

## ROMANIA

# Local development

### Location

Sat Vanatori

### Programming period

2014 – 2020

### Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

### Measure

M19 – LEADER/CLLD

### Funding

Total budget 25 987 (EUR)

RDP contribution 12 993 (EUR)

Private / own 12 994 (EUR)

### Project duration

2020 to 2021

### Project promoter

Relu Cojocar

### Email

[prisacamdova2020@gmail.com](mailto:prisacamdova2020@gmail.com)

### Website

<https://prisacamdova.ro/>

A beekeeper used CAP funds to realise an investment project that would enable him to add value to his honey products and improve his position in the market.

## Summary

Through this project, the 'Prisaca Moldova' beekeeping farm, situated within the territory of the Prut Valley LAG, was able to modernise its equipment and establish a facility for processing and packing honey and other bee products. Another part of the CAP support was used for promotional and marketing purposes, including the development of a website and online shop.



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## Project Results

An average of six to eight tonnes of unprocessed honey sold on the domestic market each year.

The project contributed to the establishment of an integrated short supply chain for selling the farm's products, including small local stores that sell traditional and/or organic produce.

The beneficiary continues to sell part of his honey to a major processor who provides honey to large retailers in Bucharest as well as large processors throughout the European Union.

Thanks to this project, the beneficiary is able to offer services to other small beekeepers in the LAG area, who can use the company's facilities and equipment for bottling and packaging their own honey.

## Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The beneficiary strongly believes in the value of all of these interconnected activities (supply chains, shared local processing facilities, education, and business innovation) as they all contribute to developing a diverse community of interest and support within the sector.
- ❑ The beneficiary recommends that this new programming period (2021-2027) focus on simplifying bureaucracy in order to increase access to financial support and motivate more potential beneficiaries.

## Context

Relu Cojocar is a zootechnical engineer based in Suceava County, Romania. His family farming business abandoned pig breeding since it turned out to be unprofitable. He then enrolled in a Romanian-Swiss programme through which farmers could receive a grant to produce and sell traditional, organic products. After attending that training programme, Relu was able to apply for a grant that would enable him to set up a 300-hive apiary.

His apiary is situated in a melliferous area with acacia trees, 10 km away from Iași, managed by the Valea Prutului LAG. Relu's first successful application for Rural Development Programme support (2007-2013 programming period) helped him build a processing facility for honey and other bee products.

Once established in the sector, and having attended several beekeeping fairs, he realised the importance of creating a brand identity and set about launching 'Prisaca Moldova'.

## Objectives

The aim of this investment project was to improve the market position of the 'Prisaca Moldova' brand and add value to its bee products by modernising the processing and packaging facilities on the farm.

## Activities

Funds from the 2014-2020 Romanian RDP were used for the acquisition of new honey production equipment (including a honey pump, a honey filter, a 100 ltr stainless steel basin, a homogeniser, a honey dispenser, a weighing platform, a refrigerator, a power generator, convectors, and a processing container) and for setting up a room for heating honey.

Finally, the beneficiary used the remaining part of the support to develop a new website and an online shop.

## Main results

'Prisaca Moldova' now sells an annual average of six to eight tonnes of unprocessed honey on the domestic market. This honey is processed in Vaslui and then sold on to large retailers in Bucharest and to large processors throughout the European Union.

The rest of the honey and by-products from the apiary reach consumers through a local short supply chain in the Iasi area.

'Prisaca Moldova' honey and its other products have now been accredited as organic and certified by Agreco GmbH Germany.

Thanks to this project, the beneficiary is able to offer services to other small beekeepers in the LAG area, who can use the company's facilities and equipment for bottling and packaging their own honey.

Relu Cojocar has recently started lecturing in apiculture classes provided by the Directorate for Agriculture of Iași County and continues to experiment with new income generating ventures on his farm. His latest experiment is in 'hive air therapy', where customers are able to lie on beds placed over active beehives in order to take in the propolis-rich air. This type of alternative treatment offers multiple health and wellbeing benefits and is becoming increasingly popular.

### Key lessons

The beneficiary strongly believes in the value of all of these interconnected activities (supply chains, shared local processing facilities, education, and business innovation) as they all contribute to developing a diverse community of interest and support within the sector.

The beneficiary recommends that this new programming period (2021-2027) focus on simplifying bureaucracy to increase access to financial support and motivate more potential beneficiaries.

Another important lesson concerns the choice of company status. 'Prisaca Moldova' was originally set up as an agricultural cooperative by Relu Cojocar and four other

experienced and passionate beekeepers. Unfortunately, after only five years (2015-2020) the group was forced to close their business because their activities were not profitable enough to meet the annual costs of maintaining the cooperative. 'Prisaca Moldova' then relaunched as an association, where the principal focus is the representation and promotion of the associate members as a means of supporting their profitability (rather than profitability itself). The lesson here is to carefully consider which legal status will offer the best conditions for a new business idea to thrive.

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### Additional sources of information

<https://galvaleaprutului.ro/>

<https://gustdeiasi.ro/>

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=e56uMI-q95s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e56uMI-q95s)

<https://observatornews.ro/economic/afacerea-cu-care-relu-cojocar-u-a-dat-lovitura-in-iasi-sa-inspirat-din-vestul-europei-iar-acum-este-tot-mai-faimos-473241.html?fbclid=IwAR2lv2B8xTiDv8LE0bkjV94vVTICKV9EBdFCulrUkRWwpLFKaPCZpGig-M>