



2020 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title of the Story: Local products in fuction of sustainable destination development

Destination Name: *(include any state, province or region)*

Lika destination

Country: Croatia

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Position: Cluster manager

Nomination Category: *(Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)*

- Culture & Communities
- Environment & Climate
- Nature & Ecotourism
- Islands & Seaside
- Immediate responses in dealing with the COVID -19
- Post COVID -19 recovery
- One of the 17 SDGs* *(if yes, which one)* GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

*The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs are integrated—that is, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. What are the Sustainable Development Goals? <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

For further information on Tourism for SDGs: <http://tourism4sdgs.org/>

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices [here](#)



DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Issues faced

Speaking of Lika destination, we can say it is an ecological core of Croatia. Beside its unique nature beauty (almost 50% of area is NATURA 2000 area) destination has an unique cuisine, with products which are made within this ecological oasis. Many plant cultures thrive in Lika destination and its preserved nature and beneficial temperature are the key to Lika products being so healthy and tasty. Many family farms breed and raise livestock, harvest the land and plant the cultures that are characteristic of the Lika area, and they do it in a traditional way. Lika has always been known as the agricultural region in Croatia. Despite these facts, involvement of local products in tourist offer is very low, almost none. Local producers are not educated about tourism opportunities and promotion of local products does not exist. Local farmers does not use technologies such as e-mail address, social media, marketing tools etc. They sell their products at home, without ambition to spread the production and sell in local shops or close to tourist attractions. Lika destination with all natural beauty is also known as a sparsely populated, only 7 inhabitants per square meter, which is equal to the Subsahar area, with tendency of emigration of young people. Average age of the population is over 50 years.

Because all this issues we decided to create Lika Quality brand with local products, help local producers to sell their products (to tourists) and promote destination as a gastro-destination. Because of its characteristics, we are developing the “smart sustainable destination” moto.

Methods, steps and tools applied

In 2017. we created a brand, gathered contacts of local producers from Lika destination and invited them to education about system.

Seeing as our cause was to create a distinguishable destination as a gastro-destination, as well as to showcase the exceptional quality of selected products and to protect those products as such, a complete regional quality system for food, drinks and souvenirs under the name Lika Quality was developed.

The Lika Quality mark was designed as a combination of the traditional Lika cap and the international mark for quality – the letter Q. Read more about Lika Quality system at: <https://www.lika-destination.hr/regional-quality-system/>.

Accordingly to the pre-defined rules, the mark is given to the products which are made in the area of Lika Destination in accordance with all the legislation, as well as based on tradition.

After involving first producers in Lika Quality system, we started to promote the destination as a gastro-destination. New web page was created with all informations about system, producers and products. We also created e-mail addresses for all producers in Lika Quality system, so everyone could contact them and buy their products.



During 2018. and 2019. we organized several educations all around Lika destination to inform and educate all local producers who were interested in involving in Lika Quality system, or in learning more about the system. Since lot of producers were not registered as a company or a trade, we gave them instructions how to be properly registered and do business properly. This was a big step for production in Lika destination.

Today we use different methods and tools. We are strongly working on product placement in cooperation with LIKA COOP agricultural cooperative and the public institutions.

Since the local producers are focused on making quality product (and not the making marketing strategy) we helped them in that way. We visited them all individually, listened to the story of the origin of the products, took photos of the products. All this was a prerequisite for quality product promotion. We give them advice on how to run social networks and be visible on the Internet. We also made them google maps navigation points to make them more visible.

Except constant education and promotion, we connect local producers with other tourist entities in the destination.

During the crisis caused by the coronavirus, we advised producers to turn to online sales of products. Also, we placed products in all local markets in the Plitvice Lakes National Park which is very first time that local residents can buy Lika Quality products in grocery shop and a great help to local production during the crisis.

Key success factors

Key factors for success in our story was following:

- experience in destination management
- quality products
- good communication with public institutions
- consistency and continuous education
- persistence in achieving results
- understanding of local producers
- giving "step by step" instructions
- recognition by the local community
- gain one of the 17 SDGs: GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Lessons learned

At the beginning, we thought the only issues was lack of awareness of local producers about tourism opportunities and skepticism of local producers about involving in tourism. After starting the development of system we realized how it is required much more effort and work to create sustainable system then we expected. We faced changing the minds of people who have been working on well-established pattern of behavior and with no computer knowledge at all. Producers were only focused on making a quality product and not on elements of marketing (visual appearance, sales potential, the possibility of inclusion in the tourist offer). During COVID-19 crisis we faced with huge problem – product placement.

On the other side, Lika Quality system gave much more success than we expected. It is recognized in all regions in Croatia and well received by local population in Lika Destination.



Results, achievements and recognitions

Today, Lika Quality system is well recognized in Croatia and in the region (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia). Organizations that want to run their system are calling us to educate them about developing a sustainable system.

The system gave great results; local producers are involved in tourist offer, they are associated with other tourist entities (hotels, restaurants, national parks, private renters, souvenir shops ect.), they are informed and educated about sustainable development.

There are 57 producers from the area of Lika Destination. They have made altogether 157 products in 11 different categories, which have undergone the system's scrumptious selection. As a result of the cooperation between the Cluster Lika Destination and the LIKA COOP agricultural cooperative, a common selling spot for all Lika Quality producers was organized in the Plitvice Lakes National Park in June 2018. Read more about opening a sales point at the link <https://www.lika-destination.hr/lika-quality-shop/>. The store was located in the most visited touristic location in Croatia, a location visited by 10% of all the tourists who come to visit Croatia in one year. The products can also be bought in Paklenica National Park, and soon in North Velebit National Park.

This way, all family farms are directly included in the touristic development, seeing as tourists now had the chance to taste some of the locally produced products, which are high in demand. There is also a high demand for the locally made products from restaurateurs, because their guests are interested in trying them. This is exactly the direction in which the certification system Lika Quality is headed. The next step is certifying the restaurants which will offer their guests meals made from the products with the Lika Quality mark. This way, the high quality locally produced products enter the category of premium products, and their representation on the local market and in restaurants is encouraged. This is a way to finally reward the dedicated local producers and to ensure them a market to place their products, and Lika will go further on its way of branding as an exceptional gastro-destination on the touristic map of the world.

The Lika Quality system is guided by the sustainable development philosophy; it encourages a greater extent of local production and consumption. This way, it ensures work places for the locals and their family farms. The system guarantees quality and local production based on traditions, and the local producers are included in the touristic development.

Additional references

Available links:

Lika destination official site: <https://www.lika-destination.hr/en/>

Lika Quality- regional quality system: <https://www.lika-destination.hr/regional-quality-system/>

Lika Quality products: <https://www.lika-destination.hr/lika-quality-products/>

Lika Quality shop: <https://www.lika-destination.hr/lika-quality-shop/>

Lika Quality map: <https://www.lika-destination.hr/lika-quality-products/map/>

News about education: <https://www.lika-destination.hr/news/more/137/workshops-on-inclusion-in-the-lika-quality-system-and-the-development-of-rural-areas-were-held>



Lika Quality – public invitation: <https://www.lika-destination.hr/news/more/138/public-invitation-for-expressing-interest-in-using-the-lika-quality-mark-for-products>

Lika food on European table: <https://www.lika-destination.hr/news/more/134/lika-food-on-the-european-table>

Lika Quality product won an award: <https://www.lika-destination.hr/news/more/119/lika-quality-product-won-a-gold-medal>

Lika Quality certificate ceremony: <https://www.lika-destination.hr/news/more/110/assignment-of-the-lika-quality-certificate-and-opening-of-the-info-point-of-destination-and-trade-with-lika-quality-products>

Lika Quality lecture: <https://www.lika-destination.hr/news/more/101/lika-quality-lecture-and-the-development-of-agrotourism-in-lika-destination>

