

ROMANIA

Local development

Location

Tulcea County

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

Measure

M19 – LEADER/CLLD

Funding

Total budget 139 454 (EUR)
RDP contr. 125 577 (EUR)
Private / own 13 877 (EUR)

Project duration

2020 to 2022

Project promoter

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A group of small farmers used CAP funds to formalise their cooperation and undertake joint investments that would improve their production capacity in a cost-effective way.

Summary

A group of six farmers in Cerna, Tulcea County, set up an association to work together formally to increase the viability and profitability of their farms through shared ownership of agricultural machinery and joint purchasing / contracting arrangements.



Source of photos: www.galmuntimacinelu.ro/

Project Results

The group are currently discussing the possibility of transforming their association into an agricultural cooperative, to expand the scope of their work to incorporate the joint processing and collective marketing of agricultural products.

Sharing the success of this agri-food association via a locally targeted communications campaign promotes the shift towards cooperative working practices and constitutes a useful step towards embedding a culture of partnership working in the LAG area.

Lessons & Recommendations

- Inspirational 'role model' projects can pioneer and demonstrate possibilities of collective approaches to developing rural Europe.
- LEADER funding procedures can provide flexible support to beneficiaries.



Source of photos: www.galmuntimacinelu.ro/

Context

The Macin Mountains - Old Danube Local Action Group (LAG) represents a poorly diversified agricultural territory of small, semi-subsistence farms. 77% of livestock farms in the area are owned by individuals (with an average of 30 animals/farm), and a common problem for all is that they have very limited access to the market.

The Romanian Rural Development Programme has been using the LEADER measure to support farmers in this area to modernise their farms and develop collective solutions to improve their market position. In this context, six local farmers used LEADER support to set up an association for collective and shared commercial action.

Objectives

The aims of this project were to improve the market position of a group of farmers and promote the concept of partnership working in the LAG territory.

Activities

- The six farmers signed the partnership agreement and established the 'Cerna Farmers Association'.
- The farmers jointly acquired high-performance agricultural machinery and equipment that will be shared within their association. This includes a tractor, a front loader, equipment for pallets, a transport trailer, a trailer manure spreader, a hoe, a baler, and a water tank.
- They created a website for their association to showcase the project, share local farm-related news and promote the concept of partnership working.
- This was reinforced with a publicity campaign across each municipality in the LAG territory. The campaign was a combination of print marketing (leaflets, posters, and flyers - available at the mayor's office and at local fairs and events) and direct meetings between local farmers in the territory.

Main results

The formal establishment of an association was a natural next step for the pre-existing friendship and small-scale cooperation between the six farmers. Now collectively managing the shared use of the machinery and equipment, the group can coordinate other joint ventures such as the contracting of agricultural services and the purchase of seeds and fertilisers, which helps them to secure a better price.

The group are currently discussing the possibility of transforming their association into an agricultural cooperative, to expand the scope of their work to incorporate the joint processing and collective marketing of agricultural products.

All this is shared via the communications channels set up by the project, which document the story of how the shift towards formal cooperative working practices leads to better outcomes for local farm businesses. It constitutes a first step towards embedding a culture of cooperation in the Macin Mountains - Old Danube area.

Key lessons

Rural areas can benefit from inspirational 'role model' projects that pioneer and demonstrate possibilities and profits from new approaches to business.

LEADER funds can involve simplified implementation procedures that help LAGs to provide targeted and flexible support to beneficiaries.

Additional sources of information

<https://www.primariacerna.ro/>