



# GENDER SENSITIVE POST-EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

## Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis (GSVCA) in the Municipality of Shijak

DECEMBER 2021



# GENDER SENSITIVE VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS (GSVCA) IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SHIJAK

December 2021

The Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis (GSVCA) in the Municipality of Shijak was conducted by Smart ICT on behalf of the Gender Sensitive Post-Earthquake Recovery and Reconstruction Project, implemented by UN Women in Albania, with the financial support of the Government of Sweden.

Contract No. ALB-2021-03

Smart ICT working group:           Diamanta Vito, Alban Ibraliu, Liana Suleymanova,  
Genc Radovicka, Ana Thana

UN Women technical support: Grania Mackie – International senior expert on GSVCA  
Erald Lamja – National senior expert on LED & WEE

*Disclaimer:*

This analysis is prepared in the framework of the Gender Sensitive Post-Earthquake Recovery and Reconstruction Project, implemented by UN Women in Albania, with the financial support of the Government of Sweden, through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Fund in Albania.

This document contains the views and opinions expressed by the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of UN Women, the Swedish Government, the United Nations or its agencies.

© 2021 UN Women. All rights reserved.

Rr. "Skënderbej", Ndërtesa 8, Ap. 29-31, Tiranë, Shqipëri

Tel: +355 4 450 2555/7575

Website: [albania.unwomen.org/en](http://albania.unwomen.org/en)

Facebook: [unwomenalbania](https://www.facebook.com/unwomenalbania)

# CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS .....	5
1. GENERAL INFORMATION .....	7
1.1 INTRODUCTION .....	7
1.2 NATIONAL CONTEXT FOR GENDER EQUALITY .....	9
1.3 UN WOMEN IN ALBANIA .....	12
1.4 METHODOLOGY .....	13
2. PROFILE OF MUNICIPALITY OF SHIJAK .....	16
2.1 VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF SHIJAK MUNICIPALITY .....	17
2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE .....	18
2.3 ECONOMIC PROFILE .....	19
2.4 SOCIAL PROFILE .....	24
3. EARTHQUAKE IMPACT .....	26
4. ANALYSIS OF VALUE CHAINS IN SHIJAK MUNICIPALITY .....	31
4.1 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VALUE CHAIN .....	34
4.1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION IN THE VC .....	34
4.1.2 OVERALL EVALUATION BASED ON BASIC CRITERIA .....	36
4.1.3 SWOT ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VALUE CHAIN .....	38
4.2 VINEYARDS AND WINE PRODUCTION SECTOR VALUE CHAIN .....	39
4.2.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION IN THE VC .....	39
4.2.2 GENERAL EVALUATION BASED ON BASIC CRITERIA .....	42
4.2.3 ANALYSIS OF VITICULTURE AND WINE PRODUCTION VALUE CHAIN .....	43
4.3 AGROTOURISM VALUE CHAIN .....	45
4.3.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION IN THE VC .....	45
4.3.2 SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE AGRITOURISM VALUE CHAIN .....	47
4.4 CONCLUSIONS .....	47
5. ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VALUE CHAIN .....	48
5.1 DETAILED OVERVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VC .....	48
5.2 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VALUE CHAIN MAPPING .....	50
5.3 VALUE CHAIN ACTORS .....	52
5.3.1 VC SUPPORT STRUCTURES .....	52
5.3.2 CERTIFICATION BODIES .....	54

5.3.4	PRIVATE SUPPORTING STRUCTURES .....	55
5.4	VC LINKS OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS (FRUIT AND VEGETABLES) .....	56
5.4.1	SECURING BASIC INPUTS FOR THE VALUE CHAIN .....	56
5.4.2	PRODUCTS PLANTING .....	57
5.4.3	CULTIVATION .....	57
5.4.4	COLLECTION AND SELECTION .....	58
5.4.5	TRADE .....	59
5.5	FINDINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN THE VC .....	59
5.5.1	OPPORTUNITIES .....	59
5.5.2	CONSTRAINTS .....	62
6.	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERVENTIONS .....	67
7.	REFERENCES .....	71

## ABBREVIATIONS

AU	Administrative Units
APP	Albanian-Austrian Partnership Foundation
ARDA	Agricultural and Rural Development Agency
ATTC	Agricultural Technology Transfer Centers
CBT	Community-Based Tourism
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
DCED	Donors Committee for Economic Development
ETC	Etcetera
EU	European Union
GLP	General Local Plan
GSVCA	Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
INSTAT	Albanian National Institute of Statistics
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IPARD	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Rural Development
LED	Local Economic Development
MAP	Medicinal and Aromatic Plants
NFA	National Food Authority
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDNA	Post-Disaster Needs Assessment
PDyV	Mandatory Local Plan
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TDP	Territorial Development Plan
TS	Territorial Strategy

UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VC	Value Chain
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
AU	Administrative Units

# 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the post-earthquake reconstruction efforts of 2019, UN Women in Albania, with the financial support of the Swedish government, is implementing the “Gender Sensitive Recovery and Reconstruction Project” focusing on supporting and empowering women in 11 affected municipalities - Shijak, Durrës, Krujë, Tiranë, Kamëz, Kavajë, Vorë, Rogozhinë, Kurbin, Mirditë and Lezhë, both in rural and urban areas.

Past experiences have shown that girls and women are differently and often disproportionately affected by disasters and crises and have unequal levels of recovery. That was also the same with the deadly earthquake of November 2019 in Albania, which had a disproportional impact on girls and women. In particular the earthquake, followed by the COVID-19 health crisis, has affected women in rural areas who face the risk of losing vital agricultural production; single mothers or women who are head of family, that are at risk of poverty and losing their homes; victims of domestic violence and / or intimate partner violence and other highly vulnerable groups, such as women and men with disabilities, the elderly, LGBTI and women and men of the Roma and Egyptian communities.

The project focuses on three main areas:

1. Supporting national and local authorities in preparing and developing risk reduction plans, which include the priorities of girls and women.
  - The objective of these plans is to increase the capacity of LGUs, by not only providing immediate relief to the disaster-affected population, but also by taking into account the specific needs of girls and women and providing support for their long-term economic and social recovery.
2. Supporting girls and women in affected areas to access and benefit from economic opportunities. Concrete activities include:
  - Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) through the development of Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis (GSVCA) to identify employment opportunities and market access for women;
  - Full implementation of activities for the post-earthquake sustainability through the development of the value chain, economic inclusion and empowerment of women by aiming to increase the family income;
  - Local Economic Development (LED) through gender equality approaches and women's empowerment activities to bring sustainable local economic growth and improved livelihoods;
  - Providing legal support and assistance to women and men in affected communities for registering new homes and apartments, as well as reconstructed buildings on behalf of both spouses based on Albanian legislation;
3. Treating domestic violence and gender-based violence in earthquake-affected areas through:
  - Creating capacities of referral mechanisms and other service providers for managing cases of violence between women and their preparation to provide these services even during emergency situations.

- Providing direct legal, psychological assistance and other services to girls and women in the affected areas.

Gender sensitive of the value chain analysis in the Municipality of Shijak was conducted within the field of 2. *Supporting girls and women in the affected areas for accessing and benefiting from economic opportunities*. Its primary objective was to identify the main sectors in this municipality, presenting opportunities for inclusive economic growth and development, as well as evaluating the involvement of women in the processes and their opportunities for empowerment; and secondly, focusing on value chains with the greatest potential for development, by providing recommendations for specific measures to enhance the role of women and eliminate gender-based initiatives.

Inclusive development will be achieved by: (i) supporting job creations for women in sectors where women find work; (ii) increasing the number of women (poor, marginalized and vulnerable) in employment, production, processing and marketing; and (iii) increasing the productivity and competitiveness of the products produced by these women.

This objective translates into specific intervention to increase the number of farmers / workers / producers - especially poor, earthquake-affected, vulnerable and marginalized women - who effectively and formally engage in employment or self-employment, take part in value chains and market systems, earn higher returns and enjoy economic security.

This approach is based on the Market Systems Development methodology ("Making Markets Work for the Poor" - M4P) and follows the guidelines of the Donors Committee for Economic Development (DCED) for Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) in the context of private sector development. The activities will be coordinated and supervised by UN Women and implemented by professionals who provide NGOs / associations with a solid history of technical engagement in inclusive private sector development and gender responsive, as well as knowledge for communities.

The specific activities are fully in line with the short-term solutions suggested by the OECD for the Western Balkans<sup>1</sup> and are based on the recent experience of gender-sensitive interventions in improving value chains in the country<sup>2</sup>.

The focus of this study is the practical analysis of the main value chains in the Municipality of Shijak, from the perspective of the gender attribute. The main purpose of the gender-sensitive value chain analysis is to provide the Municipality of Shijak with practical recommendations that affect the population of the municipality as a whole (with a special focus on women in rural areas), that will create employment or self-employment of women, strengthen their role in selected VCs, their grouping and cooperation to increase their

---

1 OECD (2020). COVID-19 crisis in Western Balkans. Economic impact, policy responses and long-term sustainable solutions. <http://www.oecd.org/south-east-europe/COVID-19-Crisis-Response-Western-Balkans.pdf>

2 Gender sensitive approach to the value chain development: Summary document. Prepared and published by TETRA TECH for the USAID project of Planning and Local Governance in Albania 2020.

influence as main actors in VCs and as the result improving the living conditions of women (and families) and their role in community.

This analysis was made possible due to the excellent cooperation with the staff of the Municipality of Shijak.

*This study is directly related to these objectives by supporting the women economic empowerment and promoting gender equality, at the same time improving the selected value chains (VC) in the Municipality of Shijak. This activity supports capacity creation of local value chain actors and supporting functions, as a better way to support value chain development by taking into account the gender aspect.*

## 1.2 NATIONAL CONTEXT FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality describes the concept according to which all human beings, both women and men, are free to develop their personality skills and make their choices without restrictions set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviors, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favored equally. It does not mean that women and men should be made equal, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born female or male. (UN Women, 2011)

Over the years, Albania has developed a sustainable legal and institutional framework to promote gender equality and the protection of women's rights. The legal framework for promoting legal equality has been significantly improved by the ratification of a large number of important international instruments and other amendments. Below are some of the most important documents:

- The Constitution of Albania adopted in 1998 provides and guarantees equality between men and women and provides policies for equal opportunities and prevention of discrimination, among other causes, based on gender (Article 18).
- The Law on Gender Equality was adopted in 2008. This law regulates the basic principles of gender equality, requiring equal participation of women and men in all areas of life, equal status between women and men, equal opportunities and to enjoy rights and fulfill their obligations in society and to receive equal benefits from their achievements. The law defines "gender-based discrimination" (Article 11).
- The Law on Protection from Discrimination was adopted in 2010. Under this law, no one can discriminate on any grounds such as gender, race, color, ethnicity, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, political, religious or philosophical beliefs, economic, educational or social status, pregnancy, family background, parental responsibility, age, family or marital status, civil status, place of residence, health status, genetic predisposition, disability, belonging to a particular group or based on some other cause.
- National Strategy for Gender Equality, 2021-2030, approved by decision of the Council of Ministers no. 400, dated 30.6.2021, is a guide to a society where all individuals women, men, youngsters, girls and boys, regardless of age, gender, place of birth and residence, ethnic or social group, disability, affiliation of religious belief, expression of gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as other individual characteristics, are given equal opportunities to develop their potentials; to participate equally in political and public decision-making; to elect and be elected; to be educated and trained

throughout life; to be employed and employ by advancing towards new professions, challenging stereotypes and gender division of labor; to influence the social and economic development of the country and to be supported of their socially and economically development; create healthy families, where parents share responsibilities equally and where communication is the key to problem solving; to live free from harmful practices and violence; and where vulnerable groups are treated with priority until they are empowered and enjoy equal rights and opportunities in all walks of life - a society where equality is not confused with uniformity and where no one should be left behind.

**Strategic goal I** - Fulfillment of economic and social rights for women, youngsters, girls and men, young people, boys in society and empowerment of women, youngsters from all groups, aiming at the growth and sustainability of the (green) environmental economy, as well as their equal participation in digitalization.

- o Application of the legal framework and improved policies that provide equal sharing of work and unpaid family care between women and men, youngsters, girls and boys.*
- o Increasing the access of women and youngsters from all groups to financial services and products, as well as to productive resources.*
- o Reducing barriers that keep women and girls away from the job market, as well as increasing the access of women and girls from all groups, to decent work even in non-traditional sectors of employment (in particular in science, technology, engineering, mathematics).*

At the local level, the promotion of inclusion and equality is a component of legal frameworks and policies, which highlight the obligations of local government units in the aspect of gender equality (UN Women, 2019). For example, the Law on "Gender Equality" addresses the need to promote gender equality in local government and the specific units that are responsible for presenting, overseeing and monitoring performance and service, including gender equality. Efforts have been made by several municipalities to meet the regulation of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and EU standards, adopting a clear structure, priorities, responsibilities and budgets that respond equally to the needs of women, men, youth (UN Women, 2018).

As a result of proactive laws, policies and principles, Albania has made improvements in many aspects of gender equality, for example, at the role that women play in private sector development. Compared to 2016, the percentage of enterprises owned or run by women has increased in all regions of Albania in 2017. However, decentralization and successful implementation of legal and development frameworks is still challenging, and the pace of change in terms of women's economic empowerment through private sector is slow, especially for women in rural areas. Gender norms, roles, responsibilities and prejudices in women's ability to access productive resources (such as land, finance, networks, technology and equipment) and business services show that women and men still do not have an equal level in the economic and social aspect.

Some obvious impacts of gender prejudices in Albania in terms of economic empowerment through enterprises are for example:

- The employment rate for the population aged 15-64 is 77.1% for men and 61.2% for women of this age group. About 22.8% of women are unpaid workers in the family business, while for men this percentage is only 13.1%. A significant proportion of men are self-employed 33.3%, while the share of self-employed women goes up to 21.5%.<sup>3</sup>
- For women and men aged 15-64, the employment in the agricultural sector predominates. In 2020, 41.4% of female employees were employed in the agricultural sector. The second sector that occupies the largest share in the employment of women and men after the agricultural sector is trade, transport, hotels, business and administrative services, respectively with 21.6% employed women and 31.7% men. The gender pay gap is 6.6%. So, men have an average gross monthly salary 6.6% higher than women. Compared to 2019, in 2020 there is a reduction of the gender pay gap by 3.5%.
- Women own or manage 25.5% of all enterprises. <sup>4</sup> Divided by business size, it turns out:
  - Business up to 4 employees 25.8%
  - Business with 5-9 employees 23.9%
  - Business with 10-49 employees 22%
  - Business with +50 employees 22.8%
- In Albania, more than 80 percent of land titles are under the name of "head of household" or former head of household (father-in-law, father or grandfather). Women in rural areas have limited access to land information, limited access to support services, and perceive high levels of inequality in family decision-making and land rights compared to male family members (Zhllima, Edvin et al., 2016).

Women in agricultural farm management represent only 7% of the total number of farms in Albania (INSTAT 2020). Although the number of female and male farm workers is at comparable levels in rural areas (224,639 males and 267,098 females), there is a large difference between them in terms of non-farm work (UNDP, 2016).

In most cases, on family farms there is a noticeable division by gender of farm work processes. Men's roles are work-related that include control over decision-making, agricultural assets, commodity mobility, and the market; while women's roles are related to manual labor in agriculture and livestock, including activities related to the cultivation or feeding of animals, harvesting, milking, processing of agricultural and livestock products and food, also household chores. This distribution of labor has resulted in women having limited opportunities and control over agricultural assets, decision-making processes, and commercial transactions. Although rural women have been a priority of support programs offered to the agricultural sector, only 64 of them have benefited from IPARD funds, approximately 10.1 million Euros. Of the support schemes implemented during 2020, only 15% of beneficiary farmers were women (MARD 2021).

---

3 Men and Women in Albania 2021. INSTAT

4 Men and Women in Albania 2021. INSTAT

### 1.3 UN WOMEN IN ALBANIA

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, also known as **UN Women**, is a United Nations entity working for the empowerment of women. UN Women is a member of the United Nations Development Group. UN Women was created to accelerate progress in meeting the needs of women and girls, worldwide. UN Women supports the United Nations Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design the laws, policies, programs and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and to really benefit women and girls all over the world. It works globally to make the vision of the **Goal for Sustainable Development** a reality for women and girls in all aspects of life.

UN Women, based on the vision for equality embodied in the United Nations Charter, aims to eliminate discrimination against women and girls; women's empowerment; and achieving equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action, peace and security. By putting women's rights at the heart of all its efforts, UN Women leads and coordinates the efforts of the United Nations system to ensure that commitments to gender equality and gender integration to go into action around the world.

Active in Albania since establishing the Country Program in 2007, UN Women works closely with government and civil society to design and implement laws, policies, programs and services needed to improve the status of women and achieve global standards for gender equality. Within the “**One UN**” Program in Albania, **UN Women Albania** leads in gender equality issues and provides coordination and support for related activities by focusing on initiatives in four priority areas that are fundamental to women's equality and that can pave the way for all in Albania:

- ❖ Leadership and political participation
- ❖ Economic empowerment
- ❖ Ending of violence against women
- ❖ National planning and budgeting

To address some of these post-earthquake needs of November 26, 2019, and as part of post-earthquake reconstruction efforts in 2019, UN Women in Albania, with financial support from the Swedish government, is implementing a project focusing on supporting and strengthening women in the 11 affected municipalities – Shijak, Durres, Krujë, Tiranë, Kamëz, Kavaja, Vorë, Rogozhinë, Kurbin, Mirditë and Lezhë, both in rural and urban areas.

The “**Gender Sensitivity for Post-Earthquake Recovery and Reconstruction**” project, which is implemented in close cooperation with the Municipality of Shijak provides support to local authorities in preparing and developing risk reduction plans, which include the priorities of girls and women; supporting women and girls in affected areas to access and benefit from economic opportunities.

The overall purpose of this report, prepared by Smart ICT Services Ltd, within the above-mentioned project is the analysis and identification of key sectors in the Municipality of

Shijak, which present opportunities for economic growth and development, assessing the involvement of women in processes and their chances for empowerment.

An important part of this report is also the in-depth analysis of 1-2 value chains with more potential for development, as well as the preparation of specific recommendations and development plans, which aim to increase the role of women and eliminate actions with gender prejudice.

## 1.4 METHODOLOGY

The selected method for evaluation has been adapted from the methodologies successfully applied in some other countries, and is particularly suitable for countries which are in the initial stages of local government reform and have limited statistical data. This methodology combines information collected and processed in the field (primary sources) with those administered by the Municipality and various government institutions (secondary sources).

This report developed by Smart ICT Services has as its primary objective the identification of key sectors in the municipality of Shijak, presenting opportunities for growth and economic development, as well as assessing the involvement of women in the processes and their opportunities for empowerment, and secondly, focusing on value chains with the greatest potential for development, providing recommendations for specific measures to enhance the role of women and eliminate gender-based initiatives

Data and information regarding the general description of the municipality of Shijak, its economic development and the main sectors of economic potential are taken from the main reports prepared and the information was also supplemented with data from the official website of the Municipality of Shijak, official publications and statistical information from the Institute of Statistics in Albania. The information was updated with the data obtained and processed from the statistical database of the Institute of Statistics in Albania (Instat) in 2021, for the period 2018-2020.

During the subsequent evaluation of value chains in the agricultural sector, the methodologies considered were "Market and value chain analysis of selected sectors in Albania for rural economic diversification and women's economic empowerment" (FAO 2018), "Chapter 4: Value Chain Sketching Tool" and "Module II: Sustainable Value Chains" (GIZ), which served as a reference during the construction of the value chain map (sketch).

Regarding the information from the earthquake analysis and the effects it had on the affected municipalities, and specifically the municipality of Shijak, the information was obtained from the "Volume A Report of the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment of Albania (PDNA)", developed in February Report "Situation Assessment of the Earthquake of Families with Children Living in Temporary Shelters in Albania", developed by the UNICEF Office in Albania & IDRA Research and Consulting.

**Sector Selection.** Primary resources such as field research, including group consultations and discussion sessions with municipal representatives, manufacturers and experts, were used to select the sectors. This step was split into two phases. In the first phase, a preliminary

evaluation of value chains was conducted, through discussions and meetings with representatives of the municipality, manufacturers, representatives of supporting organizations and field coordinators of the project aiming at identifying value chain opportunities. This phase ended with organization of a meeting of the groups of interest, during which participants had the opportunity to present and discuss additional details, opportunities and constraints and get a clear picture and understanding of value chains, and where they were identified. The main focus areas are the value chains in the following sectors: Autochthonous Agriculture Products, Viticulture and Wine production and Agro-tourism.

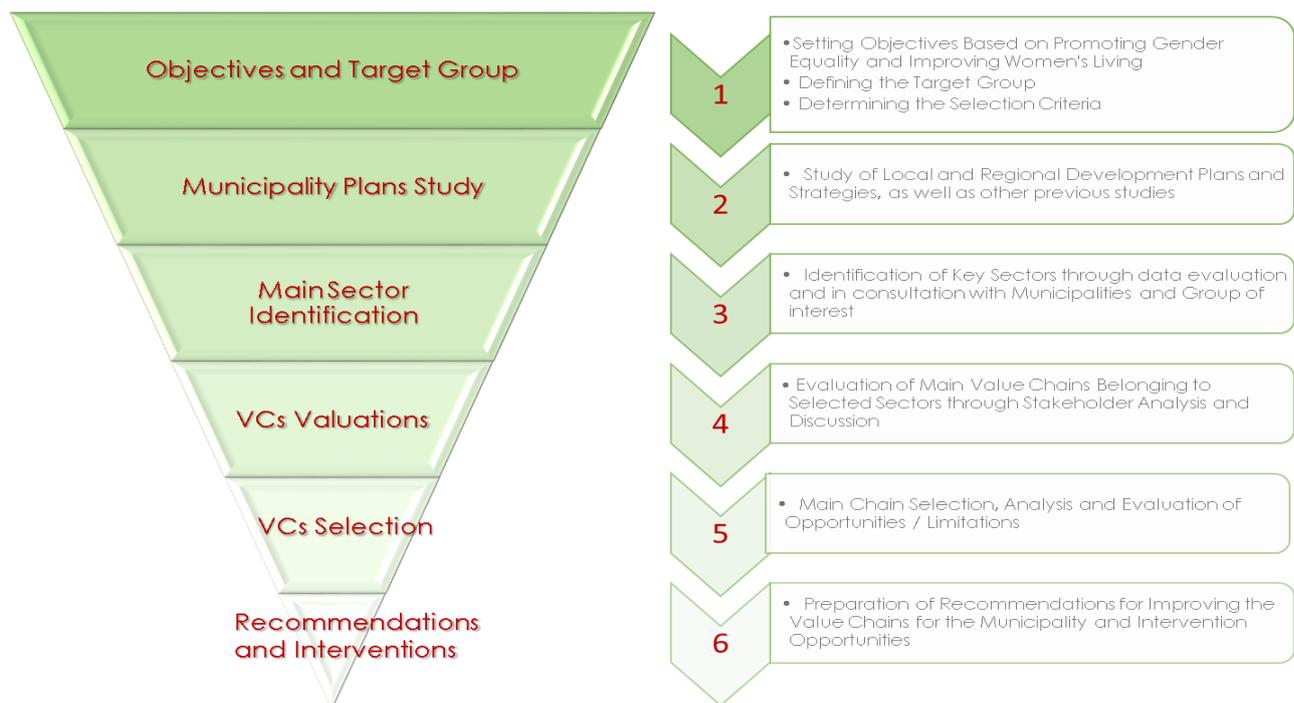


Figure 1. Methodology Approach

The main steps were followed in the process are described below:

1. **Objectives and Target Group:** Defining objectives based on national and municipal goals (improving living and promoting gender equality) and defining the target group and selection criteria:
  - a. Target group: Low-income women and men at the municipal level.
  - b. Criteria: the importance of the sector in creating living conditions for women and men.
2. **Study of Municipal Plans:** Initial study of municipal plans and research work, based on plans, strategies, previous studies, etc.
3. **Main Sectors:** Identification of main sectors through the evaluation of various reports, data and publications.
4. **Evaluation of VCs:** Evaluation of the main value chains belonging to the selected sectors through the brain storming, discussions, focus groups.
5. **Selection of VCs:** Selection of one or two main value chains and evaluation of opportunities, constraints and areas of intervention, through field research.

6. **Recommendations:** Prepare recommendations for improving the value chain for the municipality and the possibilities of intervention.

**Limitations of the Research Work.** The focus of this report is the practical analysis of the main value chains in the Municipality of Shijak, seen from gender perspective. One of the biggest challenges faced during this study is the lack of secondary resources. Currently, in Albania do not exist reliable statistical data, due to two factors: i) high level of informality, ii) differences in methodologies used by local authorities and INSTAT used for the statistical analysis. Therefore, the results of research work (for main sectors / value chains) often did not match the results obtained during the group work sessions and groups of interest interviews. Moreover, most public data are often not disaggregated by gender and a large part of the statistical data published by INSTAT is not disaggregated by municipalities. The most recent data on the resident population is that of the 2011 CENSUS, making it quite difficult to obtain reliable statistical information.

From a conceptual point of view, implementing gender sensitivity value chain analysis can often be problematic. Findings of research work are often general and depending on the purpose (improving women's lives or in other words, empowering women), can lead to the provision of intervention scenarios that aim more at economic development and not specifically improving the situation of women themselves. The purpose of this study is to provide the municipality of Shijak with practical recommendations that affect the population of the selected municipality as a whole and that would consequently lead to the improvement of the conditions of women in the municipality. It is important to bear in mind, that in Albania and in those specific municipalities that were analyzed, the situation in the value chains is often so difficult (and poverty is so high) that any overall improvement and sustainable development regarding value chains would lead to higher incomes for the family, which would automatically mean improvement of the conditions of women and other actors in it. It's also necessary to remain attentive to the local context, including the various notions of masculinity.

The meetings sessions of the groups of interest as well as the interviews conducted represent the size of the study sample, which can be considered as very small (duration of the study - about 1 month). However, the use of municipal strategic plans, as well as field research, supported the hypotheses that the observed trends can be considered as representative of the groups of people, the results of which will be generalized or further transferred.

## 2. PROFILE OF MUNICIPALITY OF SHIJAK

Based on the Law No. 139/2015 on Territorial Division in the Republic of Albania, for Statistical Purposes NUTSII, the Municipality of Shijak is part of the Northern Region. It is bordered on the north, west and south by the municipality of Durrës and on the east by the municipalities of Vorë and Tiranë. The center of this municipality is the city of Shijak.



Figure 2: Location of Shijak Municipality

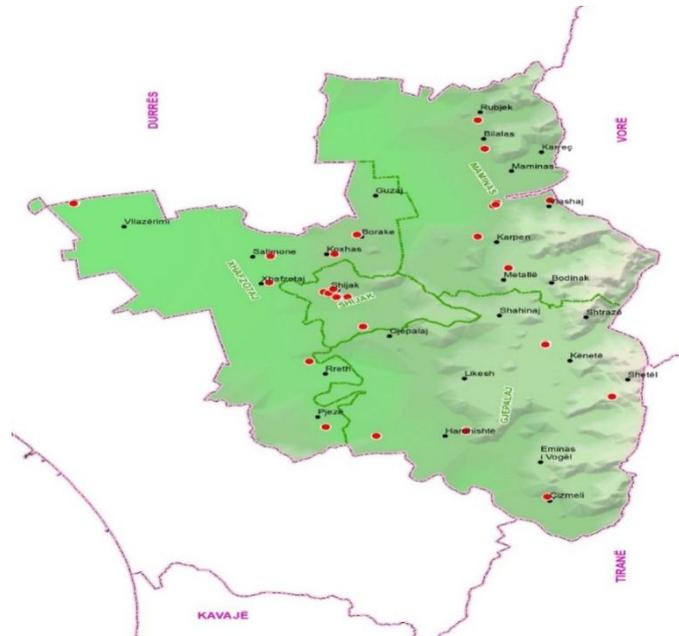


Figure 3: Administrative Map of Shijak

The new municipality consists of four administrative units which are: Shijak, Maminas, Xhafzotaj and Gjepalaj. All are part of the Durrës District of Durrës County. The new municipality has one town and 25 villages.

Data	Value	National Ranking	Ratio to national values	Average national value
Region according to NUTSII	Northern	-	-	-
Surface	93 km <sup>2</sup>	57	0.33%	464.72 km <sup>2</sup>
Population by Civil Status	46,746	26	1.04%	73,876
Population according to the 2011 Census	27,861	26	0.99%	45,908.64
Density by Civil Status	503	5	-	159
Density according to the 2011	300	6	-	19
Number of Administrative Units	5	44	-	7.67
Number of Cities	1	-	-	-
Number of Villages	25	-	-	-

Table 1: Main Administrative-Demographic Data for Shijak Municipality

The new municipality of Shijak is situated in a plain and hilly area along the Erzen River. Shijak is a city rich in water resources. The economy in the country is mainly oriented towards trade, tailoring industry, processing and manufacturing. Private businesses number 263 entities, of which 17 are classified as large business and 246 as small business. These businesses operate mainly in the services sector, trade and to a lower extent in the field of production and construction.

Shijak is an area that has seen population growth in recent decades as a result of migration from the north-eastern areas of Albania. Emigrants' remittances have played a major role in the development of the area, mainly in Shijak and Xhafzotaj.

Population growth and emigration have brought many new constructions over the last 25 years which have been built without a proper development plan. Agriculture is oriented towards high value-added products such as the cultivation of vegetables and fodder, livestock breeding and orchards.

## 2.1 VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF SHIJAK MUNICIPALITY

Meanwhile, according to the Territorial Strategy and Territorial Analysis for the Municipality of Shijak, the vision for the development of the municipality reads as follows:

*"Shijak is a municipality with rich human and natural resources and has economic potential that, under effective leadership of local government, aims to increase the well-being of its inhabitants through a functional economy of services and agrotourism, organic and intensive agriculture and an industry that helps empowerment of the businesses, based on a modern and completed infrastructure, always in harmony with the environment."*

To fulfill its development vision, Shijak Municipality has defined strategic directions and objectives for the development of the territory.

### Strategic objectives for the development of the territory

- To preserve, protect and improve the natural environment of the territory of the Municipality - Erzen river, lakes, basins, forests and streams - for their ecological function and economic and aesthetic values.
- To plan, build and restore accessible neighborhoods with efficient structure, services and facilities, which also contain various housing options.
- To continue the work for strengthening the role of the city as a center of trade and employment in the area of central Albania, in accordance with national directives on economic development.
- To work intensively for improving the quality of life of the residents through excellence in the urban architecture of buildings, streets, neighborhoods and public spaces throughout the territory.
- To support growth and development throughout the municipality through an efficient and effective transport network and investments for improving water supply and wastewater Infrastructure.
- Promote a model of growth and land use that encourages lawful, efficient and environmentally friendly development.

To ensure that the growth in the territory of the municipality during the period covered by this strategy, has been achieved through the implementation of efficient practices, reasonable in the financial point of view and environmental plan, as well as thanks to the commitment and ongoing involvement of residents, local partners and interinstitutional and regional cooperation.

## 2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

According to the 2011 Census, Shijak has 27,951 inhabitants. According to the Civil Registry, this municipality has a population of 44,103 people. Shijak has an area of 92.19 km<sup>2</sup>. According to the Census, the population density is 302 inhabitants / km<sup>2</sup> while according to the Civil Registry the density is 478 inhabitants / km<sup>2</sup>.

Based on the 2011 CENSUS data, approximately 50% of the population (13,928 inhabitants) is female. Today it has about 44,676 inhabitants or 12,439 families. The majority of the municipality's population, about 70%, lives in rural areas. Only Xhafzotaj hosts 41% of the total population and 59% of the rural population. Table 2 gives the general data on the population divided by each administrative unit by age group, while Table 3 gives these data divided by gender.

Administrative Unit	Total	Age Group		
		0-14	15-64	Over 65
Gjepalaj	3449	730	2294	425
Maminas	4463	859	2916	688
Shijak	7568	1341	5249	978
Xhafzotaj	12381	2767	8141	1473
<b>Total Shijak Municipality</b>	<b>27,861</b>	<b>5,697</b>	<b>18,600</b>	<b>3,564</b>

Table 2: Population data for the Municipality of Shijak divided by age group. (Source CENSUS 2011)

Administrative Unit	No. of Villages	Total Population	Gender	
			Male	Female
Gjepalaj	9	3449	1729	1720
Maminas	8	4463	2262	2201
Shijak	0	7568	3782	3786
Xhafzotaj	8	12381	6160	6221
<b>Total Shijak Municipality</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27,861</b>	<b>13,933</b>	<b>13,928</b>

Table 3: Population data for Shijak Municipality disaggregated by gender. (Source CENSUS 2011)

Based on CENSUS 2011 data, the Municipality of Shijak has a total number of 12,439 families, where most are married couples with children (58%), followed by married couples without children (32%). To be mentioned is the number of families consisting of single mothers with children, 559 cases, which are part of the economic aid system.

Figures 4 and 5 show the composition of the population split by gender and age group for the Municipality of Shijak in total and disaggregated by gender for each Administrative Unit.

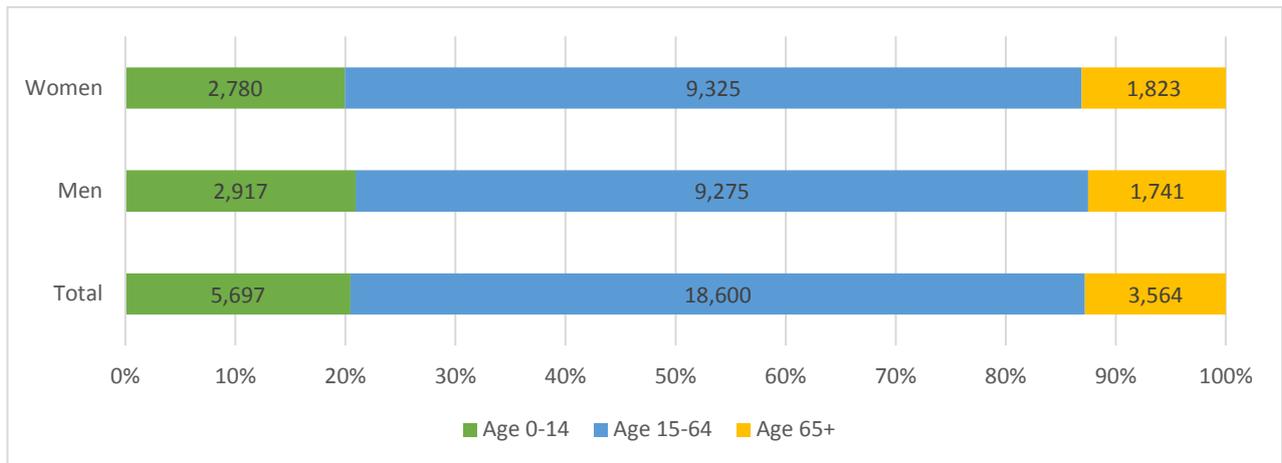


Figure4: Population of Shijak Municipality for each AU in% divided by age group. (Source CENSUS 2011)

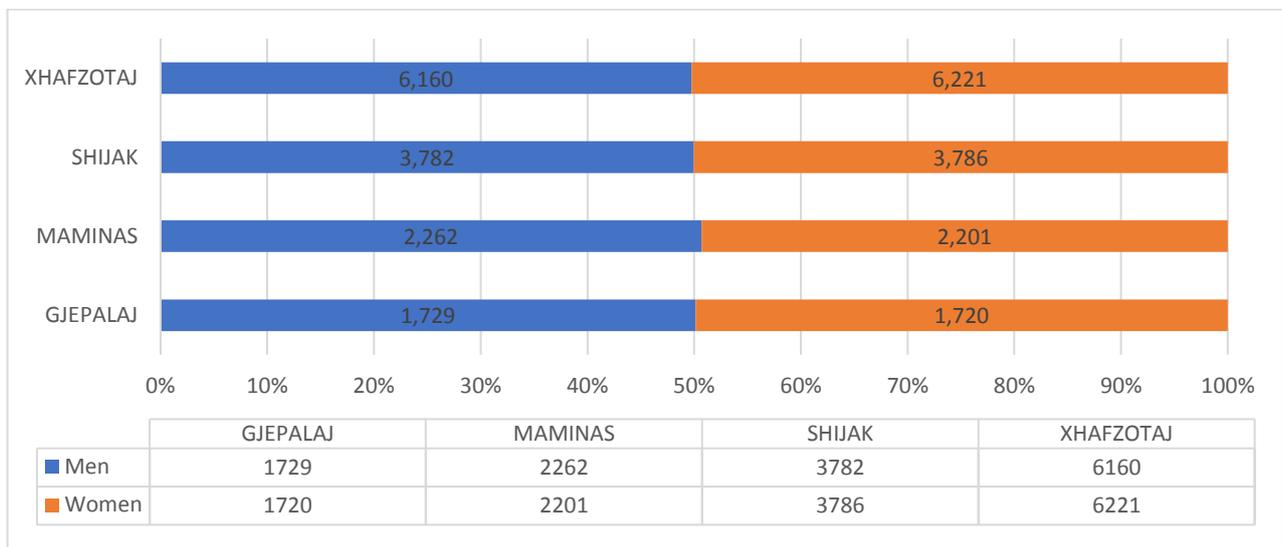


Figure5: Population of Shijak Municipality for each AU in% divided by gender. (Source CENSUS 2011)

### 2.3 ECONOMIC PROFILE

Based on the official data obtained from the statistical database of INSTAT<sup>5</sup> in the Municipality of Shijak at the end of 2021 there were 1157 active enterprises<sup>6</sup>. The number of these businesses, as noted in Figure 6, in the last 5 years is almost constant with a variation of 4.5%.

5 <http://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/statistikat-e-p%C3%ABrgiithshme-dhe-rajonale/tregues-sipas-bashkive>

6 <http://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/industria-tregtia-dhe-sherbimet/regjistri-statistikor-i-ndermarrjeve/publikimet/2021>

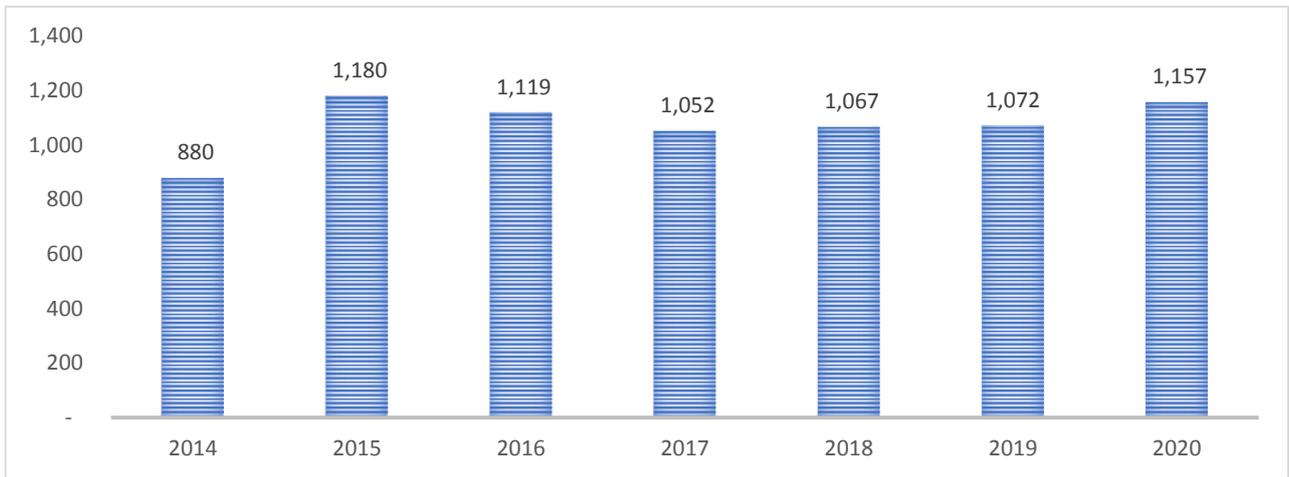


Figure 6: Number of Active Enterprises by Legal Form. (Source INSTAT)

Based on the legal form, these businesses are divided into: i) 177 Agricultural Farms; ii) 666 Legal Persons; and iii) 314 Legal Entities. As can be seen from the figure, the variation of legal forms has a growing trend of agricultural enterprises and a gradual increase of other businesses, mainly legal entities.

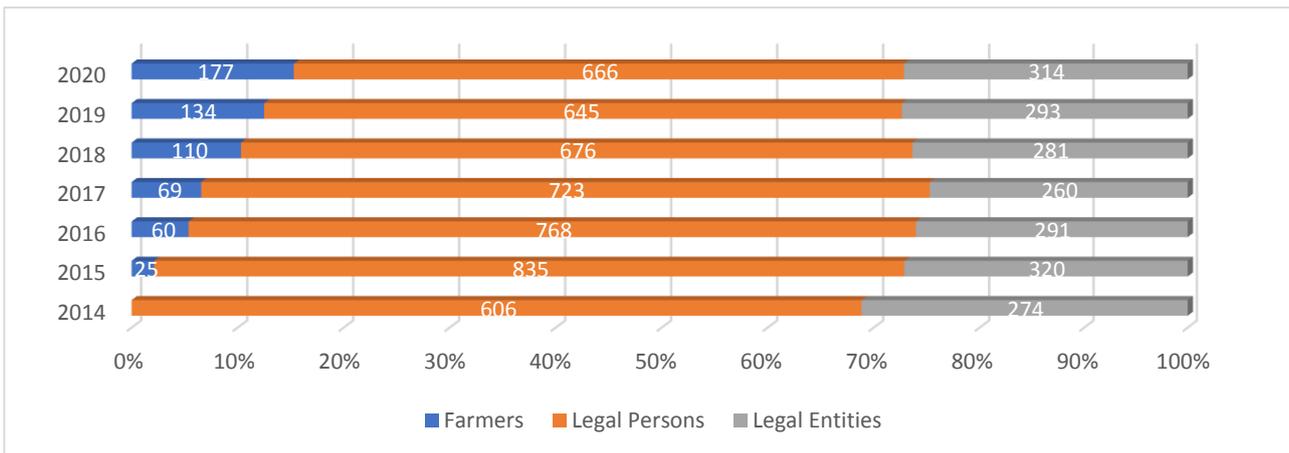


Figure 7: Percentage ratio of Businesses by legal form over the years. (Source INSTAT)

The predominance of the form of Legal Person businesses and Farmer constitutes about 70%, and is also reflected in the small number of employees in the private sector in this Municipality. Looking at the business structure from this point of view only 126 businesses or about 10.89% of them have over 10 employees, while about 954 businesses or 82.45% of businesses have less than 4 employees.

Today, about 19.79% of the businesses registered in the Municipality of Shijak are managed by women. Even in this regard there has been no significant change in the

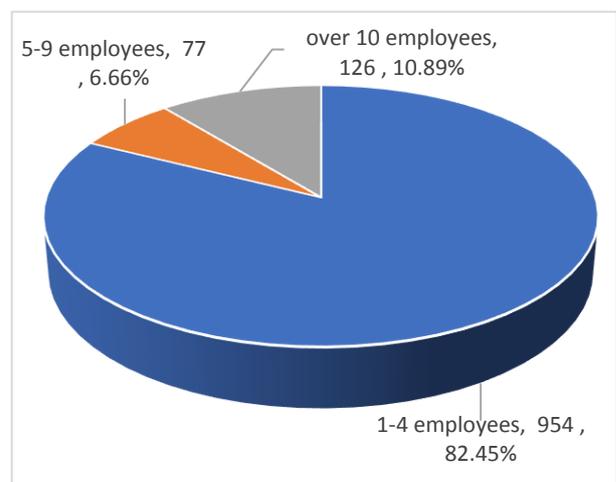


Figure 8: Number of Businesses grouped according to the number of employees. (Source INSTAT)

number of businesses run by women; the trend for the last 5 years shows a variation of 7.23%, as shown in Figures 9 and 10:

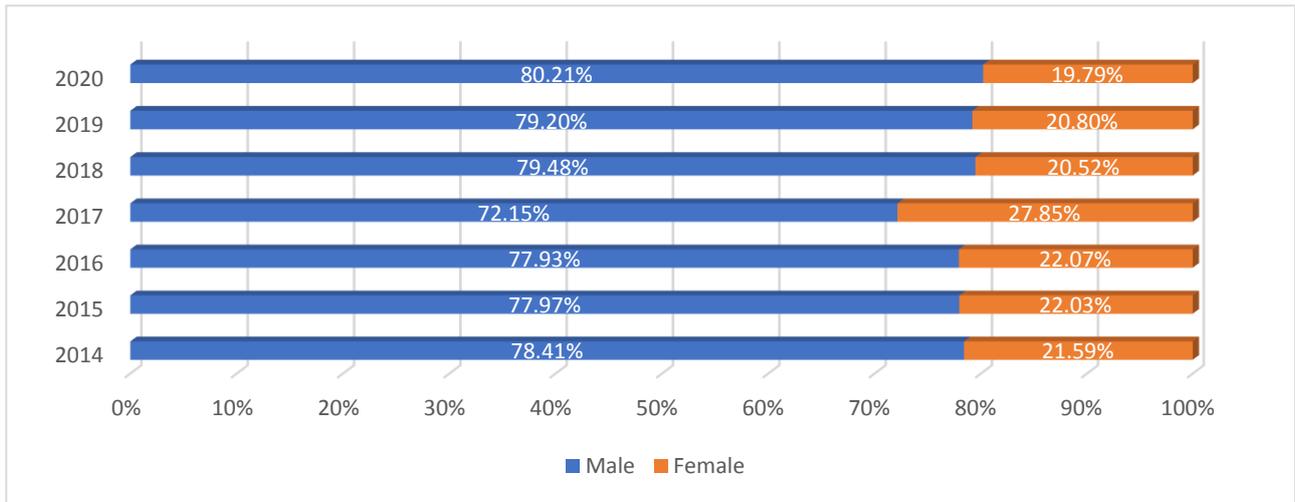


Figure 9: Percentage of Businesses by gender of administration / ownership. (Source INSTAT)

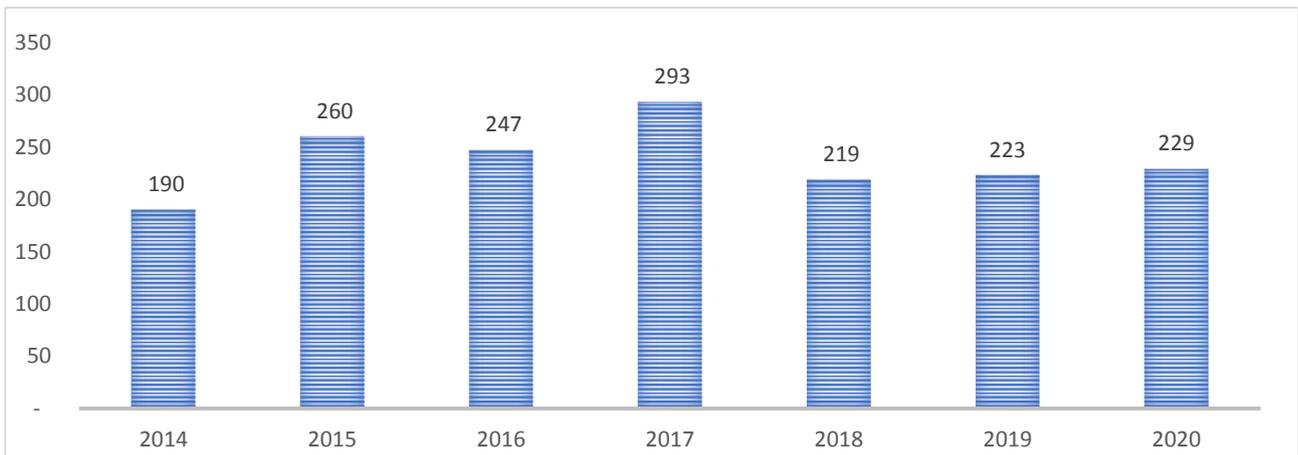


Figure 10: Change in the number of businesses administered by women over the years. (Source INSTAT)

According to the data of the local revenue office, in the Municipality of Shijak 1157 active enterprises at the end of 2020 are divided by main sectors as shown in Figure 11, in: i) 177 Agricultural Farms; ii) 211 Goods Manufacturing Enterprises; and iii) 769 Service Providers.

**Agriculture.** The agricultural sector is dominated by small businesses, which face many difficulties in securing financing, integrating modern and contemporary technologies and agro-technologies. Lack of infrastructure and convenience for processing raw materials and for the collection, marketing, hygiene and quality control of the

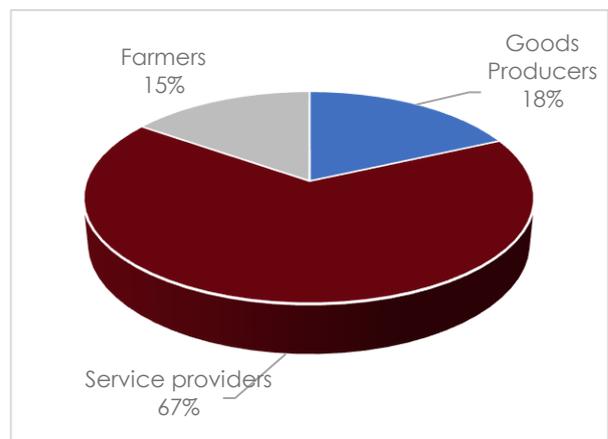


Figure 11: Ratio to the number of Businesses by main sectors. (Sources INSTAT and Shijak Municipality)

product, is the main factor contributing to the failure to achieve production efficiency and direct contact with the market of those businesses. For 2020, data from INSTAT (INSTAT, 2021) show that based on the legal form of active enterprises operating in the municipality of Shijak, 177 are classified as 'Farmers' and account for 15% of the total number of active enterprises.

The Municipality of Shijak is considered rich in agricultural land and variety of goods produced, despite the need for intervention in specific areas, as mentioned above. Based on the annual agricultural statistical report (AASR) for 2020, which releases data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the two main categories of crops cultivated in the agricultural sector are: perennial crops and permanent crops.

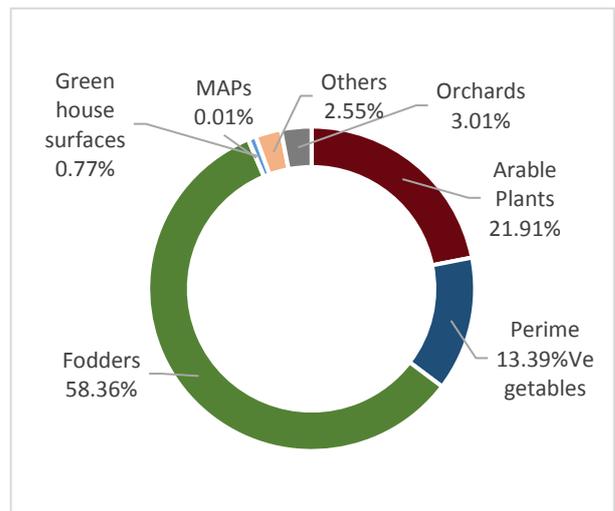


Figure 12: Structure of Agricultural Crop Groups  
 (Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Municipality)

**Industry.** Currently, there is a slight development in the light industry, in terms of processing livestock byproducts and fruits. These developments are still in their infancy and in most cases are family-run businesses. This industry is not yet formalized and the producers fail to secure the proper certifications and standards required for the sale of their produce in the local, national market or to ensure their export.

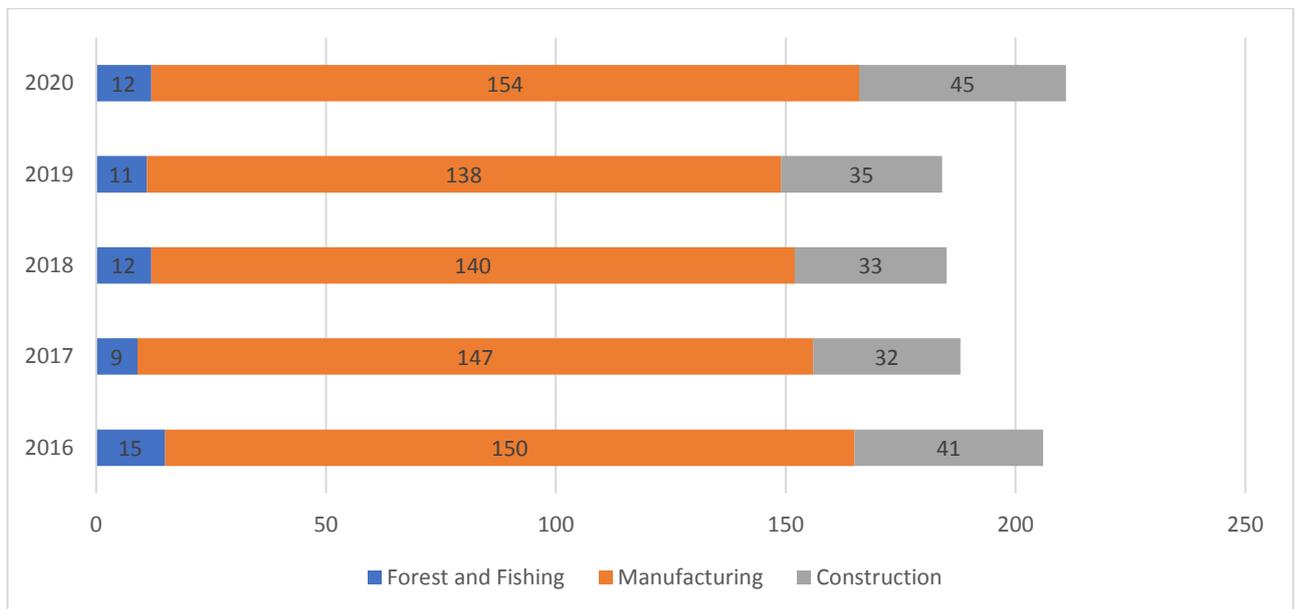


Figure 13: Manufacturing Industry Structure by 3 classifications for the last 5 years. (Source: INSTAT and the Municipality)

Manufacturing Industry during the last 5 years has seen a downwards trend of 12.8%, a significant change that illustrates the difficulties that this municipality is going through in terms of growth and economic development. This decline is observed since 2018. This indicator shows that the manufacturing industry has not decline due to the two major factors

such as the earthquake of November 26, 2019 and the pandemic during 2020 but has been decreasing in size steadily for the last 5 years till 2019.

As shown in Figure 14, the construction industry has been declining over the last 5 years, while the wood industry and the fishing industry have declined slightly in 2020. The specific data per each industry during 2020 is shown in figure 13. Even with its share of shrinking during 2017-2019, the manufacturing industry is still the leading sector in the Municipality of Shijak with over 73% of the total production sector.

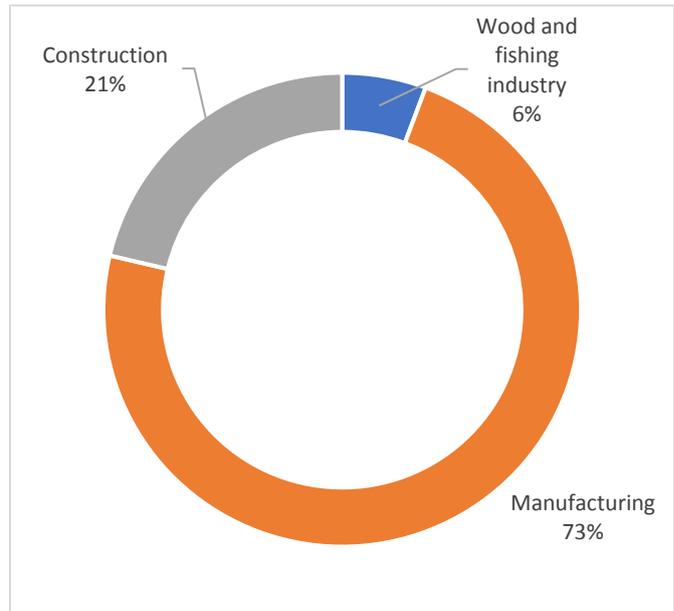


Figure 14: Ratio of the main classes of the Manufacturing Industry for 2020. (Source: INSTAT and Shijak Municipality)

**Services.** The services sector is also large and constitutes 67% of the local economic structure in terms of the number of economic operators. This sector also has seen a downwards trend with a shrinkage of 11.61% over the last 5 years. What is different from the manufacturing sector is that the decline is almost proportionally divided among all 5 of its sub-sectors. This trend makes us think that the main factor could be the reduction of the services market due to the migration of the population of this municipality to the most economically developed areas within the country, as well as emigration abroad.

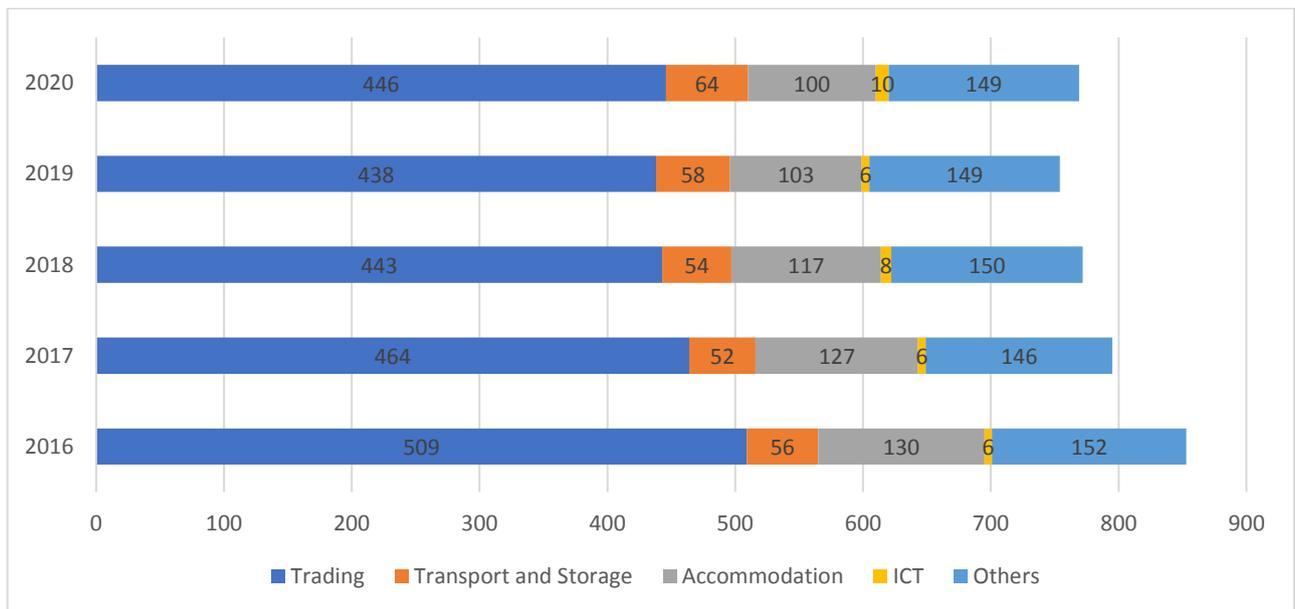


Figure 15: Structure of the Services Industry according to 5 classifications in the last 5 years (Source: INSTAT and Shijak Municipality)

A more detailed classification of this sector for 2020, as in Figure 16, shows that in the Municipality of Shijak out of 769 registered businesses, 446 or 58% operate in the trade sub-sector; 64 or 8% operate in the transport and storage sub-sector; 100 or 13% in the sector of accommodation and food, and 149 or 20% operate in the sector of other services. During last year, in this sector, especially in terms of accommodation and food, some investments have been and are still being made in small rural areas in order to attract visitors who prefer historical and natural tourism.

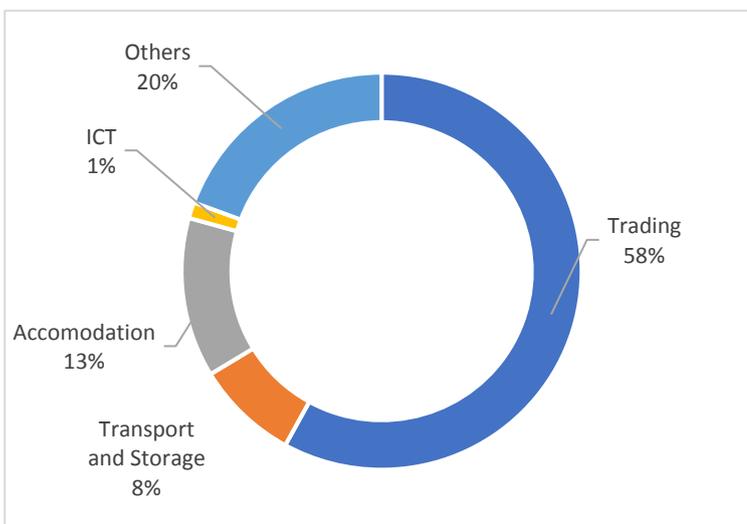


Figure 16: Report of the main productive industry classes for 2020 (Source: INSTAT and the Shijak Municipality)

## 2.4 SOCIAL PROFILE

**Employment.** In the municipality of Shijak, one of the main economic and social problems that the municipality is facing today is unemployment, with 2517 persons unemployed according to the census of 2011, where women represent 38% of jobseekers.

**Individuals in need.** From the available data, the number of families living solely on social economic aid is 559 and almost 10% are single mothers with children; there are 32 single mothers with children who are paid from community funds.

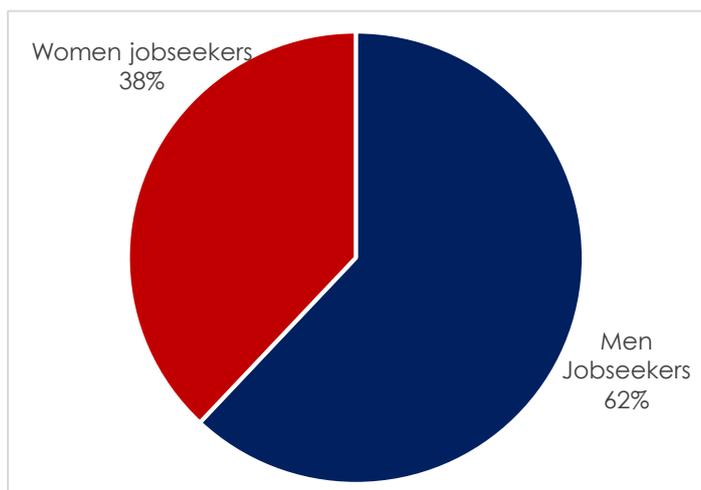


Figure 17: Ratio between male and female jobseekers. (Source Shijak Municipality)

Regarding the **persons with disabilities** in the municipality of Shijak there are about 1,437 individuals with various disabilities, 38% of whom are women. The chart below shows the budget used by the Municipality of Shijak in the last 10 years for the payments directed at Individuals in Need. The municipality fund was mainly used to support poor families who did not receive assistance from the national program.

**Education.** Regarding education, in the 2011 Census and the assessment of Shijak territorial data, there is a high rate of illiteracy in the municipality of Shijak, at 4.48% of the population. The educated population is located mainly in urban areas, such as the Shijak city.

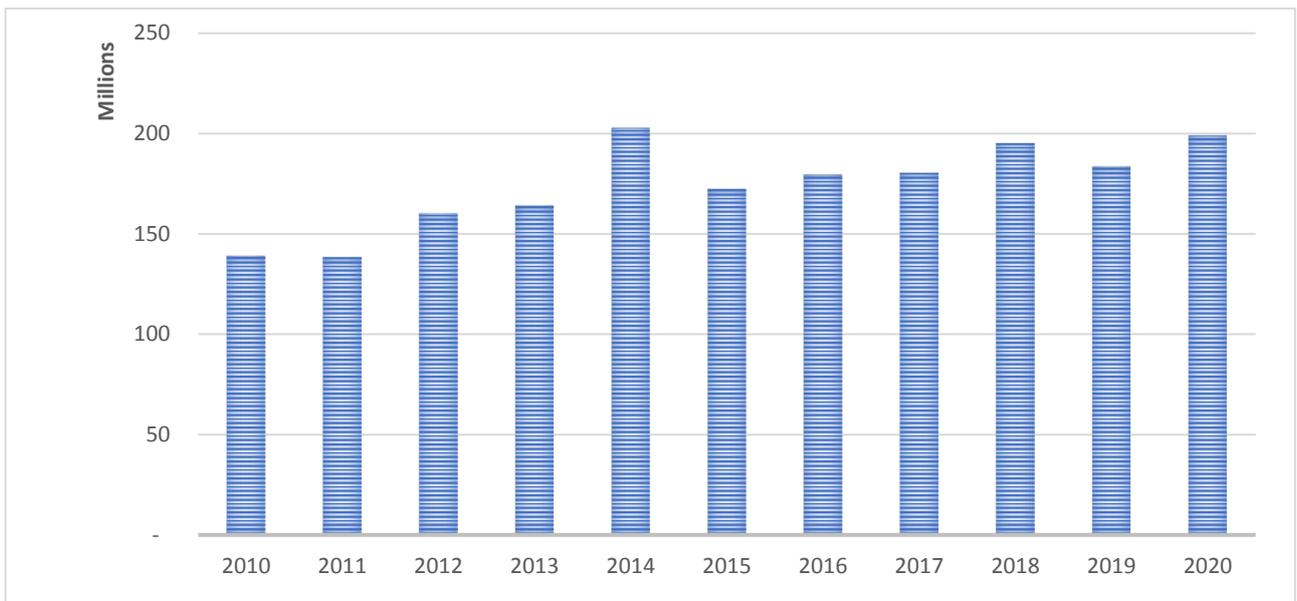


Figure 18 Budget used by the Municipality of Shijak in 10 years. (Source Shijak Municipality)

### 3. EARTHQUAKE IMPACT

On November 26, 2019, at 03:54, Albania was hit by an earthquake, which was considered by national authorities to be the strongest to hit the country in the last 30 years. According to the Albanian Institute of Geophysics, Water and Energy, based on the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment Report in Albania (PDNA)<sup>7</sup>, the magnitude of the earthquake was 6.3 on the Richter scale at a depth of 38 kilometers. Its epicenter was 22 kilometers from Durres and 30 kilometers from Tiranë, and the main damages occurred in 11 municipalities of Albania, where Tiranë and Durres were the most affected municipalities, followed by the municipalities of Shijak, Mirditë, Lezhë, Kurbin, Kamëz, Vorë, Kavajë and Rogozhinë. The tremors were felt nearly 370 kilometers from the quake's epicenter. Between November 26 and 29, 17 more earthquakes with magnitudes above 4 on the Richter scale were recorded.

Based on the PDNA report, after the assessment, it is estimated that the total impact of the disaster in all affected municipalities amounts to 985.1 million Euros, of which, 843.9 million Euros represent the value of destroyed physical assets and 141.2 million Euros the value of losses. These data are summarized in table 4 and figure 19 below:

Sector	Damages	Losses	Total
Education	63.59	8.76	72.35
Health	8.02	1.91	9.93
Housing (Buildings)	662.30	34.00	696.30
Infrastructure	30.41	3.01	33.42
Production	70.82	79.66	150.48
Social Protection	0.00	0.62	0.62
Civil Protection	8.75	13.22	21.97
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>843.89</b>	<b>141.18</b>	<b>985.07</b>

Table 4: Damages and Losses in Million Euros by sectors at Republic level. Source PDNA

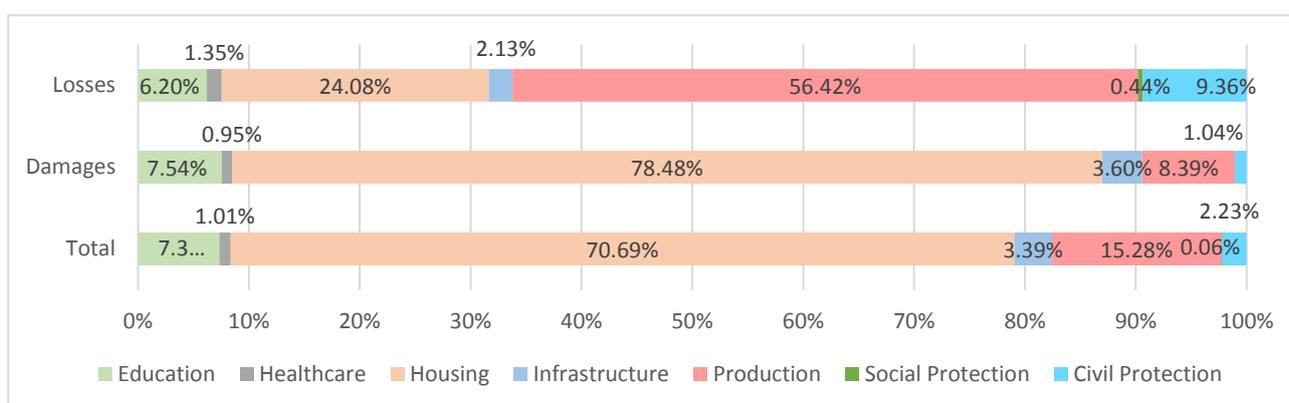


Figure 19: Specific Weight of Injuries and Losses by sectors at Republic level. Source PDNA

7 [https://albania.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/no.4-Albania Post-Disaster Needs Assessment \(PDNA\) Volume A Report 20 February 2020.pdf](https://albania.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/no.4-Albania Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) Volume A Report 20 February 2020.pdf)

As can be seen from the data presented above, the **Housing Sector** accounts for the majority of claims, with 78.5%, followed by the **Manufacturing Sector** with 8.4% and the **Education Sector** with 7.5%. Meanwhile, in terms of losses, the Manufacturing sector occupies the largest share (56.4%), followed by the Housing sector (24.1%) and the Civil Protection Sector and the Disaster Risk Reduction sector (9.4%). Based on the same report, "Damage is defined as the cost of repairing or rebuilding infrastructure or physical assets that are partially or completely destroyed. Losses are changes in economic flows, expressed as the value of output of goods and services (income or losses in kind), as well as changes in production costs (such as output decline and higher than normal cost of production)) as well as unexpected additional costs."

Based on the sectoral assessments, reflected in the PDNA report and with their accuracy confirmed by the information provided by the municipalities, the two basic sectors of the economy, after the houses (which account for 70% of the earthquake damages), the most damaged are the infrastructure and that of production, including buildings. Figures 20 and 21 are presenting data in% according to subsectors where the losses and damages are seen in these two sectors.

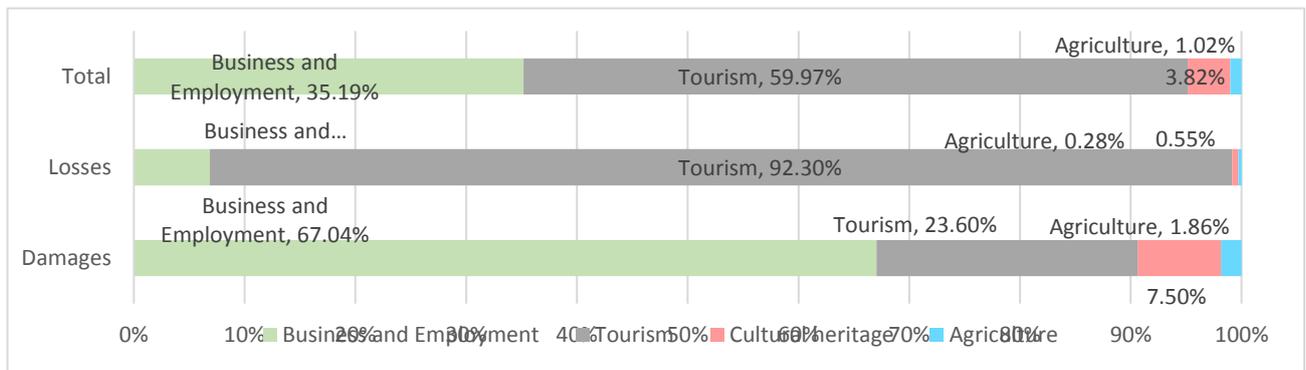


Figure 20: Specific Weight of Injuries and Losses by production subsector. (Source PDNA)

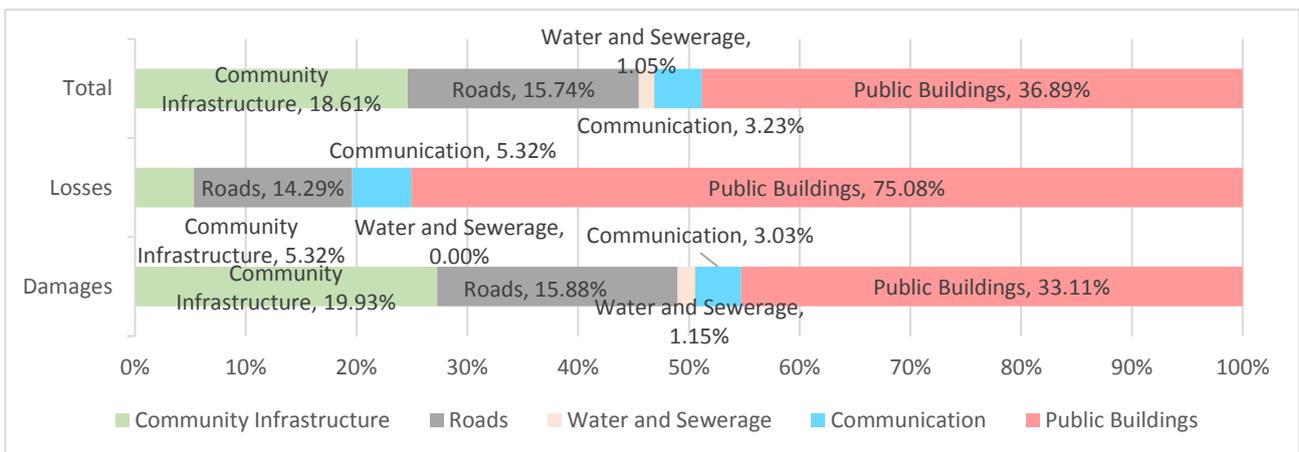


Figure 21: Specific Weight of Damages and Losses by Infrastructure subsector. (Source PDNA)

Finally, the total number of people who have lost or their homes were severely damaged is estimated to be around 204,000 people in the eleven municipalities. The following graph shows the distribution of the affected population by municipalities:

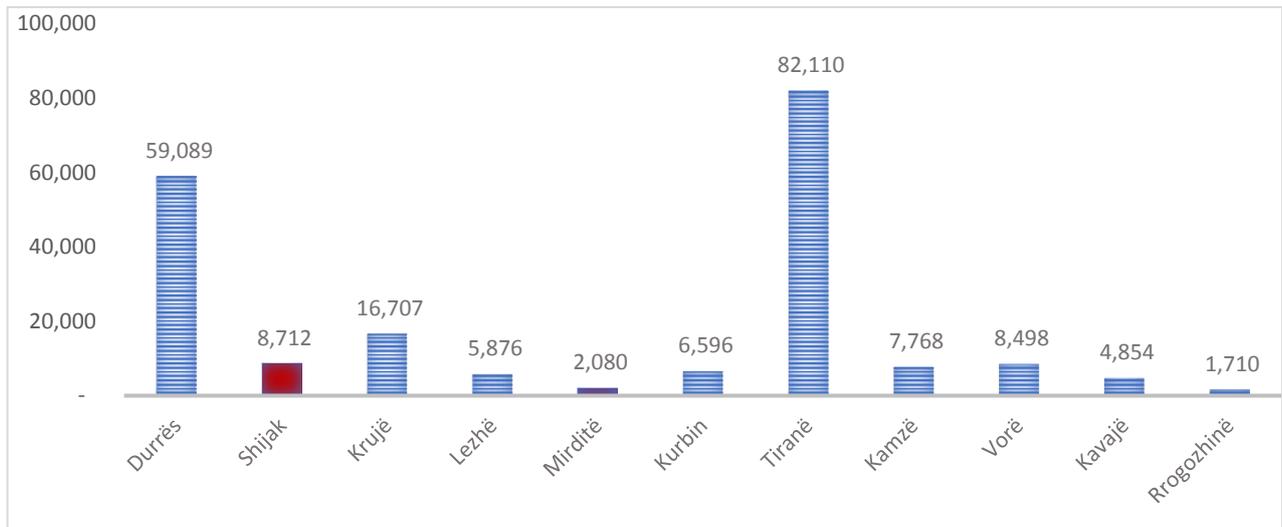


Figure 22: Number of populations whose dwellings have been damaged or destroyed by Municipalities. (Source PDNA and municipalities)

As it appears from the data in figure 15 in the Municipality of Shijak we have a number of 8,712 inhabitants affected by the earthquake, approximately 4% of the total population affected. In relation to the resident population, the number of affected persons is about 18% of the total population, which is considerable for this municipality and ranks it as the fourth most affected municipality among the 11 affected municipalities.

As mentioned above, the financial losses in damages are estimated at 985.07 million Euros. From this point of view, the Municipality of Shijak with 64.98 million losses and damages is classified as the 5th damaged municipality. Figure 23 presents the values of losses and damages for each municipality in absolute values.

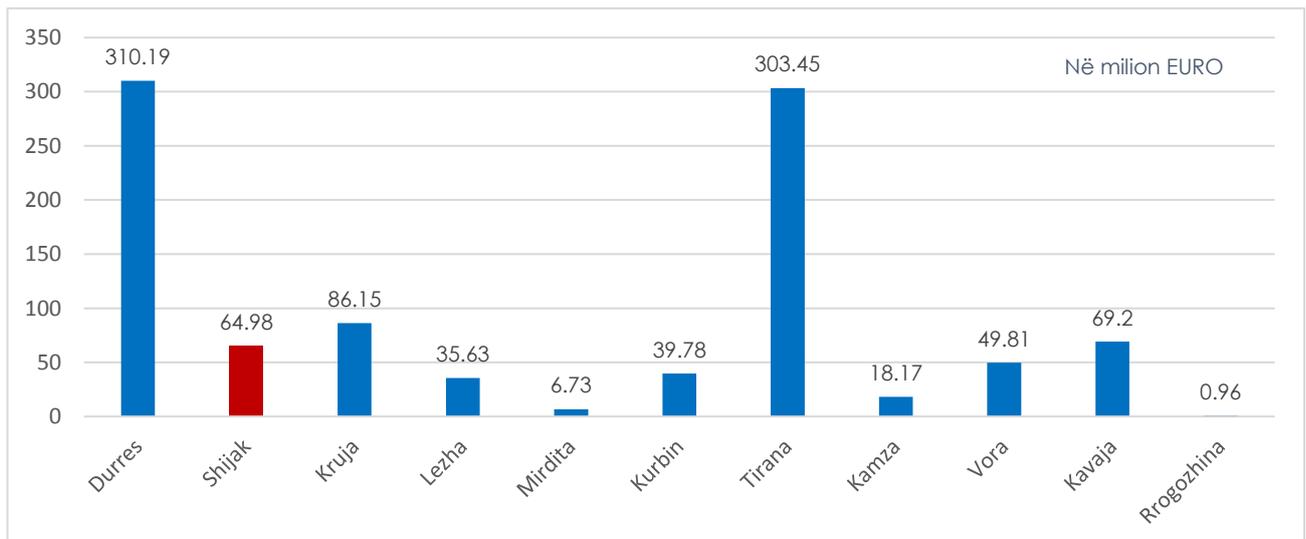


Figure 23: Financial damages in damages and losses by Municipalities. (Source PDNA and Municipalities)

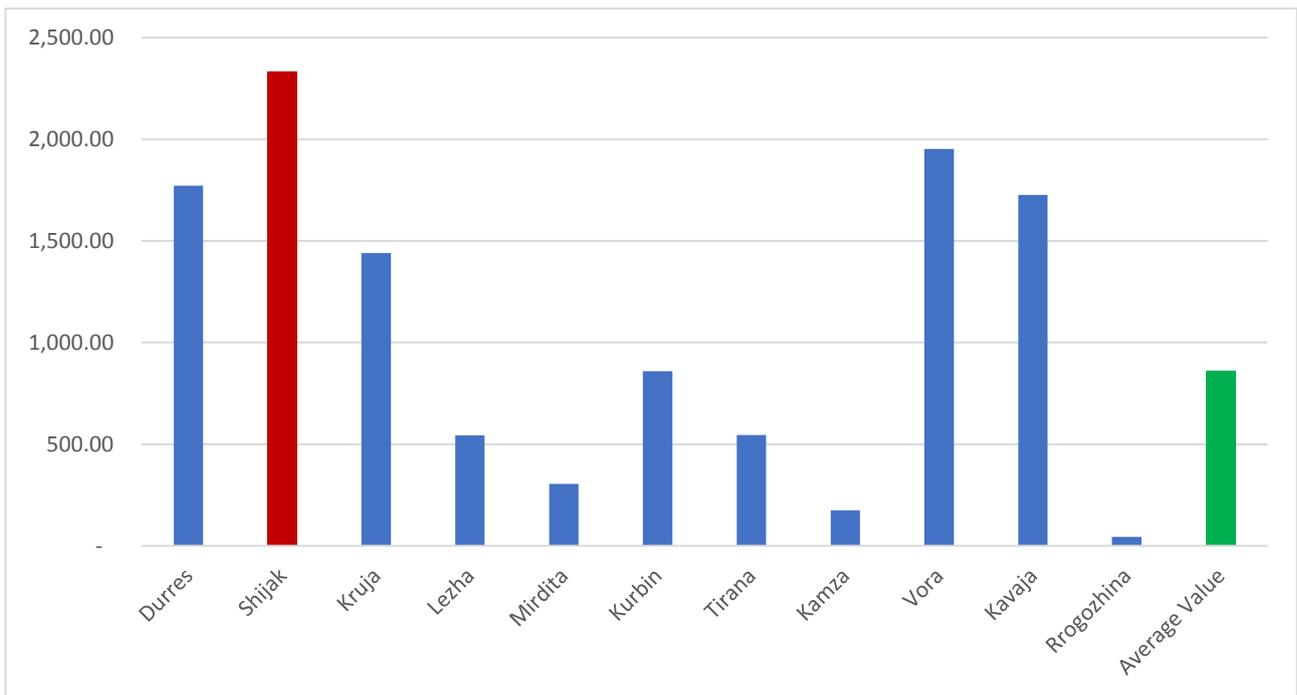


Figure 24: Financial damages in damages and losses per capita by Municipalities. Source PDNA and Municipalities

Calculating the losses per capita of the resident population, it is ranked 1st, well above the national average. Figure 24 presents the values of losses and damages for each municipality as well as the national average per capita of the resident population.

In the Municipality of Shijak, from the total effect of damages and losses of 64.98 million Euros, the housing sector is the most affected with 52.91 million Euros or 81%, followed by the production and education sector with approximately 5.36 and 2.04 million Euros or 8% and 4%. Fortunately, the health sector in this municipality did not suffer any losses or damages. The Civil Protection and DRR sectors have suffered losses or damages at the amount of 2.3 million Euros or 4%. Regarding the Housing sector, damages include damaged buildings as well as losses in interior equipment. The total earthquake damage in Albania in this sector amounts to 662.3 million Euros, while for the Municipality of Shijak these damages are estimated at

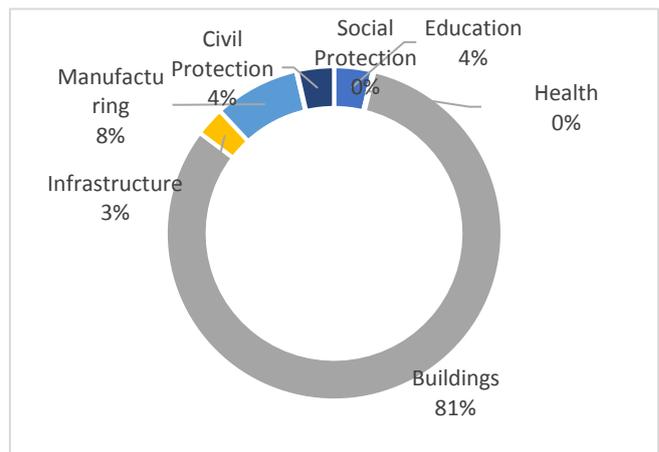


Figure 25: Financial losses by sectors in the Municipality of Shijak. Source PDNA and Shijak Municipality

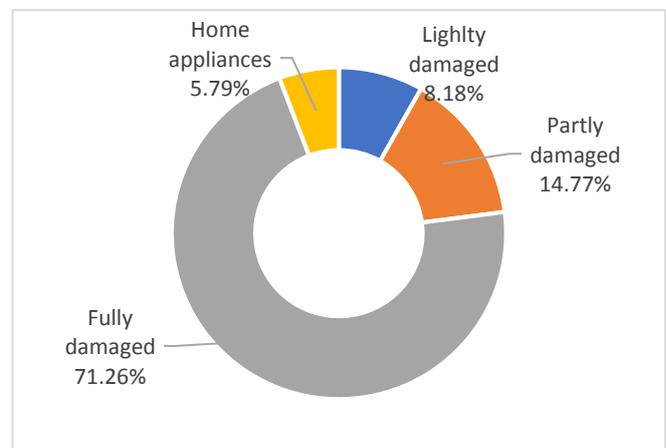


Figure 26: Financial damages of the Housing Sector by type of damage. Source PDNA and Shijak Municipality

64.98 million Euros, almost 9% of the losses of this sector. Figure 18 shows the distribution by type of damage.

Total damages and losses of the manufacturing sector, which includes the sub-sectors of Business and Employment, Tourism, Cultural Heritage and Agriculture, in the Municipality of Shijak are worth of 5.3 million Euros.

### Earthquake damage analysis and accommodation needs analysis.

In the Municipality of Shijak, the great tremors of the earthquake of November 26, 2019 caused lots of damages to administrative buildings. Once the damages were identified and assessed the Municipality of Shijak proceeded with the reconstruction process. For this purpose, was developed the Mandatory Local Plan (MLP), approved by the National Territorial Council with Decision no. 296, dated 20.05.2021.

This MLP enables:

- a) Development and / or re-development of a damaged area by a natural disaster:
- b) Development of a new area to meet the housing needs of families affected by the disaster
- c) Construction of public infrastructures

Work has begun for the construction of residential buildings as follows:

- Individual residences 12

Divided by size / structure, the residential buildings are grouped as follows:

No. ordinal	Apartment structure	Number
1	Residences with structure for 1-2 members	149
2	Residences with structure for 2-3 members	224
3	Residences with structure for 4+ members	131

## 4. ANALYSIS OF VALUE CHAINS IN SHIJAK MUNICIPALITY

Economic growth and the markets that enable it are one of the best-proven drivers in reducing poverty. Markets are the main means through which women and men participate in economic activities. However, the assumption that markets and economic growth work in everyone's favor does not mean that all types of economic growth lead to equal results. Gender discrimination may mean that the benefits of economic growth are concentrated in the hands of experienced participants in the market systems, rather than in the hands of those who need them the most.

Where markets operate inclusively, they serve both women and men by providing them the means such as jobs, opportunities, skills, financial resources and services to increase their income. The roles of women in value chains are essential for the development of market systems, especially for rural and agricultural value chains, but that are also increasing in the manufacturing sector, in which women occupy the highest number in the "production line". Women and men can be involved in different stages of a value chain. In general, women's roles are less visible in the development process, although they often serve as the key link in which change, and improvement must take place in order for it to lead the chain development.

**Value Chain Development and Market System.** The gender-sensitive value chain and market system development can be used as effective frameworks to improve the productivity and competitiveness of the sector, and at the same time to reduce gender-based barriers that hinder women's full economic participation. Initiatives for the development of the market system should take into account from time to time the multiple roles of women and the systematic disadvantage, as well as take advantage of the possibilities of using remedial measures which actively promote the transformation of gender norms and equal opportunities for women.

Developing the value chain and the market system means performing actions that improve productivity and include value chains, as well as change the market's supporting functions and rules work to support the development of the value chain in the future. Approaches to market system development, such as value chain development, have been used to improve sector productivity and competitiveness, and to promote economic development. Markets serve as the main means by which women and men participate in the economic activity. The analysis and development of the value chain and the market system are increasingly being used as a way to identify effective strategies to support the poor. They aim to identify:

- *Appropriate intervention points to improve industries, so that they compete in domestic, regional and international markets; and*
- *Opportunities to improve the situation of disadvantaged persons in the value chain*

Despite the role that women have together with men in the realization of economic development, they are often excluded from the development, direction and decision-making concerning the value chains, as well as from the benefits that come as a result of the development of the market systems. This is partly due to the socio-economic status of women in their families and the community, but also due to the direct (and sometimes even

indirect) discrimination encountered in institutions that regulate and develop markets, such as governing units and sector representation organizations.

Gender-sensitive value chain analysis and development are an approach that helps achieve gender equality and broader goals in Albania, through the identification of value chain solutions that improve productivity. They reduce gender-related barriers, to achieve women's full participation and inclusion, and to promote equality between women and men. Table 5 highlights some of the benefits that come as a result of analyzing and developing the value chain according to gender sensitivity and the market system.

BENEFITS OF INTERVENTION WITH GENDER BASIS IN THE VALUE CHAIN			
ECONOMY	SOCIETY	FAMILY	WOMEN
More competition: all human resources of society are used.	Long-term development: investment in the education and health sectors of future generations.	Improving living conditions in the family, reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience.	Family contribution and household chores.
Higher productivity: manufacturers, mainly women in rural areas, can improve the quantity and product quality.	Economically secure and healthier society. More balanced roles and responsibilities of women and men resulting in lower gender discrimination.	Reducing the economic burden of men in their role as "single provider". More investment in children's education and health.	Self-realization, more trust, improved social capital. Increasing women's skills. Economic independence of women.
Highest demand: increasing spending power, stimulating domestic demand.	Strengthening the roles of women in sub-represented areas of society, such as political representation and decision-making.	Improving the common understanding between men and women about roles and responsibilities.	Higher productivity and income through access to investment and training.
The most powerful market ecosystem by offering enterprises higher support, productivity and competitiveness.	Strengthening legal and supportive functions for market systems, improving governance and stability.	Reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience, increasing social and health insurance coverage and pension benefits.	More formalized businesses and more fair and equal access to business development supporting services.

All the main economic sectors in the municipality of Shijak were initially assessed using the criteria of gender sensitivity analysis in value chains (GSVCA), among the most important of

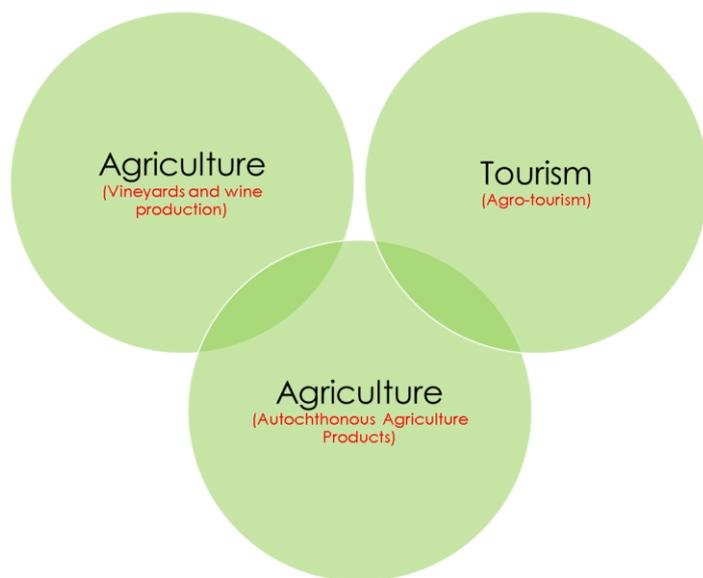
Table 5. Benefits of gender-based interventions in the value chain

which we mention:

- 1) *Is there a growing demand for the product?*
- 2) *Are women involved in the chain steps?*
- 3) *Do most of the chain steps happen in the municipality?*
- 4) *Are there any existing or recent initiatives to get involved in the value chain?*
- 5) *Are there development opportunities for the value chain?*
- 6) *Is there a connection between what women do and prospects for growth / diversification in the value chain?*

The main sectors that turned out to be most likely to be analyzed during the research work in the municipality of Shijak turned out to be as follows:

- Agriculture: Fruits and Vegetables
- Agriculture: Vineyards and Wine Production
- Tourism: Agritourism



Furthermore, in cooperation with the Municipality and groups of interest, a detailed assessment was conducted based on the six basic pre-defined criteria. After identifying the value chains or sub-chains, in the main sectors, discussions and suggestions led to the further presentation of problems, constraints, possible solutions, etc., which in a macro analysis are summarized in the table:

Figure 27. Identified Value Chains

Criteria	Agritourism	Agriculture (fruit and vegetables)	Vineyard and Wine Production
Is there a link between what women do and prospects for growth / diversification in the value chain?	Not exactly. Despite the natural attractions in the Municipality of Shijak, the growth prospects are not high due to more interest shown to coastal tourism.	Women are involved in family businesses and formal employment in this sector would be a good opportunity for them.	Women are involved in 50% of the activities, though informally, both in the family-owned vineyards and as informal employees at vineyards around the village.
Do women (or can they) acquire the skills needed to add value through product processing or diversification?	Women can gain the necessary skills, but this sector is perceived as attractive.	They can still acquire and improve their skills, especially skills related to the use of new technologies.	They possess some skills, mainly transmitted from other family members, but there is an opportunity to increase their skills, which is very necessary i
Does this value chain offer new opportunities for women?	Yes, because in addition to the cooking and cleaning they can do, they can also manage the reception or possible tours on the farm.	If steps are taken to modernize and increase interest in the sector, opportunities for women will also increase significantly.	If they were to acquire other skills, the value of in this sector would increase significantly.
Can this value chain improve living conditions for women / families?	Yes, if the employment rate in this sector will be high, but the sector is not attractive to them.	Yes, if the sector is formalized and the inclusion of women would be higher.	Considering profitability, women and families can improve their conditions if more involved.

Is there an organization in the value chain committed to supporting / representing value chain actors so that they can develop further?	Various donor-funded projects such as USAID, ADA, GIZ, etc., have repeatedly supported this sector. These donors have been present in Albania for decades and will continue their operations. With that said, EU-funded projects in cooperation with Municipality and establishment of new agritourism units is encouraged both by national strategies and the Decision of Council of Ministers on agritourism and its requirements.	Various donor-funded projects such as USAID, ADA, GIZ, etc., have repeatedly supported this sector. These donors have been present in Albania for decades and will continue their operations. With that said, EU-funded projects in cooperation with Municipality and local NGOs in Shijak: e.g., Association of Fruit and Vegetables of Xhafzotaj, Association "Vëllezërit Vora" and in nearby Durrës: Association "Bio-Ishmi", Association "Demokracia" <sup>8</sup>	There haven't been any NGOs supporting this sector; however, local organizations and associations exist, such as Association "Vëllezërit Vora" (viticulture); Association "Vreshtarët Koxhas" (viticulture), Association "Vreshtaria Kulla" <sup>9</sup>
Are there opportunities to make changes with small investments?	There are opportunities, especially in the transformation of wineries or even certain farms into real Agrotourism models.	There are various opportunities, especially in making the sector more attractive, changing people's mentality and investing in technology.	There are several possibilities, especially if relevant institutions and organizations contributing to the development of the sector.

Table 6 Ranking and Selection of Evaluation Chains, using the Gender Sensitivity Criterion

Based on the analysis of the Territorial Planning Development Plan of the country, the future of the Municipality of Shijak is related to the development of agriculture, livestock, trade and tourism industries. Shijak's geographical position between the two most important centers of the country, such as Tiranë and Durrës, makes it an area with a bright economic and social development perspective. The short distance to these two centers favors national and international trade exchanges. The establishment of several industrial businesses along the highway represents an increased potential for setting up storage and commercial facilities for agricultural and livestock products, as well as industrial products. Agriculture, including the entire territory of the municipality, is the main engine and economic direction in the Municipality of Shijak. We have carried out a more detailed analysis of these three main sub-sectors of agriculture for this municipality, namely, cultivation of Autochthonous Products, Viticulture and Wine Production and Agrotourism.

## 4.1 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VALUE CHAIN

### 4.1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION IN THE VC

The territorial area of Shijak Municipality is characterized by a very rich biodiversity, which requires a plan of measures to enable conservation by implementing some key principles such as sustainable development and the principle of environmental protection. The

8 <https://www.yumpu.com/xx/document/read/15569348/shoqatat-dhe-shoqerite-e-bashkepunimit-bujqesor>  
9 Ibid.

existence of natural areas, especially the hilly ones, in this territory has a positive impact on the preservation of diversified biodiversity in these areas. The Ministry of Environment includes the area of Durrës Municipality on the border with those of Shijak Municipality (mainly Administrative Units Rrashbull, Xhafzotaj, Manëz and Sukth) in the General Local Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment, in which environmental problems that have an impact on biodiversity of these Municipalities have been identified.

Regarding the types of autochthonous resources of this area, it is noticed that in this territory farmers have autochthonous varieties of many plant products, which are evaluated and classified by the Genetic Bank of Albania. The values of these autochthonous resources are well-known and are in demand by the consumers of Tiranë and Durrës.

**Vegetables** in general are important cultures for this municipality. They are planted both in the open field and in protected (covered) areas. In 2020, in the Municipality of Shijak were planned 703 ha of land, of which a total production of 20,463 tons was realized. These products are important for the local market of this municipality.

Such large area with vegetables is because to the very favorable conditions that these crops find in this area, both agro-climatic and the tradition of farmers in this district.

Regarding the period of planting vegetable plants, the farmers of Shijak Municipality plant more first crop vegetables and a small area is planted with second vegetable crops. Specifically, last year 219 ha were planted or an addition of only 45 ha compared to the previous year, a total production of 5,420 tons was realized which makes it 871 tons more than a year before. It should be noted that the conditions for the cultivation of second crop vegetables are quite good.

- **Fresh vegetables.** In 2020, in the Municipality of Shijak were planted 454 ha with vegetable crops that yielded a total production of 12,627 tons of raw vegetables, and namely:
  - ✓ *53 ha were planted with **tomatoes** and a total production of 2,689 tons was realized. The average yield realized this year was 50.77 ton / ha, which is a high yield and is above that of the national average.*
  - ✓ ***Cucumber** is the second crop in terms of planted area, where last year 25 ha were planted and a production of 958 tons was realized with an average yield of 38.17 ton / ha.*
  - ✓ ***Pepper** is another very important vegetable crop for Shijak farmers, last year 32 ha were planted with peppers and a total production of 891 tons of peppers was realized. The average yield was only 27.9 ton / ha, which is really an optimal yield referring to the real conditions offered by this area for the cultivation of vegetable crops.*
- **Dried vegetables.** The Municipality of Shijak has relatively good conditions for planting and production of dried vegetables, although in this district there is no consolidated tradition for their production. Specifically, the area planted with dried vegetables for the last year was only 37 ha, and a total production of 782 tons was realized, a production which has been around the same amounts for several years.

- **Melons.** Melon crop is not very popular for farmers in this area. Last year, 212 ha were planted with melon, and a total production of 7,054 tons was realized.
- **Greenhouses.** The Municipality of Shijak has very good conditions for the construction of greenhouses, both in terms of soil conditions, agro-climatic conditions but also due to the proximity to the main markets of the country. This has led many farmers or various investors to step in to invest in greenhouses in this district. Although there is more room for increasing the area of greenhouses in this district and farmers are aware of their benefits, the problem of finding sources of funding remains.

In 2020, in the Municipality of Shijak the area cultivated with vegetables in the greenhouses was 41 ha, an area that has remained unchanged in the recent years. The surface of the greenhouses is planted with both first and second vegetable crops, but it should be noted that most farmers prefer to plant the first crops and specifically last year were planted 24 ha with the first vegetable crops and 17 ha planted with second vegetable crops

**Orchards.** Fruit tree growing in the Municipality of Shijak is well-established and in this municipality, farmers have started to implement intensive agriculture for fruit production.

- **Fruit trees.** In the Municipality of Shijak, fruit trees for last year numbered 157 thousand trees, with 134 thousand of them in fruit-bearing phase. 25 thousand trees are still in the process of growth and this shows that the new plantings in this municipality are seen as a priority by farmers. These fruit trees are spread throughout the territory of the municipality, but the extensive orchards are mainly located in the hilly areas and in recent years farmers have begun to invest in establishing large orchards.

Fruit production in Shijak is relatively satisfying. Last year there was a total production of 2,773 tons with a relatively low yield of only 20.8 kg / tree.

- **Olives.** Olive is one of the oldest crops cultivated in this area, especially in the hills that start from the area of Ishëm up to Golem. In this area the olive is used for oil production as well as for preserving, mainly to meet the needs of the farming families themselves.

In the Municipality of Shijak there are a total of 129 thousand olive trees, of which only 107 thousand are fruit bearing, which shows that planting by farmers in recent years has continued. The total production is 2,638 tons. The yield of olives is relatively low and is likely to increase if the farmers use the updated technology correctly. Last year, an average yield of 24.6 kg / tree was achieved, which is much lower than the national average.

#### 4.1.2 OVERALL EVALUATION BASED ON BASIC CRITERIA

The assessment of women's empowerment and gender equality in the production chain of Agriculture (Fruit and Vegetables production), based on the expert analysis and discussions with groups of interest as well as the interviews with key actors, is presented in the table below.

Question	Points*	Weight	Total	Description
Is the participation of employed women in the value chain relatively high?	4	2	8	Yes, women are more involved than men, even though they are not formally registered (by law).
Are there many female entrepreneurs in the value chain?	3	2	6	Women are involved in the processes, but the decision-making authority and business owners are the men. This is rather a matter of mentality, as based on tradition; men are considered as the head of the family, who make decisions, are landowners and represent the family in relations with third parties.
Do women control / own equipment and assets?	2	2	4	The need for technology is low, except for a tractor for tillage, which in cases that is owned by the farm is controlled by men.
Do women (or can they) acquire the skills needed to add value through product processing or diversification?	4	1	4	Employees, and especially women, are usually trained in the processes, but there is still a need for training in support services, as well as storage and preparation of seedlings for the coming year. Having women expertly take care of seedlings part specifically would be an activity within the value chain that would empower the women in the area as they could get organized in a cluster that works specifically on seedlings, preservation of seedlings to ensure the sustainable development of the sector and women empowerment at the same time.
Do women have control over sales and enterprise revenue?	1	2	2	Men usually control the business, although women are involved in all processes. Revenues are controlled and managed by consensus among family members. Women are involved in budget planning for the family, specifically when it comes to essentials like food and children's needs.
Can work be located near home?	4	1	4	The work is located near the house, as the house is positioned close to working land
Is this a value chain with small barriers to entry for poor entrepreneurs (small scale of production, low initial cost, not requiring large capital investment, using low technology)?	3	1	3	Low access to financial resources due to informality, lack of information and low level of absorption of funds, create entry barriers for this VC Entering this sector in the role of a producer would require land ownership, cultivation skills, and an amount of money to secure inputs. Obstacles classified as relatively low.
Is this a value chain with low barriers to women's involvement (time and movement, access to technology and assets, cultural constraints)?	3	2	6	<p>It is more difficult for women to succeed as entrepreneurs in this business, given the obstacles mentioned. Poor or non-existent horizontal cooperation can be considered as one of the general obstacles. Among the gender specific barriers can be mentioned: Limited time, low access to property, low access to skills and training.</p> <p>As a positive factor we can mention: High participation and knowledge that women have in the agricultural sector, their desire and commitment, proximity to the workplace.</p>

Does this value chain offer new opportunities for women?	4	4	16	Women are involved in almost every activity, but agriculture as a sector is not getting the attention it deserves. With the increase in production and processing, especially of products typical for the zone, a high potential for women's work is created.
Is the activity in the value chain in line with living conditions (year-round income, use of domestic work, quick returns, keeping the environment intact)?	3	2	6	Overall, yes, but the actors are not satisfied with the level of performance of their business, and this is mainly attributed to the lack of financial incentives and support from various stakeholders in the sector.
Is there a connection between what women do and prospects for growth / diversification in the value chain?	4	1	4	Women are already involved in the sector and participate in almost all activities, but their involvement is not formalized. There are financing schemes for women small business owners in this sector.
Are there gender norms (for example "women's work") that prevent women from taking full advantage of value chain opportunities?	4	2	8	Women may not perform specific activities that require special physical skills, such as driving tractors and plowing. Also, not registering as an employee in the business prevents them from benefiting from all the opportunities.
<b>Total for gender potential</b>			<b>81/102</b>	

\* Points: 0 (very little, no, not at all) to 5 (very high, yes, very important).

Table 7. Assessment of women's empowerment and gender equality in Agricultural Products VC

### 4.1.3 SWOT ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VALUE CHAIN

Based on this assessment, we present a summary of the SWOT analysis for this sector.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS (FRUIT AND VEGETABLES) VALUE CHAIN	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Willingness to participate in trainings;</li> <li>▪ Willingness of the main VC actors to increase product quality;</li> <li>▪ Involvement of women in the whole process and awareness of their contribution;</li> <li>▪ Existence of typical varieties in these areas as well as very good knowledge for cultivation</li> <li>▪ Consumer demand for typical products of the zone is quite promising</li> <li>▪ Existence of a series of agritourism resorts in this territory</li> <li>▪ Agritourism of this area has extraordinary demands for these types of products, as this activity relies heavily on local products of the area.</li> <li>▪ Their cultivation is annual and creates opportunities for employment of farming families in this area and protects the land from the phenomenon of erosion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of financial resources and consequently lack of proper investments in technology and processing activities;</li> <li>▪ Lack of certification and safety and quality standards;</li> <li>▪ Informal operations in the market (unregistered businesses).</li> </ul>

- Proximity to large urban areas of Tiranë and Durres (1 hour), there are a series of shops in Tiranë and Durrës that are willing to sell these types of products

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunity to benefit from the IPARD financing scheme;</li> <li>▪ Increased demand for fruits and vegetables in the domestic and foreign markets.</li> <li>▪ Increasing demand as a result of population awareness of their values.</li> <li>▪ Support provided by the Ministry of Agriculture such as the development of sustainable agriculture.</li> <li>▪ Development of Agritourism in the area of Durres and Tiranë which requires these products for consumption</li> <li>▪ Existence of basic knowledge of farmers for the cultivation of these varieties and the desire of the younger generation to start agricultural businesses in terms of typical products of the area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of promotion and marketing strategies (regional brands);</li> <li>▪ Lack of information from main institutions regarding the plans and benefits of the sector;</li> <li>▪ Lack of attention from institutions towards the needs of the sector.</li> </ul>

Table 8. SWOT Analysis of Agricultural Products Value Chain

## 4.2 VINEYARDS AND WINE PRODUCTION SECTOR VALUE CHAIN

### 4.2.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION IN THE VC

The vineyards are another tradition of the farmers of this area and the processing of grapes in this area is quite old. In the Municipality of Shijak, as well as in the entire Region of Durrës, are found the largest massifs cultivated with vineyards, and among the best grape processing factories in the country that use the latest technology.

Currently in this Municipality of Shijak, there are a total of 196 ha planted with vineyards, of which 182 ha are fruit bearing. Last year, a total production of 2,455 tons of grapes was realized, which normally goes for processing, as the variety structure of this district is based on varieties for processing and not for the table. The realized yield of the vineyards is in optimal values and last year an average yield of 135 kv / ha was realized. Moreover, in Shijak, in recent years some farmers have started and invested in the cultivation of table grapes.

In addition to the production of grapes coming from the lots planted with grapevines, the production of grapes in this district is also realized through pergolas. The pergolas in this district account for a total of 75 thousand grapevines, all fruit-bearing and realizing a total production of 1,118 tons of grapes. The average yield per grapevine of these pergolas is estimated to be only about 15 kg / grapevine.

In the Municipality of Shijak, the production of grapes is an ancient tradition; this area has historically been one of the most productive areas of high-quality wine. The wine produced in this area has always been sold in Italy where it has found a safe market due to its high

quality. Even during the communist period, this has been one of the most productive and traditional areas in our country. Maminas vineyards have been one of the most popular areas of the country in terms of table grapes production as well as wine. This area has been designed and planted since the time of Italian invasion and further developed over the first decades of the communism era by the Albanian agricultural specialists.

Even during the period of democracy, except for the trauma suffered during the first years of the change of ownership, the area of vineyards in this zone has increased significantly. This makes this district unique from many other areas of the country, because all the grapes produced in this area generally comes from family orchards and pergolas. This product goes mainly for processing, as the varietal structure of this area is based on qualities for processing and not for the table.

**Vineyards and wine production industry.** Grape processing is a well-known and traditional industry in Albania. In the current market, in addition to local food and wine products produced in factories and wineries spread throughout Albania, there are also various brands of imported wine, mainly Italian, French, as well as those coming from the region such as those of Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo etc. Seen in this context, the development of this industry in the country requires a special attention and is quite complex in terms of grape varieties produced in the Albanian vineyards of the range of drinks according to the varieties supplied in the market with different brand names.

Therefore, the development of viticulture in the municipality of Shijak should always be seen in the context of the development of the country and never separated from it, since it acts as a global sector and never as a regional sector.

Despite that, although with small areas of vineyards, in this territory are located some of the largest and most modern grape processing wineries of the country, which are national frontrunners. Among the main ones we can mention:

- *"Bardha" canteen is among 2-3 wineries that produces the highest quality wine in the country. This winery is focused in the production and trade of alcoholic beverages, especially quality wine. This winery is also the main exporter of the country in this sector.*



Figure 28. Bardha canteen vineyards

- *"Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbeu" beverage canteen* was founded in 1933 in the Sukth area. Deals with the production and marketing of alcoholic beverages, wine, non-alcoholic beverages; import-export of its products etc. Beverage Canteen "Gjergj Kastrioti

Skënderbeu" in addition to cultivating grapes in the Arapaj area, is also using about 25 ha of land in the Marikaj area where are cultivated different grape varieties such as: Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, Primitivo, Chardonnay, Shesh i Bardhë, Shesh i Zi etc.

**Regionalism.** This specific area of the municipality of Shijak, as we described above, is part of the areas with the best reputation for quality wines in all of Albania.

Right next to this municipality is the area of Sheshi village of Tiranë, after which derives the name of the well-known variety of Autochthonous grapes Shesh i Zi and Shesh i Bardhe, which is cultivated with great success in many areas of the municipality of Shijak and all of Albania. The hills of this municipality are planted with vineyards and olive groves. We encounter this phenomenon in some other areas of the country, and farmers see the cultivation of grapes as a profitable crop, through which they can ensure their family income. This is due to the fact that they have a safe market for their production, as the largest grape processing factories in the country are located nearby, especially in Municipality of Durres.

**Vineyards Cultivation.** In the municipality of Shijak there is a variety of cultivars:

- *Sheshi i bardhe and Sheshi i zi* are the most important local varieties for wine production. The name comes from the hilly village Shesh which is located 15 km away from Tiranë and from where it was spread out in many coastal regions of Albania, it makes up for about 35% of the grapes processed for wine production.
- *Pulesi* is the most important variety of white grapes of the regions of Permet, Berat, Skrapar and Mallakastrë. Gives wines with high alcohol content.
- *Cabernet* is a foreign cultivar that has started to be cultivated mainly after the 90s. It is black grape and gives quality wines.
- *San Giovese* is a variety of Italian origin that has recently arrived and is being preferred by Shijak farmers, as it has a ruby red color and gives wines with a high percentage of alcohol.
- *Chardonnay, Riesling, Petit Verdon, Shiraz (in test), etc.* They are varieties that have the smallest presence in the territory of this municipality.

**Grape producers and processors.** The main actors in the production and processing of grapes in this district, unlike almost all other districts of our country, are the industrial wine processors. After them there are the farmers who cultivate grapes and who process grapes to make wine and brandy for their family needs as well as for their sale.

- **Farmers.** Most agricultural farms in the municipality of Shijak, as everywhere in Albania, are mixed farms, farms that produce for self-consumption and sale. Most farms cultivate grapes. The number of market-oriented farmers (farmers with vineyards larger than 0.5 ha), although not large, it is significant compared to many other municipalities in our country. These farms are always very market oriented. It should be noted that the number of farms that cover all their needs only from the activity of cultivating vineyards is still low. The main assets of a typical market-oriented farmer are vineyards, irrigation systems (well irrigation and drip irrigation system which has recently started to be applied almost everywhere in all administrative units of Shijak municipality) and sometimes agricultural machinery (tractors and sprinkler pumps).

- **Processing farmers.** Farmers in this district process significant quantities of grapes to produce brandy and / or wine. Almost 2/3 of farmers use more than half of the grapes production to make brandy. More than half of the farmers process more than 60% of grapes in brandy and 31% of farmers process in brandy more than 2/3 of grapes (more than 70%). This is due to tradition, and on the other hand, due to the fact that brandy is much easier to produce and store, and it is the dominant grape by-product compared to wine.

Meanwhile, on-farm wine production is low and declining. This significant reduction of the on-farm wine production confirms the tendency of consumers to buy higher quality imported wine (as shown by import statistics) and domestic wine produced in some specific wineries.

The technology of the on-farm wine production is usually primitive and basic; often the wine produced is stored in plastic containers and sold in plastic bottles.

#### 4.2.2 GENERAL EVALUATION BASED ON BASIC CRITERIA

The evaluation of women's empowerment and gender equality in the Viticulture and Grape Processing value chain, based on expert analysis and discussions with stakeholders and interviews with key actors is presented in the table below:

Question	Points*	Weight	Total	Description
Is the participation of employed women in the value chain relatively high?	2	2	4	In viticulture and grape processing women are involved in many processes, mainly harvesting and pre-processing. They are not formally registered (by law).
Are there many female entrepreneurs in the value chain?	2	2	4	Entrepreneurship is still considered a men's field due to cultural constraints and mentality. Men are also landowners and represent the family in relations with third parties. However, the situation is changing, also grant programs give a greater priority to women entrepreneurs, which is soon expected to lead to the establishment of new women-led businesses.
Do women control / own equipment and assets?	2	2	4	Equipment and assets are owned by men; however, women have access to and control over them. The need for technology is low.
Do women (or can they) acquire the skills needed to add value through product processing or diversification?	3	1	3	Employees, and especially women, need training in support services, as well as the implementation of new wine processing technologies.
Do women have control over sales and enterprise revenue?	2	2	4	Men usually control the business, although women are involved in all processes. Revenues are controlled and managed by consensus among family members. Women are involved in budget planning for the family, specifically when it comes to essentials like food and children's needs.
Can work be located near home?	4	1	4	The work is located near the house, as the house is positioned close to the farm land. Therefore, it's convenient for women to combine work on the land with house chores.

Is this a value chain with small barriers to entry for poor entrepreneurs (small scale of production, low initial cost, not requiring large capital investment, using low technology)?	3	1	3	Low access to financial resources due to informality, lack of information and low level of absorption of funds, create entry barriers for VC. Entering this sector in the role of a producer would require land ownership, cultivation skills, and an amount of money to secure inputs. Obstacles that are classified into relatively medium.
Is this a value chain with low barriers to women's involvement (time and movement, access to technology and assets, cultural constraints)?	3	2	6	It is more difficult for women to succeed as entrepreneurs in the production of Wine, given the mentality that exists for the production of alcoholic beverages. Gender-specific barriers include: Limited time, Low access to property, Low access to skills and training, etc.  As a positive factor we can mention: High participation of women in the agricultural sector, Their desire and commitment, Proximity to the workplace.
Does this value chain offer new opportunities for women?	3	4	12	Women are involved in almost every agricultural activity, but this sector is still not getting the attention it deserves. The sector offers great opportunities for women and girls to be fully integrated into it.
Is the activity in the value chain in line with living conditions (year-round income, use of domestic work, quick returns, keeping the environment intact)?	2	2	4	Overall, yes, but the actors are not satisfied with the level of performance of their business, and this is mainly attributed to the lack of financial incentives and support from various stakeholders in the sector.
Is there a connection between what women do and prospects for growth / diversification in the value chain?	4	1	4	Women are involved and can be involved in various processes. By improving skills and knowledge, women can drive sector growth.
Are there gender norms (for example "women's work") that prevent women from taking full advantage of value chain opportunities?	3	2	6	Women may not perform specific activities that require special physical skills, such as driving tractors or transporting, plowing. Also, not registering as an employee in the business, prevents them from taking advantage of all the opportunities.
<b>Total for gender potential</b>	<b>58/102</b>			

\* Points: 0 (very little, no, not at all) to 5 (very high, yes, very important). s

Table 9. Assessment of women's empowerment and gender equality for Viticulture and Wine Production VC

### 4.2.3 ANALYSIS OF VITICULTURE AND WINE PRODUCTION VALUE CHAIN

Given the current situation of viticulture, grape production and wine in our country described above, the evaluation of this VC presents a summary of SWOT analysis for this sector.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF VITICULTURE AND WINE PRODUCTION VALUE CHAIN	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES

- Suitable climatic conditions for the cultivation of viticulture
- Rich historical tradition in grape cultivation and wine production dating back to the Illyrian period
- Cultivation of prominent varieties of viticulture used in quality wine products, such as Kallmet, Sheshi i Zi, Shesh i Bardhë, etc.
- Employment and income in the viticulture and wine production sector are higher and more stable than in some other agricultural sectors and crops.
- The division of agricultural land into small and fragmented plots hinders the investments needed to increase the competitiveness of production.
- Lack of technological infrastructure for wine production.
- The reluctance of local farmers to join in the production of a standard joint product.
- Lack of financial funds and real difficulties in securing loans with favorable conditions for viticulture.
- Lack of state subsidies for the viticulture sector and wine production, and moreover high excise.
- Production is quantity oriented (poor quality - low price).
- From the interviews with the consumers, it appears that the cheaper wine packages turn out to be of a poor quality, and as a result this product does not stimulate the consumption of wine by the general population.
- Lack of qualified managerial staff and genuine specialists in the wine production sector
- Lack of proper scientific studies for the viticulture and wine market.

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Despite the fact that currently the area of land planted with vineyards is 196 ha; the unused area is a potential motivating factor for increasing the productivity of vineyards and wine in this municipality.</li> <li>▪ The initial investment in viticulture does not represent a high cost, compared to the initial investment in other agricultural crops.</li> <li>▪ The timely return coefficient of the initial investment is low, so the investment returns very quickly.</li> <li>▪ The increase of areas with viticulture will create new opportunities for entering the market with the production of industrialized wine.</li> <li>▪ The commitment of the government through concrete legal and fiscal measures to formalize the market as a whole as well as to classify wine as a common food product excluding it from excise.</li> <li>▪ The development of agricultural sector being a priority of the current government program represents an important factor that will affect the increase of support with financial funds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Excessive supply coming from the global wine market.</li> <li>▪ Change in the culture of wine consumption.</li> <li>▪ The pressure put in the market by importing companies on domestic production.</li> <li>▪ Competition from the countries of the region is high, which offer wines where quality is combined in a profitable balance with the price of wine.</li> <li>▪ Existence of a large number of informal producers who not only harm the fair competition in the market, but offer in the market counterfeit wines.</li> <li>▪ Lack of loans with favorable conditions for viticulture and wine production.</li> </ul>

Table 9. SWOT Analysis of Viticulture and Wine Production Value Chain.

## 4.3 AGROTOURISM VALUE CHAIN

### 4.3.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION IN THE VC

In the Municipality of Shijak, mainly in the last 10 years, Agritourism has been progressing successfully. The landscape of Shijak with many hills and vineyards, has enabled the establishment of a series of agritourism businesses, which either started as recreational areas that provided absolute tranquility and various activities for all age groups, or were built near wineries initially as wine tasting facilities and over the time became a complete agritourism destination. As a successful business model, investments in agritourism are becoming attractive to many individuals; especially those set up and run by locals living in the village. Their services are provided all days of the week, no longer focusing only on weekends. Media promotion and fiscal facilities have boosted their development. The Ministry of Tourism says that currently 13 agritourism businesses have been certified, while 4 others are still in process.

This business model is helping rural economies. Among the most important resorts we can mention Agrotourism Gjepali. Gjepalaj village is located south of Shijak, a small town near Durrës, characterized by the typical communist-era, blocks of residential brick buildings mixed with traditional small family houses. While the rest of Gjepalaj village is located on top of a small hill, Gjepali farm restaurant is located in the east of the village, in a river loop surrounded by nature, without houses near it. The Italian influence on the life of the owner is manifested in the architecture of the newly built restaurant and guesthouse, which is created in the style of a typical Tuscan villa. The number of customers and visitors staying overnight in Agrotourism Gjepali since its opening in April 2019 is astonishing.

Question	Points*	Weight	Total	Description
Is the participation of employed women in the value chain relatively high?	3	2	6	In agritourism, women are involved in many processes (cooking, service, hospitality, etc.). As for the typology of Agritourism in Shijak, they are qualitative and women are mainly employed.
Are there many female entrepreneurs in the value chain?	2	2	4	No. Entrepreneurship is still considered a men's field due to cultural constraints and mentality. Men are also landowners and represent the family in relations with third parties.
Do women control / own equipment and assets?	2	2	4	The equipment and assets are owned by the agritourism executives. Women are employed.
Do women (or can they) acquire the skills needed to add value through product processing or diversification?	3	1	3	Women are becoming more and more aware of the importance of farm diversification by adding the agritourism component. There is a high willingness to learn about agritourism management, proper hospitality, English language skills, on-farm tours, off-farm tours in attractive surrounding areas, etc.
Question	Points*	Weight	Total	Description
Do women have control over sales and enterprise revenue?	3	2	6	Men usually control the business, although women are involved in all processes. Women are involved in budget planning for the family,

				specifically when it comes to essentials like food and children's needs.
Can work be located near home?	3	1	3	The work is located near the house, as the house is positioned close to the agrotourism facilities.
Is this a value chain with small barriers to entry for poor entrepreneurs (small scale of production, low initial cost, not requiring large capital investment, using low technology)?	2	1	2	No, there are some legal barriers to entering this value chain. Initial costs are high. Based on various studies and estimates, about 50 thousand EUROS would be needed to transform the assets and the old apartment into a building with traditional renovated architecture. Given the opportunities available for grants, this investment would be unaffordable for many families in the Municipality of Shijak.
Is this a value chain with low barriers to women's involvement (time and movement, access to technology and assets, cultural constraints)?	3	2	6	There are no specific restrictions that prevent women from entering the VC. Women are involved in daily farming activities, traditional cooking for family and tourists, and other activities.
Does this value chain offer new opportunities for women?	3	4	12	Agrotourism activity is considered as a diversification activity for farms; thus, in the period of low sales in agriculture, farms can compensate for this effect by providing accommodation services and cooking for tourists. Agrotourism can provide sufficient income for families during most of the year, especially in the winter season, where coastal tourism does not work.
Is the activity in the value chain in line with living conditions (year-round income, use of domestic work, quick returns, keeping the environment intact)?	3	2	6	Overall, yes, but the actors are not satisfied with the level of performance of their business, and this is mainly attributed to the lack of financial incentives and support from various stakeholders in the sector.
Is there a connection between what women do and prospects for growth / diversification in the value chain?	3	1	3	Women are involved and can be involved in various processes. By improving skills and knowledge, women can drive sector growth.
Are there gender norms (for example "women's work") that prevent women from taking full advantage of value chain opportunities?	3	2	6	Housework and childcare take up considerable time and often deprives women of taking full advantage of value chain opportunities. However, the short distance from home offers opportunities for women to play an important role in this sector.
<b>Total for gender potential</b>		<b>61/102</b>		

\* Points: 0 (very little, no, not at all) to 5 (very high, yes, very important).

Table 10. Assessment of women's empowerment and gender equality of Agrotourism VC

### 4.3.2 SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE AGRITOURISM VALUE CHAIN

SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE AGRITOURISM VALUE CHAIN	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area based on agriculture and livestock;</li> <li>Good geographical location, which brings high opportunities for environmental tourism</li> <li>Tradition of hospitality and cooking;</li> <li>Realized investments in agricultural farms and their marketing, low-cost services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of experience and business management skills in agritourism;</li> <li>Lack of specific training programs for agritourism management.</li> <li>Poor road infrastructure and poor public transport in rural areas;</li> <li>Poor access to financial resources.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High priority in the Government Agenda (100 villages program);</li> <li>Investment funds provided by various grant programs (ARDA, IPARD, other)</li> <li>Increasing demand for agritourism experience from both domestic and foreign tourists;</li> <li>Employment opportunities for women and youth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Property rights issues can hamper investment;</li> <li>Mismanagement of waste in rural areas;</li> <li>Growing trend of young people leaving rural areas for a better life in big cities.</li> </ul>

Table 11. SWOT Analysis of the Agritourism Value Chain

## 4.4 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis of the above three sectors, using the criteria of gender sensitivity value chains analysis (GSVCA) we have the following evaluation of situation:

ANALYZED SECTOR	POINTS	NOTES
Viticulture and wine production Value Chain	56	Requires significant funding for required investments in technology and mainly in processing activity. It is therefore a long-term intervention and not with high guarantees of success.
Agricultural Products (Fruit and Vegetables) Value Chain	81	Climatic conditions and very good tradition. The developed Agritourism sector demands more and more local high-quality products. Rising consumer demand and proximity to the two largest markets, Tiranë and Durrës.  The investments are not very big.
Agritourism Value Chain	61	The agritourism units that have already been built in this area required substantial funding to invest, there are property rights problems and poor public transport in rural areas which hinder investment.

Table 12. SWOT Analysis of Agritourism Value Chain

In the following chapter we will analyze in detail the Value Chain in the Sector of Agricultural Products (Fruit and Vegetables).

## 5. ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VALUE CHAIN

### 5.1 DETAILED OVERVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VC

The sustainable development of “typical” agricultural resources, ensure the preservation of these plant resources with great value both for agricultural production and above all that natural wealth created over many years, which has been used by many ancestral generations. The use of biodiversity of the agricultural resources of this area for economic and profitable purposes is one of the assets of the development of local and national economies.

The conservation of the biodiversity of the typical agricultural products at the global and regional level is supported from the legislative point of view by a series of international conventions in which our country is participating. At the national level, Albania has drafted the National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity Conservation.

The general analysis of the situation of agricultural resources in the territory of the Municipality of Shijak is based on the physical-climatic features of the territory, of which we can mention:

- **The terrain:** This territory is mainly made up of flat and hilly areas sitting at a low altitude above sea level. The majority of the territory is dominated by hilly terrain, the flat area is mainly around the Erzeni river valley and all these lands are very fertile due to their alluvial properties.
- **Climate:** characterized by typical Mediterranean climate, with hot and dry summers and relatively mild and wet rainy winters. Climatic conditions are formed under the action of a number of factors. In this respect we can list:
  - ✓ Low plain terrain, which affects temperatures, precipitation, winds, etc;
  - ✓ High mountain relief in the east, from where cold winds blow;
  - ✓ Costal influence from the west and southwest, but also the influence of the hilly terrain
- **Solar activity:** Based on the official data of INEUM, this area gets over 2500 hours of sunshine per year.
- **Air:** Air quality in this area is generally considered within EU standards, as indicated in the National Report on the State of the Environment 2020. From the monitoring data it is noticed that the air quality is within the allowed EU standards and consequently the potentials of vegetation growth in this region are significant.
- **Winds:** The wind regimen is closely related to the season, the direction they come from as well as the influence of the Adriatic Sea. The direction of the winds varies depending on the closeness to the sea, the direction of the Erzen river valleys as well as the characteristics of the terrain.
- **Air temperature and precipitation:** Plant growth and development are related to temperature and other physiological processes (respiration, evaporation, photosynthesis, etc.). In general, the optimal temperature of the region is very suitable for the plant development. As mentioned above, in addition to the optimum temperature, plants can also endure low (minimum) or high (maximum) temperatures.

The average temperature is around 14.8°C. The Adriatic Sea brings a calming effect, both on the cold winter climate and the hot summer. This area gets on average about 1250 mm of precipitation/year, which is almost all in the form of rain and rarely small amounts of snow fall during the winter period.

Typical of this area there are a series of autochthonous products, among which we can mention:

- **Cow-Heart Tomato-**, which is large tomato with a pink to red color and which has a characteristic aroma. This tomato that is planted by the farmers of this area is in high demand in the markets of Tiranë and Durres, but it is difficult to meet the demands for those markets.
- **Pepper-** which also has a typical aroma and although it is not very large its characteristic aroma is well-known.
- **Cucumber-** is another vegetable with special values, not large in size, but firm and with lots of juice inside.
- **Eggplant-** is a relatively small size vegetable and virtually without any pulp, but is quite nutritional. It has a dark red color and has a characteristic aroma. It is in high demand by consumers.
- **Okra-** It is also one of the most widely grown vegetables in the area. Its characteristic is the really small and long-tailed fruit. But the positive feature of this type, which makes it special compared to other types, is that they have virtually no thick fibers inside.
- **Shijaku's Bean** – is one of the most valuable autochthonous varieties in all of Albania. It is red beans with some white stripes. Its characteristic is that it cooks quickly and is quite rich in protein. Exactly for its values this cultivar is one of the most widespread in all of Albania.

The conservation of plant genetic resources (PGR) supported by the advances in computer technology have become very important in recent years and this has resulted in increased attention for the PGR computing. The PGR information system increases the efficiency of the management of the latter by researchers, funding agencies, etc. The PGR information system increases the efficiency of PGR management by researchers, funding agencies, etc. This database includes all PGR from Albania. The contribution of plant genetic resources to food safety and sustainable agriculture affects:

- **Contribution to food safety.** Plant genetic improvements have a significant contribution to food safety. Thus, cultivars and hybrids bred through plant genetic improvement programs, have adapted quite well to often harsh environmental conditions compared to foreign cultivars that have not been competitive in this regard. This phenomenon is observed in wheat, corn, vegetables, etc.
- **Contribution of genetic resources to sustainable agriculture.** Although there are no institutional estimates for such a contribution, despite the current conditions in Albania, the cultivars used by farmers have consistently ensured a sustainable agricultural production.

In some of the remote mountainous areas, where farmers produce for their own consumption and not for trade, most of the agricultural production is dominated by local varieties of vegetables, grains and fruit trees. Despite the low yield compared

to new cultivars, this production system based on traditional varieties is more stable and creates suitable conditions for a sustainable development in such remote areas.

- **Introduction of new cultivars, seed supply systems and problems with autochthonous plant varieties.** Seed production and distribution in Albania is carried out through two sectors: public and private sector. The public sector, which is represented by ATTCs, produces high-yield seed categories, ranging from breeding seeds to parabasic seeds. Exceptions are vegetables for which the seeds are produced by the private sector, including those of the basic category. This is due to the demand for small quantities of seeds per unit area, because the production of such seeds needs special technology and attention. Typically, the certified seeds are produced by the private sector mainly through farmers' associations.

Although there is a system of seed production, in fact it is not an institutionalized system. Nowadays in Albania the introduction of new varieties in agricultural production is a normal and legal requirement. This is especially true for open field crops.

## 5.2 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VALUE CHAIN MAPPING

The following figure shows the comprehensive outline of the Value Chain for Agricultural Products (Fruit and Vegetables). It identifies key stakeholders, product turnover from input securing to final market reach, and helps identify gaps or barriers in the production flow.

## AGRICULTURE PRODUCTS VALUE CHAIN

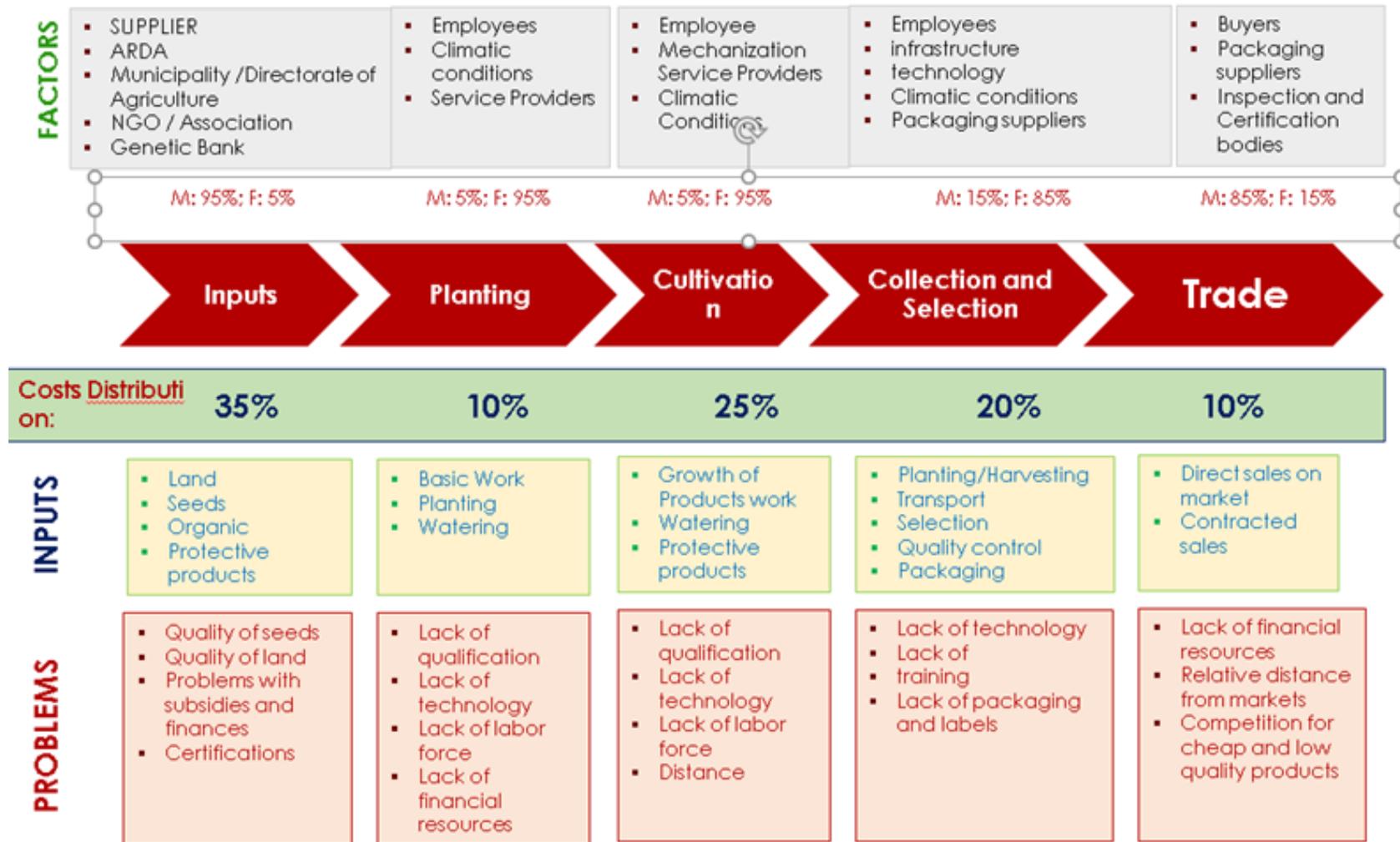


Figure 29. Outline of Agricultural Products Value Chain in the Municipality of Shijak

## 5.3 VALUE CHAIN ACTORS

The agricultural products sector as well as the sub-sector of Fruit and Vegetables is organized in three main levels:

1. *Individual Producers of Agricultural Products. In this group fall all producers of these products, who sale their produce in small amounts by themselves directly in the nearby markets or agritourism businesses in the area;*
2. *Individual Producers and Consumers of Agricultural Products are mainly the agritourism establishments using such products for their businesses as well as local villagers who plant small quantities in their gardens and use the produce for family consumption;*
3. *Collectors and Traders of medium and large quantities, these are traders who collect products in the villages and sell them in bulk in the big markets.*

In the Municipality of Shijak can be found all three above mentioned groups; however, in the following analysis we will focus on the first category. The analysis of these actors will be realized through the detailed analysis of the main links of the value chain.

It should be noted at the outset that as in other VCs, in the VC of the Agricultural Products (Fruit and Vegetables) are involved several key actors who indirectly influence the improvement of the chain, including focusing on women livelihood improvements. Given that these actors are present in almost every link, we are conducting their analysis in the context of their impact on the entire VC.

### 5.3.1 VC SUPPORT STRUCTURES

**Support services** provide free technical assistance to farmers. This includes three levels: central, regional and local, which include a total of 285 employees nationwide (ISARD 2014-2020). At the regional level, each of the 12 Directorates of Agriculture has additional services provided by 5-6 specialists in charge of vegetable, fruit and plant protection as well as livestock specialists and agricultural economists. At the local level for more than 4 years, the municipalities are responsible for the agriculture, rural development, forests and public pastures, nature and biodiversity. Municipalities are responsible for performing specific functions in these areas, according to applicable law. Furthermore, all these support service functions have been designed to offer equal opportunities to women and some, like Municipality, have it in their objectives to support women entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector.

Currently, in the Municipality of Shijak the services functions are carried out by the Directorate of Forest Service and Agriculture, but which is mainly focused on the administration of the public forest and pasture fund of this municipality and does not have sufficient human resources for the creation and administration of the local system. The Directorate is in charge of agricultural and rural information and advice as well as for the establishment and administration of local grant schemes for agriculture and rural

development, funded by the local budget and / or co-financed by third parties, guaranteeing gender-balanced access. Some of these grant scheme target women specifically.

**Agricultural Technology Transfer Centers (ATTC)** have begun to play an active role in terms of technology transfer aiming to improve competitiveness in the Albanian agricultural sector. There are five ATTCs in Albania, located in Korça, Lushnjë, Vlora, Shkodër and Fushë-Krujë. ATTCs are involved in the preparation and implementation of several programs related to olive plantation schemes, irrigation and drainage, agricultural support schemes, food safety, land consolidation, etc.

ATTC currently runs plant improvement programs in Albania under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). Despite changes in the statute of former research institutes, their transformation into agricultural technology transfer centers and the transfer of plant genetic improvement at the Agricultural University of Tiranë (UBT), plant genetic improvement programs will continue to be part of ATTC. This is related to several reasons, such as:

- ✓ *The Genetic Bank located at ATTC, due to its experience and relationship with agricultural production, staff training and adaptation to agricultural production requirements, are practically able to bear this responsibility.*
- ✓ *Unlike the Genetic Bank, the educational institutions are not closely linked to the problems of agricultural production or to the practices and procedures of concerning genetic improvement programs. University-improved plant species are not widespread in production and have not been competitive with those of research institutes.*
- ✓ *ATTCs, due to their research activities in general and genetic improvement activity in particular, have created and have rich work collections and possess suitable facilities for long-term storage.*
- ✓ *ATTC staff has good knowledge of collections; they have characterized, valued and protected them unlikely the University which has failed to preserve such collections due to their lack of interest in this regard.*
- ✓ *The current economic and financial situation of the country does not provide sufficient funds to support the implementation of plant genetic improvement programs. The need for support will be especially important for those local cultivars of open field crops. This is especially important due to the "capricious" weather conditions, which have made foreign cultivars not always resistant.*

In general, genetic improvement of plants has met the expectations for production in agriculture, however, better staff qualifications and training courses are needed, both for new methods and advanced technologies that have not yet been introduced in Albania, and the provision of conditions and appropriate equipment for the application of new techniques and technologies. Plant genetic improvement programs are funded by the state budget on the basis of short-term projects approved by specialized structures. Through these projects, plants such as wheat, corn and vegetables have been treated as part of plant genetic improvement programs. There are both men and women scientists at the Agricultural University of Tiranë that are engaged in the plant health field.

**National Food Authority (NFA)** is a government agency under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and is the authority in charge for the inspection of the management of national consumer safety and protection and plant and animal protection. The NFA performs its functions based on Law no. 10 433, dated 16.6.2011 on "Inspection in the Republic of Albania", article 7 "Principles of inspection program". The time of inspection is determined in the annual inspection program; however random inspections occur in cases when provided by law. Article 4, of the same law, which stipulates the purpose of the inspection, namely: (i) assessment of compliance with legal requirements; (ii) documenting good practices in compliance with legal requirements; (iii) advising the inspected entity regarding the correct implementation of legal requirements; (iv) ordering the correction of violations of legal requirements and the elimination of the consequences arising therefore; and (v) giving sanctions and taking other administrative measures to avoid risks that may be opposed to public interest. Based on the Article 26 "Annual inspection time", the maximum allowed inspection period varies from 5 to 15 days and there is no inspection fee. The inspected business / farm must provide the necessary evidence and information required by the inspection authority. Inspections usually follow a predetermined schedule based on the Annual Inspection Schedule, but there may be occasional inspections. The nearest inspector is the Regional Office of the National Food Authority in Durres, which conducts inspections based on the Annual Inspection Program, provided by the NFA office in Tiranë.

### 5.3.2 CERTIFICATION BODIES

Regarding **Certification Institutions**, the basic standards are HACCP (Standard of Risk Analysis and Critical Control Point) and 'Organic' Certification. HACCP is mandatory by law in Albania for any farmer, business or other entity that produces food products. 'Organic' certification is being sought by markets in urban areas and adds value to the product.

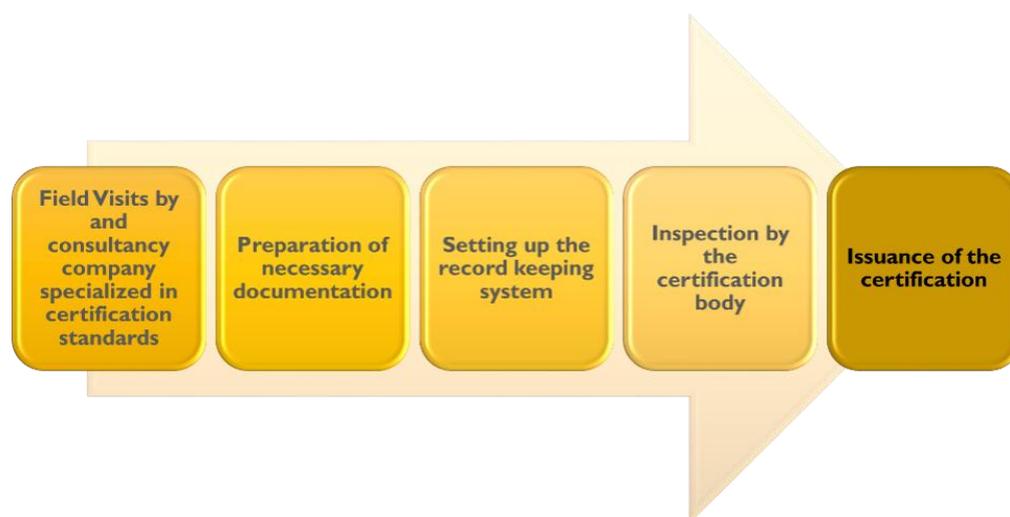


Figure 30. Steps for HACCP Certification

The average time for HACCP certification is 14-30 days and its process include the following steps:

- *Field visit by a consulting company specializing in certification standards which provides recommendations for improvements and adaptations;*
- *Preparation of necessary documentation;*
- *Establishment of a record and data keeping system;*
- *Inspection by the certification body;*
- *Issuance of certification.*

'Organic' certification is a more complex standard which can last 2-3 years. During this period, businesses receive an "Organic certification process" statement, until the final certificate is issued. The main certification body for the Organic Standard is AlbInspekt based in Tiranë. There are several certification bodies for HACCP certification. HACCP and Organic are provided by private companies and NGOs, while the phytosanitary certificate, which is required for export, is issued by the national phytosanitary service, part of the Regional Directorate of Agriculture, Durres.

#### 5.3.4 PRIVATE SUPPORTING STRUCTURES

**Raw material and technology suppliers** play an important role in the value chain of Autochthonous Agricultural Products. They provide ready-made seedlings for planting and organic fertilizers, as well as help the local villagers with information concerning plant cultivation. Usually, these suppliers also provide the necessary technology for the mechanization of various processes. However, the fragmentation of the land and the relatively small areas planted with these products, as well as the fact that for planting are used seedlings, the mechanization is almost non-existent throughout the Autochthonous Agriculture Products VC.

**Agronomists and Suppliers of Protective Products.** The existence of many agronomists in the market plays a very important role in consulting on the variety of plants that can be planted and their cultivation techniques. They also offer plant protection products, such as pesticides or other protection mechanisms. They also make a great contribution by helping the villagers of the area with information on how to prevent various plant diseases.

**Collectors of the Agricultural Products** Practically in the Municipality of Shijak, there is no collector dedicated to such products. Shijak farmers sell their produce directly in the market or at the agritourism businesses or restaurants in the area. Only a small amount of them is directed to larger collectors of the agricultural products.

Farmers, not having a guaranteed market, are reluctant to increase their production. These products cultivated under the "organic" brand, would have a great demand in the market today, but the lack of certification and small quantities produced make it difficult to find new markets in the cities of Tiranë and Durres and beyond.

## 5.4 VC LINKS OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS (FRUIT AND VEGETABLES)

Should be kept in mind that Shijak farmers cultivate a relatively wide range of these products which require almost the same amount of work and care for cultivation. Most typical autochthonous vegetables, which are traditionally grown in this area, are tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, eggplants, okra, etc. As shown in the diagram above in Figure 36, the Value Chain (VC) for Autochthonous Agricultural Products is composed of five main links. The following paragraphs analyze these elements based on:

- ✓ The main inputs needed in each link.
- ✓ Influencing factors and their weight.
- ✓ The role of women in each link and the factors or opportunities for improving this role
- ✓ Problems identified, and opportunities and recommendations for their minimization

Based on the field work, observations and interviews conducted with the main actors of the value chain in the Municipality of Shijak, the respective situations as well as the following conclusions and recommendations were drawn:

### 5.4.1 SECURING BASIC INPUTS FOR THE VALUE CHAIN

**Activities.** This chain link includes activities related to the main elements to develop an activity in the VCs of Agricultural Products (Fruit and Vegetables) and summarizes:

- ✓ **Land** normally it is owned or used by farming families, but in some cases in order to increase production or even the use of agricultural mechanics, farmers rent the land from their neighbors. The titles are usually under heads of households but women are not prevented from owning or renting land and even encouraged to do so.
- ✓ **Provision of Seedlings**, which are used for the cultivation of organic-quality Agricultural Products. Normally seedlings need to be purchased every year. During our analysis, the possibility was identified for farmers to produce their own seedlings for the following year. This is an important element to reduce the cost of production of these plants, in order to make the sector even more interesting from a financial point of view. Production of seedlings is something where women could get heavily involved given that this process can take place in their homes and would provide the women with additional income source.
- ✓ **Natural fertilizers**, which are used periodically to improve the soil planted with these crops. It is recommended to use organic fertilizers to guarantee BIO certification of these products.
- ✓ **Protective products**, plants can be affected by both diseases and rodents. For this reason, farmers need pesticides, the use of which is recommended only in extreme cases, as well as protection mechanisms that do not affect the quality of production.

**Women's Participation.** This activity in most cases is dominated by men (they make up 95% of the total workforce), because it is related to activities that take place away from the place of residence. Men are mostly the ones who go out to the markets and also carry out

the transport of the inputs. In some cases, women accompany men mainly to ensure the quality of the products purchased in the market. In this chain there are few opportunities to increase the role of women and their empowerment, for instance in seedling production activity (sales to other farms). It is worth noting that the construction of the seedling production mechanism by the farmers themselves will significantly increase both the participation of women and the income of the families. In our calculations, this process will enable the reduction of the cost of this link by over 30%.

**Cost of this link.** This phase in the total cost constitutes about **35%** of the cost of production and processing of Agricultural Products.

### 5.4.2 PRODUCTS PLANTING

**Activities.** In this link are carried out all activities related to the necessary work for planting, which are annual activities, sometimes carried out twice a year in cases of cultivating second crops. The main activities in this process are:

- ✓ **Preparing the soil for planting.** Agricultural mechanics are used at this stage. In these cases, the participation of men in this activity is considerable. But as we have pointed out above, the small number of planted plots and their fragmentation often makes it impossible to use agriculture equipment therefore women are often involved as well.
- ✓ **Planting Seedlings.** This is a process that is performed entirely by hand, because the use of agricultural mechanics is almost impossible for the specifics of the process itself. At this stage of the process, the work of women who are "hand planting specialists" for all agricultural products prevails.
- ✓ **Irrigation after planting.** In general, this process is semi-mechanized, so the participation of men in it is present, but again it is women who dominate this activity.

**Women's Participation.** In the Municipality of Shijak, due to the specifics of planting with seedlings and the very small use of agricultural mechanics, this phase is dominated by the work of women to an extent of about 95%. When planting larger areas, the agricultural mechanics is used more often but it never devalues the work of women in the Autochthonous Agricultural Products VC, it only gives them more time to perform other tasks. **Cost of this link** is estimated at about 10% of the cost of production.

### 5.4.3 CULTIVATION

**Activities.** In this link are carried out all activities related to the work necessary for the growth of Agricultural Products (Fruit and Vegetables) and includes daily activities related to:

- ✓ **Hoeing and eliminating weeds and other offensive plants.** This is a process that is done entirely by hand. At this stage of the process, women's work predominates.
- ✓ **Irrigation.** Typically, this process is semi-mechanized, so the participation of men and women is the same Irrigation is often carried out with drip irrigation systems.

- ✓ **Fertilization.** The soil is generally fertilized during the preparation activities for planting, but sometimes farmers also add it during the cultivation process. It is usually very rare activity and hardly affects cost.
- ✓ **Plant Protection** is one of the main activities of successful cultivation. As we have pointed out, farmers use both pesticides to fight plant diseases and alternative forms to protect them mainly from rodents. The use of the latter is very important because it directly affects the quality of the product, while maintaining their "organic" quality.

**Women's Participation.** In the Municipality of Shijak, even this link of the VC is dominated by the work of women, who contribute with approximately 95% of their work. Men are only sometimes involved during the irrigation process when it is mechanical irrigation or when installing plant protection equipment.

**Cost of this link.** The activities of this link, although they are an almost daily work, due to the low cost of labor do not substantially affect the total cost of production and processing of. It accounts for a relatively average weight estimated at about **25% of the cost of production.**

#### 5.4.4 COLLECTION AND SELECTION

**Activities.** In this link are realized the necessary work processes for the collection or harvesting of the products, its selection based on the quality criteria, as well as the packaging and preparation for the market. Given small amounts of these products, all the processes are mostly performed manually. In this link are realized activities related to:

- ✓ **Harvesting or collecting in the field.** This is a process that is done entirely by hand. This activity is carried out by women helped by their children d after school hours.
- ✓ **Transportation of the production to processing facilities.** Generally, this activity is performed by the men, who are responsible for the transportation activities throughout the VC.
- ✓ **Selection.** During this activity, selection and classification of the products is made, in order to increase the value of a part of the production. This too is a process that is done entirely by hand. At this stage of the process, women's work predominates.
- ✓ **Packaging.** Finally, the process of packaging or placing the final product in boxes or other packaging is carried out, making it ready for the market. It is an activity that is performed entirely by hand, where the work of women and children predominates, but men also contribute to the process.

It should be noted that during the above-mentioned activities, especially during the selection and packaging activities, there is a risk of contamination of the product, reducing the quality and therefore its price in the market.

**Women's Participation.** This process is dominated by the work of women to the extent of 85%, but sometimes men also help them. Given that there are no suitable storage conditions for harvested products, this is a daily process throughout the harvesting season.

**Cost of this link.** As mentioned, the activities in this link are daily tasks and consume human power and relatively long time. So, from the cost point of view there should have been a

considerable weight, but based on the very low levels of payments and given the fact that such activities are performed for the family, this process costs about **20% of the production cost** of the Agricultural Products.

#### 5.4.5 TRADE

**Activities.** There are generally two ways to trade the Agricultural Products: a) Contract sales, or b) Direct market sales. This link in the chain includes activities related to:

- ✓ **Contracts for selling the agriculture products.** Currently, the practice of signing contracts for selling agricultural products, as everywhere in the agricultural sector in our country, in the Municipality of Shijak generally does not exist. Even in those cases that there are some types of contracts (more of verbal agreements), this is always achieved by men.
- ✓ **Transportation of the product to the collector or to the market.** Generally, this process is performed by the men who are responsible for the transport activities throughout the VC.
- ✓ **The process of selling in the market.** Even in this activity the participation of men is almost exclusive, but women participate actively during the absence of men or if the markets are close to their homes.
- ✓ **Promotion,** this process includes the display of products in the dedicated space and offline or online promotion on social media, as well as the process of selling products to customers and the impact on buyers.

**Women's Participation.** These activities, also due to the mentality, in most cases are performed by men (they constitute 85% of the total workforce), because they are related to activities that take place far from the place of residence. Men are mostly the ones who go out to the markets and also carry out the transportation of inputs. In some cases, women accompany men mainly in cases of direct sales in the market.

**Cost of this link.** In terms of cost in the value chain this link makes up about **10% of the cost** of the whole chain.

### 5.5 FINDINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN THE VALUE CHAIN

Based on the fieldwork, observations and interviews conducted with the main actors of the value chain in the Municipality of Shijak, the following data were identified:

#### 5.5.1 OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN THE VALUE CHAIN

Regarding the **opportunities** that the production value chain of the Agricultural Products (Fruit and Vegetables) offers, the respondents mentioned / described as follows:

Figure 31. Opportunities in the Value Chain of Autochthonous Agricultural Products

**Increased demand** for Agricultural Products throughout the area. This is directly related to the variety of products. Some of the chain actors cultivate a certain product; others cultivate other types, which come as a specific request of the buyers (seed traders / sellers). For this reason, signing contracts with farmers is a phenomenon that is recommended for this sector. The increased demand for these products also leads to the increased demand for skilled workers, most of them women. Once the contractual conditions



are established, many women could be involved in working on larger plots of land. This would give them the opportunity to receive stable income as well as guarantee formalized employment, therefore given access to social security and other benefits.

**Existence of deep knowledge for the sector of Agricultural Products in the Municipality of Shijak.** As in some other areas of the country in the region of Shijak there is a long tradition in the cultivation of Agricultural Products typical for the zone.

Currently, the sector of Autochthonous Agricultural Products is becoming an important sector for the agricultural economy of this municipality while nationwide the vegetable production sector has become the main leader, and is currently exporting to neighboring countries. Foreign businesses are coming to Albania to establish production facilities (contract farming) for cultivating specific products exclusively for export. Farmers based on their knowledge are the primary target of such companies.

**Favorable agro-ecological conditions for the cultivation of Agricultural Products.** The agro-ecological conditions of the area are very favorable for the cultivation of Agricultural Products of organic quality. The climate is suitable for their requirements. This climate is characterized by longer summers and more sunshine - two of the main elements of favoring these plants. Soils are generally alluvial and with a low percentage of organic matter - another very favorable requirement for the "organic" production of Agricultural Products.

**Existence of guaranteed market.** The market for selling typical Agricultural Products of organic quality is guaranteed and is the safest market compared to all other agricultural products. This market is consolidated and its demands have been growing. Also, the growth and strengthening of the agritourism services sector has created a significant market for these products. All agritourism actors, who were contacted, stated that although they have

their own production of Agricultural Products, they cannot meet all the daily demand, so they have started to contract farms around their premises.

**Investments made in some of the links of the Value Chain of Agricultural Products in the Municipality of Shijak.** In this municipality, essential investments have been made by various investors in terms of some elements of the value chain of Agricultural Products. The largest guaranteed market for these products is the seasonal markets established near the coastal areas (Like the one in Lalzi Bay, or in Hamallaj) for the summer period, where many vacationers are consumers of fruits and vegetables, always tending to buy Typical Agricultural Products.

Large investments have also been made in Shkozet in terms of setting up the infrastructure for the collection and storage of fruits and vegetables; where collectors also collect limited quantities of Autochthonous Agricultural Products.

A number of donors have supported this agricultural sector throughout the transition period through investments or upgrades. Here we can mention USAID, GIZ, UNDP, FAO, Cooperazione Italiana, SIDA, SNV, including other projects dealing and targeting women and youth specifically.

**Other General Factors.** Among these factors we can mention:

- High number of families engaged in the cultivation of Agricultural Products
- Significant percentage of income from this sector in the structure of total income coming to Shijak farming families.
- Significant unemployment.
- Growing demand for organic-quality Agricultural Products in the market, where some support for increasing the quality and standards of production, could increase competitiveness.
- Preferred interest rate on Production of Typical Agricultural Products.
- Knowledge related to some existing market links to be used.
- Existence of many unemployed agronomist specialists, who can be easily integrated as technical leaders or entrepreneurs in the business of production of Agricultural Products.

**Agricultural development strategy.** For over 10 years the Albanian Government has defined the Autochthonous or typical Agricultural Products, as one of the strategic resources for the development of agriculture. They are also included in the support schemes of the agricultural sector.

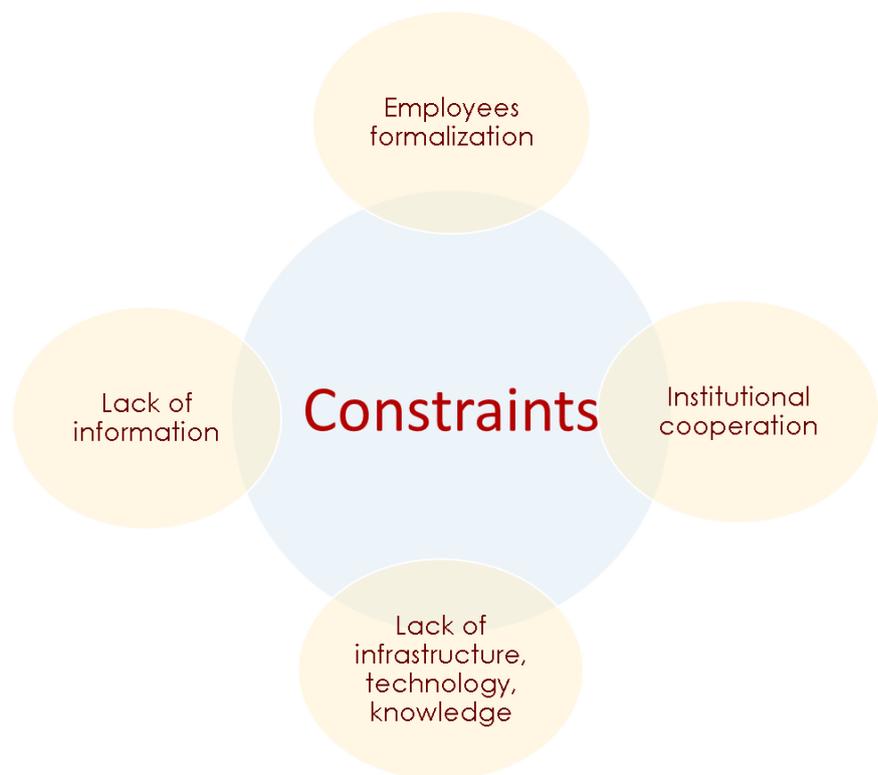
**The condition of farming families and their desire to get involved in the cultivation of such Agricultural Products** The economic situation of many farming families leaves much to be desired, especially in this municipality. There are many farmers who see these products as opportunities to provide enough income to support their living conditions and not emigration. Everywhere there are farming families who are ready to immediately start cultivating Agricultural Products in this municipality. Moreover, women specifically are very interested to get more engaged in the sector, especially when it comes to seedlings production.

Generally, the work with the cultivation of Agricultural Products, both for cultivation and harvesting, is done on a family basis. Generally, the cultivators or field workers are women and young girls and a very small percentage are men. Women everywhere in this municipality have desire to engage in the cultivation of Agricultural Products.

### 5.5.2 CONSTRAINTS

Regarding the Constraints that the value chain of Agricultural Products faces, they can be summarized as follows:

Figure 31. Constraints on the Value Chain of Autochthonous Agricultural Products



**Formalization.** Most businesses operating in this sector are not officially registered. Some are registered as farmers, having no specific field of operation. Most workers are not officially registered and employed in accordance with Albanian law, and therefore cannot benefit from subsidy schemes or other benefits.

**Institutional cooperation.** There is almost no form of cooperation between the relevant institutions in the sector, namely between the municipality, ARDA and farmers (cultivators of Autochthonous Agricultural Products). Some of the criteria set by ARDA cannot be easily met and not all categories of the population are included in the national financing schemes. There is also a lack of access to financial services through agricultural schemes with strong local contracts.

The session of the Working Group highlighted the existence of a significant lack of information provided by various relevant institutions for stakeholders in this sector. On the one hand, the municipality did not have complete information about initiatives and funding schemes (such as IPARD<sup>10</sup>) from which farmers can benefit; on the other hand, stakeholders

10 The IPARD II funding scheme (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Rural Development) started at the end of October 2019, includes MAPs in its Measure 7 for "Farm Diversification and Business Development".

did not have information on the conditions and criteria that must be met to participate in various trainings. All these restrictions reduce the level of attractiveness of the sector, as perceived mainly by young people in the Municipality of Shijak.

**Lack of infrastructure, technology and knowledge.** There is not suitable infrastructure for the collection, storage and selection of the production Farmer groups and mostly individuals have known little about post-harvest operations (selection, packaging and storage). Post-harvest treatments have a major impact on the final quality and can become sources of contamination. In the Municipality of Shijak, there are limited processing businesses (harvesting, selection, cleaning, sorting, packaging and storage) and often there is no proper environment for storage. Lack of suitable storage infrastructure and appropriate post-harvest knowledge cause significant losses in the Municipality of Shijak.

**Lack of information mainly for individual farmers or small owners.** A good portion of agricultural produce collectors have minimal or even outdated information about the potential benefits to smallholders: improved market access, improved technology, better risk management, increased trading skills, etc.

Other constraints identified during the analysis include: **climatic conditions, unresolved property issues, and lack of financial resources.**

Regarding the Problems of Gender Inequality and the Inclusion of Women in the value chain, the information obtained from the focus groups and interviews indicate that women are involved in most of the activities, especially in the processes of collecting, cultivating, harvesting, selecting and packaging, while also contributing to household chores. They possess the necessary basic skills, which have been acquired between generations (from one generation to the next, or by qualified family members), but need more specific skills, related to the processes related to production of Agricultural Products or the use of modern technology, which would increase efficiency and coordination for women. Usually, the women involved are family members and are not formally employed in the business.

Regarding Financing Opportunities, the interviewees mentioned that the income generated from engaging in the cultivation of Agricultural Products is their only source of income. They perceive this business as a profitable business, especially if agreements are made with buyers, who can also secure the supply of inputs. However, the interviewees mentioned the fact that the income generated from this activity does not meet all their needs. They do not have access to financial resources, but they recognize the growing demand for organically grown Agricultural Products and have therefore held meetings in the past with large consolidators interested in investing in the sector, particularly in this municipality, because the climate and soil are suitable for the cultivation of such Agricultural Products.

### **Why support the Agricultural Products VC?**

To a large extent, this sector relies on the family as the basis for cultivating Agricultural Products, without having the opportunity to turn into a productive industry. Among the main reasons why this sector is thought to be supported we can mention:

- The cultivation sector of typical (for the zone) organic-quality Agricultural Products in the Municipality of Shijak is on the verge of extinction. Genetically modified plant crops with high productivity are dominating, also in this sector. Youngster and women are seeking to leave rural areas as a result of the lack of support for their alternatives. This is an important point, as many women from Shijak are forced to leave their families behind and seek work in Durres or Tirana. If the sector was supported, they would have an opportunity to work closer to home and closer to their families.
- Farmers are starting to choose the easier path of purchasing mass production (high yield) seedlings and varieties, instead of growing their own. This means that the typical varieties (that grow well in the specific settings of the region) are starting to get lost as well as that the quality of the products is getting lower.
- The profit rate for these products, due to their high selling price, is significant.
- Cultivating typical for the zone products is a strategy of sustainable agriculture development. With a buy-in from the state and local government (supporting the sustainability of the initiative), and technical assistance coming from foreign projects, donors or various organizations, farmers can start cultivating organic-quality Agricultural Products (typical for the zone), because this is a way they would improve their overall living conditions, by providing stable income to cover family needs.
- With a little marketing and the provision of "organic" certification, there are opportunities to find a market in both the city of Durres and Tirana, which are the two largest markets seeking high quality products.
- The full support program starting from the provision of seedlings for the first year, the support for further production of seedlings, and ending with the linkages to markets such as the local ones near agritourism businesses or providing the farmers access to the markets of the city of Durrës and Tirana is a necessity. Once again, women can be involved in seedlings production and therefore contribute to the family financially. Even though men often are in control of the money, the budgeting (control of expenditures) is often exercised by women, when it comes to food and other necessary purchases.

In terms of gender, through the interventions proposed in Chapter 6, the value of women's work in the Value Chain of the cultivation of Agricultural Products would be increased through

- ✓ *Training to improve the skills for the cultivation of the Agricultural Products typical for the zone (what is referred to as Bio<sup>11</sup> in Albania) will reduce costs and increase product quality. Once again, having decent job opportunities closer to home – in the rural areas would discourage women to seek job opportunities in the capital city or elsewhere. Even for those women who do not work far from home, having the stable income in the family would mean less food insecurity and less reasons for their men to seek additional occasional jobs.*

---

<sup>11</sup>Basically, meaning producing without the use of pesticides and chemicals and targeting the production of those vegetable and fruit that are typical for the zone and therefore have the right qualities and characteristics and are not genetically modified.

- ✓ *Trainings in seedling processing technology increase food quality and safety, production capacity and sustainability, the importance of women in this chain, as well as reduce the risks of failure. Women cooperatives specialized in seedlings productions would make the women active formal participants in the value chain, which in turn provides them with access to economic and social benefits. These women cooperatives would be selling these inputs to farmers in the area, in so doing strengthening the role of women in this chain and all of the VC, increasing their role in farm administration and representation, strengthening the role as important actors in the community, increases horizontal participation in VCs, etc.*

### Identification of possible groups to be involved and supported in the value chain

Currently, in the process of cultivation of typical Agricultural Products are identified 15-20 families in the Municipality of Shijak. Each business (family) employs 2 to 5 workers. There is a possibility to increase the number of growers of Agricultural Products up to 30 families involved in this process. The locals also stated the intention to increase the variety of the Agricultural Products to more than one species, thus diversifying their product.

The request from the farmers of the area and our goal is to have at least 50 farms to have stable connections with local consumers or selling points in Tiranë and Durrës. We have contacted a good part of them who have expressed their willingness to participate in a project for the cultivation of typical organic-quality Agricultural Products in their territory. The groups of farmers that will open activities for the cultivation of Autochthonous Agricultural Products reside in the Administrative Units of Xhafzotaj, Manez and Sukth of the Municipality of Shijak, which represent the areas with the best tradition for a quality cultivation of such products. The identified groups are respectively:

In the **Administrative Unit Xhafzotaj** there are 5 groups of farmers who can make available about 15 ha of land ready for immediate cultivation of the Agricultural Products. Women are interested in the formalization if it means gaining access to financial opportunities.

In the **Administrative Unit Maminas** there are 3 groups of farmers who can make available about 11 ha of land ready for immediate cultivation of these products.

**Areas they plant / will plant and with what?** There are different requirements for the types of Agricultural Products that farmers are looking to plant. Their request is based on:

- *lands that the group owns*
- *providing water for irrigation especially for some of the crops*
- *domestic market prices*
- *easy service to plants and plants resistance to diseases and parasites*

From the interviews with the women from the identified families, it results that the preferences are for the cultivation of traditional vegetables.

From the contacts made, we anticipate that for the management of the activities, the participation of farmers will be at the level of 80% women and 20% men, while in terms of time they will be engaged in the process will be around these percentages:

- ✓ *Men will be dedicating about 30% of their time*
- ✓ *Women will be dedicating 75% of their time*
- ✓ *Schoolchildren will be dedicating 10% of their time*

Based on the assessment of their situation and the SWOT analysis of the cultivation of the Agricultural Products (Fruit and Vegetables) in the Municipality of Shijak, we propose that these groups of farmers be supported for:

**Increasing their professional level in this regard it is required:**

- **Ongoing technical assistance**, especially in the first year in terms of:
  - ✓ *Formalization of the business, especially recommended the women ownership*
  - ✓ *Drafting the development plan*
  - ✓ *Drafting the development plan of each cultivation and harvesting link that will have to be followed up throughout the year*
  - ✓ *Follow-up and advice on the processes of guaranteeing the "organic" production as well as the selection of the final product for the market*
  - ✓ *Consulting on the elements of cultivation of seedlings as a basis for the continuity of work in the coming years, in order to ensure the sustainability of production.*
  - ✓ *Following up the marketing process until the product is delivered*
- **Trainings** for raising the level of knowledge for the cultivation of organic-quality Agricultural Products
  - ✓ *About the values of organic products and the methods for their cultivation*
  - ✓ *For know-how for practical elements of seedling cultivation*
  - ✓ *For the way of selection and storage of the product and avoidance of its losses*
  - ✓ *On the importance of "organic" certification and how practically all the elements related to it are carried out*
  - ✓ *For practical elements of marketing at the farm level*
- **Clustering programs for women** to strengthen their representation and enhance knowledge exchange, building capacity in advocacy and facilitation dialogue between women producers and municipality as well as to improve production processes jointly (especially led by the female entrepreneurs famous in the area) – Associations related to Seedling's collectors, Fruit and Vegetables collectors, etc.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERVENTIONS

As analyzed above, based on their potential and the involvement and empowerment of women, the VC for the Agricultural Products was rated as the most important, with highest opportunities for women and as one that needs some intervention. With this in mind, the following recommendations are presented:

- **Implementation of contracts with farmers**, which can help farmers overcome market failures by establishing links between them and markets for the production of high value food products and thus guaranteeing a market for their products. Currently, the practice of contracts, as everywhere in the agricultural sector in our country, does not exist in the Municipality of Shijak. At present, in order to consolidate the production progress of the Agricultural Products from the on-farm cultivation to the final collector or seller, the latter has to use agreements on the type and the amount of the product, the implementation of a controlled protocol of agro-technical services to be performed to the products, including chemical fertilizer, protection against parasites and product consolidation and standardization; as well as formalized requirements in terms of employment contracts with people involved in the production. However, contracts with farmers alone may not be sufficient to improve the income of small households if contractors do not provide inputs, technical assistance, and access to related technology and input markets. Producers of the Agricultural Products have expressed interest in learning more about cultivation and starting the cultivation of organic vegetables, especially if they receive seedlings from buyers, who have expressed willingness to do so as part of the contracts with farmers.
- **Focus on agriculture**, which in the current situation faces some difficulties. Relevant institutions, especially the municipality, are providing training in sectors that are not attractive to the population, or that are not related to their activities. Consequently, they prove unsuccessful or the level of participants is very low. The municipality is mainly focused on the tourism sector (where there are not many promises, as resulted from the seminar and interviews), forgetting the focus on agriculture. Furthermore, there is a lack of knowledge on the existence of IPARD schemes and national financing schemes, which directly contribute to improving the conditions of the sector, especially in terms of raising awareness on opportunities related to women and their involvement.
- **Marketing of the Agricultural Products**. In recent years there has been a trend of improving the marketing of Agricultural Products both everywhere in the country and in the Municipality of Shijak where there is a positive pressure from all actors due to increasing demand in the market, for more and more quality products. The cultivation of Agricultural Products in the Municipality of Shijak is considered by farmers as an important natural economic resource and in particular, special development potential not yet fully utilized and sustainable.
- **Development axes of the Municipality of Shijak**. The Municipality of Shijak should increase its attention in the following development directions:

- ✓ *Preservation of agricultural land fund:* should be one of the priorities of the municipality. Informal and illegal constructions have not only reduced the area of agricultural land, but also endangered the rural and urban area mainly through the blockage of the Erzeni bed. Blocking construction permits and revitalizing the agriculture land and the legal situation of land ownership is the first step to be taken in this area;
- ✓ *Increasing the efficiency of agricultural production activities* with the aim of formally employing the rural population. Currently, most of the agricultural production goes for own use in rural areas. Increasing yields would increase rural / per capita income, formal contracts and employment agreements will give people access to economic benefits provided by the state. The municipality can influence through agricultural policies in terms of crop orientation, counseling, encouraging cooperation between villagers to increase the area of arable land i.e., cooperatives, and co-administration of the mechanical base;
- ✓ *Establishment of markets & connecting roads* to encourage and support the value chain of agricultural products towards high value-added activities: construction of supporting infrastructure (rural roads, local & regional markets, etc.) and linkages with markets in large cities (Tiranë & Durrës) and abroad contributes directly to the value chain of agricultural products.

The following section presents some general recommendations for the value chain of cultivation of Agricultural Products (Fruit and Vegetables) for the Municipality of Shijak and categorization according to their impact on the sector (short / medium / long term) and budget requirements (low / medium / high):

Recommendations for the Agricultural Products (Fruit and Vegetables) Value Chain							
NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS - AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VC	IMPACT			BUDGET		
		Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term	Low	Average	High
1	<b>PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF CULTIVATOR LEVEL</b>						
	Ongoing technical assistance, especially in the first year, in terms of:						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Formalization under women ownership to gain access to grants</li> <li>✓ Drafting the development plan</li> </ul>						
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Technical assistance in negotiating with others</li> <li>✓ Design of agro-technology that will be used throughout the cultivation process</li> <li>✓ Follow-up and assistance on agro-technological cultivation processes</li> <li>✓ Consultation on post-harvest issues</li> </ul>	X				X	
1.2	Trainings for raising the level of knowledge for the cultivation Agricultural Products:	X				X	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ For the values of the products, they cultivate and know-how and the cultivation techniques</li> <li>✓ For harvesting methods and avoiding losses of the Agricultural Products</li> <li>✓ For post-harvest treatment elements</li> <li>✓ On the importance of the final hygiene of the product and how it is practically realized</li> </ul>		
1.3	<p>Clustering programs for women to strengthen their representation and enhance knowledge exchange, building capacity in advocacy and facilitation dialogue between women producers and municipality as well as to improve production processes jointly (especially led by female entrepreneurs famous in the area) – Associations related to Seedling's collection, of Fruit and Vegetables collectors, etc.</p>	X	X
<hr/>			
2	<b>SMALL GRANTS FOR TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENT</b>		
<hr/>			
	<p><b>Support with basic and technological elements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Supporting elements used for planting Agricultural Products in the field such as pickets, measuring tape, twine, planting elements, etc.</li> <li>✓ Seedlings according to the development plan drafted in cooperation with the technical consultants</li> <li>✓ Protective products according to the development plan drafted with technical consultancy</li> <li>✓ Packaging elements for the final product in order to preserve the product values of the Autochthonous Agricultural Products</li> <li>✓ Drip irrigation systems to demonstrate to farmers the values and advantages of innovative technologies.</li> </ul>		
2.1		X	X
<hr/>			
	<p><b>Support for the production of seedlings for the following years.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Trainings on know-how and seedling cultivation techniques, especially targeting women</li> <li>✓ Supporting elements used for planting seedlings in mini greenhouses such as pickets, measuring tape, twine, etc.</li> </ul>		
2.2		X	X
<hr/>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Supporting elements for the construction of mini greenhouses, iron rods, connecting elements, etc.</li> <li>✓ Organic fertilizers and protective products according to seedling development plan drafted with the technical consultancy</li> </ul>		
3	<b>CERTIFICATION OF QUALITY AND SAFETY STANDARDS</b>		
3.1	<b>Awareness session</b> on the importance of certification in reaching high value markets and the steps needed to get certified.	X	X
3.2	<b>Manufacturer support</b> in certification with HACCP and Organic, as the most basic requirements from consumers	X	X
4	<b>AWARENESS ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTS SECTOR</b>		
4.1	<b>Information and awareness sessions</b> about opportunities in the agricultural sector. Raising awareness of the economic importance of the Agricultural Products sector and consumer demand in order to kindle their cultivation.	X	X
4.2	<b>Information and awareness sessions</b> on IPARD funding schemes and other national schemes.	X	X

Table13. Recommendations for the Value Chain of Agricultural Products

## 7. REFERENCES

"General Local Plan of the Municipality of Shijak (GLP) - Territorial Development Plan (TDP)" Draft.

Report "Strategic Environmental Assessment of Shijak (SEA)", prepared by DLDP, October 2016.

"Albania Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) Volume A "February 2020. Tiranë

Pasha A, Petrak L, and Volunteer D. 2020. "Assessing the Post-Earthquake Situation of Families with Children Residing in Temporary Shelters in Albania" UNICEF in Albania & IDRA Research and Consulting. Tiranë

Information from the official website of the Municipality of Shijak:  
<http://www.bashkiashijak.gov.al/>

Data from the Institute of Statistics in Albania, especially the Annual Agricultural Statistical Report, 2021.



# EMPOWER WOMEN EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY

Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis (GSVCA)  
in the Municipality of Shijak

© 2021 UN Women. All rights reserved.  
Rr. "Skënderbej", Ndërtesa 8, Ap. 29-31, Tiranë, Shqipëri  
Tel: +355 4 450 2555/7575  
Website: [albania.unwomen.org/en](http://albania.unwomen.org/en)  
Facebook: [unwomenalbania](https://www.facebook.com/unwomenalbania)