

Business Center Svishtov



Business Center Svishtov is a non-governmental organization whose mission is to assist in the development of small, medium, and family business in the region of the Svishtov municipality.

The goals of the association are: to help and support the development of the local economy, to further the advance of enterprising in the region of the Svishtov municipality, to aid the unemployed, the financially suffering, the handicapped and those who need care, and to stimulate social integration and personal realization.

For five years, our team has actively taken part in the development of the civil society in Svishtov, as well as improving the relations between the municipal administration and non-

governmental organizations, and increasing the civil involvement of the pupils, students, and media.

Business Center Svishtov partakes in and is a partner of various United Nations Development Programme projects, such as “Job Opportunities through Business Support” (JOBS) Project, designing the Strategy for Sustainable Development of Svishtov municipality, the Capacity 21 Project.



Business Center Svishtov is funded by “Job Opportunities through Business Support” (JOBS) Project, an initiative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, supported by United Nations Development Programme.

Supporting the development of local economy



The Financial Leasing Scheme is part of the “Job Opportunities through Business Support” (JOBS) Project, funded by the Bulgarian government through the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and supported by United Nations Development Programme.

The Financial Leasing Scheme is a financial mechanism for the support of emerging micro- and small enterprises and agricultural producers who are experiencing difficulties in finding financing. The funds that are given under the Financial Leasing Scheme are used for purchasing tangible fixed assets – machines, equipment, means of transport, agricultural equipment and inventory, etc. – that are put out to lease to local organizations or individuals. Through this Scheme, Business Center Svishtov assists the economic development of the Svishtov region, sub-serves the opening of new workplaces, and the retaining of now existing ones.

Galya Yordanova has been unemployed since 1997. She owns an agricultural building at the nearby village Bulgarsko Slivovo. Galya is hard-working; she moved to live in the village and started to till her lands. Little by

little she bought the equipment she needed – a seeder, a tractor, a plough, and a mower. In 2004 she decided to register as an agricultural producer. In order to close the cycle of the services she could provide, Galya needed a hay/straw-presser. Thus she could do the mowing and baling, and after that transporting the production to her storehouse. She could also provide these types of services to her fellow-countrymen at Bulgarsko Slivovo and to other producers in the nearby villages.

In February 2004 Galya Yordanova applied for the Start-With-Leasing Scheme and through the Business Center Svishtov's services she bought a second-hand “Kola-Bautz” hay/straw-presser.

Thus, by the end of April, 2004, through these services and Mrs. Yordanova's persistence, there was one less in the number of Svishtov municipality's unemployed and one more successful agriculture producer.

Yordan Dankov has been in the agriculture business for the past twelve years, having worked before that for twenty-two years as a machine operator. In 2004 he planned to double his 3,000 decares of cultivated land. This would be possible only if he could buy a tractor. Yordan took part in the informative meeting in November 2003 at Business Center Svishtov, where the Financial Leasing Scheme of JOBS was presented.

In February, 2004 he decided to use the services of Business Center Svishtov and through the Financial Leasing Scheme he hoped to purchase a new tractor.

On March 1st, 2004 the Leasing Commission approved his business idea and on March 17th, Yordan Dankov was handed the keys to his new Belarus 952.

Fast-food restaurant “Nedelia” has been in business for three years. Situated in downtown Svishtov, it is a favorite place for lunch for the Svishtov municipality workers, the Post Office personnel, staff from the nearby companies, and students. Restaurant “Nedelia” has quickly earned an excellent image in the town because of its tasty cuisine, fast service, low prices, and cleanliness. In 2004, the company rented premises with the intention to open another restaurant. To get the proper kitchen equipment, the owner Georgi Georgiev applied at Business Center Svishtov and through the Financial Leasing Scheme he purchased equipment worth 15,000 BGN. In January, 2005 his second restaurant opened. This new fast-food restaurant of Georgi’s, with ten new employees, can be found now at Svoboda square in Svishtov.

In 2004 The Financial Leasing Scheme assisted:

- ✓ Six companies, two agriculture producers, two unemployed
- ✓ Total sum of leasings granted – 124,842 BGN
- ✓ Total of 27 new workplaces (20 of them for women) have been opened and 85 workplaces have been retained through the Financial Leasing Scheme



Increasing the capacity of local authorities



During the last four years Business Center Svishtov has organized and implemented various projects related to the increase of local authorities' capacity and the development of civil society.

With the “Informational Securing of the Small Towns and Villages in the Municipality” project, Business Center Svishtov set the tasks to facilitate the administrative servicing of village residents, to improve and decrease the prices of information services, and to establish connection between the villages and the municipal center, as well as between the villages themselves.

Through the active participation of the village mayors, all the fifteen villages in the Svishtov municipality were provided with identical equipment – personal computer, laser printer, scanner, UPS, modem. Twenty-seven village staff members (incl. mayors) went through eighty hours of computer literacy course, working with Windows XP, word processing and electronic spreadsheets, using special administrative software, etc.

By the end of the project, in all fifteen village councils, there were better administrative servicing, greater access to information, and qualified staff who is able to provide these types of services. Internet connection and e-mails were also provided to the village councils.

The Business Center Svishtov's computer specialists developed a software product, available “in place” in all villages, containing up-to-date information about laws, regulations, normative documents, statutes, phone directory, resolutions of Municipal Council Svishtov, etc.

This project has laid the foundations of transforming Svishtov municipality into the first Bulgarian “e-municipality” with a computer network in all of the administrations in the villages and the town. This wouldn't be possible without the active support of the local administration and the good partnership with the village councils.



Developing the civil society

Another step in the development of the civil society was the “Reconstruction of Bus Stops in the Villages” project, which Business Center Svishtov implemented in 2004. The project involved the partial improvement of village infrastructure through the reconstruction of the bus stops.

Through this project, Business Center Svishtov has planned to improve the potential of project implementation “in place” through



formation of civil informal groups of village mayors and delegating part of the project activities to them. Fifteen bus stops have been reconstructed – one in each of the villages.

In June, 2004 the village mayors registered “Unity 21st Century” association. The goals of the new association are development and recognition of the spiritual values, the civil society and the effective local self-government in Svishtov municipality.

The project activities ended in October, 2004 with a large conference where representatives of the Svishtov municipality, non-governmental and ecological organizations, village mayors, members of the Forum-office organization Balkan Assist, and the Project-office FLGR took part.

The projects are part of the “Public Forum Svishtov Programme” and have been co-funded by the Swiss government’s Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Svishtov municipality.



Good practices



On December 13, 2004 at the Earth and Men National Museum in Sofia, the rewards for projects related to the preservation of the Bulgarian ecological and cultural heritage under the Ford Motor Company Donor Programme were presented in an official ceremony under the patronage of Mrs. Zorka Parvanova, wife of the president of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Svishtov municipality's project "Open Stage Kaleto" for building an art park, in the area of the same name, was awarded the first prize. The visual presentation of the idea was generated by the 3-dimensional computer model, created by the Business Center Svishtov's computer specialists. The prize came in an extremely competitive environment – a total of 55 projects took part in the contest -- and the jury was led by the famous publicist and public figure Doncho Tsonchev.

The purpose of the project is to transform the park, "Kaleto," into a "Park of Artists" as there will be an open stage situated amphitheatrically under the walls of the ancient fortress. "St. Demetrius", the already renovated church built in the XV century A.D., where the first form school in Bulgaria was founded, is also in the park. The stage is going to provide the opportunity for a variety of cultural events to take place as well as attracting tourists to this emblematic site of Svishtov.



Dochka Getsova was born in a Roma family. She was first a laboratory technician and then worked as a vet for 17 years. Now she is a jobber in a company. But her dream has always been to become a journalist.

For more than two years, Dochka Getsova was trying to make her opinion count by sending her articles to all the national daily newspapers, using the services of Business Center Svishtov.

"Why do I want to become a journalist?"

As a Roma I know my people's life, their problems and misery, morals and customs, thus I will expose their real way of living and will not make racial comments on anyone. I'm going to be tolerant towards Romas and Bulgarians.

My appeal to the journalists is: to show not only the mean sides, but also the good sides of Romas. You don't know Roma's soul; how warm, hearty and hospitable it is. Roma people don't have a second motherland like the other ethnics in Bulgaria, they have only one motherland – Bulgaria."

In the beginning of 2004, Dochka went to a contest and finally earned her journalist ID. Now that she has publications printed in the newspapers "Trud", "24 chasa", "Standard", "Duma" and is also a correspondent of newspaper "De facto", she still uses the services of Business Center Svishtov to get her articles typed and e-mailed.



Developing tourism



The favourable situation of Svishtov is a premise for the development of domestic and international tourism, which is improved by more than 120 official archaeological, art, and architectural monuments of local and national cultural significance. Entire ensembles of architectural monuments dating from the 18th and 19th century have been preserved. Among the town's highlights are the numerous stately temples built by patriotic Svishtov inhabitants.

The people of Svishtov are proud of their town history quite rightly because Svishtov is connected with many events that set the course of the economic and cultural life in Bulgaria. In 1651 Phillip Stanislavov published the first book written in new Bulgarian language. Hristaki Pavlovich - one of the writers of Bulgarian National Revival - had rendered great services to the town. In 1831 he opened here the first



form school; in 1833 he published the first arithmetic textbook in Bulgarian language; in 1844 he produced a revised version of the Bulgarian History by Paisii of Helendar. Phillip Sakelarievich from Svishtov was the first to endow generously his native town for the development of education as early as 1812. Dimitar Hadjivassilev followed his example and sponsored the building of Public Commercial School in 1895. Elenka and Kiril D. Avramovi left by will their wealth for the building of Chitalishte (a community center with library and theater). Such community centers sprang up in nearly every town and provided a communal forum for cultural and social activities. Dimitar Apostolov Tsenov left by will all his wealth worth 50 million leva for the construction and maintaining of a European commercial academy in Svishtov - this is now the Tsenov Academy of Economics.



The Business Center Svishtov's team, together with the Council of Tourism Svishtov, and the wide support from local ecological organizations, has been a key member in designing the tourist itineraries and the advertising materials for their promotion. Our specialists have also created the tourist gateway to Svishtov municipality.

www.visitsvishtov.com

We offer



Financial Leasing

- For start-up and existing enterprises
- Start with Leasing for unemployed

Establishment of associations

- Agricultural producers
- Marketing groups
- Production groups

Working with local partners

- Forum for local economic development
- Organizing round tables for current issues
- Meetings with other NGOs

Working with craftsmen

- Assistance in realization and distribution of products
- Organization and participation in fairs and exhibitions
- Creating brochures, bulletins, posters
- Designing web catalogues and web pages

Business services

- Technical services
- Informational services
- Consultations
- Business plans

Trainings

- Computer literacy, language courses, business trainings by client's request

E-services

- Design and support of web pages;
- Presentation CDs;
- Multimedia presentations and movies;
- E-publications

Tourist services

- Tourist packages;
- Tourist information

Promotion

- design and wetprint of brochures and leaflets, digital photography, web design, web hosting



Business Center Svishtov disposes of:

- a multifunctional hall for up to 35-40 seats, sound, multimedia projector, screen, flipchart, whiteboard, Internet, air-conditioning;
- a negotiations hall for up to 10 seats, phone, fax, Internet
- an Internet center with b/w and color copier, scanner, digital photography