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Environmentally Sustainable Socio-Economic
Development of Rural Areas



Slow Food®

a project implemented by

**Enlargement countries must use
IPARD II financial support
to address the needs of small-scale cheese producers:
Milk Farms and Traditional Mandras**

Position Paper of ESSEDRA Partnership





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Members of ESSEDRA Partnership

Slow Food

European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP) – UK and Bulgaria,
Association of Slow Food Convivia - Bulgaria,
Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania - Romania,
VIS Albania,
Okusi Hercegovinu – Bosnia and Herzegovina,
Slou Fud Bitola – Republic of Macedonia,
Mutfak Dostları Derneği – Turkey,
Natura Balkanika – Serbia,
Udruga Kinookus – Croatia



Five major threats to traditional food

- 1) Difficulties for small-scale food producers to comply with hygiene rules and regulations introduced as a part of the EU hygiene package
- 2) A shift towards newer and higher-yielding breeds or varieties
- 3) Cultural perceptions - Producers assign little value to their traditional and cultural knowledge, seeds and breeds.
- 4) The profession of herders and shepherds is not appealing to people nowadays resulting in abandonment of mountain pastures and gradual loss of traditional dairy products with the associated environmental, cultural and social consequences.
- 5) General abandonment of rural communities



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Ironically, at the same time

small farms and farmers are
increasingly recognised as

an important element of the European model of agriculture.

In fact, they probably account for the majority of farms throughout Europe.





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Why focus on IPARD to address the issue?

Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for Rural Development (IPARD II)
is supporting the enlargement countries

“in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal,
administrative, social and economic reforms necessary

**to comply with Union values and to progressively align to Union rules,
standards, policies and practices with a view to Union membership”**



ESSEDRA Partnership urges the EU

to request IPARD competent authorities in enlargement countries
to make a proper assessment of the needs of small farms and rural businesses among which particular attention should be paid to small-scale cheese producers and to design well-targeted interventions in order to address them.

Although the Regulation does not require it explicitly –
IPARD countries must not ignore the needs of the majority of their farmers!

Key specific needs of small farmers

- I. Support for the process of progressively complying with the EU hygiene rules and standards**

- II. Support for the traditional and low-intensity practices such as extensive grazing of mountain pastures, transhumance, low-input small-scale cropping**

- III. Support the marketing and promotion of traditional food products**



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I. Progressive alignment to EU hygiene rules

1.1. National Hygiene Competent Authorities must make **full use of the flexibility options provided in the EU Hygiene Package** and adapt proportionately the requirements to the hazards posed by small-scale milk farms and traditional dairies (mountain cheese making).

The lessons of implementation in existing EU states should be taken on board and best practice transferred where possible.

1.2. **Investment support to small-scale milk farms and traditional dairies** to improve the on-farm facilities (livestock housing, milking and cooling equipment, etc.) in order better to adhere to the objectives of the Hygiene Package.





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I. Progressive alignment to EU hygiene rules (2)

1.3. Training for small-scale milk farmers and traditional dairies managers for introducing better hygiene management practices including recording, self-monitoring, etc.

1.4. Training for farm advisors as well as for regional hygiene inspectors in the logic and practices of the hygiene requirements as adapted for small units, to facilitate collaboration in order to achieve the best outcomes in terms of the hygiene objectives.





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II. Support for traditional low-input practices

2.1. Design and implement agri-environmental schemes for these types of farming that continue to harbour a wide range of wildlife – so-called High Nature Value (HNV) farming.

2.2. Provide appropriate investment support for the HNV farming practices – for example, herding can be made more attractive if mountain shelters are maintained and improved.



II. Support for traditional low-input practices (2)

2.3. Ensure that on-farm face-to-face specialised advisory services are available to farmers so that they gradually get acquainted with paperwork, project applications, the implementation of agri-environmental commitments, etc.

2.4. As a priority, provide urgent specialised training of farm advisors in agri-environment, so that a sufficient number are available to give active support to farmers wishing to apply when the measures become available.



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III. Support the marketing of traditional food

3.1. Permissive, outcome-focussed hygiene rules, which can easily be implemented by small-scale producers and applied to traditional food products and sales in local markets, without compromising the public health objectives of the Hygiene Package.

3.2. Investment support for the small-scale packaging and storage as well as other processes necessary to convert the currently homemade products to artisan food products for the market.





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III. Support the marketing of traditional food (2)

3.3. Support for cooperation between small-scale cheese producers for jointly processing and/or marketing their products as well as for wider representation of their needs at regional and national policy forums.

3.4. Support for the organisation of and/or participation in food fairs, festivals, open markets and other short-supply chains.





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III. Support the marketing of traditional food (3)

3.5. Training for small-scale cheese producers on the marketing practices and safety rules for placing dairy products on the market.

3.6. Communication campaigns at national and local levels for increasing consumers' understanding and appreciation of traditional food products and the High Nature Value farming systems sustaining them.





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ESSEDRA Partnership asks National Competent Authorities to:

- Develop an **integrated package of measures** and to allocate a **guaranteed budget** for small farms and small processing units
- **Establish country specific indicators** for small farms and small food production and processing units
- Provide a **transparent and open mechanism for public participation** in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of IPARD II programmes and to ensure that appropriate training is provided for the civil society representatives.





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ESSEDRA Partnership asks National Competent Authorities to:

- **Develop special provisions and adapted selection criteria** for small farms and small processing units of traditional and local cheese products as IPARD II rules provide for it.
- Assign a **permanent body to provide advice and ensure a continuous flow of information** from the Ministries to the small scale farmers and back and **provide technical assistance regarding the applications of small farms** to the IPARD II funds under the various measures.





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Thank you for your attention!

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