

A hub for digital nomads on the Black Sea coast in rural Bulgaria

SUMMARY

Burgas Coliving is a digital nomad hub in the village of Vetren, 15 km inland from Burgas on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast. It occupies a former thermal bath complex, now converted into a co-living and co-working space.

The hub welcomes freelancers, remote workers, entrepreneurs and travellers from around the world to a 13-bedroom site designed to provide everything needed to live and work in a rural setting, alongside access to the historic Burgas thermal springs and Black Sea beaches.

Digital nomads bring demand to the village, supporting local small businesses and creating jobs and volunteering opportunities for residents. Local internet connectivity has also improved significantly.



Themes: Housing; social inclusion; demography; digital infrastructure; migrants; entrepreneurship; tourism and heritage; employment

Country: Bulgaria

Organisation:

> Burgas Coliving, private business

Start & end date: 06/2022 - ongoing

Budget: EUR 42 000 for six months' operation

Funding source:

> Private investment

Website: www.burgascoliving.com

Contact: Katya Radostinova,
info@burgascoliving.com, +359 894747473



CONTEXT

Coastal Bulgaria has long depended on seasonal tourism, which brings intense demand during the summer months but near-empty villages the rest of the year. This makes it hard to sustain local businesses year-round, retain young residents or justify investment in infrastructure such as high-speed internet.

At the same time, remote work and digital nomadism have grown significantly since 2020, creating a new type of long-stay visitors who need certain infrastructure. The historic spa resort of Vetren boasts 2 500-year-old thermal springs but was affected by the abandonment of communist-era infrastructure after 1990, including its 1954 thermal bath complex. The site offered a distinctive setting for one of the country's first digital nomad co-living hubs.



OBJECTIVES

- > Repurpose an abandoned 1954 thermal bath complex in the village of Vetren;
- > Reposition the historic Burgas mineral springs as an international destination for remote workers;
- > Manage a co-living and co-working hub for digital nomads in a rural setting;
- > Anchor digital nomads in the village so their spending and networks support local businesses;
- > Contribute to rural revitalisation, year-round employment and improved digital infrastructure in Vetren.



ACTIVITIES, KEY ACTORS, AND TIMELINE

The founders of Burgas Coliving purchased the abandoned thermal bath complex in 2002. From 2019, this was gradually **converted into a co-living and co-working space**, which became operational in June 2022.

The hub operates fully for six months a year and has 13 bedrooms, 600 Mbps internet, a 24/7 co-working space, communal kitchens and living rooms, a wine room, yoga and meditation spaces, and an 8 000 m² garden with sports facilities.

It also offers access to the historic Burgas thermal springs and Black Sea beaches. The hub is **supplied by local businesses**, including the village bakery, the local craft brewery, cheese makers, wineries and other food producers.

Life on site is structured around **regular activities** – Skillshare Evenings, Art Nights, BBQ Nights, workshops, movie evenings and sports events – which **connect long-stay co-livers with each other and the local community**. In addition, local artists and arts organisations contribute paintings and organise installations and collaborative events, while the local government co-organises events linking visitors with residents.



RESULTS

- > **A digital nomad co-living and co-working hub** with 13 bedrooms, welcoming freelancers, remote workers, entrepreneurs and travellers from around the world;
- > **Positions created for local people** at the co-living hub, and for young volunteers during community events;
- > **Support for local small businesses** (bakery, craft brewery, cheese makers, wineries and other food producers) due to steady, non-seasonal demand;
- > Significant **upgrading of local digital infrastructure** to 600 Mbps high-speed internet, exceeding what is available in surrounding settlements;
- > Repositioning of the historic Burgas mineral baths as a **destination for remote workers and long-stay visitors**;
- > An **active cultural life** woven around residents, local artists and co-livers through a structured community programme.



SUCCESS FACTORS/LESSONS LEARNT

- > Repurposing the 1954 thermal bath complex gave the site a distinctive character and **made use of abandoned communist-era infrastructure**.
- > Digital nomads stay for weeks or months rather than days, **generating demand that seasonal tourism cannot** and supporting rural revitalisation.
- > The hub is connected to local suppliers, cultural actors and the municipal government, which means the **co-livers' spending circulates through and supports the village**.
- > The structured community programme, with regular Skillshare Evenings, Art Nights and other events, **connects long-stay co-livers with each other and residents**. This helps to avoid the loneliness that can affect remote workers in rural settings.



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