

# Added Value of Networking



## *Promotion of the Local Product on the Local Market*

Basic information	
NRN:	Latvia
Theme:	Good practice
Coordinator:	NSU, Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre (LLKC)
Partners:	Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre (LLKC), Municipality Authorities, Local Institutions, local food producers
Beneficiaries:	Municipality Authorities, Local Institutions, local food producers, local people
Resources:	n.a.
Period:	2012 – still on-going
Main element of networking:	Support for cooperation and joint actions
Other elements of networking:	Effective stakeholder engagement

### Background

In recent years the interest in shortened market channels for food – short supply chains – has grown. Increasing demand for high quality food products with an emphasis on freshness, flavour, nutritional value and safety, and purchasing directly from the producer has motivated people to choose short market channels. In addition, researchers have proved that the healthiest foods are those made from raw materials obtained close to where people live and the use of seasonal foods promotes healthier eating. Local food is often rooted in local culture, knowledge and social relationships. Food often reflects the nation's traditions and collective memory, becoming part of national identity and heritage. Relationships with local culture are also reflected in the production of food which uses local technologies and related knowledge & skills and contributes towards the identity of an area. So it is very important to support local food producers to add value to their products and ensure local consumers can access fresh, high quality food.

### Main activities

The main activities within this initiative were:

1. Identification of the current situation - gathering information about the practices used by local governments (survey), identification of good practice, product group identification,

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identification of obstacles;

2. Selection of pilot areas or pilot institutions based on the information gathered;
3. Creation and training of the mentors task force;
4. Creation of farmers groups and identification of local leadership, mentoring;
5. Meeting the local food producers;

Providing information, consultations and organisational support for creating short food supply chains for local products in public procurement.

## Main results/benefits

The social aspect of local food is very important. Local food production and consumption provides jobs for local people and healthy food for consumers. The main beneficiaries, initiative owners and decision-makers are local people.

Local food production also helps maintain areas of environmental or ecological value, as it is produced under sustainable management, including organic farming methods. Developing short supply chains brings consumers closer to the point of production, reducing CO2 emissions and energy inputs. Foods that are traveling less have a greater degree of separation from energy consumption needs. Food, especially vegetables and fruits, is better quality if it is not carried for many hundreds and even thousands of kilometres. The flavour and quality of local food is much better because it is fresh and is not chemically treated and stored.

Local food also provides an economic contribution to rural, agricultural and local development within an area. The reduction of intermediaries or their absence in local food systems provides a larger market price share to the manufacturer and, consequently, a higher income for the rural region.

Nowadays, when the fight for food resources - agricultural land, water, technology ownership and food is getting worse, on a national level it is important to ensure national food self-sufficiency and food sovereignty. Increases in local food production reduce dependence on other countries and transnational food corporations, whose methods of production cannot be affected nationally.

## Success factors

The success of this project was based on the involvement and integration of local food producers, Municipality Authorities and local institutions.

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Networking supported participants to develop new contacts for further cooperation and aided communication about the support and measures provided by the NRN.

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## Contribution of the NSU

The NSU organised and co-financed all the above mentioned activities.

## Contribution of the partners

The Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre (LLKC) provided the NSU with specialists to help deliver the activities and the Municipality Authorities provided key information.

## Additional information

Currently only two municipalities are involved in this project but hopefully it will spread across the country.

## Pictures

n.a.

## Last Update

June 2013