

# Short Supply Chains in the Heart of Slovenia

Accessing markets through co-operation



## Summary

Development of distribution systems for producers, combined with a direct ‘fork-to-farm’ approach, has improved the market access and local food awareness in Slovenia.



### Type of project

Short Supply Chains  
Organic Farming

### Priority/focus area, measure

All

### Theme

Competitive Agriculture

### Location

Litija, Slovenia

### Funding

Various sources including EAFRD

### Type of beneficiary

LAGs

### Duration

2012 - 2014

### Website

<http://www.razvoj.si/las/?lng=en&>

## Description

### Official project title

Short Supply Chain Development in Slovenia



### Context and needs

Slovenia Local Action Groups (LAGs) have conducted a number of projects looking to organise producers and suppliers of agricultural products, based on the success in developing links between producers, and in consideration of the need to improve awareness and increase market access:

- The co-ordination and organisation of local markets;
- Networking and education of local producers and suppliers;
- Development of short supply chains;
- Cooperation with school kitchens and other public institutions.

### Objectives

In seeking a next step in development, a number of initiatives were highlighted to develop improved distribution and market access. Local markets had received LEADER funding to develop and build market stalls, and further market measures were investigated.

One areas which was considered as having potential for development was in linking education with local food supply in regard to public kitchen, but putting the needs of the consumer first.

A secondary project was in considering ecological production, and the need for co-ordinated distribution, so a number of objectives were identified in this areas:

- To increase the diversity of supply of ecological farms;
- To increase the share of ecological farms in the area;
- To increase the volume of production of ecological vegetables for the market;
- To connect and organize local growers of ecological vegetables;
- To increase storage and refrigeration facilities in the area.

## Activities

In developing consumer awareness and food self-sufficiency, a number of projects were initiated by the Development Centre of the Heart of Slovenia, founded in 2000 as a means to develop entrepreneurship in the centre of Slovenia, and supported by the LAG.

The Rural Developmental Cooperative Jarina z.o.o., which started operating in the autumn of 2004 was one of 10 operating developmental projects in Slovenia. Its purpose was professional education, developing quality products and stable marketing channels, connecting producers, and creating job positions in the countryside. With its activities in the area of 7 partner municipalities east of Ljubljana and 3 municipalities of Zasavje, Jarina encouraged development of entrepreneurial thinking in the countryside and helped potential entrepreneurs in the development of their business idea and in preparation for operation.

One project sought to co-operate more closely with local public kitchens, and the approach taken was in realising that many school and kindergarten kitchens need education, in tandem with education that can be given to the children attending these institutions. There was also a need, however, to consider a different approach, and that was in considering the needs of these consumers first. So, rather than adopting a 'farm-to-fork' approach to manage the supply chain, consumer needs were put first, and a 'fork-to farm' approach was adopted.

The connection with the schools was aimed at providing local food and drink suppliers with a market, but combined with an educational approach, so a consortium of schools and kindergartens was formally established in the Heart of Slovenia, and the connection helped provide lessons on various topics. Jarina is financially supported by the Heart of Slovenia municipalities in connecting with the schools, organising learning programmes for pre-school and school children, with an emphasis on the preservation of cultural heritage and the revival of 'forgotten' vocations such as beekeeping, the skills of the blacksmith and shepherding.

One of the most successful projects was the Ecological Collection and Distribution Centre for Vegetables, which was designed and implemented by organic farmers in the area of LAG Heart.

The Ecological Farmers Association conducted animation workshops and professional education for growers of ecological vegetables. The Ecological Farmers Association also presented itself at the Nature and Health Fair and also created a brochure of member activities. Realising the need for a greater distribution requirement, the association set up a collection and distribution Centre for ecological vegetables, which included the construction of a cold store, and the purchase of purchase of equipment for packing and distributing vegetables.

The project involved stakeholders and cooperation. The growers were involved in animation workshops and professional education, while one ecological farm built the collection and distribution centre for ecological vegetables on their own property. All of the members of the association were then involved in the promotion of the distribution centre

## Results

The results of the connection that Jarina has made with public institutions is that there is now a formally established consortium of 15 schools and kindergartens, and a learning programme established with them. Lessons are provided on entrepreneurship, tourism, agriculture and local self-sufficiency. The priority is promoting and developing local self-sufficiency under the

‘Heart of Slovenia’ brand. This has increase the profile of local food producers and agricultural businesses, and has connected with over 100 local food providers and established a network of suppliers and consumers.

The Ecological Farmers’ Association has completed the establishment of the distribution centre, and has established a chain of suppliers for the collection and distribution of ecological vegetables.

## **Lessons**

The supply of food to kindergartens and schools has not always been easy, due to the nature of public procurement regulations, and the focus on price in the requirement criteria, which may not always be easy for local producers. It is also important to note that the establishment of regular and reciprocal communication between stakeholders in the local food supply chain takes time (and a great deal of experience) to establish.

The experience has made farmers understand that where they work together they can promote themselves better and raise awareness, although in the distribution centre, lessons learned have included the understanding that a seasonal offer does not allow year round operation, and that an increased availability and variety may be required to look to commercial supply.

## **Contact**

Local Action Group ‘The Heart of Slovenia’

E-mail: [las@razvoj.si](mailto:las@razvoj.si)