

## POLAND

### Technical assistance

**Location**  
Olsztyn

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transfer & innovation

**Measure**  
M20 – Technical assistance

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**Project duration**  
2017 – 2018

**Project promoter**  
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Organising conferences, workshops and a culinary contest in order to promote the sustainable development of rural areas, along with and the personal development of participating rural citizens.

### Summary

The Agricultural Chamber of Warmia and Mazury, organised two conferences in response to the needs of local citizens, who were looking for knowledge sharing and new experiences in cultural heritage, folklore, customs and traditions. The conferences were addressed to inhabitants of rural areas of the Masovian, Pomeranian, Podlasie and Warmian-Masurian voivodships\*.

A specific target group were women, who participate in formal or informal groups, working on local development and the improvement of the socio-professional situation in rural areas. As part of this initiative various conferences, workshops and a culinary contest were organised.



### Results

Increased participants' knowledge on sustainable rural development; on cultural and culinary heritage and traditions; on creating short supply chains and small local processing; as well as on project management in rural development.

Increased the knowledge of rural residents about rural development policy and the financial support it can provide.

Increased the share of residents of rural areas, in formal and informal groups, who get involved in initiatives for rural development. It also helped to establish new regional and supra-regional contacts between the participants.

Familiarised participants with a diverse range of activities (culinary, handcraft, music).

### Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The transfer of knowledge between participants has a wide multiplier effect. The practical information provided about short supply chains and small-scale processing, will stimulate local economic development.
- ❑ Increasing interest in the production of regional, folklore products (cooking, handcrafts) does not only contribute to the preservation of the cultural heritage of a region, but it can support the economic development of rural areas by marketing these products.
- ❑ It is worth replicating this project so that formal and informal groups, operating in rural areas in different regions, have the opportunity not only to meet, learn and exchange experiences, but also to draw inspiration for future activities.

\* The highest-level administrative subdivision of Poland, corresponding to a 'province' in many other countries.

## Context

The Agricultural Chamber of Warmia and Mazury organised two conferences in response to the needs of local citizens, who were looking for knowledge sharing and new experiences in cultural heritage, folklore, customs and traditions, including culinary. The conferences were addressed to inhabitants of rural areas of the Masovian, Pomeranian, Podlasie and Warmian-Masurian voivodships. A specific target group were women, who participate in formal or informal groups, working on local development and the improvement of the socio-professional situation in rural areas.

## Objectives

The main objective of this initiative was to improve the economic and social balance in rural areas of the Pomeranian, Podlasie, Masovian and Warmian-Masurian voivodships, by promoting the sustainable development of these areas.

Specific objectives of the projects, were the following:

- Increase the participation of formal and informal groups in organising rural development initiatives;
- Develop regional and interregional cooperation and build partnerships between rural actors;
- Inform participants about the rural development policy and the financial support it can provide;
- Demonstrate that local and traditional products (crafts, food) are an opportunity for economic development in rural areas;
- Preserve and promote cultural, culinary and tradition heritage in rural areas; and
- Promote social inclusion, in particular for women, and reduce poverty in rural areas.

## Activities

The two-day conferences were combined with personal development workshops, the inter-regional competition 'Treasures of Europe Enchanted in Glass'. A presentation of participants' activities, related to the promotion of sustainable rural development, in particular cultural and culinary heritage and rural traditions was given.

During the conferences participants presented their activities, exchanged experiences and shared good practice examples.

The goal of the Personal Development Workshops was to stimulate participants to continue their activities and enable them to further develop in their personal, social and professional life. This would encourage them to continue undertaking initiatives for the development of their areas and promote their villages as a place to live and develop professionally.

The 'European Treasures Captured in Glass' competition aimed to promote home-made products demonstrating the richness and diversity of local culinary traditions. The competition also aimed to inspire the creation of short supply chains, and to support the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas by raising the level of knowledge and skills in small local processing. The theme of the competition was homemade products under the following categories:

- homemade fruit preparations (including blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, etc.);
- homemade vegetable preparations (including forest mushrooms); and
- homemade meat and fish products.

In total 27 groups entered the competition and sent in 85 recipes. The organisers, after assessing the recipes, selected groups of finalists, who presented their products during the conference 'Development Direction'. Throughout the conference, exhibition tables were set up in the conference room, where the participants displayed the products prepared for the competition, as well as other examples of their activities (food, handcrafts). During the conference, 21 groups presented a total of 66 products out of which 9 were awarded prizes.

## Main results

- 96 rural residents participated in the 'Tradition and development' conference.
- 80 people attended the 'Development Direction' conference which had a particular focus on women. 70 women and 10 men attended the conference.
- Increased the knowledge of rural residents about rural development policy and the financial support it can provide.
- Increased the share of residents of rural areas in formal and informal groups who get involved in initiatives for rural development.

- Established new regional and supra-regional contacts between the participants.
- Familiarised participants with a variety of activities that are new to them (culinary, handcraft, music).
- Increased participants' knowledge on sustainable rural development; on cultural and culinary heritage and traditions; on creating short supply chains and small local processing; as well as on project management in rural development.
- Overall, it is considered that the conferences had a positive impact on both the sustainable development of rural areas and in the personal development of the participants.

### Key lessons

It is expected that the transfer of knowledge between participants will have a wide multiplier effect. The practical information provided on short supply chains and on small processing, will stimulate local economic development.

Increasing the interest in the production of regional, folklore products (cooking, handcrafts) does not only contribute to the preservation of the cultural heritage of a region, but it can support the economic development of rural areas by marketing these products.

It is worth replicating this project so that formal and informal groups, operating in rural areas in different regions, have the opportunity not only to meet, learn and exchange experiences, but also to draw inspiration for future activities.

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#### Additional sources of information

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