

AUSTRIA

Implementing Local Development Strategies

Location

Mühlviertel

Programming period

2007 - 2013

Axis / Priority

Axis 4 – LEADER

Measure

M421 - Implementing
cooperation projects

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 310 400
RDP support 230 800*
(*total funding EU/Bund/Land)

Project duration

2010 – 2014

Project promoter

LAG HansBergLand (Lead-
Partner)

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Austria's Mühlviertel region developed an organic brand as a marketing tool to promote local producers, suppliers and tourism.

Summary

Austria's Mühlviertel region has seen its organic sector expand significantly in recent decades. The area is home to more than half of Upper Austrian organic farmers (around 2 100) as well as many organic processing companies. The brand BioRegion was set up in 2010 to promote and develop the sector.



The brand is used as a marketing tool for the agricultural sector but also to promote tourism and local food processing. The project created educational events for children including farm visits, published an organic-themed brochure and organised a hiking exhibition.

Results

An organic-themed brochure was published to raise awareness about the sector and promote tourism.

Events were organised focussing on communicating healthy, holistic lifestyles and the circular economy at regional level.

A 'school-on-farm' programme was developed.

A hiking exhibition was launched and over 3 000 school children participated.

Lessons & Recommendations

- Developing the bioregion brand required a long-term vision.
- A large number of actors are needed in the development process.



Context

Mühlviertel is an Austrian region, where organic farming has developed strongly over recent decades, due to the favourable geo-climatic conditions. The area is home to more than half of Upper Austrian organic farmers (around 2 100), as well as a large number of bio-processing companies. The majority of farms are owned by the same families for generations and small structures dominate. The area is remote, rural, and economically disadvantaged, with no significant industry. The BioRegion Mühlviertel brand was set up in 2010 to promote local food producers, suppliers and tourism.

Objectives

The aim was to develop Mühlviertel into one of the leading regions for organic production and ensure its long-term sustainable development.

The BioRegion initiative was designed to strengthen cooperation between organic producers, add value to the supply chain and boost sales through marketing the brand. It also hoped to develop local organic production, support processors of ready-to-consume products, suppliers and restaurants. The project also aimed to encourage tourists to the area by promoting the region, its producers and products.

The seven partners of Mühlviertel are: HansBergLand (Lead Partner), Danube-Böhmerwald, Strudengau, Mühlviertler Alm, Mühlviertler Kernland, Urfahrwest, Sterngartl Gusental and the EUREGIO Bavarian Forest Buhmerwald.

Activities

The BioRegion Mühlviertel initiative was set up between 2010 and 2014 as a Leader project. The brand is actively promoted as a marketing tool for the over 124 existing partners who come not only from the agriculture sector, but also processing, gastronomy and tourism. Organic farmers are supported by bringing them into contact and making their work more visible. Special labels and tourist opportunities were also developed. BioRegion products are available in Mühlviertler catering and accommodation companies and can also be purchased online (www.biologisch.kaufen).



Main Results

Participants in the initiative developed a tourist brochure 'Discover-Enjoyment-Beauty: Travel through the Organic Mühlviertel', presented by all project partners. It is part of an 'Organic network' tourist brochure with holiday resorts, excursion destinations, guest houses and farm shops. The brochure is aimed at guests and locals. Copies can be ordered for free at: office@bioregion-muehlviertel.at.

The initiative helped locals gain greater appreciation of their region and raised awareness about its producers and products.

Organised events have focussed on communicating healthy, holistic lifestyles and the circular economy at regional level.

A 'school-on-farm' programme was developed as well as a hiking exhibition. Over 3 000 school children participated.

The organisers also developed a sustainable organisational structure – see www.bioregion-muehlviertel.at

Key lessons

Developing and establishing a brand for a region requires a long-term vision. A large number of actors were involved in the development process.

Additional sources of information

n/a