

Food Region Savo 2020

A food cooperation project to promote the North Savo region in eastern Finland as a culinary destination.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: North Savo, Finland

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P6 – Social inclusion & local development

Focus Area: Diversification & job creation

Measures: M16 – Cooperation

Funding:

Total budget	754 000.00 (EUR)
EAFRD	316 680.00 (EUR)
National/Regional	437 320.00 (EUR)
Private	80 771.67 (EUR)

Timeframe: 2015 to 2018

Project promoter: ProAgria Pohjois-Savo

Association / Rural Women's Advisory Organisation

Email: heli.sulola@maajakotitalousnaiset.fi

Website: tastesavo.fi

The North Savo food tourism website attracts around 50 visitors per week.

Three regional food related Master's theses were published during the project.

Lessons & Recommendations

Slow processes involved with gaining EU food authentication can risk being a disincentive for participation in authentication schemes.

Active support from the national authorities is really needed in order to promote this idea and get recognition for more authenticated food products from Finland.

Context

The vision of the Regional Council of North Savo (Union of North Savo municipalities) was to make the region an internationally well-known food destination by the year 2020. This project was designed to make that vision become reality and was designed on the basis of a needs analysis and interviews involving 60 food companies operating in the North Savo region.

Objectives

The first goal of the project was to strengthen the position of the food region locally, nationally and internationally. Another core goal was to strengthen the growth, know-how and cooperation of food companies within the region. The third element was the introduction of food tourism to North Savo. In order to better attract and meet the needs of

Summary

Based on the needs analysis and interviews with around 60 food companies operating in the North Savo region, this project was designed to establish North Savo as food destination by the year 2020. This cooperation project provided coordination between regional educational institutions. It implemented communication, marketing and networking activities, created a marketing brand and organised food events to promote the region as a culinary destination.

Project results

The "Satoa Food Festivals" in Kuopio attracted 10 000 visitors in 2016, 14 000 visitors in 2017 and 20 000 visitors in 2018. 32 restaurants took part in these three festivals and in total they sold about 135 000 food portions.

The project prepared a regional gastronomic book that enabled North Savo to secure ERG membership.



international food tourists, the project also aimed to build cooperation between companies in the food, tourism and creative sectors.

Activities

The project activities were divided into six work packages:

- Provide coordination between the regional education institutions and food network development, e.g. launching Master Thesis studies on the regional food topic.
- Create a website to provide all relevant information and to promote the regional food culture.
- Establish international networks and provide communication and marketing, e.g. preparing and submitting the application to become one of the European Regions of Gastronomy.
- Develop and market a food export brand, in close cooperation with local food businesses.
- Authenticate food products of the North Savo region. The EU has more than 1 000 authenticated food products, but only ten of them come from Finland.
- Organise food events and support food tourism development, e.g. by organising a series of "Satoa Food Festivals."

Main results

The "Satoa Food Festivals" in Kuopio attracted 10 000 visitors in 2016, 14 000 visitors in 2017 and 20 000 visitors in 2018. 32 restaurants took part in these three festivals and in total they sold about 135 000 food portions.

The project prepared a regional gastronomic book that also served as an application for membership of the Network of European Regions of Gastronomy (ERG), which has 12 regional members in 12 European countries). North Savo was accepted as a member, and ERG membership brought in new working methods such as 'food ambassadors'; new, responsible products, services and events; a young chef award contest; and a food gift event.

The project website is a central point for promoting food tourism in North Savo. It has had about 50 visitors per week.

Three regional food related Master's theses were published during the project, including: 'Suggestions for Developing International



Events in Finland', 'Describing Connections and Lack of Connections Between Branding, Country of Origin and the EU Quality Schemes: the Finnish and Italian Food Entrepreneurs' Perspectives'.

The project also helped to prepare a new food authentication application for the nationally well-known strawberries that are grown in the Suonenjoki municipality, which is one of the northernmost locations in the EU for commercial scale strawberry cultivation.

Key lessons

The project aims were ambitious and so was the project partnership, which consisted of 60 different organisations. Bringing together such a large partnership is not always easy. For example, while preparing the regional gastronomic book, the stakeholders raised many different views and ideas that had to be compromised in the final product.

Slow processes involved with gaining EU food authentication can risk being a disincentive for participation in authentication schemes.

Additional information:

maajakotitalousnaiset.fi/tietoa-meista/mkn-piirikeskukset/ita-suomen-maa--ja-kotitalousnaiset

 youtube.com/watch?v=znMgW2axx1Y



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