03. A CROSS SECTORAL APPROACH

The most important motivation for bringing together an expert team from the different disciplines represented on the local level is the belief that sustainable development can only take place if done in a holistic and integrated way. There are countless examples of initiatives focused on one sector or value chains that do not succeed or do not create the maximum added value due to limited connection to other surrounding forces of influence.

There are different reasons for this. Individual entrepreneurs can hardly be expected to think far beyond the boundaries of their own activities. At the same time government is organised in a way that stimulates a sector approach: agriculture, tourism and spatial development are separated in different ministries and even within ministries tourism development and other economic development are divided due to separated budgets and different policy focus. There is hardly an incentive to work on integrating visions and strategy let alone joint activities. A way out of this is the creation of an experimental area where all different policies and interests of all stakeholders can be taken into account.

Important questions for working on such a pilot area are:

- What government policies and strategies are in place and how do they complement, contradict and overlap each other?
- How can different sectors create added value for one and other?
- What are the enabling factors for developing one sector and how do these effect other sectors or stakeholders?
- How can mistakes be prevented by taking all possible social, environmental and economic dimensions into account when “designing” a plan for a specific area?
- How can such an experiment create a common (play)ground and provide short feedback loops between entrepreneurs and customers, between government and local community, between commercial developers and NGO’s, etc.?
Circular and Inclusive Model

The answer to these questions starts with the concept of inclusiveness and circularity. This project is not about choosing the poorest area of Albania and providing locals with ideas on how to escape poverty. But it is not about enhancing business for mainstream entrepreneurs and corporations either. It is aimed at creating maximum value for all stakeholders present in a designated area and providing all with prospect of future business and the opportunity to get into action, whether it is on an individual level or on the level of the community or government. Furthermore we aim to identify as many ways as possible to create closed loops in value chains. How can for instance local agricultural activity contribute to the issue of energy demand? Or how can the tourism sector create additional income for agricultural entrepreneurs and vice versa? How can the issue of waste be transformed into business opportunities and create multiple values? Cleaner scenery, healthier food, happy tourists, etc.
Design as the Binding Factor

In order to keep all stakeholders at the table and make stakeholders from different sectors (agriculture, tourism, processing, spatial development) or levels (national government, local government, local community and entrepreneurs) have common understanding about “where we are and where we want or need to go”, it is critical to have a common language or framework. Design does exactly that. It visualizes the present situation and can help build scenarios for the future. It provides a visual context preventing people from getting stuck in different languages.

It is also a way of prototyping complex webs of relationships and testing their reciprocal influences. Often, drawing the plan reveals aspects that were not visible before: How do the actions of one actor affect another and how do they affect the over-all situation? Capturing all steps for development in a visual design provides powerful material to communicate to stakeholders and follow-up partners, needed to put the ideas into practice.
Steps in the Process

The approach for cross sectoral local development has a number of steps that can more or less be used in any situation.

**Step 1: Identify local needs**
Before deciding on bringing in experts and working on an action plan the local needs must be articulated by “problem owners” so that local ownership is evident and secured for the future. These needs can be identified by local organisations, government, entrepreneurs and embassies.

**Step 2: Analyse potential**
In a first exploratory phase the core of experts will analyse potentially connected sectors in a country, existing government strategies, and the role and interests of various stakeholders. Furthermore, the team will come up with a rough prediction of successful interventions working towards a sustainable (business) future.

**Step 3: Define a pilot area**
In order to bring together the potential development of different sectors on different levels it is crucial to define a pilot area, a living lab where stakeholders can work on common understanding.

**Criteria for choosing a pilot area**
- Focus sectors from national policies sufficiently represented
- Communication between stakeholders on local and national level
- Sufficient critical mass of entrepreneurs active and involved in the area
- Potential elements for sustainable development are present such as:
  - cooperation between stakeholders,
  - willing and active local government,
  - sufficient landscape and agricultural elements,
  - sufficient potential business cases on individual and joint level.
  - Potential demand for products and services
  - willingness to change

**Step 4: Define outlines of a local strategy/model**
To work with local community and entrepreneurs on sustainable business development, the common framework or model is a matter of preference. This framework is based on the outcome of interviews and workshops in the pilot area combined with relevant content of government strategies and policy. In this local model, social, environmental, economic and spatial elements need to be taken into account from the start. Important in this process is determining the enabling factors.
Step 5: Collect potential projects, business cases and future scenarios

Based on a common understanding of a sustainable future for all sectors involved, the next step is to define a multitude of opportunities in all sectors, preferably with strong links to each other. On the individual business level, on the level of cooperation between companies / value chains, and on the level of local community.

Step 6: Communication

An important part of the process is sharing the preliminary results with the most important local, national and international stakeholders to validate conclusions and assumptions, to involve key player for future up scaling and replication. This is also the moment in the process to engage with media and press to create awareness about the initiative, ownership, and the pride of local stakeholders.

Step 7: Work on the business cases

All the potential business cases need to be put to the test. The (financial) feasibility and ownership need to be clear. In this phase business plans are made, development strategies for public space and the organisation of parties involved take shape.

Step 8: Safeguard the overall development and encourage up-scaling and replication.

The connection to the general strategy or model needs to be guarded. This is partly the task of all local parties involved, possibly within an organisation structure, and partly a public task for government and development partners.
Results of the Process

- Taylor made strategy for a specific area
- Network of local entrepreneurs and stakeholders with joint ownership over strategy and individual ownership over individual potential business cases.
- A multitude of follow-up possibilities/business scenarios
- Blueprint for development replicable in different areas
- Insight in the implications of national strategy for specific local situations
This report has been prepared in collaboration of CITYFÖRSTER, MVO Nederland and:

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