

POLAND

Implementing Local Development Strategies

Location

Municipality of Karpacz

Programming period

2007-2013

Axis

Axis 4 – LEADER

Measures

413 - Quality of life/diversification
421 - Implementing cooperation projects
431 - Running the local action group, skills acquisition, animation

Funding

Total budget 458 000 EUR
EAFRD 198 050 EUR
National/regional 34 950 EUR
Private 200 000 EUR
Other 25 000 EUR

Project duration

2007-2015

Project promoter

LAG Partnerstwo Duchy Gór

Contact:

Dorota Goetz
d.goetz@duchgor.org
tel. +48/75 644 21 65

Website

www.konkursy.duchgor.org

EAFRD support contributed to the successful development of a local brand in a mountainous area in Lower Silesia, Poland. It enabled the local community to develop its unique cultural diversity into a successful, integrated touristic product.

Summary

Lack of cooperative spirit is a common challenge in rural areas, including Lower Silesia, Poland, where different cultures and identities co-exist, such as German, Czech. An area's distinct culture and tradition, and its range of niche products, however, provide an opportunity for economic development – if recognised and promoted as an integrated touristic product.



The Local Action Group fostered a spirit of cooperation between local actors and develop the local brand 'Karkonoska Marka Lokalna - Treasures of the Mountain Spirit'. Through this initiative a series of local products and services were certified and made available to the market. In addition a series of complementary services and activities such as developing a website, setting up an information centre, organising events and contests etc., helped to develop a fully integrated touristic product.

Results

The certification was awarded to 29 local products and services. It was acquired by mainly micro-enterprises or artists, though some local organisations and a few large businesses also received certification.

The successful branding and certification resulted in significant increases in the sales of local products and services.

Unquantifiable results include a change in locals' perception of regional identity in relation to the value of local traditions and products.

This change resulted in greater demand for education on the subject, and thus actively contributed to the creation of a cooperation culture among manufacturers, companies and other entities based on local brands and identity, which was not evident before. This cooperation effect was very visible at local and national events.

Lessons & Recommendations

- Organisation and individuals learned that moderation, patience and a lot of tact are required when dealing with different actors.
- It is possible to successfully combine the economic interests of individuals and companies, which may seem incompatible, and to teach others how to share the market as well as how to sell and make money from niche products.
- Local development groups can have confidence in local citizens and can act as a guide for many people in different environments.
- The perception that large companies and mass-produced products bring satisfaction is not always correct and can be challenged.
- The media is able to raise awareness and play a role in making authentic, locally produced products fashionable.

Context

A common challenge in rural areas is how to develop the willingness among local actors to cooperate with each other. This is also an important issue in Lower Silesia due to the difficult history of the region. Since World War II, Lower Silesia has been populated by several different nationalities, which brought together different traditions, e.g. German and Czech. The question of identity and its rebuilding in areas of resettlement remains a significant issue. As a consequence of such tensions micro-food manufacturers, handcraft producers, artists, small businesses and NGOs found it difficult to offer their services locally.

However, tourists were looking for authentic local products and craftwork that would offer an added value on mass produced goods. Products included low-processed quality food and ecological/traditional products, which were available in abundance in the region due to its distinct identity.

Objectives

The overarching goal of the project was to promote a range of high-quality products and services based on the heritage, traditions and authenticity of the region. Other specific objectives included to:

- Determine the traditions upon which it is possible to build the brand of the region;
- Promote and educate people about the value of local traditional products and the certification according to EU labels standards among local actors;
- Encourage cooperation among the local producers, makers of handcrafts, service providers and any other groups willing to work together; and
- Ensure that local products under the new brand find their way into the market and are adapted to its needs.

Activities

The first activity carried out by the LAG Partnership of the Mountain Spirit was the development of an inventory of resources available in the region in terms of tradition, local products, crafts and services.



Educational activities were organised to inform local governments, NGOs, businesses and residents about local products. Subjects covered included promoting the added value of cooperation, traditional labelling, promotion of such products. This was a critical step towards developing the criteria and principles for cooperation in order to establish the local brand.

After this first step, the certification of local products and services was obtained and the label 'Karkonoska Marka Lokalna - Treasures of the Mountain Spirit' was registered at the Patents Office.

In order to take advantage of modern communication tools to promote the new brand, the project supported the development of a mobile application for smart phones and a portal.

A shop, Gallery of Local Products, was opened in the tourist town of Karpacz. The shop was assigned by local authorities to operate a tourist Information centre for three years. It was also included in the European Network of Culinary Heritage of Lower Silesia.

A tourist information guide, *Guide for the counter*, was produced to showcase local products and offer useful information. Every year, the local products, places and services that are certified are included in the activities of the European Heritage Days.

In addition, a significant number of events and activities were organised around local products, such as the festival of the 'Mountain Spirit' (featuring happenings, hiking, workshops etc.), contests, educational games, competitions for schools and publications. Finally the Eco-museum and the Travelling Laboratory of Mountain Spirit were set up to bring people into contact with the brand.