

POLAND

Implementing local development strategies

Location
Gostycyn

Programming period
2007 – 2013

Axis / Priority
Axis 4 – LEADER

Measure
M413 - Quality of
life/diversification

Funding (EUR)
Total budget 40 769
EAFRD 32 615
National/regional 8 154

Project duration
2011 – 2015

Project promoter
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LEADER funding helped the economic development of a small Polish rural village building on the local community's rich history.

Summary

Before the start of the project most local people were not aware of their roots, the history of their place and especially the settlement's industrial past. A group of like-minded local actors decided to establish and develop a thematic village based on the area's industrial past, which has been shaped by the presence of underground brown coal mines.



Projects activities included a range of investments such as the establishment of an underground eco-museum, reconstructing drift mine elements, developing a nature trail and setting up a pottery house.

Results

The village became a successful tourism destination.

On a seasonal base around ten people are employed. These seasonal jobs may be converted into a minimum of two full-time posts.

The BUKO association has commenced economic activities and become a new tourist operator in Bory Tucholskie region.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ This project presents a classic example of how the LEADER approach can mobilise and enable a local community to use regional resources effectively.
- ❑ The implementation of this project highlighted that the initial analysis of the local resources and the potential of a region have to be carried out before the start of any project.

Context

The village Gostycyn in north-central Poland, had been confronted with socio-economic problems such as high unemployment and young people leaving the area and going abroad to look for work. The unfavourable situation of having no prospects for the future, were mainly caused by the lack of a strong secondary and/or tertiary sector, and the common belief that there was no potential in the historic sites located in the village. The latter, however, turned out to be the remains of unique underground brown coal mines - the only existing example in the North of Poland.

Objectives

The main objective of the project was to change the economic situation of the village by using its rich history and industrial heritage.

An important side-objective, which could be seen as a pre-condition for the project's fruitful implementation, was to make the locals believe in the potential of their village.

Activities

In 2008, a group of like-minded villagers established an NGO called BUKO. In 2009 an archaeological research was carried out on the mines located in the nearby forest. From 2009 to 2011, national and foreign archives were examined to find sufficient information about the past of the first German, and then Polish mines. The first activities, which were supported under EAFRD, were carried out in 2011. They aimed to increase the level of knowledge on old crafts, social economy, tourism and to develop the personal skills needed to prepare local actors to establish a "thematic village" (2011-2012).

In 2012, the development of a thematic village began with the establishment of an underground eco-museum. The numbers of tourists kept growing and further sites in the village were reconstructed and built using LEADER funding. Among others drift mine elements were reconstructed (2013), a nature trail was established (2013), a pottery house was rebuilt (2015), and a permanent village conference tent was set up (2015). Beyond relying on LEADER funds (10 small LEADER grants projects) the project strongly benefitted from the support and contribution provided by local partners and - thanks to achievement of their first profit- a winding house was renovated (2015).

Main results

The village has developed into a tourist destination.

Currently around ten people are employed to maintain the tourist attractions, which are temporary posts related to the tourism season, but may be converted into a minimum of two full-time posts.

The BUKO association itself has transformed from a group of active people into a social enterprise: The association has commenced economic activities and has become a new tourist operator in Bory Tucholskie region.

Key lessons

This project presents a classic example of how the LEADER approach can mobilise and enable a local community to use regional resources effectively.

The implementation of this project highlighted that the initial analysis of the local resources and the potential of a region have to be carried out before the start of any project.

Additional sources of information

n/a