



Making use of arable land in Herzegovina and creating opportunities for small hold farmers by investing into development of rural economy

For Jaffa Komerc, the SDG Accelerator Programme has been a rewarding opportunity to leverage company's expertise and sustainability initiatives to promote a development of rural economy through cooperative structures.

For several years, Jaffa Komerc has been dedicating significant efforts in trading fruit and vegetable products grown in Herzegovina, the southern region of Bosnia and Herzegovina, very well known for its Mediterranean climate, to the international market. Having observed market potential in the last decades, they have become more aware of the comparative advantages that Herzegovina region possesses over the other areas in the country. Along the lines of history of tobacco growers and all the unused fertile land, the climate convenience of this region provides an opportunity to grow the earliest cherries in BiH. Such conditions are allowing Jaffa Komerc to meet the market demand in the moment when no cherries could be found anywhere in the Europe.

By coupling the untapped potential for creating an official brand of Herzegovinian cherries with growing international market demand for the particular Celeste sort, Jaffa identified an opportunity to develop a sustainable, yet commercially viable, business solution. In other words of Nedim Badžak, Jaffa Komerc CEO:

Sustainable Development Goals at play

SDG 2: Zero hunger

Target 2.3: By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.



‘With our extensive knowledge of fruit production and trade, as well as our deep understanding of the market needs, we have realized that our local capacity of 6,000 cherry trees which allow us to sell around 250 tons of cherries is fairly limited in comparison to the market demand of 5,000 tons of cherries. Hence, we found a way to establish a cooperative structure and give an opportunity to small hold farms, who would, according to our instructions and with our support, produce seedlings that are in line with market requirements. This way, we would not only secure meeting the enormous demand, but we would ensure the engagement of wider community, by providing an adequate knowledge and contribution to the smaller producers who are at the moment invisible on the market. Besides, over the years, we have already launched few initiatives where we educated small farmers on the sustainable farming and hosted school visits to our plantation, so we have been proactive and have gained trust from the wider community and our main stakeholders.’

Throughout the project duration, Jaffa Komerc has worked hard on developing the model for the cooperative structure by observing both cooperatives and the customers’ needs, acting as an intermediary that binds these two sides together. Subsequently, Jaffa Komerc will procure seedlings of the particular Celeste cherries sort from Italy that are most suitable for Herzegovina climatic conditions and market requirements, after which small farmers will receive these free of charge under agreed conditions. Given its wide knowledge about the fruit production sector, Jaffa Komerc possesses the competences to share its know-how and provide precise instructions for planting cherry trees. Such way, they will ensure that the quality specifications are met in accordance to the market requirements, says the company’s Deputy Director, Elma Badžak:

‘We would guarantee our cooperatives the purchase of these cherry products at prices that are currently valid on the market. We would buy fresh cherries, adequately sort, store and package them, and with our distribution channels we would ensure products’ exit of the larger quantities towards our customers.

The important aspect of this project is focused on capacity building in terms of professional training and experience exchange, but also the practical aspect of training according to the global standards. As a part of our engagement, the quality assurance and quality product certification will take place, which will enable us to serve the EU market timely and successfully.’

According to Elma, this project idea is an upgrade of the activities that have been developed with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) under the project DEVELOPPP.de, which allowed them to already take concrete steps in its implementation. So far, Jaffa Komerc initiated an announcement call for small hold farmers to express their interest and readiness to participate in the project. Following the specific evaluation criteria, they selected more than 90 cooperatives who will be receiving dedicated training during December 2020.

Sustainable Development Goals at play

SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

Job creation for small-hold farmers.



Target 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

This is how Jaffa Komerc contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals

- Jaffa Komerc has developed a model of cooperative structure with small farmers based on fair trade and knowledge transfer on proper cherry growing by providing seedlings and guaranteeing market for growers, thus ensuring income earning and family stabilization in rural regions. This model can be replicated for other fruit and vegetable cultures.
- Over the years, Jaffa Komerc has launched a number of sustainability initiatives to educate small hold farmers on the sustainable farming as well as younger plantation visitors (from schools and kindergartens) and everyday citizens on the opportunities offered by modern agriculture.

‘Up to this point, we received an extremely good reaction and selected a large number of high-quality potential small hold farmers with whom we will be cooperating in the near future. Such a great interest makes us believe that this is a realistic plan that has a great potential for realization and genuine contribution to the increased income and family stabilization in rural areas’, says Elma Badžak.

For Jaffa Komerc and its cooperatives, the recognition and branding of the Herzegovinian early cherries is of pivotal importance, in fact, they are joining efforts to promote the Herzegovina region to be recognizable for its high-quality cherries in the international market:

‘Our goal is to grow together with our cooperatives, enable utilization of their capabilities and hard work, provide them with a decent life and income opportunities and also promote the whole region in a way that makes it a sustainable story with a quality background. By introducing new fruit sorts that we will have fully prepared for distribution, along with accompanying brand story, we believe we can make an interesting, successful, and by far, the win-win approach for our long-term cooperation and sustainable initiative.’

Furthermore, they emphasize that the long-term goal is to strengthen the established cooperative structure, get recognized in the market and replicate such business model on other fruit cultures in the future.

Facts about Jaffa Komerc

- Family-owned company founded in 1989.
- Located in Blagaj, the heart of Herzegovina.
- Specializes in production and export of fruit and vegetables. Offers accommodation facilities for tourists along with education and tours around its plantations.
- Started as small producers and traders, and today it boasts over 80 acres of cultivated land with more than 105,000 fruit trees.
- Approximately 18 permanent and over 50 seasonal employees.



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*Elma Badžak
Deputy Director, Jaffa Komerc*