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WOMEN IN THE TOURISM SECTOR IN ALBANIA

Assessment of Opportunities, Challenges and Pathways to Equality

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Purpose and Scope

1. Deliver the first gender-responsive assessment of Albania's tourism sector
2. Link gender equality with sustainability, competitiveness, and inclusive growth
3. Analyze women's and men's roles and leadership across the tourism value chain
4. Inform the Tourism Development Strategy 2025–2030 through gender integration
5. Guide UN Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) agenda with actionable evidence

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Challenges & Improvements

Depth of causal analysis: further explore the structural and economic roots of gender gaps

Coverage of the full tourism value chain: extend future work to transport, digital platforms, and leisure services

Gender data and evidence gaps: strengthen coordination with INSTAT and the Ministry of Tourism to make data collection more systematic and gender-sensitive

Intersectional insights: deepen analysis of rural, migrant, and informal women through collaboration with local partners

Methodology & Process

Timeline: January 2024 – July 2025

Sources: 51 interviews, 100 documents, 4 regional field visits

Process: Joint work between gender and tourism experts, with support from UN Women, MoTE, and INSTAT and key associations

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Areas of Analysis

1. Data and Policymaking
2. Employment
3. Entrepreneurship
4. Education and Training
5. Women Travelers
6. Community and Civil Society

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1. DATA & POLICYMAKING

- Tourism contributes 26.1% of GDP (USD 6 billion) and provides over 20% of national jobs

- Gender-Responsive Tourism Policy (GRTP) introduced in 2017 with UN Women support

- National Tourism Strategy 2025–2030 sets targets: 30% of tourism projects are led by women managed by Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA), 60% of trainees in quality and sustainability certification are women and 30% of the progressive new recruitment at the National Tourism Agency should be women.
- Gender equality drives innovation, competitiveness, and EU alignment

Data and Policymaking: recommendations

High Priority

- Integrate **Gender-Responsive Budgeting** (GRB) and SMART gender indicators in tourism
- Develop a **GRB roadmap** and a joint gender–tourism statistics plan
- Conduct a **baseline** of gender data across transport, accommodation, and digital services.

Medium Priority

- **Track** tourism-related expenditure with a gender lens
- **Audit** and **update data systems** for gender sensitivity and harmonization.

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2. Employment

- Tourism makes up 14.3% of active businesses but only 8.2% of jobs, showing untapped potential for decent work

- Women hold 62% of salaried positions, yet men occupy 84% of leadership roles

- The gender pay gap persists, women earn €600 - 700 versus €1,500 for men in similar jobs

- Informality and limited social protection remain widespread, and GBV risks are reported, especially in hospitality and seasonal work

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Employment: recommendations

High Priority

- Ensure decent work, equal pay, and safe workplaces
- Train actors on ILO Convention 190 and SEA/SH standards
- Collect sex-disaggregated data on jobs, wages, and informality
- Research GBV and trafficking risks to guide prevention

Medium Priority

- Assess gender risks in labour migration
- Strengthen labour inspection capacity on gender equality
- Develop a CSR guide promoting women's leadership together with decent work

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3. Entrepreneurship

- Women **own or manage** 43.8% of enterprises in accommodation and 43.2% in trade

- Only 11% of women access formal loans (22% of men), and 29% of agritourism enterprises are women-owned

- Lack of tailored finance and persistent care barriers continue to constrain women's entrepreneurship

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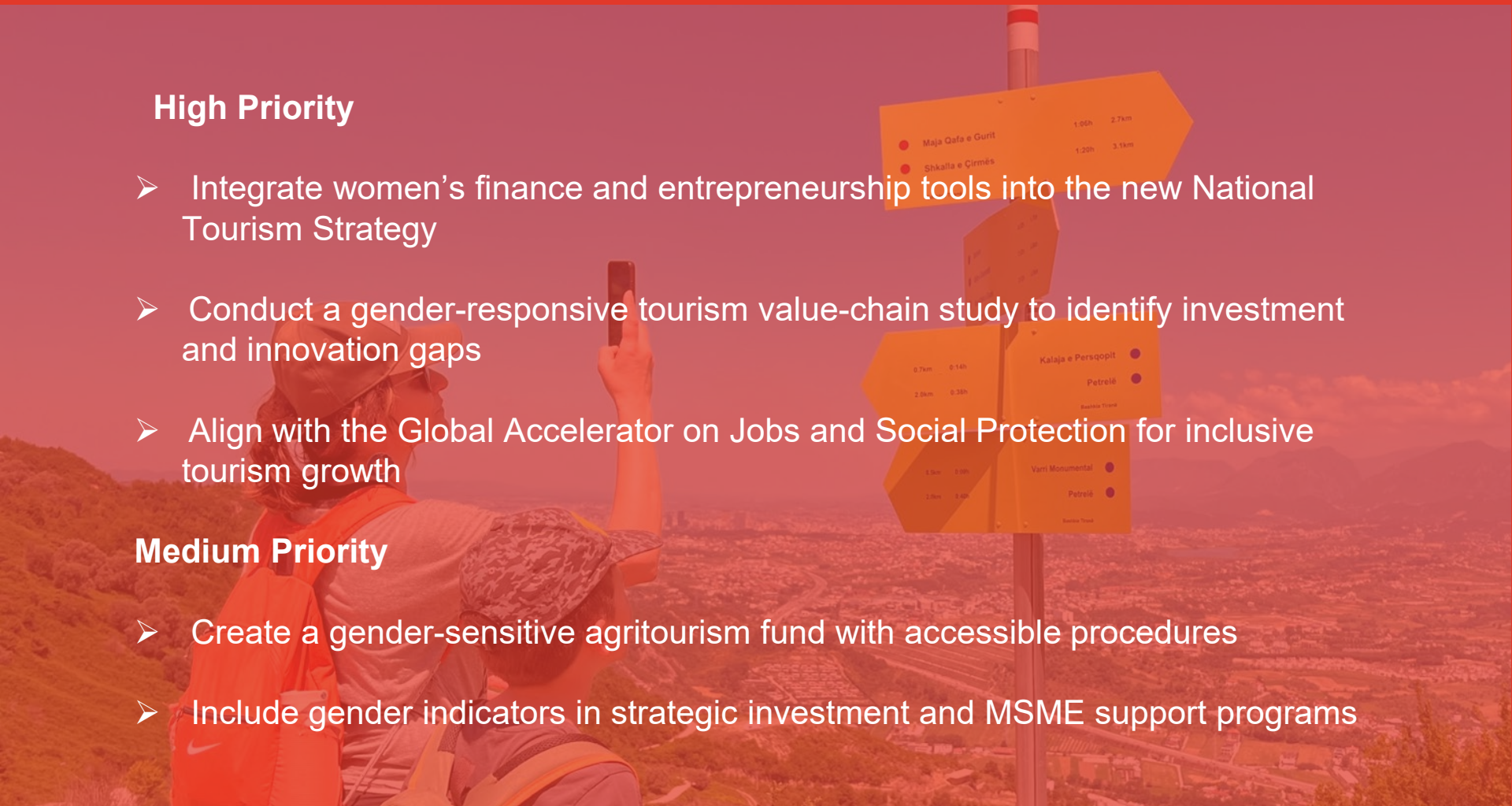
Entrepreneurship: recommendations



High Priority

- Integrate women's finance and entrepreneurship tools into the new National Tourism Strategy
- Conduct a gender-responsive tourism value-chain study to identify investment and innovation gaps
- Align with the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for inclusive tourism growth

Medium Priority

- Create a gender-sensitive agritourism fund with accessible procedures
- Include gender indicators in strategic investment and MSME support programs

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4. EDUCATION & TRAINING

64% of trainees are women, yet only 24% are enrolled in vocational tourism schools.

Despite similar training, only 14% of women earn above €360, compared to 81% of men.

There are few leadership or advanced programmes for women, and training content remains poorly aligned with labour-market needs.

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Education & Training: recommendations

High Priority

- Align training with labour-market and gender-equality goals
- Design gender-responsive training and mentoring programmes
- Create a roadmap to close education-to-employment gaps

Medium Priority

- Build gender-sensitive teaching and leadership capacity in vocational institutions

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5. WOMEN TRAVELERS

- Women make up **over half of global and domestic travelers** (50.3% in Albania)

- Yet, **data** on their preferences and spending are missing, creating a major gap in tourism planning

- **Safety and inclusion** are key to competitiveness. Destinations must be safe and welcoming for women to fully benefit from tourism

- A **gender-responsive approach** uses women travelers as a lens to improve safety, governance, value chain and marketing

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Women Travelers: recommendations

High Priority

- Increase capacities and knowledge of journalists to report on tourism from a gender perspective.
- Design a gender-sensitive manual on communication and marketing based on benchmarking.
- Conduct a market assessment of women travellers: solo, group and family travellers. .

Medium Priority

- Develop women-centric tourism products
- Support product design, storytelling and marketing for women-focused travel agencies or tour operators.

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6. Community Tourism

- Women's and community voices remain limited in tourism decisions
- Community tourism is a development strategy, not a niche product
- Inclusion must reach coastal, rural, and cultural areas
- Long-term partnerships link tourism growth with women's leadership
- Inclusive tourism benefits women, communities, and the environment.

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Community Tourism: recommendations

High Priority

- Include community tourism in the National Tourism Strategy with gender goals, budgets, and indicators
- Create a Women in Community Tourism Network for learning, advocacy, and leadership.

Medium Priority

- Use gender-sensitive tools to measure and share how tourism benefits women and men in local communities.

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FINAL REMARKS

- Tourism in Albania is growing fast, but it must be fair and sustainable for women and men
- Gender equality drives competitiveness, innovation, and resilience
- Inclusive tourism ecosystem empowers women's leadership and agency
- Gender-responsive growth creates shared prosperity
- Equality is the foundation of Albania's sustainable tourism future

THANK YOU!