



Deliverable 4.2

Transition Narrative

Osrednjeslovenska region

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1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of the transition

The transition addressed by the Slovenian RUSTIK team is twofold: environmental and social. In an ambitious attempt to turn two problems into a win-win solution (potentially using some form of social innovation and/or social entrepreneurship), we will look at how we can stimulate the prevention of food waste (environmental/climate, as well as socio-economic issue) through redistribution of excess food to the marginalized and socially excluded in rural areas. Therefore, the transition envisaged will be partial, addressing two relatively narrow issues.

1.2 Overview of the transition

Since the LL's inception, the Slovenian RUSTIK LL partners have agreed to focus on the issue of food loss and waste (FLW) and its relation to aspects of social inclusion, mainly due to their overall societal relevance, but also to be able to build on the partners' strengths, experience and existing social networks. Although these issues, especially food waste, are perhaps not considered central in the regional development strategy, these issues do have a place in it, as well as some municipal strategies, and both food and social inclusion (as well as the related issues of marginalization, disempowerment, poverty and poor access to quality food) bear a strong emotional charge. The two issues tackled mostly find their place under the umbrellas of circular bioeconomy and quality of life, while social entrepreneurship appears under access to services and the silver economy.

2 Promoters and inhibitors

2.1 Shared interests in Institutional Map

While many of the stakeholders named in the original institutional map may remain the same (national ministries and statistical office, municipalities and the regional development agency being central), recent discussions between the LLC and PRP on the specifics of the experiment have also highlighted LAGs as potentially important collocutors and perhaps even partners in conducting the experiment. The first part of the second cycle will be dedicated to a scoping of LAGs and their previous experience in conducting projects in one or both of the two transition areas outlined above. The reason for this decision is that they are the closest thing to territorial entities (in absence of regional government, despite the existence of regional development agencies), as well as the fact that they have a strong rural focus and hands-on, bottom-up functioning. In a number of cases, regional development agencies (including RRA LUR, the regional development agency covering the Osrednjeslovenska region), are also leading partners of LAGs.

Inclusivity, sustainability and quality of life, as well as addressing environmental and climate issues are (at least in principle) at the heart of the functioning of Local action groups. Actual functioning towards these goals and following these principles differ from LAG to LAG, however,





and part of the scoping exercise will be to assess the willingness and ability of the relevant LAGs to cooperate with RUSTIK partners.

It seems highly likely that commercial private entities such as supermarkets and restaurants, as well as non-commercial suppliers of food (e.g. school and care home canteens) will be included in future versions of the institutional map; likewise, caritative organizations such as the Red cross and Karitas may join the currently included Association of societies of retirees. The interests of these organisations can be seen as converging on the desire to prevent food waste as an inefficient use of resources while helping those in need, albeit due to different underlying motivational factors.

The main role of the actors will be to support, with their knowledge and data, the formulation of a model for describing possible pathways for mobilising excess food towards marginalised people, with the final aim of forming workable policy measures with appropriate indicators to assess eligibility for and success of funding.

2.2 Shared denominators in Policy Panorama

While territorial scales, foci and types of different policy documents range from national to local, general to sectoral and binding to non-binding (with implications for potential financial allocations), respectively, the majority of documents tend to invoke the same general policy goals of sustainable, inclusive and green growth. They mainly (but not in all cases) also pertain to a similar period, which often coincides with the Multiannual financial framework at the EU level.

LAGs as sites of collaboration between private and public stakeholders functioning (in principle) in a bottom-up manner seem to be appropriate vehicles of transition. Upon selection, the LAGs' strategies may also be reviewed.

2.3 Limitations

The topics addressed are quite complex even when looked at individually, let alone when addressed at the same time. In addition to the lack of data and adequate indicators (especially in relation to social issues) already highlighted in previous exercises, a lack of institutional capacity to tackle this level of complexity may prove insurmountable in attempting to address this particular combination of challenges in this particular way.

3 Impact assessment

3.1 Overall impact assessment

The envisaged experiment aims to tackle precisely the data gap pertaining to assessing the effects of current efforts. While it is known that there are certain ongoing initiatives, their impact is not well known.

The policy environment for tackling food waste is very fresh: a strategy and action plan have only recently been adopted and it is rather premature to attempt to assess their effects. However, what





can already be highlighted at this point is that the strategy and action plan have neither a special funding source nor specific (numeric) goals: funding is rather scant and dispersed across a number of sources, while goals are provided very broadly and the indicators used are mostly output indicators (number of activities, number of beneficiaries, number of trainings etc.). They therefore lack the basic criteria by which they might be qualitatively assessed, other than perhaps a general direction in trends.

On the other hand, the policy environment to tackle social issues (in rural areas) is very fragmented, so again, effects of different measures to address different 'social issues' are difficult to assess due to interacting effects of different policies. There is a broad array of complex indicators of wellbeing, with three main separate conceptual components used to form decisions and solutions: current wellbeing, differences in wellbeing and resources for future wellbeing (there are data on social exclusion and poverty – degree on risk of poverty, degree of risk of social exclusion and degree of grave material and social deprivation). Certain indicators of wellbeing do not consider demographic change and societal longevity (certain datasets include population up until 65 or 74 years of age).

3.2 Long-term and Intermediate Outcomes

As stated, the issue of food waste is gaining in importance, but the policy development is in very early stages; however, due to the issue's popularity and a high level of agreement across the policy arena, it represents a kind of low-hanging fruit for all stakeholders (reducing costs and improving corporate image for producers, processors and the HoReCa sector, turning waste streams into resources etc.), with potentially the highest obstacle being data (on quantities) and logistics, and perhaps perceptions and individual behavioural patterns towards the end of the food supply chain.

On the other hand, reducing social exclusion, while equally non-contentious in principle, seems to be a much messier issue. It involves more sensitive information that is harder to acquire and tackle through policies and formal procedures, as well as relatively high potential of free-riding, adverse selection and higher financial and human costs. To reduce social exclusion with regard to redistributing excess food, the current institutional and policy set-up should be modified in order to improve marginal groups' access to services, products, programmes and rights, while their information-, financial and digital literacy and community relations should be stimulated.

4 Transition Pathway

In the PR partner's conceptualization, which the LLC has provisionally accepted, food, access to food and food-related social activities, are seen as a kind of bridge between people that can serve to mitigate not only poverty and poor access to food, but also relational deprivation and disempowerment. The questions that will be explored in the data experiment and subsequent LL cycles are 'how', 'how much', 'can this be modelled', 'is it scalable' and 'can it be supported with policy measures'.

More practically, the work will aim to assess successful existing initiatives addressing the issues, structure them into a (mathematical) model, potentially devise usable (but meaningful) indicators where necessary, test the model in a practical case and endeavour to formulate a ready-made





policy measure to be implemented by the agricultural ministry, which is responsible for the issue of food, as well as rural development. The main contribution to transition may not be in halving food waste or poverty, but rather in providing an example of evidence-based policymaking (which is in itself seen as a necessary element of transition).

