



B- LAND

Promote and Strengthen Business Development Skills in Rural Communities

Module 3
Legal aspects of entrepreneurial activity
CASE STUDIES

Developed by the University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece



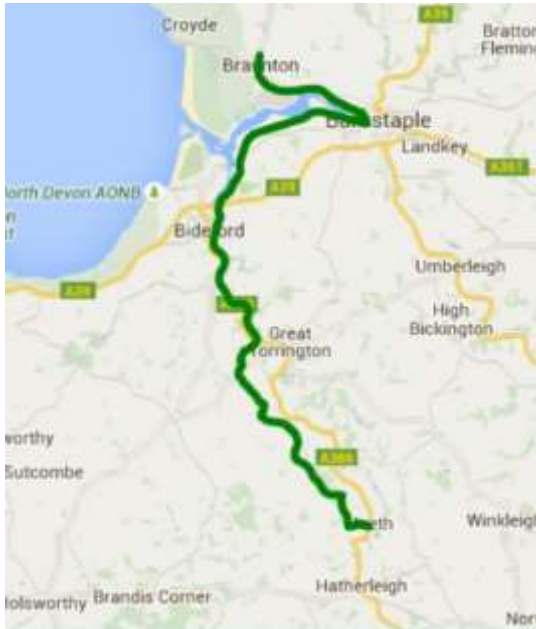
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Case Study 1: The Tarka project



The Tarka project has been an initiative that began in 1988 in the North Devon inland area focusing on sustainable economic development of the area considering 2 parameters. The first was that North Devon inland area was recognized as an Area of Great Landscape value with the existence of the National Parks of Exmoor and Dartmoor and the North Devon Coast.



The second parameter was that the area during that period was economically and environmentally vulnerable, with declining agricultural incomes, unemployment above the national average with a general concern about the viability of rural communities and environmental concerns about water quality. Before Tarka project, the area did not have a clear identity and gained little economic benefit from tourism.



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The Tarka project was one of the leading projects for the realization of environmentally friendly models of tourist development with focus on conservation and green economy. The activities that fulfilled the project were the set up of a long distance walking route and a cycleway and complementary projects for connecting the Trail with Local villages. The establishment of the Tarka Country Tourism Association (TCTA) was the connection point for the local entrepreneurs, that were called to contribute to the overall initiative signing the “Green Charter” which committed them to develop sound environmental practices in their businesses that were mostly active in producing local products-a wide range of food, drinks and crafts.

The Tarka Country Tourism Association has a stable number of 150 member SMEs which directly support more than 750 jobs.

The establishment of the cycleway has led to the opening of five bicycle hire businesses while pubs and other businesses along its length have also seen significant increases in their business.



Case Study 2: The Natural Forest Campaign in Germany

Another example of initiative that fostered small scale entrepreneurial development in a rural area in alignment with the EU framework is the Natural Forest Campaign in Germany. The nation-wide campaign was initiated by the Naturschutzbund (NABU) in 1996 that manifested that German forests should be managed and used sustainably.

The specific activities mentioned were the natural regeneration of native species rather than planting, the replacement of heavy timber harvesting and lumber machinery with more traditional working practices and the cease of chemicals use for protection from pathogens and disease.

Although the project did not have the desired impact scale it is estimated that a national sustainable forest management scheme with the integration of other EU policies for sustainability could lead not only to increased environmental benefits but also to further economic gains in local, regional and national scale.

The greater profitability of top quality timber could be achieved by using traditional practices with benefits such as slower growth and lack of damage by machinery, no planting costs, lower risk from disease and pests due to diversity of tree species and the ability to add value through eco-labelling.

NABU has estimated that a complete transfer to using heavy horses could create up to 30.000 jobs in Germany's federal forests with a subsequent added value for the small scale entrepreneurship and the local development of mountainous areas.



Case Study 3: Environmental Improvement Programme

The Environmental Improvement Programme (EIP) was launched in 1989 with the aim to tackle environmental problems in the urban area of Berlin for the enhance of the sustainability and long term success of the SMEs by bringing the latest environmental technologies to them. The need that generated this programme was the fact that SMEs were not considered competitive enough during that period although they facilitated 75% of industrial jobs.

EIPs strategy was to ensure the affordable access of manufacturing SMEs s to environmentally sound technologies, and thus improve their environmental performance beyond minimum legal standards.

The activities that served this scope included

- the integration of clean technologies directly to individual businesses through 50% subsidies on investments;
- the development of new clean technologies that are of value to a number of companies and can therefore be reproduced many times, enabling individual SMEs to benefit effectively from 'bulk ordering'
- the provision for 'service companies' that could provide access to facilities and services that individual SMEs would not wish to invest in directly: these have included combined heat and power (CHP), environmental consulting and vocational training.

Apart for the environmental gains that were vital, EIP generated 259 direct new jobs primarily in service companies and central infrastructures. Also, an estimated 1000 person-year was created at companies manufacturing the technical installations.



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Case Study 4: Pelicans in Prespa: ecotourism, farming and fishing in a greek wetland



Prespa is situated in the Peripheral Unit of Florina of Greece, close to the borders with Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Prespa was declared a National Park in 1974 is protected by a range of other designations as the area's lakes are of global importance for wetland birds are home to the world's largest nesting colony of Dalmatian Pelicans. Since 1992/3, the Society for the Protection of Prespa has developed a programme conserving the natural environment and cultural heritage while promoting sustainable development of the area.

The activities of the programme focused on 2 different sectors- the sustainable primary sector and the sector of alternative tourism.





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The most significant developments so far were the following:

- Growing of organic beans with higher-than average yields and premium prices, which as a result has spread to other areas.
- The development of ecotourism. Two tourist information centres have been set up and are managed by trained wildlife guides. Young local people have been trained in environmental management, interpretation and ecotourism. Other local products are also promoted, such as food, beverages and woollen goods.
- The development of wildlife tourism, which is a year round activity and therefore extends the tourist season.

In those two sectors several SMEs were developed, with the majority of them being owned by local people who were attached to the place and have diffused the benefits to the local society.



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Case Study 5: Abernethy- the economic impact of a nature reserve



The Abernethy Forest reserve is located in a remote rural area in Scotland, United Kingdom. It is a protected area and with the support of several organisations there was established a very conscious and sensitive management for forest regeneration and expansion, allowing for nature and bird watching tourism.

Abernethy reserve has helped to stimulate and diversify a remote rural economy. There is large economic impact generated by the reserve's ability to attract visitors to the area contributing to the direct employment and the development of small scale and sustainable entrepreneurship.

The example of Abernethy Forest reserve demonstrates that conservation projects can bring significant economic benefits and a range of possibilities for the local population to initiate successful entrepreneurial activity.





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