

BRIDGE AS THE PILOT ECO-BUSINESS MODEL FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH, SLAVGOROD, BELARUS

Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG) Pioneer Project



PROJECT FACTSHEET

The project in a nutshell

Timeframe: 2018-2021

Budget: EUR 655,744 (EU contribution - EUR 589,907)

Partners: Slavgorod District Executive Committee, Krasnopolye District Executive Committee, the International Foundation for Rural Development (IFRD)

Geographic coverage: Slavgorod and Krasnopolye districts, Mogilev region, Belarus

Target groups: Local authorities of Slavgorod and Krasnopolye districts, local SMEs, farmers and craftsmen, the wider local community

CONTEXT



The district of Slavgorod is located in the southern part of Belarus's Mogilev region, 68 km from the regional centre, Mogilev, and covers an area of 1,300 km². The district is divided into five village councils, and borders upon four districts of Mogilev and two districts of the Gomel region. The district of Slavgorod is home to around 13,000 people (1 January 2017), and its economy is largely agricultural. As of 1 September 2017, the district was also home to 11 large agricultural enterprises, 183 business entities (including 46 legal entities, and notably 8 farms), and 137 individual entrepreneurs.

PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The main goal of the "BRIDGE" Project is to encourage the development of rural entrepreneurship for the economic growth of the Slavgorod district, and to establish a local development and entrepreneurship support centre as a *pilot business model* for touristic activities. The Project will be run in Slavgorod district to achieve the following **objectives**:

- 1) To promote tourism and other connected services, including organic farming;
- 2) To create an entrepreneurs' business consortium with the local authorities;
- 3) To develop local infrastructure in different areas of the Eco-park;
- 4) To create a business centre for rural development and entrepreneurship support.

PROJECT ACTIONS

The Project involves the preparation of a plan for the long-term development of the Slavgorodsky nature sanctuary into the "Amulet Prisozhiya" Eco-park (**Park Development Plan**) and its approval by the local authorities. This plan will serve as a first key document, and will be designed with the involvement of all stakeholders. The second key document will be a **Declaration of Park Development** to bring together businesses, NGOs and local authorities for the Eco-park's development.



The Eco-park will be equipped with infrastructure for the development of tourism. In total, 23 facilities will be set up, including campsites, bicycle parking facilities, hiking trails, cycling routes, observation towers, etc.).

A regional information and education **Centre for Rural Development and Entrepreneurship** will be created in the Eco-park in the village of Staraya Kamenka. This Centre will organize special educational programmes in the *four* newly established schools:

- A Rural Entrepreneurship School,
- An Eco- and Rural Tourism School,
- A Creative Economy and Social Entrepreneurship School,
- A Workshop for the Sustainable Development of Micro-regions and Project Management.

The Centre will also open a **Start-Up School** to help ambitious young people set up successful local businesses.

The Project's actions also include:

1. The Centre will provide over **13** business-related services to local entrepreneurs, including information, advice, legal support, outsourcing, etc.;
2. An online platform for networking between local businesses and for the marketing and investment promotion of the districts will be set up to attract visitors to the Eco-park;
3. Local entrepreneurs will broaden the list of business services in the Eco-park to include guided tours, entertaining programmes, rent of equipment, organic food, accommodation etc.

ESTIMATED RESULTS

- **150** residents a year of Slavgorod and neighbouring districts, including entrepreneurs, will improve their business skills through the services of the Centre for Rural Development and Entrepreneurship;
- At least **25** entrepreneurs will develop their businesses in the Eco-park by broadening the scope of services to tourists and associated products up to a total of **26**;
- At least **250** entrepreneurs of Slavgorod and neighbouring districts will recognize the improvement of local business activity in the region;
- The number of tourists visiting the Eco-park will increase annually by up to **15%**;
- Around **1,000** trainees will take part in the education programmes of the Centre's schools;
- **3** new investors will pump into the Eco-park, and **15** new businesses will be developed in the region;
- At least **1,000** visitors will benefit from the Eco-park's information and tourism infrastructure;
- The quality of life of **9,000** citizens of the districts will be improved.

In terms of outcomes, the "BRIDGE" Project will become a pilot eco-business model for the transition from an unsustainable use of natural resources to sustainable regional economic growth, and will serve as a facilitator for the establishment of public-private partnerships between local authorities and entrepreneurs.

The pioneer project "BRIDGE" as the Pilot Eco-Business Model for Local and Regional Economic Growth" is being implemented in Belarus as part of the Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG) Initiative. The M4EG Initiative began to operate in January 2017 within the Eastern Partnership framework. Its overall goal is to help mayors and municipalities in Eastern Partnership countries to become active facilitators for economic growth and job creation at local levels. For more information, please visit www.m4eg.eu.



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