

SLOVAKIA

Local development

Location

Karst National Park

Programming period

2007 – 2013

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local
development

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 23 490
EAFRD 18 792
National/Regional 4 698

Project duration

2014 – 2015

Project promoter

Civic Association ALMA

Contact

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Website

www.karsticum.sk

A Slovakian cultural centre used EAFRD support to develop and promote a regional brand to improve sales of local artisanal products.

Summary

The cultural centre ALMA in the Slovak region of the Karst National Park wanted to promote local artisanal foods and handicrafts through a regional brand. The creation of the Karsticum brand aimed to help producers increase their sales, preserve traditions and develop tourism.



The cultural centre ALMA used EAFRD support to establish a process for awarding the brand to applicants and for promoting it through events such as farmers' markets and promotional material. Workshops were organised to train assessment panels to award the brand.

Results

The Karsticum brand has helped improve sales of artisanal products from the region.

The brand is already used by 21 producers and service providers, with 48 products or services recognised.

The brand has become widely recognised in the area and more artisanal producers have applied to use it.

The project has enabled producers to exchange knowledge about their experiences in using the brand, as well as about their production methods.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ It is a long term process to enable people to understand the principles the branding. The project was a good start, however all activities carried out during the project duration have to be repeated continuously until the brand will have the expected impact on tourism and the local economy.

Context

Civic Association ALMA – Centre of Renewal, Preservation of Folk Architecture and Traditions of the Gemer Region is a member of LAG KRAS. LAG KRAS operates in the region of the Slovak Carst National Park. The Park has several attractions including the famous caves which are listed as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage.

The ALMA-Centre focuses on tourism development based on the local resources. Local farmers, craftsmen and tourism service providers who are active in the Slovak Carst region were not coordinated, and they were able to sell only small portion of their production. Many of them did not even have basic knowledge about running small businesses. In 2013 – 2014, the ALMA-Centre created the regional brand "Regional product KARSTICUM®" and it was necessary to manage the brand's promotion in the region and its awarding to interested applicants.

Objectives

The main objective of this project was to promote the regional brand "Regional product KARSTICUM®" as a supporting marketing tool. The project would in this way contribute to increase sales of local products and increase the competitiveness of local businesses in the region.

Activities

Awarding the regional brand "Regional product KARSTICUM®"

The first step was to prepare the necessary documents for awarding the certification, e.g., setting the criteria, developing the application forms, etc. In August 2014, the first call for applying for the regional brand was launched. After collecting the applications the LAG organised a workshop where the members of certification commission were trained on how to handle the process of awarding the brand. At the same time they organized a one-week open exhibition of local products.

In September 2014, 21 applicants out of 22 who applied, were awarded the brand and started to use it. A special ceremony was organized to promote the awarded products.

Promoting the regional brand "Regional product KARSTICUM®"

In order to promote the brand, farmer markets events were organised on a monthly basis. All events included a varied program of cultural activities and attractions.

Different promotional materials and merchandise products were produced and distributed to promote the brand. These included banners, 1000 leaflets, 15 000 merchandise products (stickers, packaging material etc.). All information was also published on the brand's website.

Main results

The concept of the branding was completed and verified. People now recognise the brand and new local farmers and craftsmen apply for it.

During the implementation of the project, 21 producers and service providers offering altogether 48 products and services were awarded the brand. The list of all awarded participants in the brand is published on the brand's website.

Two producers started their own small businesses to be able to produce more products as they are now able to sell not only in events organized by ALMA Centre, but directly to customers.

Producers and service providers started to communicate and exchange their experience and knowledge in using the brand. At the same time, they control each other in order to maintain the high quality of all products.

Key lessons

It is a long term process to enable people to understand the principles of regional branding. The project was a good start, however all activities carried out during the project duration have to be repeated continuously until the brand will have the expected impact on tourism and the local economy in the region.

Additional sources of information

www.krasturistgis.sk