

Title of the example of good practice	The protection of the Livno cheese and exercising the rights of small-volume producers
Categories	Local products, Local initiative, Management
Organization	Association of producers of the traditional Livno cheese "Cincar"; Cincar 2 Agricultural Cooperative
Partners	The municipality of Livno and the Herzeg-Bosnia County
Area of Activity / Location	Livanjsko polje ("the Livno field")
Country	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Degree/form of protection	Ramsar site. The process of protection according to national categorization currently in progress
Scope of implementation (local, national)	Local
Time period required to achieve a solution	10 years
Number of projects	5
Number of employees	1 (4 since the beginning of 2018)
Budget	EUR 1,000,000
Funding source	UCODEP (Unity and Cooperation for the Development of Peoples), UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), Czech Development Agency
More information about the project (link)	http://www.okusihercegovinu.com/tradicionalni-proizvodi/livanjski-sir/
Contact person	Jozo Baković
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • founding the association for the protection of an autochthonous product, among the first in Bosnia and Herzegovina • more than 50 family-run productions are members of the Cincar association (number of members growing constantly since foundation) • indirect benefit for the people – 500 (family members collecting an income from the activities)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of new services – 20 new small dairy farms • foundation of an agricultural cooperative – 11 member families • increased product quality and quantity (110 tonnes of cheese) • increase in livestock units – 8,000 sheep, 700 cows • association members are active participants in working groups involved in legislation related to autochthonous products of Bosnia and Herzegovina
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Problem/opportunity	
Problem you wish to solve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of primary market • Lack and non-implementation of legislation related to the protection of autochthonous products and food safety • Unfair competition • Disparities in product quality
Opportunities you wish to seize?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • traditional agricultural production • high-quality pastures • engaged local community • widely recognized brand • demand for autochthonous products
Planning	
Key pre-requisites for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existence of a recognisable product with a long-lasting tradition • possibility of founding an association that would serve as a legal entity for livestock farmers, and so that they would jointly agree on their priorities and direct their resources • a person that understand the forms and ways of

	submitting project proposals
How did the idea come to you?	<p>Our original idea was the protection of products and achieving the rights of small-volume producers in Livanjsko polje.</p> <p>The cooperation with the Italian association UCODEP on the “Taste Herzegovina” project really opened our eyes. We took organized trips to visit producers in Italy and Croatia and that’s when we started to get a picture of what we need and want. We saw that the quality of our product matched all others, but also that there are other things we need to work on. They were the ones that financed our first 6 mini dairy farms. The municipality of Livno, Herzeg-Bosnia County and the UNDP joined later, and now, with the support of the Czech Development Agency, we are concluding the process we started 10 years ago.</p>
How much time has passed since the conceptualisation of the idea until the moment you could see the positive effects?	Opening the first mini dairy farms had positive feedback, and the general public became familiar with the producers’ objectives maybe a year and a half since the beginning of the “Taste Herzegovina” project. This was also recognised by the municipality which joined the project. All this resulted in invitations for the association to exhibit at trade fairs all around Bosnia and Herzegovina.
Is the idea part of a more expanded strategy?	<p>The production of the Livno cheese is included in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – municipal and county development strategies – national / political-division-specific documents and strategies related to environmental protection, autochthonous products, cultural heritage and/or tourism and rural development strategies.
Implementation	
Key stages – from idea to actualisation?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Founding of producers’ association (defining work goals and setting priorities) 2. Strengthening cooperation with associations, donors, local authorities, scientific institutions and the media

	<p>(more intensive contact, common projects)</p> <p>3. Education (organised visits to similar producers abroad, workshops)</p> <p>4. Adapting to conditions and standards required by regulations related to the protection of origin and food safety in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EU.</p> <p>5. Cooperation with the Czech Development Agency (branding, infrastructure, equipment)</p>
Which actions have you undertaken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • founding the association of producers of the traditional Livno cheese, which enabled us to initiate concrete cooperation with representatives of authorities, donors, associations, scientific institutions, the media • joint identification of issues and finding solutions with the partners • organised visits to similar producers and fairs in Italy and Croatia, and, most recently, the Czech Republic and Slovakia • fulfilment of all statutory requirements for product protection (ordinance, standardisation, traceability, recipe uniformity and control system) • participation in working groups for the drafting of legislation and ordinances related to the protection of autochthonous products and local development strategies • joint presentation at trade fairs • including the local authorities in attracting projects • adaptation, construction and furnishing of a mini/family dairy farm for the purpose of adjustment to all current hygiene standards • founding of a cooperative is more rentable than doing business as individual sole proprietorships • started a regular annual cheese trade show

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training for Cooperative management • branding – a unique label, but each family has their own marking • a common facility consisting of a sales and office space, cheese museum and storage space • equipping a laboratory for products of animal origin of the county Office for Food and Veterinary Medicine • promotion of the tourist cheese route
How much was the total investment per stages and who were the donors?	<p>1. The project was funded by UCODEP and its value was EUR 15,000. It was co-funded by the municipality of Livno and the producers (education and the first 6 mini dairy farms)</p> <p>2. UNDP and the municipality of Livno EUR 25,000 (mini dairy farms, meeting statutory requirements)</p> <p>3. Stage: Czech Development Agency, Livno municipality, Herzeg-Bosnia County EUR 1,000,000 (education, mini dairy farms, equipment, construction of warehouse and expo-sales centre, promotion, laboratory equipment)</p>
What are the roles of the partners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Italian NGO, UCODEP, conducted the project of the protection of autochthonous products in Herzegovina and south-western Bosnia; they were the ones that contacted us and we started cooperating and developing this process. • The municipality of Livno – back when we were individual agricultural producers, we already had good relations with the consulting service of the municipality. It helped us to continue the cooperation as an association and take it to a higher level. We arrived with a project for which we needed co-funding and, after a lot of negotiations, they agreed to cooperation. Since then, we have been actively participating in the municipality's working groups

	<p>related to the adoption and implementation of development strategies, but we also, in turn, include the employees of the municipality in charge of the economy in all of our activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP/GEF At their invitation, we applied for small grants within the project of peatland protection in Livanjsko polje they were implementing. Following the project, we continued the cooperation on other projects they were implementing here as well. • The WWF recognised our work, promoted it and included us in the work of coalitions of associations from the basin of the Cetina river called “Partnership for the Environment”; we also participated in the initial meetings of the committee of the stakeholders of the Ramsar site. • Scientific institutions got involved in the implementation of the project from the beginning in a consulting capacity; there are also a lot of scientific papers on the Livno cheese, and the students of the Faculties of Agriculture and Food Science of Sarajevo and Mostar still come here for field trips.
How did you select the local stakeholders?	Based on the local stakeholders’ interest and capacities. The participants were livestock owners of the Livanjsko polje area.
How have you included the stakeholders?	A business requiring the involvement of entire families which is also their source of income. Such small family farms are, unfortunately, barely surviving, and we’re trying to include them in the Cooperative and give them some boost as much as we can. All family members of the producers received training depending on their jobs.
Which vulnerable groups have you included and in what way?	Through equal approach as with other stakeholder groups – through conversation and subsequent e-mail and telephone communication. More than 50 representatives of the association participated in its activities, out of which

	half were women and young people.
Have you drawn the attention of the local stakeholders to their rights to information?	<p>The association and, subsequently, the cooperative was founded because we couldn't reach the decision makers individually in a productive way. They cooperated individually with scientific institutions, experts, international organisations and associations. They all suggested we join forces so that we, the small-volume producers among larger dairy farms, could achieve our rights.</p> <p>Acting as an organised unit is different, it has opened a lot of doors to us and, most importantly, it has offered us the possibilities (administrative, educational) to implement projects. Now our priorities are clearly defined and we're tackling them together.</p> <p>The business we are in demands a great effort from the entire family. Even the children assist in the work. And the wives are usually the ones that make the cheese, and they've all been trained when we were implementing production standardisation.</p>
Which communication activities have you implemented and which channels have you used?	<p>We had no plan with regard to communicating with the general public whatsoever. We have neither the time nor the skills it requires. Due to the general lack of time, it's hard enough to maintain communication amongst ourselves. So far, we've produced some promotional material as part of project-related activities, and we're sometimes invited to appear on the radio and called up for interviews. This is about to change, as this stage of the project is all about branding and product promotion, and we will appoint a young person for the task.</p>
How have you included the activities of reducing and alleviating climate change into your work?	<p>Developing standards for sustainable business – energy efficiency product quality depends on the alimentation, which, in turn, depends on the climate conditions such as floods and droughts. Unfortunately, this is beyond our influence and I hope that the area protection activities will</p>

	also resolve the management of water issues in the fields.
Challenges during implementation:	Administrative: Slow implementation of procedures and insufficient institutional support in the initial stages of the initiative. Lack of time and a person to coordinate the activities.
	Technical: Lack of capacities (a single person on the project). This was the first time we dealt with the implementation of a project on such a large scale, and we lacked the necessary skills and experience to manage it. This was resolved by educating the members and including institutional experts (municipality, county) in project management.
	Financial: It's often impossible to obtain the necessary co-funds from the local authorities within the required time limit.
	With the stakeholders: Getting the stakeholders to work together in order to achieve better results.
Change	
How was the negative environmental impact reduced?	The constant increase of production prevents the overgrowing of grasslands and revives the neglected pastures. Some association members have over 1000 sheep. The grazing helps maintain the natural eco-systems and so does the mechanical mowing for the purpose of collecting hay for the winter. The total surface of the Livanjsko polje that is being maintained is 21,761 ha.
Positive economic (E) and social (S) change in:	The public sector – national: The importance of the association and its participation in working groups for the drafting of laws on the protection of food origin has been recognised.

	<p>The public sector – local:</p> <p>The promotion of the area and local producers, increased visibility. The credibility of local authorities in relation to the donors has increased due to the implementation of a large-scale project.</p> <p>The municipality of Livno recognised the Cincar Association as the key partner in achieving strategic goals and the importance of this product to the recognisability of the area. The Livno cheese is also an important item in other strategic goals related to tourism and culture. For example: The “Cheese Days” event, although still emerging, is an integral part of the Livno cultural summer programme. The municipality of Livno gets an expo-sales area for its trademark product.</p> <p>The Herzeg-Bosnia County also included the small-volume producers in its support programmes, where before it has only supported large-scale dairy farms and their collaborators. Production development and the protection of the traditional Livno cheese is also included in the municipal and county development strategies. The process of drafting a county-wide rural development strategy, in which we’re actively participating, is currently in progress.</p>
	<p>The business sector:</p> <p>E: increased income, sustainable business activities</p> <p>S: promoting products and services, the possibility of networking and joint action. Solely local companies and supplier were contracted during the construction of the mini dairy farms and the common facility.</p> <p>The large-scale dairy farms producing cheese agreed to a dialogue, which has never been the case before.</p> <p>Local businesspeople (restaurants, merchants) gain quality partners and suppliers.</p> <p>By meeting the requirements for export into the EU</p>

	<p>countries, the product will make its way back to its primary market, the Dalmatian coast, where the “traditional Livno cheese” will once again be available without any legal issues. The same goes for all the restaurants and supermarket chains in the country and abroad, which will be able to offer traditional Livno cheese for the first time ever.</p>
	<p>The local community:</p> <p>Economic:</p> <p>The 50 families that are members of the Association of producers of the traditional Livno cheese “Cincar” draw economic benefits. At the moment, over 200 people make a living from this type of cheese production.</p> <p>About 20 families (that meet the requirements) founded the Cincar 2 Cooperative, within the project of the Czech Development agency, so that they could enter the market. The other families can join the cooperative as soon as they fulfil the requirements as stipulated by the ordinance.</p> <p>Lower costs of laboratory production control.</p> <p>Two people are employed full-time (two more planned).</p> <p>Social:</p> <p>Legalised market and products.</p> <p>Product protection as part of the heritage and culture of the area. The cheese museum.</p> <p>The public has been informed of the status and issues of traditional producers.</p>
	<p>The scientific community:</p> <p>Participating in protection processes from the beginning and enabling field work for students (Faculty of Agriculture and Food Science of Sarajevo) and monitoring the status and habitats of species.</p>
What's your greatest contribution to the project?	<p>For the people</p> <p>Increasing the income of the local community based on</p>

	our own products and services.
Replication and recommendations	
What are the key things essential to replication?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • founding a producers' association and strengthening its capacities • quality and recognisability of the producers • including decision makers and managers in the very beginning of project implementation • including scientific institutions, i.e. experts and students in the initial stage of the project • persistence • good cooperation between project partners and a common effort
Is there anything you would do differently (and recommend others)?	<p>Hire a younger person who understands the forms and ways of submitting project proposals. We found a lot of calls for projects complicated, and some donors provided expert assistance in the drafting of projects, as well as the counselling service of the municipality of Livno.</p> <p>As an association, we took a long time to get involved in the processes around us. The moment we started to cooperate more intensely amongst ourselves, as well as encourage each other and insist on cooperation with all the stakeholders of the process, a lot of possibilities opened up.</p>
What is the key element for project sustainability?	A recognised product and market positioning.
Where do you see this idea being replicable?	<p>A recently established protected area can apply this model, i.e. this model can be one of the key factors/arguments in the process of advocating the establishment of a protected area.</p> <p>The protected areas the assets of which are managed by municipalities and/or other institutions managing public assets.</p>

	Products of a specific geographical origin.
What are your recommendations for policy improvements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a more significant participation of local authorities in supporting local initiatives (securing financial resources – subsidies) • passing and implementing laws related to the protection of autochthonous products • the protection of Livanjsko polje by national categorisation • improving the competitiveness of local products on the market • facilitating market access for small-volume producers
What are the areas for which you'd like to know about the examples of good practice?	Market positioning (promotion and sales)
Expectations	
What do you expect from the "Nature for People" site?	That the people recognise these examples, based on what we do, as models for achieving economic benefits through the preservation of natural resources and product and service placement.
What do you expect of the WWF?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the promotion of traditional animal husbandry • partnership • organisation of education and trainings • exchange of experiences