

FICHE – ORGANIC FARMING CASE

“ EKO-PODEŽELJE COOPERATIVE - JOINT WORK FOR ORGANIC MARKET DEVELOPMENT ”

Data extracted in January 2022

Note to the reader: This set of *fiches – organic farming case* is offering additional information to the meta analysis literature review summarised in *general fiche* and set of fiches on the environmental aspects of ORGANIC FARMING SYSTEMS. Each individual case describes an initiative in different parts of organic food systems within the European Union, delivering more detailed information on possible ways to develop organic systems.

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE ORGANIC SYSTEM

Geographical location	Slovenia
Geographical level	Multi-farms, regional
Description	In 2011, certified organic farmers established a producer group (the cooperative EKO-podeželje) and presence at local markets in the North-East of Slovenia. The group also helped to establish direct relationships with consumers by using a range of promotion and awareness raising actions. The project helped to increase direct selling skills, improve sales and expand regional market opportunities in the organic sector.
Key descriptors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing, advertising and communication • Increasing sales and profits for the cooperative members • Public awareness raising about environmental benefits of organic products • Capacity building for producers • Developing on-farm selling and partnership with external selling points
Production system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small organic farms. Each farm has its own production system, which include a more or less large diversity of common European plant and/or animal species (e.g. cereals, potato, vegetables, fruits, nuts, herbs, goat, sheep, cow, pig, chicken, bees, carps...) • Most farms process on-farm or partner with a local processors (e.g. goat or cow milk-derived products, bee product, bread, bakery products, spreads, beauty/care products, herb preparations, meat products...).
Actors involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 small organic producers and processors • Consumers, tourists, • Cooperation with organic markets, sales outlet, schools and kindergartens
Project type	European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development-funded project
Project status/ date of report	2016

2. VISUALS ASSOCIATED TO THE ORGANIC INITIATIVE



3. ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVMENTS OF THE ORGANIC INITIATIVE

Rationale / Motivation for the project	
<p>The founder and director of the cooperative realised through his years of experience that quality schemes were not widely known about by different target groups of consumers or the public in general. At the same time there was a need for organic farmers to improve their skills in presenting their products to consumers.</p>	
Actions	
Promotion, awareness raising, marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation at trade fairs and different events addressing agriculture, nature and environment, nutrition, health and similar. • Production of promotional materials: a range of leaflets, videos, posters and signs were produced to be distributed and to support visibility. • Design and regular updating of the cooperative's website • Communication actions were aimed at specific target groups for example public institutions, groups with higher purchasing power, young people and the media. The actions included organisation of workshops, lectures, personal presentations, organisation of nature & science days at schools and kindergartens. The media was addressed through invitations to the events, creation of news articles, other press releases and press conferences. • Professional marketing support was provided by an external marketing agency.
On-farm events organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised directly on farms or at market places, usually included food tasting.
Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project gave special attention to building internal capacities of the group members. The focus was put on how to effectively communicate with end consumers and how to present the advantages and benefits of the products, how to organise their own marketing.
Lessons	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When producers saw the concrete effects of the co-financed EAFRD project, they became more motivated and proposed new ideas on how to proceed with joint promotion. • Target groups and their motives should be explored in advance to identify the actual needs in an area. • It is important that actual promotion activities are adapted to each specific environment. • External expertise was very helpful in supporting and developing a communication plan and coordinating its implementation. The media can provide valuable support but a professional approach is also required. • By providing advisory services and by supporting investors in their activities, the cooperative is able to provide co-financing for projects. 	

4. SOURCES, PROJECT WEBSITE OR DATA COLLECTION ON THE CASE STUDY

ENRD fiche https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/joint-work-organic-market-development_en
 Cooperative's website <http://www.eko-podezelje.si/>