

AUSTRIA

Local development

Location

Weinviertel-Manhartsberg

Programming period

2014 - 2020

Priority

P5 – Social inclusion & local development

Measure

M19 – CLLD / LEADER

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 14 180
EAFRD 7 940.8
National/regional 1985.2
Private 4 254

Project duration

2016 – 2017

Project promoter

Verein Naturforum
westliches Weinviertel

Contact

NaturforumWestlichesWeinviertel@gmx.at

Website

n/a

A LEADER project that promoted the use of the local natural heritage as a lever for sustainable local development.

Summary

The project aimed to raise awareness about the extraordinary fauna and flora of the region and disseminate information to the region in Lower Austria, Vienna and the Czech Republic. As a first step, educational activities targeted the local population of Schmidatal and Retzerland. The second main step of the project was to develop a touristic offer based on the natural resources of the area with the contribution of the local communities.



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The community of Sitzendorf developed a competence centre for natural resources and biodiversity and through the marketing of tourism, nature lovers from Austria as and the Czech Republic were made aware of the attractions of the region.

Results

The project led to the establishment of the association Naturforum western Weinviertel.

Networking brought together all key players in the region.

A number of cooperation partners were identified to support this initiative.

The support and commitment of targeted communities and partners was engaged.

A concept was developed for a series of educational activities to be supported including the creation of a thematic trail, the organisation of educational events and the carrying out of learning case studies.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Networking with other local actors, regional and state authorities as well as conservation organisations is a particularly demanding task.
- ❑ Due to the extensive involvement of numerous interest groups, it was always challenging to adhere to a tight schedule. The implementation of future projects could certainly be accelerated through fixed schedules.

Context

The European Nature Reserve of western Weinviertel was created in 2008 with the aim of preserving the most valuable European species and habitats that are important for all Europeans and future generations. The preservation of such habitats and species depends upon the harmonious coexistence of human beings and nature.

However, the local population has hardly been offered the opportunity to receive relevant information, despite the interest they have shown. Knowledge about the regional biodiversity, habitats and their endangerment is scarce among the local and regional population. Also the public has been repeatedly exposed to misconceptions that has them to consider as pests endangered species such as the ground squirrel, the hamster and certain birds of prey. The personal experiences and findings of the project team in the region led them to develop a comprehensive education project.

Objectives

The overarching objective of this project was to raise awareness among the population in the area of the natural resources and biodiversity in the western Weinviertel.

Activities

Activities supported by the project included:

- Developing a marketing plan to promote the natural resources of the area;
- Preparing an inventory and developing of a detailed educational concept for the communities of Sitzendorf, Straning-Grafenberg, Eggenburg, Röschitz and Zellerndorf;
- Creating a concept to realise a series of educational events for the community of Sitzendorf and the surrounding area; and
- Disseminating information about ongoing actions to preserve the environment and the commitments towards protecting natural monuments.

Main results

- The establishment of the association Naturforum western Weinviertel, which receives support from various sponsors.
- A network bringing together all key players in the region.
- Identification of a number of cooperation partners to support this initiative.
- Engagement of targeted communities and main partners;
- A concept for a series of educational activities to be supported including the creation of a thematic trail, the organisation of educational events and the carrying out of learning case studies.

Key lessons and recommendations

One of the most positive experiences during the implementation of the project was the good cooperation between various interest groups, including the project team, the project partners and participating municipalities.

Networking with other local actors, regional and state authorities and conservation organisations was a particularly demanding task. The project team was surprised by the high level of interest in the environment of the region already existing among all involved stakeholders, including the local LEADER action group.

Due to the extensive involvement of numerous interest groups, it was always challenging to adhere to a tight schedule. The implementation of future projects could certainly be accelerated through fixed schedules.

Additional sources of information

www.facebook.com/NaturforumWestlichesWeinviertel