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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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‘Taking back control’: Developing Protected Food Names post-Brexit: What can we learn from GI use internationally?

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The phrase ‘taking back control’ has been part of the rhetoric of the Brexit debate in the UK conveying the notion of sovereignty regained. However, in terms of Geographical Indications of Origin (GIs) for food and drink products, the post-EU era will actually be the first time that the UK has had the opportunity to develop an independent national policy approach. Here, we draw on the literature on international policy transfer and global experience of implementing GI policies to identify lessons for the new Protected Food Names scheme in the UK and other economies developing GIs for the first time. Internationally, GIs have been developed with very different policy objectives from supporting sustainable food production to protecting food heritage. Outside the EU there is scope to focus GI policy on the UK’s broader food, agricultural policy and rural development objectives and develop a clear rationale for supporting and developing PFNs. Second, the UK currently has relatively few GIs compared to other European economies. Implementing a more proactive policy towards GIs could have substantial benefits for producers, particularly in an era in which the UK seeks to re-orient its export activity away from Europe. Third, engaging local actors could help with convening and develop local producer groups to develop new PFNs. Fourth, promoting awareness of PFNs among consumers and producers will also be important given the relatively low level of consumer recognition in the UK. One approach here might be through food quality and marketing competitions which have proved a valuable promotional activity in other countries.