

HMRR Info

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Impressum



HMRR

CROATIAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Lj. Posavskog 2/IV

HR-10000 Zagreb

Phone: +385 1 4655 203

Fax: +385 1 4655 200

koordinator@hmrr.hr

www.hmrr.hr

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EDITORS

Višnja Jelić Mück, Odraz/HMRR

Marina Koprivnjak, HMRR

LAYOUT

Ante Vekić, Slap/HMRR

TRANSLATION

Mario Dumančić

The **HMRR Info** is a quarterly e-newsletter of the Croatian Rural Development Network (HMRR), a CSO and CSO-network joined in a common endeavour to improve conditions for integral development and quality life in rural areas.

On a quarterly basis, the **HMRR Info** publishes news and announcements, information on events and activities, projects, achievements, publications and calls for project proposals associated with rural development in Croatia. The bulletin follows legislative and funding developments at the national and European levels, and presents major stakeholders in rural development.

Sustainable Futur for Rural Areas of Croatia project drawing to a close
Local Development Partnership of the Prigorje-Zagorje Area

2/3

Presenting the First Croatian LAGs: LAURA and FOUR RIVERS

4

From the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development: Rural Development Policy in the Pre- and Post-Accession Period

5/6

On activities conducted by HMRR members: DEŠA and Slap

7/8

Miscellaneous: Study visit to Croatia under the Green Agenda project for five Balkan Countries

9/10/11

12

IN THIS ISSUE

Sustainable Future for Rural Areas of Croatia



A partnership project of Milieukontakt International, ODRAZ, HMRR, SMART and PINS, financed by the MATRA programme

HIGHLIGHT

Sustainable Future for Rural Areas of Croatia

A partnership project of Milieukontakt International, ODRAZ, HMRR, SMART and PINS, financed by the MATRA programme

On Saturday, 12 December 2009, a conference was held to mark the completion of the Sustainable Future for Rural Areas of Croatia project. Following the presentation of project results, participants exchanged views and opinions, and also discussed their expectations regarding future rural development in Croatia. Subsequently, an Info-Point was opened in Skrad - a project of the local LAG. The host of the conference was the Business Incubator Skrad - PINS. The conference took place together with the traditional Gorski kotar Fair (Goranski sajam).

In early 2008, when an associating process among Gorski kotar communities was initiated in the form of a local partnership, the Sustainable Future for Rural Areas of Croatia project became a major vehicle for the implementation of the European rural development model and LEADER approach in Croatia. This best practice and road sign for other similar endeavours was crowned with the registration of the first Local Action Group (LAG) in Croatia. Using their experience, advice and recommendations, LAG representatives supported and encouraged the launching of development initiatives in various Croatian regions in the course of 2008 and 2009. Meetings with stakeholders in other rural regions contributed to the promotion of a European approach to rural development in our country.

The LAG carried out a number of small-scale projects in 2009: making of a logo, cleaning of several springs in the hamlet of Tići near Moravice, competitive selection of digital photographs for the Gorski kotar Calendar 2010. Currently, the largest project is in progress: building of wooden kiosks to serve as info-points with promotional material on municipalities and towns situated in the region of Gorski kotar. The members of LAG Gorski kotar have prepared and submitted several more project proposals.

Under the guidance of consultant Jadranka Pelikan, the members of LAG Gorski kotar prepared a Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development of Gorski kotar and a Basic Area Situation Analysis as the point of departure for attracting funds for the development of Gorski kotar. Representatives of local self-governments and other major institutions also took an active part in the development of the above documents. The leaderships of the units of local self-government supported



the development of a local partnership from the very beginning. The two-year process, which began with the first meeting of stakeholders in November 2007, saw a growing interest among citizens and organisations from various segments of society, which gradually transformed into direct support and public participation.

The Sustainable Future for Rural Regions of Croatia project supported the development of civil society capacity in the field of rural development, and it also strengthened civil society organisations' influence in the public dialogue on sustainable rural development. Communication was improved with associations and networks in the EU and SEE, and exchange and cooperation were intensified between Croatian CSOs. Insight was gained into best practices in European countries and the functioning of EU-institutions dealing with rural and regional development as well as into further training covering issues relevant to sustainable rural development, offered in the respective country or abroad.



PROJECT ID Sustainable Future for Rural Areas of Croatia

A Dutch-Croatian partnership project

PARTNERS

Milieukontakt International – Amsterdam, ODRAZ – Zagreb, HMRR – Zagreb, SMART – Rijeka and PINS d.o.o. – Skrad

ASSOCIATES

CCI-Zagreb, Pelikan Consult-Zadar, PREPARE and CCO-Přerov, Czech Republic

PROJECT PERIOD

2007-2009

PROJECT VALUE

EUR 344,000

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

MATRA programme of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Achievements of the Sustainable Future for Rural Areas of Croatia project

- LAG Gorski kotar: the first registered LAG in Croatia
- Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development of Gorski kotar 2010-2013
- participation of the Gorski kotar public in the process of establishing a LAG and developing a Strategic Plan
- Croatian stakeholders in rural development introduced to the processes and achievements in the project pilot area
- interest raised among the Croatian public in the European rural development model
- communication and consultation processes intensified, as well as the exchange of experience and cooperation within the civil sector and between sectors at local, regional, national and international levels in the field of rural development
- a manual on the implementation of the LEADER approach in Croatia published



FROM THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF GORSKI KOTAR 2010-2013

Gorski kotar is a green park above the sea, with tourism and sports infrastructures creating unique and dynamic region inhabited by active and friendly population. Natural materials form the basis of a local architecture in harmony with the environment, and new technologies are employed in a way to ensure sustainable use of resources.

Gorski kotar, the region to live in!

A needs assessment conducted on the basis of an analysis of social, natural, economic and cultural resources helped identify the following LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES to be addressed by the plan until 2013:

- How to reduce depopulation?
- How to protect natural and cultural resources?
- How to improve and adjust the entrepreneurial environment to the specific conditions in the subregion of Gorski kotar?
- How to develop tourism and define the development course in agriculture and traditional crafts so that they contribute to tourism?
- How to accentuate the distinctive character of Gorski kotar?
- How to use the forests of Gorski kotar in a sustainable way?

Serious depopulation is a pressing issue in Gorski kotar. Local population decreased in the period between two censuses by 4,425 persons, which accounts for 17% of today's total population. The key challenges were used for the identification of DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES. The

Plan translated the latter into appropriate measures and actions to be used as the basis for writing and submitting projects for the development of Gorski kotar

PRIORITET 1.

Improvement and adjustment of the entrepreneurial environment to specific conditions in the subregion of Gorski kotar.

PRIORITET 2.

Development of tourism and defining the development course in agriculture and traditional crafts so that they contribute to tourism.

PRIORITET 3.

Protection of natural and cultural resources.

PRIORITET 4.

Using the forests of Gorski kotar in a sustainable way.

PRIORITET 5.

Accentuating the distinctive character of Gorski kotar.

PRIORITET 6

Reducing depopulation

LAG GORSKI KOTAR ID

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

3 towns and 6 municipalities in Gorski kotar

AREA

1,275 sq km

POPULATION

26,000

POPULATION DENSITY

21 persons per sq km

REGISTRATION DATE

23 February 2009 (legal form: association)

LAG MEMBERSHIP

23 representatives from all the nine local communities and all sectors of society

MANAGEMENT BOARD

5 members

HEAD OFFICE

Josipa Blaževića Blaža 8a
51311 Skrad

PRESIDENT

Petar Mamula
098/986-9767
petar.mamula1@ri.t-com.hr

SECRETARY

Nina Vinski
099/310-7575
poduzetnički.centar@ri.t-com.hr

www.lag-gorskikotar.info





Public Presentation of LAG PRIZAG

On Wednesday, 14 October 2009, the future local action group LAG PRIZAG was presented to the public in the Municipality of Ljubešćica. This LAG integrates a local partnership of the Town of Novi Marof and eight municipalities situated in three counties, specifically: Municipalities of Breznica, Breznički Hum, Ljubešćica and Visoko in Varaždin County; Municipalities of Gornja Rijeka, Kalnik and Sveti Petar Orehovec in Koprivnica-Križevci County; and Municipality of Budinščina in Krapina-Zagorje County. The meeting brought together councillors from the Town of Novi Marof and municipal councils, and representatives of the business community and local civil sector.

The Sustainable Development of Regions through Participatory Processes project, implemented in the LAG PRIZAG pilot-area by partnership organisations - Center for Community Organizing Central Moravia from the Czech Republic and Croatian Rural Development Network – under the PHARE 2006 programme, was presented by Ms Višnja Jelić Mück from the Croatian Rural Development Network.

Roman Haken, Director of the Center for Community Organizing Central Moravia, presented to participants the positive experience with Czech LAGs and their activities, and also emphasised the importance of involving the public of a LAG area in the debate on development and formulation of a local sustainable development strategy.

Local Coordinator Kristina Matijašec informed the participants about the past work leading to the establishment of LAG PRIZAG, that is, activities conducted between December 2008, when a LAG initiative was launched at a meeting in Visoko, and October 2009. Ms Matijašec pointed out that the Visoko meeting concluded that, in

the Town of Novi Marof and eight contiguous municipalities having similar characteristics, there was interest and a need for the establishment of a partnership group concerned with rural development and prosperity. This proposal was supported by municipal administrations and the Government of the Town of Novi Marof, who reaffirmed their willingness to participate in the sustainable development project and formation of a LAG in the proposed pilot-area by signing a prior approval document.

As from June 2009, training programmes have been organised which involve selected representatives of the public, business and civil sectors from all local self-government units, with the aim of qualifying participants as LAG area development leaders and preparing them for a subsequent study tour. Simultaneously, the partnership group has worked on the formulation of a local development strategy and registration of LAG PRIZAG in the legal form of an association. Assisted through local population's active participation in the project, it should be in charge of implementing development programmes in the whole micro-region covered by LAG.

Following the presentation, the mayors of member municipalities and the Town of Novi Marof signed a LAG Financing Agreement. The respective local self-government units' share in total LAG population will be the key apportionment criterion for assumed financing commitments.

The meeting was completed with a festive contribution by the local Ljuba voda Folklore Troupe, who performed songs and dances from the Ljubešćica area.

PREPARED BY:
KRISTINA MATIJAŠEC | LOCAL COORDINATOR

PROJECT ID

Sustainable Development of Regions through Participatory Processes

A partnership project of the Center for Community Organizing Central Moravia in Přerov and HMRR, aimed at spurring sustainable local development through greater public participation and cross-sectoral partnerships

NAME OF LAG

LAG PRIZAG

(abbreviated from: LAG Prigorje-Zagorje)

VISION

"A community of happy and satisfied people in a healthy environment whose progress is based on the recognition of both cultural and traditional values as well as effective and balanced use of all human, natural and economic resources."

MOTO

Home Sweet Home

LOGO

A motif by Rabuzin - a section of a painting by the great painter born in the subregion



Projekt financira EU



CPKP



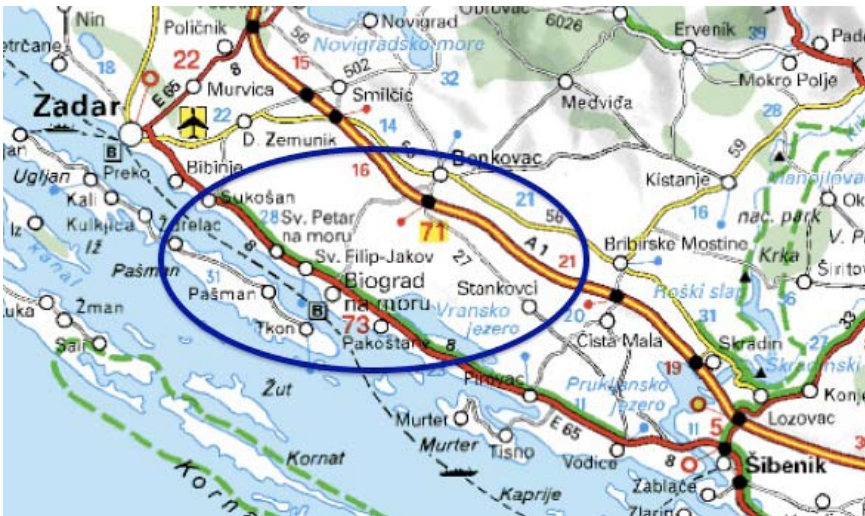
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HMRR

In addition to the regular provision of information about the development of LAG Gorski kotar, we also presented LAG VALLIS COLAPIS in the previous issue. In this issue, we present two more LAGs which, just like LAG VALLIS COLAPIS, have resulted from the pilot-project of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development implemented under the SAPARD/IPA-RD programme and entitled Integrated Local Development Programme under the LEADER Approach.

LAG LAURA **Looking Ahead on the Road of Quality**



The Local Action Group Laura, with a Head Office in Biograd na moru, was entered in the Register of Associations of the Republic of Croatia on 16 May 2009.

The LAG LAURA area is situated in the south of Zadar County and has a population of 30,408 (2001 census), accounting for about 13% of the total land and marine area of Zadar County, or 25% of county land area. It shares boundaries with three counties (maritime boundary with Primorje-Gorski kotar County in the north, maritime and land boundary with Lika-Senj County, maritime and land boundary with Šibenik-Knin County) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (international mainland boundary in the east).

LAG LAURA includes the territories of two urban jurisdictions, the Towns of Benkovac and Biograd na moru, and seven municipalities, two of which are insular territories: Polača, Stankovci, Lišane Ostrovičke, Sv. Filip i Jakov, Tkon, Pašman and Pakoštane. There are three national parks and three nature parks in its vicinity.

The primary goal of LAG LAURA is to encourage the formulation of activities contributing to development in all its communities, from economic and infrastructural development to the preservation of heritage, improvement of the local population's cultural and social life and typical gastronomy and tourism offerings, whilst also protecting the environment and observing the principles of sustainable development. Hence, LAG LAURA will organise presentations of its activities and provide advisory and practical assistance in conducting an analysis of the area, preparing the implementation of a local development strategy, promoting inclusion in international cooperation projects, organising fairs and other events which promote the area and, ultimately, establish ties between local community members and the respective ministry, with the goal of attracting financial support from EU funds. One of the objectives is also the establishment of links with LAGs in contiguous countries.

PREPARED BY:
RADOSLAV BOBANOVIĆ | LAG PRESIDENT

LAG LAURA ID

SCOPE

2 towns and 7 municipalities in Zadar County, including two municipalities on the island of Pašman

AREA

915 sq km

POPULATION

30,408 (2001)

POPULATION DENSITY

33 persons per sq km

REGISTRATION DATE

16 May 2009 (legal form: association)

HEAD OFFICE

Trg Hrvatskih velikana 2c/1
23210 Biograd na moru

PRESIDENT

Radoslav Bobanović

VISION

Forward and Ahead on the Road of Quality

CONTACT

Phone: 00 385 23 384 549
Fax: 00 385 23 385 126
lag.laura2009@gmail.com



LAG FOUR RIVERS

Together for Prosperity



The Local Action Group Four Rivers was founded on 21 May 2009. It includes the rural area of the Town of Sisak and Municipality of Martinska Ves, with a total of 17,715 inhabitants and an area of 547.57 sq km.

Although the name may remind us of another Croatian town lying on four rivers, the area of our LAG bears characteristics determined by the Sava, Kupa, Odra and Lonja rivers, which carve a joint and distinct identity for our region.

By including representatives of the public (26%), civil (26%) and private (48%) sectors, the membership composition of the LAG follows LEADER principles. More specifically, the membership includes: Town of Sisak, Municipality of Martinska Ves, Bukovsko Village Board, Crnac – Machinery Ring, SMŽ Prevelac - Association of Small Cheese Producers, Donja Posavina Kratečko - Cattle Breeders' and Agriculturists' Association, Tihomir Kožić Family Farm, Sunce nad Posavinom Association, Ravlić Family Farm – Rural Tourism, Marica Nekić Family Farm, Sokol Crnac Agricultural Cooperative, Lonj-

sko polje Nature Park – Public Institution, Town of Sisak Association for Urban Beautification, Andrija Ovas Family Farm, SMŽ Vrt - County Vegetable Farmers' Association, Gušće Agricultural Cooperative, Sanja Selanac Family Farm, Croatian Agricultural Extension Institute, Lonjsko polje-Kratečko – Machinery Ring, Goran Veselić Family Farm, Association of Organic Producers – SMŽ Izvor, Dobro Agricultural Cooperative, Sisačka češnjovka Association, Ljubica Pavičić Family Farm and Svinjičko Village Board.

We remain open for new members who are willing to accept the principles of the LEADER approach and to work with us for common prosperity.

In preparations for the establishment of a LAG, information was collected and a number of guidelines for further local development were discussed by using the bottom-up approach, resulting in a Local Development Strategy with goals and specific projects of key importance for our LAG. The Strategy is not unalterable, but will rather be subject to amendments and extension in line with development needs.

PREPARED BY:
NATALIJA BANOVIĆ | LAG PRESIDENT

LAG FOUR RIVERS ID

OBUHVAAT

Rural areas of the Town of Sisak and Municipality of Martinska Ves

AREA

547.57 sq km

POPULATION

17.715 (2001)

POPULATION DENSITY

32 persons per sq km

REGISTRATION DATE

21 May 2009 (legal form: association)

HEAD OFFICE

Galdovačka 1
44000 Sisak

PRESIDENT

Natalija Banović

SECRETARY

Jakša Ravlić

CONTACT

Natalija Banović,
tel.: 044 510 173
fax: 044 510 160
mob: 099 2185-158
mail: natalija.banovic@sisak.hr

Jakša Ravlić
tel.: 044 710 151
mob. 098 9727 104
mail: jaksa.ravlic@sk.htnet.hr



At the session of the Monitoring Committee for Implementation of the IPARD Programme held on 25 November 2009, the new Head of the Rural Development Department, Ms Žaklina Jurišić, introduced the Committee members to the characteristics of the rural development policy in 2011 and subsequent years.



Rural Development Policy for 2011 and the S Period after Croatia's Accession to the EU – Key Characteristics

On the one hand, Croatian agriculture and rural areas are faced with difficulties similar to those in other new EU Member Countries, but, on the other, also with some highly specific problems caused by the war in the recent past:

- unsatisfactory structure of the economy and production – small and fragmented agricultural plots
- the economy of scope is insufficiently developed, and production for „own needs“ still plays a significant role
- sales channels are not developed
- abandoned agricultural land
- multiple compliance standards have not been achieved – preservation of environment and biodiversity, animal and plant health, and animal welfare
- proizvodnja proizvoda s oznakom kvalitete nije na zadovoljavajućoj razini - mali udio ekološke proizvodnje i proizvodnje proizvoda s oznakom zemljopisnog podrijetla i izvornosti
- the manufacture of products bearing quality marks has not reached the desired levels: there is a low share of organic production and domestic products that bear geographic origin and originality marks
- heavily subsidised production and producers' income
- dominantly production-oriented subsidy/support system, which does not comply with the EU system
- poor economic situation in rural areas
- agriculture is the dominant economic activity in rural areas; agriculture remains the main source of income
- ageing rural population
- unsatisfactory social and physical infrastructures in rural areas
- lack of local initiatives and their poor articulation

Evident and serious absorption capacity problems exist in making use of EU pre-accession programmes.

Standard and transitional rural development measures grouped around four priority axes - greater competitiveness, preservation of the environment and landscape, improvements in rural areas and local actions (LEADER) - are available to new EU Member Countries.

The Republic of Croatia will soon end the implementation of the EU pre-accession SAPARD programme. The implementation of the IPARD programme for agriculture and rural development was set to start at the end of November 2009. In addition, a large number of national structural measures, non-compliant with EU principles, are being implemented. Disharmony exists with regard to the type of measure, eligible costs, support intensity and implementation procedures. Evident and serious problems exist with regard to the absorption capacity in using EU pre-accession programmes. One of the reasons for poor absorption is the overlap with national measures, which, compared with the SAPARD/IPARD systems and the EU system in general, are associated with softer criteria and control.

Standard and transitional rural development measures grouped around four priority axes – greater competitiveness, preservation of the environment and landscapes, improvements in rural areas and local actions (LEADER) – are available to new EU Member Countries.

Plan for the adjustment of rural development measures

1. Adoption of new rule books governing rural development measures in order to harmonise the type of measures, eligible costs, support intensity and procedures with EU principles:

- Investment in Farms, Investment in the Processing of Agricultural Products and Investment in Farm Infrastructure; deadline: 15 February 2010
- Restructuring of Self-Supplying Farms; deadline: 15 April 2010

- Establishment of Production Organisations; deadline: 15 April 2010
- Manufacture and Promotion of Products Bearing Quality Marks; deadline: 15 April 2010
- Less Favourable Areas for Economic Activity; deadline: 15 February 2010
- Agricultural and Environmental Measures; deadline: 15 April 2010
- Diversification into Non-Agricultural Business Activities, Tourism Activities; deadline: 15 April 2010
- Rural Infrastructure; deadline: 15 April 2010
- Operation of Local Action Groups, Implementation of Local Development Strategies; deadline: 15 April 2010.

2. Preparation of a new National Support for Agriculture and Rural Development Act that would comprise amendments to provisions relevant to rural development measures; deadline: 31 March 2010.

3. Passing of the new Act by the Croatian Parliament; deadline: September 2010.

4. The new Act should enter into force from 1 January 2011.

5. Preparation for the post-accession period in Croatia:

- development of a National Strategic Plan for the Period 2012-2013; deadline: June 2010
- development of a Rural Development Programme for the Period 2012-2013; deadline: June 2011

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO

- IPARD PROGRAMME / Agriculture and Rural Development Plan
- Flyers on the implementation of IPARD / Measures 101, 103 and 301

<http://www.mps.hr/default.aspx?id=4787>

Transitional measures

In view of the situation in agriculture and rural areas, experience gained through the SAPARD/IPARD programme and the obligatory implementation of specific measures compliant with EU rules, it has been decided start implementing the following rural development measures from the day of EU-accession:

AXIS I MEASURES

Greater Competitiveness

- Investment in Farms
- Investment in the Processing of Agricultural Products
- Investment in Farm Infrastructure
- Restructuring of Self-Supplying Farms
- Establishment of Production Organisations
- Manufacture and Promotion Products Bearing Quality Marks

AXIS II MEASURES

Preservation of the environment and landscape

- Less Favourable Areas for Economic Activity
- Agricultural and Environmental Measures (eco- and integrated production, native breeds, other above-the-standard practices)

AXIS III MEASURES

Improvements in rural areas

- Diversification into Non-Agricultural Business Activities
- Tourism Activities
- Rural Infrastructure

AXIS IV MEASURES

Local actions (LEADER)

- Operation of Local Action Groups
- Implementation of Local Development Strategies

DEŠA DUBROVNIK 3RD CROATIAN JAM, FRUIT SPREAD AND MARMALADE FESTIVAL

Promotion of Tradition, Customs and Traditional Products



Organised by DEŠA and the Dubrovnik Orange Association, the Sweet Festival took place on 3 and 4 October in Luža Square, in front of St. Blasius Church in Dubrovnik. This year, the festival took on an international dimension and attracted many domestic and international visitors. This cultural event, organised with financial support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development, Dubrovnik-Neretva County and Town of Dubrovnik, contributes to the promotion of tradition, customs and traditional products, turning them into gastronomic souvenirs and supplements to the tourism offerings of Dubrovnik.

The Festival attracted a total of 18 exhibitors from all parts of Croatia and

one exhibitor from Bosnia and Herzegovina. All of them wore traditional local costumes, presenting their customs and cultural identity.

GOLD MEDAL TO THE HOT ORANGE

On the first festival day - 3rd October, simultaneously with the cultural and sweet programme in Luža Square, a special jury was working in the office of the DEŠA Association, consisting of Professors Vlasta Piližota and Ljiljana



Primorac from the Faculty of Food Technology in Osijek, Professors Verica Uzelac and Branka Levaj from the Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology in Zagreb, and Culinary Science Professor Josip Žuvela from Dubrovnik. The jury was entrusted with the highly demanding task of selecting the best among 65 products submitted for judgement. The products were divided into three categories: jam (41 products), marmalade (12 products) and fruit spread (12 products). From among the awards based on sensory judgement, we wish to highlight the DEŠA Association, who won gold for hot orange jam, and the EKOTURISTIKO Association, who won the most medals.

PREPARED BY
JANY HANSAL | DEŠA DUBROVNIK

DEŠA DUBROVNIK SMALL ENTERPRISES AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Knowledge and Experience Exchange Relevant for Territory Development



Under its Adriatic Sea – Small Enterprises and Local Development cross-border cooperation project, DEŠA organised two important events on 24 and 25 November. On Tuesday, 24 November 2009, an initiative committee met in order to discuss the establishment of an association - a Responsible Tourism Centre for the Adriatic Region. Apart from the civil society organisations DEŠA-Dubrovnik and Cospe-Florence, the committee membership includes reputable prominent persons from the academic communities of Croatia and Italy, Dr Saša Poljanec Borić, Professor Alberico di Meo and Lucija Bronzan, as well as the Town

of Dubrovnik, Dubrovnik-Neretva County, and the Region of Marche. By joining the Committee, they demonstrate their commitment to the sustainable development of the Adriatic Region.

The international Symposium on the Territorial Approach to the Development of Tourism was held on Wednesday, 25 November 2009, at the Centre for Advanced Academic Studies in Dubrovnik. It was attended by 50 individuals from town- and county-level public and business institutions interested in community development and cooperation. The topics and participants were structured in a way to allow the exchange of knowledge and experience relevant to an integrated approach to territory development, which is the focus of the Adriatic Sea - Small Enterprises and Local Development cross-border cooperation project.

Eminent Italian and Croatian experts in the research and implementation of various disciplines and projects presented an integrated approach to territory de-

Message of the Symposium on the Territorial Approach to the Development of Tourism

Desire, willingness, education and a strategy involving all local stakeholders are required for sustainable development and responsible tourism in any community. It is only through one's desire for education, cooperation and public-private partnership that favourable living conditions can be created for the local population and visitors.

velopment, requiring synergy between sociology, psychology, anthropology, architecture and physical planning.

PREPARED BY
JANY HANSAL | DEŠA DUBROVNIK

ASSOCIATION FOR CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT SLAP SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP PRACTICE

Basis for Development Projects

The Social Entrepreneurship Practice seminar of the Slap Association in Osijek was attended by about fifty representatives of the civil, public and business sectors. It took place at the home of Milutin Milanković in Dalj, the heart of the rural Croatian east. „What we wanted to achieve with this seminar was to identify the specific fields in which the practice of social entrepreneurship can develop through concrete partnerships, and this is why we have brought together all the key stakeholders – all those institutions and organisations that cooperate with us on our programmes for the encouragement of social employment“, says Sonja Vuković, President of the Slap Association.



The participants made efforts to map needs and resources in three areas, and they also developed specific action plans: the first area included the creation of infrastructural support to eco-entrepreneurs, the second involved employment in

rural tourism through branding and establishing ties between various segments of tourism potential, and the third area covered education and professional training programmes for women and young people who prepare to enter the labour market. A number of ideas were specifically articulated for each area. „The action programmes prepared by the seminar participants will be further elaborated and offered to all interested institutions and organisations. They will serve as the basis for projects submitted for eligible pre-accession funding by the EU“, concluded Sonja Vuković.

PREPARED BY
ANTE VEKIĆ | SLAP ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION FOR CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT SLAP ORGANISED A CONFERENCE ENTITLED SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP – THE PRIME MOVER OF DEVELOPMENT

A Social Entrepreneurship Forum Founded in Osijek

The conference entitled Social Entrepreneurship – the Prime Mover of Development, held in Osijek on 25 and 26 November in Osijek and Zlatna Greda, brought together representatives of institutions, individuals involved in the implementation of the National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Legal Framework Serving as Infrastructural Support, and a number of social entrepreneurs who successfully apply social entrepreneurship principles and develop their own business models based on the philosophy of social entrepreneurship. The Slap Association for Creative Development organised this event with the intention of establishing links between all key stakeholders, representatives of the public, business and civil sectors. By using integrated programmes, their interest-based partnerships should contribute to the implementation of a common social entrepreneurship platform in the Republic of Croatia.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP, A CONCEPT STILL UNKNOWN TO THE PUBLIC

„A whole chapter of the National Strategy for Civil Society Development is dedicated to social entrepreneurship in Croatia. So far, however, most measures have not been implemented as planned. There are several reasons for this. One of the main reasons is the lack of understanding of what the social entrepreneurship concept is and what it should stand for. Further,



it is not clear who should be in charge of implementation, and the difference between social entrepreneurship and social welfare institutions is not understood. Social entrepreneurship is not recognised as an entrepreneurial activity that returns a portion of profits to the community, which is precisely the aspect that needs to be strongly encouraged in this time of crisis“, pointed out Marina Lochert, participant from the Office for Cooperation with NGOs.

THERE ARE POSITIVE EXAMPLES

There were also presentations of a number of best practice cases in social entrepreneurship. Teo Petričević from the Autonomous Centre ACT explained that this CSO had founded two companies which offer cheaper services to CSOs. Their profits cover up to 20% of this CSOs programme costs. An interesting example came from the Roda Association, presented by Ivana Zanze. By selling cotton diapers, this CSO covers up to 20% of its annual budget. The activities of CID from Bilje, region of Baranja, were presented by Krešimir Mazur, and participants were introduced to the operations of the tourist agency founded by the Zeleni Osijek Environmental Association. The Primary School in Ernestinovo was also an interesting example. They have taken up beekeeping and plant cultivation

in polytunnels. All the said models face one common challenge: numerous legal barriers and ambiguities that complicate their daily business and generate problems which even those who are supposed to give answers cannot resolve.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS' FORUM LAUNCHED

The most tangible result of the social and entrepreneurial conference of the Osijek-Baranja region is the establishment of a Social Entrepreneurs' Forum, an informal body that should deal with the harmonisation of needs, suggest solutions and lobby legislators for the adoption of social entrepreneurship measures which address the current economic and social situation. Three Action Groups will work within the Forum: one will be in charge of developing a legal framework draft document, one will examine programmes and infrastructures that support social entrepreneurs, and one will cover the methods and activity fields of the Social Entrepreneurs' Forum. Action Groups, who will be open for all interested organisations and individuals, should come up with tangible results in the upcoming year. A new meeting and compilation of proposals should take place in the spring of 2010.

PREPARED BY
ANTE VEKIĆ | SLAP ASSOCIATION

PROJECT: GREEN AGENDA CAPACITY BUILDING IN BALKAN COUNTRIES

A Study Visit to Croatia

Under the Green Agenda Capacity Building in Balkan Countries project, implemented by Milieukontakt International (Dutch foundation based in Amsterdam) and local CSOs in six Balkan countries, a study visit was organised to Croatia in the period 1-5 November 2009.

In the period 2002-2005, the foundation implemented the Green Agenda/Green Plan project in six Croatian municipalities and two towns, in Istria and Međimurje Counties. The study visit by representatives of 15 municipalities situated in five countries included in the project (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania) was organised with the purpose of presenting the Green Plan process in Međimurje and follow-on activities in the period after the adoption of the document, i.e. project completion. The hosts were local communities which participated in the creation of the Green Plan, adopted it and also actively work on its implementation: Town of Čakovec, Municipality of Nedelišće and Municipality of Sveti Martin na Muri, as well as the ZEO Nobilis Association, which acted as a partner and project implementation coordinator. In view of the fact that the methodology for the development

of Green Plans and the strategic document concept (one that takes specific local characteristics into account and responds to local needs) are highly similar to the LEADER approach, and in view of the important role the LEADER approach plays in rural development at the EU-level, the last day of the visit was used to present two Croatian local action groups to the guests.

The meeting in Remetinec near Novi Marof, hosted by LAG PRIZAG (currently in the process of establishment), was attended by the representatives of LAG Gorski kotar: Petar Mamula, President, and Nina Vinski, Secretary; and LAG PRIZAG: Kristina Matijašec, Draga Bitar, Jasenka Grubješić and Kruno Đurec. The representatives of LAG Gorski kotar introduced the participants to the fundamentals of the LEADER approach and activities conducted in the previous period (initial meetings, creation of partnerships, formation of the Local Action Group, development of the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development of Gorski kotar and, ultimately, implementation of projects under the plan). Special emphasis was placed on the need, and desire,

for networking between LAGs, which allows the exchange of experience and knowledge, and facilitates the development of a common rural policy.

Ms Matijašec, Local Coordinator of the project supporting the development of the future LAG PRIZAG, presented activities conducted in their area with the aim of establishing a registered LAG and also emphasised good cooperation with LAG Gorski kotar and their assistance in past activities.

The presentation of the LEADER implementation process in Croatia was a valuable supplement to the original programme and an excellent final topic of the study trip. It also initiated discussions of local strategic plans, participation and rural development in participating countries/regions.



Representatives of LAG Gorski kotar introduced the participants to the fundamentals of the LEADER approach