

Green Entrepreneurship

Successful business cases of Green Entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean



Regional Activity Centre for Cleaner Production



Action Sarl: Tunisian environmental and energy consulting company

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Name: Action Sarl
City, country: Gafsa, Tunisia
Name of entrepreneur/ founder: Mr. Néji Amaimia

Description Studies and consulting in the field of energy, environment and management systems (environmental, security, quality and energy conservation management systems).

Investment
Start up capital: DT 50,000.
Rate of return on investment: + de 100 %
Sources of funding: private funding.

Stakeholders
Shareholders: 20% of shares owned by another individual shareholder.
Customers: Tunisian Ministries (Industry and Technology, Agriculture and environment, Training and employment); Public institutions (Société Tunisienne d'Electricité et du Gaz, Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Tunisiens); Private firms (Group Carrefour, Group One Tech, Group Hmila, Group POULINA, etc); International cooperation agencies and donors (GIZ, AFD, UE, German Ministry of Environment, etc.); German private firms (SOLAR 23, Fraunhofer Institute, etc.).
Providers: None.
Strategic partners: GIZ.
European partnership: DEFIC (Consulting German firm working in the fields of renewable energy and energy efficiency); PROFEC (German private firm specialized in wind energy).
International partnership (other than European): None.

Employment generation Not available.

Timeline
 Date of Start up: 2008
 2009: have signed an important contract with Group Carrefour on energy conservation in all tunisian malls held by Carrefour. Some energy conservation measures identified have been also applied at the Carrefour France; Assignment with SOLAR 23 to develop renewable energy in 24 African countries; Start of international missions in Germany, France, The Netherlands, Spain, Belgium and Morocco.

Feasibility study
 The feasibility study realized before the launch of the Action Sarl has identified local and even international needs for expertise in the field of energy conservation. Besides that, the founder was motivated to start an experience in the private sector (as he was a high responsible in the public administration) where he could be able to bring additional technical know-how to private companies such as industries. The founder decided then to leave the field of projects' management and to move to the technical input as a consulting firm.

Geo-social-economic setting	Action Sarl works in all regions of Tunisia and in many fields such as the agriculture, infrastructure, industry, training and employment.
Key features	The vision of Action Sarl is to participate to the development of energy conservation in Africa in order to create new markets because there is a huge need in African countries to integrate energy conservation measures and environmental aspects in the economy.
Overall rational and motivation	Not available.
Strenghts	According to the founder, the diversity of the customers' portfolio of Action Sarl is one of the reasons for its success, basically by looking for international customers and developing the export of services. Action Sarl is also works in 2 innovative fields (energy and environment) in Tunisia that allows capturing new opportunities in emerging markets. The consulting activities and the training activities of Action Sarl are 2 complementary activities. For example, though consulting missions in the field of energy conservation, Action Sarl proposes training programs for internal auditors based on IRCA standard (International Registered Credited Auditors).
Challenges and constraints	Sometimes, Action Sarl is facing unfair competitiveness that emerges through non profitable prices offered by competitors with low qualification. In addition, the adjudication system in Tunisia gives advantage to the so-called 'best offer', means the lowest one in term of financial offer. The issue of export, especially to African countries, is also restrictive, because projects are funded by the EU and as a Tunisian consulting firm Action Sarl is legally required to cooperate with European firms and cannot participate as a leading company.
Direct activities and Impacts	<i>Social:</i> Jobs creation following the implementation of energy conservation measures resulting from the action plans proposed to enterprises. <i>Environmental:</i> Many companies in Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria have been certified in the environmental management ISO 14001 norm and succeeded to reduce pollution. <i>Economic:</i> Many companies have benefit from our studies and action plans to improve competitiveness. Action Sarl also trained and accredited around 100 young people who become able to launch small enterprises in the field of energy conservation.
Use of innovative Technologies	In training activities, Action Sarl uses and applies practical tools and instruments based on the newest technologies. In the field of studies, Action Sarl uses participatory approaches, involving as much as possible a wide range of stakeholders concerned by one issue. This kind of methods ensures credibility and reliability to our outputs.
Evidence of a holistic approach/world view	Action Sarl is contributing through its network to provide advice in 24 African countries where projects on energy conservation are being held. Besides that, many innovative projects in the field of applied research (in cooperation with the EU) are being implemented with the contribution of Action Sarl, such as water desalination using renewable energy).

Scale of benefits

Action Sarl works on the macro, meso and micro levels. The most important impact generated through the company is levelled at the macro strategic level, through advices provided to decision makers.

Policies, incentives and regulations needed

The regulatory framework in the field of energy conservation needs to be more attractive to private investors, which would create consequently additional markets in the consulting field. In the environmental field, as well, there is a need to boost the local market further by encouraging the end users through fiscal advantages and subsidies.

Lessons and recommendations

Diversify the portfolio is the key of success in the field of consulting. One should never work in a sole economic field. Additionally, developing networks of multi-disciplinary expertise is of a high added value to succeed in consulting, because customers need more and more global solutions to problems they are facing.

References

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