

SLOVENIA

Local development

Location

Mala Nedelja

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

Measure

M19 – LEADER/CLLD

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 23 805.88

EAFRD 13 670.37

National/Regional 3 417.59

Private 6 717.92

Project duration

2017 – 2018

Project promoter

Anton Vrbnjak

Contact

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Website

www.turisticna-kmetija-vrbnjak.si

Expanding the range of tourist offer in a LAG area by supporting a small farm to diversify into horseback riding and therapeutic riding.

Summary

Anton Vrbnjak's Farm located in the area of the Prlekija Local Action Group (Prlekija LAG), decided to offer therapeutic and tourist horseback riding activities. This kind of tourism had not yet been developed in the area and thus several partners joined in to support in the preparation of this bottom-up project.



Support from the LEADER measure was used for purchasing a carriage; equestrian equipment for horseback riding; developing riding paths with signposts; the construction of a riding hall whose dimensions were 20 x 40 m as well as hiring an instructor/therapist.

Results

The project expanded the range of tourist products and services in the Prlekija area, and this has both economic and social benefits.

A 15 per cent growth in visits to the farm has been recorded.

A new job for a therapeutic riding instructor was created on the farm.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The provision of recreational infrastructure initiatives can enhance the tourism offer in a region and entice other potential investors.

Context

Anton Vrbnjak's family farm covers an area of about 10 ha and in addition, they have 5 ha of forest. The family mainly grows wheat and corn. A few horses also live on the farm.

The owner of the farm wanted to offer something more to daily visitors and guests who spend their holidays on their farm, as well as to the local community. Therefore, he decided to set up an on-farm horseback riding activity. To start with, he contacted the local LAG, the Prlekija Development Agency, to ask for advice and learn about funding possibilities.

The LAG saw the potential of this project and in order to maximise its impact on the area, brought in several partners. The Mala Nedelja – Radoslavci Tourist Society joined as a partner focusing on the tourist products and services to be provided by the project, and the Prlekija Development Agency became the lead partner. Other partners that joined included the Bioterme Mala Nedelja Spa, the Terme Banovci Spa, as well as nearby schools and nurseries.

Objectives

The objective of this project was to support the development of tourism and new services on the farm with the addition of a horseback riding activity, while also promoting and connecting local businesses.

Activities

RDP support helped the farm to set up the new activity which included the recreational field horseback riding, but also tourist carriage rides for guests and riding courses on public and forest paths.

The project activities were carried out in two stages; the first stage included purchasing a carriage; other equestrian equipment for horseback riding and for teaching guests how to ride. Riding paths with signposts were also prepared.

The second stage included preparing a riding hall with dimensions of approximately 20 x 40 m; employing an instructor – therapist; and organising the first event for horse and horse-pulled rides.

In cooperation with the project partners, horseback riding and horse-drawn rides will be carried out throughout the LAG area and, if necessary, the farm will participate in cultural and other relevant events. This vertical connection between an investor as the provider and partners will enable the LAG area to become more attractive for tourists.



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Main results

The project expanded the range of tourist products and services in the Prlekija area, and this has both economic and social benefits.

A 15 per cent growth in visits to the farm has been recorded as tourists have come to use the new services offered (carriage rides, horseback riding on riding paths and therapeutic riding)

A role for a therapeutic riding instructor was created on the farm.

The farm is connected with tourist providers, nurseries and schools. The project holders also plan to collaborate with hospitals and other institutions.

Overall, the project realises the basic principles of the LEADER approach, i.e. collaboration, innovation and networking.

Key lessons

The provision of this recreational infrastructure will potentially encourage local residents and their guests, as well as guests from nearby spas to learn more about the rich tourist products and services that are available in the region. This would set a project model for other potential investors in the area.

Additional sources of information

www.las-prlekija.com