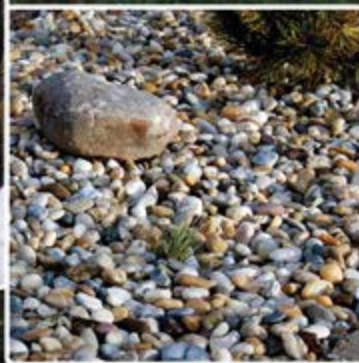


*The evaluation report on the
implementation of the LEADER
approach in the Nitra region
for the period 2009 - 2014*





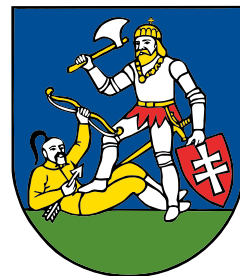
Dear ladies
and gentlemen,

Nitra self-governing region was able to create strong base of specialised capacities in its rural areas with the aid of active financial support of local action groups and public-private partnerships. They are able to create innovative projects, which are then presented as activities of regional development of Nitra region.

The fact that we have 16 public-private partnerships functioning within LEADER approach with specially prepared integrated strategy of local development and annually requesting subsidy from our budget to be able to implement their investment and non-investment projects, is important sign of present work of the region in countryside. In our region, we have five local action groups with LAG Status, which finish the implementation of the integrated strategies in 2014 and 2015. Presently, local action groups cover 74% of the territory of our region and include 79% of regional municipalities. Our joint effort is to look for more financial sources to implement development projects in rural area and towns.

The practice obtained in implementing the integrated strategy of LEADER type has great perspective in the future, mainly in connection with the beginning of new programming period and assessment and selection of the local action groups for support from the

Rural Development Programme of the SR till 2020. We believe that the local action groups from our region fulfil the strictest criteria to be able to apply successfully for support from European sources.



At this period, the support methodologies and tools are tuned not only at the national or European level, but also at the level of our self-governing region. It is very important to actively participate in the processes with our opinions, suggestions and comments.

We also need to acknowledge, that “partnership” is not only about municipalities, but also about organisations and institutions of third sector, small and medium size entrepreneurs and wide public. These subjects are also important and necessary to achieve the partnership principals of local action group.

This is the time, when we can look back at the results of our work since the year 2009, when we created financial tools to support LEADER approach via rural agents in favour of the development of our region. This publication offers such a look.

Enjoy the reading.

doc. Ing. Milan Belica, PhD.
Chairman of Nitra
self-governing region

Assessment of financial tools implementation of Nitra self-governing region for support of integrated rural development of LEADER type and successful development of rural micro-regions

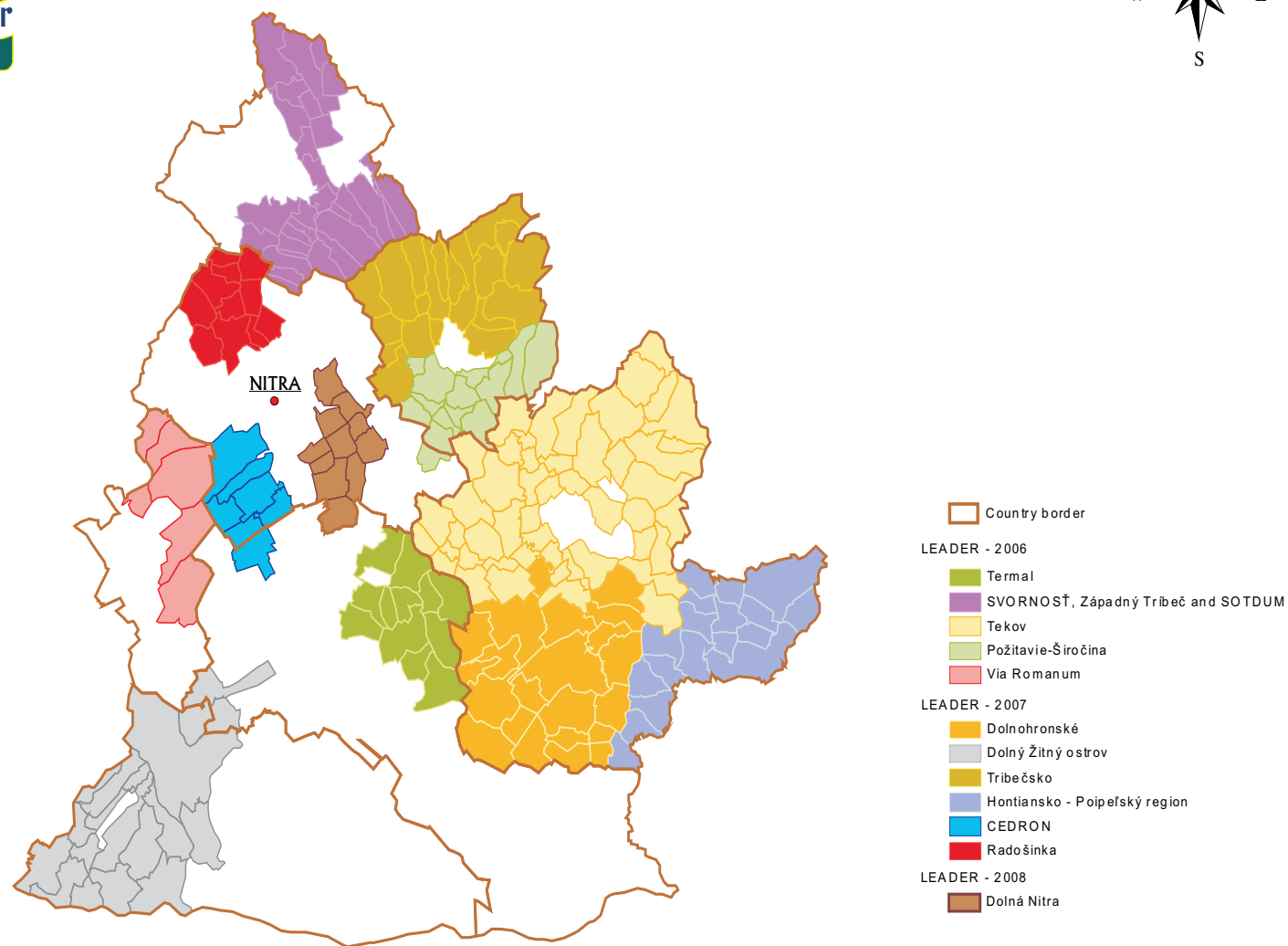
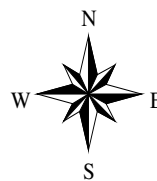


Nitra region covers 12.9% of the Slovak Republic territory with the area of 6,343.4 km². It is located in the South-West part of the Slovak Republic, bordering in the South with Hungary, in the East with Banská Bystrica region, in the North with Trenčín region and in the West with Trnava region. Our region with population of 689,564 citizens belongs to the 4th place within all the regions of Slovakia. It has 7 districts and 354 municipalities, out of which 15 have the status of a





Micro-regional associations of Nitra self-governing region municipalities involved in LEADER project



Map No. 1. Territory of Nitra region in 2008

town. Nitra is the regional capital. The region belongs to the warmest areas and the most productive agricultural centres.

In Slovakia, Nitra region belongs to largely rural regions with more than 50% of citizens living in rural municipalities.

Preparation of micro-regions of Nitra self-governing region for integrated rural development

In 2006 – 2008, Nitra self-governing region implemented the project called “Preparation of micro-regions of Nitra self-governing region for integrated rural development” with the objective

- to build specialised capacities in the micro-regions and to prepare innovative strategies of LEADER type development,
- to prepare integrated strategies for development of rural micro-regions territory,
- to create and institutionalise local action groups.

Project supporting activities:

- project graphical identity, creating original logo for Nitra LEADER,
- establishing website www.leadersk.sk,

• organising twinning projects, so called study field trips on purpose of gaining knowledge and important information in area of rural development with LEADER approach in countries, where this approach was implemented, such as Finland, Austria, Czech Republic,

• accredited trainings and courses for potential managers of establishing local action groups.

Nitra self-governing region has created conditions for implementing Integrated strategies of development of rural micro-regions territory, it provided education of local specialised capacities in area of mobilising local potential, animation of citizens and preparation of management for implementing strategies of LEADER type.

Project results:

11 public-private partnerships, so called Local Action Groups (LAGs) were established within the project. The project increased the ability of citizens, self-governments and enterprising sphere to successfully apply for sources from the Rural Development Programme of the SR in 2007–2013, from Axis 4 Implementation of LEADER approach.

Financial sources for implementation of LEADER approach were approved from European Agricultural Fond for Rural Development for 5 local action groups (Dolná Nitra, Dolnohronské rozvojové partnerstvo, Požítavie - Širočina, Svornosť and Radošinka), which gained the LAG Status. Each of the 5 LAGs acquired approx. 2 mil. EUR for implementing their integrated strategy and for project implementation.

Since 2009, Nitra self-governing region co-finances, financially and professionally helps in implementing

the projects, which were approved in integrated strategies for local action groups (LAG with the Status) and public-private partnerships (LAG without Status). Each year, it financially supports these local action groups and public-private partnerships from own financial tools of LEADER NSR approved at the Representation of Nitra self-governing region in Resolution No. 316/2008.

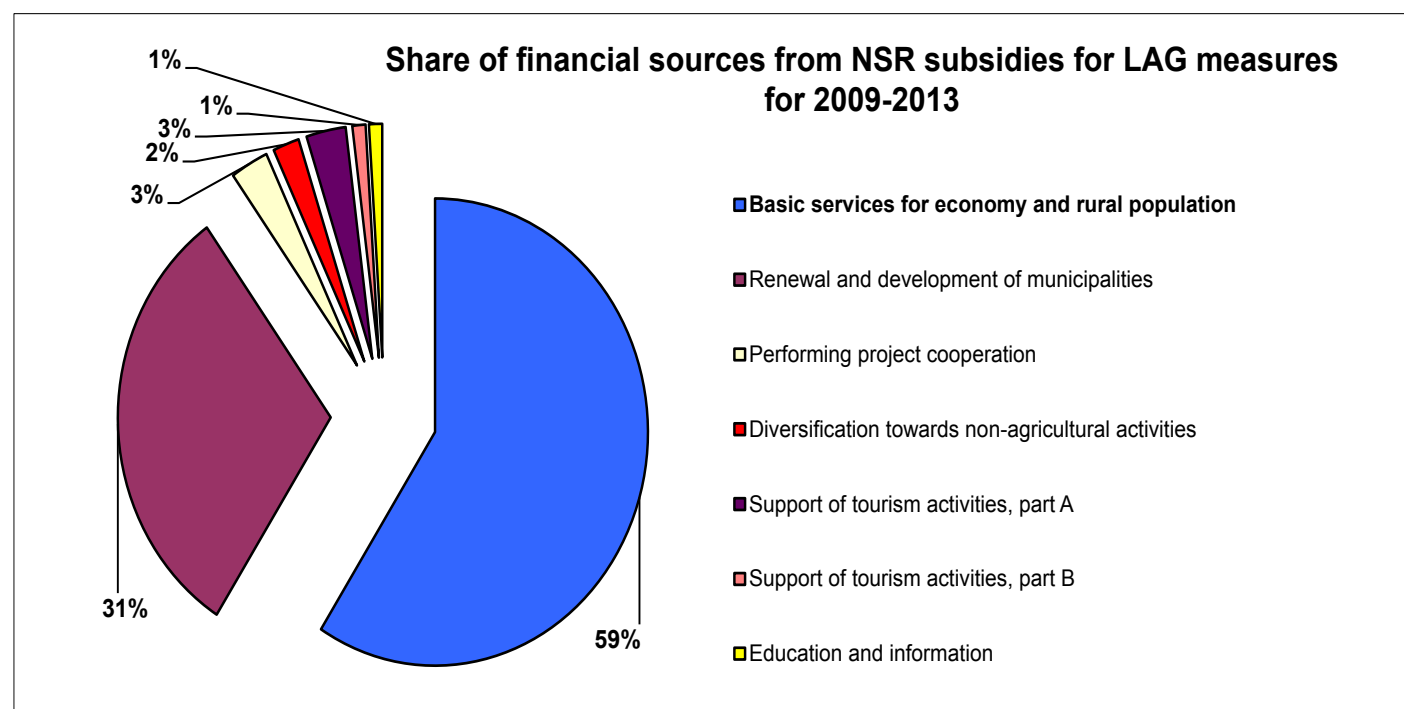


Chart 1 The share of awarded financial sources from NSR budget allocated to relevant measures of the Rural Development Programme of the SR during the implementation of Tool 1 LEADER NSR

Tool 1 LEADER NSR

Nitra self-governing region co-financed the implementation on integrated territory development strategies of the 5 LAGs selected by Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic in 2009 by own financial tool (Tool 1) pursuant to generally binding regulation No. 3/2009 as amended. LAGs implemented development innovative projects, which were beneficial for the territory.

Via Tool 1, LAGs were able to finance

- Payment of ineligible costs of Rural Development Programme of the SR 2007–2013 (Call 1),
- Payment of eligible and ineligible costs of Rural Development Programme of the SR 2007–2013 (Call 2).

Contract on providing subsidies between Nitra self-governing region and local action group was

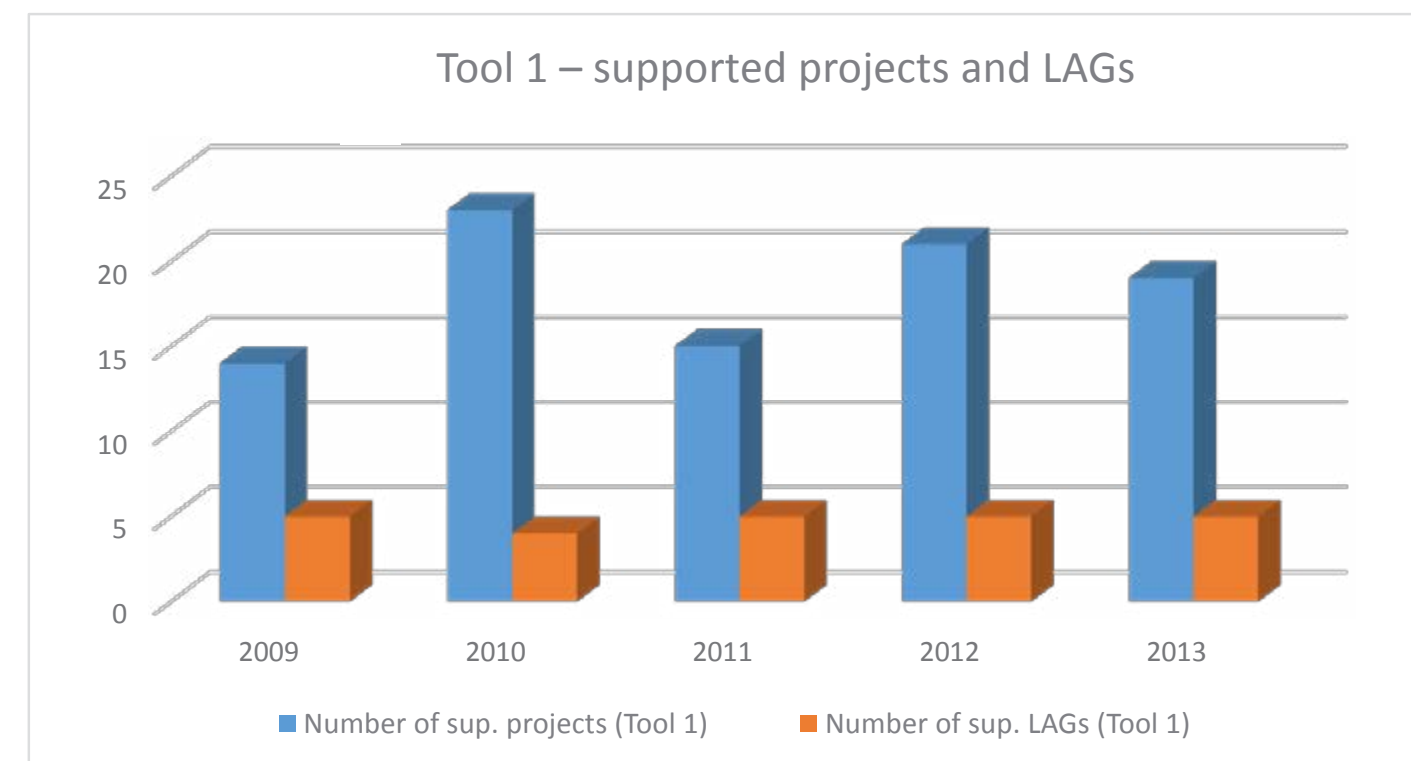


Chart 2 Assessment of Tool 1

| | Year 2009 | | Year 2010 | | Year 2011 | | Year 2012 | | Year 2013 | |
|--|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Name of Local Action Group (Civil association with LAG status) | Subsidy (in EUR) | Number of projects | Subsidy (in EUR) | Number of projects | Subsidy (in EUR) | Number of projects | Subsidy (in EUR) | Number of projects | Subsidy (in EUR) | Number of projects |
| Regionálne združenie Dolná Nitra | 8,199.10 | 2 | 8,298.48 | 4 | 8,298.48 | 2 | 8,098.55 | 2 | 6,038.27 | 2 |
| Občianske združenie pre rozvoj mikroregiónu Požitavie - Širočina | 8,298.48 | 1 | 8,289.99 | 7 | 8,278.59 | 4 | 8,298.48 | 6 | 8,297.83 | 4 |
| Mikroregión Radošinka | 8,298.48 | 3 | 8,298.48 | 2 | 8,298.48 | 2 | 8,298.48 | 2 | 8,298.48 | 3 |
| Občianske združenie Dolnohronské rozvojové partnerstvo | 8,298.48 | 2 | 0.00 | 0 | 8,293.89 | 4 | 6,015.96 | 3 | 8,270.99 | 1 |
| Združenie mikroregiónu Svornosť | 8,298.48 | 6 | 8,298.48 | 10 | 2,675.00 | 3 | 8,298.48 | 8 | 8,298.08 | 9 |
| Spolu | 41,393.02 | 14 | 33,185.43 | 23 | 35,844.44 | 15 | 39,009.95 | 21 | 39,203.65 | 19 |

Table 1 Assessment of drawing subsidy in Tool 1

signed for period of 5 years and annual subsidy was in amount of 8,298.48 EUR per 1 LAG. Conditions for implementation the annual subsidy are stipulated in Guidance to administration of Tool 1.

Table 1 and Chart 2 follow drawing of the subsidy and number of projects implemented in Tool 1.

During the set period of Tool 1 implementa-

tion in 2009–2013, 92 projects were implemented in five approved LAGs in the territory of Nitra region, and the total subsidy in Tool 1 was 188,636.49 EUR in amount of really drawn financial sources from the Nitra self-governing region budget. Average subsidy per one project was approximately 2,050 EUR.

The majority of the projects was implemented under the measure Basic services for economy and rural citizens.



Tool 2 LEADER NSR

Tool 2 supports public-private partnerships or local action groups, which did not get the LAG Status within the Rural Development Programme of the SR in EU programming period of 2007–2013. Nitra self-governing region has its own tool LEADER NSR, approved by the Representation of Nitra self-governing region.

Department of strategic activities of the Office of Nitra self-governing region publishes a Call every year pursuant to generally binding regulation No. 4/2009 as amended and it is published on the site www.unsk.sk. It is designed for public-private partnerships functioning within LEADER approach principals.

Tool 2 is designed for implementing projects, which have 4 measures and it is implemented via Guideline to Administration of Tool 2:

- Measure 1. Renewal of municipalities,
- Measure 2. Development of rural society and support of traditions,
- Measure 3. Operation and administrative activity of LAG,
- Measure 4. Support of cooperation projects of

| | Year 2009 | | Year 2010 | | Year 2011 | | Year 2012 | | Year 2013 | | Year 2014 | |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Name of public-private partnership of LEADER type (Legal form civil association) | Subsidy (in EUR) | Number of projects | Subsidy (in EUR) | Number of projects | Subsidy (in EUR) | Number of projects | Subsidy (in EUR) | Number of projects | Subsidy (in EUR) | Number of projects | Subsidy (in EUR) | Number of projects |
| CEDRON | 33,185.77 | 11 | 33,002.41 | 9 | 33,186.70 | 9 | 15,275.15 | 10 | 0.00 | 0 | 28,200.00 | 7 |
| Dolný Žitný Ostrov | 31,850.00 | 5 | 33,193.00 | 8 | 30,000.00 | 5 | 19,772.00 | 10 | 17,495.00 | 10 | 20,375.00 | 5 |
| TRÍBEČSKO | 33,193.85 | 6 | 33,190.00 | 16 | 26,760.01 | 20 | 16,904.00 | 9 | 16,350.00 | 8 | 18,925.00 | 10 |
| Via Romanum | 26,000.32 | 10 | 32,593.82 | 7 | 27,492.25 | 8 | 9,653.92 | 3 | 15,878.00 | 6 | 15,830.00 | 7 |
| SOTDUM | 0.00 | 0 | 33,190.00 | 11 | 30,001.00 | 7 | 0.00 | 0 | 14,085.00 | 6 | 18,950.00 | 10 |
| Termál | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 28,992.62 | 6 | 22,355.00 | 6 | 20,443.15 | 5 | 20,210.00 | 13 |
| Cergát - Váh | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 13,170.95 | 9 | 13,590.00 | 7 | 16,675.00 | 5 |
| Csángó | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 12,896.00 | 5 | 13,072.00 | 6 | 14,875.00 | 6 |
| Ipeľ - Hont | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 19,205.16 | 8 | 14,764.02 | 7 | 17,285.00 | 8 |
| Hídverő – Most priateľstva | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 16,822.00 | 10 | 17,990.00 | 8 | 20,850.00 | 10 |
| V dlani Hrona | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 19,962.41 | 11 | 11,173.26 | 7 | 0.00 | 0 |
| Mikroregión pod Marhátom | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 17,380.49 | 8 | 13,164.65 | 6 | 17,950.00 | 7 |
| ŽIBRICA | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 20,559.82 | 8 | 17,730.00 | 8 | 17,675.00 | 8 |
| Dvory a okolie | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 17,240.00 | 11 | 17,575.00 | 5 |
| Pod Slovenskou bránou | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 13,115.00 | 12 | 22,075.00 | 16 |
| VITIS | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 12,572.00 | 8 | 21,050.00 | 9 |
| Spolu | 124,229.94 | 32 | 165,169.23 | 51 | 176,432.58 | 55 | 203,956.90 | 97 | 228,662.08 | 115 | 288,500.00 | 126 |

Table 2 Assessment of drawing subsidy in Tool 2 (Measure 1, 2, 3)

public-private partnerships.

The following subjects can be the final beneficiaries of the projects from territories of individual local action groups:

- Municipalities,
- Civil associations,

- Community organisations (for example societies, village associations, foundations, interest association of legal entities),

- Civil initiative (a group of minimum 3 citizens with permanent residence within LAG territory),

- Enterprising subjects (for example limited com-

| | Year 2012 | | Year 2013 | | Year 2014 | |
|--|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Name of public-private partnership of LEADER type (Legal form civil association) | Subsidy (in EUR) | Number of projects | Subsidy (in EUR) | Number of projects | Subsidy (in EUR) | Number of projects |
| CEDRON | 13,465.78 | 3 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 |
| Hídverő – Most priateľstva | 1,500.00 | 1 | 1,721.00 | 1 | 1,200.00 | 1 |
| ŽIBRICA | 1,500.00 | 1 | 1,721.00 | 1 | 1,200.00 | 1 |
| TRÍBEČSKO | 11,949.78 | 2 | 3,935.60 | 1 | 0.00 | 0 |
| SOTDUM | 13,474.78 | 3 | 4,437.00 | 2 | 0.00 | 0 |
| Termál | 1,500.00 | 1 | 1,892.40 | 1 | 1,200.00 | 1 |
| Dolný Žitný Ostrov | 1,500.00 | 1 | 1,721.00 | 1 | 1,200.00 | 1 |
| Csángó | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 1,200.00 | 1 |
| Spolu | 44,890.34 | 12 | 15,428.00 | 7 | 6,000.00 | 5 |

Table 3 Assessment of drawing subsidy in Tool 2 (Measure 4)

panies, joint stock companies, unlimited partnerships, farmers, entrepreneurs, cooperative),

- Local Action group (only in Measure 3 and Measure 4).

The implementation of Measure 4 started in 2012 and it is focused on national and multinational cooperation projects. Table 3 is the overview of financial

sources and implemented projects. Under this measure, there are projects focused on building capacities and exchange of experience among public-private partnerships via twinning programmes in the form of issuing promotional materials, catalogues or presentation publications in foreign languages. Implementation of regional cooperation project focused on introduction of regional labelling of products and services in

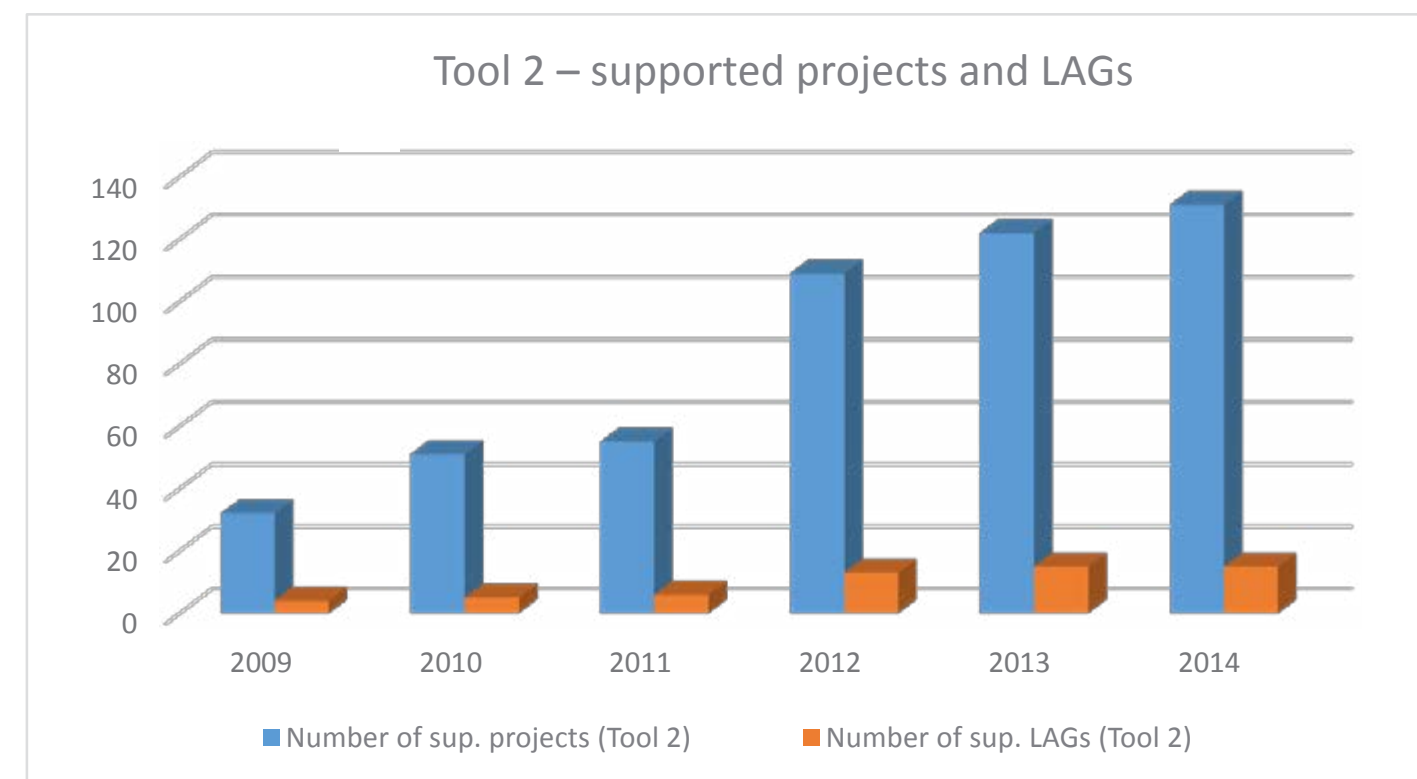
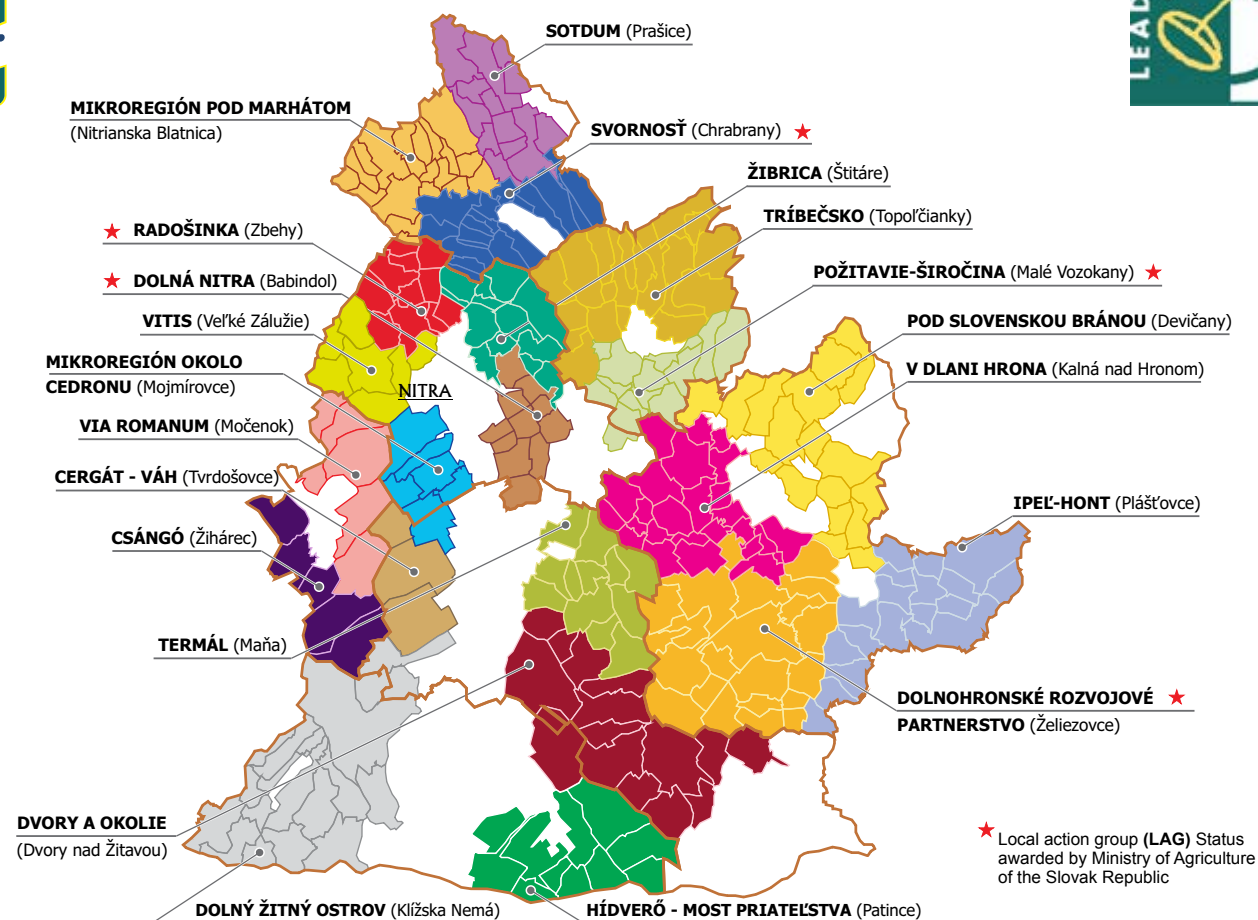


Chart 3 Assessment of Tool 2



“Public-private partnerships of LEADER type in Nitra region”



Map No. 2.
Territory of Nitra region in 2014

Nitra countryside belongs to Measure 4, too.

During the period of Tool 2 implementation in 2009–2013, 16 LAGs (without LAG Status) were gradually created in territory of Nitra region, which implemented 350 projects within their territories and the total subsidy within Tool 2 was 898,450.73 EUR in amount of really drawn financial sources from Nitra self-governing region budget. Average subsidy per one project was approximately 2,567 EUR. Final beneficiaries co-financed separate projects from own sources, while the total amount of co-financing is 79,936.03 EUR. Average subsidy of co-financing one project was approximately 228 EUR. The amount of co-financing evolves from legal form of final beneficiary of the projects and is deduced from total eligible project expenditures. The majority of projects was implemented in Measure Renewal of municipalities.

Starting from the Chart 3, in the course of the years 2009–2014, we follow the increase of final beneficiaries number (i.e. LAGs), final users (i.e. project presenters and implementers) and last, but not the least, significant increase of number of implemented projects.

Regional labelling, regional product Ponitrie

In the year 2011, Representation of Nitra self-governing region approved the project of cooperation and financially supported it in 2012–2013. Department of strategic activities arranged that the largest possible territory was involved in the project, and provided this possibility for manufacturers, producers and potential users.



Regional labelling project was implemented in cooperation with six partnerships, with three approved LAGs (Dolná Nitra, RADOŠINKA, Požítavie – Širočina) and three public-private partnerships (CEDRON, SOTDUM, TRIBECŠKO). The territory was mapped, building of capacities and introduction of regional labelling of products in countryside was arranged. The project was financially supported also by Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Regional trademark “Regionálny produkt PONITRIE®” was created (www.produktponitrie.sk). We present quality, Ponitrie region, its people, culture, traditions and positive relationship with environment.

Regional trademark is created by four principals, criteria of quality and uniqueness, which specify the system of trademark management, network of local producers and providers of services. They contribute by mutual cooperation to support of employment, creation of added value in the region and they support its economic growth.

It is the “bottom-up” approach. We worked with people and for people, with representatives of craftsmen and producers from the territories, whose ideas, knowledge and experience were incorporated not only into the trademark draft, but also in principals and criteria of quality assessment of the products, awarding of certificates or providing marketing and consequently distribution of products.

31 subjects from partnership territories were involved in the process of capacities building. There manufacturers and producers deal with the following activities:

- Painting, landscape painting, preferring oil of can-

vas,

- Production of replicas of historical cold weapons in rich chronological and typological range,
- Production of ornamented honey-cakes,
- Operation of tea house, painting on silk and glass,
- Production of utility and decorative ceramics,
- Bee-keeping, production of bee products,
- Production and sale of mead,
- Creation of miniature historical costumes,
- Growing of pumpkin seeds,
- Carving, ornamental lacing, engraving, painting on glass, egg shells decorating by scratching technique,
- Production and sale of decorative wood plants,
- Production of bee wax candles,
- Artistic wood carving,
- Growing grapes and wine production,
- Cattle and horse breeding, agricultural tourism and agricultural activity,
- Accommodation, catering and conference services,

summer camps and schools,

In December 2013, first ceremonial award of Certificates to first users of the trademark regional product PONITRIE® took place. It was preceded by meeting of Certification Commission for awarding rights to use the PONITRIE® trademark, which decided on awarding the trademark to 1 tourism facility and 10 manufacturers and producers. The certificate was awarded for food and agricultural products (box tree, pumpkin seeds, bee honey, mead, goat and cow milk), traditional crafts and artistic products (decorative ceramic products, wood sculptures and reliefs, dolls in costumes, landscape oil paintings) and also accommodation and catering services.

Where does the usefulness of Nitra LEADER lie? It brings new approach to solving problems of countryside, it brings the “bottom-up” approach, which indirectly forces citizens of our countryside to actively participate in its live. It adds value to local sources, it creates new jobs, it connects various projects, ideas, agents and rural sources. Our region is the first ever region in Slovakia, which created own financial sources for LEADER approach and started to support financially the implementation of integrated strategies of developing territories of local action groups and public-private partnerships within this region territory.

LEADER approach, including coordination and administration of financial sources of LEADER NSR has been under the umbrella of Department of strategic activities of the Office of Nitra self-governing region, since 2006.



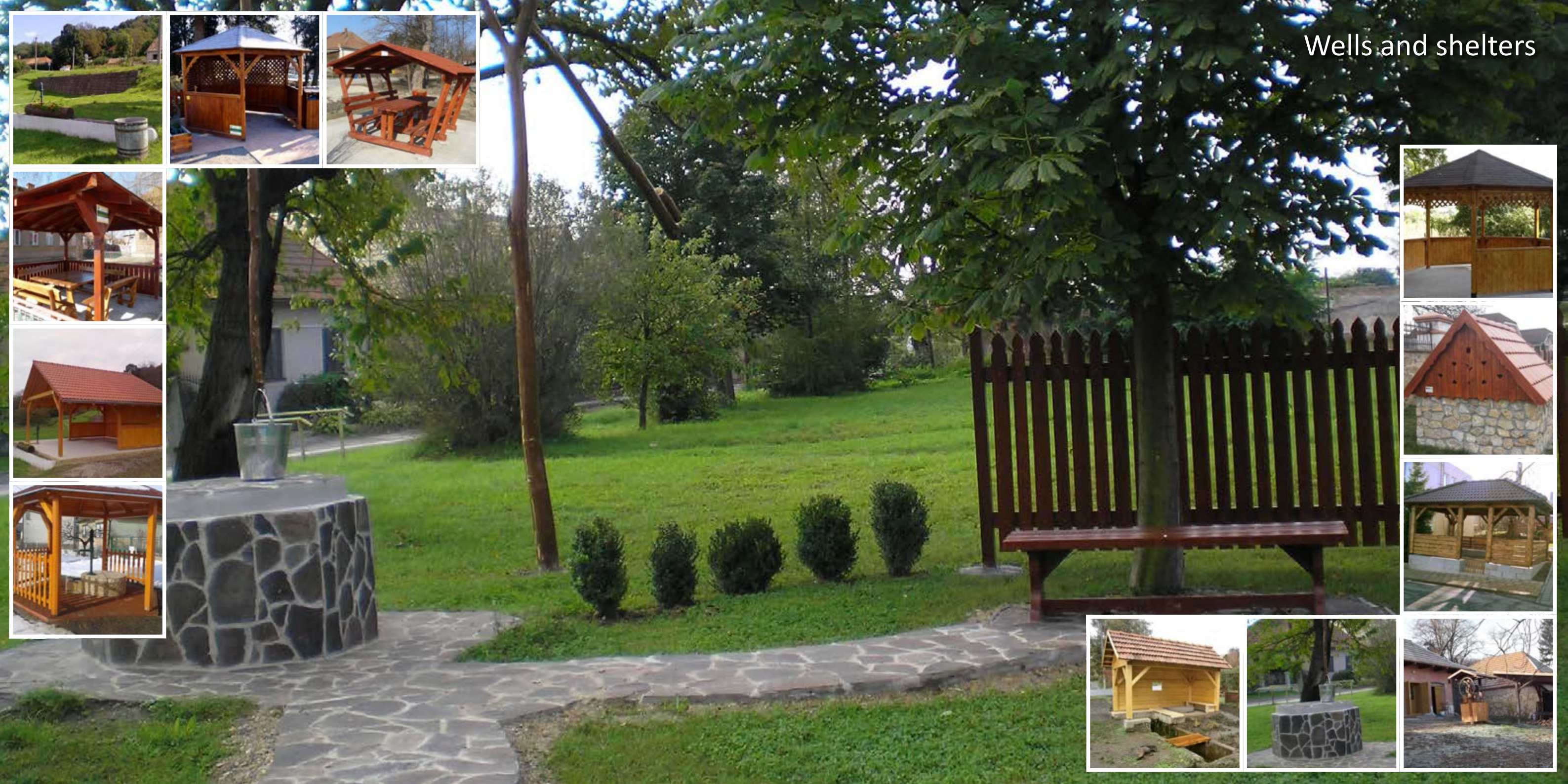
Conferences, training, twinning programs



History, tradition, events



Wells and shelters



Tourist information systems and signage



Bus stops



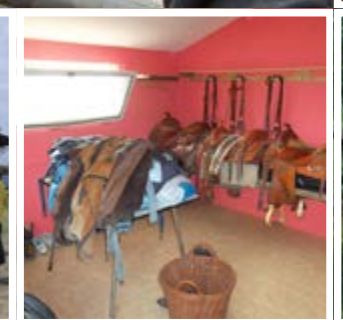
Playgrounds



Rest areas and public spaces

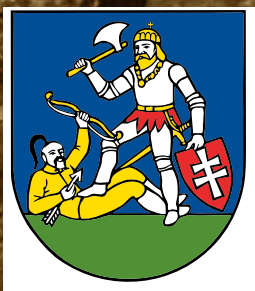


Horses and leisure



Craftsmen and regional brand Ponitrie



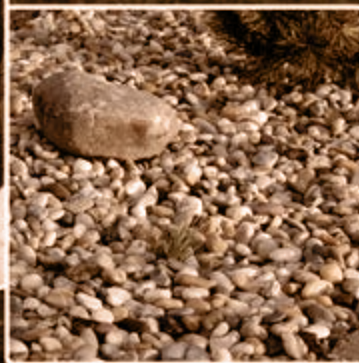


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