

Our European Countryside

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	3
PLN 30 million for beneficiaries of the RDP	4
A thematic village – common idea as a way to succeed	8
The LAGs activate residents in rural areas	10
Going to Lower Silesia to gain knowledge and inspiration	13
Direct sale in cheese dairies operating by the agricultural holdings	14
Christmas is upcoming...	15

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Krzysztof Grabowski

Deputy Marshal of Wielkopolska Region

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Rural Development Programme for the years 2014-2020, implemented by the Self-Government of the Wielkopolska Region since the second half of 2015, has resulted in 8 calls for applications targeted at units of the self-government and in the contracted amount of approx. PLN 203 million so far. In 2018, municipalities and municipal centres of culture could submit applications for financial aid for performing investments in buildings for cultural purposes, shaping public space and protection of monuments and traditional construction. At the turn of September and October, I signed contracts with beneficiaries for implementing at least 60 projects with the total value of PLN 30 million. However, it is really possible that the list of beneficiaries will be extended significantly as we have requested the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to transfer the funds saved under other calls for applications.

Our plan for the following year involves an additional call for applications for the construction or modernization of local roads. Furthermore, it is still possible to submit applications for co-financing through 29 Local Action Groups which implement the community-led local development strategies.

To implement the strategies successfully, the LAGs may use funds granted under the so called sub-action 19.4 "Support for running costs and activation". In this edition of "Our European Countryside", we look at what funds are used for and how the LAGs activate residents. We also discuss the emergence of thematic villages by indicating the benefits resulting from this innovative and integrated approach to business activity in rural areas. We also recommend reading the articles on the projects implemented by Partners of the National Network of Rural Areas. You will learn about the plans of the Association "Wielkopolska with Imagination" to establish an incubator of local processing and about the study visit organized by the Association - the Network of LAGs of the Wielkopolska Region.

On the occasion of the upcoming Christmas and New Year 2019, I would like to wish you a wealth of inspiring ideas which will enable to further transform the countryside in the Wielkopolska Region, improve living conditions of its residents, professional fulfilment and all the best in your private life.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RDP

PLN 30 million for beneficiaries of the RDP

In September and October 2018, contracts were signed under this year's three calls for applications: investments in buildings for cultural purposes, shaping public space and protection of monuments and traditional construction. The co-financing for these tasks will be used by 60 or more municipalities and municipal institutions of culture. The total amount of the granted co-financing is equal to approx. PLN 30 million.



Photo by A. Kapuściński

Mr. Tadeusz Bąkowski, Mayor of the Municipality of Kiszkowo, and Mrs. Teresa Występska, Treasurer, signed the contract with Vice-Marshal Krzysztof Grabowski for co-financing the "Construction of a building for a social integration centre for residents (rural after-school care facility)" in the amount of PLN 400,318. The photograph also depicts Mrs. Izabela Mroczek, Director of the Department of RDP of the Marshal Office of the Wielkopolska Region.

- The Self-Government of the Wielkopolska Region has allocated quite a high amount from the funds of the Rural Development Programme for the years 2014-2020 to support municipalities and their cultural units this year. Being aware of the scale of needs in relation to the construction of village halls in rural areas above all, I have personally made attempts to get the limit of funds for our voivodeship increased. The pool of available funds has been increased from approx. PLN 18 million to PLN 30 million. The co-financed investments will be performed in localities with up to 5000 residents. The granted support covers up to 63.63% of eligible project costs, with the limit of funds per one locality amounting to PLN 500 thousand – says Mr. Krzysztof Grabowski, Deputy Marshal of the Wielkopolska Region.

Eligible costs are related above all to the construction or reconstruction of buildings, renovation and conservation works, the purchase of machineries and devices and services, and general costs, including: project documentation preparation costs which may constitute not more than 10% of the value of the remaining eligible costs.

Funding will be paid out to beneficiaries upon the completion of projects on the basis of payment requests which must be completed correctly and the documentation of investment costs which must be incurred correctly. The tasks should be completed within 24 months from the date the

contract is signed, which means that the majority of the co-financed buildings will be put into use until October 2020.

Investments in buildings for cultural purposes

Municipalities and municipal institutions of culture submitted 87 applications for financial aid for performing tasks under the "Investments in buildings for cultural purposes". The current limit of funds made it possible to co-finance 36 projects. However, it is highly probable that financial aid from the European funds will also be granted for further projects included in the list published by the Management Board of the Wielkopolska Region. The Self-Government of the Voivodeship requested the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development again to transfer the funds saved under other actions. They are to be used for increasing the available limit of funds under the "Investments in buildings for cultural purposes". Should the Ministry accept the request, all projects which have received a favourable assessment and are included in the updated list stating the order of allocating aid may receive co-financing.

Receiving support for the performance of tasks related mainly to the construction or modernization of after-school care facilities and rural centres of culture was dependent on the number of scores received under the national and voivodeship criteria. The latter category was based on statistical data, eg tax incomes of the municipality per capita, population density, and unemployment rate. It was also important to consider innovative solutions under the planned project, equip buildings with micro-installations providing electricity or heat, and to ensure that the building will be used for classes in arts, foreign languages, caring and teaching classes and other social initiatives upon the completion of the investment. Under the voivodeship criteria, a higher number of scores was granted, inter alia, for the applications involving the performance of tasks in localities with a small population of residents and in localities in which no investments were performed under the Rural Development Programme for the years 2007-2013.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RDP

List of projects co-financed under "Investments in buildings for cultural purposes"		
Name of the beneficiary	Title of the co-financed project	Amount of financial aid
Municipality of Łądek	<i>Investments in buildings for cultural purposes - reconstruction of the Municipal Centre of Culture in Łądek, including the arrangement of space around the Centre</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Dąbie	<i>Complex modernization, reconstruction and equipment and arrangement of the plots of land of the village hall for use in the Municipality of Dąbie for cultural purposes</i>	PLN 939,029
Municipality of Krobia	<i>Reconstruction of the roadside inn of Biskupizna in Domachowo for supporting the unique cultural heritage of the folk sub-region of Biskupizna</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Czempień	<i>Reconstruction and modernization of the village hall in Gorzyce, including the arrangement of the plot of land for use</i>	PLN 323,397
Municipal Centre of Culture in Łękno	<i>Construction of the village hall in Nowe</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Kłodawa	<i>Reconstruction of the village hall in Dębina</i>	PLN 357,273
Municipality of Grodziec	<i>Together for culture - reconstruction and equipment of the buildings used for cultural purposes in the Municipality of Grodziec</i>	PLN 962,625
City and Municipality of Buk	<i>Extension of the Rural Centre of Culture in Kalwy, including the creation of space around the Centre and the purchase of equipment</i>	PLN 201,857
Municipality of Złotów	<i>Construction of the village hall in Stawnica, including the arrangement of the plot of land for use</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Wągrowiec	<i>Reconstruction of the village hall in Ludwików</i>	PLN 363,384
City and Municipal Public Library in Rychwał	<i>With culture every day - equipment of the building of the exhibition and sport hall in Rychwał, including the assembly of the photovoltaic installation and the arrangement of the land around the hall for use</i>	PLN 208,050
Municipality of Zduny	<i>Extension of the village hall in Chachalnia</i>	PLN 328,084
Municipality of Kiszkowo	<i>Construction of a building for a social integration centre for residents (village hall)</i>	PLN 400,318
Municipality of Dolsk	<i>Construction of the village hall, football grass pitch, playground and hardening of the plot of land and of the parking space in Księginki</i>	PLN 448,649
City and Municipality of Plesze	<i>Reconstruction of the hall of the rural centre in Rokutów</i>	PLN 495,418
Municipality of Osieczna	<i>Construction of the village hall in Jeziorki</i>	PLN 361,622
City and Municipal Centre of Culture in Wieleń	<i>Reconstruction of the village hall in Folsztyn</i>	PLN 499,679
Municipality of Wieleń	<i>Reconstruction of the village hall in Wrzeszczyna, including the arrangement of the plot of land for use</i>	PLN 499,988
Municipality of Turek	<i>Construction of a building for the village hall in Korytków, reconstruction of the building of the village hall in Pęchezew, and extension, reconstruction and changing the manner of use of the water treatment plant for the village hall in Chlebów</i>	PLN 636,255
Municipality of Łobżenica	<i>Reconstruction and extension of the village hall in Luchowo and demolition and construction of the village hall as a semi-detached building in Kunowo in the Municipality of Łobżenica</i>	PLN 663,810
Municipality of Wijewo	<i>Reconstruction of rural centres of culture in Wijewo and Zaborówiec</i>	PLN 946,468
Municipality of Kleczew	<i>Construction of the village hall in Tręby Stare, including a detached utility building, technical infrastructure and arrangement of the plot of land for use</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Śrem	<i>Construction of the village hall in Zbrudzewo - phase I</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Powidz	<i>Construction of the village hall in Anastazewo</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Przygodzice	<i>Reconstruction and extension of the hall of the rural centre in Dębica</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Olszówka	<i>Extension and reconstruction of the village hall in Olszówka</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality and City of Krajenka	<i>Construction of a hall of a rural centre in Głubczyn in the Municipality of Krajenka</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Wierzbinek	<i>Reconstruction of the building of the Municipal Public Library in Wierzbinek</i>	PLN 334,572
Municipality of Damasławek	<i>Construction of the village hall in Dąbrowa</i>	PLN 500,000

IMPLEMENTATION OF RDP

List of projects co-financed under "Investments in buildings for cultural purposes"

Name of the beneficiary	Title of the co-financed project	Amount of financial aid
Municipality of Dobra	<i>Extension and equipment of the Centre of Culture in Dobra to adapt the rooms for cultural education</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Babiak	<i>Reconstruction of the building of the Municipal Centre of Culture and of the Public Library in Babiak</i>	PLN 42,222
Municipality and City of Krotoszyn	<i>Reconstruction of the Rural Centre of Culture in Wielowieś so that the building can be used as cultural infrastructure</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Szczytniki	<i>Development of cultural infrastructure in the Municipality of Szczytniki through the reconstruction, extension of the existing building of the village hall and of the watchtower of the Voluntary Fire Brigade, including the arrangement of public space around the village hall</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Strzałkowo	<i>Construction of the Rural Centre of Culture used for educational purposes through the extension, adaptation of the existing building (of the village hall used for educational purposes) in Skarboszewo</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Ślesin	<i>Modernization of the village hall in Szyszyńskie Holendry</i>	PLN 363,795
Municipality of Budzyń	<i>Construction of the village hall, including the management of the adjacent area in Wyszynki</i>	PLN 496,000

Shaping public space

Under the action "Shaping public space", 15 applications were assessed favourably. The limit of funds for the Wielkopolska Region made it possible to support 9 tasks at the moment, with the co-financing of the remaining 6 tasks being dependent on the decision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on the transfer of the funds saved under other actions. The contracts concluded have a value of PLN 5.2 million. These funds will be used for, inter alia, constructing walking and bicycle paths, constructing solar lighting, managing the centre of the locality, or constructing the so called green stops (which is an innovative solution consisting in the planting of plants around the the bus stop, to be watered appropriately).

Receiving co-financing was dependent on the fulfilment of the selection criteria under which scores were granted.

Applicants belonging to poviats with a high volume of tourist traffic and to municipalities with a high population density had greater chances to receive financial aid from the RDP for the years 2014-2020. The criteria also gave preference to, inter alia, the application of innovative solutions at least within the voivodeship and the equipment of buildings with micro-installations allowing to cover not less than a half of the demand for electricity or heat. Additionally, the voivodeship criteria gave preference to investments planned in those localities which had not implemented similar projects under action "Village renewal and development" of the RDP for the years 2007-2013, and to those investments which involved the construction or reconstruction of street lighting based on renewable energy sources and those constituting in the construction or reconstruction of pavements and walking and bicycle paths.

List of projects co-financed under "Investments in buildings for cultural purposes"

Name of the beneficiary	Title of the co-financed project	Amount of financial aid
Municipality of Jarocin	<i>Managing public space on the plot of land by the Centre of Local Activity and of the Voluntary Fire Brigade in Łuszczanów</i>	PLN 499,993
Municipality of Czerwonak	<i>Make shopping and have a rest in Kozięglowy</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Chrzypsko Wielkie	<i>Construction of a walking path on the bank of the Chrzypskie Lake in Chrzypsko Wielkie</i>	PLN 258,555
Municipality of Łobżenica	<i>Managing public space along the River of Łobżonka - phase IV</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Ceków Kolonia	<i>Managing public space in Morawin and Nowa Plewnia</i>	PLN 369,809
Municipality of Czempin	<i>Construction of a pavement and pavements with a lane for bicycles, including solar lamps and a smart solar bank, in the Municipality of Czempin</i>	PLN 1,315,273
Municipality of Kobyla Góra	<i>Shaping public space in the Municipality of Kobyla Góra through the renovation of the square in the centre of Kobyla Góra and the construction of a walking and bicycle path towards the dams of the storage reservoir "Blewązka"</i>	PLN 688,808

IMPLEMENTATION OF RDP

List of projects co-financed under "Investments in buildings for cultural purposes"		
Name of the beneficiary	Title of the co-financed project	Amount of financial aid
Municipality of Wągrowiec	<i>Managing public space - in the centre of Werki, Kopaszyn, Wiśniew, Mikołajewo and Przysieka</i>	PLN 735,608
Municipality of Jaraczewo	<i>Managing public space in Rusko</i>	PLN 360,238

Protection of monuments and traditional construction

On the other hand, the amount of PLN 6.5 million was granted to those municipalities which had applied for financial aid for the "Protection of monuments and traditional construction". Fifteen contracts were signed for such tasks. They are aimed at revitalizing historic monuments or adapting buildings in a way so that they can serve for other purposes. The valid provisions on the RDP for the years 2014-2020 also allow to refund the purchase of building structures and exhibits. Some of the co-financed projects involve renovation works in religious buildings.

The selection criteria set out for this type of investments envisaged a much higher scoring for applications concerning the performance of works in buildings which require immediate action due to their particularly poor technical condition as confirmed by an opinion of the voivodeship monument conservator. A higher scoring was also granted for projects which envisaged the use of over 50% of the surface of the building for new educational, cultural or promotional purposes. An important factor was also that the building was entered in the register of monuments or in the voivodeship list of monuments. The voivodeship criteria rewarded above all small localities and those which had not performed similar tasks under the RDP for the years 2007-2013.

List of projects co-financed under "Investments in buildings for cultural purposes"		
Name of the beneficiary	Title of the co-financed project	Amount of financial aid
Municipality of Nekla	<i>Reconstruction of selected rooms in the former Palace by changing the manner they are to be used for a chamber of remembrance (history hall), reconstruction of the tower, terrace at the back side of the building, construction of a viewing terrace on the roof, construction works related to the arrangement of the area behind the building</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality and City of Pyzdry	<i>Purchase of the arcaded house and purchase and renovation of the Dutchman's Windmill - historic buildings in Pyzdry</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Pępowo	<i>Renovation of a historic windmill, including the arrangement of the plot of land for a bicycle station</i>	PLN 310,305
Municipality of Kleszczewo	<i>Restoration of a historic park of the manor house in Gowarzewo</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Przemęt	<i>Renovation of the elevation of the palace in Bucz, including the arrangement of the area around the building</i>	PLN 500,000
City and Municipality of Buk	<i>Reconstruction of the building of the Rural Centre of Culture in Dobieżyn</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Suchy Las	<i>Reconstruction of the building of the railway station in Goleńczewo in the Municipality of Suchy Las</i>	PLN 427,596
Municipality of Dąbie	<i>Renovation of the building of the Town Hall in Dąbie</i>	PLN 495,593
Municipality of Miejska Górka	<i>Reconstruction of a historic building of the school in Konary</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Bralin	<i>Renovation of the elevation of the building, including the reconstruction of the original gallery and the construction of a driveway for persons with disabilities moving on wheelchairs</i>	PLN 371,232
Municipality of Kaźmierz	<i>Renovation and reconstruction of the palace in Kaźmierz</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Koźminek	<i>Renovation of the elevation of the building, including the restoration of wooden windows and doors and roof coverage, lightning protection installation of the building of the Evangelical Chapel, Parish School and of the flat of the cantor, and improvement of the infrastructure of the historic park in Koźminek</i>	PLN 297,348
Municipality of Murowana Goślina	<i>Renovation of a historic building of the school in Uchorowo</i>	PLN 500,000
Municipality of Olszówka	<i>Renovation of historic building of the primary school in Głębokie</i>	PLN 302,408
Municipality of Zduny	<i>Renovation and conservation works in the historic post-evangelical church in Zduny</i>	PLN 279,944

TOURISM IN RURAL AREAS

A thematic village – common idea as a way to succeed

What actions should be taken to make use of the potential, knowledge and skills living in residents of small localities? What actions should be taken to establish a coherent business model based on social integration? What actions should be taken to promote the largely known corners of the region and stimulate tourism in rural areas? These are the questions we seek to answer in the article on the creation of thematic villages.



Source: Primary School in Stara Obra

Pupils of the Primary School in Stara Obra in the Municipality of Koźmin Wielkopolski during their visit to the "Spotted Village" in Gluchów.

We have been observing a decrease in agricultural employment in our country for a long time now, which is not always compensated by an increase in jobs in other sectors of the economy. Therefore, any ideas to stimulate non-agricultural activities in rural areas are becoming highly valuable. Difficulties in finding employment may be addressed through the establishment of thematic villages, i.e. the places which focus on one concrete leitmotiv to build the potential of the locality around. A product, tradition, legend or specific skills of a group of residents may serve as a leitmotiv. It often happens that the idea to establish a thematic village is derived from the vary name of the locality.

The idea to establish thematic villages is known around the world. Its origins go back to the beginning of the 1990s. Thematic villages were first established in Lower Austria, while the walnut village (Krummnussbaum), the smithery village (Ybbsitz) and the poppy village (Armschlag) may serve as master examples. Outside of Austria, thematic villages are also highly popular in Germany, Belgium, Portugal, the USA,

Canada, China, Japan and in South Korea. This concept was used on a larger scale in Poland at the beginning of the 21st century by following the experiences of Western countries. However, it is worth adding that the municipality of Wierzbinek in the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship was a pioneer wishing to make willow a leitmotiv to stimulate economic activity and to organize the Willow and Wicker Fair "Salix".

Thematic villages offer an innovative way to drive the rural economy. It is not indispensable to incur high costs to establish them, while cooperation makes the community to integrate by engaging whole families. Its impact on the aesthetics of the locality must not be disregarded. The concept of thematic villages has given a brand new face to numerous localities. Indeed, there are much more advantages. It is worth pointing out the strengthened feeling of self-esteem among residents who choose a concrete objective and seek to implement it with the use of resources which are available locally. The establishment of thematic

TOURISM IN RURAL AREAS

villages may prevent the outflow of young people to large cities and inspire investors to take action in a chosen place and not elsewhere.

The offer of thematic villages is based on the use of the existing natural, cultural and historical resources. It represents a kind of magnet attracting tourists who are bored with the standard offer of leisure activities and seek attractions in the bosom of nature. Agricultural holdings, formerly acting independently, join their efforts and make attempts to create a common brand of the locality and local products. Modern marketing techniques, with an increasingly stronger focus on the Internet promotion, are of assistance in this respect. Possessing specialist knowledge enables to care for the recognizability of the locality and of the thematic village established therein at a low cost.

Localities in the Wielkopolska Region are already experienced in initiating the establishment of thematic villages. Under the cooperation project financed from the RDP 2007-2013, two Local Action Groups: the Association of the Forest of Noteć and the Association of the Valley of Sama laid the foundations for thematic villages in several localities. Chrzypsk Wielki welcomed the establishment of a fishing village, Rzecin in the Municipality of Wronki a village of mushrooms, Lewice (in the Municipality of Międzychód) a village of Santa Clauses, Koźle (in the Municipality of Szamotuły) a village of wooden goats, Wartosław (in the Municipality of Wronki) a village of four cultures, and Radzyny (in the Municipality of Kaźmierz) a village called "Groves of Radzyny". The offer of these six thematic villages was presented by the "Noteć Primeval Forest" Association during the Fair of Agri-Tourism and Rural Tourism "Agrotravel" in Kielce in 2015 and was welcomed by visitors with great interest.

Two localities in the Poviát of Gostyń can also be proud of their thematic villages. The locality called Pępowo has been associated with the term "Village of Herbs ("Ziołowieś") for several years now. This is due to an association operating under the same name which disseminates knowledge about the use of herbs in medicine, cosmetics and gastronomy. The activities of the association also focus on the dissemination of local traditions of handicrafts. Apart from buying herbal products, visitors to Pępowo can make use of an offer of lectures and of workshops concerning these topics.

The "Spotted Village" is a thematic village established by residents of Głuchów in the Municipality of Pogorzela. This a splendid example of a bottom-up initiative, cooperation of residents. One of old houses in the thematic village was used to organize a museum full of exhibits in relation to the processing of milk and the manufacturing of cheeses. Old

devices, used in many households in the past, were found in the lofts. Friends and families were requested to donate additional devices. The museum managed to gather quite a large collection of antiques which are a tourist attraction for incoming guests. Residents of the "Spotted Village" created a place where everybody can learn interesting facts about the traditional manufacturing of dairy products and the breeding of milk cows. However, the concept of the thematic village in Głuchów goes even further as it involves the integration of the offer with three agricultural holdings, which makes it possible to conduct study visits and workshops.

On the other hand, a village based on the egg as leitmotiv was established in Rozdrażew in the Poviát of Krotoszyn. This project was initiated by the Association of Rural Women in Rozdrażew. The start was marked by the construction of a huge painted egg which decorated the market in Rozdrażew over Easter. Afterwards, members of the Association adapted a building of the coach house which became the main seat of the thematic village. A pen with different varieties of hens was created thereby. In the former stalls for horses, a "mini ethnographic museum" was created and hosted an exhibition of old household devices. Guests can also watch a multimedia lecture "Everything about the egg". Following the example of Wrocław dwarfs, colourful eggs are to be placed in different corners of Rozdrażew.

What are the localities which attempted to create thematic villages like now? Is the offer based on the leitmotiv of the thematic villages growing? We encourage you to visit the thematic villages in the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship on your own so that you can see and hear whether they have succeeded as expected.



The "Spotted Village" in Głuchów. One of the first thematic villages in the region.

Source: Primary School in Stara Obrá

LOCAL ACTION GROUPS

The LAGs activate residents in rural areas

The most important task of the Local Action Groups, which have received funds from the Rural Development Programme for the years 2014-2020, is to implement community-led local development strategies. However, in parallel to announcing and conducting calls for applications for co-financing bottom-up initiatives, the offices of the LAGs take a number of activities to activate local communities and improve their knowledge concerning co-financing opportunities. In this edition of the Bulletin, we have a look at practical forms the projects financed under sub-action 19.4 “Support for running costs and activation” may take.



Source: "We Make it Work" Local Action Group

"We Make it Work" LAG activates their residents through the canoeing.

The correct performance of the tasks formulated in the community-led local development strategy requires appropriate resources, tools and funds. Above all, it is important to ensure that the offices of the LAGs possess qualified employees to implement the strategy smoothly and in a timely manner. Depending of the size of the area the Group operates in, the offices may have 2-5 employees. The Local Action Groups also received financial aid for appropriate equipment of the offices, administering the Internet website which is one of the most important tools for communication with the local community, and for implementing the so called communication plan. The docu-

ment provides a detailed description of the whole range of communication forms between the LAGs and residents. The fundamental objective is indeed to disseminate information about the opportunities to apply for funding, the selection and assessment criteria used by the Council of the LAGs, the dates of the calls for applications, and the best practices concerning the priorities of the strategy.

The activities launched under the communication plan are to encourage potential beneficiaries to become involved in the implementation of the local development strategies and to activate disadvantaged groups through local anima-

LOCAL ACTION GROUPS

tion. An important aspect which impacts the perception of the RDP 2014-2020 is also the promotion of the effects of the implementation of the strategy and the presentation of success stories from its implementation. The communication activities used in this process consist of, inter alia: information campaigns in the mass media, distributing printed materials, organizing trainings and meetings, advisory services and organizing events and local events which contribute to the promotion of the LAGs and to the activation of residents. The communication plan also serves to identify communication problems (through monitoring and evaluation), which makes it a tool to shape the level of cooperation or engagement of partners and stakeholders of the LAGs.

Under sub-action 19.4 "Support for running costs and activation", the Local Action Groups receive funds in the form of a lump-sum amount being dependent on the achieved indexes covering the sum of financial aid paid out to beneficiaries. The funds are transferred in more than four tranches a year during the implementation of the local development strategy.

- *The Local Action Groups operating in the Wielkopolska Region approach their tasks with great enthusiasm and engagement. That reflects in material benefits for residents of rural areas which are becoming more and more aware of how they can use the European funds the LAGs are to distribute. It should also be born in mind that the Groups are often animators of local activity by organizing open-air events for residents, competitions with prizes, workshops or study visits – says Mrs. Małgorzata Blok, President of the Association - the Network of the LAGs of the Wielkopolska Region.*

The aforementioned activation of the local community emphasizes the topics listed in the local development strategy adopted by the respective LAG. An interesting initiative, to be financed from the funds for running costs and activation, was taken up by the Local Action Group – the Association "Window of the Southern Wielkopolska" with its seat in Krotoszyn. Organizing workshops for children, it presented the topic of apiculture in an interesting form. Not only could pupils of primary schools hear stories about working in an apiary, the life of bee colonies and the history of the keeping of wild bees in Poland, but also watch bees in a demonstration beehive from a close distance. They watched a show of devices used in apiculture, beehives, boards and exhibits with great interest. The beekeeper conducting the workshop explained the participants the role of bees in the pollination of plants and the manufacturing process of honey, wax, propolis or bee bread. Pupils could also taste different types of honey.



In 2018, the sixth edition of the competition "Tastes of the LAG" was organized by the Association "Royal Fern".

- *We should make children aware of how much we owe to bees as early as possible. Working in an apiary is not easy, but it brings invaluable benefits in ecological terms and due to the common use of apiculture products in the gastronomy or pharmaceutical sector. Our LAG disseminates the knowledge among the youngest – says Mr. Franciszek Marszałek, President of the Association Local Action Group "Window of the Southern Wielkopolska".*

Ecology is also important for the Local Action Group "Between People and Lakes" with its seat in Kazimierz Biskupi. Its strategy involves the organization of 10 ecological actions engaging the local community. Distributing seedlings in exchange for waste paper or plastics, outdoor games, common actions of planting plants in the public space, school actions, art competitions are examples of how residents of the Poviát of Konin care for the natural environment. In April and May 2018, five municipalities of the LAG: Kazimierz Biskupi, Kleczew, Skulsk, Ślesin and Wilczyn, organized an action of planting flowerbeds with melliferous plants in the public space.

- *Each municipality received 60 pieces of perennials: lythrum, sage and common pochard. Five flowerbeds with melliferous plants were created in the places indicated by the municipal authorities. We hope that we will contribute to increasing the population of wild bees in the territory of the LAG in this way – says Mrs. Maria Siwińska, President of the Local Action Group "Between People and Lakes".*

LOCAL ACTION GROUPS

The Local Action Group "Land of Three Rivers" with its seat in Oborniki focuses on the activation of women. Every year before Easter, it organizes a meeting of female leaders in Objezierze (in the Municipality of Oborniki). - During the ceremony, which also hosts the presentation of the achievements of active women in the territory of the LAG, the super female leader is awarded with prizes. This is also a great opportunity to discuss and exchange experiences. Each of the meetings attracts several tens of women who are full of passion and very engaged in working for their own small homelands – says Mrs. Małgorzata Najdek, President of the Local Action Group "Land of Three Rivers".

The Association "Royal Fern" with its seat in Brzeziny in the Poviát of Kalisz has promoted the region and encouraged residents to be active through the culinary event "Tastes of the LAG" since 2013. This is a great feast of local, regional and traditional products, including thematic culinary competitions for clubs of rural homemakers, local restaurants and bars. This year's sixth edition of the event took place in Błaszki on 15 July.

- This year, the leitmotiv of the event "Tastes of the LAG" was the duck and Chief Jan Kuroń was the special guest. The culinary competition attracted four clubs of rural homemakers, one from each municipality of the LAG: Club of Rural Homemakers in Pieczyška in the Municipality of Brzeziny, Club of Rural Homemakers in Marczanów in the Municipality of Szczytniki, Club of Rural Homemakers in Parczew in the Municipality of Sieroszewice, and Club of Rural Homemakers "Wildflowers" in Chrzanowice in the Municipality of Błaszki. There were also musical accents. The Folk Band "Brzeziny" and the Band "Golden Ears" from the Municipality of Szczytniki were among the performers – says Mr. Zbigniew Słodowy, President of the Association "Royal Fern".

In the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship, there are currently 29 Local Action Groups which implement local development strategies under the current financial perspective, from the funds of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. Each of them has something to offer in terms of the activation of residents. Activities in relation to the implementation of communication plans under the RDP 2014-2020 will be undertaken until 2023.



Source: Association Local Action Group "Window of the Southern Wielkopolska"

Pupils of primary schools in the territory of the Association Local Action Group "Window of the Southern Wielkopolska" participated in workshops on apiculture.

NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK PARTNERS

Going to Lower Silesia to gain knowledge and inspiration

The Association – the Network of Local Action Groups of the Wielkopolska Region, being a partner of the National Network of Rural Areas, organized a study visit to the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship. The initiative was aimed at exchanging experiences between employees of the offices of the LAGs who are engaged in the implementation of the RDP 2014-2020. The project was co-financed from the European funds under Competition No. 2/2018 for Partners of the National Network of Rural Areas.



Source: Association LAG Network of the Wielkopolska Region

Participants in the study visit during their visit to the Palace in Łomnica (in the Poviats of Jelenia Góra).

The National Network of Rural Areas offers a platform for cooperation between the entities engaged in rural development. It provides technical conditions for exchanging knowledge and confronting the experiences gathered by the entities over the years. One of the actions which are supported by the National Network of Rural Areas and intended for the LAGs is to provide assistance in the search for partners of inter-territorial and international cooperation. The Network also serves to improve competencies of the Local Action Groups in terms of their tasks related to the implementation of the Local Development Strategies, in particular advisory services for potential applicants and project evaluation. The European Union relies on the LEADER approach with a belief in the driving power of bottom-up initiatives to be worked out under the partnership approach in the local communities. Such a bottom-up approach strengthens the coherence between the decisions made locally, improves the quality of management and contributes to strengthening the social capital of the rural communities and encourages to apply innovative solutions in the development of the specific area.

The Association – the Network of Local Action Groups of the Wielkopolska Region, which brings together the Local Action Groups operating in our region, decided to hold a meeting with representatives of its counterpart from the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship under the project co-financed by National Network

of Rural Areas, with the aim to compare former observations and conclusions from the implementation of the strategy upon reaching the first milestone, i.e. the deadline within which the LAGs must reach specific indexes. During the study visit, the delegation of the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship visited the area in which the Local Action Group “Flower of Flax” implements its strategy. It covers the area of eight municipalities in the Poviats of Kamienna Góra and Wałbrzych. Thanks to its location in the mountains, it has very good conditions for developing tourism. In Chełmsk Śląski, guests from the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship could participate in the weaving workshops prepared by the Association for the Development of Chełmsk Śląski “Silesian Weavers”. They also visited the palace in Łomnica which is located within the territory of the Local Action Group “Partnership of the Mountain Spirit”. The area of the Local Action Group covers, inter alia, the municipalities which are very well known to lovers of holidays in the Polish Sudety Mountains: Karpacz and Szklarska Poręba. Both LAGs are members of the Association – the Lower Silesian Network of LAGs and were glad to share their knowledge and experiences related to the common projects they have performed so far. This was an opportunity to discuss the tasks and challenges the LAGs in the Wielkopolskie and Śląskie Voivodeships face, to discuss the ideas to perform inter-territorial projects of cooperation financed from the RDP 2014-2020.

NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK PARTNERS

Direct sale in cheese dairies operating by the agricultural holdings

The Association “Wielkopolska with Imagination”, operating in the Poviats of Gostyń and Krotoszyn, organized a study visit and workshops in cheese manufacturing for farmers and members of the Club of Rural Homemakers. Under the project co-financed by the National Network of Rural Areas, attempts were made to encourage local manufacturers of milk to focus on direct sale. This is an interesting proposal above all for owners of smaller agricultural holdings which find it difficult to compete with giants on the market for dairy products.



Source: “Wielkopolska with Imagination” Association

The workshops in cheese making for members of the clubs of rural homemakers increased the knowledge of the local community about the manufacturing process of different categories of cheese.

Under the project “Milk processing in the agricultural holding as a chance to develop” implemented by the Association “Wielkopolska with Imagination”, Partner of the National Network of Rural Areas in 2018, 50 persons participated in a study visit to a cheese dairy and an agricultural holding in Lutomierz in the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship. The agricultural holding manufactures cheeses from cow’s milk and sells them under the brand “Cheeses of Lutomierz from the Owl Mountains”. Not only could guests from the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship learn the history and organization of the cheese dairy, but also participate in a show of cheese making. They also learnt about the experiences in direct sale and marketing of farmers in the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship.

Inspired by the example of the facility which successfully operates in the neighbouring voivodeship, representatives of the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship were eager to increase their knowledge about cheese making.

- During the two-day workshops, we made farmers and homemakers familiar with secrets of the manufacturing process of six categories of cheese: Gouda, Ricotta, a kind of Mozzarella, Camembert, Parmezan, and a kind of Feta. I believe that we have managed to make the participants interested in this topic. This is the first step towards establishing an incubator of local processing - says Mr. Sławomir Szyszka, President of the Local Action Group - the Association “Wielkopolska with Imagination”.

The incubator of local processing is an entity whose aim is to provide local agricultural manufacturers or small processors with infrastructure (premises equipped with devices and machines for the manufacturing of food products and for the preparation of the products for sale), which fulfils the veterinary, sanitary and environmental requirements. The idea of the incubator is that farmers processing agricultural products will be able to use appropriate kitchen facilities free of charge, which allows to process the products in appropriate hygienic and sanitary conditions by contributing to the professional home manufacturing of food products and to the development of economic activity. The advanced form of the incubator of local processing may also be used for storing products and for rendering services in the fields of legal, technological or marketing assistance. The services rendered by the incubator may also cover the preparation of IT tools for the Internet sale and distribution of agricultural products. Farmers pay a fee for using the facilities, machines and devices and professional assistance, and they can be sure that products for direct sale fulfil the valid norm requirements and may be placed onto the market in a secure way. The support for the establishment and development of incubators of local processing is provided under the LEADER action of the RDP 2014-2020.

The project “Milk processing in the agricultural holding as a chance to develop” received co-financing from the funds of the National Network of Rural Areas under Competition No. 2/2018 for Partners of the National Network of Rural Areas.

Christmas is upcoming...

The Christmas time is approaching quickly. For this remarkable time, we would like to wish you a while of respite from every-day duties, family atmosphere and joy at spending time with the closest family. Please find below a recipe for a Christmas goody - a poppy-seed shortcrust pastry with nuts and dried fruits. We encourage you to try it out.

Recipe for a poppy-seed shortcrust pastry with nuts and dried fruits:

Pastry:

- 500g wheat flour (eg plain flour)
- 250g butter
- 180g sugar
- 2 bags vanilla sugar
- 2 spoons sour cream
- 4 egg yolks
- 1 flat teaspoon baking powder

Poppy-seed filling:

- 180-200g icing sugar
- 3 spoons liquid honey
- 4 spoons breadcrumbs
- 50g candied orange peel
- 500g poppy seeds
- 2 eggs
- 4 egg whites
- 1/2 teaspoon almond aroma

Coating glaze:

- 200g white chocolate
- 100ml cream 30% or 36% fat

Additionally:

- approx. 400-450g candied fruits (pineapple, papaya, coconut)

Preparation:

Pour poppy seeds with hot water and boil. Reduce the heat and cook for approx. 15 minutes. Afterwards, drain them off. Once poppy seeds have cooled down, grind them 2 times.

Pastry:

Mix flour with sugar, vanilla sugar and baking powder. Add pieces of butter and rub with fingers for a while. Add egg

yolks, cream and knead the dough quickly. Wrap the dough with foil and put in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Put the baking paper on the bottom of the baking tin 25x40cm large.

Grind eggs with sugar until bright and creamy. Add honey, aroma and stir with a mixer.

Afterwards add poppy seeds, breadcrumbs, candied orange peel and mix thoroughly. Put a cooled pastry onto the baking tin and prick it with a fork. Beat the egg whites until stiff, add them to the poppy seed and mix everything with a spoon carefully.

Put out the poppy-seed filling onto the pastry on the baking tin and make it smooth. Bake it at 180 °C for approx. 60 minutes, function top-bottom. After removing from the oven let it cool.

Coating glaze:

Boil the cream. Take the pot from heat and add bits of chocolate, stir until chocolate has melted. Let it cool for approx. 15 minutes. Pour the hot glaze over the poppy-seed cake and sprinkle with candied fruits.



Poppy-seed shortcrust pastry with nuts and dried fruits.

Source: malakukierka.pl (Recipe and photograph)

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