

ROMANIA

Improve the
quality of life
in rural areas

Location

Prajesti, Romania

Programming period

2007 - 2013

Axis / Priority

Axis 4 – LEADER

Measure

M413-322 Village renewal and development, improving basic services for rural economy and population and upgrading of the rural heritage

Funding (EUR)

Total budget: 62 000
RDP support: 49 997
Other: 12 003

Project duration

2014 – 2015

Project promoter

Prajesti Commune

Contact

Iulian Burca
public@primaria-prajesti.ro
tel. +4 0234 222 240

Website

www.primaria-prajesti.ro

Additional information

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lqqlz2BSzKg

A small commune in Romania used EAFRD support to restore and promote its local landmark: a botanical garden, and design a training programme on environmental aspects for young farmers.

Summary

One of the main landmarks of the small community Prajesti, Romania, is a complex consisting of a botanical garden and a museum. Due to lack of funding, both the botanical garden and the museum had not been maintained since 1990 and suffered from continuous degradation.



Following an earlier restoration of the museum through national and regional financing, EAFRD support helped to refurbish the botanical garden and adapt it for training activities for local young farmers. Specifically, EAFRD support was used to restore the infrastructure and vegetation of the garden and link it with other similar establishments at national and international levels.

Additionally, the funding allowed to set up an educational programme for young farmers focused on environmental issues such as applied environmental protection, ecological storage of livestock waste, water consumption economy, drip irrigation in fields and greenhouses.

Results

The number of visitors to the complex increased by 25% throughout the first year following the finalisation of the restoration activities.

Bilateral agreements for exchanges with schools from 15 localities (towns and communes) in Bacau County were signed.

15 young farmers participated in the training programme and improved their knowledge and skills on a series of environmental issues.

The project helped build trust in the potential benefits of RDP funding in view of the 2014-2020 programming period.

New opportunities to promote local assets and boost the local economy arose.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The project coincided with the local election cycle and the transfer of power from one party to another. In this context, it successfully brought the community together by providing a common objective and stimulating shared and maintained the commitment for its achievement.
- ❑ The training programme for young farmers was designed to be as practical as possible, offering knowledge that could be immediately put into practice. The programme further served as a platform for networking, discussions and exchange of ideas, as well as to create opportunities to develop new projects and partnerships.

Context

The commune of Prajesti is located 15 km from Bacau, which is the capital of Bacau County and an important economic regional centre. According to a 2011 census, the commune has 1 879 inhabitants.

The most important landmarks and touristic attractions of Prajesti are an archaeological site, a Roman-Dacian necropolis dating back to 2-3 century AD, and a complex including a botanical garden and the 'Paul Taralunga' museum, established in 1971. Both the museum and the botanical garden have been functioning without being properly maintained since 1990. As a result, both suffered from continuous degradation.

To continue exploiting the educational and touristic value of the two sites, the community had to restore them. The museum was rehabilitated and modernised in 2012 with financial support from the Romanian government and the local budget. However, the botanical garden still needed to be restored.

Objectives

The project's specific aims were to:

- revitalise the existing plant species and spatial planning of the botanic garden to make suitable for inclusion in scientific and touristic networks; and
- provide training to local young farmers to develop their knowledge and skills related to applied environmental protection.

Activities

The **first objective** included the following activities:

1. Works on the rehabilitation and modernisation of the infrastructure, paths and walkways of the botanical garden, including:
 - Installation of 58 sprinklers for the underground irrigation in four areas of the garden;
 - Installation of 50 rustic wooden benches;
 - Installation of lighting posts and photovoltaic lighting lamps;
 - Installation of ecological toilets and showers;
 - Paving the garden paths and alleys with ecological grass pavers and placing bins;
 - Building three wooden huts for storing work tools.



2. Revitalisation of local and exotic species of plants (i.e. rare vanilla trees and magnolia species, almond trees, willows, oriental flowers, ginkgo biloba, black walnuts, etc.). The work was carried out by the botanical garden staff with the supported of local schools. These activities continued after the project completion.
3. Creating linkages between the museum and the botanical garden and other similar national and international establishments (i.e. museums, botanical gardens, educational institutions) and tourist agencies under the coordination of Prajesti Town Hall. Bilateral meetings were held with other similar organisations (public entities, schools, environment NGOs). Advertising and joint promotional activities were organised under larger umbrella events such as fairs, touristic circuits and scientific workshops. These activities also continued after the project completion.

The **second project objective** included the following activities:

- Preparation of the dossier and launching the call for the training provider;
- Selection the company to provide the training;
- Promotion of the course to potential attendants;
- Preparation of the training program (program design agenda and training materials) focused on: applied environmental protection, organisation of ecological platforms for storage of livestock waste, water consumption economy and installation of drip irrigation on the fields and greenhouses.
- Selection of 15 young farmers from the commune based on letters of interest.
- Implementation of a one-week training session.