

LEADER has helped with the establishment of a Dental practice in Druva, Saldus municipality

LEADER is facilitating public-private cooperation in Latvia to fund new rural dental services.

EAFRD-funded projects

Country: Latvia

Location: Druva, Saldus municipality

Programming period: 2014-2020

RDP Priority: P6. Social inclusion and local development

Focus Area: Local development

Measures: M19. LEADER CLLD

Funding:	Total budget	104 000 (EUR)
	EAFRD	54 400 (EUR)
	National/regional	25 600 (EUR)
	Private/own	24 000 (EUR)

Timeframe: 09.2019 - 03.2021

Project promoter: Zilzobis Ltd.

Email: info@zilzobis.lv

Summary

Ms. Diana Rūtena, a qualified dentist, was looking for an opportunity to move back to Latvia after five years of working as a dentist abroad. Since there was no dental service available in her own hometown, she took the initiative and returned back to provide the solution. Her newly established company, Zilzobis Ltd, worked in partnership with the municipality of Saldus; combining private and LEADER (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale) funds to renovate a building and acquire all the necessary equipment and certifications to establish a dental practice in the village of Druva.

Project results

- The project has already created three full-time and two part-time jobs.
- Dental care and dental hygienist services are now available in the area. Demand exceeds capacity.
- The municipality arranged for the Zilzobis clinic to provide dental services free of charge for children on behalf of the National Health Service.

Lessons & Recommendations

- The speed of project implementation was affected by a low level of interest from the construction sector regarding public procurement opportunities.
- There is a lack of expertise, guidelines and legislation in Latvia concerning the design and construction of medical service facilities.



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Context

Ms. Daina Rūtena, a qualified dentist with 18 years of professional experience, was looking for an opportunity to move back to Latvia after five years of working as a dentist in Finland. On discovering that there was no dentist based in her own hometown, she took the initiative and returned home to set up a dentistry service in the local area.

The municipality of Saldus had been looking for different ways to ensure dental care services for its inhabitants as well as to create new full time employment positions. Previously, those in need of dental care needed to travel out of town, even as far as the capital city of Riga. It was also important to provide dental care to local secondary school pupils.

In this context, the Zilzobis Ltd. dental practice was established in the village Druva in partnership with the Saldus municipality: the first cooperation project implemented by a municipality and an entrepreneur in the territory of the Saldus District Development Association Local Action Group.

Objectives

The aim of this LEADER project was to provide high quality dental services for residents of the Saldus region by equipping dental office premises and creating full-time jobs.

Activities

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) funds from the Latvian Rural Development Programme (RDP) were used for:

- Developing a renovation project for the building that was to be used as a dentistry, in line with certification standards for healthcare service premises.
- Renovating the building according to high standards, including the heating and ventilation systems, which required dust and pollen filters to be fitted.
- Purchasing high-quality healthcare equipment and furniture, including a dental chair (complete with compressed air, vacuum sponge, sterilising equipment), an autoclave, an instrument washing machine, etc.

- Supporting the process of registering Zilzobis Ltd. as a healthcare service provider and obtaining the registration certificate.
- Opening the dental office in the spring of 2021 and starting to offer services.

In addition to this, Ms. Rūtena's company, Zilzobis Ltd., used its own funds to finance:

- The installation of an X-ray phosphor plate system.
- The purchase of a state-of-the-art endomotor with built-in apex locator (a device to treat the root canals of teeth).
- The purchase of dental hygienist equipment and instruments, such as a piezoelectric ultrasonic instrument.
- The purchase and installation of a modern patient record system and financial system.



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Main results

- The project was initially expected to create two new full-time jobs, but the volume of work and level of need for dental services in the local area has led to three full-time and two part-time jobs being created.



- Dental care and dental hygienist services are now available in the area, but, with a six-month waiting list for dental treatment and a two-month waiting list for hygienist services, demand clearly exceeds capacity at this stage – all of which proves the importance of such services and the value of this investment.
- The municipality succeeded in arranging a contract between The Zilzobis dental clinic and the National Health Service to provide State healthcare services free of charge for children up to the age of 18.
- The project enabled a partnership between an entrepreneur and a municipality, which is encouraging for future projects and for other stakeholders.
- The Zilzobis dental clinic is currently exploring the potential of other new cooperative actions with Latvia's Ministry of Health, to further strengthen healthcare availability in rural areas.

Key lessons

- The LEADER funds enabled this much-needed project to be implemented faster than would otherwise have been possible. However, the speed of implementation was affected by a low level of interest from the construction sector regarding public procurement opportunities (in this case, the renovation of the building). This is due to the fact that construction services are currently in high demand in Latvia.
- Another issue that the project team encountered was a lack of expertise amongst architects, coupled with a lack of guidelines and legislation in Latvia generally, concerning the design and construction of medical service facilities. The dentists themselves were obliged to work very closely with the architects to oversee and steer the process, but this knowledge gap is something that could be addressed across the sector to create new niche opportunities.

Additional information:

<https://sald.us/druvas-zobarstnieciba>



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