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GENDER SENSITIVE POST-EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

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

DECEMBER 2021

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

December 2021

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

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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.

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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

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, Kruja, Tirana, Kamza, Kavaja, Vora, Rrogozhina, Kurbin, Mirdita and Lezha, both in rural and urban areas.

Past experiences have shown that girls and women are differently and often disproportionately affected by natural disasters and crises and have unequal possibilities for 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, including the priorities of girls and women.
   - The objective of these plans is to increase the capacity of LGUs, by providing immediate relief to the disaster-affected population as well as 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 legal 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 the 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 towards women and their preparation to provide these services even during emergency situations.
- Providing direct legal and psychological assistance as well as other services to girls and women in the affected areas.

Gender sensitive analysis of the value chain in the Municipality of Vora was conducted within the framework of the component 2. *Supporting girls and women in the affected areas for accessing and benefiting from economic opportunities.* The primary objective of the analysis was to identify the main sectors in this municipality which present 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-biased initiatives.

Inclusive development will be achieved by: (i) supporting creation of new job positions for women in those sectors where women can get involved; (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[1] and are based on the recent experience of gender-sensitive interventions in improving value chains in the country[2].

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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.

The focus of this study is the practical analysis of the main value chains in the Municipality of Vora, from the perspective of the gender attribute. The main purpose of the gender-sensitive value chain analysis is to provide the municipality of Vora 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 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 Vora.

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 Vora. This activity supports capacity building 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.*

- *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.*
- *Increasing the access of women, youngsters from all groups (to financial services and products, as well as to productive resources.*
- *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). The Municipality of Vora has not yet signed the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life.

As a result of such 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%.[3]

- Women and men aged 15-64, are mostly employed in the agricultural sector. 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 percentage point.
- Women own or manage 25.5% of all enterprises. [4] Divided by business size, it turns out:
    - Business up to 4 employees 25.8%
    - Business with 05-09 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).

3 Men and Women in Albania 2021. INSTAT

4 Men and Women in Albania 2021. INSTAT

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 the beneficiary farmers were women (MARD 2021).

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, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and 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, Durrës, Kruja, Tirana, Kamza, Kavaja, Vora, Rrogozhina, Kurbin, Mirdita and Lezha, both in rural and urban areas.

The Gender Sensitive Recovery and Reconstruction Project, which is implemented in close cooperation with the Municipality of Vora, 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 Vora Municipality, 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 several 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 Vora, 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-biased initiatives.

According to the general description of the municipality of Vora, its economic development and the main sectors of economic potential are taken from the main reports prepared in the framework of the "General Local Plan of the Municipality of Vora (GLP)", respectively "Territorial Development Plan (TDP)", and "Territorial Strategy" (TS), approved by the Decision of the National Council of the Territory no3 date 17.05.2019; as well as the report "Strategic Environmental Assessment of Vora (SEA)". The information was also supplemented with data from the official website of the Municipality of Vora and official publications and statistical information from the Institute of Statistics in Albania. The information was updated and the data were 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 Vora, 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, were used to select sectors, including group consultations and discussion sessions with municipal representatives, producers and experts were used to select 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, producers, representatives of supporting organizations and field coordinators of the project, as a way to identify value chain opportunities. This phase ended with the organization of a stakeholder meeting, during which participants had the opportunity to present and discuss additional details, share the opportunities and constraints and get a clear picture and understanding of value chains which helped them to select Agritourism production value chains were identified as the main areas where to focus.

In the second phase, field visits, observations of activities, surveys and semi-structured interviews were conducted with questionnaires adopted for different actors in the value chain.

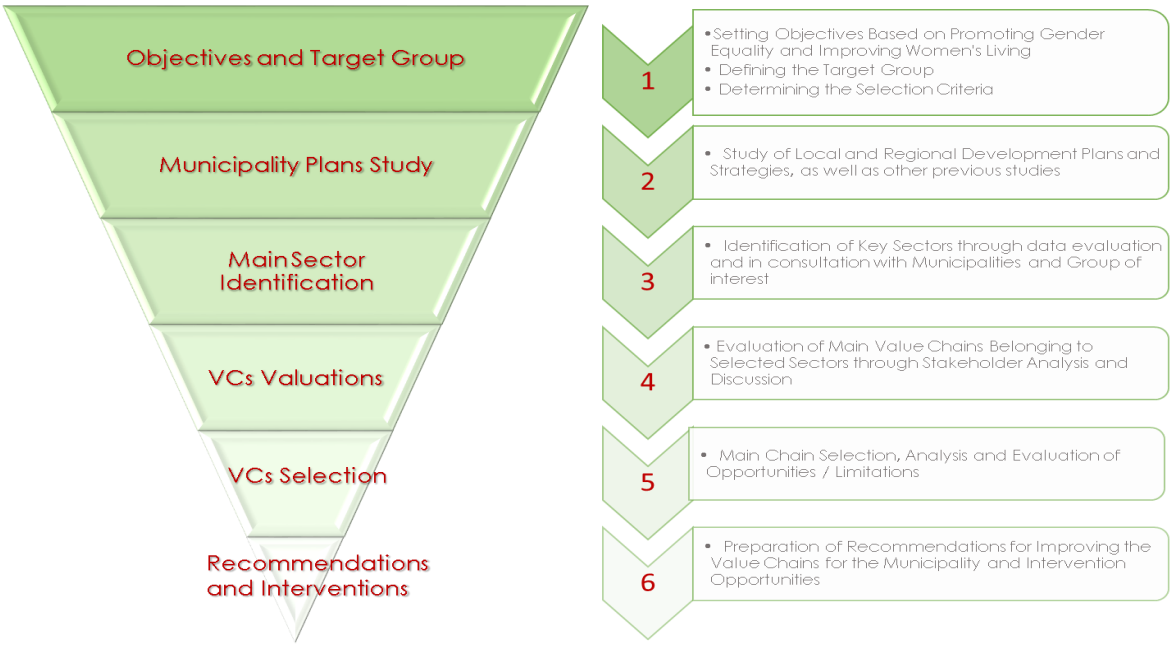

Figure 1: Methodology Approach.

The main steps of 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 using 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.

Limits of Research Work. The focus of this report is the practical analysis of the main value chains in the Municipality of Vora, seen from the 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) difference in methodologies used by local authorities and INSTAT. 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 are not disaggregated by municipalities. The biggest problem with this data is that, with the exception of CENSUS 2011 data, there is no data on the resident population. The most recent data on the resident population is that of the 2011 CENSUS, making it quite difficult to obtain reliable statistical data.

Conceptually, implementing gender sensitive 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 at improving the situation of women themselves. The purpose of this study is to provide the municipality of Vora with practical recommendations that affect the population of the selected municipality as a whole that would consequently lead to the improvement of the women' living conditions in the municipality. It is important to mention that in Albania and in those specific municipalities analyzed, the situation of the value chains is often so difficult (and poverty is so high) that any overall general changes and sustainable development in value chains would lead to higher incomes for the family, which would automatically mean better conditions for women and other actors in it. It's also necessary to remain attentive to the local context, including the diverse notions of masculinity.

Meeting sessions of the groups of interest, as well as the interviews conducted, are representative of 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 VORA

Based on Law No. 139/2015 on the Territorial Division in the Republic of Albania, for Statistical Purposes NUTSII, the Municipality of Vora is part of the Central Region. It lies in central Albania and is bordered on the north by the municipality of Krujë, on the east by the municipality of Kamëz, on the south by the municipality of Tiranë, on the southwest by the municipality of Shijak, and on the west by the municipality of Durrës.

The new municipality consists of three administrative units which are: Vora, Prezë, and Bërxullë. In this municipality, there is a town and 18 villages. All are constituent units of Tiranë district, Tiranë County.

Figure 2: Location of Vora Municipality

Data	Value	National Ranking	Ratio to national values	Average national value
Region according to NUTSII	Central		-	-
Surface	80Km^2	59	0.28%	464.72 km^2
Population by Civil Status	39,143	35	0.87%	73,876
Population according to the 2011 Census	25,511	33	0.91%	45,908.64
Density by Civil Status	489	6	-	159
Density according to the 2011	319	5		19
Number of AUs (including Neighborhoods)	3	55	-	7.67
Number of Cities	1	-	-	-
Number of Villages	18	-	-	-

Table 1: Main Administrative-Demographic Data of the Municipality of Vora.

The new municipality of Vora lies at the main road junction of Albania, where Tiranë connects with Durrës and the north with the south of the country. As a result, a significant part of the light industry and construction are located in the territory of this municipality, while agriculture is concentrated in some high value-added products such as flowers. In the Municipality of Vora are registered over 800 large businesses. In the former commune of Prezë, there is a medieval castle that is a small tourist resource. Vora and its three constituent units have seen rapid population growth over the last 25 years, which has also brought a

considerable number of constructions out of the urban plans and without proper infrastructure.

2.1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF MUNICIPALITY OF VORA

The vision of the Municipality of Vora is based on the forecasts of the General Local Plan of the Municipality. The realization of the vision of the Municipality of Vora will be carried out through the implementation of strategic objectives and sub-objectives as follows:

Strategic Objective 1: Restructuring and rehabilitation of urban and rural areas
- Rehabilitation and creation of public spaces within urban and rural areas
- Development of detailed planning instruments

Strategic Objective 2: Addition and strengthening of monuments and cultural heritage
- Protection and rehabilitation of monuments and cultural heritage

Strategic Objective 3: Provide access to social and collective services
- Establishment of new collective services

Strategic Objective 4: Meeting the housing need and improving the housing supply
- Establishment of new social housing
- Improving housing supply

Strategic Objective 5: Establishment of new commercial and economic poles and new production areas
- Establishment of new commercial and economic poles and new production areas, as well as improvement of existing ones.

Strategic Objective 6: Improvement and establishment of basic urban infrastructure
- Establishment of a functional sewage system for the entire territory of the municipality
- Improving the basic infrastructure of the drinking water supply
- Establishment of a functional system of waste collection and disposal for the entire territory of the municipality

Strategic Objective 7: Strengthen public and soft mobility
- Establishment of a network of trains for passengers and goods and improvement of the bus system
- Creating a soft mobility network

Strategic Objective 8: Improve road transport
- Improving road and transport conditions

Strategic Objective 9: Address key threats to the environment
- Protection and risks
- Development of conservation policies

Strategic Objective 10: Protect and enhance valuable environmental assets
- Addition of hydrogeological assets

Strategic Objective 11: Growth of agriculture as one of the main economic activities of the territory

- Rehabilitation of the agricultural system
- Supporting food self-sufficiency

Strategic Objective 12: Establishment of a territorial park

- Establishment of public/collective infrastructure for the territorial park

2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

According to the 2011 Census, in the territory of the new municipality of Vora, there are 25,511 inhabitants, while according to the Civil Registry, there are 36,230 inhabitants. With an area of 82.72 km2, the population density according to census data is 308 inhabitants km2, while according to the Civil Registry, the density is 438 inhabitants km2.

Based on the CENSUS 2011 data, approximately 49% of the population (12,591 inhabitants) are female. The 15-64 age group constitutes the largest number of the population, almost 66% of the population, both female and male. Table 2 provides the general population data divided by each Administrative Unit by age group, while Table 3 provides this data broken down by gender.

Administrative Unit	Total	Age Group		
		0-14	15-64	Over 65
Bërxullë	9,883	2,603	6,483	797
Prezë	4,727	1,046	3,105	576
Vora	10,901	2,410	7,433	1,058
Total Vora Municipality	25,511	6,059	17,021	2,431

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

Administrative Unit	No. of Villages	No. Of Families	Total Population	Gender	
				Male	Female
Bërxullë	3	2,395	9,883	5,046	4,837
Prezë	7	1,124	4,727	2,376	2,351
Vora	8	3,386	10,901	5,498	5,403
Total Vora Municipality	18	6905	25,511	12,920	12,591

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

	Total no. of families	Couple without children	Couple with children	Single father with children	Single mother with children	Invalids
Vora Municipality	6905	13%	79%	1%	6%	1%

Table 4. Number of families and family typology. (Source: Census, 2011)

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

Based on CENSUS 2011 data, the municipality of Vora has a total number of 6,905 families, where most are married couples with children (79%), followed by married couples without children (11%). To be mentioned is the number of families composed of single mothers with children in 414 cases, accounting for almost 6% of the total

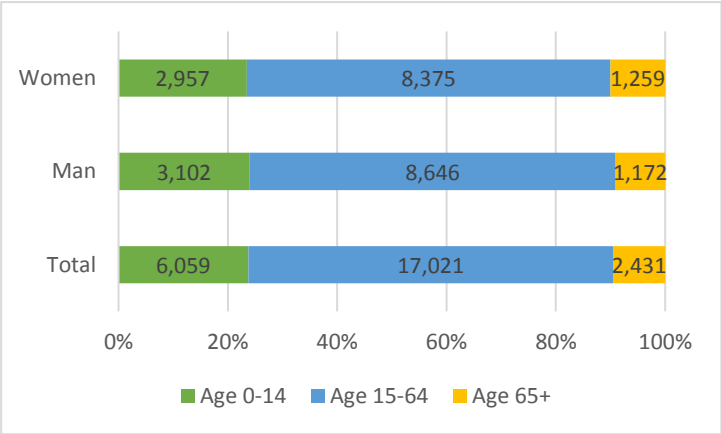

Figure 4: Population of Vora Municipality % disaggregated by gender and age. (Source: INSTAT CENSUS 2011)

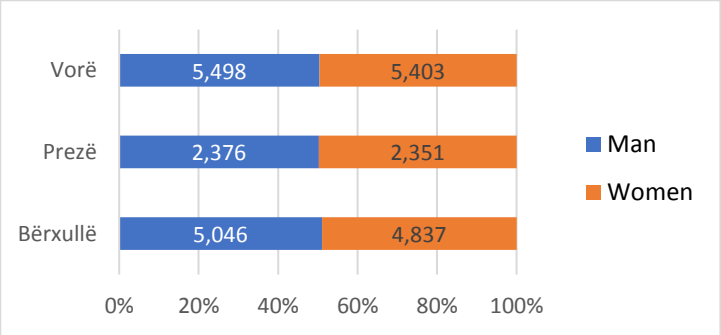

Figure 5: Population of Vora Municipality for each AU in% disaggregated by gender. (Source: INSTAT CENSUS 2011)

2.3 ECONOMIC PROFILE

Based on official data obtained from the statistical database of INSTAT in the Municipality of Vora, at the end of 2021 operated 1088 active enterprises. The number of these businesses, as noted in Figure 6, in the last 5 years has been almost constant with a variation of 8.2%.

Based on the legal form, these businesses are divided into: i) 56 Agricultural Farms; ii) 634 Legal Persons; iii) 398 Legal entities. As can be seen from the figure, the variation of legal forms has a growing trend of agricultural enterprises and a gradual decrease in the number of Legal Persons.

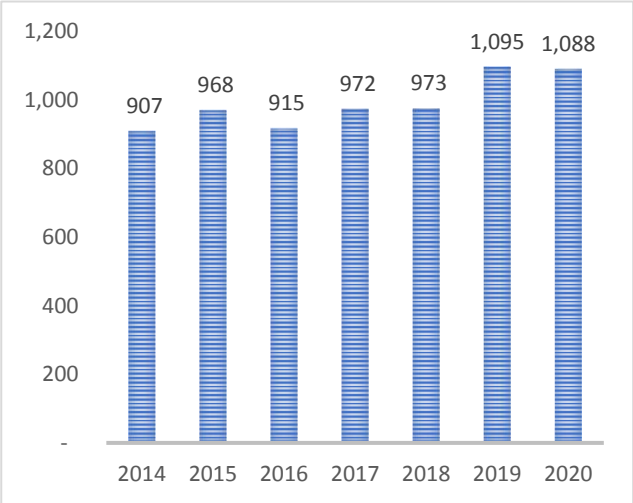

Figure 6: Number of Active Enterprises by Legal Form. (Source: INSTAT)

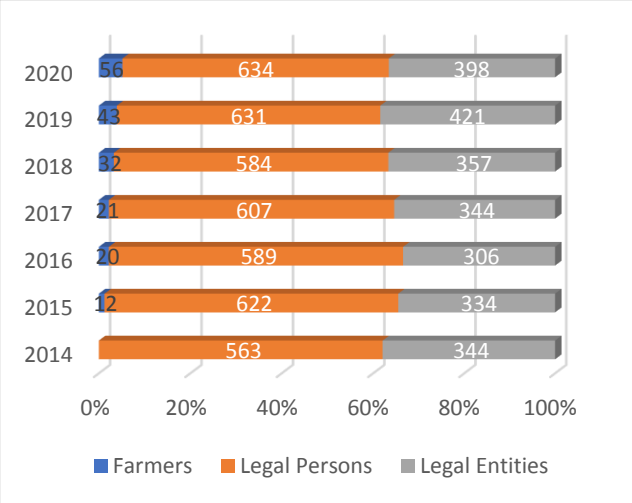

Figure 7: Percentage ratio of Businesses by legal form over the years. (Source: INSTAT)

The predominance of the Business Form as a Legal Person and Farmer 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 147 businesses or about 13.51% of them have over 10 employees, while about 834 businesses or 76.65% of businesses have less than 4 employees.

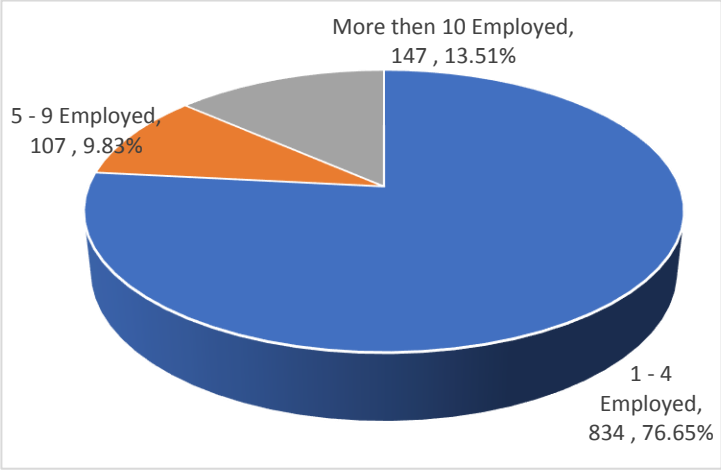

Figure 8: Number of Businesses grouped by the number of employees. (Source: INSTAT)

Today about 23.81% of businesses registered in the Municipality of Vora are run by women. Even in this regard, there has been no significant change in the number of businesses run by women. This variation in the last 5 years is in the values +/- 4.53%, as shown in figures 9 and 10.

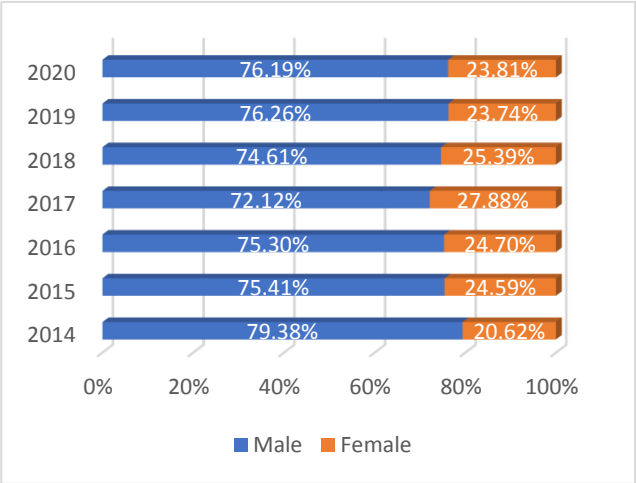

Figure 9: Percentage ratio of Businesses by gender of administration/ownership. (Source: INSTAT)

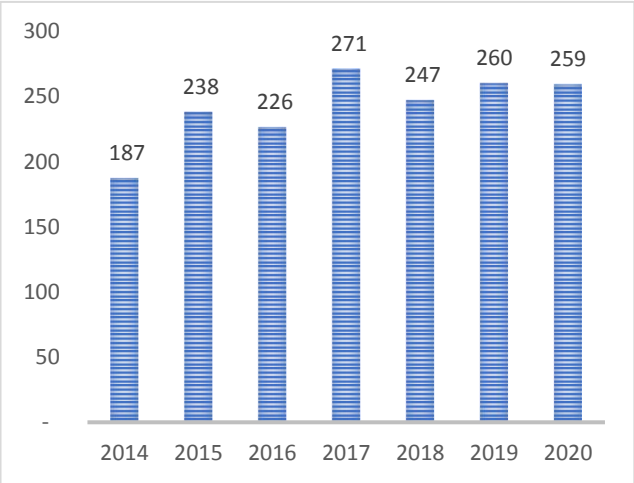

Figure 10: Trend of Businesses Administered by Women Over the Years. (Source: INSTAT)

According to the data of the local revenue office, in the Municipality of Vora 1088 active enterprises at the end of 2020 are divided by main sectors as shown in Figure 11, in: i) 56 Agricultural Farms; ii) 186 Goods Manufacturing Enterprises; and iii) 846 Service Providers.

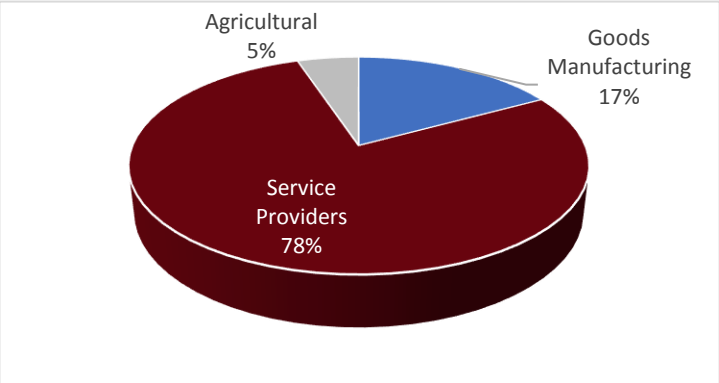

Figure 11: Ratio to the number of Businesses by main sectors. (Source INSTAT and Vora Municipality)

Agriculture. Since Agriculture and Livestock are today the two main economic drivers in the Municipality of Vora, we have conducted a more detailed analysis of these sectors.

According to the data of the cadaster office, the agricultural land fund of 6,284 ha is divided into 5,467 ha of arable land and 541 ha of orchards, of which 276 ha are vineyards; while pastures are divided into 3,758 ha natural and 257 ha cultivated.

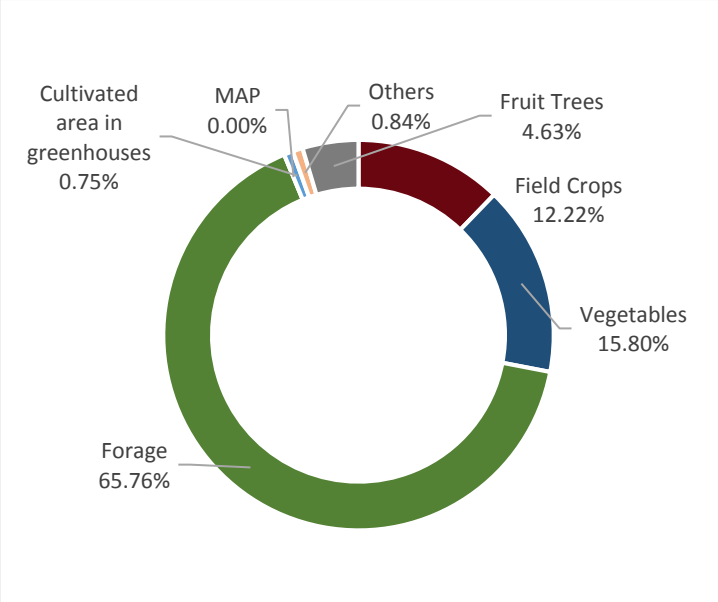

Figure 12: Structure of Agricultural Crop Groups (Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Vora Municipality)

The arable land area is small, the irrigation and drainage system are damaged, while farmers have difficulty securing key inputs and proper mechanization. Meanwhile, not all production chain links for different agricultural products exist.

In terms of agricultural crops, cereals, vegetables, potatoes and beans, viticulture, fodder, fruit trees, nuts are cultivated. Here the main weight is borne by the fodder. Vineyards are also widespread due to the favorable climatic conditions and the provision of the production chain. However, the main problem is the lack of adequate irrigation systems that have hindered the further expansion of this activity. The following paragraphs present in detail the structure of agricultural crops in the Municipality of Vora.

Industry. Today there is a slight development in the light industry in terms of processing livestock products and fruits. These developments are still in their infancy and, in most cases, are family-run businesses. This industry is not yet formalized and fails to provide the proper certifications of the standards required for their sale in the local, national market or to ensure their export. The industrial sector in the last 5 years has had a contraction at the level of 16.13%, a significant change that shows the difficulties that this municipality is going through in terms of economic growth and development. This decline is observed since 2018, which means that the industrial sector has not declined due to two major factors such as the earthquake of November 26, 2019 and the pandemic during 2020. The sub-sector that has suffered the biggest decline is the manufacturing industry. As shown in Figure 14, the construction industry has seen growth over the last 5 years, while the wood

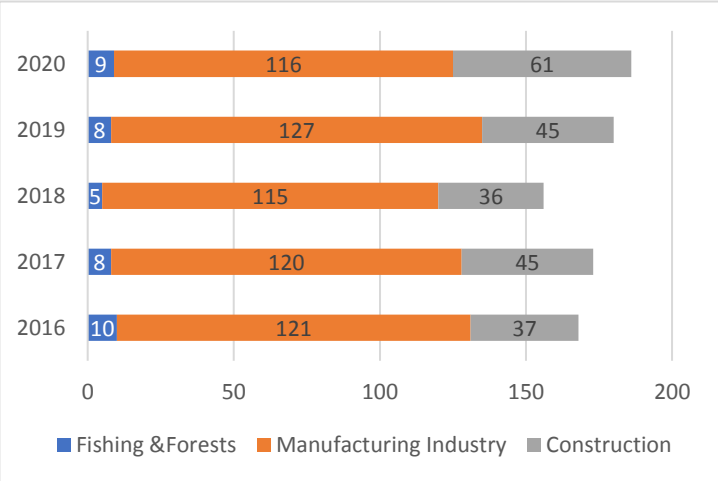

Figure 13: Manufacturing Industry Structure by 3 official classifications over the last 5 years. (Source: INSTAT and the Municipality of Vora.)

industry and the fishing industry are at constant levels. The specific weight of each class during 2020 is shown in Figure 13. Although with a contraction of about 10%, the manufacturing industry is still the leading sector in the Municipality of Vora with over 62% of the entire industrial sector.

Services. The services sector is also the sector with the largest weight and constitutes 78% of the local economic structure in terms of the number of economic operators.

This sector has seen a contraction of 16.63% over the last 5 years. What makes it different from the manufacturing sector is that this downward trend can be observed almost proportionally in all 5 of its sub-sectors. This makes us think that the main factor is the reduction of the services market due to the emigration of the population of this municipality to the most economically developed areas within the country as well as emigration abroad.

Making a more detailed classification of this sector for 2020, as can be seen from Graph 16, results in that in the Municipality of Vora, out of 846 registered businesses, 437 or 52% operate in the trade sub-sector; 62 or 7% operate in the transport and storage sub-sector; 120 or 14% in accommodation and food and 204 or 24% operate in other services sector.

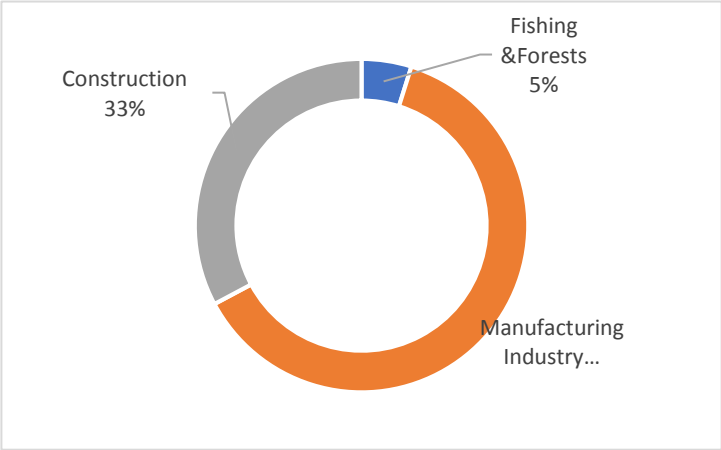

Figure 14: Report of the main sub-sectors of Industry for 2020. (Source: INSTAT and the Municipality of Vora.)

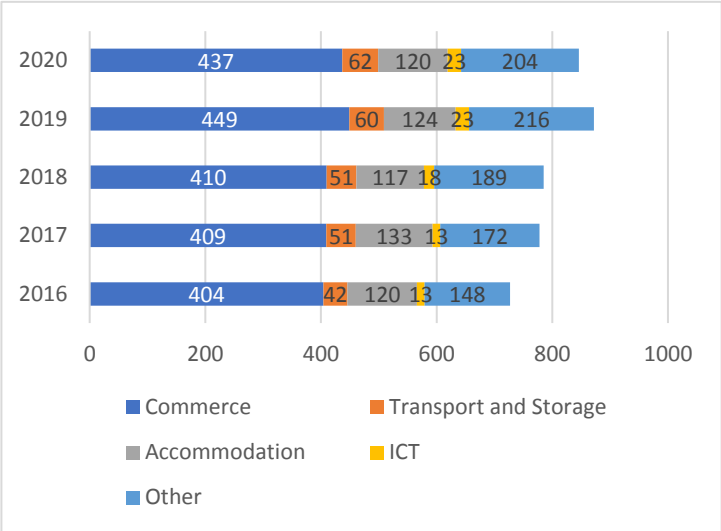

Figure 15: Structure of the Services Industry according to 5 official classifications during the last 5 years. (Source: INSTAT and the Municipality of Vora.)

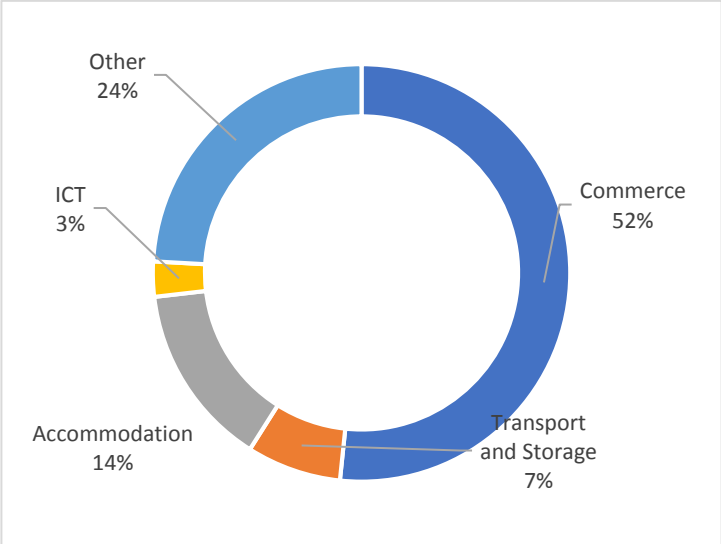

Figure 16: Report of the main productive industry classes for 2020. (Source: INSTAT and the Municipality of Vora.)

2.4 SOCIAL PROFILE

Employment. Despite being located in a very good area for businesses, the number of employees in the private sector in Vora remains low at only 786. Services with 54.6% of the number of employees is the main source of employment in Vora followed by industry with 34.8 %. Employment in agriculture is reported to be low, only 10.6% of employees, due to informality in rural areas.

Many of the businesses are located along the Tiranë - Durrës highway, where about 50 hotels and restaurants are counted. Figures from the Regional Employment Office show that almost 65% of the active working population is employed in Tiranë. Practically based on the data of the Municipality of Vora, there is a situation of employees according to AU as follows:

Administrative Unit	Population	% of employees	% outside the territory of AU
Bërxullë	9,883	65.0 %	100 %
Prezë	4,727	29.0 %	56.6 %
Vora	10,901	23.6 %	34.8 %

Table 5. Situation of employees. (Source: Regional Employment Office and the Municipality of Vora.)

These data reinforce once again the small% of employees in agriculture as well as the labor market outside the Municipality of Vora.

The number of job seekers according to the Employment Office is extremely low, only 132. Unemployment trends according to the Census show that youth and women unemployment is reported to be extremely problematic.

Vora	Total	Male	Female	Young
	29.4%	26.4%	38.6%	48,6%

Table 6. Job seekers in Vora Municipality. (Source: Employment Office and the Municipality of Vora.)

Individuals in need of at least one form of social care service, identified at the end of 2020 in the territory of the Municipality of Vora, are 365 families with approximately 942 individuals, which constitute 3.7% of the population registered according to the civil status, or about 8.6% of the resident population.

The figure shows the budget used by the Municipality of Vora in the last 10 years for the payments of Individuals in Need. The municipality fund is mainly used to support low-income families who did not receive assistance from the national program.

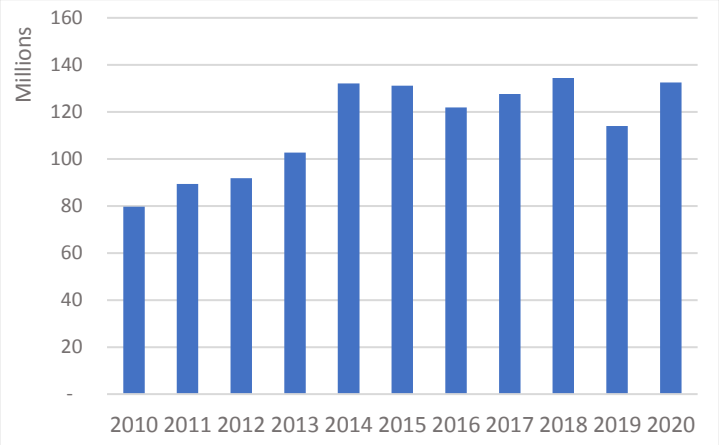

Figure 17. Budget used by the Municipality of Vora in 10 years. (Source: Vora Municipality)

Education. Data on education show an average of 21 children per kindergarten teacher. The situation is better in primary and secondary education, where the average is 16 and 24 students per teacher, respectively. It is also noted that all students who complete primary education continue their secondary education, while 80% continue their university education.

According to the local Education Administration, there are 17 schools in the municipality of Vora, attended by 4386 children. The data are presented in the figure.

In the territory of the Municipality of Vora, there are 14 nine-year schools and 3 high schools, in which study 4,386 students, and in these 31 schools teach 259 teachers. In the municipality of Vora, there are 14 kindergartens with 861 children with 42 kindergarten teachers.

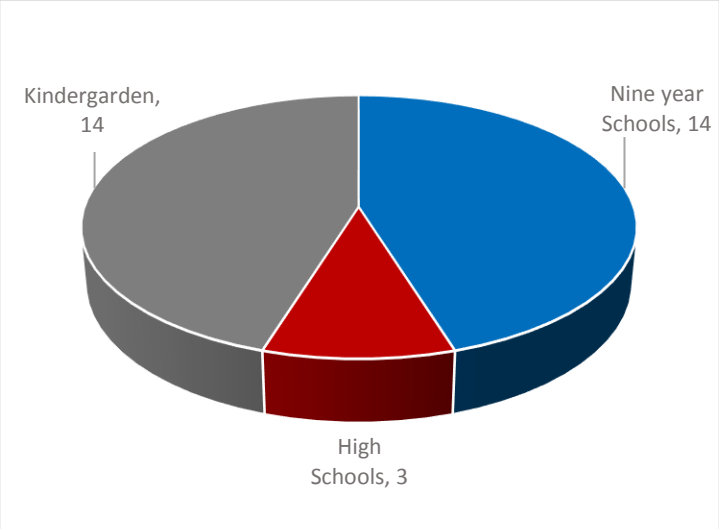

Figure 18. Number of institutions by educational structures. (Source: Vora Municipality)

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)[5], the earthquake's magnitude 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 damage was caused in 11 municipalities of Albania, where Tiranë and Durrës were the most affected municipalities, followed by the municipalities of Shijak, Mirditë, Lezhë, Kurbin, Kamëz, Vora, Kavajë and Rrogozhinë. 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 7 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
TOTAL	843.89	141.18	985.07

Table 7: Damages and Losses in Million Euros by sectors at Republic level. Source: PDNA

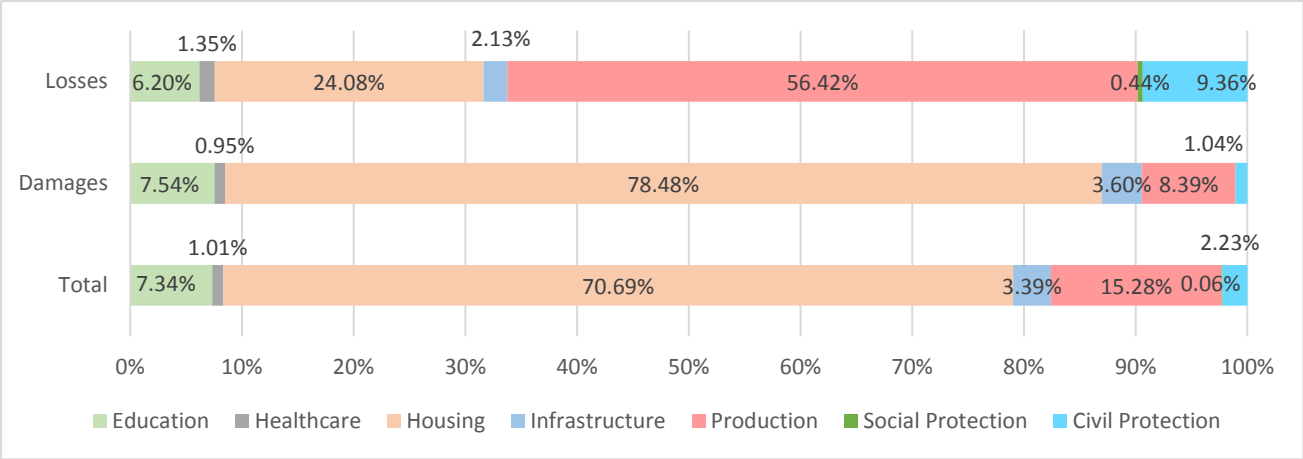

Figure 19: Specific Weight of Injuries and Losses by sectors at Republic level. Source: PDNA

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

5 https://albania.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/no.4-Albania_Post-Disaster_Needs_Assessment_(PDNA)_Volume_A_Report_20_February_2020.pdf

occupies the largest part of the amount (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 the 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 accurate according to the information provided by the municipalities, the two basic most damaged sectors of the economy, after the houses, which suffered 70% of the earthquake damages, are infrastructure and that of production including buildings. Practically, figures 20 and 21 are presented in% according to subsectors the losses and damages in these two sectors.

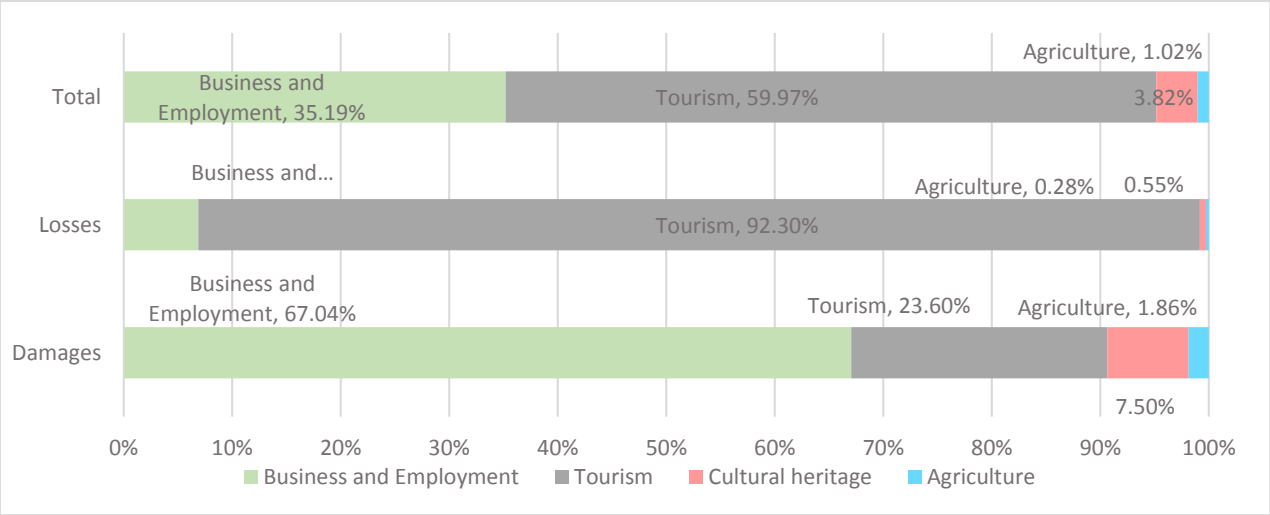

Figure 20: Specific Weight of Injuries and Losses by production subsector. Source: PDNA

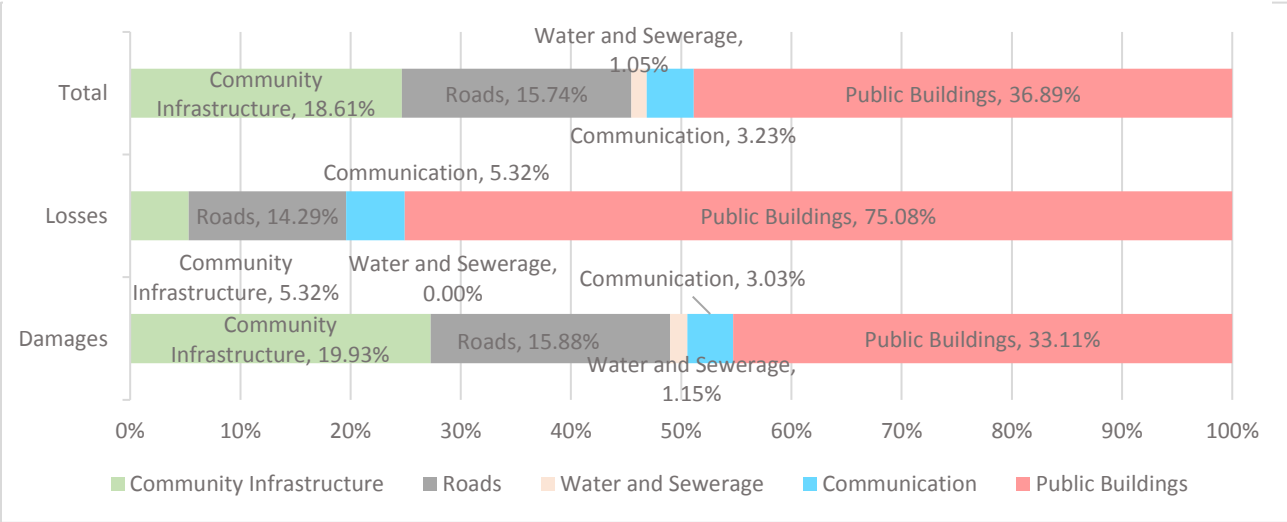

Figure 21: Specific Weight of Damages and Losses by Infrastructure subsector. Source: PDNA

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 figure 22 shows the distribution of the affected population by municipalities.

As it appears from the data, in the Municipality of Vora we have a number of 7,498 inhabitants of the total population of Albania affected by the earthquake, approximately

3%. In relation to the resident population, the number of affected persons is about 19%, which is considerable for this municipality and ranks it as the fifth most affected municipality among the 11 affected municipalities.

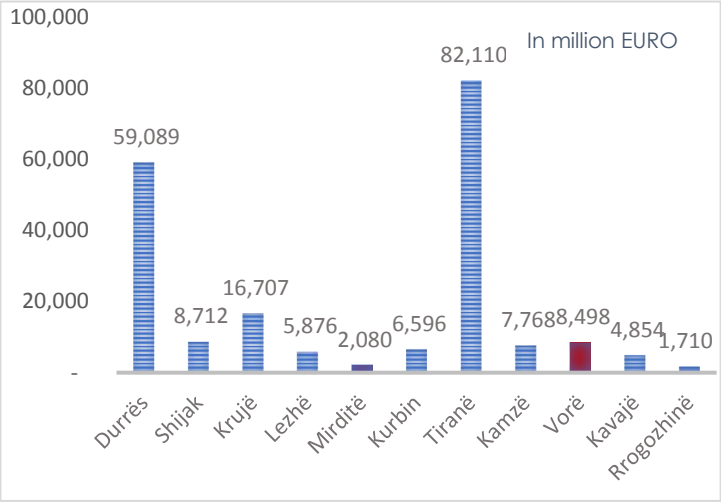

Figure 22: No. of population whose dwellings have been damaged or destroyed by Municipalities. Source: PDNA and Municipalities.

As we mentioned above, the financial losses in damages and losses are estimated at 985.07 million Euros. From this point of view, the Municipality of Vora, with 49.81 million losses and damages, is classified as the 6th damaged municipality. The figure presents the values of losses and damages for each municipality in absolute value.

While calculating the losses per capita of the resident population, it ranks 2nd, much higher than the national average.

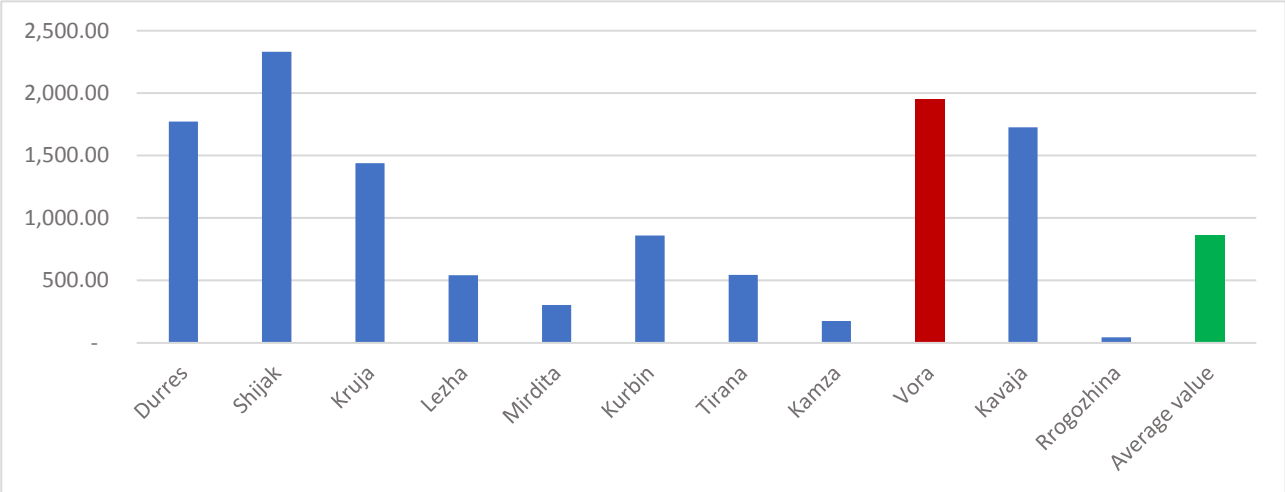

Figure 23: Financial damages in damages and losses by Municipalities. Source: PDNA and Municipalities

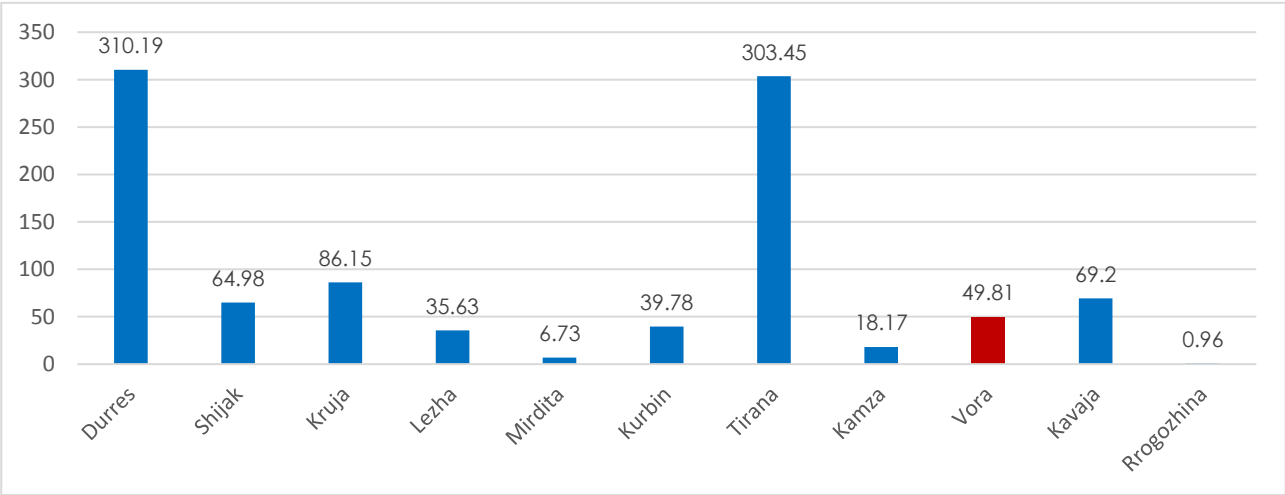

Figure 24: Financial damages in damages and losses per capita by Municipalities. Source: PDNA and Municipalities

In the Municipality of Vora, from the total damages and losses of49.81 million Euros, the housing sector is the most affected with 40.16 million Euros or 81%, followed by the production sector with 5.59 million Euros or 11% and the Civil Protection and GDR with 4%. Fortunately, the Social Protection sector in this municipality did not suffer any losses or damages. The Infrastructure Sector has shown loss or damage in the amount of 1 million Euros or 2%.

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 Vora, these damages are estimated at 49.81 million Euros, almost 7% of the losses of this sector. Figure 25 shows the distribution by type of damage.

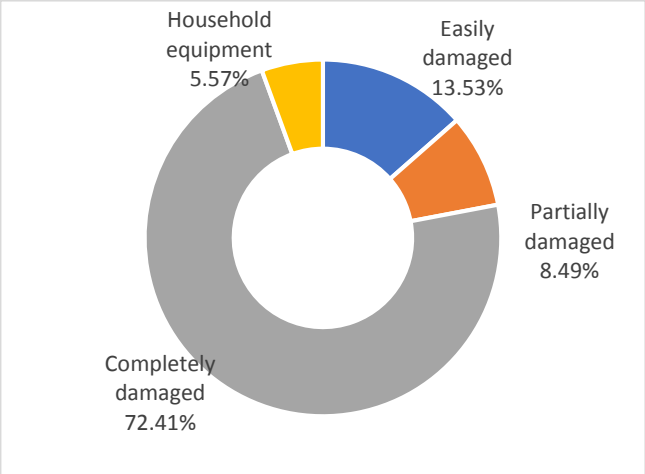

Figure 25: Financial damages of the Housing Sector by type of damage. Source: PDNA and Vora Municipality

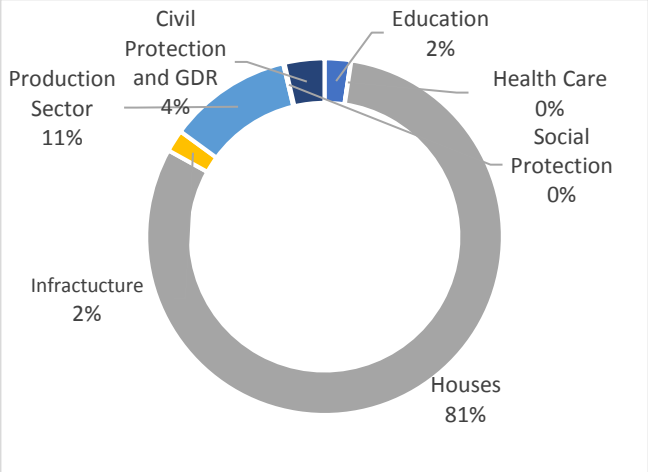

Figure 26: Financial losses by sectors in the Municipality of Vora. Source: PDNA and Municipalities

Detailed information on damages in the Municipality of Vora. In the Municipality of Vora, the great tremors of the earthquake of November 26, 2019 brought, as a result, numerous damages to residences and buildings of institutions.

Total families affected as per the Building Ascertainment Act for buildings damaged by the earthquake:

No.	Administrative Unit	Residence type	Slightly damaged Residences	Uninhabitable Residences	Damaged and out of order Residences
1	Vora	Individual	61	142	125
2	Vora	Collective	7	2	23

Educational Facilities and Institutions. In addition to the damaged collective and individual dwellings, this area also contains damaged public spaces and social infrastructure, such as according to the table below.

No.	Administrative Unit	Name of the School/Kindergarten	Level of Damage
1	Vora	Municipality building	DS3
2	Vora	Kindergarten "Muçaj"	DS4
3	Marikaj	High School	DS4

Analysis of the damage caused by the earthquake and the needs for accommodation. In the Municipality of Vora, the large tremors of the earthquake of November 26, 2019 caused damage to apartments, service units, and administrative buildings. After determining and assessing the damages, the Municipality of Vora proceeded to the reconstruction process. For this purpose, two Compulsory Local Plans (PDyV) were implemented which were approved by the National Council of Territorial Adjustment respectively on 18.08.2020 for A.U. Vora and with decision no. 6029 dated 27.07.2020 for A.U. Marikaj. Based on these PdyV which enable:

a) Development and/or re-development of an area damaged 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 on residence construction as follows:

- Collective Residences 426

50 families from individual residences will be housed in collective dwellings. Divided by size/structure, the residences are grouped as follows:

No.	Residence structure	Number
1	Residences with structure for 1-2 members	141
2	Residences with structure for 2-3 members	205
3	Residences with structure for 4+ members	123

4. ANALYSIS OF VALUE CHAINS IN VORA 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 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 the tools, jobs, opportunities, skills, financial resources, services to increase their income. The roles of women in value chains are essential for the development of market systems, especially rural and agricultural value chains, but are also increasing in the manufacturing sector, in which women occupy the highest number in the "production base". 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 occur 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, at the same time reducing gender-based barriers that hinder women's full economic participation. Initiatives for the development of the market system should take into account the multiple roles women play and the systematic disadvantage, as well as utilize the possibilities of using remedial measures that actively promote the transformation of gender norms and equal opportunities for women.

Developing the value chain and market system means performing actions that improve productivity, including value chains, and changing the way market support functions and rules operate to support the future development of the value chain. Approaches to market system development, such as value chain development, have been used to improve sector productivity and competitiveness, and promote economic development. Markets serve as the main means by which women and men participate in 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, decision-making of value chains, as well as the benefits that come as a result of the development of 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.

The gender-sensitive value chain analysis and development approach help achieve gender equality and broader goals in Albania by identifying value chain solutions that improve productivity. They reduce gender-related barriers to achieve women's full participation and inclusion and promote equality between women and men. Table 8 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 "sole provider". More investment in children's education and health.	Self-realization, more trust, improved social capital. Increasing women's skills. Women's economic independence.
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 equitable and equal access to business development support services.

Table 8. Benefits of gender-based interventions in the value chain.

All the main economic sectors in the municipality of Vora were initially assessed using the criteria of gender sensitivity analysis in value chains (GSVCA), among the most important of 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 Vora turned out to be as follows:

- Agriculture: Autochthonous Products Cultivation
- Agriculture: Vineyards and Wine Production
- Agriculture: Olive and Oil Production
- Agriculture: Aromatic and Medicinal Plants, mainly herbal teas
- Tourism: Agritourism

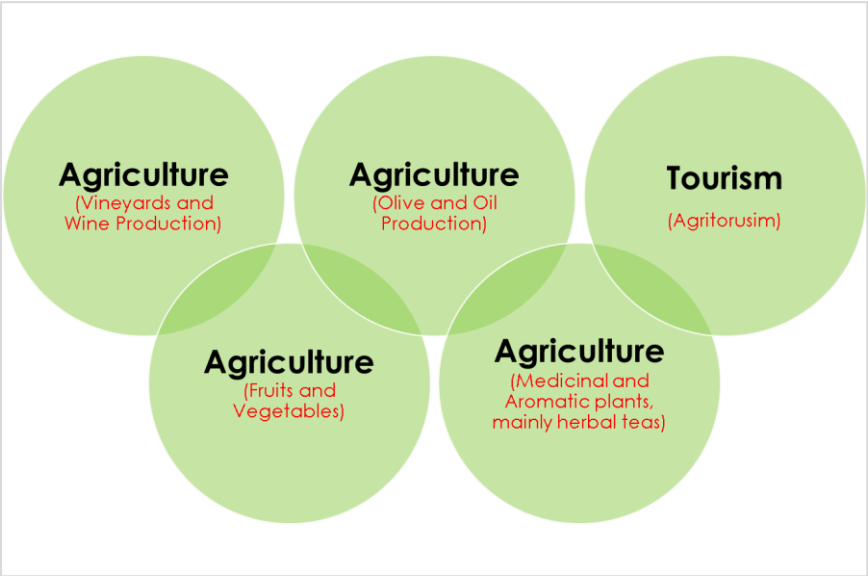

Figure 27. Identified Value Chains.

Agritourism remains the main challenge of the area to orient the geographical, climatic, and human potential towards a more productive economy towards tourist services related to cuisine, ecotourism, etc. Preza, with its affirmed historical and architectural values, is experiencing an initial moment in the revival of its former status, which, although not in its typical form, constitutes a reference for many visitors and consequently for the development of Agritourism.

Further, in cooperation with the Municipality and stakeholders, a detailed assessment was conducted with reference to 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, limitations, possible solutions, etc., which in a macro analysis are presented summarized in the table below:

Criteria	Agritourism	Agriculture (Autochthonous products, olive, MAPs)	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 Vora, 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, even though informally.
Do women (or can they) acquire the skills needed to add value through	Women can gain the necessary skills, and 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

product processing or diversification?			is an opportunity to increase their skills, which is very necessary.
Does this value chain offer new opportunities for women?	Yes, because in addition to the cooking and cleaning that 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 this sector would increase significantly.
Can this value chain improve living conditions for women/families?	Agritourism is very well recognized as an important diversification strategy for inclusive tourism. Agritourism development can increase farm sales and add value to agricultural products.	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?	The Municipality of Vora itself supports the sector in terms of marketing to turn it into a potential sector for Vora.	Various donor-funded projects such as USAID, ADA, GIZ, etc., have repeatedly supported this sector.	To date, there are no organizations supporting this sector other than the Sommelier Association.
Are there opportunities to make changes with small investments?	There are opportunities, especially in the transformation of wineries or even certain farms into real Agritourism 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 contribute to the development of the sector.

Table 9. Macro analysis of the three sub-sectors of agriculture.

Given that after the development of a relatively large industrial zone integrated with the municipalities of Tiranë and Durres along the highway, Agriculture, including the entire territory of the Municipality of Vora is and will be the engine and the main economic direction in this Municipality, we have realized a more detailed analysis of these four main subsectors of agriculture for this municipality, that of the production of Agricultural Products (Fruit and Vegetables), Viticulture and Wine Production, Olive and Oil Production and MAPs mainly that of tea, as well as the sector of Agritourism, as a sector closely related to these sectors.

4.1 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VALUE CHAIN (FRUIT AND VEGETABLES)

4.1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION IN THE VC

The territorial area of Vora 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 principles of environmental protection. The existence of natural areas and especially the hilly ones of this territory positively impacts the preservation of diversified biodiversity in these areas, especially in the Administrative Unit Bërxullë and in the villages Marikaj and Marqinet.

Regarding the types of agricultural resources of this area, it is noticed that farmers have autochthonous varieties of many plant products in this territory, which are evaluated and classified by the Genetic Bank of Albania. The values of these autochthonous resources are known and are in demand by the consumers of Tiranë and Durrës. Thus, there are many people who, when they come from the south of the country and return to Tiranë or to the north, stop in the village of Marikaj to buy these products. In addition to typical products in the Municipality of Vora, many vegetables are produced as well as some fruits, which add to the values of its agro-biodiversity.

Although the Municipality of Vora offers favorable conditions for the development of intensive vegetable production, again in 2020 in the Municipality of Vora were planted only 432 ha. This area is always in these figures in recent years. Even the production realized from vegetable plants is always around the same figures and last year it was worth 10,010 tons. This vegetable production is mainly used for the needs of farming families and its surpluses go only to the regional market of this municipality and not elsewhere.

Regarding the vegetables planting period, in the Municipality of Vora, farmers plant the first vegetable crops and a small area of them is planted with second vegetable crops. Specifically, last year the area of second vegetables was only 56 ha, a figure which is almost the same in recent years and a total production of 812 tons of total second vegetables was realized.

Fresh vegetables. In the Municipality of Vora, the area cultivated with raw vegetables in 2020 was 365 ha and a total production of 8,633 tons was realized. Among the main vegetables we can mention:

- Tomato, last year were planted 91 ha, an area which is at the same values in recent years and was realized a total production of 2939 tons. The average yield realized this year was 344 tons/ha.
- Cucumber is an important vegetable crop for the municipality of Vora and is almost at the same value as tomatoes and peppers. In 2020, a total of 73 ha was planted, and the same total production of 1,839 tons was taken, a production which has small variations from year to year. The average yield realized this year was 25.37 tons/ha.
- Pepper is the second crop in terms of area planted with fresh vegetables in the Municipality of Vora and is almost at the same value as tomatoes and cucumbers. In

2020, 76 ha of peppers were planted and a total production of 1890 tons of peppers was realized. The average yield realized this year was 248.7 q/ha.

Dried vegetables. The Municipality of Vora has relatively good conditions for planting and producing dried vegetables, although there is no established tradition for the production of dried vegetables in this municipality. Specifically, the area planted with dried vegetables for the last year was only 38 ha, which has been almost at the same levels over the last few years, and a total production of 488 tons was realized, a production which fluctuates in these figures for several years.

The main crop among dried vegetables in the Municipality of Vora, as everywhere in our country, is dried onions, where last year 29 ha were planted and a total production of 411 tons of dried onions was realized with an average yield of 141.7 q/ha, which should be said that this yield is normal for the cultivation conditions offered by this district, but the opportunities are to increase further.

Melons are not very popular plants for the farmers of this municipality. Last year, only 29 ha were planted with melon plants, an area which has remained almost at the same levels for several years in a row, and a total production of 889 tons was realized.

Greenhouses. The Municipality of Vora has very good conditions for the construction of greenhouses, both in terms of soil, agro-climatic conditions but also proximity to the main markets of the country. This has led many farmers or various investors to invest in protected areas in this municipality. However, there is still room for increasing the surface area of greenhouses and farmers are aware of the value that it brings, but finding a source of funding always remains a problem. For the last year in the Municipality of Vora, the area cultivated with vegetables in greenhouses was 20 ha, an area that has remained unchanged in recent years, and a total production of 659 tons was realized, which remained at stable levels for the last years.

Even in this municipality, the surface of the greenhouses is planted with first vegetables as well as second vegetables. It should be noted that the farmers of Vora prefer to plant the first crops, and specifically last year, 16 ha were planted with the first vegetable crops and 5 ha planted with the second vegetable crops. The production realized from the planting of greenhouses with the first vegetables last year was 535 tons of vegetables, while with the second vegetables, the production was lower, and concretely, a total production of 124 tons was realized.

Fruit trees. Fruit growing, as everywhere in our country and in the Municipality of Vora, is a permanent agricultural activity carried out by the farmers of this area, which is generally extensive. As we have pointed out above, the development of fruit growing enables and positively affects the biodiversity of the environment. In this municipality, there are quite good conditions for the cultivation of a wide range of fruit trees.

For last year, fruit trees in the Municipality of Vora for last year were counted 95 thousand tree roots, of which fruit-bearing were only 71 thousand. As can be seen, there are 20 thousand roots in the process of growth and this shows that the new plantings in this municipality are in the focus of farmers, who are showing an increased interest in planting fruit trees. These fruit trees are spread throughout the territory of the municipality of Vora, but generally, extensive orchards are located in the hilly areas of the municipality and in

recent years, the investments have been made into the establishment of intensive orchards in this municipality.

Fruit production in Vora is relatively satisfactory and specifically last year, a total production of 1,393 tons was realized, and last year, a relatively low yield was realized with only 19.6 kg/root. Fruit tree products are divided as follows:

- Drupe fruits. The whole production of orchards in this area is the main result of the nuclear orchards, from which a total of 39 thousand roots are in production, of which a total production of 653 tons of fruit is realized.
- Pome fruits. As for the light fruit trees in this district, there are a total of 13 thousand roots, last year, a production of 300 tons was realized.
- Subtropical Orchards. Subtropical orchards are also located in this district, where there are 15 thousand roots in production out of 20 thousand roots in total and realizing a total production of 375 tons.
- Walnuts. Walnuts are fruit trees that, although they are not typical fruit trees of this area, it must be said that, in some cases, they find good conditions for their development, especially in the hilly areas of Vora district. Their total number of 4 thousand roots, of which fruit-bearing only 2 thousand roots, and which realize a total production of 18 tons.
- Mulberries are fruit trees that existed before but are not growing much. These are mainly in the yards of the villagers and there are about 1 thousand roots in total, all of them fruit-bearing. The production of berries in this district is estimated at 13 tons in total.
- Other fruit trees are being successfully cultivated in this area and specifically their total number has reached 3 thousand roots, of which only 2 thousand roots are fruit-bearing, which provide a total production of 36 tons.

4.1.2 OVERALL VC EVALUATION BASED ON BASIC CRITERIA

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

Question	Points*	Weight	Total	Description
Is the participation of employed women in the value chain relatively high?	3	2	6	Yes, women are more involved than men, even though they are not formally registered.
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 based on tradition; men are considered as the head of the family, who make decisions, are landowners and represent the family in relation to third parties. Nevertheless, there are some businesses in the area that are famous for having women managing them (e.g. Subashi

				oil factory in the Marikaj area), which consequently influence the agricultural sector as a whole when it comes to the role that women play and can play in it.
Do women control/own equipment and assets?	2	2	4	The need for technology is low, except for a tractor for tillage, which when it 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?	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 working grounds.
Is this a value chain with small barriers to access 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)?	2	2	4	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. 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,

				existence of other women entrepreneurs in the area
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 traditional autochthonous products, 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 groups of interest 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-owned small business in this sector.
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 and plowing. Also, not registering as an employee in the business prevents them from taking advantage of all the opportunities.
Total for gender potential			67/102	

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

Table 10. Evaluation of women's empowerment and gender equality in the VC of Autochthonous Agricultural Products.

4.1.3 ANALYSIS OF AUTOCHTHONOUS AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VALUE CHAIN

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

SWOT ANALYSIS OF AUTOCHTHONOUS AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VALUE CHAIN	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
▪ Willingness to participate in trainings; ▪ Willingness of key VC actors to increase product quality; ▪ Involvement of women in the whole process and awareness of its contribution; ▪ Existence of these varieties in these areas as well as very good knowledge for cultivation ▪ Their adaptation to the terrain conditions of this area and the stability of their production without the use of agricultural inputs, such as chemical fertilizers or pesticides to protect plants against their diseases and parasites.	▪ Lack of financial resources and consequently lack of proper investments in technology and processing activities; ▪ Lack of certification for safety and quality standards; ▪ Informal operation in the market (unregistered businesses).

- Consumer demand for these products is quite promising
- Existence of a series of agritourist resorts in this territory
- Agritourism of this area has extraordinary demands for these types of products, as this activity relies heavily on local products of the area.
- Their cultivation is annual and creates opportunities for employment of farming families in this area and protects the land from the phenomenon of erosion.
- Self-employment of women and youth will have more chances through the cultivation of these species
- They supply the market with quality products and without waste harmful to human health, do not harm and pollute the environment, on the contrary contribute to its sustainability.
- Proximity to large urban areas of Tiranë and Durres (1 hour), there are a series of shops in Tiranë and Durres that are ready to sell these types of products.

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
▪ Opportunity to benefit from the IPARD financing scheme; ▪ Increased demand for fruits and vegetables in the domestic and foreign markets. ▪ Increasing demand as a result of population awareness of their values. ▪ Support provided for autochthonous farm resources by the Ministry of Agriculture such as the development of sustainable agriculture. ▪ Development of Agritourism in the area of Durrës and Tiranë, which requires these products for consumption compared to other types. ▪ Existence of basic knowledge of farmers for the cultivation of these species and the desire of the younger generation to start agricultural businesses in terms of typical productivity of the area. ▪ In the context of climate change, autochthonous plant resources are the most sustainable and guarantee a secure future compared to other species.	▪ Lack of promotion and marketing strategies (regional brands); ▪ Lack of information from main institutions regarding the plans and benefits of the sector; ▪ Lack of attention from institutions towards the needs of the sector. ▪ Lack of dedicated markets in the villages where these activities take place.

Table 11. SWOT Analysis of Autochthonous Agricultural Products Value Chain

4.2 VINEYARDS AND WINE PRODUCTION VALUE CHAIN

4.2.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION IN THE VC

In the hilly area that extends from the villages of Marikaj, Marqinet, Prezë and Ahmetaq, grape production has an ancient tradition, dating back to the time of the Illyrians. This is confirmed by the archaeological data collected in this area. Also, this area was one of the most productive areas of high-quality wine even before the '90s. This has been one of the most productive and traditional areas in Albania. Marikaj vineyards have been one of the most popular areas of the country in terms of grape production for wine production. This area has been designed and planted since the times of Italian protectorate and further developed in the first decades of communism by Albanian agricultural specialists. Even after 1990, with the exception of the trauma suffered during the first years of the change of ownership, the area of vineyards in this area has increased significantly.

Currently, in the territory of the Municipality of Vora, with the small area of agricultural land compared to other districts, a total of 55 ha of vineyards is planted where all trees are fully fruit-bearing. In this district a total production of only 1,245 tons of grapes is achieved, which for the most part comes from plots with relatively considerable area. This makes this area distinct from many other areas of the country, where grape production is generally on the surfaces of family orchards and pergolas. This product generally goes for processing, as the cultivar produced is more suitable for processing and not for the table. The realized yield of the vineyard is below the average for the country, and last year, an average yield of 121 q/ha was realized.

There are about 67 thousand vine roots that are grown in the form of pergolas in this municipality (a very small figure compared to other municipalities in the country), where only 60 thousand roots are fruit-bearing and which realize a total production of 580 tons of grapes. Their productivity is quite low, as they do not receive proper care, but despite that it should be noted that thanks to the climatic conditions that this district has, a yield of 9.7 kg/root is still achieved.

Figure 28. Vineyards of the Enol canteen in the village of Prezë

Food, wine and viticulture industry.

Grape processing is a well-known and traditional industry in Albania. The development of this industry in the country requires special attention and is quite complex in terms of grape varieties produced in Albanian vineyards and the type of drinks according to the varieties thrown on the market under different brand names. Therefore, the development of

viticulture in the Municipality of Vora should always be seen in the context of the development of the country and never separated from it, for the specifics of this sector, which acts as a global sector and never as a regional sector. Despite that, small areas of vineyards in this territory are located among the largest and highest quality grape processing wineries in the country. One such in the Prezë area is Enol canteen.

This area of the Municipality of Vora, is part of the areas with the best reputation for quality wines in all of Albania. Right next to this municipality is the village of Shesh of Tiranë, from where it got the name of the well-known autochthonous grape variety Shesh i Zi and Shesh i Bardhë, which is cultivated with great success in many areas in the territory of this municipality.

In the fields, in recent years, has begun a massive cultivation of vineyards. This is also characteristic of this area. We encounter this phenomenon in some other areas of the country, but here it is generally more intense 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 grape processing factories in Durrës, some of the largest in the country, are very close.

Vineyard cultivars. In the Municipality of Vora, there is a variety of cultivars. Among the main cultivars found in this region are:

- *Shesh i Bardhë dhe Shesh i Zi* are the most important local varieties for wine production. The name comes from the hilly village of Shesh located 15 km away from Tiranë and from which it was distributed in many coastal regions of Albania. It represents about 35% of the grapes processed for wine production.
- *Cabernet* is a foreign cultivar that started to be planted mainly after the `90s. It is black grape and produces quality wine.
- *San Giovese* is a variety of Italian origin that has recently arrived and is being preferred by Vora farmers, as it has a ruby red color and produces wines with a high percentage of alcohol.
- *Chardonnay, Riesling, Petit Verdon, Shiraz (in probation), etc.* These varieties have the smallest spread in the territory of this municipality.

Grape growers and processors. The main actors in the production and processing of grapes in this district, unlike almost all other districts of the country, are the industrial wine processors. After them come the farmers who produce and process grapes in wine and brandy for their family needs as well as for trade.

Farmers. Most of the agricultural farms in the Municipality of Vora, as everywhere in Albania, are mixed farms, farms that produce for self-consumption and sale, and a large part of them cultivate grapes. The number of market-oriented farmers (farmers with vineyards larger than 0.5 ha), has a significant difference compared to many other municipalities in our country. Here farms are always very market oriented. However, it should be noted that the number of farms that cover all their needs only from the activity of cultivating vineyards is still low.

Processing farmers. Farmers in this district process significant quantities of grapes to produce brandy (raki) and/or wine. Almost 2/3 of farmers use more than half of the grape production for brandy production. This is due, on the one hand, to tradition and, on the other hand, to

the fact that brandy is much easier to produce and store, and it is the dominant grape by-product compared to wine. Meanwhile, wine production on farms is low and declining. This significant reduction in on-farm wine production confirms the tendency of consumers to buy higher quality imported wine (as shown by import statistics) and domestic wine produced from wineries. The technology of on-farm wine production is usually primitive and basic; often the wine produced is stored in plastic containers and marketed in plastic bottles.

4.2.2 GENERAL VC 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 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, especially in viticulture sector. 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	1	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.

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.
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	Low access to financial resources due to informality, lack of information and low level of funds absorption, 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 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.
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?	2	2	4	Women cannot perform specific activities that require special physical skills, such as driving tractors, transporting, or plowing. Also, not registering as an employee in the business, prevents them from taking advantage of all the opportunities.
Total for gender potential			53/102	

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

Table 12. Assessment of women's empowerment and gender equality for Viticulture and Wine Production VC.

4.2.3 SWOT ANALYSIS OF VITICULTURE AND WINE PRODUCTION VALUE CHAIN

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

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, Shesh i Zi, Shesh i Bardhe, etc. ▪ Employment and income in the viticulture and wine production sector are higher and more stable than in some other agricultural sectors.	▪ 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. ▪ From the interviews with the consumers it appears that the cheap look of wine packaging does not stimulate the consumption of wine by the general population as it creates a wrong message cheaper packaging = lower quality. ▪ Lack of qualified managerial staff and genuine specialists in the wine production sector.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
▪ The unused area is a potential motivating factor for increasing the productivity of vineyards and wine in this municipality ▪ The initial investment in viticulture does not represent a high cost, compared to the initial investment in other agricultural crops. ▪ The timely return coefficient of the initial investment is low, so the investment returns very quickly. ▪ The increase of areas with viticulture will create new opportunities for entering the market with the production of industrialized wine. ▪ 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. ▪ The designation of the agricultural development economy as a priority in the current government program represents an important factor that will affect the increase of support with financial funds.	▪ Excessive supply coming from the global wine market. ▪ Change in the culture of wine consumption. ▪ The pressure exerted in the market by importing companies on domestic production. ▪ 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. ▪ Existence of a large number of informal producers who not only harm the fair competition in the market, but offer counterfeit wines. ▪ Lack of loans with favorable conditions for viticulture and wine production.

Table13. SWOT Analysis of Viticulture and Wine Production Value Chain.

4.3 MEDICINAL AND AROMATIC PLANTS (MAPS)VALUE CHAIN IN

4.3.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION IN THE VC

Medicinal and Aromatic plants (MAP), as everywhere in Albania have begun to be cultivated in the Municipality of Vora. They are mainly planted in small areas, mainly in Marikaj, where their processing has begun, mainly in the direction of herbal and aromatic teas. In this area, they are associated and intertwined with the olive groves that lie in these territories. In the last two or three years, there has been an increasing interest of farmers to cultivate MAP on their lands as they are agricultural crops which can provide much better income compared to other traditional plants that farmers have been cultivating over the years. So the demands and initiatives from both farmers and producer groups exist but require support and promotion to support this lucrative agricultural activity.

The medicinal and aromatic plants sector is very important for the Albanian economy. There is a long tradition in collecting wild MAPs that began during the centralized economy system, when Albania was exporting MAPs worth about USD 50 million. In recent years in the statistical indicators of agricultural products, there is a very large increase in exports of medicinal plants. Albania is a major international player for some products, such as sage, thyme, oregano and watermelon.

In recent years, the cultivation of MAPs is increasing and many farmers are switching from cultivating traditional crops to cultivating medicinal and aromatic plants. According to the data of the Ministry of Agriculture, there are about 4,000 small farms in Albania that are dedicated to the cultivation of MAP.

The agro-ecological conditions of the Marikaj area are very favorable for the cultivation of MAPs. The climate is typical for key MAP requirements: it is represented by long summers and accompanied by prolonged droughts - two of the main elements that these plants favor. Soils are generally alluvial and with a low percentage of organic matter - another very important requirement for the production of quality MAP products. Furthermore, the farmers of this area plant MAP in the olive plots, which enables the improvement of the taste of the olive oil from the grain.

Today, there are more and more farmers who see MAPs as an opportunity to provide enough income to support their living conditions, instead of having to resort to emigration. It should be noted that in general the work with MAPs, both for collection as well as for cultivation, is carried out on a family basis. Generally, the cultivators in the fields are women and young girls and a very small percentage are men. Women as everywhere in this municipality have a desire to get involved in the cultivation of MAPs.

4.3.2 GENERAL SECTOR EVALUATION BASED ON BASIC CRITERIA

The assessment of women empowerment and gender equality in selected value chains, opportunities, and SWOT analysis for the Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAP) value chain is presented below.

Question	Points*	Weight	Total	Description
Is the participation of employed women in the value chain relatively high?	4	2	8	In the Marikaj area of Vora, two groups of women were identified involved in wild plant collection and drying activities. Their involvement is informal. There are also 5 women farmers who have started cultivating MAP. In addition, there are some businesses in the area that are famous for having women managing them (e.g. Subashi oil factory in the Marikaj area), which consequently influences the agricultural sector as a whole when it comes to the role that women play and can play in it.
Are there many female entrepreneurs in the value chain?	2	2	4	There are no important women entrepreneurs in the Municipality of Vora, but in some cases they manage the whole process, but even here they are informal.
Do women control/own equipment and assets?	3	2	6	Assets and equipment are under the control of the family and men and women have the same access.
Do women (or can they) acquire the skills needed to add value through product processing or diversification?	4	1	4	Women possess basic skills for the collection and drying processes, however there is a high will to gain knowledge and skills for using proper collection and cultivation techniques, drying and proper storage.
Do women have control over sales and enterprise revenue?	3	2	6	Family income is usually managed by men, but the decision is made by family consensus. Women are in charge of budget planning, whether for family essentials (food, children's needs) or for the business expenses.
Can work be located near home?	3	1	3	The collection of wild plants takes place in the mountains, usually away from home. However, cultivation and drying can be done near the house, which would improve the current working conditions of women considerably.
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	2	6	There is a cultural barrier for women to own or be a business manager, as this field is usually considered a male-owned sector, although the situation is changing in the recent years with the attention this sector and women entrepreneurs from this region are gaining from their appearances on TV.

Does this value chain offer new opportunities for women?	4	4	16	Women can be involved in various steps and activities in the value chain, such as cultivating, collecting, drying, storing, packaging, marketing and selling. This would require the acquisition of new skills, combined with some investment to set up the business.
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	MAP activity can provide sufficient income for the inhabitants of the Municipality of Vora, especially for women. It is also presented as a good opportunity for self-employment. But attention should be paid to proper collection practices, in order to preserve biodiversity.
Is there a connection between what women do and prospects for growth/diversification in the value chain?	4	1	4	Currently women are involved in the process of collecting and drying wild MAP. However, the sector is underdeveloped and needs strategic interventions to promote growth and diversification. So what women are doing individually will not bring any other greater growth perspective.
Are there gender norms (for example "women's work") that prevent women from taking full advantage of value chain opportunities?	4	2	8	Home maintenance and childcare are time consuming activities for women; however, they are willing to participate and offer their contribution.
Total for gender potential			71/102	

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

Table14. Assessing Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in the MAP Value Chain.

4.3.3 SWOT ANALYSIS OF AROMATIC AND MEDICINAL PLANTS VALUE CHAIN

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

SWOT ANALYSIS OF AROMATIC AND MEDICINAL PLANTS VALUE CHAIN (MAP)	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
▪ Existence of in-depth knowledge of the MAP sector; ▪ Existence of a guaranteed market, based on the existence of collectors ▪ The demand for teas and spices in the food industry has experienced an upward trend in recent years	▪ Excessive use of natural resources from their wild habitats and habitat changes have damaged the population levels of MAP species. ▪ Inadequate knowledge on sustainable harvesting, collection, post-harvesting,

▪ Favorable agro-ecological conditions for the cultivation of MAP ▪ The situation of farming families and the desire to deal with the cultivation of MAP, mainly by women.	processing and value-added, as well as lack of respective infrastructure facilities. ▪ Limited processing knowledge and lack of equipment for post-harvest operations (drying and storage). ▪ High percentage of losses after harvest and non-exportable rejections. ▪ Lack of infrastructure and post-harvest knowledge as well as adequate storage facilities result in significant losses. ▪ Lack of incentive financial schemes with strong local contracts ▪ Lack of adequate information on supply and demand.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
▪ High national and international demand for high quality products certified for sustainable collection and production, environmentally friendly. ▪ Export growth is driven by a combination of growing supply (mainly through increased cultivated MAPs) and increased global market demand. ▪ Increased consumer demand and preference for organically grown products. ▪ Land suitable for organic cultivation of various medicinal plants in the municipality of Vora. ▪ Availability of funds for grants and investments.	▪ Exhaustion of natural resources at an alarming rate. ▪ Uncontrolled harvesting of wild plants can destroy the biodiversity and sustainability of wild plants. ▪ The growing tendency of young people to leave rural areas for a better life in big cities. ▪ Natural variations such as droughts, floods and forest fires. ▪ High fluctuations in the international market price and the development of illegal market mechanisms. ▪ Property rights hinder investment. ▪ Lack of agricultural schemes with strong local contracts.

Table15. SWOT Analysis of Aromatic and Medicinal Plants Value Chain.

4.4 OLIVE AND OLIVE OIL VALUE CHAIN

4.4.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION IN THE VC

Olive is one of the oldest crops in this area, especially in the hills that start from the area of Preza to that of Vora. In this area olives are used for oil production as well as for canning. Olive oil is an old tradition of this area, even according to the oldest of the area, there are historical documents that show that in the 17th-18th centuries from this area (Marikaj-Preza), oil was exported to the Republic of Venice and St. Mark. While in the time of the Ottoman Empire, this area supplied olive oil to the Sultan's family. According to some research, this geographical area has the oldest olive trees in the country and even in the whole Europe.

New Municipality of Vora has a total of 138 thousand olive roots, of which 110 thousand roots are fully fruit-bearing, which shows that planting by farmers in recent years has continued. From these olives last year was realized a total production of 760 tons in total. In

addition to this production, a total of 140 tons of olives have been preserved in this district. But the yield of olives is relatively low and is likely to increase if farmers apply the technology links correctly. Last year, an average yield of 6.9 kg/root was achieved, which is much lower than the national average.

Figure 29: Olive orchards in Vora.

The olive that grows in this area, is the Kalinjot variety, a special and unique Albanian variety, which carries great nutritional and anti-cancer values. Olive oil is simply pressed in the factory; therefore, the oil retains the quality and aroma of the olive itself. The mastery of the area lies in the fact that the olive is processed as soon as it is harvested.

Figure 30: Olives of the Subashi Family in the village of Marikaj.

What is seen differently in the Marikaj area, in the production of olive oil is the diversification of products. Here, the company "Subashi" is a pioneer as besides pure olive oil for consumption, they sell in their shops, spicy olive oil, alternating with medicinal plants which they grow on their own lands or those of neighboring farmers, and that have significant nutritional and curative values. This company has also experimented with the

Figure 31: The range of Subashi products.

production of cosmetic products based on olive oil. They have also started to promote handicrafts carved from olive wood.

Olive oil production industry. The olive and olive oil sector is one of the main agri-food sectors in Albania. More than 100,000 farmers are involved in olive cultivation. Olive and olive oil production in Albania has increased partly thanks to government subsidy schemes. However, the chronic weaknesses of the sector, i.e. low yields and high prices of raw materials are not resolved - imports remain high while exports are very modest. The olive oil chain is considered as a priority sector in terms of an import replacement strategy, but also the export of high-quality olive oil. Olive production has been characterized by a marked upward trend - it has almost tripled (to around 100,000 - 120,000 tons over the past 2 years) compared to the early 2000s, but still has large fluctuations from year to year. Olive oil production has also increased significantly, reaching 20,000 tons last year (2020) - as most olives are used for olive oil, the increase in olive oil production has followed the upward trend in olive oil production. Production is still very fragmented and yields are quite low, as farmers do not perform proper agronomic services for the trees. High fragmentation and production costs mean that the export potential is very limited, at least in terms of competition in volume and price, also given that Albania's neighboring countries are leading producers of olives and olive oil; however, there is potential to export/sell in the higher paying segments.

The dual nature of the olive oil sector - the production of a decent quality and competitively priced olive oil for domestic consumption, on the one hand, and the production of a high quality and high price olive oil on the other, targeting exports, on the other hand. This implies a dual approach:

- *The first option would be to support investments to increase efficiency and reduce costs,*
- *The second option would be quality enhancement support combined with certification.*

Any donor or private sector support for this sector should be considered in conjunction with public support. The olive value chain is considered a priority sector for the Albanian government based on its export potential - the sector is included in all public financial support schemes, including the latest support schemes.

While there has been very large investment in the olive oil processing sector, there is a need to support technology upgrades for a significant portion of the processing plants (which are becoming obsolete and out of order). Due to the lack of adequate storage capacity for olive oil, processors report the need to establish storage capacity for the entire olive oil industry (which includes most olive oil processors). Investing in olive oil storage capacity is a key factor influencing the quality of olive oil, along with fruit quality, processing technology and technical knowledge. The capacity of bottle packaging, labeling and packaging in oil mills and industrial processors is also an opportunity for financial institutions and government support, as only a few oil mills have this equipment. The processing of waste from olive oil is also a very interesting subject worth exploring.

Olive producers and processors. The two main actors in the olive oil value chain are farmers and olive oil processors.

Farmers. Most farmers are small farmers (less than 0.5 ha of olive groves/olive groves). It is estimated that more than 150 farmers in the Marikaj - Prezë area are involved in olive

cultivation, however, most farms have a small number of olive trees that are mainly used for personal consumption, where less than 1% of them have more than 0.5 ha.

Processors. Processors can be categorized into small local processors (service providers), medium processors, industrial processors (bottle packers), and small modern processors. The latter two categories also export high quality olive oil. The following discussion describes in more detail the profile of the actors, followed by the value chain flows and the management of this chain.

Small and local processors use their processing lines mainly to provide processing services to farmers and to produce limited quantities of olive oil for themselves or for direct sale to traditional family clients. The environments, processing technology and technical knowledge of these processors are heterogeneous: A large part of the processing (not to say the majority) is performed in unsuitable environments with outdated equipment, but there are also units that operate with good used processing lines or new.

Medium processors have a higher production capacity. The processing capacity is over 1.5 tons/hour - there are 2 such factories, one in Marikaj area and one in Preza area. More than 90% of processed olives are offered as a service to third parties (e.g. farmers who process their olives for a fee and receive the oil themselves). So, most olive oil is sold informally.

4.4.2 GENERAL VC EVALUATION BASED ON BASIC CRITERIA

The assessment of women's empowerment and gender equality in the value chain of Olive Production and Oil Processing, based on expert analysis and discussions with stakeholders and interviews with key actors is presented below.

Question	Points*	Weight	Total	Description
Is the participation of employed women in the value chain relatively high?	3	2	6	In the production of Olive and its processing women are involved in many processes, mainly of harvesting and pre-processing. They are not formally registered (by law). There are some businesses in the area that are famous for having women managing them (e.g. Subashi oil factory in the Marikaj area), which consequently influences the agricultural sector as a whole when it comes to the role that women play and can play in it.
Are there many female entrepreneurs in the value chain?	3	2	6	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, grant programs give a greater priority to women entrepreneurs, which is soon expected to lead to the

				establishment of new businesses by women. There are some notable women entrepreneurs in the field, dominated by Subashi company that pave the way to other female business managers and owners.
Do women control/own equipment and assets?	3	2	6	The equipment and assets are owned by men; however, women have access to and control over them.
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 olive processing technologies.
Do women have control over sales and enterprise revenue?	3	2	6	Men usually control the business, although women are involved in all processes. Revenues are controlled and managed by consensus in the household.
Can work be located near home?	4	1	4	The work is located near the house, as the house is mainly positioned close to the 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)?	2	1	2	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 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)?	4	2	8	Yes, it is entirely possible for women to succeed as entrepreneurs in Olive and Oil production, given that grant programs give a greater advantage to women entrepreneurs and the best practices established by other female entrepreneurs in the region.
Does this value chain offer new opportunities for women?	3	4	12	Women as in any agricultural activity are involved in almost every branch of production, mainly in that of harvesting and selection and processing. 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	4	2	8	Overall, yes, but the actors are not satisfied with the level of performance of

conditions (year-round income, use of domestic work, quick returns, keeping the environment intact?				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 running, transport from the olive grove to the home, or to processing plants. Also, not registering as an employee in the business, prevents them from taking advantage of all the opportunities.
Total for gender potential			71/102	

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

Table 16: Evaluation of women's empowerment and gender equality in the Olive and Oil Production VC.

4.4.3 SWOT ANALYSIS OF OLIVE AND OLIVE OIL VALUE CHAIN

Given the current situation of olive production and its oil, in our country described above, the evaluation of this VC we present a summary SWOT analysis for this sector.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURE VALUE CHAIN (Olive and its Oil)	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
▪ Suitable climatic conditions for olive cultivation ▪ The rich historical tradition in olive cultivation dates back to ancient times ▪ Production base with good potential and in expansion phase ▪ Improving the technical knowledge base for processing and some technical services ▪ Cultivation of local varieties with a very good economic potential ▪ The processing capacities of oil mills can withstand a larger production without additional investment. ▪ Several small oil mills have achieved high quality standards, winning national and international awards.	▪ The fragmentation of agricultural land into small and fragmented plots hinders the investments needed to increase the competitiveness of production. ▪ Fragmentation of the olive production base ▪ Extremely high price of olives sold on the farm ▪ Low olive quality due to poor agronomic, harvesting and post-harvest practices. ▪ Insufficient technical knowledge and inadequate awareness of manufacturers on market quality criteria. ▪ High level of informality at the processing level.

▪ Employment and income in the olive production and processing sector are higher and more stable than in some other agricultural sectors and crops.	▪ Lack of technological infrastructure and partially obsolete olive oil processing lines. ▪ Lack of storage capacity of olive oil in function of oil quality ▪ Insufficient investment for bottle packaging and labeling ▪ Lack of olive oil refineries (olio di sansa) ▪ Lack of investment in the processing of waste from olive oil ▪ Lack of financial resources and real difficulties in securing soft loans for olive groves.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
▪ High and increasing domestic demand for olive oil; the unused area is a potential motivating factor for increasing the productivity of olive groves in this municipality. ▪ The initial investment in olive groves does not represent a high cost, compared to the initial investment in other agricultural crops. ▪ The timely return coefficient of the initial investment is high, so the investment returns very quickly. ▪ The increase of olive groves will create new opportunities for entering the market with industrialized oil products. ▪ Support for the planting/replanting of olive groves for relatively large farms as well as support for their completion in existing olive groves ▪ The commitment of the government through concrete legal and fiscal measures for the formalization of the market as a whole and favorable policies for the sector.	▪ Change in the culture of olive oil consumption. ▪ The pressure exerted in the market by importing companies on domestic production. ▪ The competition from the countries of the region is high, which offer oils where quality is combined in a profitable balance with the price of olive oil. ▪ Existence of a large number of informal producers who not only harm the fair competition in the market, but also offer in the market counterfeit olive oil. ▪ Lack of loans with favorable conditions for olive production.

Table 17. SWOT Analysis of the Value Chain of Olive and Its Oil Production.

4.5 AGRITOURISM VALUE CHAIN

4.5.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION IN THE VC

Tourism and Cultural Heritage. Vora is a municipality with rich human resources, natural resources and economic potential that under the leadership of an effective local

government aims to increase the well-being of its inhabitants through a functional service economy, agritourism, organic and intensive agriculture and an industry that helps business empowerment, based on a modern and complete infrastructure, always in harmony with the environment.

Vora is a town proclaimed in 1970, built in the old village known as Kodér-Vora. Information on the areas around Vora is scarce. The reasons are twofold: the area itself, which includes the town of Vora, has a rugged terrain that makes tracking difficult; the distance from Vora has brought the least attention to the assessment of Vora's heritage.

The importance of the geographical position of the area is also proved by the construction the medieval Castle of Preza. Its dominant position aimed at the continuous control of the road coming from the north to connect with central Albania and the Adriatic coast. Among the known traces we have a dome well, declared a Cultural Monument.

Preza Castle. The castle aimed to keep under control and preserve the important road that connected Shkodra with Durrës and Krujë. The castle is built on one of the peaks of a hilly range, which borders the plain of Tiranë on the northwest side. It has the shape of an irregular triangle with round towers at its four corners and with a rectangular tower near the middle of one of the walls. The castle has a length of 80m and a width of 50m.

Agritourism remains the main challenge of the area to orient the geographical, climatic and human potential towards a more productive economy and tourist services related to cuisine, ecotourism, etc. The landscape with many hills and vineyards, has enabled the construction of several agritourism units, which either started as recreational places that provided absolute tranquility and various activities for all age groups, or were built near wineries initially as tasting facilities and today have turned into a complete agritourism destination. Among the most important resorts we can mention Enol Canteen and Agritourism. It is a warm and family guesthouse, located in the middle of the greenery of Preza. Over the years, this guesthouse has become the ideal destination to get away from the noise of the city and enjoy the tranquility, greenery and fresh air. Enol Canteen is located only 30 minutes away by car from the capital of Albania, Tiranë, not far from the airport, in the village of Preza. The 14th century Preza Castle overlooks Tiranë and the plain surrounded by the Krujë and Dajti mountains. Currently the castle attracts many tourists for day trips to the village to enjoy a picnic and great views in the fresh air.

Figure 32: View of the canteen and agritourism Enol in the village of Preze.

Enol is the union of the names Eni and Olsi, the children of the owner and founder of the winery, Qemal Alushi, which reflects the family nature of the farm, restaurant and wine. The winery which produces about 10,000 bottles a year, mainly home-made wine mixes: cabernet, sangiovese and merlot, but also trebbiano, is managed by the girl of the house, Eni. She also helps her father run the restaurant, and is also involved in guesthouse accounting. The cooking ingredients are grown partly on the farm, and partly by the villagers near the canteen. Meat and other dairy products come from local farmers, the supply chain is consolidated and the kitchen staff, headed by the wife of the owner, and two other chefs, have experience in processing food products. Finally, visitors in early September are allowed to take part in the harvest, as well as the summer festival, during which visitors can pick grapes and press it with their feet, in the traditional way.

Subashi Olive Oil has been established since 2005 and since 2010 organizes tasting tours, how olive oil is produced, tours to learn history of the area and olive groves, learning about olive growing, varieties and age of olives, but also about the fauna and flora of the area. Subashi organizes guided tours to get to know and collect edible green plants, edible flowers as well as spices and medicinal plants of the area. The meals offered are typical of the area and related to the olive grove and the season. The area's attractions are hundreds of years old Autochthonous olives. Subashi is working to offer the new "cook together" service: food preparation together with customers, based on traditional recipes of the area.

Figure 33: A trip to Subashi Olive Grove.

4.5.2 GENERAL VC EVALUATION BASED ON BASIC CRITERIA

The assessment of women's empowerment and gender equality in selected value chains, opportunities, and SWOT analysis for the agritourism value chain is presented below.

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 such as cooking, service, hospitality, farm tours, etc.
Are there many female entrepreneurs in the value chain?	1	2	2	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 as managers.
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, etc.
Do women have control over sales and enterprise revenue?	2	2	4	Men usually control the business, although women are involved in all processes. Budget planning is often done by women, including the business and family expenses (food, children's needs).
Can work be located near home?	3	1	3	The work is located near the house, as the house is usually positioned close to the farm/guesthouse.
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 relatively high. Given the opportunities available for grants, this investment would be unaffordable for many families in the Municipality of Vora.
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	Agritourism 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. Agritourism can provide enough income for families for most of the year.
Is the activity in the value chain in line with living conditions (year-round income, use of domestic work, quick returns,	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.

keeping the environment intact?				
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?	4	2	8	Housework and childcare take a considerable amount of time, and this 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.
Total			59/102	

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

Table 19. Evaluation of women's empowerment and gender equality in the VC of agritourism.

4.5.3 SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE AGRITOURISM VALUE CHAIN

SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE AGRITOURISM VALUE CHAIN	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
▪ Area based on agriculture and livestock; ▪ Good geographical location, which brings high opportunities for environmental tourism ▪ Tradition of hospitality and cooking; ▪ Realized investments in agricultural farms and their marketing ▪ Low cost services.	▪ Lack of experience and business management skills in agritourism; ▪ Lack of specific training programs for agritourism management. ▪ Poor road infrastructure and poor public transport in rural areas; ▪ Poor access to financial resources.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
▪ High priority in the Government Agenda (100 villages program); ▪ Investment funds provided by various grant programs (ARDA, IPARD, other) ▪ Increasing demand for agritourism experience from both domestic and foreign tourists; ▪ Employment opportunities for women and youth.	▪ Property rights issues can hamper investment; ▪ Mismanagement of waste in rural areas; ▪ The growing tendency of young people leaving rural areas for a better life in big cities.

Table 20. SWOT Analysis of Agritourism Value Chain.

4.6 CONCLUSIONS

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

ANALYZED SECTORE	POINTS	NOTES
Value chain in Agricultural Products (Fruit and Vegetables) sector	75	Climatic conditions and very good tradition. The developed Agritourism sector demands more and more agricultural products. Rising consumer demand and proximity to the two largest markets, Tiranë and Durres. The lack of a stable market in the territory of the Municipality of Vora is one of the main problems.
Value Chain in the viticulture and wine production sector	53	Requires significant funding for investments required in technology and mainly in processing activity. It is therefore a long-term intervention and not with high guarantees of success.
Value chain in the Aromatic and Medicinal Plants sector	71	Production dependence on climatic conditions, sometimes unfavorable for the growth of MAP as well as the lack of a stable market in the territory of the Municipality of Vora, are two of the main problems.
Value chain in the Olive and Oil Products sector	71	Climatic conditions and very good tradition. The market demands higher quality of olive oil products. Rising consumer demand and proximity to the two largest markets, Tiranë and Durrës.
Value chain in the agritourism sector	59	Agritourism is an emerging sector in the Municipality of Vora. It has not yet reached the levels to be an important sector for the economic development of the area and to influence the conditions of improving the living conditions of women.

From the initial roundtable research (including statistical information that strongly supports the assumption) supplemented with information obtained from municipal authorities, and sessions with key actors in the field, the Agriculture sector and value chains thereof has been identified as having the greatest potential to improve women's livelihoods. and to lead to the economic empowerment of women. In recent years, the Municipality of Vora has implemented a number of initiatives to support the sector and pursue the Development Plan with clear gender-sensitive solutions proposed in the short, medium and long term. These measures, combined with the recommendations of this study, have the potential to be sustainable and in the medium/long term to create a positive multiplier effect on the overall economic and social well-being of women in the Vora Municipality.

Given that the result of the analysis of value chains showed that the three subsectors of agriculture analyzed are very close to each other and affect each other, then in the following chapter we will analyze in detail the value chain in the Sector of Agricultural Products (Fruit and Vegetables), MAPs and that of Olive Production. As we have mentioned above, during the analysis we will focus on the Marikaj area, as an area which has high potentials for development, as well as has been most affected by the earthquake of November 26, 2019.

4.7 DETAILED VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS

The area where the village of Marikaj lies, is at the main road junction of Albania where Tiranë connects with Durrës and the north with the south of the country. MLP development plan[6]for Marikaj area, aims at a spatial reorganization of the designated area in order not only to accommodate families affected by the earthquake but also based on an in-depth analysis of land use, trying to preserve as much as possible under the structural units defined by the Plan General Manager for the Municipality of Vora. This plan aims to improve living conditions, expand public spaces, expand social and cultural activities, increase commercial activity and increase the flow of visitors to the area. All the following analysis is based on the impact that the implementation of the proposed interventions in this plan will have.

4.8 OVERVIEW OF THE THREE VALUE CHAINS

Aromatic and Medicinal Plants Sector is very important for the economy of Albania. There is a long tradition in collecting wild Maps that began during the centralized economy system, when Albania was exporting MAPs worth about USD 50 million. In recent years, the cultivation of MAPs is increasing and many farmers are switching from cultivating traditional crops to cultivating medicinal and aromatic plants. The agro-ecological conditions of the Marikaj area are very favorable for the cultivation of MAP. The climate as well as the soil characteristic are key MAP cultivation requirements. Furthermore, the farmers of this area plant MAPs in the olive plots, which enables the improvement of the taste of the olive oil from the grain.

Medicinal and Aromatic plants (MAP), in Marikaj are cultivated mainly in small areas. The difference compared to producers in relatively large areas is that in Marikaj they are processed almost 100%. Mainly are processed herbal and aromatic teas. Also, some of the olive growers cultivate them intertwined with the olive groves, in order to improve by getting the natural aromas of the olives from the grain. Farmers in these cases admit to losing something in the yield of olive production, but gain a lot in its quality and also diversify the products on the farm. Based on these experiences, in the last two or three years there is an increasing interest of farmers to cultivate MAP on their lands as they are agricultural crops that can provide better compared to other traditional plants. So, the demands and initiatives from both farmers and producer groups exist but require support and promotion to promote this lucrative agricultural activity.

In Marikaj we have identified three processors of wild MAPs. They went to the north of the country at the beginning of the summer, mainly in the area of Kukës and Peshkopi, and bought wild MAP raw from local collectors. They carried out the drying and processing processes in Marikaj, continuing with the packaging and retail trade in the markets of Vora, Durrës and Tiranë.

It should be noted that generally the work performed in the MAP Value Chain (both wild and cultivated ones), as in general all work in agriculture, is seasonal work. Today, with the

6 Mandatory Local Plan (MLP) for Zone 1, Marikaj village, Vora Administrative Unit, Vora Municipality, drafted on 13.03.2020

MAP cultivation activity in Marikaj, 58 farming families were identified, with about 80 women and 10 men involved in this process. Work processes in MAP VC, starting from cultivation, collection, processing, etc. are generally carried out on a family basis where the main work is done by women and school children. Generally, the cultivators in the fields are women and young girls and a very small percentage are men. Women deal with field services as well as their harvest. Men generally only deal with the transportation of the product harvested by women and school children from the fields to the warehouse. Again, in the warehouse, work processes that require large amounts of manual labor are again done only by women. The packaging process is also generally done by women.

Today more and more farming families see MAP as an opportunity, not only to diversify production, but also to provide enough income to support their living conditions and not have to resort to emigration. Farming families, especially women, are ready to immediately start cultivating MAP in this area.

Agricultural Products VC (Fruit and Vegetables). The sustainable development of autochthonous resources, especially those of the agricultural sector, ensure the preservation of these plant resources with great value both for agricultural production but above all for the natural wealth created over many years, which has been used by many ancestral generations. In a general analysis of the situation of Agricultural resources in the territory of the Municipality of Vora and especially in the area of Marikaj, very good physico-climatic features of the territory are observed, where we can mention:

- Terrain: This territory is located in a plain and hilly terrain at a low altitude above sea level. Most of this territory is dominated by hilly terrain, which should be noted that they are low-slope hills, the lands are very fertile and almost all of their territory is usable for agricultural purposes.
- Climate: characterized by a typical Mediterranean climate, with hot and dry summers and relatively mild and humid winters with rain.
- Sun: Sun provides light which is very important for the flowering process of plants. Based on official data of IEWE[7], in this area there are over 2,500 hours of sunshine within a year, while the highest value of the monthly extension of sunbathing was recorded in July.
- Air: In general, the air quality in this area is considered within EU standards. This is referred to 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 considerable.
- Winds: The wind regime is closely related to the seasonal period, the position as well as the influence of the Adriatic Sea. The direction of the winds is influenced by the proximity to the sea.
- Air temperature and precipitation: Plant growth and development are related to temperature, other physiological processes (respiration, evaporation, photosynthesis, etc.). In general, the optimal temperature of the region is more suitable for the development of plant life. The average temperature is around 14.8o Celsius. The Adriatic Sea exerts a calming effect, both on the cold winter climate and the hot summer.

7 IEWE - Institute for Energy, Water and Environment.

As in the whole territory of the Municipality of Vora, also in the area of Marikaj there is a series of autochthonous products, among which we can mention:

- Ndroq Tomato[8], which is large and dark red tomato, which is characterized by its characteristic aroma. This tomato that is planted by the farmers of this area has a demand in the markets of Tiranë and Durres, but it is difficult to meet the demands of this market.
- Pepper - which also has a typical aroma and although it is not very big, its characteristic aroma remains even after cooking. This is exactly why there is such a great demand for it.
- Cucumber - is another vegetable with special values, with not great body development, but with consistency and more juice inside. It is also characterized by actually longer storage compared to other types.
- Eggplant - is a vegetable which has a relatively small body and not much pulp, but is quite elegant. It has a dark red color and has a characteristic aroma. It is in high demand by consumers.
- Okra - is also one of the vegetables that is mostly grown in this area. Its characteristic is the really small and long-tailed bean. But the positive feature of this type, which makes it special compared to other types, is that they form virtually no thick fibers inside them.

Olives and Olive oil VC. Olive is one of the oldest crops in this area, especially in the hills that start from the area of Preza to that of Marikaj. In this area olives are used for oil production which is an old tradition, as well as for canning. The olive that grows in this area, is the Kalinjot variety, a special and unique Albanian variety, which carries great nutritional and anti-cancer values. Olive oil is simply pressed in the factory, and the oil retains the quality and aroma of the olive itself. The mastery of the area lies in the fact that the olive is processed as soon as it is harvested. What is different in the Marikaj area, in the production of olive oil is the diversification of products. Thus, in addition to the production of standard olive oil in this area are also produced for consumption olive oil with spices alternating with medicinal plants, which have significant nutritional and curative values.

The olive oil processing industry consists of 400 to 450 olive processors, which can be categorized into four groups, (i) small local processors, (ii) small modern processors, (iii) medium processors and (iv) industrial processors/packaging. In the group of small local processors, are the majority of the processors found in the villages today. There are about 400 with a capacity of 0.8-1.5 tons/hour. Small and local processors use their processing lines mainly to provide processing services to farmers and to produce limited quantities of olive oil for themselves. The environments, processing technology and technical knowledge of these processors are heterogeneous: A large part of the processing (not to say the majority) is performed in unsuitable environments with outdated equipment, but there are also units that operate with good used processing lines or new, as in "Subashi" company in Marikaj.

According to interviews with olive oil processors in the Marikaj area, one of the most worrying problems is unfair competition in the market. Some of these processors buy bulk olive oil from other oil mills or local producers (low quality olive oil kept in stock for several

8 The variety is grown for the first time in the village of Ndroq in the Municipality of Tiranë.

years) and/or import low quality cheap olive oil; however, they all sell olive oil as the country's olive oil, in some cases using local/territorial names, misinforming consumers about the true origin of olive oil. One of the main measures expected of the government/policy makers is to regulate the olive oil trade, especially in terms of quality and origin counterfeiting - this law enforcement measure would encourage domestic production of a quality olive oil. and would make new investments in the sector more necessary and affordable (not to mention the benefits that the consumer will have by having higher quality olive oil in the case of retail).

4.9 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, MAPS AND OLIVES VALUE CHAIN MAPPING

The following figure shows the all-inclusive sketches of the Value Chain for MAP, Agricultural Products and that of Olive and Oil Production. These schemes identify key stakeholders, product turnover from input securing to final market reach, and will help us identify gaps or barriers in the production flow.

Since all three VCs are segments or sub-chains of agricultural products we have tried to identify and uniformize the respective links in the chain. This enables us to make a comprehensive analysis of the links in each VC.

As can be seen from the following schemes, 4 main links in the chain have been identified, for each of them and respectively:

- Inputs
- Planting and Cultivation
- Collection and Processing
- Trade

During our analysis it was identified that the costs in different links of the VC are different, but on the other hand the participation of women in each of the links is almost the same.

What stands out in all three chains is the significant cost of the trading link of the respective products. It is almost the same in every link and based on the fact of the lack of a local market in Marikaj and the relative distance from the markets of Tirana and Durrës accounts to a value of about 20% of the cost of the product

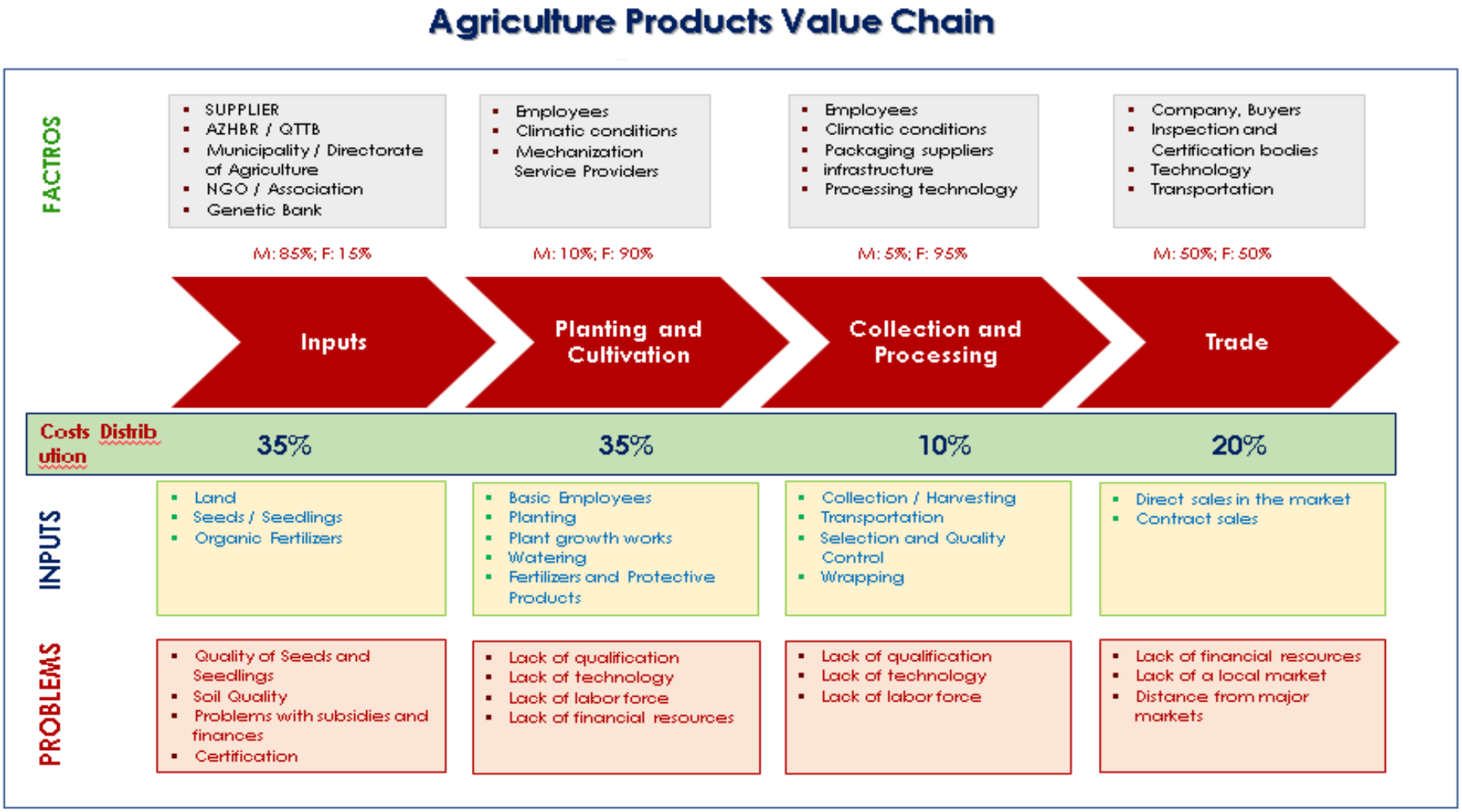

Figure 34. Outline of the Value Chain of Agricultural Products in the Municipality of Vora, Marikaj area.

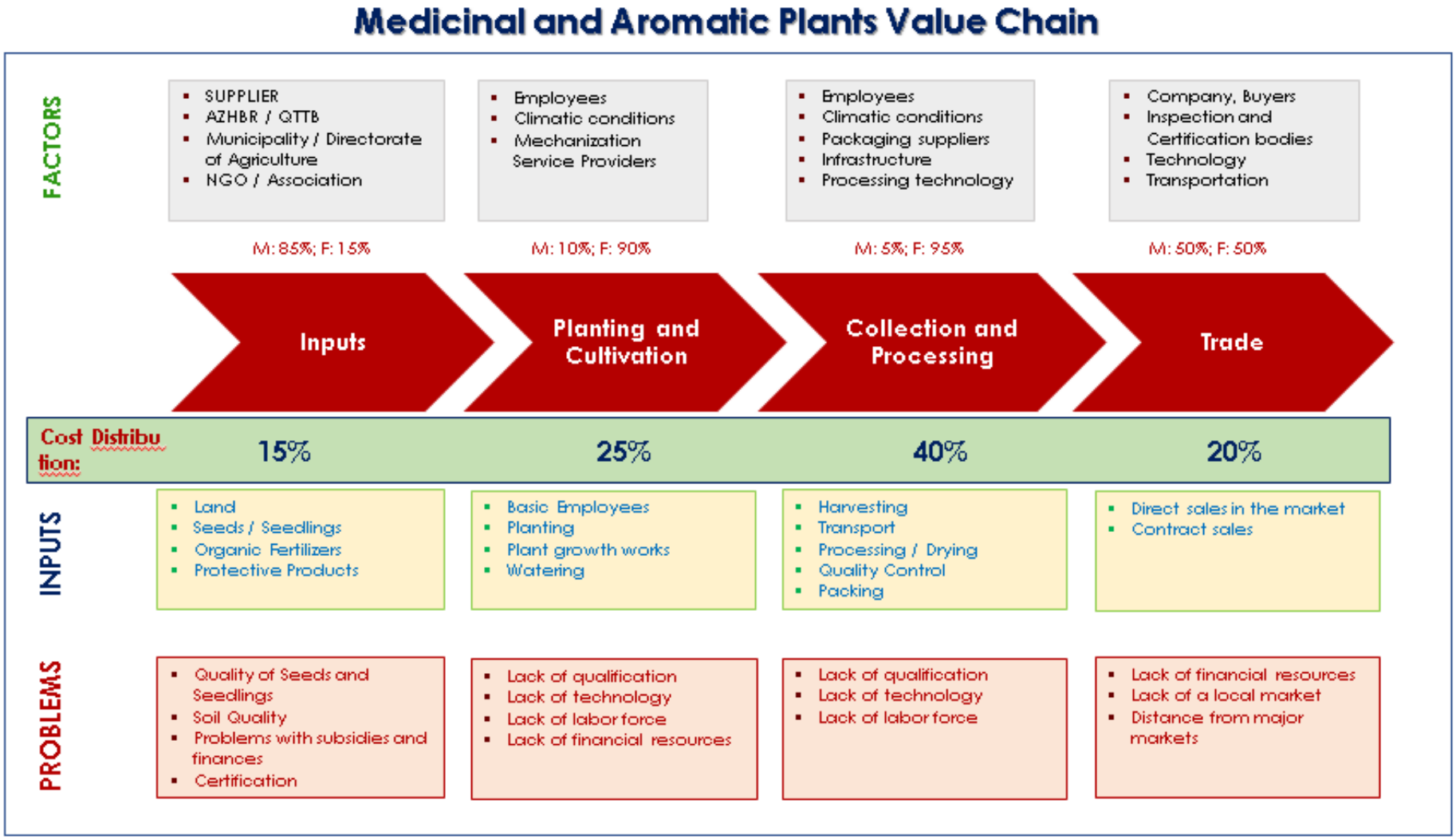

Figure 35. Outline of the Value Chain of Production of Aromatic and Medicinal Plants in the Municipality of Vora, Marikaj area.

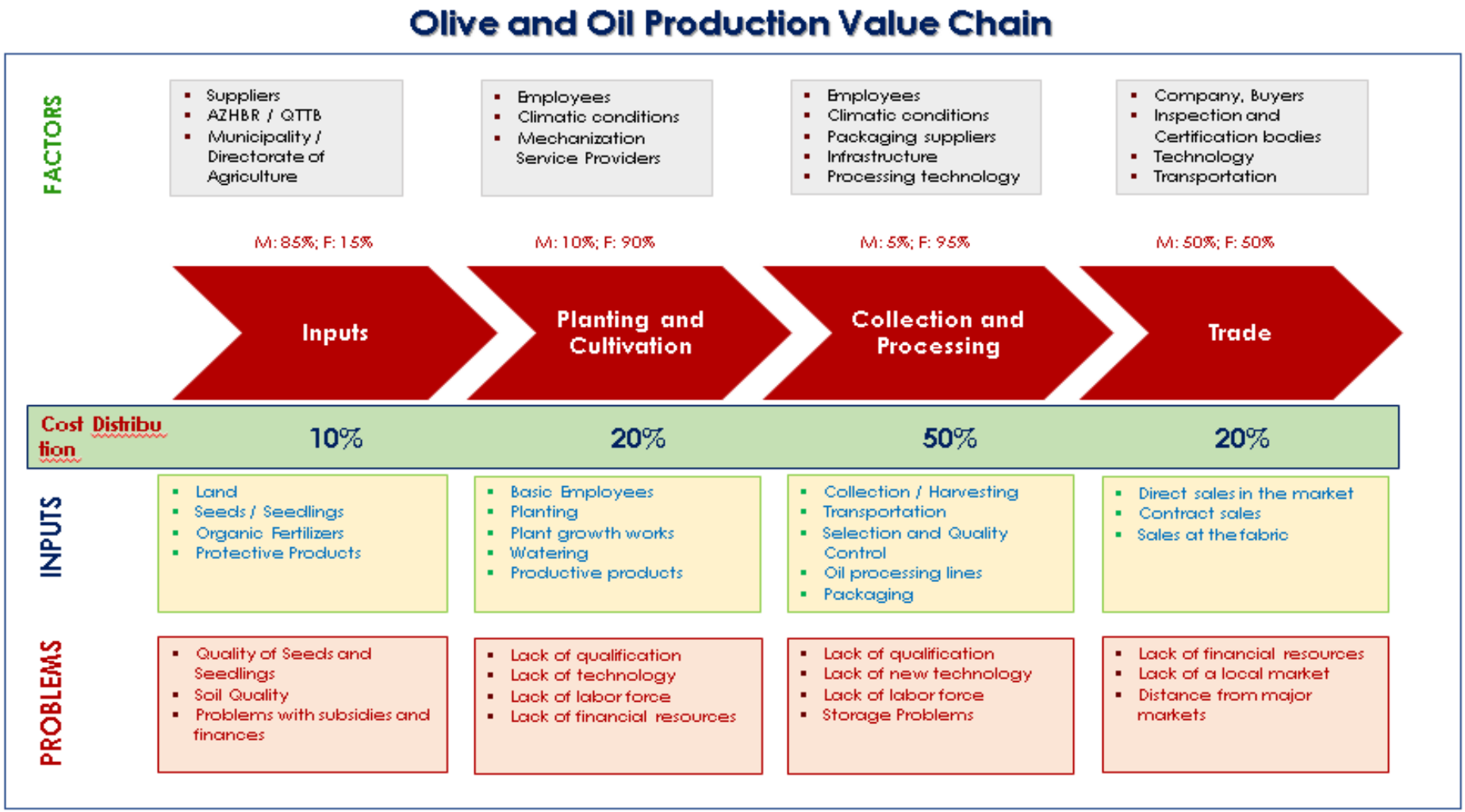

Figure 36: Outline of the Value Chain of Olive and Olive Oil in Vora, Marikaj area

4.10 VALUE CHAIN ACTORS

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

1. *Individual Producers of Agricultural Products. In this group are all producers of these products, who either trade in small quantities by themselves directly in the markets or near the Agritourism units in the area;*
2. *Individual Producers and Consumers of Agricultural Products; which are mainly Agritourism establishments that use them in their premises, or villagers who plant small quantities in their gardens and have it for family consumption;*
3. *Collectors/ consolidators 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 Vora are present all three groups, but in the following analysis we will focus on the first category. The analysis of these actors will be carried out during the detailed analysis of the main links of the value chain.

It should be noted at the outset that as in any VC, even in the VC of Agricultural Products, there are several key actors who indirectly influence the improvement of the chain (these would be the same also for the other two value chains, that of olive production and MAPs). Given that these actors are present in almost every link, we are doing their analysis in the context of impact on the entire VC.

4.10.1 SUPPORT AGENCIES

A very important role in the sector is played by other groups of interest, including central and local structures that support the agricultural sector in general, as well as certification structures. Below is a brief description of each of the product actors of 3 VCs.

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 vegetable, fruit and plant protection specialists, livestock specialists and agricultural economists. At the local level for more than 4 years the municipalities have a functional duty to perform functions in the field of agriculture, rural development, forests and public pastures, nature and biodiversity. Municipalities are responsible for performing specific functions in this field according to applicable law. The municipalities and related directorates have also among their objectives to work with women and promote women entrepreneurship.

Currently in the Municipality of Vora the services for performing these functions are performed by the Forest Service and Agriculture Agency, which is mainly oriented towards the administration of the public forest and pasture fund of this municipality and does not have sufficient structures for the creation and administration of the rural information local system and agricultural counseling as well as the establishment and administration of local

grant schemes for agriculture and rural development, financed from the local budget and/or co-financed by third parties, guaranteeing gender balanced access.

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 security, 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.*
- ✓ *In contrast, educational institutions are not currently as closely linked to the problems of agricultural production nor to the practices and procedures of 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 differently from 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 implemented, 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.

National Food Authority (NFA) is a government agency, subordinate to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and is the competent authority with national management inspection functions in the field of consumer safety and protection, plant and animal protection. NFA performs interventions 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, in the same law, gives the purpose of the inspection, namely: (i) assessment of compliance with legal requirements; (ii) documenting good practices in complying with legal requirements; (iii) advising the inspected entity on the correct implementation of legal requirements; (iv) ordering the correction of violations of legal requirements and the elimination of the consequences arising therefrom; and (v) sentencing and taking other administrative measures to avoid risks that may be posed to the public interest.

Based on 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 (NFA) office in Tiranë.

4.10.2 CERTIFICATION STRUCTURES

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.

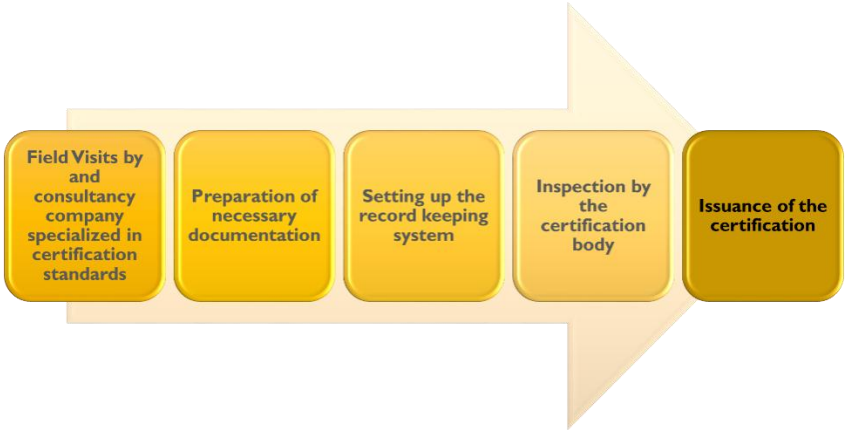

Figure 37. Steps for HACCP Certification

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;*
- *Setting up the records 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 Tiranë Regional Directorate of Agriculture.

4.10.3 PRIVATE SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Raw material and technology suppliers play an important role in the value chain of Agricultural Products. They provide ready-made seedlings for planting and organic fertilizers, as well as help the local villagers with information on plant cultivation. Normally these suppliers also provide the necessary technology for the mechanization of various processes, but the fragmentation of the soil and the relatively small areas planted with these products, as well as the fact that planting is done with seedlings, 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 advising on the variety of plants that can be planted and their cultivation techniques. They also offer plant protection products, such as pesticides or other traps and 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 Autochthonous Agricultural Products. Practically in the Municipality of Vora, and even more so in the area of Marikaj, for the small quantities of production of Agricultural Products, and MAPs, there are no collectors dedicated to these finished products. Only in VC of Olive, as we have pointed out, almost all the amount of oil that is for the market is collected by the company "Subashi". Farmers in the Marikaj area, like most Vora farmers, sell their produce mainly in the Tiranë market, directly in informal markets along the road or to Agritourism units or restaurants in the area.

The lack of a market for products grown under the "bio" brand, in Marikaj as well as the lack of these collectors, affects the cost of products, given the relatively large distance from major markets, as well as the harm of products from not selling within the day, as well as in the amount of production of these products, because farmers not having a guaranteed market are reluctant to increase production.

In order to make the collectors attractive, it is necessary to create and consolidate the production lines (farmers' groups) of these products, as well as their certification, along with the possibility of building a small market in Marikaj.

4.10.4 VC LINKS ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS (FRUIT AND VEGETABLES)

It should be taken into account that Marikaj Farmers have a relatively wide range of production of these products, which from the perspective of cautiousness and work required for their cultivation are relatively the same. As shown in the schemes above in Figures 36, 37 and 38, the Value Chain (VC) for the three sectors is composed of four 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 area of Marikaj, Vora Municipality, the respective situations as wel as the conclusions and recommendations were identified as follows:

4.10.5 PROVIDING BASIC VALUE CHAIN INPUTS

Activities that take place. This chain link includes activities related to the key elements to develop an activity in the VCs of Agricultural Products, MAPs and Olive Growth and Oil Production, 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.
- ✓ Provision of Seeds/Seedlings, which are used for the cultivation of the following products:
  - 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. It is also where women collectives (associations or nuclei) could become very influential and could potentially become the knowledge-sharing hubs.
  - Aromatic and Medicinal Plants. Seedlings used for the cultivation of cultivated MAP are planted on average once every five years depending on the cultivated plant, so even here the costs are reduced.
  - Production of Olive and its Oil. As far as Olive is concerned, it is over 90% inherited from the past, but each passing year farmers continue planting new areas mainly to improve the variety as well as to increase the area with olive groves. On average,

they increase by 5-10% of the number of olives each year. This cost affects the cost of the value chain, but is a good indicator of sustainability.

- ✓ Provision of Organic fertilizers, which are used periodically to improve the soil planted with these crops. It is present in all three VCs. It is recommended to use organic fertilizers to guarantee BIO certification of these products.
- ✓ Protective Products, Even the products of three VC 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 "Bio" quality of production.

Women's Participation. This activity in most cases is dominated by men, in all three VCs. Men make up 85% of the total workforce, because it is related to activities that take place away from home. 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 to ensure the quality of the products taken in the market. In this chain, there are few opportunities to increase the role of women and their empowerment. But as we pointed out above, through the training of farmers and assistance with simple tools can enable the production of seedlings by themselves. This will be a process that can be carried out mainly by women, like all other links in the process. 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 families. If the markets become more accessible distance-wise, more women will be encouraged to participate in this link.

Based on the VCs we have different costs of this link as follows:

- Agricultural Products. The cost of this VC for the first year is about 35%. 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. In our calculations this process will enable the reduction of the cost of this link by over 30% or about 12% of the total cost of production.
- Medicinal and Aromatic Plants. As mentioned above, spending on seedlings is done on average once every five years. In this VC the cost of this link is about 15%.
- Production of Olive and its Oil. Based on the fact that olives produce for years and possibly centuries, the cost of this link, including renovation is about 10%

4.10.6 PLANTING AND CULTIVATION OF PRODUCTS

Activities that take place. In this link are carried out all the activities related to the necessary work for planting and for the growth of plants, which are daily activities in the spring, summer and autumn seasons mainly. The main activities in this process according to the VC 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 quantities of planted plots and their fragmentation often make it impossible to use mechanics.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Spraying and elimination of other herbs or plants. This is a process that is done entirely by hand. At this stage of the process, women's work predominates.
- ✓ Irrigation. 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 as well.
- ✓ 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 during 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.

In the first two VCs, that of Agricultural products and MAPs, all activities are carried out throughout the production period. While in Olive are carried out mainly the last four activities, but also these, in a very periodic way.

Women's Participation. As everywhere in agriculture, even in Marikaj, due to the specifics of planting seedlings and the very small use of agricultural mechanics, this phase is dominated by the work of women to an extent about 90%. The increase of planted areas enables even the greatest use of agricultural mechanics, it gives them time to deal with other jobs.

Costs of this link. Based on the VCs we have different costs of this link as follows:

- Agricultural Products. The cost of this link is one of the highest for the costs of materials themselves (organic fertilizers and protective elements) and accounts for about 35% of the cost of VC.
- Aromatic and Medicinal Plants. Even in this VC, we have relatively high costs of this link, they go about 25% of the cost of the product.
- Production of Olive and its Oil. As we said above, the activities in this chain take place periodically, so the labor costs are more reduced in this office. The cost of this link in this VC is about 20%.

4.10.7 PRODUCT COLLECTION AND SELECTION

Activities that take place. In this link are realized the necessary work processes for the collection or harvesting of the production, its selection based on the quality criteria, as well

as the packaging and preparation for the market. Even this process for the limited quantity of production itself is a manual and mechanized process. In this link are performed activities related to:

- ✓ Harvesting or Collecting produce. This is a process that is done entirely by hand. This activity is dominated by the work of women and once children after school hours.
- ✓ Transportation of production to processing facilities. Generally, this activity is performed by men who are responsible for transport activities throughout the VC.
- ✓ Drying process. This process is for MAP only. Simple techniques are generally used, in the house and in their corridors, in warehouses and other places up to the backyards, in the shade or in the sun. During this activity the participation of men, mainly when drying is done outdoors is present but not essential.
- ✓ Selection. During this activity, a selection and filtering of 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 them in boxes or other packaging is carried out, making them ready for the market. It is an activity that is done entirely by hand, where the work of women and children predominates, but also men contribute to the process.

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

Women's Participation. This process is dominated by women's work, as it takes place in the home environment, women are involved to the extent of about 95%, but sometimes men also help them. Since there are no conditions for storing products, this is a daily process throughout the production period.

As we said, the activities in this link are daily and consume resources and relatively long time. So, from the costs point of view, there should have been a considerable weight, but based on the very low levels of payments and mainly those are carried out in the family therefore do not have much impact on the process. Based on the VCs we have different costs of this link as follows:

- Agricultural Products. The cost of this link is low for the relatively small work that is done in this link. It accounts for only 10% of the cost of VC.
- Aromatic and Medicinal Plants. In this VC, we have relatively high costs of this link, since we have MAP processing as well as packaging in small quantities, to make it ready for the market. The cost in this VC link goes up to 40% of the product cost.
- Production of Olive and its Oil. The cost of this phase is even higher because we also have its processing for oil production in factories. As well as higher packaging costs. In this VC this cost goes to almost 50% of the cost of the entire VC.

4.10.8 PRODUCT TRADING

Activities that take place. This is the concluding link of VC. In general, the sale of the product is pre-contracted only in very specific cases or the production is bought in bulk by MAP collectors, but in special cases, mainly for teas or part of aromatic plants (mainly those used in cooking), this is done even with direct sales in the market. In this link are performed activities related to:

- ✓ Production contracting. Currently, the practice of contracts, as everywhere in the agricultural sector in Albania, even in the Municipality of Vora (or more specifically in Marikaj) do not exist, although even in those cases that are carried out are in the type of verbal agreements and it is always performed 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 this activity has women participate actively during the absence of men.
- ✓ 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. In Marikaj, unlike in other places, the trading process is almost equal in participation between men and women. There are no restraining mentalities in this area that prevent women from entering the markets. Thus, for all three VCs we have a participation of women in the amount of 50%.

In the cost of the three VCs this link represents about 20% of the production cost.

The lack of a local market in Marikaj or even the lack of a structured market in the Center of Vora, brings as a consequence that the transport process is greatly affected by transport to the main markets. The intervention for enabling a market, no matter how simple, in Marikaj would enable mainly in the first two VCs approximately the halving of the costs of this link and would affect with about 10% reduction of the costs of all VCs.

4.10.9 OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE VCs

Regarding the opportunities offered by these three VCs, the interviewees mentioned the following factors:

The increase of demand for all products of these VCs, throughout the area, is directly related to the variety of products. Some of the actors in the chain cultivate a product, others cultivate other species, which come as a specific requirement of the buyers. For this reason, contract with farmers is a phenomenon that is recommended to be applied to this sector.

Figure 38: Opportunities in the Value Chains.

Existence of in-depth knowledge of the Agricultural Products sector. As in some other areas of the country, in the area of Marikaj there is a long tradition in the cultivation of Agricultural Products. Currently the Agricultural Products sector is the most important sector for the agricultural economy of Marikaj, and among the main sectors of the Municipality of Vora. At the national level, the vegetable production sector has become the main leader, and has started to export to neighboring countries Agricultural Products, which before the '90s were widely cultivated in Albania. These today constitute an important natural economic resource and especially the development potential, not yet fully exploited and sustainable.

Favorable agro-ecological conditions for the cultivation of Agricultural Products. The agro-ecological conditions of the Marikaj area are very favorable for the cultivation of Agricultural Products (fruit and vegetables), MAPs, olives. The climate is typical for their requirements. This climate is represented 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 demand for "organic" production of Agricultural Products.

Existence of guaranteed market. The market of products Agricultural Products is guaranteed and is the safest market compared to all other agricultural products, also for the modest amount of MAP this market is almost consolidated. Olive oil is also sold in its entirety, with a few exceptions. In general, the market for these products is consolidated and its demands have been growing. The market has the ability to attract any amount of production without any restrictions, the only problem is the cost of products. Also, the growth and strengthening of Agritourism services has created a significant market for these products. All Agritourism actors, who were contacted, stated that although they have their

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

Investments made in some of the links of the Olive Oil Production Value Chain. In Marikaj, as we have said, the company "Subashi" has made significant investments in the production of olive oil and other olive products. So, in terms of olives as well as MAPs, there are high processing potentials not yet exploited. Also the position of Marikaj near the national road Tiranë - Durrës that connects the north with the south of Albania, is a potential for creating a market for local products, which can very well supply the temporary markets built near the coastal areas (Like the one in the Bay of Lalzi, or in Hamallaj) for the summer period, where many vacationers are consumers of fruits and vegetables, always turning even more towards BIO products.

Other General Factors. Among these factors we can mention:

- High number (relative to the area) of families engaged in the cultivation of Agricultural Products and olives
- Significant percentage of income from these sectors in the structure of total income coming to farming families.
- Opportunity to classify Agricultural Products of this area, as pure natural products and certified as organic.
- Good interest rate on Agricultural Production businesses.
- Knowledge of some existing market links to be exploited.
- Existence of many unemployed agronomist specialists, but who can be easily integrated as technical leaders or entrepreneurs in the business of production of Autochthonous Agricultural Products.

Agricultural development strategy. The Albanian Government has for over 10 years declared Pro-Autochthonous Agricultural Products, MAP and Olive, as strategic resources for the development of agriculture. All three are included in the support schemes of the agricultural sector.

But as we have pointed out above, according to interviews with various actors, one of the most troubling problems is unfair competition in the market. So, one of the main measures expected of the government/policymakers is to regulate, especially in terms of quality and counterfeiting of origin - this law enforcement measure would boost domestic production.

The situation of farming families and the desire to deal with the cultivation of various types of Agricultural Products, MAPs and Olives. The economic situation of many farming families leaves much to be desired, especially in this area. 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 improving the sector in this municipality, whether by choosing cultivation of MAPs over the collection of wild MAPs, or expanding the capacities in olive growing/ olive oil production, or investing in growing of high-quality bio agricultural products.

Generally, the work with these products, both for cultivation as well as for harvesting, is done on a family basis. Generally, the cultivators in the fields are women and young girls and a

very small percentage are men. Women everywhere in this area have a desire to cultivate these products.

4.10.10 CONSTRAINTS ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS VALUE CHAIN

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

Formalization. Most businesses operating in this sector are not officially registered. They 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

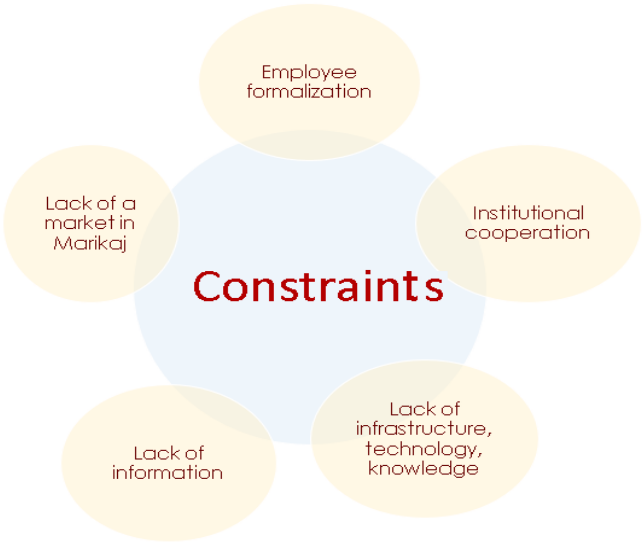

Figure 39: Constraints on the three analyzed Value Chains.

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 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[9]) which farmers can benefit from and facilitate the way they operate; on the other hand, stakeholders 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 area.

Lack of infrastructure, technology and knowledge. Lack of infrastructure facilities for collection, storage and selection. On the other hand, groups of farmers and mainly individuals have little knowledge about post-harvest operations (selection, packaging and storage), these post-harvest operations have a major impact on final quality and can be sources of contamination. In the Marikaj area there are no processing units (harvesting, separation, cleaning, sorting, packaging and storage) and farmers often lack the proper

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

storage environment, especially when it comes to MAPs. Lack of infrastructure and post-harvest knowledge result in significant losses in these products.

Lack of information mainly for individual farmers or small owners. A good part of farmers has minimal or even outdated information about the potential benefits for smallholders such as: improved market access, improved technology, better risk management, increased trade acumen, etc.

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

Lack of a local market. When it comes to selling agricultural products, the problems faced by small owners are numerous. These problems are forcing farmers in most cases either to give up production or to increase the scarcity of products as a reason for not finding a profitable market. The situation becomes so problematic that the existing problems are to some extent forcing farmers to use informal routes in order to participate in the market, etc. Considering the current situation in the Tiranë and Durrës region, a farmer has practically two possible ways to actively participate in the market: either to sell the products at a collection point (for which he/she needs to be officially registered as a farmer) or try to sell the products themselves (for which he/she needs to be officially registered as a fixed/street vendor). When none of these options work for them, the farmer may choose to sell marketable agricultural products informally in street markets.

One of the factors that either motivates farmers to produce more or discourages them completely from the production process is the prices of the products. They can be either accelerators or inhibitors of food security in the region depending on the area in terms of farmers/producers. On the farmers side; a constant rise in prices acts as motivation to produce more and increase revenue as a result. Otherwise, when it comes to lowering prices: farmers and smallholders will be completely discouraged from producing. Given that in the Municipality of Vora, there is no collection point, even small traders who buy wholesale products from related farms have import prices as a competitive comparative price, leaving no choice to farmers. A potential or existing farmer today is confronted with many problems faced by the sector and the opportunities for their trade are such as: 1) Direct sales to/towards the collection point; 2) Using various intermediaries like other larger farmers to sell their products; and 3) Participation in many functioning public markets, or choosing to sell agricultural products informally.

Regarding Problems of Gender Inequality and Women's Inclusion in the value chain, information obtained from focus groups and interviews show that women are involved in most activities, especially in the processes of collection, cultivation, harvesting, selection 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 they need more specific skills, related to the work processes for the benefit of these 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, this hinders their chances for economic benefits that the formal registration of the business and employment contracts

provide. Moreover, many national grant schemes are available for women specifically but only for registered businesses with a valid Tax ID.

Regarding Funding Opportunities, respondents mentioned that the income generated from engaging in Agriculture is their only source of income. They perceive this business as profitable, especially if agreements are reached with buyers, who can also secure the supply of inputs. However, respondents 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 Agricultural Products mainly for those grown organically and therefore have held meetings in the past with large consolidators interested in investing in the sector, due to that the climate and soil are suitable for the cultivation of these products.

Why support establishing a local market in Marikaj?

As we saw above, the construction of a market, no matter how small, in Marikaj would greatly improve all three VCs analyzed.

The market and its importance. The market is the place where exchange takes place between buyers and sellers. The term market was originally used for places, such as village squares where buyers and sellers gathered to exchange their goods. To better understand the market, one must start from the focus of the enterprise which is facing such challenges as to what extent it should focus its marketing strategy. Generic markets deal with customers, their types and the geographical area where customers operate. The product market goes one level further, specifying that each product constitutes a unique and potential market for farmers. Consumer needs refer to the needs that the product or service meets to the benefit of the customer to push him to buy the product or service. At the basic level, product types typically offer functional benefits. Customer type refers to final customers or businesses such as product users. To determine the type of consumer, farmers need to identify the consumer and determine what they might be, what might motivate them to buy. The market is also influenced by the economic environment which consists of factors that affect the purchasing power of the consumer, as well as the cultural environment which is the other forces that influence the core values of a society and which determines their relationship with others.

Support small and medium farmers in the trade of domestic products. Today it is impossible for farmers to sell in one way or another directly in the city with cash, which has led to a large increase in prices of agricultural production, reduced production volumes for some products and growing demand for help from state in the sale of other products. The banning of direct sales, due to the lack of a physical market and for fiscal reasons, does not seem at all suitable for farmers, who according to some data have reduced production and interest in investment. Farmer or peasant markets are not just a tradition, they are a way of life, culture, thinking, producing. Farmer markets enable direct selling or short food trading chain. After a period of oblivion, in many countries they have been forcibly returned demanded firstly by citizens and consumers.

The short chain of agricultural product marketing has been re-evaluated and reconsidered as a way which increases sales and profit opportunities for farmers and lowers the price for consumers. It is also considered as a way to avoid the monopoly of large retail chains, which generally sell products that provide high profit margins, have constant sales volumes and that have strong marketing from the manufacturer, regardless of origin.

From a study of the economic magazine "Monitor", in Albania, seeing the almost total shortage, direct sales of farmers are a necessity. The low value and quantity of production for trade of most farms, the lack of "standards" for trade in store chains, transport infrastructure and trade itself do not make large commercial networks require the production of small Albanian farms.

The alternative is for farmers to sell to commercial intermediaries, or to produce only for their own consumption. Brokers have the same requirements as stores, and will even offer manufacturers an even lower price if they find resale opportunities inside or outside the country. The risk of resale, the "added value" of the intermediary, for example, cash on delivery, transportation, storage, administrative costs will double or triple the value of the initial sale of the agricultural product, which will often again pass another link with the same "added value" to reach the final consumer.

In direct sales to the final consumer, manufacturers have the opportunity to ask for a higher price than the one they would receive from intermediaries or "stores". This margin enables you a much higher profit versus selling in a long chain. For "working" hours as a sales process even for small quantities traded, considering the low profit that has work in agriculture, farmers will benefit much more from direct trading.

In addition to making money, another good side is the direct connection with the customer, the interaction, the creation of trust, the supply-demand connection, which give even stronger non-monetary values to the direct sale. According to two Eurobarometer surveys in 2011 and 2016, 9 out of 10 European citizens agree that there are benefits to buying directly from a local farm, 4 out of 5 citizens consider that strengthening the role of farmers in the food chain is appropriate or very significant.

Infrastructure. Albanian farmers need the necessary physical, administrative and fiscal infrastructure to sell directly in cities, regional markets, places of movement and on their farm. Farmers can pay part of the costs for the physical market themselves. A part can be subsidized by the municipalities, which now cover the village, as well as by the Ministry of Agriculture, as the collection points were subsidized. The chances and opportunities in a market economy must be equal for all.

Direct selling is also a way to regain consumer confidence, which currently for domestic products does not seem to be very high. A direct and regular selling manufacturer finds it more difficult to abuse quality than in terms of a long and anonymous chain trade. Potential abusers remain localized and there is no need to suffer the producers of a country, region, village, farm, if somewhere it is abused and consumers refuse to buy all the domestic production of that product because they do not know the origin of the production. AKU (National Food Agency) should play a much larger pro-active role than the current one and not show up as consumers have identified problems.

Models. Short chain forms exist in Albania, for example, for olive oil, a large part of it is achieved through direct sales. It starts with buying grain olives, extracting the oil directly under the care of the consumer, making it possible to first get an oil with standards and avoiding the fear of abuse by dishonest producers who mix it with other oils. Second, a reasonable price. At the same time, also fast sales from manufacturers and long-term trust relationships between manufacturers and consumers. Also, a part of honey, wine, brandy is sold directly in direct reports of trust.

Then the question arises, but when it exists, why should it be recreated and promoted? Because, in the form above, it is more like a hobby of the young rich in the city, shows distrust of classic trading and is cost in time and transportation for buyers. Not everyone has cars to go to the village, not everyone has the cash to buy nor can they store 30 liters of olive oil right away.

Restaurants, as Agritourism has already done, can become part of the short chain, especially for typical and traditional products. They are frequented by domestic and foreign tourists, but the jobs they directly and indirectly create and the impact they have on the local economy, the simplification of buying and selling procedures and the abolition of VAT on purchases by small farmers would help to have prices. reasonable in menu and their consistency.

In conditions when farmers have direct trading experience and are confident in its continuity, this will certainly lead to further specialization and to encourage cooperation between producers to have the same standards, to exchange experiences, to organize together transportation, marketing, etc. So, it will be natural for what is required from above the farmers - to organize.

Moreover, the consumer mentality has not changed radically in relation to agricultural production, but many people still think that traders/intermediaries earn more than you owe at the expense of producers and consumers, the former giving you the highest possible prices. lower of the latter as high as possible, abuse the quality, create monopolies, restrict the choice of products, etc. So there is still the ingrained mentality that it is better to buy directly from the farmer. Farm work, due to technology and machinery, takes much less time, so they have non-agricultural free time even for commercial activity and do not need much commercial capital to sell, or can be easily secured.

The more freedom, opportunities, ways of direct or indirect sale, every business, farm, individual and non-agricultural individual should have, in order to find the one that best suits them and to bring out their best interest. This means more income, more capital, more effectiveness, welfare and economic growth.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERVENTION

As we have analyzed above, based on their potential and the involvement and empowerment of women, all three VCs evaluated need some interventions. With this in mind the following recommendations are presented below:

- Implementation of contracts with farmers, securing formalization and linkages, which can help farmers overcome market failures by creating links between themselves 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 Vora. Today, in order to consolidate the production progress of Agricultural Products from farm cultivation to the final collector or seller, the latter use agreements on the type of product, the quantity it will produce, the implementation of a controlled protocol of agro-technical services to be performed. products, including chemical fertilization, parasite protection and product consolidation and standardization. However, contracts with farmers alone may be insufficient to improve the income of small households if contractors do not provide inputs, technical advice, and access to technology and input markets. Producers of 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 contracts with farmers. Here the opportunities for win-win situations for women are evident. Formalization will not only lead to betterment of working conditions of women as well as their access to economic benefits offered by the state and financial institutions, but it could also lead to creation of opportunities that will improve women's overall well-being (e.g. creation of clusters of women to work on seedlings, improving their technical capacities and therefore providing additional income opportunities, so that women don't have to work away from home like in the case of MAPs or seek for work opportunities away from their homes in Tiranë or Durres, like in other cases).
- 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.
- Market building in Marikaj. The short chain of agricultural products trading has been re-evaluated and reconsidered as a way which increases sales and profit opportunities for farmers and lowers the price for consumers. The construction of an agricultural market in Marikaj will enable direct sales to the final consumer. Manufacturers are likely to ask for a higher price than what they would get from intermediaries or "shops". This margin enables you a much higher profit versus selling in a long chain. For "working" hours as a sales process even for small quantities traded, considering the low profit that has work in

agriculture, farmers will benefit much more from direct trading. This market will also eliminate some essential transportation costs and value losses of their products and make women more active participants of this phase of the link, which will lead also to formalization of their work.

- Marketing of Agricultural Products in conjunction with the Local Market. In recent years, there is an improving trend in the marketing of Agricultural Products, there is a positive pressure from all actors conditioned by the increasing demand in the market, for more and more quality products. Cultivation of Agricultural Products is being viewed by farmers as an important natural economic resource and especially development potential, not yet fully exploited and sustainable. Combining this trend with a market that can be set up in Marikaj would increase the chances of visitors by a large number of citizens who travel on the road Tiranë - Durres, especially during the summer period, during the influx of vacationers coming from Durrës and Kavajë. The place where this market can be set up is only 500 meters away from the national road.
- Development axes of the Municipality of Vora. The Municipality of Vora 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. Blocking building permits and repertoire of 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 employing the rural population and controlling the territory. Currently, most of the agricultural production goes for own use in rural areas. Increasing yields would increase rural income, which would improve the economic situation of families in Vora (which in turn would lead to food security and betterment of situation of women and children, as neither the fathers nor the mothers would have to look for work opportunities away from home, even abroad). 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 liaison 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 three value chains and categorization according to their impact on the sector (short/medium/long term) and budget requirements (low/medium/high):

RECOMMENDATIONS							
NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPACT			BUDGET		
		Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term	Low	Average	High
1	PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF CULTIVATOR LEVEL						
1.1	Ongoing technical assistance, especially in the first year, in terms of: ✓ Drafting the development plan ✓ Technical assistance in negotiating with others ✓ Agrotechnology design that will have to be heard throughout the cultivation process ✓ Follow-up and advice on agro-technological cultivation processes ✓ Consulting for post-harvest items	X		3.	X		
1.2	Trainings for raising the level of knowledge for cultivation Agricultural Products and MAP: ✓ For the values of the products they cultivate and the know-how for cultivation techniques ✓ For the way of harvesting and avoiding losses mainly of MAP ✓ For post-harvest treatment elements ✓ On the importance of the final hygiene of the product and how it is practically realized	X			X		
1.3	Clustering programs for women to strengthen their representation and enhance knowledge exchange, improve production processes (especially led by the female entrepreneurs famous in the area) – Associations related to Seedlings Collection, of MAPs collectors, Olive collectors			X	X		
2	SMALL GRANTS FOR TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENT						
2.1	Support with basic and technological elements (this would improve working conditions of both men and women, besides making production more efficient) ✓ Supporting elements used for planting Agricultural Products and MAPs in the field such as pickets, tape measure, twine, elements for bathing, etc. ✓ Saplings according to the development plan drafted in cooperation with the technical consultancy		X		X		

RECOMMENDATIONS							
NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPACT			BUDGET		
		Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term	Low	Average	High
	✓ Protective products according to the development plan drafted with technical consultancy ✓ Packaging elements for the final product in order to preserve the product values for Agricultural Products and MAPs ✓ Drip irrigation systems to demonstrate to farmers the values and advantages of innovative technologies						
2.2	Support for the production of seedlings for the following years. ✓ Trainings on know-how and seedling cultivation technique – specific for women and youth. ✓ Supporting elements used for planting seedlings in mini greenhouses such as pickets, tape measure, twine, etc. ✓ Auxiliary elements for the construction of mines, plasmas, iron rods, connecting elements, etc. ✓ Organic Fertilizers and Protective Products according to the seedling development plan drafted with the technical consultancy	X		4.	5.	X	6.
3	CERTIFICATION ON QUALITY AND SAFETY STANDARDS						
3.1	Awareness session on the importance of certification in reaching high value markets and the steps needed to be certified.			X	X		7.
3.2	Manufacturer support in certification with HACCP and Organic, as the most basic requirements from consumers.			X	X		8.
4	DIRECT ASSISTANCE FROM MUNICIPALITY OF VORA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR FOCUSING ON AUTOCHTHONE PRODUCTS, MAPS AND OLIVES						
4.1	Modernization of farms and marketing of marketable agricultural products through the concept of branded products by: ✓ Develop a better infrastructure for connecting villages with urban areas that serves as a market for agricultural products and livestock - ✓ Marketing of local agricultural products. ✓ Diversification of economic activities in rural areas.			X	X		9.

RECOMMENDATIONS							
NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPACT			BUDGET		
		Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term	Low	Average	High
	✓ Irrigation system improvement. ✓ Better supply and value chain support for local products. ✓ Application of fiscal easing policies for farmers.						
4.2	Investment in building a market for products in Marikaj.			X	X		10.
4.3	Marketing of agritourism and the regional market in Marikaj, between the promotion of nature and the cultural and historical elements of the area.			X	X		11.
5	AWARENESS FOR OPPORTUNITIES IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR FOCUSING ON AUTOCHTHONE PRODUCTS, MAPS AND OLIVES						
5.1	Information and awareness sessions about opportunities in the agricultural sector. Raising awareness of the economic importance of the sector of Agricultural Products, MAPs, Olive Oil and consumer demand in order to stimulate their cultivation.			X	X		
5.2	Information and awareness sessions on IPARD funding schemes and other national schemes.			X	X		

Table 21. Recommendations for the three Value Chains.

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EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY

Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis (GSVCA)
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