



BUILDING A GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION FOR THE SHARRI CHEESE - KOSOVO



Mid-term progress report 2015-2018

Coordination of actions (not a "project") ...

The construction of a GI for and by Sharri cheese producers is a coordination of actions which enables producers and stakeholders (including public and governmental institutions) to make a European tool theirs.

For all the partners involved in this coordination, it has been a learning process that began in 2015 and can yet be considered at mid-term.

... which requires the convergent involvement of actors in an evolving learning device

The GI creation process was made possible by: the support of the delegation of the European union to the institutions of Kosovo, particularly through 4 TAIEX missions of French experts of the INAO (National Institute of origin and quality); participatory studies (with the producers and other actors involved), of agro-ecological diagnosis on the natural environment, the definition of the cheese characteristics and its production systems (AgroParisTech, FFEM, AIDA); contact with public institutions (relevant Ministries and Sharri National Park) and their involvement in the learning process; as well as their support for the creation of the Sharri cheese association – mainly led by KsIIP (Kosovo institute of intellectual property).



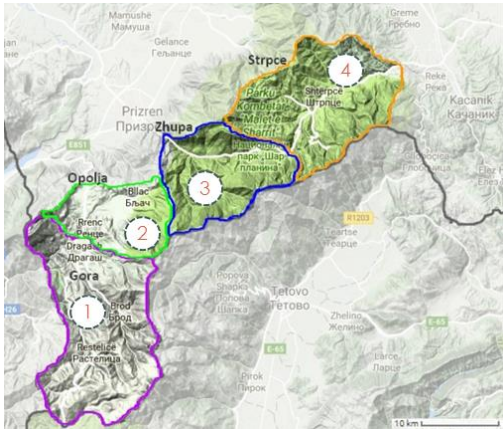
AIDA - International Association for the development of agroenvironment.
With the support of **Kosovan French Embassy**.
In partnership with **Kosovo Institute of Intellectual Property**.



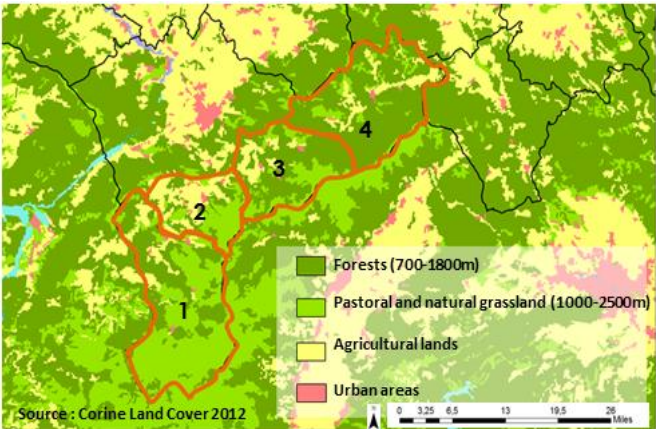
The Sharr, its cheese and its producers

Territory

- Achievement:**
 - Delineation of the territory of Sharri cheese production as perceived by the producers.
 - Geomorphological, agro-ecological and landscape analysis of the Sharri massif.
 - Division of the territory into 4 geomorphological subsets: (1) Gora, (2) Opoja, (3) Zhupa, (4) Strpce.



- To be defined for the Book of requirements:**
 - Specify (or not) areas of (1) pasture, (2) origin of animal feed, (3) milk collection, (4) processing and maturing, and (5) conditioning.

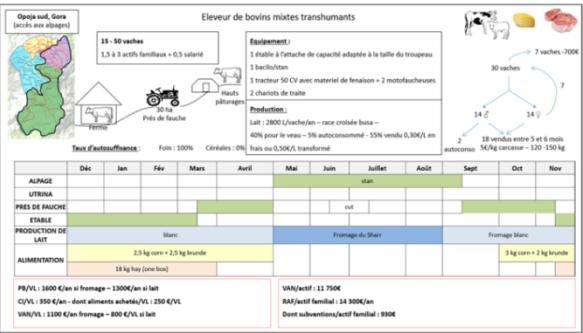


The pastoral area of the Sharri massif (Kosovan part) is estimated at 28000 ha. The majority of high pastures and of Sharri cheese production is located in Gora and Opoja areas.

Production systems and pastoral practices

- Achievement:**
 - Description of pastoral practices: herd feeding habits, use of rangelands, mobilized pastures.
 - Typology of production systems, described and localized.
 - Detailed analysis of the Sharri agrarian history and evolution of production systems over time.
- To be defined for the Book of requirements:**
 - Practices concerning the use of rangelands and the feeding of herds, as conditions for the attribution of the GI.

Ovine	Bovine	Ovine + bovine
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meat sheep• Milk sheep• Greats transhumant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Little flock of milk and meat cow (autoconsumption)• Little flock of milk and meat cow• Transhumant milk and meat cow• Milk cow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Little flock of milk and meat cow + sheep in pension• Milk and meat cow (no milking during summer) + milk sheep• Milk and meat cow (milking during summer) + milk sheep



Example of a form describing a production system: the type " milk and meat transhumant cow ".

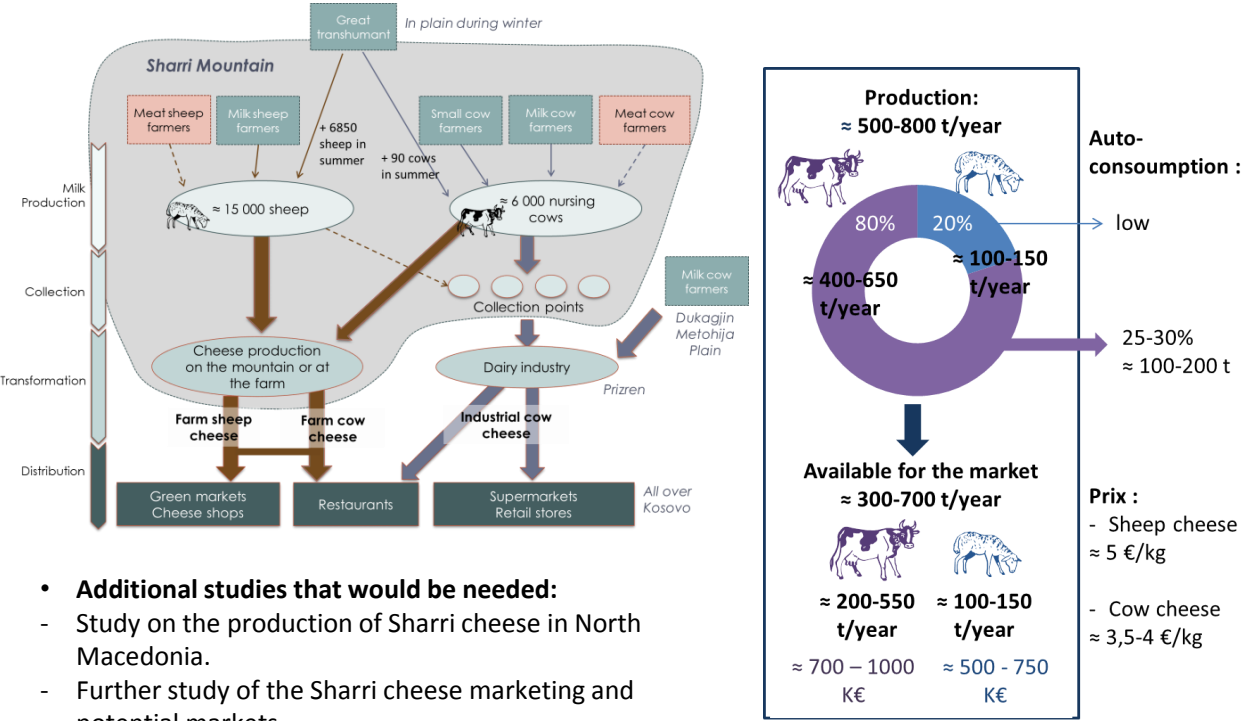
Ten types of production systems involved in Sharri cheese production were determined from herd composition, breeding practices, main production (milk / meat), etc. Goats systems have not been described because they are almost non-existent.

Cheese and processing practices

- Achievement:**
 - First description of the different processing processes of the cheese sold under the name "Sharri cheese": farm, artisanal, industrial process.
 - Creation of a database of cheese producers of "Sharri cheese" (different farming and production methods).
 - First characterization of the cheese from a tasting session.
- To be defined for the Book of requirements:**
 - The organoleptic characteristics of Sharri cheese.
 - The types of milk used: ovine, bovine, possibly goat.
 - The key stages of the transformation process.
 - Packaging methods (in jars, bread, both, etc.)

Cheese marketing

- Achievement:**
 - Identification of actors of the marketing channel.
 - Schematization of the marketing circuits.
 - Evaluation of production in terms of volume.
- To be defined:**
 - Estimation of the volumes produced, depending on the production methods and cheese processing methods.
 - Assessment of markets and potential consumers of cheese as GI.



- Additional studies that would be needed:**
 - Study on the production of Sharri cheese in North Macedonia.
 - Further study of the Sharri cheese marketing and potential markets.

The stakeholders

The various surveys conducted recently in the field have identified a number of stakeholders related to Sharri cheese and to the construction of the GI. In the next stages of the GI construction, particular attention will be needed to the inclusiveness (1) of territories, (2) communities, (3) production systems and (4) gende.

GIs and the EU

More than 1600 food products are identified by a Geographical Indication in the EU.

The four potential dimensions of GIs.

The Geographical Indications are:

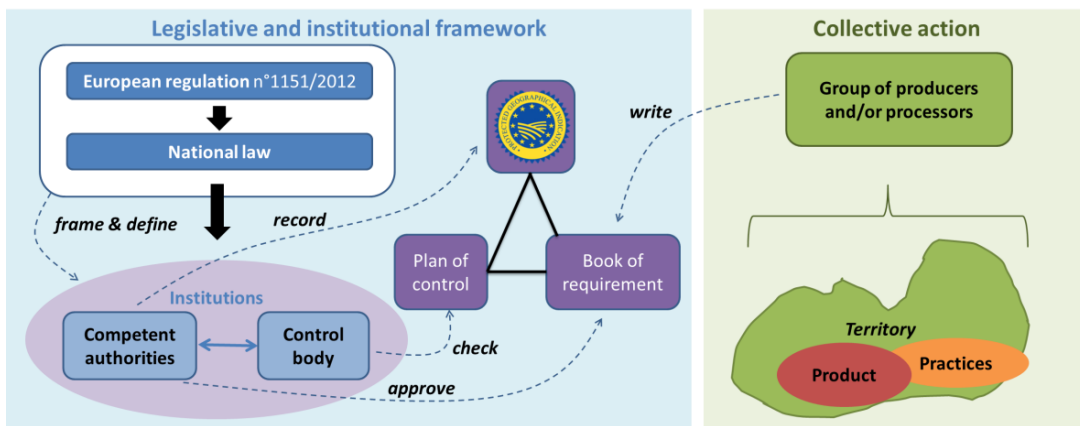
- (1) market tools to promote products with a high degree of typicity,
- (2) an inclusive rural development factor,
- (3) increasingly used as an incentive for the protection of the environment and the implementation of sustainability practices,
- (4) and finally, GIs are always relevant localized devices led by local actors & stakeholders, as well as an object of cooperation and network partnerships.

Issues of GIs in Kosovo

Kosovo has not registered any GIs yet.

There are many reasons to register Sharri cheese as a GI:

- adoption of the *acquis communautaire*,
- valorization of typical products in the European single market,
- support for pastoralism as a multifunctional agriculture,
- defense against counterfeits,
- consumer information,
- product traceability,
- structuring of quality production chain, enhancement and preservation of a territory, an heritage and a multi-community identity,
- preservation of agro-biodiversity on an exceptional natural territory (Sharri National Park).



Steps accomplished



(Agri-environmental mediation/ GI institutional frame/ Collective action in Sharri region)

Next steps

Autumn 2019 : → Adoption of the « Book of requirements » for Sharri cheese and registration !

Three-year program 2019-2021 :

Enhancement of the Association of producers with the following objectives:

- Insure the inclusiveness of the association
- Build internal and external communication tools
- Develop a promotional agenda for consumers
- Maintain a watch on projects and insure relations with institutions concerned
- Support and promote complementary studies.