Experience with GIs in Croatia, Hungary and Poland. Linking small holder farming with quality policy and for sustainable rural development.

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Recommendations for the role of the public authorities, institutions

- **Institutional cooperation:** If GIs are to serve not only as an instrument for the protection of intellectual property rights, but also as an effective tool for RD, all institutions dealing with RD policy should be co-responsible (or be included) in its implementation. Cooperation with retailers is essential for mass commercialization of quality products and public institutions (e.g. MoA) can be involved in work on food marketing actions.

- **Role of regional and local authorities:** Regional and local authorities, in cooperation with groups of producers and associations, are the backbone for recognition of products which deserve protection as a GI. The regional and local authorities cooperating with local NGOs represents huge potential and source of information about local initiatives.

Regional and local governments can also directly reach local producers and cooperate with them.
Example of products recognition mechanism: List of Traditional Products (Poland), as example of administrative cooperation between central and local authorities.
Recommendations to improve GI administrative system

Procedures of GI registration:

• It’s important to establish some institutional solution to validate the applications for GI products in a collective manner with representatives of different sectors, possibly as a council or group of advisors to the MoA, as a commission combining different types of expertise and specific expertise on the product (in Croatia it is operative working group of experts, in Hungary it is the Hungarian Council of Origin Protection and in Poland it is the Council for Regional and Traditional Products).

• It is good to split GI registration into two parts: reliable validation and opposition procedures. It helps to eliminate conflicts at the registration stage (between producers and interested parties) in the management of GIs and strengthens the whole sector of high quality/GI products in the country.
Recommendations to improve cooperation and build trust between producers

Cooperation between producers:

• To clearly explain to producers what cooperation, which is so needed in any GI scheme, really means.

• Farmers still connect cooperation with cooperatives, which means they are often afraid to cooperate.

• It is important to introduce a supportive and encouraging program for the association of producers and for cooperation in groups. It could be effective, for example, to subsidize the statutory activities of the secretariats of groups and organizations associating producers of quality products.
Recommendations to support farmers in the preparation of GI application

Preparation of specification:

• To be led by farmers/leaders (with representation of all types of producers) with expert support where necessary. It is important that the tech. assistance and the funding are available.

• There are a number of expenses for producers when preparing specifications (Costs of retrieval of historical information and evidence on the product, physical-chemical characteristics and others that are necessary to apply for GI scheme).

• Here it is suggested to introduce a support program for producers’ groups for the development of the specifications of the agricultural products to be protected as GIs.

• Through this program, groups of producers could receive resources for co-financing the preparatory phase of the registration of their product. Financial resources have to remain within the parameters of the state budget.
Recommendations to support farmers to cooperate on cross border cases

The approach to promoting cross-border GIs is important. In the case of registration of products from border regions, it is necessary to seek the interest of the neighbouring country and if possible to cooperate at the stage of preparation of the application. Croatia and Slovenia working together on a GI for ham “proshut” from Istria (on the left), and Poland and Lithuania working together on honey from Sejny and Lazdijaj (on the right) respectively are examples.
Recommendations for information campaigns (fairs, stamps, etc)

Information and promotion:

- Consumers/supermarkets must be informed on GI products, namely, what protection brings in terms of quality and specificity and why such products are more expensive.
- The key tasks of the authorities (local and national) and other stakeholders (chambers of commerce, for example) should include support for creating a "new trend" in society for GI products.
- It is important to include the largest possible range of institutions and organizations in dealing with the subject of GIs - including those that are preparing tourist information and culinary guides, so as to create interest in regional products for both domestic and foreign tourists.
- The role of public authorities in supporting education, information and promotion of the quality label and its meaning is crucial.
- These actions will not be able to help build a market for GI products. However, the authorities are the first to give impetus to action, especially if there is uncertainty and lack of trust.
Recommendations to ensure quality through effective controls

Due to the specificity and significance of protected products, it is important to establish efficient official controls of registered GI products, with particular emphasis on misuse of names.

It is necessary to establish a sound system of enforcing GI protection, including:

• certification (adapted to local contexts; e.g. as for institutional solutions and costs) and;
• market surveillance.

When implementing the system of geographical indications attention should be paid to the creation of an effective system of penalties for the unauthorized use of protected names. Penalties should handed down quickly and should be appropriate to the offense.
Recommendations for increased participation of small scale farmers (food safety derogations)

- Sometimes, the traditional methods of producing GI and local products include activities not allowed by sanitary and veterinary regulations; for example, the use of wooden containers or tools.

- The introduction of derogations for traditional products (animal and non-animal origin) to allow traditional methods of production has positively impacted the implementation of the system of geographical indications.

- In the case of small food processing plants, a flexible approach to sanitary and veterinary requirements is required (proportionate to potential hazards and production risks in small scale production).
Derogations – production of Oscypek (PDO)
Recommendations for complementary (non-GI) regulations and policies to support small scale producers

Benefits of national quality schemes
National quality schemes should aim at:

• collecting traditional and regional or local agricultural products,
• understanding the potential of countries in this matter,
• identifying products and producers’ groups of traditional and regional products,
• preparing producers for further registration of their products as GIs.

Therefore, the requirements for product registration in national quality schemes should be easier to meet than for GI products. However, if possible, they should include the key GI scheme requirements e.g.:
1) reliable product specifications (including method of production),
2) institutions responsible for applications verification and
3) certification system.
Recommendations for complementary regulations and policies to support small scale producers

Specific support measures within rural development programs for small scale producers (Bulgarian RDP. *Investments in physical assets, investments in processing/marketing, advisory schemes and non-productive investments (environment), investments to start small scale business activities,* to facilitate the restructuring and modernisation of small farms

Facilitation for the small scale producers to organize short value chains based on new urban food trends (community-led schemes to promote networking and integration of small farms in the agro-food chains)

Facilitation for small scale producers to participate in promotional funds (organized as subsectorial funds based on % collected from the revenue of produce sold)
Thank you for your attention!