

Establishing an innovative and professional cleaning company in rural Romania

13 new jobs for rural women from vulnerable groups created by LEADER support for non-agricultural businesses in farming communities.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Mures County, Romania

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P6. Social inclusion and local development

Focus Area: 6A. Diversification & job creation

Measures: M19. LEADER CLLD

Funding:

Total budget	20 000 (EUR)
RDP support	18 000 (EUR)
Private/own	2000 (EUR)

Timeframe: 11/06/2019 - 18/10/2021

Project promoter: Work&Shine SRL

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Summary

LEADER can play a crucial role in nurturing non-agricultural businesses within farming communities by providing financial resources and promoting sustainable practices. Such support helps boost rural economies and ensures a more integrated approach to rural development that can benefit all stakeholders involved.

LEADER funds in Romania helped establish a cleaning services company by co-financing the cost of equipment and materials needed to carry out the cleaning services, as well as a campaign to promote the services.

The beneficiary purchased all the necessary equipment (vacuum cleaners, brushes, washing and mopping equipment, cloths, etc.), IT equipment for business management, a solar panel for charging the equipment and leaflets for business promotion.

This LEADER project developed the concept of outsourcing cleaning activities for homes and business premises in a rural region. New employment opportunities were created for women from vulnerable groups where education and skills gaps can limit job prospects.

Project results

This LEADER project:

- created 13 new rural jobs. The start-up employees are aged up to 40, all female employees, including women from vulnerable groups.
- trained staff in different organisational skills, teamwork, interaction with other people, different work techniques.
- secured an average of 10 monthly subscriptions for cleaning, such as at different companies, medical offices, public administrations, schools, factories, retailers, guesthouses, hotels, etc.
- developed innovative cleaning solutions and services using specialised equipment for upholstery, mattresses, carpets, different types of flooring, etc.

Key lessons and recommendations

- LEADER can play a crucial role in nurturing non-agricultural businesses within farming communities by providing financial resources and promoting sustainable practices. Such support reinforces rural economies and ensures a more integrated approach to rural development.
- A client network grew from word-of-mouth recommendations.





- The success of this business can be a source of inspiration for young rural entrepreneurs.
- The project's management appreciated that women would put greater emphasis on details, which, in the cleaning business, is very important, leading to the fulfilment of tasks.

Context

The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) extends beyond traditional agricultural support and provides funds supporting a variety of benefits to non-agricultural businesses in farming communities. By promoting rural development initiatives, CAP facilitates the diversification of local economies, encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation.

Funding within the CAP, such as grants and financial instruments, can be allocated to support sectors such as tourism, food processing, renewable energy, and rural services. This financial backing helps create job opportunities and stimulates economic growth in rural Europe.

By fostering collaboration between farmers and non-agricultural enterprises through cooperative projects or networks, CAP funds also strengthen community ties while enhancing overall resilience against economic fluctuations.

Small towns and rural areas can face gaps in specialised labour forces, such as a lack of modern cleaning services. Demand for domestic services exists in rural hospitality sectors as well as in company and farm offices, medical centres, or public institutions such as town halls or schools.

In Romania, Andrada Felegean and her husband returned to their home area and applied for LEADER support to help them start a new family business called Work&Shine, which provides professional modern rural cleaning services.

The project was innovative because no companies offered such cleaning services in the region, and many businesses did not use a cleaning company.

Objectives

This LEADER project aimed to develop the concept of outsourcing cleaning activity for homes and business premises in a rural region. New employment opportunities would be created, especially for women from vulnerable groups where education and skills gaps can limit job prospects. Specific objectives included:

- providing new rural services.
- helping young people address depopulation pressures by increasing the number of jobs in the LAG Dealurile Tarnavelor area.
- using specialised equipment to reduce energy consumption.

Activities

Project activities for this business start-up involved:

- obtaining business permissions with help from the Vinători Village/Mureş County municipality.
- purchasing the necessary equipment for cleaning services (vacuum cleaners, brushes, washing and mopping equipment, staff uniforms, IT equipment for business management, a solar panel for charging the equipment and leaflets for business promotion).
- recruiting and training staff in new working techniques responding to client requests.
- promoting the business through a [website](#), as well as printed leaflets and a Facebook page.
- securing subscription contracts with clients to provide cleaning services.
- continuing to invest in growing the company.

Main results

This LEADER project:

- created 13 new rural jobs. The exclusively female employees of this start-up are aged up to 40, and included women from vulnerable groups who were eager to consolidate their knowledge regarding the use of new cleaning techniques because a lack of specialised studies limited employment opportunities.
- trained staff in different organisational skills, teamwork, interaction with other people, different work techniques. They helped them to support their families financially and build a career within a continuously developing firm.

- secured an average of 10 monthly subscriptions for cleaning, such as at different companies, medical offices, public administrations, schools, factories, retailers, guesthouses, hotels, etc.

As a result, the company increased its turnover and gained satisfied customers, becoming known for the quality of its services.

Innovative cleaning solutions and services were developed using specialised equipment for upholstery, mattresses, carpets, different types of flooring, etc.

Key lessons and recommendations

- LEADER can play a crucial role in nurturing non-agricultural businesses within farming communities by providing financial resources and promoting sustainable practices. Such support reinforces rural economies and ensures a more integrated approach to rural development.
- The beneficiary, Work&Shine, applied as a start-up with an innovative business idea that was successful from the very beginning because there was a market with high demand for the services it offered.
- A client network grew from word-of-mouth recommendations, and the company has secured a regular customer list.
- Andrada and her family chose to live in the countryside, and the success of their business, which supports the development of their area, can be a source of inspiration for young rural entrepreneurs.
- The beneficiary chose to have only female employees because the management appreciated that women would put greater emphasis on details, and in the cleaning business this is very important, leading to the full and efficient fulfilment of tasks.



Quote

“For us, for our family, it was a big step to give up our corporate jobs and return to our native village to develop a local business. We took a risk, and we are happy that our business idea is successful in the area. To young people who want to stay or return to the countryside, we can tell them, from our experience, to have courage. There are many motivating financing opportunities. It is important to have a well-defined business idea, a mini strategy put on paper and to ask for the support of people in the area, like the Local Action Group, who can help them put their idea into practice”.

Andrada Felegan, manager Work&Shine SRL

Additional information:

Project website:

www.tarnava-mare.ro

Project on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/workandshine>