

SLOVAKIA

Technical Assistance

Location

Slovakia

Programming period

2007 – 2013

Measure

Technical Assistance

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 10 073

EAFRD 7 555

National/Regional 2 518

Project duration

2013 – 2013

Project promoter

Slovakian NRN

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Information and promotion activities on direct marketing by the Slovak National Rural Network.

Summary

The National Rural Development Network (NRDN) focused on the issue of direct marketing based on its findings that Slovak farmers did not have any or very little knowledge about how to put the idea of direct marketing into practice respecting all the legislative conditions in Slovakia.



Besides the delivery of information, seminars were used as a kind of promotional event designed to motivate farmers to take up the idea of direct marketing. Mutual cooperation for exchanging experiences and networking among farmers at both, regional and national levels, was supported. Project implementation significantly contributed to improved communication to and amongst authorities at national level.

Results

In total, 353 participants from all over Slovakia took part in the seminars.

Introduced a set of rules essential for practicing direct marketing.

Increased number of farmers, who decided to apply for support from different rural development measures instead of solely passively receiving direct payments.

Distribution of the guide “Step by step to good hygiene practice”, in which the ways how to draft proper operational guidelines are explained, preparation of a draft guide on direct marketing, and distribution of information about direct marketing in different publications and via the NRDN website.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ☐ When planning events striving for addressing assumed needs of rural actors, it is important to conduct a survey for examining the interest of potential participants.
- ☐ It might also be advantageous to adapt the agenda of the seminars to meet the specific regional needs when delivering them in different locations.

Context

Although direct marketing could be found in Slovakia before Communism and some Slovakian farmers are used to selling their products directly to the final customer occasionally, the formal concept of using direct marketing as a way to gain additional income is not normal practice in Slovakia. One of the main reasons for this market being underdeveloped has been a lack of knowledge, especially around the legal framework that surrounds establishing a direct marketing business. This together with the fear of heavy administrative burdens are among the main reasons for the development of a grey economy in the farming sector/ the food chain, as many farmers have shied away from registering their direct marketing activities.

Having the comparison with the situation in other EU member states this circumstance was discovered and this project was brought forward, by amongst others the NRDN, to share experiences on how things were done elsewhere.

Objectives

The key objective of the project was to provide farmers with detailed information on opportunities for implementing direct marketing in Slovakia taking into account the legislative requirements. Key questions to be addressed were; how to finish their own products and how to sell them in the region. Other objectives were to improve communication with the legislator both locally and nationally and to stimulate and contribute to adapting the legislation to become more favourable to the farmers.

Activities

Seminars, in which especially the owners of small and family farms participated in, were held in seven regions in Slovakia from February to March 2013 at a variety of rural locations including a guesthouse, a sheep farm, a chalet and an eco-restaurant. Each seminar covered different topics such as what the current situation in direct marketing is in both Slovakia and in other Member States and gave examples of good practices. At the seminars an initiative was introduced to open up a dialogue between rural actors and the authorities to support entrepreneurship in rural areas which interested farmers were invited to join.

The NRDN was responsible for organising the seminars, designing the content and the engagement of experts

with relevant experience in each topic.

Well known and widely acknowledged experts from EKOTREND Slovakia – an association of organic farming - were invited to lecture.

Main results

- Transfer of information to target groups; in total 353 participants from all over Slovakia took part in the seminars,
- Introduction of a set of rules essential for practicing direct marketing,
- Presentation of examples of good practice by farmers, who had already started direct marketing initiatives,
- Increased number of registered farmers,
- Increased number of farmers, who decided to apply for support from different rural development measures instead of solely passively receiving direct payments,
- Distribution of the guide “Step by step to good hygiene practice”, in which the ways how to draft proper operational guidelines are explained,
- Preparation of a draft guide on direct marketing,
- Distribution of information about direct marketing in different publications and via the NRDN website,
- Recommendations and proposals for changes to the relevant national legislation, which would lead to clearer rules in direct marketing in Slovakia and to simplified framing conditions for the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas, delivered to Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Main lessons

Retrospectively, it was found, that when planning events striving for addressing assumed needs of rural actors, it is important to conduct a survey for examining the interest of potential participants, before planning seminars, as e.g. within this project participation in the seminar was oversubscribed. By using the findings of the survey it is possible to plan the number and frequency of seminars to meet the needs of the target audience of agricultural workers and food processors.

It might also be advantageous to adapt the agenda of the seminars to meet the specific regional needs when delivering them in different locations.