



## NGO AND PARTNERSHIP FUND IN SLOVENIA RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER BETWEEN SWITZERLAND AND SLOVENIA



A fund totalling approximately CHF 3.2 million has been set up in Slovenia to support civil society. Financed by this fund, the Slovenian Institute for Sustainable Development is implementing two small projects, one in the field of partnership and one in the NGO sector. Both these projects involve a Swiss organisation in the person of the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL).

The NGO and partnership fund in Slovenia finances small partnership projects between Slovenian and Swiss institutions, and enables Slovenian non-governmental organisations (NGOs), in some cases with the assistance of Swiss NGOs, to carry out their own small projects.

The selection process for all small projects was already completed at the beginning of 2012. In total, the fund is financing 43 small projects in Slovenia. 12 NGO projects relating to environmental and social issues plus 19 Swiss-Slovenian partnership projects were selected.

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### PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

One such partnership project is intended to raise awareness among Slovenian schoolchildren. Many children nowadays have very little direct experience of sustainable agriculture, or indeed nature in general. This is no different in Slovenia. With their joint "Organic school gardens" project, the Slovenian Institute for Sustainable Development and FiBL are seeking to make the younger generation more aware of sustainable development.

#### *The development of organic school gardens*

The project began by establishing the level of interest at schools and kindergartens in having their own organic garden. Following this, in April and May 2011 the Institute for Sustainable Development ran seminars at 15 locations in Slovenia on how to develop an action plan and create and maintain such organic gardens. The participating schools and kindergartens then went on to put the knowledge acquired directly into practice. The Institute was on hand to provide advice, including via a dedicated project website. This resulted in the creation of a thematic network within Slovenia which currently encompasses 150 schools and kindergartens. A newsletter is used to keep schools informed on how the new school gardens can be incorporated into lessons.

#### *More than just theory*

According to Anamarija Slabe from the Institute for Sustainable Development, this project was widely welcomed by the general public. By producing their own food, the children learn in a practical way how nature, healthy eating and sustainable environmental practices interrelate.

This small project, to which Switzerland is contributing around CHF 85,000, began in January 2011 and will be completed in June 2012. The Institute plans, however, to continue supporting and expanding the network and its activities.



### JOINT NGO SMALL PROJECT IN ORGANIC FARMING

The second project collaboration between the Slovenian Institute and FiBL took place as part of an NGO small project in the environmental field. The two partners sought to expand the knowledge base and research potential for organic farming in Slovenia.

This small project running over twelve months allowed the Slovenian Institute to conduct on-farm research at organic farms.

### LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP STRENGTHENED

A relationship has existed between the Slovenian Institute for Sustainable Development and the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) for a number of years already. For both organisations, these small projects carried out with the aid of the Slovenian NGO and partnership fund will help strengthen their many cooperative ties.



*Future generations will have to overcome major challenges in the area of environmental protection. More effective and efficient nature conservation is only possible if children can be made to understand the correlation between nature, healthy nutrition and sustainable protection of the environment on the basis of a practical example. Organic school gardens are ideal for securing this sustainable form of awareness-raising.*

Anamarija Slabe,  
Slovenian Institute for Sustainable Development

### THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

#### SUBJECT

Supporting civil society

#### COUNTRY

Slovenia

#### PARTNER

For both projects:  
Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL

#### STARTING POINT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Partnership project:

Many children nowadays have little idea where food comes from. A sustainable lifestyle is also a major challenge for upcoming generations.

NGO project:

The Slovenian Institute needed to conduct research directly on organic farms.

#### PURPOSE

Partnership project:

The small project to establish organic gardens at Slovenian schools and kindergartens aimed to make children more aware of sustainability, healthy food and nature.

NGO project:

Access to field research opportunities in organic farming for the Slovenian Institute for Sustainable Development.

#### ACTIVITIES

Both projects involved field trips and seminars. A dedicated website was created for the organic school gardens partnership project. In the NGO project, training was offered to Slovenian organic farmers and a catalogue of future joint research projects was drawn up.

#### TARGET GROUPS

Partnership project

Kindergartens and schools, teachers, plus indirectly also the media and the general public.

NGO project

Slovenian organic farmers, organic agriculture experts, plus the two project coordinators.

#### COSTS

*Partnership project*

Total project budget:

CHF 94,192

Swiss contribution:

CHF 84,773

*NGO project*

Total project budget:

CHF 49,550

Swiss contribution:

CHF 42,117

#### RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

For both projects:

The Slovenian Institute for Sustainable Development

#### DURATION

Both projects:

2011 – 2012