



# Added Value of Networking

## Success Story

Success Story title *Developing the cooperation of local food networks*

Theme *Knowledge exchange*

NRN *Estonia*

Coordinator *NSU*

Partners *LAGs*

Period *October 2010-April 2012*

Resources *Direct costs ca. 34 000 €*

Geo-location *Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Austria in 2011*

Beneficiaries *Small-scale food producers, SSC food networks, Estonian Food and Veterinary Board*

### Background

The idea to undertake activities emerged in a bottom-up way. This was a consequence of the growing need of the Estonian small food producers to improve their capacities in dealing with legal obstacles for running their businesses and counteract their marginalisation. The important aim became encouraging these producers to improve and market their products better. Also, it was intended to develop local food networks, and promote use of the RDP support. The ENRD initiative about the short supply chains that gave the impulse to deal with this topic.

### Main activities

Between 2010 and 2012 the NSU organised a series of capacity building activities: study trips, thematic events and a publication targeting small-scale producers and representatives of institutions involved in supporting them. Following steps were undertaken:

- October 2010: Study-trip to Latvia, Lithuania and Poland (38 participants: small-scale food producers and officials of the Estonian Veterinary and Food Board).
- October 2010: Study-trip to Austria (participants: small-scale food producers and officials of the Estonian Veterinary and Food Board)
- November 2011: Thematic Day "Local Food" for rural tourism entrepreneurs (participants: rural tourism entrepreneurs and relevant stakeholders)
- February 2012: Thematic day "Local Food Networks" (participants: representatives of local food networks, officials of Estonian Veterinary and Food Board).
- April 2012: Publication "Leader for Local Food Development!", presenting 14 local food projects supported by LEADER+ and so called potential projects (project ideas).





#### Main results/benefits

The study trips, events and publication have greatly contributed to increasing capacities of the Estonian small-scale producers, their networks and specialist institutions. Since the first study trip in 2010, the networking between local food producers has increased. In follow-up, they have started organisation of regular meetings and exchange of experiences. In particular it came to discussions between the Estonian Veterinary and Food Board and small-scale food producers about issues and possible solutions. The officials encouraged producers to contact local veterinary and food board officers for further consultations. The thematic days about local food stimulated an exchange of experiences and brought stakeholders together. Local food networks have also created common communication channels in social media. They run exchanges on possible topics for the oncoming thematic days, and the need for thematic guidance for small producers. The topic of local food is also systematically present in the media.

#### Contribution of the NSU

NSU organized and financed all above mentioned activities.

#### Contribution of the partners

LAGs helped the NSU to identify the study trips participants, contact the local food networks and contributors to the articles in the publication about local food.

#### Success factors

- Involving Veterinary and Food Board at the very first steps of the initiative
- Creating the direct exchange opportunity with the small-scale food producers

