

**ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING EXCHANGE INITIATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE  
HOSPITALITY SMEs IN THE BALKAN-MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

Subsidy Contract No. BMP1/1.3/2616/2017

**Company name: Golf Club Air Sofia**

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Source: <https://www.golfbg.com/golf-courses/view/3/en>

**Country/region of operation:** Ihtiman, Bulgaria

**Sustainability dimension:** facility management, experiential tourism

**Description of the enterprise/initiative:**

The modern 18-hole Golf Course Ihtiman is conveniently located just a few minutes from the highway A1 and can be reached in about an hour from the city center of the country's capital Sofia. Aside from the golf course, the facility of the generously set up golf resort also offers numerous other sport opportunities such as tennis, soccer, basketball and volleyball. The Golf Course Ihtiman itself is open to local and foreign visitors all year round. The course length of the park (par 71) totals 5,815 meters. Since the Golf Club Air Sofia – Golf Course Ihtiman is located in a rural and quiet area, the 550,000 square meter area offers fantastic views of the nearby surroundings in addition to a relaxing atmosphere. As a whole, the terrain is relatively flat, meaning that its challenges consist mainly of the vegetation itself and various sand bunkers. This makes the course suitable for less experienced golfers as well. A visit to the Golf Club Air Sofia is a particular treat in connection to a stay at the adjoining hotel. The complex, architecturally recreated after a country estate, offers numerous amenities including two swimming pools, a fitness studio, a sauna as well as a restaurant, bar, and Pro Shop.

**Social/ community impact sought:**

Providing opportunities for practicing golf in Bulgaria as at the same time a wide range of services to rest, work, hold meetings and conferences, and entertain.

**Stakeholders:** beginners and advanced golfers, local and foreign visitors

**Approach applied:**

The golf course is meeting the global standards – 18 holes and par 71, S/I 71.2, Slope 131 and is situated less than hour away from the Bulgarian capital – Sofia in order to be as convenient for the citizens of Sofia and for the capital’s visitors as possible. To add value to the product, the enterprise also include a grassed football ground of conventional dimensions, a basketball pitch, a volleyball playground, two tennis courts, two swimming pools, a riding-school, a fitness hall, sauna and solarium, two-field and automated bowls bowling, 6-place Jacuzzi, squash, billiard, a winter beer house, an open swimming pool, a children pool and conference rooms.

**Innovation applied:**

The Golf Club Air Sofia in Ihtiman was the first professional golf club that was opened in Bulgaria. Besides, there is no other place in Bulgaria where you can have all in one – to play golf, football, basketball, volleyball, tennis, to ride thoroughbred horses, to rest, work, hold meetings and conferences, and entertain.

**Social impact and business results achieved:**

As being the first golf course in Bulgaria, The Golf Club Air Sofia gave rise to the development of this sport in the country. Many of the current Bulgarian golfers have made their first steps in golf here. In addition many sport teams use the facilities to train and rest, as well as many companies choose the location for conducting business and teambuilding events.

**Financial situation / sustainability of the business model:**

The sustainability of the business is ensured by the wide range of services and opportunities the complex provides. Thus, the target group of people who can benefit from the site and the services is illimitable.

**Key success factors: Location, innovation and flexibility**

**Challenges and problems:** Golf is an expensive sport therefore there is a certain limitation on the people who want to practice it.

**Year when the enterprise was created: 2000**

**References (web-site, intent links, video, etc.):**

<https://www.golfbg.com/golf-courses/view/3/en>

<https://www.facebook.com/Golf.AirSofia/>