

BELGIUM

Local development

Location

Vaux sur Sûre

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local
development

Measure

M7 – Basic services & village
renewal

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 1 359 478
EAFRD 435 033
National/Regional 652 550
Other 271 895

Project duration

2018 – 2020

Project promoter

Commune de Vaux-sur-Sûre

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www.pcdr-vaux-sur-sure.be/maison-de-la-ruralite-p988828

Construction of a new, versatile building consisting of a coworking space, a cultural hall and a tourist office, enhancing the services offered to the residents of a rural municipality.

Summary

Discussion groups and roundtables were organised in the 10 villages of the municipality Vaux sur Sûre in order to identify, through this participatory process, the citizens' needs in terms of culture, leisure, community and economic development.

This consultation process resulted in a project to create a new versatile infrastructure consisting of a coworking space, a cultural hall and a tourist office that complements the existing services, e.g. post office, nursery, etc. already available at the centre of the municipality.



Results

A totally re-organised village centre offering more services and energy-efficient new buildings.

The building is of contemporary design and creates a new architectural landmark for welcoming visitors to the town.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The development of communal spaces and services should be carried out in consultation with local people in order to adequately address their needs and interests.
- ❑ It is a challenge to coordinate various strands of activity (income generation, tourism promotion, leisure and culture, etc.) The Rurality Centre could certainly benefit from volunteer support but the management of a volunteers team would require additional funding.
- ❑ Efficient collaboration between the elected board and administrative team is crucial to the success of this kind of project.

Context

In 2015, the municipality Vaux sur Sûre decided to launch a 10-year local rural development programme (in French: PCDR) combined with an "Agenda 21" sustainable development strategy. This action was the result of a participatory process that started in 2011 with a subsidy from the Fondation Rurale de Wallonie. Discussion groups and roundtables were organised in each of the municipality's 10 villages, gathering together the local population and paying particular attention to achieving a balanced representation of age, class, gender and profession. During this consultation process, in which around 400 inhabitants participated, a series of needs were identified in the fields of culture, leisure, community development and economic development. This diagnosis served as a basis for the design of local strategy. The process led to the decision to create a new, centralized and versatile infrastructure consisting of a coworking space, a tourist office and a cultural hall.

Objectives

The Rurality Centre is a flagship project stemming from the local Agenda 21 plan and long-term rural development strategy. The overall objective is to improve and enhance the range of available services in the area in order to stimulate the local economy.

Activities

The new Rurality Centre is constructed at the heart of the village of Vaux-sur-Sûre, opposite the municipal administration headquarters and complementing the existing services such as the Post Office, the crèche and the few shops that are available. The project activities include:

Construction of a coworking space – to be managed by the newly-created local development agency which consists of 4 municipalities (Vaux-sur-Sûre, Martelange, Léglise and Fauvillers). The space will include a digital open area, a meeting room, a shared office, a kitchenette and a facilitating team. It is available to all the creative entrepreneurs of the area.

Opening a tourist office - offering professional tourist services and promoting the local area. It will be located on the ground floor of the building, meaning it will be easily visible from the national highway. The tourist office includes a reception area and a display of the municipality's tourist sights and attractions. The latter is visible from the street outside, even outside opening hours. The infrastructure will be completed with an

informative digital display panel, an office and a storage space. An additional room is also planned for the storage and maintenance of rental bicycles. The services to be offered include:

- Secondment of municipal staff to provide information for tourists in Vaux-sur-Sûre. This is in addition to the full-time staff already working at the tourist information office in nearby Sibret and to strengthen the tourism offer in the area,
- The sale of local products,
- The reservation of "picnic baskets" as well as the delivery of "weekend baskets" to cottages or during walks,
- Walking pathways' sponsorship (marking, cleaning, repair, etc.),
- The promotion and maintenance of small heritage,
- The development of the "city bike" (in French: Commune vélo) brand and image.



Development of a culture hall - consisting of a large multi-purpose room equipped with sound and light. The space has been designed to accommodate temporary or permanent exhibitions and is also suitable for occasional meetings or larger events. Various initiatives are planned for the cultural space:

- The development of synergies between the various actors within the municipality's youth programme;
- Organizing a welcome day for new inhabitants;
- Creation of a LETS (Local Exchange Trade System);
- Promotion of local history and passing on the knowledge of the elders;
- Creation of a "gastronomic brotherhood";
- Set up a market / craft fair and "communal aperitif" - in collaboration with local craftsmen and producers;
- Development of environmental activities and awareness projects.

Main Results

The village centre is now offering more services and energy-efficient new buildings.

The Rurality Centre will be well-insulated, with good acoustics. A new heating system will be installed, adapted to the entire infrastructure and connected to the heating network that is under development in the centre of Vaux-sur-Sûre. Heat production will be improved by the installation of high-efficiency appliances and dual-flow mechanical ventilation systems.

The building is of contemporary design and creates a new architectural landmark for welcoming visitors to the town.

The project holders also aim to restructure the surrounding public space by closing the square and providing a covered space for events such as markets.

Key lessons

The Rurality Centre is an expression of citizens' needs. Its design and concept reflects the expectations and interests of the local inhabitants.

What constitutes a challenge is coordinating of the various strands of activity: income generation, tourism promotion, leisure and culture, etc. both in terms of facilitation and supervision. The infrastructure could certainly benefit from volunteer support - especially when it comes to keeping the place open for visitors - but the management of a volunteers team would require additional funding.

The project is carried forward through the collective efforts of the elected board and administrative staff. This fine-tuning between the policy level and technical staff is crucial to the success of such a major project.

Additional sources of information

www.vaux-sur-sure.be/commune/services-communaux/developpement-rural