



I. Business Overview:

Balyolu: The Honey Road, builds unique beekeeping jobs and professional trainings for the increasing number of women in rural Turkey without formal employment and education opportunities, and connects them to global markets through honey tasting tours. The honey tasting tours use old nomadic walking trade routes, making these trips a socially conscious and ecofriendly twist on wine tasting tours, and positioning Northeastern Turkey as a leader in a new niche tourism industry. Through this program, we are building a marketplace of experiences - recreating the Silk Road journey of connecting cultures and goods, while providing specialized environmental livelihoods for women and their villages.

Balyolu is unique because it is tackling a simple problem – a lack of women’s employment – with a complex, multifaceted and self-sustaining business approach. Balyolu integrates community education and literacy into the very production and marketing of our products, using green infrastructure and non-invasive development to protect the environment instead of harming. The arrival of a Balyolu tour at a village does not only benefit the women but the whole village, as we plan to engage both men and women as part of the tours, and provide village sweet grants for women to start new social businesses. Becoming role models for the children, and producing new product chains in the villages, our program will affect rural communities across the Northeast. The overarching mission is to work across Eastern Anatolia, training local women and their communities in environmental business and using sustainable hyper-local tourism to fund their work. The vision of Balyolu is to rejuvenate international peaceful walking Silk Road routes throughout the Caucasus that are moving marketplaces for fine artisan tastes and experiences, with local women and men as the leaders. Balyolu: the Honey Road is currently registering as a non-profit corporation in the US, launching their first set of pilot tours in mid 2012. The Balyolu Team is booking tours and raising revenues for the program through a Kickstarter campaign in the US, collaborating with the Georgia Tech Business School and Koç University and applying for corporate sponsorships and grants in the US as well as Turkey.

II. The Market Opportunity:

Turkey’s northeast is a fragile historic ecosystem of nomadic animal husbandry, beekeeping, and endemic wildlife that is threatened by regional construction projects and environmentally hazardous development. At the same time, local populations are leaving for major cities as they suffer from a lack



of employment, local schools are closing from low enrollment and poor infrastructure. Balyolu aims to bridge this gap, using business solutions to sustain a thriving environment, provide high-end economic opportunities for villages, and to connect global communities to this beautiful part of the world. Currently, the status quo surrounding existing organizations is compartmentalized. There are environmental organizations, but they do not integrate the needs of local communities. There are factories and businesses that do a limited number of provide jobs, but they do not consider environmental well being or provide formal employment opportunities for women.

III. Market Solution:

Balyolu is aptly positioned to create this market because the team's experience lays at the intersection of business, tourism, and social entrepreneurship, as well as a strong global and local network balances with corporate and local communities. The Balyolu Team has worked with Turkey's leading EU beekeeping experts and worked with village women beekeepers and observed how tourism treats honey more like fine wine, with unique underlying flavors and tastes can value honey at a higher value with more return for quality, small scale local producers. Balyolu will be the first company worldwide that offers extended honey tasting tours that are not targeting professionals or academics. Balyolu works closely with small remote villages, capitalizing on the beautiful environment, and creating an income generating industry that will help ensure its protection.

IV. The Market:

The Balyolu trip targets active Turkey enthusiasts, food travelers, environmentalists, and adventurers between the ages of 30 and 60 in Europe, the US, and Turkey. Existing models such as TEMA's Bee Safari targets academics, scientists and professionals and focuses mainly on bee genetics. This model has been successful but it does not offer honey tastings or a sustainable social benefit for village communities. Another comparable model is cultural tours in Eastern Anatolian, which are popular with domestic tourists as a cost-effective travel option. However, Balyolu creates a new niche market of cultural, social, and environmental tourism, driven by local communities, providing local women with trainings in specialized honey harvesting techniques. A more comparative analysis is not applicable since Balyolu is creating this new niche market. Balyolu is ambitious because it provides continuous literacy,



business marketing, and beekeeping training opportunities infused in its operations. The business is built around the needs of women, with a loyalty to the environment, and a sustainable business model. No other organization integrates these components with a further mission of social progress and economic sustainability as a goal.

V. Management Team:

The Founders of this program are **Cat Jaffee** and **Sertac Turhal** (who is the Director of Balyolu Board of Advisors). Cat and Sertac have years of experience living and working Kars as part of the UNDP, Fulbright, and local non-profits – both experienced with beekeeping, migration, village agriculture and tourism. Balyolu Board of Advisors also include **Mona Tekin Diamond** (Turkish Honorary Consul General) and **Zeynep Sariaslan** (local coordinator of UN Women Friendly Cities). Our Board of Directors includes **Tara Chantel Hopkins** (the founder of Cop Madam), **Cagan Sekercioglu** (the founder of KuzeyDoga) and **Irfan Kandemir** (Professor of apiculture and Caucasian-Bee genetics at Middle East Technical University). Our other team members include **Burcu Uzer** who brings over nine years of experience in tourism and hospitality with the Smithsonian, **Alex Barberis** who specializes in raising sustainable capital for new global startups, and **Deniz Duygu** who has a business finance background and has worked extensively with corporate leaders in Turkey.

VI. Financial and Social Impact Summary:

The Balyolu Team have drafted an initial operational budget for the pilot program and launch beginning in January 2012. Operational costs are budgeted as \$100,000 USD, and Balyolu plans to raise all of these funds through booking the trips for the summer of 2012 and supplementing this revenue through merchandise sales. Four pilot trips have been organized for 2012, each with 12 spots costing 2,000\$ USD per person. Contingent on the success of this pilot, The Balyolu Team has lined up prominent corporate relationships and potential sponsors in Turkey who are interested in integrating Balyolu into CSR campaigns for 2013. For the pilot year, Balyolu will: (1) Run organic beekeeping trainings for participants (to be continued into 2013) (2) Equip all program participants with organic beekeeping supplies (3) Purchase yurt accommodations for our homestay program (4) Have 48 adventurers travel through the honey road. The Balyolu Team will achieve these goals through running



our Kickstarter campaign, and close relationships with the UNDP, SERKA, and local beekeeping professionals.