

Green Entrepreneurship

Successful business cases of Green Entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean



Regional Activity Centre for Cleaner Production



SPD Heljda Eko Sarajevo: Production of organic buckwheat products in BiH

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Name: SPD Heljda Eko Sarajevo, Ltd.
City, country: Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Name of entrepreneur/ founder: Samir Mehonić

Description “Heljda eko” Sarajevo is recognizable company in the domestic and foreign markets as one of the BiH company that deals exclusively with organic food production. They gained a reputation in an effort to maintain an organic way of growing buckwheat, calendula, artichokes and other medicinal herbs, and in this way ensure the quality of their products. “Heljda eko” Sarajevo is a domestic company that is involved in production, processing and sale.

Investment *Startup capital:* Business began with no working capital and fixed assets. The initial capital was of modest wages of the founder.
Rate of return on investment: not available.
Sources of funding: Sale of organic products.

Stakeholders Organic farmers, NGOs, local government, consumers of organic products in the country and abroad, commercial centers that sell the products.

Employment generation 4 people full time, plus 10 seasonal workers.

Timeline 2000: Start with the organic production of buckwheat in the mountain environment.
 2003: Received certification according to “KRAV” standards, certified by IFOAM (International Foundation for Organic Agricultural Movement)
 2004: Opening of Shop of Agricultural business, “Heljda Eko” Raštelica.
 2006: Opening of specialized Agricultural Cooperative “ZZ Heljda eko”
 2011: Opening of healthy organic food shop.
 2012: Plans to officially open eco restaurant.

Feasibility study Feasibility Study or any other type of study was not conducted prior to starting a business. The founders have developed their business step by step, with a few good results at a time.

Geo-social-economic setting Not available.

Key features Organic farm Heljda Eko takes pride in the quality and authenticity of their products. Their product range comprises of 3 groups with over 60 types of different products: food products, preparations based on medicinal herbs, products made on the basis of buckwheat scales: neck pillows, eye masks, bedding for kids and adults, etc.

Overall rational and motivation	Their slogan “Back to the nature” speaks enough about the motive, which initiated individual and group energy in order that the project of growing buckwheat experiences success in BiH.
Strenghts	In BiH, prospects for cultivation are huge, although it is a difficult and painstaking job during the season which requires 20 hours a day of work, but it is not difficult if the circle for the placement of the final product is not closed. Buckwheat cannot be produced in the lowlands, only in the highlands, and BiH has high plateaus of 700 meters above sea level, which should be used for this purpose.
Challenges and constraints	Not enough support from the government to promote this type of production abroad. In order to develop organic production and meet the market needs, it is necessary to make a symbiosis between the relevant ministries and producers and manufacturers.
Direct activities and Impacts	<i>Social:</i> All the employees are from the local community. The associates of the project come from all across the country. Education at all levels of employees in Heljda Eko is free and “man-oriented”. <i>Environmental:</i> Buckwheat is a medicinal plant and during ten years of work in our production there is no waste – everything is usable. They have, so called, closed-circuit production of buckwheat and herbs to the end product. In this circle, all is exploited and everything is in touch with nature. <i>Economic:</i> The project has stimulated economic development within the community. Directly and indirectly, the company employs about 100 people.
Use of innovative Technologies	Facebook, webpage of the company and e-mail.
Evidence of a holistic approach/world view	Heljda Eko is the biggest producer of buckwheat and other organic products in the country. The area of former Yugoslavia is interested in all of their products, as well as Sweden, Germany, Italy, Australia, etc.
Scale of benefits	100 cooperative subcontractors throughout BiH; The largest collection and redemption center of buckwheat in BiH, population in BiH educated on the benefit of products of buckwheat; the products exported to Australia, Sweden, Croatia and Slovenia.
Policies, incentives and regulations needed	Producers of organic, eco and bio products should joint in one association on the state level.
Lessons and recomendations	Hopefully, the positive example of Heljda Eko will be guiding for the prosperity of organic agriculture in BiH.

References:

www.heljdaeko.com
www.facebook.com/heljda-eko-organska-proizvodnja
heljdaeko.blogger.ba