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SANITATION SANITATION MANAGEMENT

seecon gmbh

## seecon — moves — 2017

Projects for sustainable development

seecon — moves — 2017



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## **EDITORIAL**

seecon — moves — 2017

seecon moves: new ideas, projects, people. From time to time, we also move our headquarters, as we did last August. Having said goodbye to Basel, we now welcome our clients in the heart of Bern, at our new offices on Hirschengraben 8.

In the pages that follow, we would like to show you what moves our clients: five projects for the future that are characteristic of seecon. These projects may not always be straightforward, but they certainly are interdisciplinary, professional, and dedicated to sustainable development in the social, economic, and environmental spheres.

Together with our clients, seecon develops solutions that are process-and learning-oriented, purposeful and efficient. Here, perseverance is of the essence. New and innovative solutions need time, as the story of the Wolhusen Tropical House illustrates. Even if things take a bit longer, we stay on task.

Whether it is taking climate-adapted action in the Surselva, setting out on the journey toward sustainable

tourism, or fighting corruption in the water sector: network-based learning is at the center of our projects. This may also mean the emergence of new networks—the cewas startup network is one example. In cases like these, synergy potentials are successfully realized as new ideas take shape in an interdisciplinary exchange that transcends the borders of cultures and countries. This notion of collaboration informs everything we do at seecon.

Our corporate culture focuses on innovation, motivation, environmental awareness, and a responsibility to the future. It creates space for new ideas and projects that we develop alongside our clients in education, research, public administration, and the private and non-profit sectors. Perhaps you will encounter something unexpected in the pages to come. Perhaps we can even provide you with the inspiration for a new idea. We would be glad to do so!

seecon moves. We stand for innovation in sustainable development.

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STAYING ON

TASK—A REGIONAL

DEVELOPMENT

STORY WITH

INTERNATIONAL

ROOTS

The Swiss municipality of Wolhusen in the Canton of Lucerne is home to a part of energy history:
The Wolhusen Tropical House, which attracts visitors from all over Switzerland. From inception to implementation, seecon has accompanied the development of this project for 20 years.



## The Roots

Southern China in the mid-90s: polyculture farms utilize water and nutrient cycles in agriculture, fish production and industrial food processing. As a result, production increases and negative environmental effects recede. Under the commission of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, we help to establish of the Beijing Ecological Engineering Center (BEEC).

The Canton of Lucerne, eight years earlier: I am serving as a member of the Swiss Parliamentary Energy Commission, and together with colleagues from all parties represented on the Council, I propose to include a provision on waste heat utilization in the newly drafted energy bill. The provision is supposed to promote the enormous energy potential of waste heat beyond the mechanisms that are already in place at incineration plants. The proposal is adopted.

## The Trigger

The Canton of Lucerne, 1997: the Office of Environmental Protection commissions seecon to conduct a study on the possible uses of waste heat produced by the Transitgas-owned gas compression station in the municipality of Ruswil. Transitgas uses a pipeline to transport natural gas across Switzerland. The compression of the gas at Ruswil generates massive amounts of waste heat. An expansion of the pipeline at the end of the 1990s triggers the provision on waste heat utilization contained in the energy law.

Our knowledge of Chinese polyculture systems informs the conception of the Ruswil Tropical House. The goal is the production of tropical fruits and fish. Throughout the region, the idea is met with derision, so representatives from the municipality of Ruswil join forces with local farmers and other interested parties to found an interest group that will act as a support association for the project. The Chinese polyculture specialist Yan helps to translate the intricate framework of the Chinese farms to the plans for the Ruswil Tropical House, a complex covering 1,500 square meters. It is worth noting

that with Yan's contribution, the Agency for Development and Cooperation's earlier decision to invest in the Ecological Engineering Center in Beijing now benefits the development of a regional project in the Canton of Lucerne.

Winter of 1999: the Ruswil Tropical House is built in close vicinity to the gas compression station; it opens the same year. The unique local landmark soon generates nationwide interest and begins to attract visitors from all over Switzerland as well as from neighboring countries. Its significance for the regional economy becomes apparent. On this basis, it gains funding from the regional development programs RegioPlus and Neue Regionalpolitik (NRP).

> Two years after opening, the first »Rusmul« (Ruswil) bananas are harvested. The project has decidedly "arrived" in the region. The local residents have grown fond of "their very own tropics« and begun to identify with them. National and international research projects benefit from the experience and findings that have been gained here. They flow into domestic projects, like the Frutigen Tropical House, and projects abroad, like the Rennsteig Tropical House in Germany. Knowledge of the water, energy, and nutrient cycles of the Tropical House is fast becoming a core competency.

The initial business model of the Ruswil Tropical House revolved primarily around the production of exotic goods. But more and more visitors take an interest in polycultures and sustainable development. Demand for gastronomical services increases. This gives rise to a new business model which combines the production and sale of goods with a visitor's center and a restaurant. Since it is too small, the Ruswil Tropical House cannot meet these requirements. The interest group settles on a new strategy going forward: a joint-stock company is established; the search for a new building site begins. The Ruswil Tropical House becomes the Wolhusen Tropical House. Hundreds of small investors acquire shares, and the Coop Cooperative signs on as majority shareholder.

> In 2010, the Wolhusen Tropical House opened its doors to the public. Today, it employs around 50 people in produc

tion, food service, visitor management, sales, and administration. People have come to associate the Tropical House with enjoyment and the creation of an experience. At the restaurant MAHOI, which has earned 14 Gault Millau points, visitors can enjoy exotic menus in a tropical setting, seecon has accompanied the Tropical House for 20 years and is still represented on its board of directors today.

## 20 Years of Learning

Regional innovations require support on a variety of levels. Laws establish the underlying legal framework, funding programs provide the necessary financial resources, and regional support associations ensure market acceptance. Apart from our own involvement, the idea of the Tropical House would never have turned into a success story without numerous local partnerships and the support of Coop as the majority shareholder. Perhaps it does not always take 20 years, but one thing is certain: success stories need time. The ability and determination to stay on task is one of seecon's most important assets. This is key to all our areas of operation and expertise, since innovations in sustainable development arise in complex social, political, and economic networks. — Photo I »ripe papaya«

# A TOOLBOX AS MOTIVATION FOR CLIMATE-ADAPTED ACTION

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The climate is changing, and it's affecting everyone's life.
A toolbox developed by seecon demonstrates how participatory processes can initiate local climate change adaptation.





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On an October afternoon, deep in the Surselva Valley, scattered cumulus clouds adorn the opaque mountain sky. The weather is chilly, yet still uncharacteristically warm for this time of year. There is the soft rush of the Alpine Rhine as it flows into the village: the muted chime of wind-bells can be heard in the distance. It is quiet in Vals—the farmers are already done with their preparations for the winter, and the tourists are beginning to stay away. The Hotel Steinbock, however, is bustling with activity. The hotel restaurant is lined with pinboards, multicolored notes are stuck to the walls, and the tables are stacked high with fact sheets and colored pencils. A group of men and women stand in front of a poster, gesturing and eagerly discussing dangers and potentials, risks and chances, scenarios and measures. A projector casts aignt letters onto the wall behind them that read: »Perspectives 2060: Climate Change in the Surselva«. The men and women have come here for a collaborative project by seecon, the NGO Mountain Wilderness, the regional development association Region Surselva, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps (CIPRA), and the UNESCO Biosphere Entlebuch, All these institutions participate in the pilot program »Adapting to Climate Change, « initiated by Switzerland's Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN). The goal is to develop an instrument for a participatory process of climate adaptation in the Surselva District. Since January 2014, people have been busy working on the methodology, doing basic research, interviewing experts, and assembling the needed materials. After more than 20 months of work, the finished product is here: the Climate Toolbox Surselva.

## The Climate Toolbox

The Climate Toolbox is an instrument that helps regional decision makers initiate a participatory process in order to counterbalance or harness the effects of climate change. The accompanying discussion takes systematic note of the economic, ecological and social characteristics of the region

to illustrate the advantages of proactive and sustainable climate change adaptation across different sectors.

Conceived as both a proverbial and an actual toolkit, the Climate Toolbox contains all the instruments that are necessary to conduct a »Climate Adaptation Workshop« (spanning one and a half days) and to initiate the necessary processes afterwards. Its contents are specifically tailored to the Surselva region. — Photo I Instead of adding another entry to the long list of online tools for climate change adaptation, the Climate Toolbox is proudly analog: an actual toolbox.

> On this sunny autumn afternoon, the Climate Toolbox saw use at the Hotel Steinbock. Among those present were five members of the municipal administration as well as a representative each from the consulting firm Seilplan, the Parc Adula, the Office of Forestry and Natural Hazards, the Program San Gottardo, and the Regiun Surselva.

The Climate Adaptation Workshop consists of six steps. Following the introductions, the participants entered into a discussion of the regional business model of the Surselva District. Once they reached agreement on the way the region operates economically, the participants began to assess the significance that climate change has for their business model. — Photo 2 In small groups, the participants of the Climate Adaptation Workshop discuss the risks and chances that climate change holds for their regional business model.

In a next step, the participants chose from a selection of fieldtested, sustainable adaptation measures. Were some of these measures already being implemented in the Surselva? Did they make sense for the region? In what ways could the new, viable measures that were selected have a positive impact on the regional business model? A discussion of these questions yielded a definite list of measures to be implemented in the Surselva District. In a final step, these measures were fit into an implementation strategy, seecon accompanied this process in accordance with the needs and wishes of the participants.

## **Prospects and Perspectives**

What makes the Climate Toolbox unique is that it creates a practical, regional perspective from which to view the connection between a regional business model and the effects of climate change. The Director of Regional Development in the Surselva states: "With the help of the Toolbox, all the actors in the region can come together to access information and coordinate their efforts. This way, the risks of climate change can become opportunities for the region.«

The Climate Toolbox was designed for the Surselva, but it can also be used in other alpine and mountainous regions. All that is required is commitment and a meeting of the most important actors in a given region.

There is considerable domestic and international interest in the Climate Toolbox. Current discussions include the broader application of the Toolbox in mountainous regions and a translation of the method to the agricultural sector in Nepal.

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2017 has been declared
the International Year of Sustainable
Tourism for Development.
With this step,
the United Nations World Tourism
Organization (UNWTO)
wants to raise public awareness
of the contribution
sustainable tourism makes
to regional development.



From an economic standpoint, the role the UNWTO assigns to tourism makes sense: globally, tourism represents one of the largest economic sectors. Sustainable tourism, however, means more than sheer economic size and financial gains.

This is also reflected in the five key areas that the UNWTO is set to promote in 2017<sup>1</sup>:

- Inclusive and sustainable economic growth
- Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction
- Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change
- Cultural values, diversity and heritage
- Mutual understanding, peace and security.

## Partners on an Equal Footing

Travel agents, tour operators, travelers and their hosts certainly share these aims, yet the goals are rarely met in practice. Sustainable tourism remains focused on economic growth; more often than not, sustainability functions as a marketing catchphrase and not as a genuine guideline for the reorientation of business models.<sup>2</sup> In many travel destinations, challenges also lie elsewhere. Some local populations do not live in a culture of democratic political participation and have little say in decision-making processes. Indigenous peoples often live in poverty. They are minorities in their own countries; their past is full of suffering. As a people, they bear the burden of a history that is marked by disregard and ignorance of their views and traditions. As a consequence, their collective sense of self-esteem is diminished. In defiance of humiliation and repression, they may rediscover their pride through a renewed

I http://www.tourism4development2017.org/about/

<sup>2</sup> Moscardo, G. & Benckendorff P. (Eds.) (2015). Education for Sustainability in Tourism: A Handbook of Processes, Resources, and Strategies. Heidelberg: Springer

attention to their collective heritage. In this way, they can gain the self-confidence to insist on their own ways of conflict resolution and face Western models of negotiating and doing business as partners on an equal footing. What might happen if the spiritual leader of an indigenous people, in negotiations with a white man looking to invest, requests a period of three days to ask the counsel of his forebears?

> Tourism does not always bring about the kind of development we would like. In Europe, Mallorca is nearing its limits: the summer of 2016 recorded an all-time record in visitor numbers. Far off in the Pacific, the Easter Islands' 5.000 inhabitants host up to 50,000 visitors per year, who leave behind not only their money but also their waste. They bring along their own worldviews, they eat and drink, use up water, and occupy public space. To turn this into a developmental positive, it is necessary to establish a dialogue between partners on an equal footing.

## **Destination Development**

For these reasons, seecon has adapted its procedures for destination development to comply with the values and traditions of different travel regions as well as their guests. These basic attitudes and approaches have served seecon and our customers well:

- Professional conduct modeled on the UNWTO definition of sustainable tourism
- Sustainable development as interdisciplinary endeavor
- Phenomenological attitude
- Person-centered systems theory
- Solution-oriented method

To develop sustainable tourism destinations, seecon works with the cultural traditions of the locals. For us, the focus of destination development is not on building hotels or generating revenue for the local population. Instead, we concentrate on the question of hospitality: are guests welcome? For instance, would the people in Cameroon's Ngie subdivision

like to welcome European guests and show them their traditions? Such concrete questions are part of an open dialogue about the form of tourism that the populace of a given region might prefer. To avoid manipulative queries, we use specific, open-ended questions rather than multiple-choice schemes: which dances and songs would you like to share with tourists? Which places and stories would you like to reveal? The answers to these questions determine the development of a form of tourism that is desirable for a village community, a people, or a whole region. Questions are also asked regarding borders: what would you rather not share? What places or traditions should remain yours alone? In Cameroon, for instance, certain places are consecrated to the forebears; in South Africa's Khomani San community, certain dances belong exclusively to the tribe. For us Europeans, these decisions are not always immediately comprehensible. This otherness is the challenging aspect of dealing with diversity and plurality. But otherness is what makes our world bountiful.

## MANAGING CHANGE IN THE

## CORRUPTION-PRONE

WATER AND SANITATION-SECTOR

**Tandiwe Erlmann** 

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## 29

## »You managed to demystify water integrity.«

(workshop-participant)



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Safe and reliable access to water and sanitary facilities is a fundamental requirement for societies seeking to overcome poverty and achieve environmental sustainability. Often, lack of access is not caused by technological deficits but by weak legal and institutional frameworks and mismanagement in the water sector. The Integrity Management Toolbox—developed by WIN, GIZ and cewas, the international center for water management services—supports water sector organizations in preventing and mitigating risks related to corruption and mismanagement.

Edwin Sikoongo is standing in front of a pinboard with a bright smile on his face. He is the founder of Portmore Construction, a company that does civil engineering work. Together with four other companies, he has joined a workshop on risk management in corruption-prone environments like the Zambian water sector. Over the course of the two-day workshop, he has developed a vision for his company and chosen the integrity tools the company will adopt to realize that vision. Developing this vision was only the first step of the process that he and his staff engaged in. Over a period of six months, coaches supported him in assuming leadership of his company's transformation, in providing the necessary skills, resources and incentives, and in planning and monitoring his daily actions with an eye towards his vision.

## How does the Integrity Management Toolbox work?

Bribery in procurement processes, illegal tapping of water mains, collusion between public officials and water cartels, falsification of invoices: these are the kinds of serious integrity risks facing companies like Portmore Construction. Instead of finger pointing, the Integrity Management Toolbox helps companies to turn such risks into an opportunity for higher levels of performance and efficiency. The results benefit not only the company but also water users and the

surrounding society. — Photo I Edwin Sikoongo, founder of Portmore Construction, has a vision: zero tolerance for corruption. He also has a plan: implementing integrity tools to prevent and mitigate corruption risks for his company.

The Integrity Management Toolbox kicks off with a workshop. Here, the participating companies describe their business model, assess their current performance, identify their integrity risks, and assess tools with which to address them. Subsequently, the companies implement these tools and monitor their progress with the support of external coaches. Mr. Sikoongo and his staff chose tools that enable them to review the diligence of their subcontractors and to formulate anti-corruption commitments in their business contracts. — Photo 2 Integrity tools are essentially managerial tools: they help prevent or mitigate risks for the company's finances, human resources, governance, contracts and customer relations.

> Successful change requires leadership. At Portmore Construction, it was the director himself, Mr. Sikoongo, who assumed leadership. By developing the company's business model and choosing the appropriate tools together with his employees, he created a sense of ownership among them and ensured their commitment to the process.

Change also comes at a price. In order to implement the chosen tools successfully, resources like work hours, assets and money must be made available. Change also requires the planning of activities and the monitoring of progress. Often, change is delayed by employees who are too occupied with their regular tasks or lack the necessary skills. Here, coaches assume the important tasks of motivating company staff to stay on track, discussing problems, and advising on activities.

## How can you use the Toolbox?

The Integrity Management Toolbox is unique because it allows companies to tackle corruption in a non-moralizing and practical manner. As one participant put it: "You managed to demystify water integrity. « Taking a step-by-step approach allows companies to break the task of tackling corruption down into discrete parts and to focus their efforts where they are most effective.

Corruption usually involves two sides: the demand side and the supply side. It is not enough to combat corruption within companies; instead, a sector-wide approach and a list of specific risks and tools for water utilities, companies and public institutions are called for. Both can be found online at www.waterintegritynetwork.net/imtoolbox. Specific approaches, risks and tools for multi-stakeholder processes in water basins as well as community-based water service providers are available on request. Because of its interactive and participatory nature, the Integrity Management Toolbox can be used in any country.

cewas, the international center of expertise for water management, provides support for young entrepreneurs and startups in Switzerland and abroad.



To satisfy future generations' demand for clean water, the United Nations believes it is necessary to effect "revolutionary changes" in the infrastructure and management of water and sewage systems. To respond to this need, domestic and international experts teamed up to establish the international center of expertise for water management cewas in Willisau, in the Lucerne canton of Switzerland, on May 18, 2011.

## Business Expertise in Water, Sewage, and Resource Management

cewas provides business expertise and sustainable solutions for water and sanitation management. The non-profit association helps to found and develop startups as well as small and medium-sized enterprises with the goal of stimulating regional development. Its reigning principle is "think globally," act locally.« cewas is supported by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the Lucerne canton, and the regional development authority REGION LUZERN WEST within the framework of the New Regional Policy (NRP). »We provide support to cewas startups so that they can respond to the problem of global water management in ways that are sustainable, economically viable, socially responsible, and ecologically sound«, Michael Kropac, co-director of cewas, explains. Support also extends to collaborations between businesses or with academic institutions, both in Switzerland and abroad, Co-director of cewas Johannes Heeb observes a »formation of clusters within the cewas startup network: synergy potentials are used and projects are acquired collaboratively.«

In the last few years over 30 startups, not only from Switzerland and Europe but also from Ecuador, India, Palestine, the United States, Zambia, and South Africa, have successfully been established on the domestic and international markets. The spectrum of ideas and services ranges from innovative agricultural solutions to ecologically sustainable and userfriendly dry toilets for refugee camps. Raffael Känzig's company Phoster, for instance, builds floating platforms carrying plants whose roots help to filter and clean bodies of water

without the use of chemicals. Känzig credits cewas with helping him succeed: »The cewas startup program made it possible for me to swiftly acquire all the skills I needed to found Phoster. For more than a year, their team also provided individual support as I went through the founding stage.«

Another startup, MoSan (founded by Mona Mijthab), is set to introduce an ingeniously simple dry toilet system, designed for refugee camps or other emergency situations in which water for flush toilets may be sparse or unavailable.

## **Global Challenges** as Engines for Job Creation

The cewas Smart Startup Program was developed and successfully tested in Zambia with the support of the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) and its program for reform of the local water sector. Training and coaching measures empowered entrepreneurs to found micro and small enterprises (MSEs) and to expand their portfolio of goods and services. Since then, the proven model of the cewas Smart Startup Program has also been implemented successfully in India, Namibia, Palestine, Peru, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Vietnam. To date, more than 100 MSEs have been established.

> In 2015. Anton Hallak and Muntasser Sinokrot participated in the program in Ramallah. Their startup EcoTech Recycling is the first official electronic waste recycling firm in the Palestine Territories. Hallak and Sinokrot state that cewas »widened the horizons of our thinking and educated us on how we can open our current company EcoTech Recycling on a much more professional level. A few months later we started seeing the results, and now we have opened and registered our company and we are excited for what is to come.« — Photo During a road show, participants in the Smart Startup Program introduce themselves and their projects to key actors in the water sector in Lusaka. Zambia in 2015.

## **Business Matchmaking: Establishing Business Partnerships** between North and South

Opening up new markets poses a great challenge for any business. Encountering a lack of resources, local business partners, market knowledge and networks makes for a difficult market entry and heightened risk. Since 2016, cewas has been offering »Business Matchmaking and Innovation Brokering« in the form of structured, guided processes that facilitate market acces for small and medium-sized enterprises from Switzerland and Europe and help to establish business partnerships between North and South. The target group comprises not only Swiss and European technology and service providers seeking new markets in countries like Namibia, Zambia or South Africa. It also includes small and medium-sized enterprises from Southern countries looking to diversify their portfolio of goods and services and to identify innovative solutions to local challenges in the water sector.

## ABOUT SEECON

We develop, manage and participate in innovative projects in Switzerland, Europe, as well as in various countries in Asia and Africa. Together with our clients and partners, we develop focused and effective solutions under a processoriented framework and following a learning-oriented approach. We work independently, multidisciplinary and professionally on sustainable development: society—environment—economy.

A corporate culture in line with innovation, accountability to future generations, environmental awareness and motivation guarantees our high quality work.

Our customers are national, provincial and regional government bodies, private companies, businesses, NGOs, non-profit organisations as well as educational institutions and research centres.



seecon is active locally and globally. The places marked on this map refer to the respective texts. **(S)** seecon locations Switzerland Biel, Bern Willisau **(1)** Wolhusen Ngie, Cameroon & Lusaka Willisau Khomani San, Kalahari Zambia Switzerland Switzerland South Africa — p. 9 — p. 27 Ecuador, USA, India Nepal, Peru Namibia, Palestine 2 Tajikistan Peru, Senegal — p. 21 Zambia, South Vals GR

Region Surselva

Switzerland

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Africa, Tanzania

Uganda, Vietnam

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