

Report of activities in 2017

Orgnaisation: Ecoland Issyk-Kul

Person in charge of the report: Jacobiene Ritsema

Location: Grigorievka, Issyk-Kul region, Kyrgyzstan

Report date: 15 January 2018

Summary of Project Status

The year 2017 was the third full tourist season for the Bel-Zhan yurt lodge, after we have performed construction activities in 2014.

The Bel-Zhan yurt lodge is open from May until October. The main tourist season in 2017 was in June, July, August.

In the summer of 2017, Bel-Zhan has had cooperation with three tour-operators:

1. Ecotours (tour operator from the Netherlands, specialized in tours to Kyrgyzstan);
2. Kyrgyz Muras (Dutch-Kyrgyz travel agency)
3. Afa Travel (travel agency owned by a Spanish businessman, located in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan).

Moreover, Bel-Zhan is registered at Booking.com, Airbnb and Tripadvisor.

For 2017 Bel-Zhan received the 'hospitality hero' status at Booking.com, indicating the high rating of our services by guests.

In 2017 Bel-Zhan offered Bed & Breakfast for a total of 428 nights plus a number of excursions and hikes and a yoga tour. Some guests booked a tour on beforehand in the Netherlands and a majority of guests found their way through Booking.com, Airbnb or local operators. Currently, we are still working on a detailed financial overview for 2017.

In 2017 a total estimated amount of 4500 Euro was spent on local staff (permanent and temporary). The following local staff was hired:

technical manager (Ruslan Bakayev), full time, monthly fee of 10.000 KGS (12 months a year);

financial administrator (Ludmila Gromova), part-time, fee of 3.500 KGS during summer (5 months) and 1.500 KGS during winter time (7 months);

- a cook/cleaning person (Samara) for a monthly fee of 20.000 KGS (3 months);

Drivers for transport, guides and excursions for of tourists (total estimated 150.000 KGS).

A receptionist (Begay) for a monthly fee of 15.000 KGS (three months).

UNDP and UNIDO projects

Besides the Zero Kap loan and services provided by Bel-Zhan and Ecoland Issyk-Kul, a grant provided in 2015 for , for the purpose of seabuck thorn harvesting and fruit drying at the Bel-Zhan yurt lodge. The second tranche of this grant (9715 USD) has been received in 2017. Project goals are to create a micro-reserve with small-scale nature camping site at the shore of the Issyk-Kul Lake as part of the Bel-Zhan sustainable tourism complex, to create conditions for sea buckthorn growing in a greenhouse at Bel-Zhan, to organize harvesting according to Fair Wild standard and to organize processing (drying). All activities are aimed at increasing income for inhabitants of Grigorievka village. The project has been finalized in December 2017.

At the same time, Bel-Zhan has applied for cooperation with UNIDO in their program 'Linking tourism to agricultural activities in the Issyk-Kul region'. The nature of this cooperation will become clear in 2018. Activities would include production of fruit jams and sales of these products to tourists. The proposed budget for UNIDO grant is 10.000 USD.

English lessons

In summer 2017 Ecoland invited a professional teacher English, to teach English to the main staff of Bel-Zhan (Ruslan, Ludmila and Samara) and paid for the airfare, lodging and food. In follow-up we made an agreement with a local English teacher to continue lessons in winter. The English lessons will continue (and be extended to other people in the village) in 2018.

Engineering for the base of the pyramid

Bel-Zhan has developed a plan for cooperation with the engineering firm Witteveen+Bos and the foundation Klusvakanties to design and implement in 2018-2020 low tech small scale solutions for sanitation, waste and waste water in rural areas in Kyrgyzstan, starting in Grigorievka: 'Engineering for the base of the pyramid'.

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Signature:



(J.Ritsema)

