

AUSTRIA

Implementing Local Development Strategies

Location

Mühlviertel

Programming period

2007 - 2013

Axis / Priority

Axis 4 – LEADER

Measure

M421 - Implementing cooperation projects

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 310 400
EAFRD 230 800*
(*total funding EU/Bund/Land)

Project duration

2010 – 2014

Project promoter

LAG HansBergLand (Lead-Partner)

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Website

www.bioregion-muehlviertel.at/

Austria's Mühlviertel region developed an organic brand as a marketing tool to promote local producers, suppliers and tourism.

Summary

Austria's Mühlviertel region has seen its organic sector expand significantly in recent decades. The area is home to more than half of Upper Austrian organic farmers (around 2,100) as well as many organic processing companies. The organic network and brand BioRegion was set up in 2010 to promote and develop the sector.



The brand and network is used as a marketing tool to partners in agriculture but also in tourism and food processing. The network aims to make them more visible and to develop tourism activities.

The project created educational events such as for children to visit farms, published an organic-themed brochure and an exhibition on hiking.

Results

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Developing the bioregion network and brand required a long-term vision.
- ❑ A large number of actors are needed in the development process.



Context

Mühlviertel is an Austrian region, where organic farming has developed strongly over recent decades, with favourable geographic conditions. The area is home to more than half of Upper Austrian organic farmers (around 2,100) as well as a large number of bio-processing companies. The majority of farms have been owned by the same family for generations, with small structures dominating. The area is remote, rural, and economically disadvantaged, with no significant industry. The BioRegion Mühlviertel network and brand was set up in 2010 to promote local food producers, suppliers and tourism.

Objectives

The aim was to develop Mühlviertel into one of the leading regions for organic production and ensure its long-term sustainable development.

The BioRegion initiative was designed to strengthen cooperation between organic producers, add value to the supply chain and boost sales through marketing the brand. It also hoped to develop local organic production, processors of ready-to-consume products, suppliers and restaurants. The project also aimed to encourage tourists to the area by promoting the region, its producers and products.

The seven partners of Mühlviertel are: HansBergLand (Lead Partner), Danube-Böhmerwald, Strudengau, Mühlviertler Alm, Mühlviertler Kernland, Urfahrwest, Sterngartl Gusental and the EUREGIO Bavarian Forest Buhmerwald.

Activities

The BioRegion Mühlviertel initiative was set up between 2010 and 2014 as a Leader project. The brand is actively promoted as a marketing tool for the over 124 existing partners who come not only from the agriculture sector, but also processing, gastronomy and tourism. Organic farmers are supported by bringing them into contact and making their work more visible. Special labels and tourist opportunities were also developed. BioRegion products are available in Mühlviertler catering and accommodation companies and can also be purchased online (www.biologisch.kaufen).



Main Results

Participants in the initiative developed a tourist brochure 'Discover-Enjoyment-Beauty: Travel through the Organic Mühlviertel', presented by all project partners. It is part of an 'Organic network' tourist brochure with holiday resorts, excursion destinations, guest houses and farm shops. The brochure is aimed at guests and locals. Copies can be ordered free at: office@bioregion-muehlviertel.at.

The initiative has helped locals develop a greater appreciation for their region and has raised awareness of its producers and products.

Organised events have focussed on communicating on health, holistic lifestyles and the circular economy at regional level.

A 'school-on-farm' programme was developed as well as a hiking exhibition with visits from over 3 000 school children.

The organisers also developed a sustainable organisational structure – see www.bioregion-muehlviertel.at

Key lessons

Developing and establishing a bioregion requires a long-term vision. A large number of actors were involved in the development process.

Additional sources of information

n/a