

Green Entrepreneurship

Successful business cases of Green Entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean



Regional Activity Centre
for Cleaner Production



Dar Zaghouan: Eco-Lodge in Tunisia

48

Name:	Dar Zaghouan
City, country:	Zaghouan, Tunisia
Name of entrepreneur/ founder:	Mr. Skander Zribi

Description	Dar Zaghouan is an eco-lodge located in the region of Zaghouan, 45 minutes far from the capital Tunis. It comprises chalets, gardens and a traditional olive oil mill. Dar Zaghouan eco-lodge promotes green and agri-tourism.
--------------------	--

Investment	<i>Start up capital:</i> DT 400,000. <i>Rate of return on investment:</i> 10 % <i>Sources of funding:</i> private fund.
-------------------	---

Stakeholders	<i>Customers:</i> Companies located in the region, basically industries. Individuals and families (tunisians and expatriates). Tunisian companies who organize team building seminars, meetings and events. <i>Providers:</i> 90 % of the providers are located in the region of Zaghouan. Dar Zaghouan comprises also a farm producing fruits, olive oil, cheese, chicken and quails. 50 % of food is produced in the farm. <i>European partnership:</i> Travel Agency 'AMPLI Travel', located in France.
---------------------	--

Employment generation	Not available.
------------------------------	----------------

Timeline	Date of Start up: September 11 th 2007. 2007: Visit of French TV channel 'France 2'. 2009: Visit of French tv channel 'France 5'. 2009: Launch of the polyvalent room. 2010: Opening of 3 new wood chalets and refurbishment of the traditional oil mill. 2011: Visit of Tunisian TV channel; Visit of 2 Ministers (Minister of Culture and Minister of tourism); Organization of a key event for the SEDIF (syndicat des agences de voyages françaises); Start building a Canadian well to save electricity for cooling and heating. Waste water recovery system to be installed for irrigation.
-----------------	---

Feasibility study	A passion for nature is the driver motivation of the owner of Dar Zaghouan. At the beginning, the idea was to renovate the parents' house and to use it during the week-end. The idea of creating an eco-lodge followed the visit of a 'green' journalist who encouraged the project by writing an article on one of the most well known newspaper in Tunisia. In Tunisia, there are no eco-lodges and the owner wanted to start with an innovative project. The starting hypothesis relies on the need of people to live closer to nature and to consume natural and fresh products. The proximity of Tunis the capital (more or less 2 Million inhabitants) has been considered as an advantage.
--------------------------	---

Geo-social-economic setting	Clients and visitors of Dar Zaghouan come from Tunis and other big cities, and from the governorate of Zaghouan (many companies from Zaghouan have organized events in Dar Zaghouan).
Key features	Eco-lodge and Agro-tourism: Dar Zaghouan aims at providing its clients with a new vision of clean consumption and cleaner behavior in a more sustainable environment of life without jeopardizing the standards of comfort.
Overall rational and motivation	Not available.
Strenghts	The architecture of the eco-lodge and the location in a mountainous and forested area. The landscape is very beautiful and the air very clean. Dar Zaghouan offers local and traditional food of excellent quality and a friendly, familiar environment.
Challenges and constraints	The major constraint for the future is related to the extension of the city, which is coming closer to the eco-lodge. Too much houses are being built on the piedmont of the mountain. This phenomenon will affect the landscape and consequently people may look for other more natural areas. The founder of Dar Zaghouan owns other spaces far away from the city, but the investment will be too high to create another eco-lodge and to abandon the existing. The scarcity of underground water is another constraint to be probably faced in the future.
Direct activities and Impacts	<i>Socio-economic:</i> Dar Zaghouan contributed to provide local employment for the villagers (men and women). <i>Environmental:</i> Besides the awareness raising in favour of visitors, Dar Zaghouan uses solar water heaters and traditional agricultural techniques in respect of the environment.
Use of innovative Technologies	It uses renewable energy by installing solar water heaters in rooms. In addition, the owner is currently installing a Canadian well for natural cooling and heating of the chalets.
Evidence of a holistic approach/world view	Not available.
Scale of benefits	Despite of the difficulties and constraints (lack of institutional public support) and the decrease of clients in 2011, due to the revolution of January 2011, Dar Zaghouan is considered as an interesting project on several levels: environmental, awareness raising, turn-over and jobs creation.
Policies, incentives and regulations needed	According to the owner, the Ministry of Tourism should encourage more significantly the region of Zaghouan, mainly in the field of sustainable tourism, by promoting a sustainable natural resource management and protecting the landscape. In terms of financial incentives, there the sector needs to extend the fiscal incentives, as Zaghouan region is registered as a development zone, in which investments are excluded from VAT and other social taxes.
Lessons and recomendations	The motivation of the promoter is crucial to overcome the constraints and the challenges that are to be faced at the launching phase of such projects in rural area. The emotional relationship of the founder to its motherland and to local traditions is an important aspect to pursue such a project.

References

Tel.: +216 24 309 309
e-mail: darzaghouan@gmail.com
www.darzaghouane.com