

Slovenia

Agri-food chain integration & quality

Location

Kranj

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P3 – Food chain & risk management

Measure

M09 – Producers groups & organisations

Funding

Total budget 350 000 (EUR)
EAFRD 150 000 (EUR)
National/Regional 50 000 (EUR)
Private 150 000 (EUR)

Project duration

2019 – 2023

Project promoter

Sloga Kranj agricultural and forestry cooperative

Email

marija.mehle@sloga.si

Website

<https://www.sloga.si/sl/>

Slovenian smallholders cooperate to strengthen their collective competitiveness.

Summary

The 'Sloga Kranj' agricultural and forestry cooperative used CAP funds to establish a group of potato producers and a group of vegetable and fruit producers. As part of this process, the cooperative provided training, undertook the promotion and marketing of the groups' products, as well as organising the transport, collection and quality control of the produce.



SLOGA
Kmetijsko gozdarska zadruga z.o.o.

Project Results

The project connected more than 1,700 farmers.

The producers cooperate with each other and can now meet the supply volume requirements of large retailers.

Two job positions were created, which resulted in an increase in sales and improved quality control.

Lessons & Recommendations

- This project was delivered successfully thanks to its cross-sector network of stakeholders.

Context

Many Slovenian farms are classified as small, and these smallholdings can lack capacity to produce large quantities of produce that big retailers require. As such, producers of potatoes, vegetables and fruit are obliged to approach the market independently. This can put small farms in a poor negotiating position and may make it difficult for them to sell their produce at a fair price.

In this context, the 'Sloga Kranj' agricultural and forestry cooperative decided to establish a group of potato producers and a group of vegetable and fruit producers within the cooperative. They launched a project that successfully brought together farmers from the regions of Gorenjska, Štajerska, Prekmurje, and Dolenjska, who worked together to address this situation.

Objectives

The main aim of this project was to improve the position of smallholder producers in the food supply chain by combining and concentrating supply and carrying out joint promotion and marketing actions.

Activities

In 2019, members of the Sloga Kranj agricultural and forestry cooperative set about raising awareness, amongst producers across the regions, of the benefits of joining producer groups. At the same time, the cooperative launched the 'Polonca' brand, where each product features the full address and name of the producer alongside the general nutritional information, in order to build consumer confidence. In 2020, the cooperative adjusted its computer system to further improve the traceability of products, and the following years (2021 – 2022) were spent recruiting more farmers into the producer groups.

Due to the increase in the volume of work, and to be able to ensure better quality, the cooperative adapted its premises, improved its energy efficiency, and updated its production equipment. The cooperative also purchased a new compressor for the packaging machine and multiple components for economical packaging.

Investments were also made to set up two cold rooms and a ventilation system as well as acquire an electric washing machine, a sweeper, and an electric forklift.

In addition to these improvements, the cooperative organised workshops for farmers to ensure better product quality and provided technical assistance and expert guidance aimed at improving the producers' business approach or working practices. The staff of the cooperative also received training to make their own work more efficient, which included ICT training, stress management, and workplace health and wellbeing.

Overall, the cooperative is in charge of the promotion and marketing of the products, as well as the organisation of transport, and the collection and quality control of the produce.

In this process, the cooperative received support and advice from the Agricultural Advisory Service and educational institutions (the Naklo Biotechnical Centre agricultural secondary school and college, the Faculty of Public Administration, and the Secondary School of Economics)

Main Results

The project has connected more than 1,700 farmers.

The producers cooperate with each other and can now meet the supply volume requirements of large retailers.

Two job positions were created, which resulted in an increase in sales and improved quality control.

Key lessons

This project was delivered successfully thanks to its cross-sector network of stakeholders and support from the Agricultural Advisory Service and educational institutions (the Naklo Biotechnical Centre agricultural secondary school and college, the Faculty of Public Administration, and the Secondary School of Economics).