

Chapter 5

Business Models for Urban Farming in and Around Urban Protected Areas: EkoPark Belgrade Case Study

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ABSTRACT

In the Best Practice Guidelines for Urban Protected Areas, IUCN pointed out that managers of urban protected areas should take advantage of the large numbers of visitors to: demonstrate, facilitate, and promote the many benefits of contact with nature; and make healthy food available and encourage good eating habits. Urban, and particularly urban protected area constraints and opportunities have forced farms to adopt different business models or to combine elements of different business models to meet sustainability goals under challenging conditions. The authors analyse EkoPark Belgrade, organic farm in special purpose zone of Avala Protected Area that combines certified organic production and direct sales with a range of on-farm services and experiences for farm visitors. Authors analyse different aspects of EkoPark business model and emphasize key success factors using Canvas Business Model. The results can help farmers in and around urban protected areas to choose viable farm development strategy.

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INTRODUCTION

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines a protected area as “a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”. Associated ecosystem services that are related to but do not interfere with the aim of nature conservation, can include provisioning services such as food and water, regulating services such as regulation of floods, drought, land degradation, and disease, supporting services such as soil formation and nutrient cycling and cultural services such as recreational, spiritual, religious and other non-material benefits. Cultural values, that do not interfere with the conservation outcome, include in particular those that contribute to conservation outcomes and those that are themselves under threat (Dudley, 2008).

The main benefits of protected areas are that they provide a basis for recreation, health and wellbeing, quality of life, environmental education, sustainable tourism and transport, sustainable land use, sustainable development of rural areas, regional and national identity, regional marketing, employment and integrated regional development (Ostermann, 2009).

Protected areas create a positive regional image, while sustainable tourism development contributes to the promotion of protected areas and to greater employment opportunities for local population (Popović, Milijić, & Vuković, 2012). Sustainable tourism in protected areas implies development of complementary activities - agriculture, crafts and services by promoting the consumption of local products and services (Popović, Nikolić, & Katić, 2010).

According to the United Nations Population Division (2011), the proportion of people living in urban areas in Northern America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Oceania already exceeds 70%. Urbanization is expected to continue rising in both the more developed and the less developed regions so that, by 2050, urban dwellers will likely account for 86% of the population in the more developed regions and for 64% of that in the less developed regions (United Nations, 2012).

Urban protected areas are protected areas situated in or at the edge of larger urban centres. As any other protected area, they are recognized, dedicated and managed to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values, but they are also highly distinctive in their role of providing opportunities for large numbers of urban dwellers to maintain contact with nature and of doing so in cooperation, but also in competition and conflicting relations with numerous urban stakeholders (Trzyna, 2014).

The area of 489 ha of Avala Mountain, which stands at 511 metres above sea level, was protected in 2007 as the landscape of exceptional features (Category V Protected landscape or seascape, in terms of IUCN's protected area management categories). The Landscape of exceptional features “Avala” is situated 16 km south-east of downtown Belgrade, in the city municipality of Voždovac (parts of cadastral municipalities: Beli Potok, Ripanj, Zuce and Pinosava). Avala has also been identified as Emerald area and Prime Butterfly Area (PBA) (Official Gazette of the City of Belgrade, 2016).

IUCN defines Category V Protected landscape or seascape as a protected area “where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced a distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values” (Dudley, 2008). According to the Serbian Law on Nature Conservation (Official Gazette of RS, 2009, 2010) the landscape of exceptional features is an area of distinctive appearance with significant natural, biological, ecological,

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