

POLAND

Diversification & job creation

Location

Kujawsko-Pomorskie region

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P6 - Social inclusion and local development

Measure

M20 – Technical Assistance

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 7100

EAFRD 4518

National/Regional 2582

Project duration

Feb 2016 – Sep 2016

Project promoter

Stowarzyszenie Kujawsko-Pomorski Ośrodek Wsparcia Inicjatyw Pozarządowych TŁOK

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EU funding helped create and promote a new cultural and culinary brand for the attractive Vistula valley in Poland, helping the region to entice tourists.

Summary

The Vistula valley in the Kujawsko-Pomorkie region, Poland, is a beautiful region with a rich cultural and culinary heritage. A new project funded by the EAFRD was set-up to promote the food and cultural attractions in the area. The result was a package of thoroughly researched offers for tourists, a new cultural and foodie brand and a more business-like approach to attracting tourists.



Results

The launch of a new network that promotes food and culture tourism in the Vistula valley and the creation of 6 food-themed tourist packages including trips to the Vistula Valley and the Dobrzynska area.

Around 100 people took part in workshops, study trips and activities aiming to share knowledge, improve skills, and develop new approaches in the tourism industry.

Tourism in the region is now well developed involving different people in suggesting innovative and diversified offers.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Extensive and accurate analysis of the tourism potential in the area is a necessary prerequisite.
- ❑ Study visits to Alsace, Normandy and Catalonia inspired good practices.
- ❑ the development of a local brand clearly identifying the culture and identity of area is a successful strategy.
- ❑ It is important to involve experts in the tourism industry who can create an offer that matches demand.
- ❑ Extensive promotion of the initiative from very early stages helped mobilise a large number of stakeholders.

Context

The Valley of the Lower Vistula in the region of the Kujawsko – Pomorskie, Poland, has a unique potential due to its natural beauty; rich cultural diversity, including the folklore and culture of the ancient inhabitants of the region called Mennonites; a large range of local products; architectural richness; and a large variety of cultural and gastronomic events.

Study tours in 2013-2014 in Alsace, Normandy and Catalonia, helped the project promoters get inspired to exploit the valley's potential for development in terms of tourism and culinary heritage.

A comparative analysis among others found that the regional potential was not reflected in the products offered and their successful commercialisation; tourist operators prefer to offer primarily outbound destinations and do not recommend services in the area; cities in the Kujawsko – Pomorskie region, with the exception of Torun are mostly considered as places for a “one-day visit”; local products are consumed mostly in the informal economy, with a very small impact on farmers’ income; and traditional dishes presented at competitions were often made from raw materials purchased in supermarkets, which is in contradiction with the idea of local products.

Objectives

The project aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- creation of a coherent tourist offer, based on the cultural, natural and culinary potential of the Vistula Valley and capitalising on the attractiveness of towns located along of the Vistula River;
- motivation and integration of local stakeholders to participate in the creation of tourist packages;
- creation of a local brand based on local products, which will be part of the tourist offer;
- stimulation of jobs in the tourism and processing industries.

Activities

The project activities were divided into three steps:

- I. The preparatory phase from February to April 2016 included preliminary identification of the regional potential, organisation of information meetings, selection and recruitment of beneficiaries in the Dobrzyńskie and Kociew areas;

- II. The implementation phase from May to July 2016 consisted of the organisation of a series of four one-day thematic workshops entitled "Four Seasons in the Vistula Valley ". This included:

- Working groups of 12-15 people led by thematic experts, focusing on the development of tourism and culinary heritage;
- Identification of needs and services to develop different forms of touristic attractions;
- Selection of services and products to offer as tourist packages.



- III. The final phase from July to September 2016 included the following activities:

- Organisation by project experts of two pilot trips in the areas of Dobrzyńska and Lower Vistula to discover the natural and culinary heritage;
- Organisation of two 2-day study visits "Exploring of the Taste of Dobrzyńska area" and "Exploring of the taste of the Vistula River Valley - between the bridges". The 2 study visits involved representatives from the tourism industry, journalists and bloggers, who had the chance to discover and verify on the ground the tourist offer in the two target areas;
- Presentation of tourist packages and products from the Vistula Valley at the open-air event "Niech Cię Zakole". During the event, 10 prizes were awarded, including the “Culinary Lancer” and “Lancer of the Rural Tourism and local culinary brand - Niech Cię Zakole”;
- The tourist offer has been promoted through interviews in local media, Facebook and through the NRN, K-POT, Active village and project partners’ websites.

Main Results

The creation of the first tourist product network that promotes the rural valley of the Vistula in Kujawsko – Pomorskie region from the tourist and culinary perspective;

10 different stakeholders were directly involved. One was nominated for the “Culinary Lancer” and “Lancer of the Rural Tourism and local culinary brand - "Niech Cię Zakole” prize;

Development of 6 tourist packages, such as trips to the Vistula Valley and the Dobrzynska area, and each of them with a specific name:

1. "Hospitality at 6 Dobrzynskie area' inhabitants“, a two-day visit;
2. “Hiking in the Lower Vistula river area”, a two-day trip and participation in cultural and culinary events;
3. “Exploring the taste of the Vistula River Valley - between the bridges” a 1-day trip to discover regional food, with different accommodation options;
4. "Tour of the Mennonite's flavours”, an excursion to the four villages of Gruczno, Chrystkowo, Topolno and Łuszkowo on foot, by bike or car;
5. With “Gzina exploring Vistula river valley”, an agro-tourist package;
6. "Between Kociewe village and coniferous forests", a trip to discover the natural heritage of the Kociewe area.

Participation of approximately 100 people in workshops, study trips and project activities dedicated to knowledge sharing, skills improvement, development of new approaches to the tourism industry;

Participation of 14 municipalities of the Vistula Valley;

Thanks to the project, it is possible to observe a clear, positive change in terms of the quality of the offered services. The tourist offer is now developed in an integrated manner, involving different people in suggesting innovative and diversified offers.

Key lessons

The success of the project depended on the following factors:

- the analysis of the potential of the area and the consequent assessments were made in a very accurate way;
- the development of a local brand clearly identifying an homogeneous area in terms of culture and local identity,
- the right identification of the project participants;
- the attractiveness of the local brand;
- the involvement of experts who conducted commercial activities in the tourism industry, and who helped create a real offer matching market demand;
- the use of good practices mainly related to the results of the study visits to Alsace, Normandy and Catalonia, where the tourist offer is built upon capitalising on the potential of local products;
- the extensive promotion of the initiative from very early stages became an important factor in mobilising a large number of stakeholders;
- the integration and sense of identification of participants with the local brand and organisation of the events around it.

The end of the project does not mean the end of the process. For example, the local products' brand requires the development of a wider brand strategy and coordination among project partners.

Additional sources of information

<http://biokurier.pl/aktualnosci/3700-odkrywamy-kulture-i-kulinaria-ziemii-dobrzynskiej>

<http://grazynagotuje.pl/poznawalam-smaki-doliny-wisly-miedzy-mostami/>

www.krolestwogarow.pl/2016/09/miedzy-mostami.html