08. ACTIVITIES IN QEPARO, MARCH ‘16
Project Outlines

Key questions for the mission
How can agriculture, tourism and spatial planning as well as adjacent sectors work together in a circular model adding maximum value to a sustainable year round local economy? How can this lead to more economic relations between Albanian and Dutch companies?

Showcase
It is extremely difficult to envision a solution without concrete examples. For this reason, it is essential to put effort in creating an area of successful combinations between agro-food production, the development of tourism and the development of infrastructure and other spatial elements. During previous events, a number of entrepreneurs who have a product and service level that could function as a starting point for desired quality level of supply in Albania were identified.

Optimal scale
To build these "living labs" it is important to find an optimal scale: big enough to bring all these elements together and create enough body for impact, small enough to keep things going without making implementation costly and difficult.
Local context
The Ministry of Tourism has well thought through strategies and plans in place to develop tourism in Albania. At the same time the agricultural sector is developing the great potential in several areas. The Ministry of Urban development has very clear ideas on how the coastal area's in Albania can be developed. But do these powers strengthen each other or do they in certain cases threaten one and other? In a period when government and sector organizations, in cooperation with international organizations such as the Worldbank and GIZ are working on the actualization of plans and strategies, individual entrepreneurs are working on sustainable tourism and agriculture and providing practical cases and best practices that really stand out and are inspiration for others to follow.

How can these powers come together and complement each other in such a way that the result is a well-structured and smart approach by local and national government to an integrated and sustainable agricultural and tourism sector? And how can they at the same time stimulate the emergence of best practices based on ideas and business cases that have a strong link to this approach?

Objective
Objective of this project is to create insight among high level stakeholders on potential for sustainable alternatives to mass tourism. Furthermore this mission will result in understanding of possibilities and practical implications of implementing a sustainable tourism strategy in a specific location (pilot area), working on development of agro tourism in a narrow sense, on the level of accommodation, as well as in a broader sense by linking agro production, spatial design, infrastructural planning and tourism to show the interdependency as well as the potential to create added value for all three sectors. This project will contribute to the start of a development of sustainable (agro) tourism in Albania, ultimately leading to relevant supply for northern European tour operators and further opening Albania to European market for sustainable tourism.
NEW ACTIVITIES

1. Camping
2. Drive green

Be Friends

- Adopt tree
- Harvest working
- Process pruning
- Social activities
- Mindfulness / yoga
- Cooking with olive
- Wood carpenter
- Shop local / artisan
- Street art
- Educational
- "Third world" skills
- Worship children
- Tea / herbs

Observation
- Feed them
- Give them

Marketing - social activity
- Calendar
- Local people
- Meet & drink

Word herbs
- Celtic
- Meet the farmer
- Local herbs

Maybe
- Wood
- Meet the farmer
- Local herbs

Sum
Data collection and stakeholder interviews

In 2015, Martin Sobota and Meine van der Graaf worked on the framework for a project that could meet these objectives. During a number of meetings and stakeholder interviews in Tirana and the Riviera, national challenges were identified, along with some potential pilot areas where these challenges could be addressed using a multi-stakeholder approach to bring the bottom-up initiative together with the city ambitions.
Putting together a team

To work on cross-sectorial objectives with a strong design, it is important to bring together a team of experts from all trades. This group of professionals should not only be specialized in specific areas but should be able to work with experts from other fields, in order to co-create a total solution for a given area. From the existing networks at CSR Netherlands and from personal networks of Cityförster came a number of professionals that formed the “Traveller and the Olive Grove” team, led by Arber Togani and photographers Armand and Mirton Resuli of the Urban Research Institute in Tirana.

Choice for pilot area

“We know what needs to be done, we just can not do it alone” - Fotaq Buffi, local contact in Qeparo person and owner of local supermarket.

As mentioned earlier, Qeparo was chosen as the designated pilot area. We have arrived at this choice through evaluating a number of variables. Some of the most important criteria are:

- Area is already on or very close to the existing routes for tourists
- Area has high potential for small-scale tourism
- Area has high potential for development of suitable forms of agriculture
- Local community understands and approves of the need to develop sustainable agro-tourism
Program
Monday March 14th

Field visits and interviews with local entrepreneurs.

**Pig Farm**

A pig during its hours of free walks in the olive grove.

**Sheep Farm**

Sheep farmer answering questions in his sheepfold.
Municipality of Himare

“There is a big need for vocational training and training for tourism entrepreneur skills on the coast. The only available education for young people is in Tirana and focuses on a different kind of tourism than we have to offer.”

- Jorgo Goro, Major of Himara

Questions and answers from Jorgo Goro at his office in the municipality of Himara.
“This visit makes me think in a different way about my business.”

- Dimitris, vegetable farmer & honey producer

Honey Farm

Honey farmer shows the honey and bees hives.

Fish Farm

View of the fisherman’s fishnets.
Visit to another olive press.

Olive press 1

Visit to an olive press, showing the process of olive oil making.

Olive press 2

Visit to another olive press.
By joining a booking agency like booking.com,

Discussing one of the resent major investments done in Qepro.

“By joining a booking agency like booking.com,

Talking to the owner of the Riviera Hotel.
we have extended our season tremendously.”

Owner Riviera Hotel

Processing First Results

Discussing the firsts results, sharing experiences and encounters with entrepreneurs.
Tuesday March 15th

Upper Qeparo

Discussing the value of old qeparo as a tourism commodity.

Kudhes

Visiting Kudhes: example of individual and joint renovation.
Old Himara

Tour by local architect and house owner, Egda.

Pilur

Visiting Pilur: an example of poor public space maintenance.
Shepard and the Sheep Trail

Visit to the local Shepard to join the Shepard trail route: a potential product development for tourism.

Collecting Local Ingredients

Collecting local ingredients for Qeparo signature dish by Arber Togani.
Preparation of First Stakeholder Meetings

Discussing and finalizing during breakfast at the hotel.
Wednesday March 16th

Stakeholder Presentation
Discussing common values and beliefs with local community, entrepreneurs, tourism companies and local government.
Presentation and discussions leading to a basic model for Qeparo:

Presentation of local signature cuisine, made from readily available ingredients. Prepared by Arber Togani and his team along with Marinela Papajori, owner of the Riviera restaurant.
Landscape: mountains, sea, drinking water, clear water from mountain

Activities: hiking, climbing, traditional, strong community sense, make wine and drink it together, cleaner than other villages, closed for a reason, co-existence of 6 churches, different religions

Needs to part of their family and keep in touch

Note: natural atmosphere, microclimate
Thursday March 17th

Design and business planning sessions with entrepreneurs on agriculture, hospitality, tourism services, urban planning and product design.
Finalizing presentation of outcomes and enjoying local cuisine and quality pork from local pig farmer, prepared by the masterchef.
Friday March 18th

Final presentation in Qeparo attended by local entrepreneurs and stakeholders as well as government and NGO representatives from Tirana.

Introduction of Dutch Ambassador Dewi van de Weerd.
Enjoying a buffet of finger food prepared from all local ingredients.
Matchmaking Event At Uka Farm, May 24th

After processing all the input and defining a great number of potential pilot projects, "The Traveller and The Olive Grove" team met with entrepreneurs and government officials as well as international donors and NGOs to discuss possible follow-up steps. Out of this event came a great number of potential next steps:

- Bottom-up approach will be an important addition to efforts in assisting policy makers. Without practical examples, these strategies and policies risk ending up in a desk drawer.
- A number of organisations have expressed interest in working together on some of the separate challenges that have been discussed.
- The local community has already taken steps to bring some of the advice into practice. First steps have been taken in constructing a tourist information centre and outlining an entrepreneur association. Furthermore, a campsite has already been established.
- There are a lot of good ideas to bring events in the coastal area into reality such as festivals and markets. A number of attendants underwrite that these events can bring more international and local tourists travelling to the Riviera earlier in the season.
- The municipality of Himare is very willing to work on several different projects and there are already ideas on how to work together in PPPs to realize a training centre.
- Besides these easily attainable results, more structural challenges such as water supply, water management and energy have been pointed out during several workshops as crucial to bring the development of coastal villages forward.
- A number of possible funding opportunities have been brought to our attention, which we together with local organisations will follow up in the near future.
International Team

Boer Bos
Paul Bos
Farmer & Coach

PUM
Gojart Smaja
Representative

Originate
Fedde Germans
Consultant, Coach, Trainer, Facilitator & Founder

Cityförster
Tea Hadzizulfić
Architect

Alterra Wageningen UR
Tomek de Ponti
Agriculture Business Innovator
Activities in Qeparo, March '16

Cityförster
Martin Sobota
Architect & Founder

Openfabric
Francesco Garofalo
Landscape Architect & Founder

Sawadee
Chantal van Gent
Product Manager

gutundgut
Rafael Enzler
Placemaker

MVO
Meine van der Graaf
Project Manager
National Participants

Niko Goro
Tourism Director
Himara Municipality

Auron Tare
Director at National Coastal Agency

Enri Leka

Armando Ormeni
Architect

Zana Vokopola
Director at Urban Research Institute

Alba Zhori
Southern Albania Development Project

Erald Derveni
Cooks’ Assistant

Rosita Habazaj
Artist
“Walking the mountain with the experiences we want to share
Shepherd, is precisely one of the with our costumers.”
“Yes, of course! I am happy to bring tourists with me in the country side.”

Local Participants

Odhise & Sotirika Sinjari
Bed & Breakfast Owners

Viron Kushta

Liridjan Kambula
Farmer

Dhimitraq Gjika
Honey Farmer

Detjon Prenga
Co-Owner Qeparo Hotel

Anxhelo Theodhori
Son of Lazar

Jerasimo Basha
Kadaster office
Bashkia Himare

Aleksander Koci
Cattle Farmer
Shepherd

Jorgo Goro
Major of Himara Municipality

Panajot Thanasi
Co-Owner
Veranda Restaurant

Romina Leka
Owner Riviera Hotel

Egda Rapo
Architect and Bed & Breakfast Owner

Hans Vermunt
Director at Waterman Travel & More
Lazar Theodhori
Farmer / Mechanic / Sheep-Keeper

Marinela Papajorgji
Owner Restaurant Veranda

Gjergji Kokedhima
Pig Farmer

Thanas Nase
Sheep Farmer

Viktoria Theodori
Wife of Lazar

Stefan Kokedhima
Former Major of Qeparo

Wife of Lazar

Shepherd

Zef Prenga
Hotel Owner / Father of Detjon (18) and Klodian (35)
“Restoring the aqueduct would help to implement mixed farming in the terraces.”
This report has been prepared in collaboration of CITYFÖRSTER, MVO Nederland and:

If you have any questions or remarks, please do not hesitate to contact us:

martin@cityfoerster.net
+31624738041