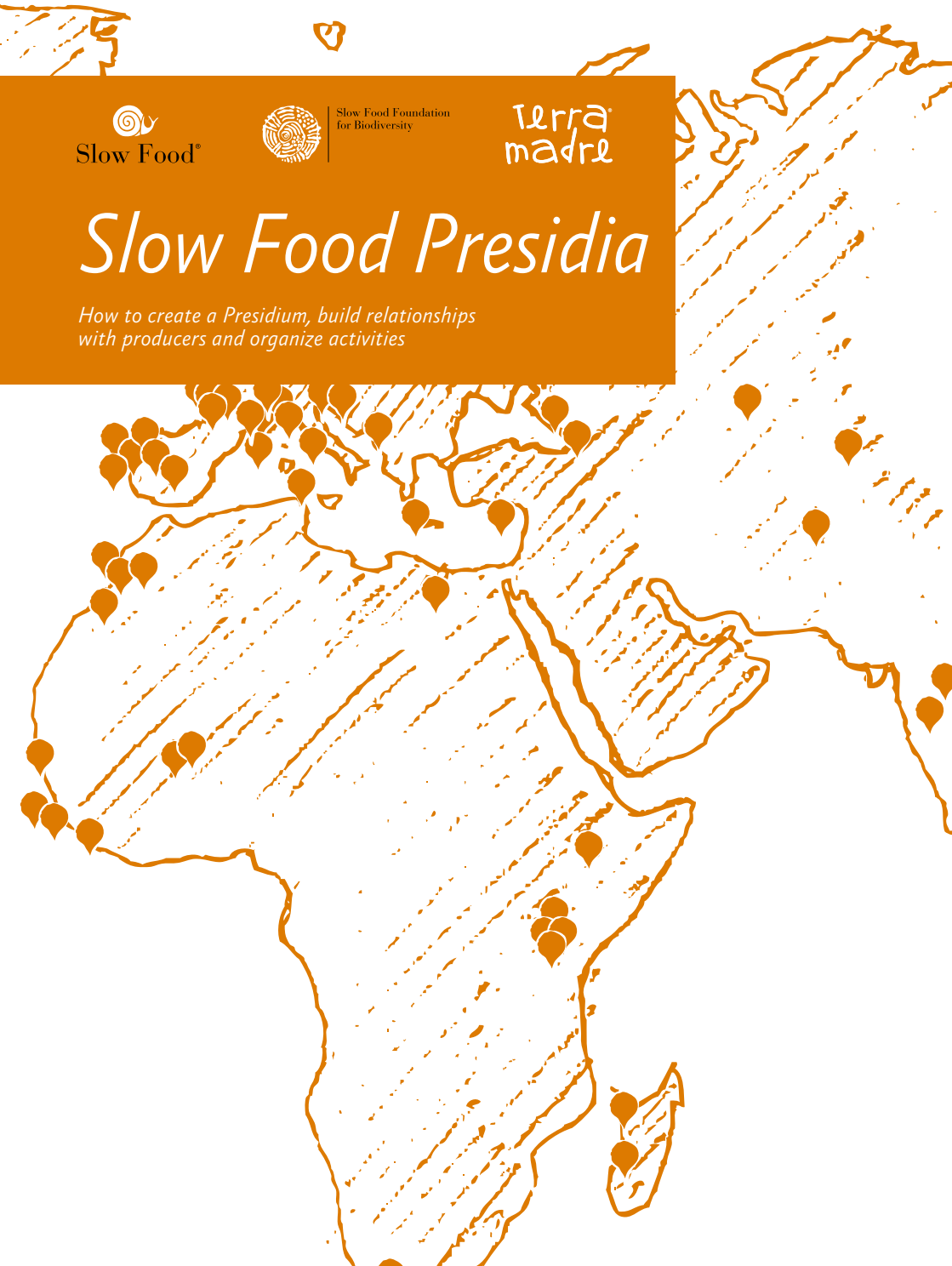
Slow Food®

Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity

Terra Madre®

Slow Food Presidia

How to create a Presidium, build relationships with producers and organize activities



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Slow Food Presidia

The Presidia (singular: Presidium), active since 1999, are projects in which Slow Food works with groups of small-scale producers to resolve difficulties they face, uniting isolated producers and connect them with alternative markets that are more sensitive to their situation and appreciative of their quality products.

To make the journey from being listed on the Ark to becoming a Presidium, it is essential to make direct contact with producers, who in turn must share Slow Food's values and philosophy and be motivated to develop the project.

Criteria

The Presidia can work to protect:

1. A traditional product at risk of extinction (an Ark of Taste product);
2. A traditional production practice at risk of extinction (e.g. fishing, breeding, processing or cultivating);
3. A rural landscape or ecosystem at risk of extinction.

To create a Presidium two aspects must always be verified.

4. Environmental sustainability ("clean")
5. Social and economic sustainability ("fair")

1. Presidia that safeguard a traditional product at risk of extinction (an Ark of Taste product)

A Presidium can be created for a product already catalogued on the Ark of Taste and that consequently has the characteristics required.
The product can be a **domestic species** (edible plant variety or ecotype, animal breed or population), a **wild species** (when linked to specific harvesting and processing techniques and traditional uses) or a **processed product** (which must have a particular sensory quality as defined by local uses and traditions; must be linked to traditional local knowledge and the territory, memory and identity of a community; must be produced in limited quantities using artisanal methods; and must be at risk of extinction).

The majority of Presidia belong to this category, that is, focused on the production of an Ark product.

SOME EXAMPLES...

Presidia for the Navajo-Churro Sheep (USA), Müstair Valley Rye Bread (Switzerland), Mangalica Sausage (Hungary), Maiorchino cheese (Italy), Taliouine Saffron (Morocco), Purèn White Strawberries (Chile) and Rimbàs Black Pepper (Malaysia).

2. Presidia that safeguard a traditional production practice at risk of extinction (e.g. fishing, breeding, processing or cultivation)

The products obtained through these practices can be more than one, some of which may not be at risk of extinction.
A traditional technique may be at risk of being lost for numerous reasons: because only the elderly still have the knowledge or skills, because youth are emigrating elsewhere or are choosing other professions, etc.
Some traditional techniques (fishing, breeding, production) are important not just for reasons of culture or identity, but also because they guarantee better environmental sustainability and represent an important opportunity to improve the local economy. Just think of the traditional coastal fishing techniques that are based on the use of low-impact selective nets and the precise dexterity and knowledge of fishers, which is very difficult to pass on without direct contact with older generations of fishers. The same thing can be said of cultivation, where often the knowledge of rotation, intercropping and a particular management of the fields is being lost.
The Presidium **name** can refer either to the technique itself or the product, both of which can be combined with the geographical area.

SOME EXAMPLES...

Presidia named after the technique and geographic area

The Presidium for the Camogli Tonnarella (Italy) safeguards the ancient 'tonnarella' fishing system (similar to the tonnara). The nets are cast at sea for six months, from April till September, and catch only medium to large sized fish (horse mackerel, Atlantic bonito, garfish, etc.).

The American Raw Milk Cheeses Presidium involves cheesemakers (from across the USA) united by their commitment to safeguard and promote cheese production using raw milk in a difficult context of ultra-hygienic and rigid laws.

Presidia named after the products and geographic area

The Presidium for Smylian Beans (Bulgaria) protects beans grown in an uncontaminated valley whose climatic conditions (moderate temperatures in summer, large temperature differences between day and night) create a small paradise for their production. The small mountain community has cultivated the beans for more than 250 years, each family taking care of a small plot of land, intercropping the beans with corn or potatoes, avoiding the use of chemical fertilizers and taking care to not deplete the soil.

The Vienna Gemischter Satz Wines Presidium preserves an ancient technique that involves growing up to 20 different vines in the same vineyard, all white grapes. The individual vines are not at risk of extinction, but the technique, which involves cultivating them in the same vineyard and processing them together, is.

3. Presidia that safeguard a rural landscape or ecosystem at risk of extinction

Landscapes also risk disappearing as they are abandoned, pushed out or paved over by urbanization, industrialization, industrial agriculture or depopulation when their inhabitants emigrate. Furthermore, in some developing countries, rural ecosystems can be the object of land grabbing, a new form of colonialism where land is taken from local/rural populations. Or they can be destroyed by deforestation or overexploited by the poor knowledge of the environmental consequences of some practices (like the 'slash and burn' technique). A Presidium can be a valuable form of condemnation. Through the products cultivated and the animals raised on the land, or the fish caught in the sea, citizens and institutions can be informed of a better way.

Some forms of biodiversity at risk of extinction – like local breeds or plants that grow in a forest – can be saved only if a particular agrarian landscape or ecosystem survives. Often, Presidia that safeguard a landscape also protect certain ancient agricultural practices (such as terracing with stone walls to hold back unstable lands).

SOME EXAMPLES...

The Gandoul Islands Wild Fruit Juices Presidium (Senegal) offers local inhabitants an alternative to overfishing, and at the same time, safeguards the trees of the remarkable natural reserve in which the fruit trees grow. The juices are not produced using techniques linked to this community, but they represent an alternative source of income for local fishing families.
Through the production of oil, the Maestrat Millenary Tree Extra-Virgin Oil Presidium (Spain) works to preserve trees that are more than 800 years old and are seriously at risk of being removed.
The Wiesenwienerwald Chequer Tree Presidium (Austria) was formed to promote the magnificent chequer trees scattered through the forest of Vienna.

Often protecting an ecosystem and a technique overlap in the same Presidium.

SOME EXAMPLES...

The Presidia for Primiero Mountain Botiro and Upper Elvo Raw Milk Mountain Pasture Butter (both in Italy) safeguard production techiques of raw-milk butter (difficult to find on the market) and, at the same time, the ancient stone dairies of two alpine regions.

4. Environmental sustainability ("clean")

Cultivation techniques used by Presidium producers must preserve the **fertility of the land** and hydrographic ecosystems, avoid the use of chemicals as much as possible, and maintain traditional methods of cultivation and management of the land where possible. The methods and production sites must safeguard the **landscape** and traditional architecture.
Intensive monocultures (even if applied to traditional varieties or ecotypes) are not permitted, nor are intensive animal farming, unsustainable fishing techniques, industrial products or genetically modified products.
On the Foundation website there is a section with general guidelines for cultivation, breeding and processing that is must be followed in the development of any production protocols.

5. Social sustainability ("fair")

A Presidium always involves a **food community**. It is not a project in the favor of an individual producer or producers that do not collaborate with each other.
Producers must play an **active role** and be able to influence business decisions. For this reason, the central figures of the projects are the producers themselves. The people that we must work with to develop a Presidium must not be subject to the choices of landowners or large companies, and for this reason a Presidium cannot be created with producers that do not have complete autonomy in their business.
Producers must be willing to **collaborate** and decide together the rules of production (protocol) and methods of marketing the product. They could potentially unite in collective bodies (e.g. associations, consortia, cooperatives).
One of the objectives of the Presidia is to obtain an adequate and profitable **price** for producers, in order to improve their quality of life and the socioeconomic welfare of their families. The price must also be transparent and fair for consumers.
The Presidia products are often made in marginal environments (high mountains, islands, isolated rural areas) in difficult conditions. They often require more care and manual skill and longer processing or aging times, and usually can only be made in small quantities. The market often does not recognize the true value of artisanal products and condemns them to follow the laws of the standardized market, putting them in competition with inferior products.
Establishing what is the "fair" price for the producer (and the consumer!) is not easy. Producers must make the effort to quantify processing times and their costs (production expenses including energy, raw materials, transport to reach the markets, etc.), and set an honest profit margin. Consumers must make the effort to evaluate the Presidia without automatically making comparisons with the prices of products that are similar but from a different place or made industrially.

Relationships with producers

While the Ark of Taste is a catalogue of products (the producers of which may not be mentioned in the nomination), the fundamental characteristic of the Presidia project is the relationship with producers and developing concrete initiatives that support them. Forming a Presidium means making contact with producers; meeting them; asking them to explain how they work and what their difficulties are; visiting production sites; understanding the social, cultural and economic context; analyzing the market; and involve the community in planning promotional initiatives.
Normally, when it is decided to launch a Presidium, the producers, or some of them, are already known to Slow Food. But it is important to carry out further research and make contact with all those who still produce the product, in the hope that the majority will decide to participate in the Presidium from the beginning.

How to track down all the producers for a Presidium

Producers using the same techniques within a region usually know each other, so we can start by asking known producers to point out others.
It is also important to understand if a producers' association already exists. Associations can be specific, uniting all the farmers of a particular breed that we want to safeguard, or generic associations of breeders and growers. To identify other producers it is also useful to consult local chefs, experts (veterinarians, agronomists) and vendors or affineurs that sell the product in question. The Presidia begin with an initial nucleus of producers – normally the most motivated and willing – but they are open projects that can welcome new producers over the following years.

Who coordinates the Presidia?

Presidia are technically coordinated by the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity, which receives requests for new projects; collects and reviews support material for a nomination; organizes visits to producers; and officially authorizes the Presidium launch. The Foundation does not take the initiative to launch a Presidium by itself, but acts only following a request from national associations or the association in the region, or where these do not exist, from convivia, food communities or other organizations (e.g. NGOs, institutions, etc). In areas where Slow Food does not exist, it is more difficult to create a Presidium.

If it is decided to proceed, during the first stages of work, the local is asked to collaborate alongside the Slow Food association. Sometimes the creation of a Presidium can pave the way to form a new convivium. The work on the ground is always done in collaboration with these convivia, which work alongside the producers in the development of their Presidium.

The Foundation works with a group of experts (veterinarians, technologists, agronomists, etc.) and producers that have been active for some time. These figures help producers to identify and resolve production problems; improve, where necessary, the quality and sustainability of the production; and to create production protocols.

Steps in creating and managing a Presidium

Fill out the Presidium application form

Those wishing to request the creation of a new Presidium must fill out the application form (which can be downloaded from the website). The form asks for information on the production system and an initial list of producers, allowing a preliminary evaluation to be made.
After initial approval by the relevant Slow Food body (depending on the country this will be a Slow Food National Association, the national office, or the local Slow Food Convivium*), the application form is forwarded to the Slow Food Foundation, along with some tasting samples from different producers where possible.

*If Slow Food is not present in the area, the application form can be sent directly to the Foundation.

Organize an initial visit to producers

If the application is valid, the Foundation can organize an initial visit to producers along with the local Slow Food contacts. The visit must examine production sites and include a meeting with local contacts (convivium leaders, experts, institutions, potential sponsors) and a meeting with all interested producers.

The meeting with producers is fundamental to identify the main problems and define the project's objectives, clarifying the main principles agreed by all, first and foremost the willingness to share a virtuous journey towards good, clean and fair production and the readiness to work together as a community to improve the quality and promote the product.

It is important during the visit to identify **two local contacts** that can coordinate the development of the project on a voluntary basis: a **representative and spokesperson** for the producers and a **Slow Food representative** (normally a convivium leader or other member of the closest convivium) that from this moment on will become the Foundation's interlocutor.
Information regarding the **production situation at the starting point** must be collected immediately and detailed in the questionnaire (provided by Slow Food), including information on the number of producers involved, quantities produced, type of market, etc. This allows us to sketch out a precise profile of the situation, the potential and the problems to tackle.
By regularly updating this data over the following years, it is possible to evaluate the development of the Presidium and its economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes.
In the first meeting with producers, it is essential to pay much attention to the presentation of Slow Food (its history, objectives and philosophy), clearly explaining the role of the association and the Foundation in the development of the Presidium project. It is important to clarify that our association does not have economic or commercial interests, but only one goal – to help producers preserve and communicate biodiversity, through an international network of small-scale producers.
It is hoped that producers become Slow Food members over time.

Draw up a production protocol

Once all producers are known and involved, a production protocol can be drawn up. This is a fundamental prerequisite in the development of the Presidium. The Foundation can give support for the drafing of a protocol, providing guidelines for each type of production and simple questionnaires for collecting the necessary information.
The production protocol must be the result of consultation with the Presdium producers who take ownership of it. It cannot be the work of experts or academics in an office. While the producers' timeframes may be long, they must be respected during the process of arriving at a definitive version of the text that is agreed on by all.

The ideal process includes organization of an initial meeting with producers during which the Slow Food representative presents a questionairre with the main areas of information to collect from producers. The **questionaire is developed specifically for each product category** (cheeses, cured meats, edible plants, honey, breeds for meat, breeds for milk, etc.).
After filling it out, the producers can then compose a first draft of the protocol, which can then be fine-tuned until a final version is agreed upon. On some delicate or complex questions, the input of experts (agronomists, veterinarians, food technologists, etc.) can be useful.

The process requires a great deal of patience. It is worth keeping in mind that conflicts can be useful as they highlight weak points and the need to make choices and find a compromize between opposing positions. Discussions and disagreement may regard the definition of a geographical area, whether certain steps in the production chain should be mandatory, the time of aging a product, etc.

Fundamental aspects of the protocol

The protocol precisely defines the area of production, documents the history of the product and describes in detail all phases of cultivation (or breeding) and processing. It strengthens the awareness of producers who are often working together for the first time to compare production techniques and put their knowledge on paper.

The protocol must be approved both by the Foundation and the producers. The final version must be signed by all Presidium producers and can be a good moment to present the Presidium to the public.

If the protocol is drafted in a through and attentive way, it will allow the weak points of the Presidium to be identified. One of the main objectives of the Presidia is to help producers improve or maintain the quality of their productions and the sustainability of the techniques in use. For this reason, the Foundation has involved a group of experts able to provide technical advice and training to producers and Presidia coordinators.

Production, cultivation and breeding techniques

For each product category, specific guidelines exist (available on the Foundation website), which should be used to guide the drafting of Presidia protocol. The guidelines include, for example, the obligation to use raw milk in cheesemaking; prohibit the use of chemical flavors, preservatives and additives; require sustainable forms of farming and fishing; obligate the safeguarding of traditional production techniques and sites; etc.
The guidelines have been drawn up by the Foundation in collaboration with experts and producers. Over the years they are regularly improved and updated thanks to the contribution of local coordinators and producers.

Presidia and European denominations

Over the last few years in Europe, many Presidia have been created for products that are already protected by a European denomination (PDO – protected designation of origin or PGI – protected geographical indication). It may seem redundant to create a Presidium when a product is already protected by a European brand, but in some cases Slow Food has considered it necessary to protect particular aspects of the production method or territory, that the denomination protocol does not adequately cover.
All Presidium producers must also adhere to the European denomination.
The Presidium protocol in these cases is an extension of the denomination (more restrictive compared to the PDO protocol).
The Presidium name, in these cases, must correspond with that of the denomination (without adding more information or adjectives).

SOME EXAMPLES...

Producers from the Roccaverano Robiola Presidium (an Italian goat's cheese) respect the protocol of the PDO, but while this allows them to use a certain quantity of cow's and sheep's milk in their production, they are committed to only using goat's milk. The Presidium production rules specify this more restrictive requirement.

Sometimes, in extreme cases, Presidium producers do not wish to continue following the rules of the denomination and decide to exit. In this case they must then give up the historical name.

Define a Presidium name

The choice of name for a Presidium is very important. It is the affirmation of a specific historical identity and a tradition. It is important therefore to understand what name the local community uses to identify the product. Invented names and folk-names are prohibited (farmers' salami, farmhouse cheese, etc.), as are privately registered commercial names.
The Slow Food communications activities to promote the Presidia result in growing public familiarity with the names. To avoid a situation in which the name is changed a few years down the track, rendering previous communications work useless, the decision of which name to use must be well thought out in the beginning.
It is always very useful to associate a Presidium name with a place, the area in which it is produced. In this way we highlight the value of the local region, meaning not just from a geographic point of view, but also social and cultural, and the Presidium can become an instrument for local development.

SOME EXAMPLES...

Quebrada de Humahuaca Andean Potatoes (Argentina)
Alnif Cumin (Morocco)
Polignano Carrot (Italy)

Presidia names can also come from local dialect (when it is recognized by the community as such and not a rhetoric to evoke images of the past or rural landscapes) or from indigenous languages. However, it is better to not to over-use this approach, as the names are often difficult to understand and communicate to an international public.

SOME EXAMPLES...

Saras del fen (Piedmontese dialect, Italy), a ricotta produced in the Valdesi Valley that is wrapped in hay. Reindeer suovas (Sweden), where suovas means 'smoked' in the indigenous Sami language.

Define the production area

The production area indicated in the production protocol does not necessarily correspond only to the area in which the producers who were involved since the beginning live and work, but must include the entire historical production area. Anyone who produces the product within this area and decides to follow the protocol must have the possibility to join the Presidium. The production area must be homogenous in term of climate (for example, we cannot associate cheese produced in mountainous areas with that from the plains), and linked to the tradition and history of the product.
The information can be based on written testimony, but also oral.

Consult the community – interview elderly people, chefs and historical restaurants and bars, to discover how and where the product was produced and how and where it was traditionally consumed.

Organize training and technical assistance

Training is one of the most important parts of a Presidium's activities and has diverse objectives: to improve the quality of production; sharpen the sensory analysis skills of the producers; create producers' associations; develop sustainable packaging; and help producers improve their communications and marketing.

Training methods

Tasting. Through a comparative tasting of product samples from all producers, we can identify potential defects in processing or aging and improve the sensorial qualities of products. A tasting will also reveal variations in products from different producers or regions, which can be used in communications and promotions. Both producers and Slow Food experts must attend tasting sessions.

Visits by experts. Thanks to its international network, Slow Food can put producers in contact with technicians and experts from across the word to tackle and resolve technical or organizational problems. The Foundation can also send artisans and experts to visit Presidia directly.

Producer exchanges. Knowledge exchanges between Presidia, which can take place as group visits by producers to other Presidia or to other good examples of production, allows producers to discover similar agricultural and artisanal productions, find solutions, or discover methods of promotion and sale that are replicable in their country.

Training seminars. The Foundation organizes training seminars for producers in different sectors (cheese, fruit and vegetables, meat, etc.) both on site and in the international office.

Unite the producers

After the initial communal activities, when the group of Presidium producers has become close-knit, they can be encourage to form a cooperative, consortia or other collective body of their choice.
This does not mean that they have to sell their products collectively – individual businesses can maintain their independence – but it is important that they feel part of a common project, to be carried forward collectively.
Forming an official group or association has many advantages. It is easier to develop projects as a collective group; public bodies that provide financial support for producers prefer to give contributions to associations rather than individuals; some costs can be shared (e.g. purchase of machinery such as a harvester, which is costly and useful for short periods; promotional materials; transport to participate in a fair; training sessions, etc.). Uniting in an association means collaborating with other producers, sharing problems and opportunities. It often also means opening one's mind and growing from a personal point of view. Creating an association – and therefore officially registering the group, and at times also the product name – means formalizing the existence of the product and the tradition to defend and promote, giving it more visibility.

Funds to launch and sustain Presidia

Once it is decided to request the creation of a Presidium, the economic aspect – that is, the possibility to find resources to support the promotional work required by a Presidium – must not be overlooked. Funds are needed to create promotional materials, cover the costs of a visit by an expert, participate in an international event, etc.

The situation varies depending on the country a Presidium is based in. If the Presidium is in a country in difficulty (e.g. in Africa, South America and some countries in Asia), resources can be collected through the Foundation's fundraising activities. If the Presidium is in a country without particular problems, it can be possible to

find supporters and sponsors that can assist to cover costs. The Slow Food national associations or convivia must therefore mobilize to help find resources to cover the costs necessary to sustain a Presidium. The fundraising office of Slow Food International and the Foundation can assist with information and contacts.

TAKE NOTE!

For its part, the Foundation collects funds necessary for its projects thanks to donations from individuals, businesses and national or international public bodies. All donors are published on the Foundation website and in its annual Social Report.
On occasion some donors assist a project directly during the processing or commercialization stages, and a portion of the sales' profits is dedicated to supporting the Foundation. These funds are needed for international communication and to provide training tools and technical assistance to all Presidia (in both the global north and south) and to provide communities of producers with financial contributions (only in the global south) – useful funds for project 'start-up' that are assigned on the basis of cooperation agreements that stipulate a series of actions, e.g. purchase of equipment, training and trips.

When creating a Presidium, don't ask for funds directly from producers. We cannot ask for contributions from those who need Slow Food precisely to resolve their difficulties. Producers may only be asked to make a contribution in the second phase (at the discretion of the national association), when they are able to use the "Presidio Slow Food®" brand. This possible contribution is then used to sustain the Presidia or other Foundation projects (e.g. A Thousand Gardens in Africa or the Earth Markets).

Promoting and adding value to the Presidia

Slow Food is an association that unites over 100,000 members around the world.
The number of supporters, what we can call the "movement" that revolves around the association, is in the millions. All of these people are deeply motivated and actively involved to some degree in Slow Food's activities. They also represent an extraordinary potential market for the Presidia products.
According to Slow Food, the only way to save food biodiversity under threat is to create a new market, more attentive to safeguarding the environment and traditions. It involves thousands of conscious consumers, or rather co-producers, at a worldwide level.

The global market's trend towards standardization and the difficulties of small-scale producers, who cannot be competitive if they are put on the same level as the food industry. Slow Food calls on everyone who wants to fight this trend to come together and help the producers find a new market, one which is more conscientious and aware.

Slow Food's many promotion and communication activities are aimed at raising the profile of the Presidia projects and bringing producers and co-producers closer together. Below are the main examples.

Events

The Presidia's participation in the international events organized by Slow Food (Salone del Gusto and Terra Madre, Cheese, Slow Fish, Asiogusto, Euro Gusto, etc.) is vital, as is their participation in the many local events organized at a regional or national level around the world. Setting aside a specific area for the Presidia and the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity at the events is by now an established tradition.
At these events, the producers sell their products, but more significantly they can promote them and make contact with journalists, buyers, enthusiasts and other producers. The events are also important showcases for Slow Food, which can present its projects and the results of the work carried out in the field.

Alliance Between Chefs and Producers

Since Terra Madre 2006 when Slow Food launched the chefs' network, many chefs have become valuable ambassadors, spreading the philosophy of Slow Food in their restaurants. The Alliance network, launched 2009, links chefs, small-scale producers and Slow Food Presidia. Alliance chefs commit to using products from the Presidia or the Ark of Taste, food communities and good, clean and fair local small-scale producers, listing the names of producers who have supplied them on their menu. Every year, they organize fundraising events, and a portion of the proceeds is used to set up a new Presidium or support one that is struggling.

The Alliance has been active since 2009 and has spread from Italy to the Netherlands and Morocco. Many other countries are becoming interested in the initiative.

Earth Markets

Earth Markets are farmers' markets that have been established according to guidelines that follow the Slow Food philosophy. These community-run markets are important social meeting points, where local producers offer quality food directly to consumers at fair prices and guarantee environmentally sustainable methods. In addition, they preserve the food culture of the local community and contribute to defending biodiversity.
Earth Markets regularly host local Presidia producers, and often invite Presidia from other areas for special events.

Buying groups

Slow Food uses its network to bring together Presidia producers and consumers not just during its events, but also by encouraging direct sales.
Ethical purchasing groups, known in Italy as GAS (Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale), are organized by members and convivia—sometimes directly by national Slow Food branches or the Slow Food Foundation—and encourage direct contact between farmers and consumers, usually within the same geographical area. In the case of CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) schemes, participants pay producers in advance, which gives the producers the security of guaranteed sales for that season.

Communicating the Presidia

For Slow Food, quality cannot be measured by objective parameters, but is the result of a narrative. This is why the organization focuses particularly on communication in its various forms. The Presidia products are recounted in national publications, newsletters and websites through direct accounts, stories of producers and places and descriptions of ancient techniques.

The Slow Food **press office** constantly suggests articles and reports on the Presidia to the Italian and international **media**, including newspapers, magazines, television channels and radio stations.

The Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity website (www.slowfoodfoundation.com) includes large sections on the Ark of Taste and Presidia.
Slow Food's **website** (www.slowfood.com) often publishes news about the Presidia, as well as stories about producers, recipes, etc. Information about Presidia can also be found on national and regional Slow Food websites.

It is also important for the Presidia to be promoted at a local level, to avoid their products becoming famous internationally while remaining unknown locally, where their most important market is. It should also be remembered that the Presidia's activities have an important cultural purpose: to rediscover and disseminate knowledge about the local area, culture and traditions, transforming them into opportunities for sustainable local development.

It is therefore important to involve the local press and other media when a Presidium is started, keeping them informed about the launch, the producers' activities, any exchanges and other important moments in the Presidium's life. It is equally valuable to involve local restaurants and shops and ensure that tourists know that the area they are visiting has important traditions to discover.

Slow Food's campaigns

Since their early years, the Slow Food Presidia have served as the inspiration and as concrete, virtuous examples for several of Slow Food's campaigns.
For example, the 70-plus cheese Presidia have become the flag-bearers of the campaign to protect raw milk (Slow Cheese). The Presidia for seafood and traditional fishing techniques are an integral part of the Slow Fish campaign. And the honey and bee Presidia have links with the campaign against the use of pesticides containing neonicotinoids to protect bee populations.

Narrative labels

Slow Food has developed a specific project on product labeling. Most of the labels on food sold in shops and supermarkets do not give enough information about the contents of the product, not to mention the story behind it, the characteristics of the place where it was made, the production technique, the livestock breeds used for milk or meat, how they were farmed, and so on. This important information can help consumers make choices that favor more virtuous and sustainable producers. This is why Slow Food has developed a back label that offers a comprehensive narration of the entire production chain and allows consumers to make more conscious choices.

Many Presidia are adopting this back label (which does not replace the legally required label, but supplements and completes it), using it to give detailed information about the varieties and breeds used in the project, cultivation and processing techniques, place of origin, animal welfare, storage advice and serving suggestions.

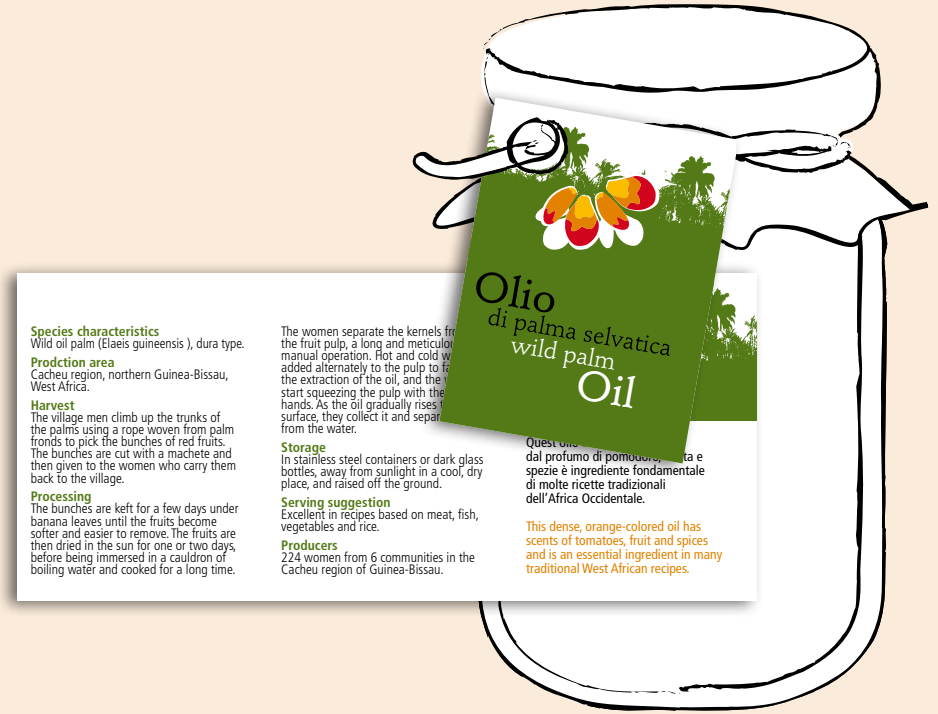
The guidelines for producing a narrative label can be found on the Slow Food Foundation website. The narrative label should become an essential step in the life of a Presidia, and be used by all the producers.

BE AWARE!

It is not possible to use the Slow Food logo or the name of the Slow Food association on packaging or product labels or in any other context not authorized by the National associations.

However, it is possible to mention and describe the Presidia products in brochures or posters, subject to authorization by the national Slow Food branch or, when there is no National association, the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity.

SOME EXAMPLES...



A brand for the Slow Food Presidia

In 2008, Slow Food registered the "Presidio Slow Food®" brand and allowed the producers of Presidia in certain countries to use it on their product labels. It is currently in use in Italy (for all the national Presidia, as well as Presidium coffee roasted in Italy) and Switzerland. The brand allows producers to differentiate themselves on the market and to protect their products in certain countries where the risk of fraudulent imitations is particularly high, such as Italy, where there are over 200 Presidia.
The brand is used by the producers, who must guarantee that it is employed correctly. The management of the brand must be the collective responsibility of a group of producers. The producers cannot transfer the right to use the brand to anyone else. They can only use it individually or as a Presidium. There are no third-party controls.

Presidio Slow Food®

The Presidia brand must always be used together with a sentence that briefly explains the project:

"The Presidia are Slow Food projects that protect quality, artisanal products made using traditional practices."

Direct sales, personal knowledge, a close relationship with local Slow Food convivia, regular participation in Slow Food events, relationships between chefs and producers and between producers and consumers: These are the elements that guarantee quality and respect for the production protocol.
The result is a mix of self-certification (by individuals and groups) and checks by consumers (including Slow Food convivium leaders, chefs and professional tasters), in other words a kind of "participatory certification."
The narrative label—which lists every key aspect of production on the product itself—makes this mechanism even more trustworthy.

Why can only Presidia in certain countries use the brand?

Because this informal guarantee mechanism only works in countries where Slow Food has a widespread, active presence and can work directly to ensure the project's success.

The size of the national association (in relation to the number of Presidia, of course) matters, as does its willingness to commit to a process that involves:

1. visiting all the production sites;
2. helping to draw up production protocols and ensuring all producers sign them;
3. collaborating with the Presidia to ensure that each one sets up a producers' association, one for each Presidium, whose functions include checking production and making sure the protocol is respected;
4. making sure all the producers sign a document agreeing that they will follow the regulations about using the brand and provide a set of data about their business;
5. closely supervising the use of logos on labels, packaging and other graphic material and during participation in events, including drawing up an appropriate plan for regular checks.

A year after introducing the use of the brand, the Italian association began asking the producers to contribute to the expenses of managing the brand. The payment is calculated on the basis of the Presidium's annual production. It is minimal enough to have little effect on the producers' finances, but helps to make the project sustainable. Slow Food normally only raises funds for the first year of work on the projects, but Presidia will never expire and will continue to require attention for many years.

When a Slow Food National association feels able to guarantee that it can carry out all of the listed activities—and this means being able to count on resources to cover the expenses of whoever oversees this part of the project, or in some cases hiring a part-time collaborator—it can ask Slow Food International to authorize the use of the Presidia brand on the labels of their Presidia. The request must be made to Slow Food International through the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity, which will assist the association with the process. Once the process has been successfully completed, the Slow Food Foundation will give its approval and Slow Food will authorize the national association to use the brand.
The local association plays an important role in constantly evaluating the sensory quality of the Presidia products. It must organize annual tasting committees to evaluate the products, which must be bought on the market and not requested directly from the producers.
Slow Food reserves the right to carry out checks on the correct use of the brand, product quality, respect for the production protocol and adhesion to the Slow Food principles wherever and whenever it believes it necessary.
The Slow Food Foundation provides anyone who requests the Presidia brand with support and assistance, providing templates for the statutes for producers' association, graphics for promotional material and general consultancy services. The "Presidio Slow Food®" brand can also be used together with PDO or PGI certifications.

Rules for processors

Producers who buy and process Presidia products do not automatically qualify as Presidium producers and cannot automatically use the "Presidio Slow Food®" brand.

To be able to use the brand, the processor must make a request to Slow Food, and also:

- work in the area covered by the production protocol and use artisanal methods and natural ingredients;
- adhere to the production protocol (alongside the protocol on the cultivation or farming of the original food, a specific protocol must be drawn up for processed products);
- send a sample of the product to Slow Food for tasting. The tasting must have a positive outcome;
- be accepted by the producers and join the producers' association.

If a processor does not belong to the Presidium, they are still free to contact the Presidium producers, use their products as ingredients and say on the label that they use a Slow Food Presidium as an ingredient, but they cannot use the Presidia brand.

In some cases, a Presidium producer could decide to involve an external processor in the Presidium, either because they do not yet have a processing facility or because they cannot afford their own facility. If the label of the final product contains the name of the Presidium producer (and not that of the processor), and if it is sold directly by the Presidium producer, the brand can be used.

The Presidium producer must however guarantee that the processing was done in accordance with the criteria established by Slow Food and must provide the Slow Food Presidia office with the details of the processing company.

The Presidium must also record the quantity produced of the final product, to allow any necessary checks to be made on the products released on the market.

Rules for retailers

Slow Food can establish forms of collaboration with retailers who sell Presidia products and request support for the communication, promotion, selection or supply of the products. In these cases, Slow Food can grant the retailer the right to use the "Presidio Slow Food®" brand in their communication, in agreed ways with Slow Food Foundation.
This decision can only be made by the relevant offices of the national headquarters, and the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity must always be kept informed.
Slow Food only collaborates with commercial entities, whether private businesses, consortia or associations that guarantee respect for the Presidia project's rules is trustworthiness and affinity of intent and who have a track record of quality initiatives.

Any communication regarding the use of Presidia and the brand by processors or retailers must always be approved by Slow Food before being launched.

To get more information, make suggestions, present projects, organize initiatives to support the Slow Food Foundation, submit tasting samples or send press clippings about initiatives related to the Presidia; contact us at **foundation@slowfood.com**.

Slow Food®

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