

Maribor Development Agency, the lead partner of project INTRA (programme Interreg Europe) proposed changes to the OP for implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 in East Slovenia. As the result, the Ministry for Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia prepared the Internationalisation vouchers.



The CEO, Mr. Uroš Požgan, stated that the voucher has relieved them of the financial burden the market research represents for a young company.

KOKICA d.o.o. is a young SME established in 2017 and currently employs 3 people. They are producing high quality popcorn. To ensure the quality, it is of vital importance to have the high-quality maize to get the corn that will pop just right, so they got in touch with the farmer, who produces the corn and are jointly making sure the quality will be nothing less than perfect.

But to ensure the variety of their product, they also learned how to add flavoured. Their caramelized popcorn is the crown jewel of their offer. At first, they were told it cannot be done. Experts in the field have told them that if a caramelized popcorn has the glow to it, it means it got wet in the process and should be rejected. Kokica team, however, didn't give up and they were able to make dry popcorn with the glow effect – because the caramelized coating is reflecting light, while the popcorn itself is still perfectly crunchy.

Through the process of trial and error they created the perfect popcorn! It is large in size, crunchy not wet, and has various flavours. The product was supported by ŠTARTAJ SLOVENIJA, which is supporting young entrepreneurs to start their business ideas.

Since then the company has never looked back and kept grown up to the point, they were ready to expand beyond the borders.

In 2019 they have applied for the voucher for market research on the foreign markets and received 4.740,00 EUR support. With the help of the voucher they researched the German market in order to determine the name of the brand under which they will be selling their product within Germany, the most appropriate packaging and the initial retail price. They have also identified the business partner to help them reach the new market.

We can soon expect to find the Slovenian product under the name “Kornpops” selling at 13 cafeterias that daily service 28.000 students and 8.000 industry workers in Germany.