

More than a Village

„More Than a Village” Project results



Prepared by MTaV Partnership

October, 2025

Overview of the Implemented Pilots

More Than a Village Pilots

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- ❑ ITC - Innovation Technology Cluster Murska Sobota, Slovenia
<https://www.itc-cluster.com>
 - ❑ Local Action Group Association "South Warmia", Poland
www.poludniowawarmia.pl
 - ❑ ANCI Liguria, Italy
www.anciliguria.it
 - ❑ City of Buzet, Croatia
<https://www.buzet.hr>
 - ❑ Hajdú - Bihar County Government, Hungary
<https://www.hbmo.hu>



ITC - Innovation Technology Cluster Murska Sobota, Slovenia

Innovation system for reduction of food loss and waste



About the Pilot

- In the Pomurje region, over 29 kilograms of edible food per person is discarded during one year
- Our pilot brings together farmers, food producers, and local communities to turn surplus food into opportunity.
- Through digital innovation, cooperation, and awareness, we're reshaping how food circulates from farm to fork.



zelenatočka

!hudo!
!zeleno!

DOBR
HDO



Challenges Addressed

- Surplus food goes unused due to a lack of logistics and coordination.
- Limited consumer awareness about the value of preventing food waste.
- Fragmented food chains with small producers working in isolation.
- Regulatory barriers and uncertainty on using surplus food.



Food is safe but the quality is no longer as best before date

**Best Before Date
VS
Expiry Date**

Food is no longer safe to eat



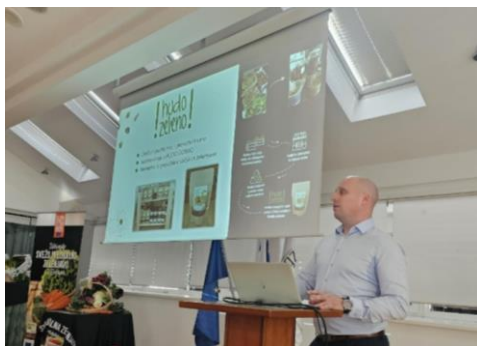
Actions Implemented

- Created a digital surplus food marketplace to connect local producers and processors.
- Launched online awareness campaign and series of events
- Prepared a national Food Loss & Waste booklet highlighting best practices and policy recommendations.

izdelki

Seznam izdelkov

ID	Slika	Naziv	Sifra	Kategorija	Cena (Eurocent)	Količina	Loca	Veljavnost	Status	Ukazi
85		Banane Columbia	00005	Sadje	0.60	100.00 kg	Zakleno toča	13. 04. 2025	Prebrskaj	✓ ✕ ⚙
84		Kajstane rumene	01769	Sadje	2.00	4.00 kg	Zakleno toča	06. 04. 2025	Prebrskaj	✓ ✕ ⚙
83		Hruška Karar	02412	Sadje	0.80	40.10 kg	Zakleno toča	06. 04. 2025	Prebrskaj	✓ ✕ ⚙
82		Jabolka Gala	02109	Sadje	0.80	110.00 kg	Zakleno toča	16. 03. 2025	Prebrskaj	✓ ✕ ⚙



Lessons Learned

- Cooperation grows when stakeholders see shared benefits and not obligations.
- Trust and transparency are key for data sharing and food redistribution.
- Simplicity matters: digital tools must be easy and intuitive for local farmers.
- Awareness is most effective when combined with action so that people remember what they experience.



Pilot: Innovation system for reduction of food loss and waste



Home Who We Are Network Platforms & Infrastructure Tools & Applications Data Space

CircEco Platform
& Community



CircEco's platform and community are built around a cloud-based marketplace, enabling farmers and businesses to sell their surplus food – perishable food close to expiry and food not meeting marketing standards. The CircEco business model is being deployed, piloted and validated in the **Green Point Living Lab**, where the surplus food from the **Green Point SFSC** is being upcycled to a food processing SMEs (such as **Hudo Dobre**), producing sauces and healthy snacks, which then return to the **Green Point** retail store as high-end local products.



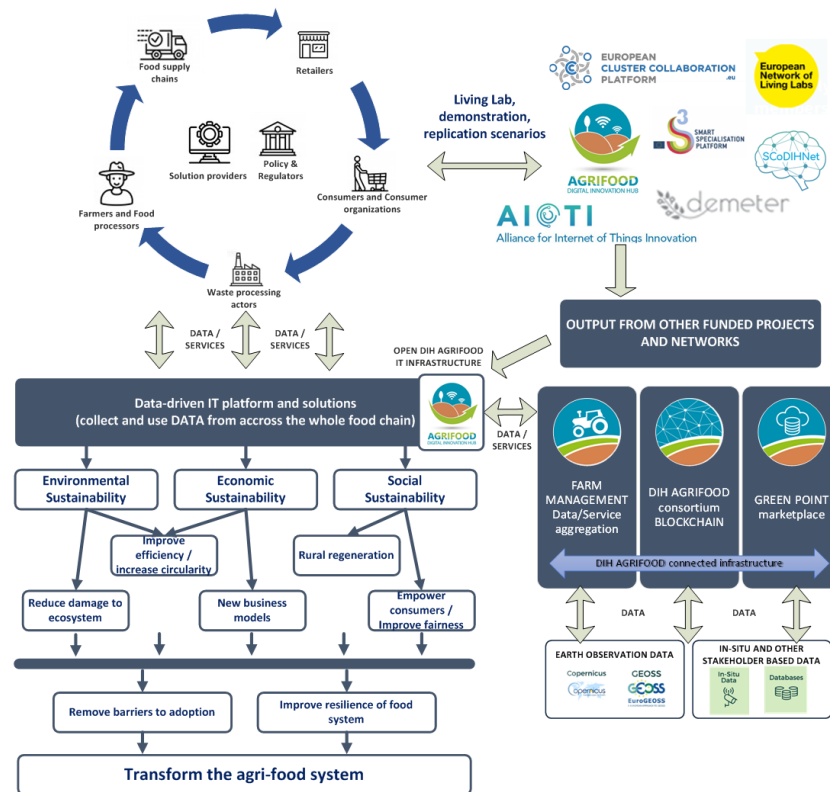
Short-term and Long-term Results

Short-term:

- Over 100 kg of food saved from waste.
- Strong engagement from local stakeholders and communities.
- Increased visibility of local farmers and Green Point network.

Long-term:

- Foundation for a regional food circularity model.
- Empowered citizens who understand their role in reducing waste.
- Blueprint for scaling up across Slovenia and beyond.



Transferability & Sustainability

- The model is replicable across rural regions with local producer networks.
- Based on community involvement and digital facilitation, so that it could be adaptable to local needs.
- Sustainability ensured through integration with existing Green Point activities and stakeholder commitment.
- Future plans: extend marketplace reach, foster policy alignment, and involve more actors.



ITC - Innovation Technology Cluster Murska Sobota



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<https://www.linkedin.com/company/dihagrifood/>

Local Action Group Association "South Warmia", Poland

Designing and testing a new Smart Village Hub



About the Pilot

- SMART VILLAGE HUB - A place to support SMEs, NGOs, and residents from rural areas in creating and developing Smart Villages has been established in Marcinkowo under the name Smart Village Hub (SVH) in Marcinkowo, Purda commune, Warmia and Masuria region.



Challenges Addressed

- Warmia and Mazury, and particularly the area of Southern Warmia, include rural areas characterized by depopulation, an aging society, migration of young people, communication, energy, economic and digital exclusion, as well as the lack of access to social and health services. Low population density causes less interest from politicians (a small number of votes in a dispersed area), which translates into less support. SVH aims to support the implementation of grassroots ideas by rural residents, reversing the unfavorable trends characteristic of rural areas in Central Europe.
- Challenges and problems were defined as the result of consultation meetings, which were held during the process of creating the Local Development Strategy of the Local Action Group South Warmia for the period 2023-2027.

Actions Implemented

Actions:

- Conducted workshops and consultancy meetings in Smart Village Hub, reaching residents, inc. Young people, reaching target groups: 17 SME and 12 NGO, and testing the Smart Village Hub offer.

Main achievements:

- 1 SMART VILLAGE HUB in Marcinkowo, Purda commune, with an offer directed to SMEs and NGOs in rural areas.
- 12 NGOs and 17 SMEs reached as the target group for Smart Village Hub
- 4 workshops with stakeholders, inc. over 70 people (residents of rural areas, SMEs, NGOs, youth)
- 5 meetings with target groups, inc. SMEs and NGOs as a testing ground and an offer of the Smart Village Hub: Village Community Center in Marcinkowo, Purda commune, from April to September 2025.

Actions Implemented

Workshops and consultancy meetings in Smart Village Hub



The photos owned by LAG South Warmia

Lessons Learned

Recommendations based on lessons learned:

- 1) **Good diagnosis** – based on public debates, workshops, surveys.
- 2) **A good leader (a person or an organization) who** is a driving force of promotional action.
- 3) **Define a clear goal for the meeting with the local community**, for example, developing a specific document.
- 4) **Involvement of various sectors**, including external people with a fresh perspective, e.g., new inhabitants, university staff.
- 5) **Enthusiastic people** to run workshops with the local community.

Short-term and Long-term Results

Short-term:

- Launching Smart Village Hub with offers **NEW SERVICES** for local communities: Consultancy on starting and developing business activities in rural areas, external sources of financing for business activities, advice on innovation in rural areas, including the creation of energy cooperatives, digitalization, and tourism development. Development of bottom-up initiatives consistent with the Smart Village concept for Marcinkowo, along with advice on transferring good practices related to the creation and implementation of the Smart Village concept to nearby towns.

Long-term:

- This pilot responds to the need of rural areas, where residents have limited access to knowledge and the possibility of consulting ideas, substantive support, and training in rural areas.
- New Services allow rural areas to develop and be more resilient economically. This will counteract the depopulation of rural areas and increase their attractiveness as a place to do business and live a peaceful and healthy life.

Transferability & Sustainability

- Development of a Smart Village concept for the locality in line with the grassroots approach and involvement of the broadest possible group of the local community (local leaders, SMEs, NGOs, youth, seniors, residents).
- Defining fixed days/hours of support in an accessible location.
- Responding to reported needs (scope of support, convenient hours).
- **Local Action Group "South Warmia" is an organization operating in rural areas since 2007 and has become a permanent part of the landscape of organizations operating in rural areas. As part of its statutory activities, LAG SW ensures the durability of the product after the project is completed, as well as the expansion of activities to create additional locations where the Smart Village Hub provides its services.**

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LAG South Warmia



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PILOTING A NEW DIGITAL SILVER ECONOMY HUB IN HAJDÚ-BIHAR COUNTY, HUNGARY

Empowering Rural Hajdú-Bihar: Smart Solutions for a Silver Economy



About the Pilot



Partner: Hajdú-Bihar County Government

Location of the pilot: Hajdú-Bihar County, Hungary

The main objective of the pilot activities was **to practically strengthen the digital literacy** of local entrepreneurs and businesses in order to exploit the silver economy potential, to create an ecosystem to support business, initiatives and consumers integrating people over 50 and to create a platform for the basics of silver economy, so that the optimal combination of these two development areas will lead to effective cooperation.

Challenges Adressed

- lack of local knowledge and expertise - there is the greatest need for **capacity and competence building** in rural areas
- **growing demand for a calm, green environment and domestic tourism** in the post-crisis period is also a potential to be exploited
- development of **short supply chains** and the **strengthening of local markets** which can alleviate vulnerability and strengthen resilience;
- through the **international network of settlements**, localities should recognize the potentials of smart development, find out what kind of “resource mix” they can get support for
- **sharing resources** – mapping potential of silver economy
- development efforts that exploit the potential of digitalisation can help improve **access to services in rural areas**
- **village hub** – actual database of service providers and associations

Actions Implemented

- Desktop research, stakeholder discussions and a **dedicated survey**
- Compilation of accessible, downloadable, and interactive training materials with a strong focus on digital security
- Face-to-face trainings in the form of **3 interactive forums** in 3 pilot villages
- Silver Economy Platform (called **Senior Point**) as a sub-site on the Hungarian partner's website, with thematic modules that serve as a knowledge base and help business and civil society actors to network professionally
- **Senior Point platform** (<https://hbmo.hu/portal/szeniorpont/>):

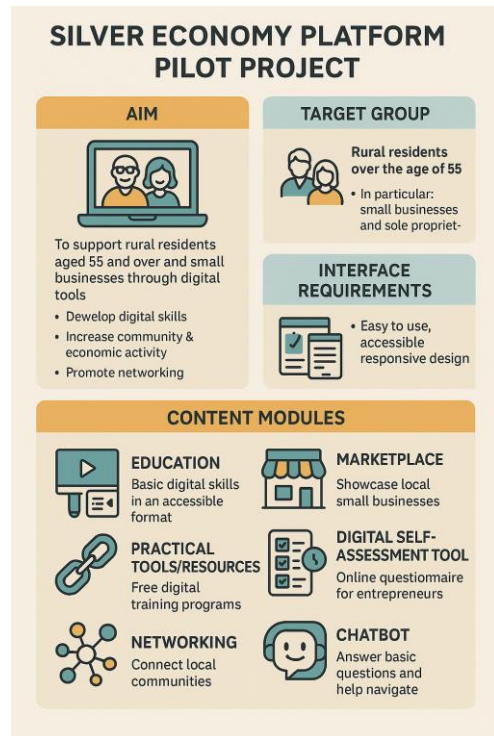
thematic modules (education/knowledge base, practical tools/resources, marketplace (providing brief info about local producers' database)

networking (offering data on civil organisations, community places and community initiatives)

digital self-assessment tool

simple chatbot – demonstrates a novel integration of education, community building, and digital engagement within a single, senior-friendly hub

training material of the 3 local training events is also published



Lessons Learned

- **Actual participatory approach** for a solid stakeholder community that can act far beyond the project duration
- Special attention **to explore and formulate specific target group needs** during the pilot preparation phase in order **to generate real answers** and effectively support the digital transition activities of older business actors in rural areas
- Regular contact with and feedback from **key stakeholders**
- Exploiting **synergies** with ongoing collaborations in relevant topics
- Never miss to **consider the actual length** of administrative processes
- **Always ask** the target group
- Regular check of research **updates and new practices** to learn from
- Create a long-time and solid **focus group**



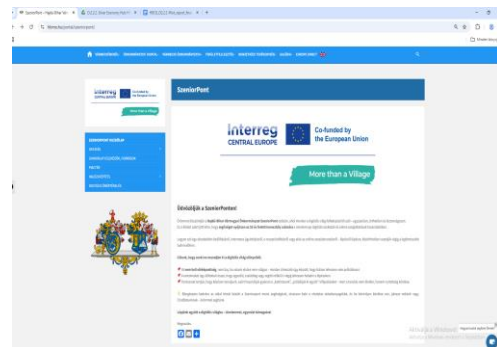
Short-term and Long-term Results

Short-term:

- Improved digital skills in rural areas to apply and use smart solutions
- Access to wider economic potential
- New opportunities for stronger collaborations

Long-term:

- More resilient local communities with strengthened networking capacities
- Optional extension of implemented activities
- Potential for replication
- Suitable for diverse audiences



Transferability & Sustainability

The output's structure (thematic modules, well-defined training material) as well as the training process from preparation to implementation make adaptation and transferability easy and applicable

Open access, easy-to-understand language, and replicable stakeholder engagement processes also support the extension of such activities

The universal design allows replication across different territories and sectors, as the training content is shaped by publicly identified needs

Moreover, the approach is inclusive of various target groups, making it suitable for diverse demographic and professional audiences

Sustainability through dedicated resources and oversight by HBCG

Through the synergies with ongoing European collaboration projects, cross-fertilisation of several mutually complementary topics brings a long-term engagement of all relevant stakeholders, institutions and general public

Involving the diverse stakeholders much beyond the project's duration promotes continuous and regular updated input, content relevance, and shared responsibility, which fosters long-term use and development

More than a Village



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<https://www.facebook.com/HajduBiharMegyeiOnkormanyzat>



<https://www.youtube.com/@hajdu-biharmegyeivideotar7736>



ANCI Liguria, Italy

Improvement of smart tourism services



About the Pilot

Region: Italy - Liguria / Alta Val Polcevera

Short description of the pilot's focus:

1) ValPolcevera Lab - Creation of a co-working space in the Campomorone Library, equipped with a projector screen, PCs, and a Totem. The initiative aims to introduce the concept of an innovation hub and promote its use among local businesses, residents, and visiting tourists.

2) Interactive video to promote co-working activities and also to give helpful info about what happens in the Upper Alta Valpocevera to citizens and tourists. The video will also promote enterprises and other economic and tourist activities.



Challenges Addressed

- Difficulty in attracting large audiences to events and workshops: despite organizing relevant and engaging activities, participation often remains limited.
- Importance of networking and knowledge sharing among stakeholders: building a strong collaboration between local institutions, businesses and citizens requires opportunities for exchange and ongoing communication to foster trust and long-term partnerships.
- Challenges in communicating the social value of a co-working space: making residents and local actors fully aware of how coworking contributes to community development, innovation and social inclusion, making it essential to improve awareness and storytelling of its benefits.

Actions Implemented

Actions for ValPolceveraLab – co-working:

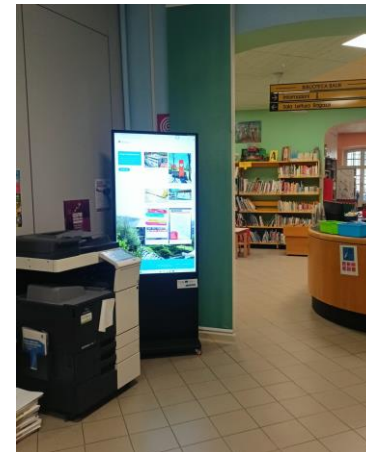
- 1) Identification of the space and preparation to be used
- 2) Co-designing activities in terms of objectives and targets
- 3) Opening of the space and organization of meetings

Actions for Interactive Video:

- 1) Preparation of the storytelling
- 2) Collaboration with the video maker for the animation of the protagonist: the dog ARTU'
- 3) Identifying the stakeholders to be interviewed
- 4) Identifying the locations for the interviews
- 5) Elaboration of the texts of the descriptions
- 6) Collaboration on translations

Actions Implemented

Val PolceveraLab



Interactive Video

The photos owned by ANCI Liguria



Lessons Learned

Recommendations based on lessons learned:

- 1) Identify the best location for the physical space so that it is accessible to as many people as possible
- 2) Carry out an in-depth consultation with potential stakeholders to avoid any obstacles to the activity
- 3) Identify potential targets and consequently use appropriate communication channels for each target group

Short-term and Long-term Results

Short-term:

- The creation of a new collaborative space where young people can meet, exchange ideas, and develop innovative projects together.

Long-term:

- Valpolcevera Lab will become a recognized community hub — a place actively used and experienced by citizens and tourists alike, fostering creativity, participation, and a sense of belonging in the area.

Transferability & Sustainability

- Municipality of Campomorone, through its Culture and Promotion Department, will ensure the sustainability of ValpolceveraLab, already linked to the local library.
- The pilot project showed strong engagement among citizens, especially young people, though tourist participation remains limited.
- To increase visibility, ANCI Liguria will promote the Lab via information channels in Genoa, a key tourist hub. Tourist impact will be reassessed after the summer. The project also helped define a motivational methodology to foster community ownership of co-working spaces in similar contexts.

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ANCI Liguria



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<https://www.youtube.com/@anciliguria/videos>



https://www.instagram.com/anci_liguria/

City of Buzet, Croatia

Virtual agri-food web platform



About the Pilot

Region /Location

- City of Buzet, Istria, Croatia

Short description of the pilot's focus

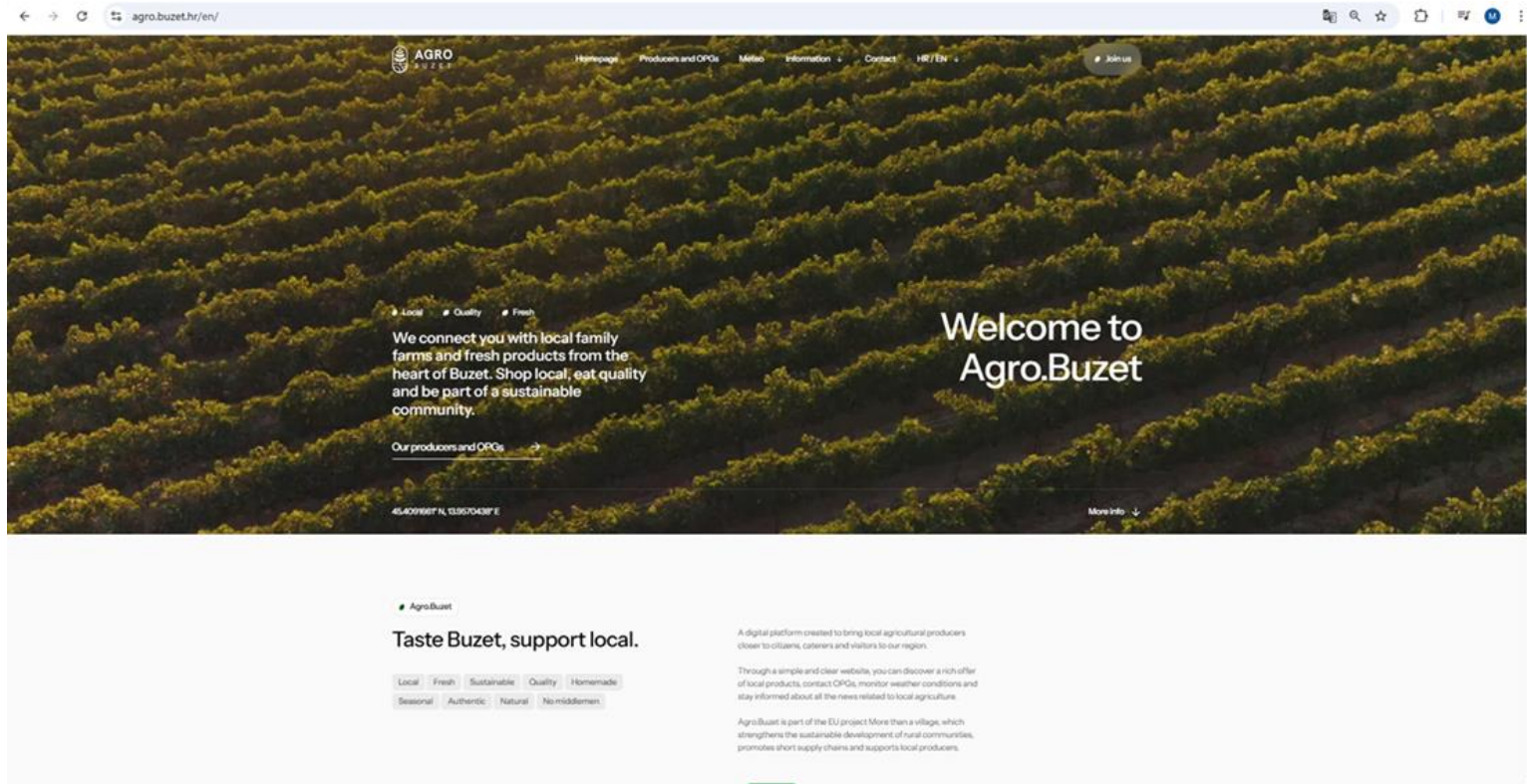
- digitalizing local agriculture through a web platform and weather stations
- strengthen local agricultural capacities through digital transformation and data-driven support
- better visibility for local producers via a web platform to consumers

Contribution

- smarter, more sustainable farming and stronger rural communities



About the Pilot



Challenges Addressed

What was the main problem in the region?

- limited public visibility of local producers and difficulties in marketing their products to consumers

Why was the Pilot needed?

- to help local producers promote their products, improve market access and use digital tools to modernize and strengthen Buzet's agriculture sector
- strengthen the agricultural economy of Buzet and its surroundings

Actions Implemented

Key activities:

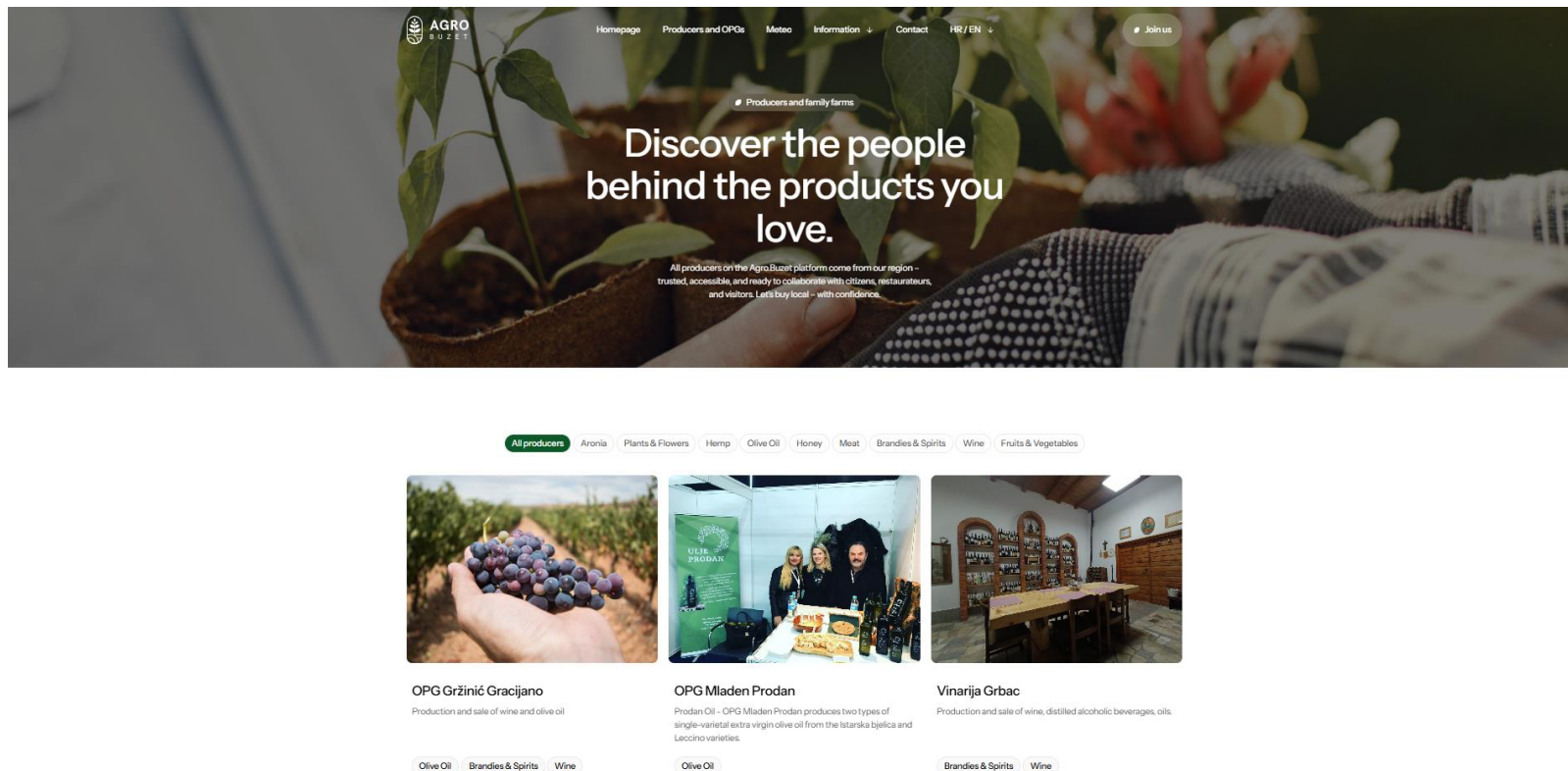
- development of a digital agri web platform, public procurement and installation of four meteorological stations, workshop with supplier, creation of a local producer database, promotion and user training on platform usage

Tools and innovations used:

- custom development digital agri web platform using real-time data from four meteorological stations, a user-friendly web interface for family farms and producers, a digital tool to monitor weather conditions and improve agriculture

Actions Implemented

More than a Village



Lessons Learned

What worked well?

- strong collaboration between the City of Buzet, family farms and producers and technical partners ensured that the platform met real user needs and was easy to use

Key recommendation for others

- maintain continuous communication with end users during development, regularly update the platform, and consider adding e-commerce and regional expansion features for greater impact.

Short-term and Long-term Results

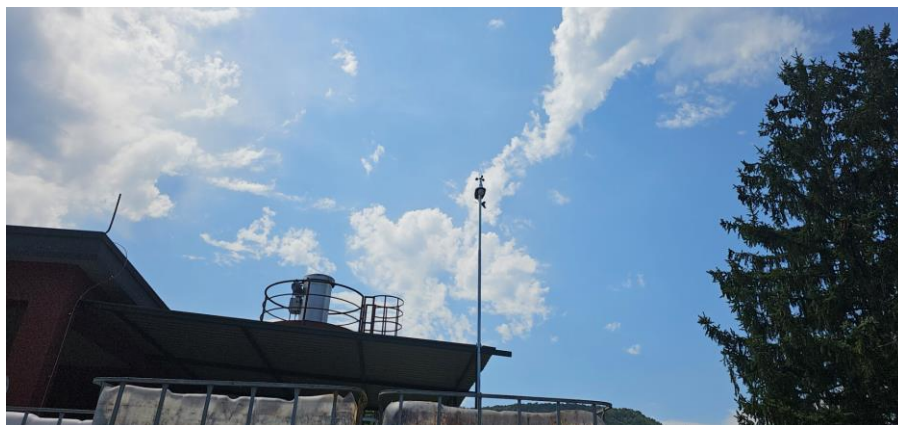
Short-term:

- Commitment to maintain and regularly update the platform, adding new users and posts over time
- Involve all local producers and encourage participation of older generations unfamiliar with digital tools
- 20 local producers registered on the platform within the first month of its operation
- Installation of 4 meteo stations
- Ongoing digitalization of the entire system

Short-term and Long-term Results



Meteo station



*The photos owned by the
City of Buzet*

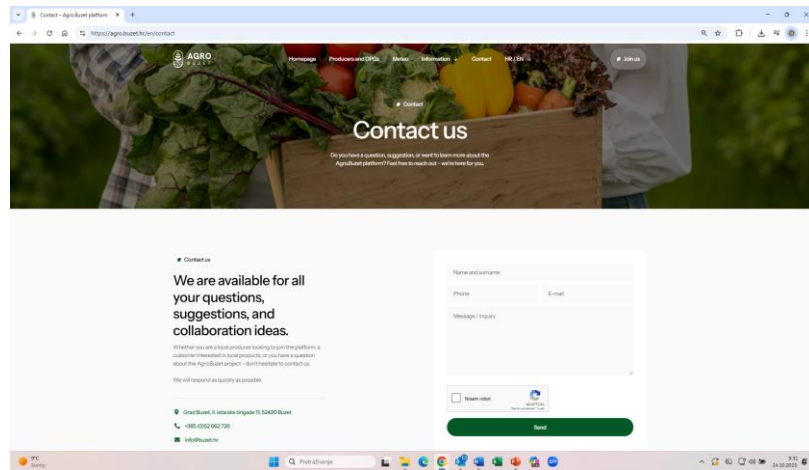
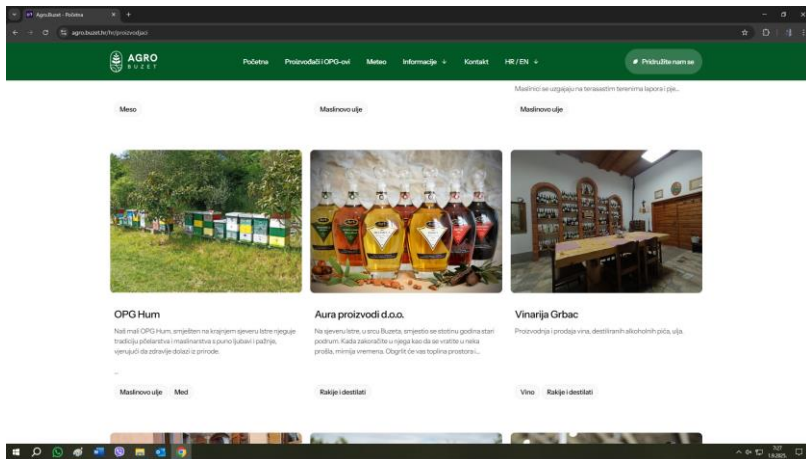
Short-term and Long-term Results

Long-term:

- In the long term, we expect at least twenty additional local farms and small enterprises to join the platform. At the same time, continuous development and improvement of the web portal will further enhance its functionality, user experience, and regional impact.
- We expect that by using the web platform, farmers will adopt digital tools, increase digital literacy, and reduce the digital divide in the agricultural sector.
- Stimulation of local agri economy: ensuring higher returns for farmers and boosting internal money circulation
- Through direct links and short supply chains, the local economy will develop resilient resistance to external factors

Transferability & Sustainability

- Model easily replicable in other rural areas
- Low-cost approach with strong stakeholder support
- Platform to be maintained and updated by the City of Buzet
- Expand user base and add new services



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City of Buzet



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<https://www.youtube.com/gradbuzet3714>