

POLAND

Local development

Location

Działdowo

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion and
local development

Measure

M19 –LEADER/CLLD

Funding (EUR)

RDP support 15 000
EAFRD 9 545
National/Regional 5 455

Project duration

2017 – 2018

Project promoter

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A female entrepreneur set up a company to produce high quality fashion products made of natural material.

Summary

Ewa Sumiła, an entrepreneur living in a rural area, decided to set up her own company producing fashionable products that are made of natural material. This would allow her to create employment for herself and also respond to a growing demand for environmentally friendly products.

Support from the LEADER measure enabled the entrepreneur to purchase machinery and equipment, as well as to finance the services needed for creating the company's website and online store.



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Results

One new enterprise set up;

One job created (self-employment);

The business's operation is focused on innovation using wood and agricultural products which are biodegradable;

The business is expanding its portfolio into tourism, recreation and environmental protection activities.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ High quality, environmentally friendly products are a growing market globally. This is driven by increasing social awareness about environment issues and the increasing tendency of consumers to turn away from products made from artificial materials.
- ❑ Acquiring new markets is a central goal of the company. This can be achieved by placing the company's products on foreign websites and by participating in trade fairs.

Context

The Local Action Group 'Brama Mazurskiej Krainy' promotes innovative solutions in tourism, entrepreneurship and social activities. It supports the development of companies in the areas of smart specialisation in the Warmian-Masurian Region, such as the case of Ms Ewa Sumiła producing various fashion items, such as bow ties, cufflinks and women's handbags, from wood and local agricultural products.

Ewa is living in a rural area and came up with the idea to create new fashionable products due to her own interest in fashion and as means to create employment for herself. Following new trends, she realised that the market for naturally made products is growing. There is an increasing social awareness about environmental protection and a growing desire to replace products in the market that are made of plastic, which are littering the environment, with more sustainable options. Wood is renewable and can be re-used and recycled in specific circumstances.

Objectives

The objective of this project was to help a female entrepreneur to create employment for herself by investing in the production of quality products made from natural material.

Activities

Ewa's plan to develop her business was twofold. Firstly, she adopted a differentiation strategy. This means that her products will stand out against the competition due to their unique design and because her customers will associate them with a healthy/ecological lifestyle. An emphasis is given to higher quality, which customers will be willing to pay for. Secondly, the company will also use a concentration strategy, focusing on filling in a gap in the market by offering niche products. Through these two complementary strategies, it is estimated that the company will achieve their forecasted level of sales.

Promotional campaigns are envisaged in order to boost her company. In this regard, Ewa decided to create a professional website where she publishes news about the company, but also information about artistic workshops for children in order to raise community awareness about the use of natural products.

Other activities carried out for the preparation of the production included first of all, learning the 'CAD - Solid Edge' design program and creating preliminary patterns of the company's products.

At the beginning of 2016, for ten months, Ewa acquired theoretical and practical knowledge on woodworking and coating techniques, by working at the company F.P.U.H. 'Mar – Stoł' which produces kitchen furniture in Działdowo city. She practiced on methods and techniques of natural wood colouring using agricultural products e.g. beetroot, carrot, blueberry, cherry juice and sauerkraut juice. Fresh walnut shells, onion skins, and grasses were also tried out.

She also learned about the production machines and equipment she would need for her company by participating in trade fairs, such as the 'DREMA 13-16. IX 2016' in Poznań and the exhibition of innovative industrial solutions 7-9.XI 2016, in Warsaw.

In November 2016, Ewa signed a contract to rent two separate rooms of a total area of 100 m². One room is used to store wood and any semi-finished products needed to make her jewellery. In the second room, the production takes place and the purchased machines and equipment are stored.

At the end of November 2016, she applied for aid to start her business. On August 31, 2017, she signed an agreement for financial aid which was granted by the institution implementing the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, the Management Board of the Warmian-Masurian Region.

On October 1, 2017, the business was registered to produce other wooden products, cork, straw and plaiting materials. Then the premises were prepared for operation.

Ewa purchased the necessary raw materials from local farms and other materials using her own financial means.

In 05/10/2017, she applied for the first payment and purchased the agreed machinery and equipment. The subsidy also financed the services for creating the company's website and online store.

Using her own funds she produced promotional catalogues. Other marketing activities carried out included:

- determining the company's target groups;
- Investigating the competition;
- initial design of the products catalogue;

- establishing contacts with people who run fashion blogs and blogs about creating new products using agricultural materials in order to place product advertisements;
- investigating the advertising offer of magazines promoting ecological fashion and fashion trends in order to place advertisements in the form of sponsored articles, e.g. AVANTI, MAD WHITE;
- establishing contacts with shop owners promoting Polish products, e.g. the SVOI store in Warsaw.

In addition, Ewa carried out surveys to explore the market. This included interviewing targeted clients to check the offers of competitors, also but looking into the fashion trends for upcoming seasons.

In 31/01/2018, she applied for a second payment and a total settlement of the project.

The next steps will be to further develop the business. Her goal is to build and establish her brand as a solid, reliable company. In addition, she aims to secure her financial independence.

Main Results

One new enterprise set up;

One job created (self-employment);

The business's operation is focused on innovation using wood and agricultural products which are biodegradable;

The business is expanding its portfolio into other new tourism, recreation and environmental protection activities;

The business has developed a new way of using existing local natural resources. Modern technologies are used in the production process, using a CNC milling machine to create high quality biodegradable jewellery.

Set up a professional network as contacts have been established with local producers of agricultural products and non-governmental organisations, including social cooperatives, in order to obtain processed products.

Key lessons

There is a growing global market for high quality, environmentally friendly products. This is driven by growing social awareness about environment issues and the increasing tendency for consumers to turn away from products made from artificial materials.

Acquiring new markets is a central goal of the company. This can be achieved by placing the company's products on foreign websites and also by participating in trade fairs.



Additional sources of information

Fanpage: @lerymond.eu

www.facebook.com/lerymondeu/