

Green Entrepreneurship

Successful business cases of Green Entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean



Regional Activity Centre
for Cleaner Production



Becasse: Eco-tourist services and environmental education in Tunisia

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Name:	Becasse
City, country:	Tunis, Tunisia
Name of entrepreneur/ founder:	Tarek Nefzi

Description	<p>Becasse is a company active in the field of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Design and implementation of Nature trip, bird watching, mammal watching and tailor made safaris for small groups. – Green courses and training classes in environmental education. – Awareness rising activities in the field of environment, green courses, training and design of communication materials (CD, TV program, etc.)
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Investment	<p><i>Start up capital:</i> DT 7,000. <i>Rate of return on investment:</i> 35% <i>Sources of funding:</i> private funds.</p>
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Stakeholders	<p><i>Shareholders:</i> 2 persons. <i>Customers:</i> European and North American tours operators, Ecologists, Universities and schools, International cooperation programmes, TV producers. <i>Providers:</i> Travel agencies in Tunisia, Editing companies (digital and printed), Experts and University teachers. <i>Strategic partners:</i> General Directorate of Forest of Tunisia, National bureau of tourism of Tunisia, Ministry of National Education. <i>European partnership:</i> PRP, Belgium company, Tours operators, NGOs active in the field of ecology and environment, Centres of environmental education, International cooperation agencies, such as GIZ. <i>International partnership (other than European):</i> UNDP, UNOPS.</p>
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Employment generation	Not available.
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Timeline	<p>Date of Start up: 1997 2000: Staff cuts and reorganisation of the company. 2003: capital increase and establishment of strategic partnership with a Belgium company.</p>
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Feasibility study	<p>The founder carried out a quick feasibility study prior to the launch of BECASSE. At that moment, the availability and access to information were too difficult. The founder considers himself as a 'risk taker' when he created BECASSE. Although the first years have been too tough for BECASSE to ensure its viability, some strategic adjustments allowed the company to evolve and be sustainable.</p>
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Geo-social-economic setting	<p>Becasse is working uppermost in North African region (Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco) but is trying to develop its activities to the African sub-Saharan and central region.</p>
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Key features	Ecotourism, ornithology, sustainable tourism, communication on environmental issues, green trips, eco museums. Green tourism: nature cycling, trekking, etc. Awareness rising to environmental issues.
Overall rational and motivation	Not available.
Strenghts	Becasse has a strong experience in design of Eco-museums (design of 4 eco-museums in Tunisia) and has realized several TV programs on ecology and environment in Tunisia (for BBC and National Geographic TV: 'Off the fence'). BECASSE has designed several eco tourist tours and expeditions to protected areas in Tunisia, Algeria and Democratic Republic of Congo.
Challenges and constraints	Becasse is working on new kind of services in the field of sustainable tourism without any support of governmental bodies like the ONTT (Office National du Tourisme Tunisien). Through its activities, the company is trying to create new employments for graduate young people as natural guides, mainly those who studied 'life and earth sciences'.
Direct activities and Impacts	<i>Social:</i> Becasse intends to create new green jobs by integrating young people in the field of nature guiding. <i>Environmental:</i> Though its activities, Becasse promotes biodiversity and ecosystems as source of income for local population. <i>Economic:</i> Becasse promotes sustainable activities in the field of environment and ecology and also promotes fair trade as an added value to local population.
Use of innovative Technologies	Becasse uses new communication and marketing tools and approaches through the Internet.
Evidence of a holistic approach/world view	Becasse uses an inter-cultural approach in designing any eco-trip, leading visitors to 'dive' into local tradition and customs. The company contributes to the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems throughout their economic added value (employments, incomes...)
Scale of benefits	Besides awareness raising towards children and adults on the importance of environmental issues and biodiversity, Becasse is considered as a very innovative company as it is the first and presumably the only company in Tunisia which organizes ecological tours.
Policies, incentives and regulations needed	According to the founder of Becasse, Tunisia needs to be promoted as an eco touristy destination. At this purpose, the governmental bodies should train further the eco tourists' guides and establish a regulatory framework for professions like guides and eco trip designers. In addition, as the protected areas are totally under the control of the public institutions, companies like Becasse needs a transparent framework allowing the establishment of public-private partnership towards the promotion and realisation of activities inside and around those protected areas.
Lessons and recomendations	The experience of Becasse shows that Eco tourism in Tunisia could, simultaneously, generates sustainable income for local people, and preserve the ecosystems and the biodiversity.

References

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