



# Added Value of Networking

## Success Story

Success Story title	<i>Competition "Friendly village"</i>		
Theme	<i>Knowledge exchange</i>		
NRN	<i>Poland</i>	Coordinator	<i>Central NSU, 16 Regional NSUs</i>
Period	<i>Annually since 2009</i>	Resources	<i>73 350 euro</i>
Partners	<i>Rural and municipal-rural communes, LAGs, Agricultural Advisory Centers, branches of the Paying Agency</i>		
Geo-location	<i>16 voivodships of Poland</i>		
Beneficiaries	<i>Entities of public sector (mainly self-government units), entities of social sector (NGOs) and entities of private sector (SME) implementing projects supported from the EU funds</i>		

### Background

The idea behind the „Friendly Village” competition is promotion of the best infrastructural rural projects which remove barriers in access to cultural values and education, eliminate social inequalities and at the same time protect environment and Polish cultural heritage. With the support of EU funds places are created in which everybody can find something interesting for himself, where one wants to live, work and rest and where tourists want to spend free time and provide inhabitants and local self-governments (communes) with some extra income. The competition allows, at least partially, to answer the question in what way the quality of lives of the rural areas inhabitants can be improved and how to make people identify themselves with and be proud of the rural area they live in.

### Main activities

Each year there is the “Friendly Village” competition is organized within the framework of NRN activities in order to present the best infrastructural projects implemented in rural areas thanks to the EU funds support. The competition is organized in two stages: regional and national. Regional competition (stage I) is run by 16 Regional Networks Units (Secretariats). National competition (stage II) is outsourced to the Foundation of Assistance Programmes for Agriculture FAPA by the Central NSU.

Projects which took first places in regional competitions are eligible to take part in the national competition. At the national stage the Central Competition Commission appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development chooses winners on the basis of evaluation criteria. Projects are assessed according to the same criteria at both stages. The criteria are: innovation, functionality, level of the use of the implemented project, impact on the economic development of the region. At the beginning, the competition regarded only one category: technical one. In the next years there was introduced another category – social one and in the third edition of the competition there was added an ecological category. The final of the competition is a national conference and publication of the winning projects.



#### Main results/benefits

- The choice of the best infrastructural projects in different categories: technical, social, ecological (on the basis of criteria which promote creativity, innovation, functionality, level of the project use after its implementation, partnership in the project implementation and its influence on economic development of the region)
- Review of the best infrastructural projects during the conference (66 projects in three editions)
- Publication summarising and presenting winners of the competition (2 publications from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the competition, 5 000 copies each)
- Exchange of information and knowledge among participants of the competition, representatives of the Regional NSUs, self-governments (communes) and central administration during the national conference

Thanks to different competition criteria there have been awarded and promoted infrastructural objects which serve the development of various spheres of social and economic life. The name "Friendly Village" was granted to such objects as sewage plants, sports facilities, educational facilities, village day-rooms, tourist and recreation infrastructure, facilities that use renewable energy. The competition helps also to promote voivodships.

The "Friendly village" title ensures that the project implemented by the beneficiary will be entered into the data base of good practices on the NRDN website which helps other organizations in their search for proper initiatives implemented in rural areas and regarding revitalization of the public space or complex actions in rural development planning.

#### Contribution of the NSU

Coordination of the competition, specification of the competition criteria, organization of the stage I of the regional competition in voivodships, development of the rules and appointment of the Central Competition Commissions for the national competition (stage II).

#### Contribution of the Partners

Collaboration with the NSU in selecting the winners of the competition

#### Success factors

- Involvement of many partners who act for the benefit of the rural areas development and who promote next editions of the competitions on their websites or information boards
- Creating an unique, innovative recognizable brand "Friendly Village" with a specially designed logo which presents all elements that should be characteristic to the rural areas

#### Additional information

More information available on the website: <http://www.ksow.gov.pl>

