

Green Entrepreneurship

Successful business cases of Green Entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean



Regional Activity Centre
for Cleaner Production



Eco-Village Ecofutura: Ecotourism and healthy lifestyle in BiH

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Name:	Ecofutura, Ltd.
City, country:	Sarajevo, Hreša, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Name of entrepreneur/ founder:	The founder of Vegehana restaurant with ten other shareholders of different professions from BiH

Description	Ecofutura is the project of ecotourism village which offers organic food and the specific facilities for sport and recreation, leisure, fun and education. The aim of the project is to be an example of the sustainable way of living and to raise awareness of BiH citizens and promote traditional principles of construction, healthy food growth and lifestyle in line with the nature, with use of modern technological achievements with the purpose of creation of sustainable village.
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Investment	<p><i>Startup capital:</i> None; all work initially done voluntarily by shareholders and out of their own earnings and private capital. The bank credit was also taken on their own shareholder accounts. The value of this project is circa EUR 1,000,000 up to now. Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism approved the grant of BAM 10,000 in 2011.</p> <p><i>Rate of return on investment:</i> still not visible.</p> <p><i>Sources of funding:</i> Sale of touristic offer at the village.</p>
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Stakeholders	<p><i>Municipality Old City of Sarajevo in Federation of BiH and East Old City in Republic of Srpska supported the project with the official permit and approval for construction and spatial planning of these areas for economic development. All the shareholders who founded the company Ecofutura, as well as those media and companies who promoted the village, and of course the tourists, citizens and municipalities of Sarajevo.</i></p>
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Employment generation	5 people full time, 12 free-lancers.
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Timeline	<p>2006: The idea started with the shareholder idea to produce the organic food and distribution of healthy food in the restaurant.</p> <p>2008: Vegehana Restaurant opened.</p> <p>2010: Location in Hreša purchased and Ecofutura was registered at the Court as a shareholder company, the construction works have started, shareholders started their own organic food production in the greenhouses for vegetable production.</p> <p>2011: In July Ecofutura officially opened for public.</p>
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Feasibility study	<p>The shareholders of Ecofutura recognized the Municipality Old City as top tourist destination, and it all began with the idea of healthy lifestyle, with the accent on environment protection and production and consummation of vegetarian food, to contribute to the reduction of pollution from the cow farms.</p> <p>The opening of the Vegehana Restaurant was first placed in Municipality Center and then when the conditions were fully acquired for that, Vegehana restaurant was moved in Ferhadija Street in Old City with which the gastro offer of the Old Town has been enriched.</p> <p>The founders did research on the tourist offer in ecotourism and knowing that BiH strong potential is tourism sector (National Geographic published that BiH is the No.1 Country for mountain bicycling in the world), they discovered that ecotourism can be the strong potential for tourist offer in BiH.</p> <p>Later, the Business plan was made for Ecofutura ecotourism village, and it has been revised a year after its opening.</p>
Geo-social-economic setting	Not available.
Key features	<p>Sustainability and creativity are the key features of the project targeting the whole population including children and adults. The way of construction of the guest houses and restaurant is the creative way to educate visitors on sustainable construction with natural raw materials (straw, clay and wood), recycling methods of water and energy, use of renewable energy sources for heating.</p>
Overall rational and motivation	<p>The overall motivation is to change attitude of BiH citizens toward the environment and lifestyle. The climate change and sustainable living were key motivations for the action. The vision of Ecofutura is to be the leading BiH brand promoting the eco-tourism and healthy lifestyle in BiH.</p>
Strenghts	<p>The intensive cooperation of two Municipality Mayors through this project is very good example of inter-entity Cooperation practice.</p>
Challenges and constraints	<p>The ongoing financing is the major organizational challenge and barrier for continuation of the project. Currently the project is in its Second phase of construction of additional facilities for guests and for educational program, and the Third phase envisages the solar park for education and production of thermal energy.</p>

Direct activities and Impacts

Social: Support from the local community has been essential in the period of initial construction and supply of organic food for the restaurant. Environmental education on sustainable way of living is planned to be included in the whole process of Eco village project.

Environmental: The Eco village has its own treatment of wastewaters from the location and the effluent is used for technical water for watering and cleaning, and 90% of the wastewater is being used in recycling process. The energy efficiency is visible through the construction of the buildings on the location, because the thermal isolation is done with the use of the natural raw materials for construction and also with the use of biomass furnace which has own integrated recirculation system of the flue gasses which have been used repeatedly as a source of energy. The third Phase of the project envisages the use of solar collectors for thermal energy production which will produce the energy necessary for the village and the surrounding local community.

It is situated 12 km away from the Old City of Sarajevo, on altitude of 1,200 m and since there are no industrial plants to disturb natural benefits of this area, it makes this area an air spa. The location is characterized with extremely pure air – with specific concentration of light ions, its ideal humidity, increased oxygen levels, beneficial air circulation, stable temperature and high number of sunny hours per year. Eco village also has own natural water spring that supplies all the facilities of the location.

At this location, the Eco village also has its own greenhouses for growth of organic vegetables.

Economic: The local community has the opportunity to sell their products such as vegetables and milk products; 5 people employed by the project.

Use of innovative Technologies

The raw materials used for construction of the buildings on the location of Eco-futura are the natural construction materials with characteristic of filtering the air through it, that is they enable the air circulation i.e. “the breathing effect of the walls” with no condensate formed in the inner walls of the rooms, and in the same time having excellent thermal insulation characteristics. Also use of the surrounding biomass from the forest (the forest waste or residues) with the higher caloric potential when compacting it in the special machines. In the same time the elimination of this waste minimizes the risk of forest fires.

Facebook, webpage of the project and e-mail are the main communication systems used.

Evidence of a holistic approach/world view

The shareholders all operate under the philosophy “Think global, act local”. Open minded persons gathered through this project in Shareholder Company wanting to achieve low environmental impact with this project and to educate people visiting their facilities and through the internet on their website on sustainable way of living.

Scale of benefits

Each weekend Ecofutura has 100–200 visitors mainly from Sarajevo which comes for lunch and walk. From its opening in July, 2011, there were 15 team building workshops organized in Eco future. During working days of course, the visits are smaller and their number is approx. 10 persons staying overnight. There are 1,000 persons monthly visiting Ecofutura webpage.

Policies, incentives and regulations needed

Incentives for Green Entrepreneurship are highly necessary for starting this kind of business, as well as more understanding from banking sector for financing the business plans, and not only the assets.

Lessons and recommendations

Good communication and cooperation with local community is imperative for successful implementation of the project.

It is very important to have the original idea which you strongly support and then to make research of the market as well as the business plan. Our experience is that you have to do most of the work by yourself in the sense of finding the financial sources, because the process of finding the investor is long-term process. What banks prefer is to feel the seriousness of the investment of the starting capital and to have as more precise cash flow as possible with which you prove possibility for paying out the credit.

When tourist catering business is the issue, it is important to recognize the needs of the client.

In relation to marketing, the internet is the strongest media for advertisement. We had a positive experience when we introduced the action sale advertisement on one BiH web portal and after that we had the largest record of visits in Ecofutura.

References

www.vegehana.com

www.ecofutura.ba

www.ecotourism.ba