that all members may be ready to pay to receive the services, representation and defence by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association: open to contributions.</li> <li>- Request new voluntary stakeholders ready to collaborate on the work of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, especially to set up the GI database of the GI area.</li> <li>- Agree on a calendar for volunteers to gather the information to build up the database.</li> <li>- Discuss the budget to build up the database, to be covered with the fees from members if at all possible.</li> <li>- Discuss possible means of financial support for the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> </ul>	10 March – 31 March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear understanding of the GI concept, its implications and benefits as well as the importance to work together for consolidating, defending and promoting the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.</li> <li>- Agreement on the role and functions of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> <li>- Agreement on the membership fees and yearly fees of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> <li>- Pool of voluntary stakeholders to help the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, especially to gather the information for the GI database.</li> <li>- Calendar to gather the information for the GI database.</li> <li>- Budget to set up the GI database.</li> <li>- List of possible options to gather additional financial resources for the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Other aspects that may arise.</li> <li>- Invite to join the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List of new members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> </ul>
<b>B. Set up the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI's database</b>	<b>Elaborate the methodology to build up the GI database</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Define the contents of the database that will serve to set up the traceability system (plantations, name of producers/processors/traders, hectares, production, etc.)</li> <li>- Define the format of the database (electronic or manual, data introduction and update, etc.), reviewing the database already started in order to improve and extend it.</li> <li>- Prepare templates to gather the data with contents of data to collect, especially to set up the database from different areas, etc.)</li> </ul>	15 March – 31 March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Methodology to build up the database of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.</li> <li>- Format of the GI database.</li> <li>- Templates for data collection.</li> </ul>
	<b>Provide training for trainers to the identified voluntary stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepare a training sessions for identified volunteers, where explaining the GI concept, the purpose of the database, the methodology to gather the data, the area that shall be covered, the budget to gather the data, etc.</li> <li>- Provide templates and clarify questions.</li> </ul>	25 March – 15 April 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trained pool of volunteers to gather the information for the GI database.</li> </ul>
	<b>Prepare and implement a planning to gather the information to build up the GI database</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With the pool of voluntary stakeholders and the prepared calendar to gather the information for the GI database, set up a planning for data collection, based on the proposed implementing period.</li> <li>- Assign volunteers to the task of collecting the data and monitor the process.</li> <li>- Follow up on the data gathering.</li> </ul>	15 April - 31 May 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planning for volunteers to collect the data</li> </ul>
	<b>Set up the database for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI,</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collect the information provided by volunteers.</li> <li>- Insert on the database</li> <li>- Set up the database.</li> <li>- Launch the methodology for regular update as soon as it is complete.</li> </ul>	15 April – 31 May 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Database of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.</li> </ul>
<b>C. Improving the capacities of the working personnel at the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association</b>	<b>Set up a training plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With the support of the relevant local authorities, set up and implement a plan of regular training for improving the capacities of the officials working in the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> <li>- Include on the training the following: the GI concept, its requirements and benefits; the GI management and quality control; the services to provide to members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association; the division of responsibilities for each department or individual within the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> </ul>	1 April – 31 August 2017 (yearly plan to be continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A yearly plan for regular training of the officials within the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> <li>- Improved capacities of the association to manage and develop the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.</li> </ul>

## 2) Strengthening the basis of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, by reviewing the product specifications and fostering the efficient auto-control of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI by involved stakeholders:

STEPS	ACTIONS	CONTENT	IMPLEMENTING PERIOD	EXPECTED RESULTS
A. Reviewing the product specifications of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI	Prepare and undertake a meeting with the Lạng Sơn DOST to discuss the review of the product specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss the procedure and requirements of NOIP to present the modification of the product specifications.</li> <li>- Discuss the modification of the scope of protection of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, to include the essential oil.</li> <li>- Discuss the rules regarding the elaboration process of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed essential oil.</li> <li>- Discuss the need to review the GI area, in case an update is also needed, to include all districts producing the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.</li> </ul>	1 March – 10 March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agreement on the aspects of the product specifications of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI to be modified</li> </ul>
	Define and agree on the amendment of the product specifications of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jointly draft the amendments according to the discussed issues.</li> <li>- Submit the amended product specifications for approval by all members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> <li>- Collaborate with the Lạng Sơn DOST on the presentation of the amended product specifications for approval and registration by NOIP.</li> </ul>	1 March – 31 March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approval of the amended product specifications by members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> <li>- Amended product specifications of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.</li> <li>- Approval and registration by NOIP of the amended product specifications of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI</li> </ul>
B. Setting up an efficient auto-control system by involved stakeholders	Prepare a tool for facilitating the understanding of producers and processors on the production practices they must respect based on the product specifications and other related provisions on the elaboration of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organize and implement an agenda of meetings with all members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, once new members have joined and the database setting has been launched, to collect all relevant information on the elaboration process of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, comprising both the dried star aniseed and the star aniseed essential oil.</li> <li>- Based on the collected information, prepare some guidelines on the production practices that all stakeholders must implement on their plantations and trading centres.</li> <li>- Based on these guidelines, prepare a tool, easy to understand by all stakeholders, explaining clearly how producers, processors and traders shall verify that they are respecting the rules of the product specifications, while becoming a friendly and accessible instrument to all GI stakeholders for its implementation on their plantations and processing/trading companies.</li> <li>- Organize meetings with all members to validate the draft.</li> </ul>	1 April – 30 April 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidelines on the production practices for the elaboration of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.</li> <li>- Friendly tool explaining clearly how producers, collectors and traders shall verify that they are respecting the rules of the product specifications of the GI.</li> <li>- Approval of the proposed tool.</li> </ul>

**Provide the tool to stakeholders so that they may implement an efficient auto-control system**

- Once the tool is validated, finding the necessary resources for its editing in a friendly format, printing and disseminating among stakeholders, to have it accessible on their plantations and companies.
- Editing the tool, with the supporting resources.
- Once the tool is edited, printing as many copies and formats (flyer, poster, etc.) as members shall have them on their plantations, processing centres or companies.
- Organizing a planning to disseminate and explain the content of the tool and the importance to comply with it on their daily work elaborating the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.
- Implementing the planning, disseminating the tool to all stakeholders within the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.

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- Edited tool for GI stakeholders.
- Awareness raising among stakeholders on the importance to respect the production practices on the elaboration of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.
- Coordinated auto-controls of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI on all plantations, processing centres, trading companies, etc.

### 3) Setting up the traceability system and the internal control plan of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI:

STEPS	ACTIONS	CONTENT	IMPLEMENTING PERIOD	EXPECTED RESULTS
A. Setting up a traceability system for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI	Define the methodology for the traceability system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact all members and gather their information regarding the traceability they apply on their businesses, to ensure that the product originates from the delimited GI area.</li> <li>- Define a methodology for a common traceability system: This methodology can start from the auto-controls implemented by producers and processing/trading companies; it can also profit the traceability used for certification schemes that some members may apply, as possible synergies may be profited to reduce costs.</li> <li>- Propose common traceability markers at different stages of the production process that shall be agreed for their use by all members.</li> <li>- Organize meeting with members to discuss and agree on a common traceability system, to ensure the origin of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI from the start of the production process through to the final product.</li> <li>- Put the traceability system in place and correct if necessary.</li> </ul>	1 June – 15 June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Methodology for a common traceability system for the GI.</li> <li>- Traceability markers and tracing codes</li> </ul>
	Agree and launch the traceability system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organize meeting with members to discuss and agree on a common traceability system, to ensure the origin of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI from the start of the production process through to the final product.</li> <li>- Put the traceability system in place and correct if necessary.</li> </ul>	15 June – 31 July 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordinated traceability system in place for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, agreed by all members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> </ul>
B. Setting up an internal control plan for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI	Define the parameters of the internal control plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The control plan specifies how the rules defined for the elaboration of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI are to be checked (in the product specifications as well as in other adopted provisions, such as the guidelines on the production practices defined for the auto-control).</li> <li>- The Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association must define: the critical points to be controlled for each rule, the method used to control (visual, document analysis, etc.), the moment of control, the frequency of controls and the coverage (all producers, sampling), the sanctions depending on the seriousness of the non-compliance (economic, such as fines or prohibition to use the GI name, or social, such as the exclusion from the group)</li> </ul>	1 July – 31 July 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidelines for the implementation of the internal control plan.</li> </ul>



**Prepare and launch the internal control plan**

- Draft an internal control plan, to be discussed and agreed by all members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.
- In case the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association needs orientation for setting up the control plan, it may explore the possible collaboration of a control and certification body, which can assist on the elaboration of the control plan and training of agents within the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association for its implementation.
- In case there are limited human resources to implement the internal control, it is always advisable to profit the synergies within the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, having some voluntary members to rotate for implementing the internal control.

15 July – 31 August 2017

- Trained agents within the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association to implement the internal control plan.
- Internal control plan in place for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, agreed by all members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.



## LOCAL AUTHORITIES (LED BY LẠNG SƠN DOST)

### 1) Setting up the traceability system and the internal control plan of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI:

STEPS	ACTIONS	CONTENT	IMPLEMENTING PERIOD	EXPECTED RESULTS
A. Involving all agencies directly or indirectly involved in the establishment and development of GIs in the Lạng Sơn province	Identify the local agencies that need to be involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on its contacts with different departments under the Provincial People's Committee, the Lạng Sơn DOST shall set up a list of all relevant departments and agencies (Agriculture, Trade, Tourism and those that are directly or indirectly involved/interested in the development of GIs).</li> </ul>	1 March – 10 March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List of local agencies to be part of the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team</li> <li>- Invitation for the meeting.</li> <li>- List of confirmed participating officials.</li> </ul>
B. Setting up the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team	Organize a meeting of all related local agencies to discuss and agree on the main aspects of the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team to set it up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design the methodology to programme, prepare, implement and follow up on all actions to support and develop the GIs from the Lạng Sơn province.</li> <li>- Define the role of each relevant local agency.</li> <li>- Organize the meeting with all related local agencies to agree on the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team structure, roles and duties, skills and the resources required to set it up (what each agency can do, what resources they can allocate, what are the actions that they must undertake as a priority, what may be the support to request from NOIP, what may be the support to the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, etc.)</li> <li>- Set up a deadline for the appointment of the officials who will make up the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team</li> </ul>	10 March – 31 March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Methodology of the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team</li> <li>- List of officials from each agency proposed to be part of the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team</li> </ul>
	Set up the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organize and hold the first meeting of the new GI Multi-Disciplinary Team to launch its activities, comprising the following:</li> <li>- Confirm the appointment of the proposed members and defining the next steps (training, calendar of meetings, tasks, etc.).</li> <li>- Provide training to the team members on the GI concept, the GI scheme, its potential benefits and the current challenges in Vietnam, setting up an awareness-raising programme, with regular updates on the GI scheme and its progress.</li> <li>- Prepare a road map of actions for the development, promotion and</li> </ul>	20 March – 31 March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GI Multi-Disciplinary Team in place</li> <li>- Trained officials integrating the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team</li> <li>- Programme of awareness raising and update on the GI scheme.</li> <li>- Work Plan for 2017/2018, including the road map of actions for the development, promotion and protection of GIs from the Lạng Sơn province.</li> </ul>

protection of GIs from the Lạng Sơn province.

- Define annual work plans.
- Coordinate the proposed actions with the relevant national authorities.
- Define the skills, duties and resources needed to implement the actions proposed in the annual work plans, identifying and recruiting the skilled technical personnel, local officials or external experts required to implement the activities proposed in the annual work plans.
- Allocate the required resources and manage the administrative arrangements necessary for the implementation of the activities.
- Supervise, coordinate and implement the actions set out in the annual work plans.
- Report regularly on the results to the relevant government ministries and agencies.
- Follow up on outcomes, identifying the additional activities to be implemented in subsequent annual work plans.

- Pool of technical experts to support on the implementation of the activities.
- Clear resources from all agencies to ensure the implementation of the yearly work plans.

## 2) Continuing the support to the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, by reviewing the product specifications as well as by supporting its GI management by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association:

STEPS	ACTIONS	CONTENT	IMPLEMENTING PERIOD	EXPECTED RESULTS
A. Adapting the product specifications to the reality of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI	Understand the procedure to amend the product specifications of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consult with NOIP the procedure and requirements to present the modification of the product specifications, in order to discussing these requirements with the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> </ul>	1 March – 10 March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear knowledge on the procedure to apply for an amendment of GI product specifications.</li> </ul>
	Prepare and undertake a meeting to discuss the review of the product specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gather the members from all local agencies that will soon compose the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team to hold a meeting with the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association to discuss the review of the product specifications.</li> <li>- Discuss the modification of the scope of protection of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, to include the essential oil.</li> <li>- Discuss the rules regarding the elaboration process of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed essential oil.</li> <li>- Discuss the need of a review the GI area, in case an update is also needed, to include all districts producing the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.</li> </ul>	1 March – 31 March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agreement on the aspects of the product specifications of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI to be modified.</li> </ul>
	Define and agree on the amendment of the product specifications of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jointly draft the amendments according to the discussed issues.</li> <li>- Once the amended product specifications are approved by all members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, present the amended product specifications for approval and registration by NOIP.</li> <li>- Assist the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association on the elaboration of the tool for facilitating the understanding of producers and processors on the production practices they must respect based on the product specifications and other related provisions on the elaboration of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI, providing support on the drafting and dissemination among producers and processors.</li> </ul>	1 March – 31 March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approval of the amended product specifications on all members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> <li>- Amended product specifications of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.</li> <li>- Approval and registration by NOIP of the amended product specifications of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI.</li> </ul>

<p><b>B. Supporting the management of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association</b></p>	<p><b>Brainstorm with the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association on the needs to improve and develop the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organize a meeting, gathering the members of the GI Multi-Disciplinary Team and the representatives of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> <li>- During such meeting, discuss the training support and financial resources that they need to implement the recommended priorities in this report. Among others, it would be needed for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial support for preparing the database of members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> <li>- Financial support for editing and printing the tool on auto-control for stakeholders.</li> <li>- Technical assistance for training for officials working in the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> <li>- Technical assistance for providing training for trainers to the identified voluntaries, so that they can gather the information for the database of members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> <li>- Financial support for hiring a control and certification body to assist on the preparation of the internal control plan.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>1 April – 15 April 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Useful exchange on the needs of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association, in terms of training support and financial resources needed to implement the recommended priorities in this report.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Set up an action plan for the support of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Once the needs have been discussed, assess and decide on the means that shall be provided to support the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association and prepare a plan for its provision and supervision of its use. It is advisable that the provided financial support is partial, in order to ensure also a commitment by the members of the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association. As regards to the training, it is advisable to ensure that contents are accessible but complete, in order to ensure that trained professionals may afterwards disseminate their knowledge to others.</li> </ul>	<p>15 April – 31 May 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agreement on the actions and resources to be supported by the GI Multi-Disciplinary team.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set up an action plan, including all actions that shall be supported by local authorities, including technical and financial means that each agency within the GI Muti-Disciplinary Team will provide to endorse and support the activities by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> </ul>	<p>1 June – 31 August 2017 (yearly plan to be continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agreed action plan in place to endorse and support the activities by the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association.</li> </ul>

### 3) Setting up the external control plan of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI:

STEPS	ACTIONS	CONTENT	IMPLEMENTING PERIOD	EXPECTED RESULTS
A. Ensuring the necessary capacities to undertake the external control and certification of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI:	Ensure that the Lạng Sơn Division of Standards, Metrology and Quality (STAMEQ) and the DARD have the needed technical capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask the BoA if the only DARD or both DARD and STAMEQ must ensure that they has the technical capacity complying with international regulations (ISO/IEC 17065:2012) by receiving the accreditation by the BoA or, at least, by proving their independence and impartiality, having the qualified personnel to control and certify the yearly production of the GI before being placed in the market. In any case, the both entities must have the resources and appropriate expertise to fulfil such task.</li> <li>- If necessary, organize trainings with the BoA to receive the accreditation or at least to ensure independence and impartiality of the entities as well as the capacities of their personnel.</li> <li>- If DOST or the PPC decides that the designated agency/agencies must receive the accreditation by the BoA, they shall contact the BoA and start the accreditation process (around 5/6 months minimum).</li> </ul>	1 May – 31 August 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accreditation by the BoA as a control and certification body.</li> <li>- Technical capacity complying with international regulations (ISO/IEC 17065:2012), for controlling and certifying GIs.</li> </ul>
	B. Setting up and implement an external control plan for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI:	Set up the external control plan for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI (DARD and STAMEQ, as designated control and certification bodies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work in cooperation with the Lạng Sơn Star Aniseed Production, Processing and Trading Association to define: the critical points to be controlled for each rule, the method used to control (visual, document analysis, etc.), the moment of control, the frequency of controls and the coverage (all producers, sampling), the sanctions depending on the seriousness of the non-compliance (economic, such as fines or prohibition to use the GI name, or social, such as the exclusion from the group).</li> <li>- Draft the external control plan, to be discussed and agreed by the Lạng Sơn DOST. It shall include a certification of conformity or non-conformity of the yearly GI production before the GI is placed in the market.</li> <li>- Explore the possible collaboration of a control and certification body to assist on the elaboration of the control plan and training of agents within the designated entity for its implementation.</li> </ul>	1 July – 15 July 2017
Implement the external control plan for the Lạng Sơn star aniseed GI (DARD and STAMEQ, together with related local authorities),		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implement the external control plan.</li> <li>- Detect and correct deviations if needed.</li> <li>- Ensure the certification of the yearly production of the Lạng Sơn star aniseed as a GI before being placed in the market.</li> </ul>	15 July – 31 August 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- External control plan in place</li> <li>- Certification of the yearly production in place.</li> </ul>



## V. Annexes

**ANNEX I – Presentation delivered in localities by the International GI expert on “Management by the GI Association”**

**ANNEX II – Presentation delivered in localities by the International GI expert on “Sustainable development of the GI: Labelling & Promotion”**

**ANNEX III – Presentation delivered in localities by the International GI expert on “GI Protection: The use of the GI right”**

**ANNEX IV – Check List on the Status of the Implementing Planning of the Lạng Sơn star anised GI completed by the local GI expert.**

**ANNEX V – List of competent control and certification bodies accredited by the BoA**