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FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT

WOMEN IN THE TOURISM SECTOR IN ALBANIA

OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND PATHWAYS TO EQUALITY

Women in the Tourism Sector in Albania
A national assessment of opportunities, challenges and pathways to equality

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ACRONYMS

AIDA:	Albanian Investment Development Agency
CE:	The European Commission
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSR:	Corporate Social Responsibility
EBRD:	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EIGE:	European Institute for Gender Equality
GADC:	Gender Alliance for Development Center
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
IIWG:	Inter-Institutional Working Group
ILO:	International Labour Organization
INSTAT:	National Institute of Statistics of Albania
IPARD:	Rural Development Assistance Programme in the Accession Process
ISCO:	International standard classification of occupations
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
NAES:	The National Agency for Employment and Skills
TSA:	Tourism Satellite Account
TTDI:	Travel and Tourism Development Index
UN Tourism:	The United Nations World Tourism Organization
VET:	Vocational Education and Training
WTTC:	The World Travel and Tourism Council

INTRODUCTION

Albania's tourism sector is experiencing rapid growth and development, which is driving the national economy and playing a key role in job creation. In 2024, Albania welcomed 11.7 million foreign visitors, marking a 15.2 per cent growth compared to 2023. In the first nine months of 2023, over 8 million visitors arrived in the country, more than double the number in the same period in 2022. Albania's Travel and Tourism sector was forecasted to contribute ALL 608.4 billion (US$6 billion) to GDP in 2024, representing 26.1 per cent of the economy.[1] This projection marked a 7.7 per cent increase compared to 2023 and a 47.5 per cent increase compared to 2019. The sector was also forecasted to support 278,000 jobs in 2024, accounting for 21.8 per cent of total employment, with projected growth to 314,200 jobs by 2034.[2] The Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024[3] shows significant progress for Albania, which has improved 5.9 percentage points and advanced from 78th to 66th position.

Tourism is the most prominent economic sector in the country, driven by a series of investment programmes and strategies to attract foreign direct and indirect investment and advance sustainable development. The *National Tourism Strategy 2025–2030* encompasses a comprehensive portfolio of projects aimed at strengthening the tourism value chain. Through the promotion of employment, this strategy is expected to benefit 73,778 people by 2030.[4]

Amidst Albania's exceptional tourism performance, it is imperative to make informed decisions that consider the needs of women. Doing so is essential for ensuring the sustainable growth and development of the sector. UN Women Albania has been addressing gender equality in tourism since 2017 with *"Guidance on developing a baseline study on gender and tourism in Albania,"* the *"Technical Working Paper on Integrating gender equality into Albania's tourism sector,"* and the review and submission of recommendations of the *"National Tourism Strategy 2017-2022" and the National Tourism Strategy 2024–2030.* UN Women is currently implementing its Strategic Note 2022-2026,[5] which aims to ensure that "all women and girls enjoy and exercise their human rights in a gender equal society and meaningfully contribute to Albania's sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development and EU integration." In that context, UN Women is implementing the project "Engender the consumption and offer of tourism services in Albania," an outcome of which is the current assessment.

This assessment provides key insights into the current situation of women in tourism in order to support the successful integration of gender equality into tourism policymaking as the sector expands rapidly. Importantly, it also serves as a contribution to inform the National Tourism Strategy 2024–2030, offering evidence-based recommendations for a more gender-responsive and inclusive approach. It is aligned with several European Union (EU) and international frameworks:

- *EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025:* This strategy focuses on promoting gender equality across all areas, including employment, entrepreneurship, education and leadership. It aligns with the assessment's goal of addressing gender disparities in the tourism sector.

- *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*: Albania is a signatory to CEDAW, which requires the country to take measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all areas, including employment and education. This assessment supports Albania's efforts to fulfil its obligations under this international treaty.

- *Beijing Platform for Action (1995)*: This landmark global agreement, to which Albania is a party, outlines key actions to advance gender equality across sectors such as economic empowerment, education, and access to decision-making, as well as the feminization of poverty. The assessment's focus on employment, entrepreneurship and education aligns with the goals of the Beijing Platform.

1. World Travel and Tourism Council. (2025) Albania travel & tourism economic impact research.
2. Ibid.
3. The index evaluates 119 economies, highlighting factors and policies that support sustainable growth in the travel and tourism sector
4. This data is not disaggregated by sex in the National Tourism Strategy
5. UN Women Albania. (2022.) UN Women Albania Strategic Note 2022–2026

- *Sustainable Development Goals*: As part of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Albania is committed to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The assessment contributes to this goal by identifying key areas in the tourism sector where gender equality can be included under the priorities set by Goal 5 (gender equality) and Goal 8 (decent employment), but also as a mainstream component for moving tourism towards gender- transformative change.

- *EU Acquis on Gender Equality*: As an EU candidate country, Albania has adopted various EU directives related to gender equality, which promote equal treatment and opportunities in the workplace and encourage the integration of gender considerations into all policies. This assessment will provide insights to support Albania in aligning its tourism policies with these EU norms, such as the gender mainstreaming in tourism norm.[66]

Drawing on the analysis of available data on gender within tourism, the assessment offers actionable recommendations that support gender-responsive policies for sustainable development in tourism. It is expected to be used by national tourism authorities, decision makers, and international and national organizations supporting Albania's tourism development.

6. European Institute for Gender Equality. (n.d.). Tourism and gender equality in the EU acquis: Albania. https://eige.europa.eu/topics/tourism#:~:text=Gender per cent20mainstreaming per cent20has per cent20been per cent20embraced,Justice

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Barazia gjinore nuk është vetëm shqetësim në të gjithë sektorin e turizmit, por edhe një nxitës strategjik i zhvillimit gjithëpërfshirës, konkurrues dhe të qëndrueshëm. Si një nga sektorët ekonomikë me rritjen më të shpejtë në Shqipëri, turizmi luan një rol të rëndësishëm në gjenerimin e punësimit, tërheqjen e investimeve dhe rritjen e dukshmërisë së vendit në botë. Me Shqipërinë që po shfaqet si një destinacion i rëndësishëm mesdhetar, zgjerimi i shpejtë i sektorit përbën një mundësi aktuale për inkorporimin e angazhimeve kombëtare dhe ndërkombëtare për barazinë gjinore, të përfshirjes sociale dhe qëndrueshmërisë në politikat dhe praktikat në fushën e turizmit.

Gender equality is not only a cross-cutting concern in tourism, it is a strategic driver of inclusive, competitive and sustainable development. As one of Albania's fastest-growing economic sectors, tourism plays a vital role in generating employment, attracting investment and enhancing the country's global visibility. With Albania emerging as a key Mediterranean destination, the sector's rapid expansion presents a timely opportunity to embed national and international commitments to gender equality, social inclusion and sustainability into tourism policy and practice.

This assessment examines the intersection of gender and tourism in Albania, providing evidence-based insights into achievements to date, persistent structural barriers and practical entry points for transformative change. While tourism has opened doors for women, particularly in hospitality, trade and agritourism, these opportunities have not consistently translated into decent work, leadership pathways, or economic empowerment. Unlocking the full potential of the sector requires addressing these inequalities head-on and ensuring that women are not only participants in tourism but agents of its transformation. This assessment is especially timely, as it has been developed to inform and strengthen the National Tourism Strategy 2025–2030.

Several structural and institutional challenges continue to limit women's full participation in and benefit from tourism:

- Persistent gender gaps in employment quality, pay equity and leadership;
- Labour migration in tourism, when not governed by gender-sensitive safeguards, heightens women's risk of exploitation, abuse and gender-based violence;
- Limited access to finance, land and technical support for women entrepreneurs;
- Unequal access to vocational training, particularly in rural and traditional craft sectors;
- A lack of comprehensive sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data;
- Weak implementation of existing gender-responsive budgeting frameworks in tourism.

At the same time, Albania has a strong foundation to build on. The country has a nationally-recognized methodology for gender-responsive budgeting, increasing public awareness of gender issues, and a growing ecosystem of women-led enterprises in both urban and rural tourism. The rise in women travellers, viewed not merely as a market segment but as a transformative force within the tourism ecosystem, offers a strategic opportunity to promote gender-responsive, socially conscious tourism. These travellers increasingly seek experiences that are safe, inclusive and beneficial to local women, helping to advance structural change and contribute to more equitable and sustainable tourism development. Moreover, the rise of community tourism offers significant opportunities to foster more inclusive and locally anchored development.

The report identifies several priority recommendations to support Albania in advancing gender equality through its tourism sector:

- Institutionalize gender-responsive budgeting within tourism planning and investment frameworks;
- Develop a national training and capacity-building strategy tailored to women entrepreneurs and workers across the tourism value chain;
- Promote women's leadership and representation in Destination Management Organizations and tourism associations;
- Strengthen gender-sensitive data systems to inform evidence-based policymaking and resource allocation;
- Establish a national network of women in community tourism to amplify women's voices and leadership in local tourism development;
- Ensure implementation of ILO Convention 190, promoting safe, fair and violence-free work environments in the sector;
- Design and promote tourism products that respond to the needs and expectations of solo women travellers, including safety protocols, clear information channels, women-owned experiences and inclusive marketing strategies.

By embedding gender equality into tourism development, Albania can achieve more than growth: it can position itself as a leader in gender-responsive tourism. This is not only a matter of fairness, but of strategic governance: societies that invest in the rights, talents and leadership of women build stronger, more competitive, and sustainable economies.

CHAPTER 1
CONTEXT

1.1 TOURISM SNAPSHOT

Arrivals

- Albania experienced a growth of approximately 15.84 per cent in international tourist arrivals, welcoming 11.7 million visitors in 2024 compared to 10.1 million in 2023.[7]
- From 2019 to 2023, international tourist arrivals increased by 61 per cent due to post-pandemic demand, improved air connectivity and expansion of online booking platforms.[8]
- In 2024, visitors to Albania primarily came from Europe, accounting for 95.3 per cent of all international arrivals, with Southern Europe alone representing 72.4 per cent of the total, followed by Western Europe (8.5 per cent), Central/Eastern Europe (7.3 per cent), Northern Europe (4.2 per cent) and Eastern/Mediterranean Europe (3 per cent).[9]

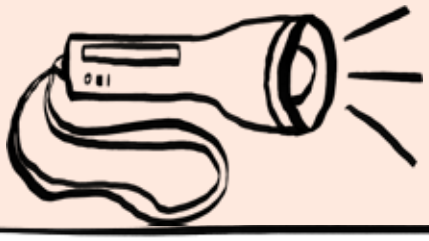
Tourist characteristics

- Most trips to Albania are for "vacation and leisure" purposes (50 per cent), followed by "visiting family and friends" (43 per cent).[10]
- The predominant age group of people visiting Albania with tourism interests is 25–34 years.[11]
- Of trips within Albania among domestic travellers, 50.3 per cent are made by women and 49.7 per cent are made by men.[12]

7. Ministry of Tourism and Environment in Albania. (2024.) Viti 2024 solli 1.17 milionë vizitorë të huaj në Shqipëri
8. World Tourism Organization. (2024.) Tourism doing business - Investing in Albania
9. Institute of Statistics of Albania (INSTAT). (n.d.). Tourism statistics.
10. INSTAT. (2023.) Survey on holidays and trips 2022
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.

Economic impact

- Albania's tourism sector was forecasted to contribute ALL 608.4 billion ($6 billion) to the GDP in 2024, representing 26.1 per cent of the national economy.[13]
- Inbound visitor spending was projected to reach ALL
- 493.4 billion ($4.8 billion), accounting for 54.7 per cent of total exports, while domestic visitor spending was estimated at ALL 107.1 billion ($1 billion), representing 13.3 per cent of exports.[14]
- The direct contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP was expected to grow at an average annual rate of 1.9 per cent, reaching ALL 316.1 billion, or 9.6 per cent of GDP, by 2034.[15]
- In 2023, the direct contribution of Travel and Tourism to Albania's GDP was ALL 244.7 billion, accounting for 10.7 per cent of the total GDP. This contribution primarily reflects economic activities from the industry such as hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services (excluding commuter services). Additionally, it encompasses activities from the restaurant and leisure sectors that are directly supported by tourism.[16]
- In 2022, inbound tourism expenditures represented 46 per cent of total exports, 65 per cent of export services and 17 per cent of GDP.[17]
- Inbound tourism expenditure reached $3.3 trillion in 2022, boosting tourism's direct contribution to GDP to 3.8 per cent.[18]



Tourism has a pivotal role in Albania's economy and its importance for sustainable development. However, recent data indicates a predominance of low-spending mass tourism, which significantly constrains the potential of tourism as an engine for a positive economic environment.[19] An example of low-spending tourism is the fact that the most popular type of accommodation used by tourists was "accommodation with family or friends" in 2022, which increased by 5.2 per cent compared to the previous year.

13. World Travel and Tourism Council. (2025) Albania: Travel & tourism economic impact
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. The average expenditure of international tourists is noted in https://www.ifc.org/content/dam/ifc/doc/mgrt/cpsd-albania- summary.pdf

1.2 WHY IS GENDER EQUALITY IN TOURISM IMPORTANT? SOME GLOBAL KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALBANIA

Engendering tourism is critical for improving the sector's sustainability and addressing challenges related to decent employment and workforce development. On a global scale, women constituted 54 per cent of the global tourism workforce in 2019, a figure that stands out when compared to the 39 per cent representation of women across all industries.[20] However, it should be noted that the remuneration gap between men and women was significant, with women earning 14.7 per cent less than their male counterparts.[21] In 2024, the proportion of women working in the sector increased by 1 percentage point to 55 per cent, while the gender pay gap widened by 3 percentage points to 17 per cent.[22] Global evidence[23] shows that by closing gender gaps, GDP per capita would rise by 20 per cent and 300 million jobs would be created in the global economy by 2035.[24] These figures underscore that Albania stands to unlock significant, untapped economic potential by applying a gender-responsive approach to tourism development.

Tourism has significant capacity to stimulate other sectors of Albania's economy, becoming a powerful driver of growth that should benefit women and men equally. "Tourism mainstreaming"[25] requires the inclusion of women's needs at all levels, in all forms of tourism and across all aspects of the tourism value chain.[26] The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of ensuring gender equality in the tourism sector as women were disproportionately affected, with many losing their jobs, experiencing wage cuts and encountering difficulties in re-entering the workforce due to unpaid domestic work.[27]Women in tourism still face major barriers, including constrained opportunities for career progression and the pay gap. The underrepresentation of women in leadership roles also impacts decision-making, often resulting in policies that fail to adequately address the unique needs and challenges women still face in the sector on a global scale.[28]

Table 2.1. Making gender equality a core pillar of sustainability in tourism development[29]

Dimension	Key Issues in Tourism	Gender-responsive insights for sustainability in tourism
Economic	Tourism is promoted as a poverty reduction tool.	Tourism must move beyond income generation to actively confront the feminization of poverty. Employment alone cannot dismantle structural inequalities or protect women from gender-based violence.

20. World Tourism Organization. (2019.) Global Report on Women in Tourism – Second Edition.
21. Ibid.
22. World Tourism Organization. (2024.) Informe regional de las mujeres en el turismo en América Latina y el Caribe.
23. Considering all sectors of the economy.
24. UN Tourism. (2024.) UNWTO calls on the sector to invest in women.
25. In 2015, The UN Statistical Commission's UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) and UNWTO Statistics & Tourism Satellite Account Programme encouraged "mainstreaming tourism in sustainable development," meaning that tourism should be fully integrated into national social, economic and environmental policies, rather than treated as an isolated sector.
26. Moreno Alarcón, D. (2023.) Brechas de género en las cadenas globales de valor de América Latina y el Caribe: Nuevos y viejos desafíos en un contexto de incertidumbre. En Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), Cadenas globales de valor en América Latina y el Caribe: Nuevos desafíos en un contexto de incertidumbre (LC/TS.2023/17, pp. 199–238).
27. World Tourism Organization. (2023.) Survey on the Gendered Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Tourism Employment.
28. World Tourism Organization. (2019.) Global Report on Women in Tourism – Second Edition.
29. Eger, C., Munar, A. M., & Hsu, C. (2022). Gender and tourism sustainability. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 30(7), 1459–1475. Equality in Tourism. (n.d.). Tourism, climate change & gender; Moreno, D. M., & Cole, S. (2019). No sustainability for tourism without gender equality. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 27(7), 903–919; Pathiranage, N. W., Waheduzzaman, W., & Dayarathna, K. T. (2025). Top management gender diversity and environmental performance: Evidence from hospitality and tourism industry. International Journal of Hospitality

Dimension	Key Issues in Tourism	Gender-responsive insights for sustainability in tourism
Economic	Women are concentrated in precarious tourism jobs (low paid and lack of protection or benefits).	Tourism must deliver decent work for women by closing wage gaps, preventing harassment, recognizing unpaid care and enabling leadership. The so-called "feminization" of tourism often signals precariousness and disempowerment, not progress.
	Women lack access to land and resources for tourism-linked production (e.g., food, crafts).	Securing women's land rights and access to economic assets is essential for equitable participation in the tourism value chain. As tourism expands, land certification and property for women becomes critical in safeguarding their rights and preventing displacement.
	Women are underrepresented in tourism governance and business ownership.	Strengthening women's leadership and entrepreneurship in tourism through institutional reforms that address systemic gender barriers. Increasing women's participation alone is not sufficient—structural change is essential for achieving meaningful equality.
Social	Tourism can worsen risks to women's health and safety (e.g., sexual exploitation, harassment).	Without safeguards, tourism can reinforce harmful gender norms and increase risks of sexual exploitation, limiting women's autonomy and agency.
	Education and training in tourism often lack a gender lens.	Reform tourism education to reflect women's roles, challenges and leadership potential, ensuring training fosters equal opportunity, empowerment and inclusion.
	Women's voices are excluded from tourism decision-making.	Implement participatory gender audits and strengthen gender-responsive governance to ensure inclusive decision-making and accountability.
	Gender equality is often treated as an "add-on" to sustainability.	Gender equality must move beyond symbolism, requiring dedicated budgets, actionable strategies and measurable outcomes.

Dimension	Key Issues in Tourism	Gender-responsive insights for sustainability in tourism
Environmental/ Climate & Biodiversity	Tourism depletes natural resources (e.g., water) needed by local communities.	Adopt gender-sensitive water and resource management to uphold women's rights and alleviate unpaid care responsibilities, given that water collection is often considered domestic work. Evidence shows that when women lead, as board members, managers, or entrepreneurs, tourism enterprises are more likely to embrace integrated sustainability strategies, including climate-smart policies and community-focused accountability.
	Climate change disproportionately impacts women in tourism-dependent areas.	Recognize women as agents of climate resilience and ensure their inclusion in environmental governance.[30] Women disproportionately bear health and safety risks when tourism and climate change compromise water and sanitation systems, yet they remain underrepresented in decision-making spaces.
	Tourism development affects biodiversity and land use.	Protect women's land rights and roles as custodians of biodiversity through community tourism development.[31]

Women are powerful agents of change; when granted equal access to decision-making, they often make more sustainable choices, leading to improved school attendance for their children, increased food security, greener mobility patterns and reduced energy demand.[32] Adopting a gender perspective in tourism is about more than simply increasing the number of women working in the sector: it is an essential element of sustainability and inclusion in the entire tourism sector. A commitment to "more tourism for women" must go beyond rhetoric if it is to ensure proper inclusion of a gender-responsive approach within tourism and outcomes that support gender equality and women's empowerment at the sector's core. Among others, key objectives should be to enhance investments that positively impact the number and quality of women's employment opportunities, conditions, and entrepreneurial prospects, establish secure and violence-free environments and practices, and to foster leadership roles that are committed to reducing gender inequality in the tourism sector.

Gender equality in tourism requires the design and implementation of concrete reform measures that respond to the needs and realities of both women and men. Globally, gender-responsive tourism is recognized as a key driver of sustainability, resilience and inclusive development. This makes it particularly relevant in destinations such as Albania, where the rapid growth of the tourism sector risks outpacing the institutional and policy capacity to ensure sustainability and equity. As such, it is imperative that all tourism stakeholders, public, private and civil society, integrate gender equality into the core of their strategies, not only to avoid deepening existing inequalities, but also to fully harness the transformative potential

30. United Nations. (2022.) Dimensions and examples of the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change, the role of women as agents of change, and opportunities for women.

31. In 2024, Planeterra, a nonprofit organization, generated 3,935 jobs for women through its Community Tourism Enterprises, many of which are directly involved in climate resilience and biodiversity regeneration initiatives. These include initiatives that reconnect people with nature (63 per cent of Planeterra´s community partners), support sustainable value chains (87 per cent), protect animals and their welfare (59 per cent) and invest in nature restoration (59 per cent), showing that women's leadership in tourism can also drive environmental stewardship and climate action. Data is available in their 2024 Impact Report.

32. A study conducted by the Peterson Institute for International Economics, which analyzed 21,980 companies worldwide, revealed that firms with a higher representation of women in top leadership roles tend to achieve stronger performance in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) metrics.

of tourism for inclusive national development.Barazia gjinore në turizëm kërkon hartimin dhe zbatimin e masave konkrete reformuese që u përgjigjen nevojave dhe realiteteve si të grave ashtu edhe të burrave. Në shkallë botërore, turizmi i përgjigjshëm gjinor njihet si një nxitës kryesor i qëndrueshmërisë, aftësive ripërtëritëse dhe zhvillimit gjithëpërfshirës. Kjo e bën atë veçanërisht të rëndësishëm në destinacione të tilla si Shqipëria, ku rritja e shpejtë e sektorit të turizmit rrezikon të tejkalojë kapacitetet institucionale dhe politike për sigurimin e qëndrueshmërisë dhe barazisë. Për këtë arsye, është e domosdoshme që të gjithë palët e angazhuara në turizëm – publikë, privatë dhe shoqëria civile – të integrojnë barazinë gjinore në qendër të strategjive të tyre, jo vetëm për të shmangur thellimin e pabarazive ekzistuese, por edhe për të shfrytëzuar plotësisht potencialin transformues të turizmit për zhvillim kombëtar gjithëpërfshirës.

1.3. UN TOURISM DOMAIN OF ANALYSIS TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY

UN Tourism[33] in 2010 outlined key domains of analysis to encourage gender equality, ensuring that women have greater opportunities and voice in tourism employment, entrepreneurship, education, leadership and community engagement. The current assessment is guided by these six domains of analysis. Within the framework of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, the incorporation of the gender approach as a condition for sustainable development is a priority. In this sense, UN Tourism has been promoting a set of six objectives focused on increasing the number of women in the sector, enhancing their agency, and advancing towards greater equality in tourism planning and management.

Domain of analysis	Statement	Scope of work
Measuring for better policies	Tourism is active in buildinggender-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data to improve its sustainable development response.	Assessing the role of gender-disaggregated data in shaping tourism policies and strategies and identifying the need for more comprehensive data collection to inform decision-making and policy design.
Employment	Tourism provides decent work for women.	Analyzing the participation of women in the workforce within the tourism sector, exploring challenges such as gender-based pay gaps, job security and career advancement opportunities.
Entrepreneurship	Women-owned and -led tourism enterprises lead to women's empowerment.	Examining the role of women in tourism entrepreneurship, including ownership and management of businesses, access to financing and the obstacles they face in establishing and growing tourism-related enterprises

33. The United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.

Domain of analysis	Statement	Scope of work
Education and training	Education and training that considers the particular needs of women promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women in the sector.	Understanding the availability and accessibility of educational opportunities for women in the tourism sector, including specialized training programmes that address gender-specific needs, skills development and the impact of educational attainment on career progression.
Community and civil society	Tourism empowers women socially, economicallyand politically to work collectively for gender justice and equality.	Exploring how tourism affects women in local communities, particularly in rural and marginalized areas, and how community tourism can contribute to women's empowerment through community-based initiatives and civil society engagement.
Leadership, policy and decision-making	Women are leaders in the tourism sector: they are represented and have influence in decision-making spaces.	Investigating the representation of women in leadership positions in tourism-related organizations (both public and private) and the influence of women in policymaking and decision-making processes that affect the tourism sector.

CHAPTER 2

ASSESSMENT SCOPE OF WORK AND METHODOLOGY

To gather primary and secondary data, a mixed-methods approach—quantitative and qualitative—was applied to provide a comprehensive view of gender dynamics in Albania's tourism sector.

2.1 GENDER ANALYSIS PLAN

A desk review was conducted to capture the opportunities and gaps women face in tourism, as well as the availability of sex-disaggregated data in the sector. Building on the desk review, a gender matrix was developed with key questions to ensure an optimal examination of the gender dimension in tourism in Albania. This was done based on existing quantitative and qualitative data, including international and national reports, institutional data, and statistics and publications, as well as the current Tourism Strategy 20252030. The matrix is a key tool that guides the primary data collection through interviews with key stakeholders. It includes the six domains of analysis on gender equality promoted by UN Tourism.

2.2 DATA COLLECTION AND SCOPE

Following a desk review and a preliminary meeting with the UN Women team, a stakeholder mapping was developed. This tool enabled the identification of key players in tourism and gender in Albania and helped clarify diverse perspectives on the subject, including roles, data and priorities.

Data collection was done during the field mission, which took place from 30 September to 4 October 2024, and involved in-depth semi-structured interviews to be conducted in three key regions based on their distinct tourism profiles:

- Tirana (27 interviews): As the country's capital and main gateway for international tourists, Tirana is central to policy-making and decision-making in the tourism sector. The city's role in influencing national tourism strategies and policies makes it a critical region for understanding the broader policy frameworks that affect gender equality in the sector.

- Vlora (12 interviews): Known for its rapid growth in mass tourism, Vlora offers insights into how large-scale tourism impacts women's employment, safety and entrepreneurial opportunities. Assessing this region helps understand the specific challenges that women face in more commercialized tourism areas.

- Shkodra (13 interviews): With its focus on culture and rural and adventure tourism, Shkodra is a growing destination for sustainable and authentic travel experiences. Evaluating women's roles in these types of tourism, especially in agritourism and rural tourism, provides critical insights into gender equality in rural tourism contexts.

These discussions were crucial in providing additional context, particularly where data was limited. Local experts, tourism professionals, and community members shared their experiences and perspectives on the gender dynamics of the tourism sector.

2.3 DOMAIN OF ANALYSIS AND LIMITATIONS

In light of Albania's specific priorities and opportunities, it was deemed beneficial to add one additional domain of analysis: the trend of women travellers. Given the increasing importance of women as global travellers, this area explores the growing trend of women travelling independently and in groups, their preferences, and how Albania can better cater to this market to boost tourism and promote gender equality.

The following is an overview of data limitations and challenges:

Limitation	Description	Solution available considering the scope of the consultancy
Causal analysis limitation	While this assessment identifies key gender disparities in Albania's tourism sector, it is important to acknowledge that in some areas the analysis may focus more on the disparities themselves rather than exploring the reasons for women's position within the sector. This is largely due to two interrelated limitations: ↘ First, the lack of comprehensive, gender-sensitive data in tourism—particularly disaggregated information on employment status, business ownership, income levels and informal work—continues to pose a significant barrier to deeper causal analysis. ↘ Second, the scope and timeframe of the consultancy did not allow for a fully comprehensive gender analysis of all tourism sub-sectors and governance structures, because of the breadth of structural challenges involved.	The findings are informed by available data, stakeholder interviews and field observations and interpreted through a gender-transformative lens that highlights key structural barriers such as informality, time poverty, limited access to finance and restrictive gender norms.
Limited understanding and contextualization of the full tourism value chain[34,33]	National tourism statistics are often limited to a narrow scope within the tourism value chain, with a primary focus on accommodation and food services. Data on other critical elements of the value chain, such as tourism-related transportation, entertainment and leisure activities, retail, travel agencies, tour operations and online travel agencies, and support services, is typically grouped into broader categories like "services" or "othersectors."	The team relied heavily on qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews and consultations with stake-holders.

34. The tourism value chain is the full sequence of activities and services that create and deliver a tourism experience—starting from how tourists learn about and book a trip to the transportation, accommodation, food, attractions and other services they use at the destination, and even post-trip feedback and marketing. Source: Duke Tourism Global Value Chain Framework.

Limitation	Description	Solution available considering the scope of the consultancy
Lack of sex-disaggregated data in Albania's tourism sector	This lack of detailed data makes it challenging to assess the extent of gender disparities and identify opportunities for women within the tourism value chain. Moreover, the availability of sex-disaggregated data across the sector also is different, being the food sector and accommodation the best informed by this data, further hindering the ability to understand how gender dynamics are shaping the industry.	Following a meeting on data, the UN Women's data focal point shared a document containing key information on tourism, including identified gaps in gender-sensitive data. Following the preliminary findings, a second desk review was conducted to analyse and triangulate all data/information collected for the assessment. It should be noted that sex-disaggregated data on tourism activities was not largely available from open sources. The team relied heavily on qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews and consultations with stakeholders.
Intersectionality	One of the main challenges in unpacking intersectionality in the assessment is the limited availability of gender-sensitive data and the lack of knowledge provided by key stakeholders on how tourism may affect to marginalized groups when gender equality is not considered. While it is that certain groups are particularly vulnerable to exclusion and bias, the availabledata (both qualitative and quantitative) is insufficient for conducting a comprehensive analysis of this issue.	To capture women's unique needs and feedback in the tourism sector, the plan is to partner with local organizations and share this assessment in order to expand the analysis to include these sub-groups: migrants, rural communities and women engaged in all forms of tourism.

CHAPTER 3

DATA MANAGEMENT AND POLICYMAKING IN TOURISM

3.1 KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDING 3.1. **The promotion and protection of gender equality and women's empowerment can be optimized by leveraging policies developed by national tourism authorities.**

National tourism authorities play a pivotal role in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. When strategically applied, their mandates and instruments can drive transformative change across the tourism sector. In 2017, UN Women conducted a review of Albania's Tourism Development Strategy (2017–2022) to assess the situation of women in the tourism sector. This review introduced the concept of the "gender-responsive tourism policy." This term refers to the need to develop tourism mechanisms and tools that account for the different socio-economic situations of women and men, with the ultimate goal of ensuring equal opportunities.

Despite this foundation, recent field observations confirm that tourism is not yet widely recognized as a strategic lever for women's empowerment. The practical application of a gender-responsive tourism policy remains limited. The current National Tourism Strategy (2025–2030) does not explicitly address gender equality, which presents an important opportunity. With targeted support, gender equality considerations can still be integrated to align the strategy with national and international commitments to inclusive, sustainable development. Doing so will require the establishment of measurable objectives, dedicated resources and programmatic mechanisms to ensure tourism becomes a catalyst for gender-transformative change.

Tourism is a strategic sector for advancing women's empowerment across economic, political and social domains. Albania has taken important steps as a pioneer of gender-responsive budgeting in the Western Balkans, and its commitments under CEDAW and the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2030 reaffirm the need to integrate gender equality not as an additional goal, but as a central pillar of sustainable and inclusive development.

The National Tourism Strategy 2025–2030 introduces quantitative targets, including ensuring that **30 per cent of tourism projects are led by women** managed by Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA), **60 per cent of trainees in quality and sustainability certification are women** and **30% of the progressive new recruitment** at the National Tourism Agency should be women. These measures represent significant starting points. At the same time, the basis for these percentages is not fully explained, and they appear conservative when weighed against both the potential of tourism as a driver of women's empowerment and the high number of women already engaged across the sector. To achieve meaningful impact, these commitments must be accompanied by enabling conditions that ensure women from diverse regions and backgrounds, particularly those leading small and medium-sized enterprises, can effectively access opportunities. Without such measures, there is a risk that well-intentioned indicators could inadvertently reinforce existing inequalities rather than reduce them.

The Strategy also references financial mechanisms, such as the AIC and AIDA, as well as incentive schemes and tax reforms. While these tools can play a critical role in expanding access to capital, their transformative potential will depend

on embedding gender-responsive criteria. Tracking the proportion of women beneficiaries, the nature of their enterprises and the broader social impact of investments will help ensure that these mechanisms do not unintentionally favour larger or more established (male/elite) actors, but instead serve as catalysts for women's empowerment across the tourism value chain. Addressing informality is equally critical. The planned Task Force on Informality provides an important opportunity to embed gender equality at the core of its mandate. A dedicated analysis of the links between tourism, informality and gender—an unprecedented exercise in Albania—would help guide a clear strategy, supported by adequate resources and a monitoring framework. Integrating gender-sensitive labour standards, including harassment prevention and workplace safety, will further strengthen this approach and align with CEDAW recommendations.

The training target of 60 per cent women by 2030 also has transformative potential if linked to leadership, rights awareness, and decision-making, and extended to tourism authorities, line ministries, and civil society. Similarly, the targets for women in the National Tourism Agency and in Destination Management Organizations should go beyond representation to ensure that women occupy decision-making roles, manage budgets and shape policy. Institutional mechanisms such as gender action plans, accountability systems and protocols on gender-based violence and workplace safety would help translate numerical participation into real influence.
The Strategy will be significant in the long run only if it goes beyond numbers, removes barriers and ensures that women can lead and shape the future of tourism.

Table 3.1. Legal and policy framework related to gender equality in Albania[35]

Name of Law	Opportunities for "gender-responsive tourism policy"
Law no. 9970, dated 24.07.2008, "On-gender equality in society."	This law serves as a cornerstone for advancing gender equality across all sectors, including tourism. It guarantees equal rights and opportunities for women and men, encourages women's participation in economic and decision-making processes and promotes gender-responsive budgeting. For tourism, this creates an opportunity to integrate gender equity into policies, workforce development and investment planning, ensuring the sector grows sustainably and inclusively.The ongoing review of the law provides a timely opportunity to explicitly link gender equality provisions to tourism development, addressing challenges such as informality, precarious work, and migrant labour. Article 18 prohibits harassment, including sexual harassment in the workplace, while Article 21 safeguards female employees from discrimination linked to marriage, pregnancy or maternity. Article 23 recognizes unpaid work as a vital contribution to families, communities and the economy. Embedding tourism-specific measures in the revised law could strengthen women's protection, leadership and economic empowerment within the sector.
Law no. 10221, dated 04.02.2010, "On-Protection against Discrimination."	This law supports efforts to reduce barriers faced by women by promoting diversity and inclusion under the principle of non-discrimination (also listed as a priority in the 2030 Agenda). Chapter 4 on "Prohibition of Discrimination" is particularly relevant to the tourism sector, as well as to service providers in the areas of "transportation and travel," "entertainment, relaxation and refreshment," and "sale or rental of residences and other premises."

35. Law No. 9970/2008 on Gender Equality; Law No. 10221/2010 on Protection against Discrimination; DCM No. 400/2021 on Gender Equality Strategy; Law No. 65/2016 on Social Enterprises; Law No. 10237/2010 on Health and Safety at Work; Law No. 15/2019 on Employment Promotion; Law No. 9817/2007 on Agriculture and Rural Development; Law No. 7961/1995 on the Labour Code of the Republic of Albania (as amended by Law No. 136/2015); Law No. 57/2016 amending Law No. 9936/2008 on Budget System Management; DCM No. 465/2012 on Gender Mainstreaming in the Medium-Term Budget Programme; Joint Instruction No. 21/2013 on Integrating Gender Issues in the Medium-Term Budget Programme; Law No. 68/2017 on Finances of Local Self-Governments; Law No. 139/2015 on Local Autonomy; Law No. 10019/2008 on the Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania (as amended by Law No. 101/2020).

Name of Law	Opportunities for "gender-responsive tourism policy"
DCM No. 400, dated 30.6.2021, "National Strategy 2021–2026. on Gender Equality (NSGE)."	The NSGE 2021–2026 creates many opportunities in the tourism sector, including: (i) Increasing women's access to financial services and productive resources boosts female entrepreneurship, strengthening the diversity and sustainability of the industry; (ii) Promoting women's participation in public and local decision-making positively influences the development of more inclusive and innovative tourism policies, adapted to the needs of society as a whole; (iii) Raising awareness of gender stereotypes and supporting a more equitable sharing of domestic care responsibilities encourages more women to work in tourism; and (iv) Attention to protection against violence and harassment improves safety in tourism workplaces.
Law 65/2016 "On social enterprises in the Republic of Albania."	This law is particularly relevant to Albania's tourism sector as it fosters inclusive employment models through social enterprises. By establishing a legal framework that supports the reintegration and empowerment of individuals facing social and economic barriers, including women affected by violence and trafficking, it helps expand equitable opportunities within the sector.
Law No. 10237, of 02.18.2010, "Health Safety at Work."	This law ensures greater workplace safety in the tourism sector and guarantees that specific situations, such as pregnancy or breastfeeding, do not bring risk of discrimination and/or marginalization. It enhances the safety of both women and men workers and contributes to the creation of a healthy and secure working environment, which is particularly important in a sector often marked by high stress levels and irregular shift patterns. The law also encourages employers to introduce safer and more inclusive work practices.
Law No. 15/2019 "On employment promotion."	This law represents an important opportunity for women facing socio-economic hardship by offering assistance such as childcare subsidies and training programmes to facilitate their entry into professions in the sector, such as reception, management or catering. These supports are especially valuable for victims of domestic violence, victims of trafficking and young mothers, who often face great obstacles in accessing employment.
Law No. 9817, dated 10.22.2007, "On Agriculture and Rural Development."	ourism in Albania, with a special focus on the inclusion of women and youth in rural communities. By providing a legal framework to support local initiatives, this law stimulates entrepreneurship and strengthens social capital in these areas while promoting the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, essential to tourism. It can also play a key role in reducing territorial combine with gender inequalities, revitalizing rural areas, and promoting a strong and inclusive local economy.

Name of Law	Opportunities for "gender-responsive tourism policy"
Employment promotion programmes	Employment promotion programmes such as the following directly contribute to the inclusion of women in the tourism workforce. ↘ DCM 48/2008: Although this programme does not specifically target women, it can indirectly promote the integration of women experiencing social or economic exclusion into the tourism sector by facilitating access to formal employment. ↘ DCM 27/2012: Dedicated specifically to women facing economic and social barriers, this programme encourages their integration into the formal employment sector, enabling them to achieve financial stability and contribute to the local economy. It can be applied to tourism through social contributions and financial incentives. ↘ DCM 47/2008: This programme focuses on vocational training, a strategic tool for women to gain access to, or upgrade, employment opportunities in the tourism sector.
Law no. 7961, dated 12.07.1995, "On the Labour Code of the Republic of Albania" **and Law no. 136/2015 "On some amendments and additions to Law no. 7961, dated 12.07.1995,** 'On the Labour Code of the Republic of Albania.'"	These two laws seek to establish the principles of equality and non-discrimination in the labour market. They provide specific measures to protect women in the workplace, ensuring that they have access to the same rights and opportunities as men and guaranteeing special protections for their particular circumstances (pregnancy, maternity). These elements are particularly relevant to the tourism sector and are essential to ensuring a safe and equitable working environment for women. Among other measures, they include maternity leave, the prohibition of night work during pregnancy or after childbirth, and the right to breastfeeding breaks, which enable a reasonable balance of work and family life and ensure health care for women workers in the sector.
Law no. 57/2016 "On some amendments and additions to the Law no. 9936, dated 26.06.2008, 'On the management of the budget system in the Republic of Albania.'	This law introduces an important advance in gender equality and budget management by integrating the concept of gender-responsive budgeting. The inclusion of the gender dimension in public budgets would make it possible to target initiatives that promote equality in tourism, such as funds to encourage women to enter the sector, support for projects led by women, or training and capacity-building to enable them to qualify for skilled jobs. In addition, the implementation of this law would ensure that public policies related to tourism and rural development account for the specific needs of women, promoting their active participation in the sector's development and their economic empowerment, for example, through access to financing and other resources.

Name of Law	Opportunities for "gender-responsive tourism policy"
DCM No. 465, dated 18.07.2012 "On gender mainstreaming in the medium-term budget programme" **and Joint Instruction No. 21, dated 21.06.2013** "On the procedures for integrating gender issues in the medium-term budget programme."	This law establishes the legal basis for integrating a gender perspective into budget frameworks at the central level, requiring that all central institutions include measurable gender equality objectives in their budgets.In the tourism sector, these provisions offer significant opportunities. Gender budgeting could facilitate the financing of tourism initiatives that empower women, especially in areas such as rural tourism, women's entrepreneurship and projects that revalue local cultural heritage. By allocating funds to programmes that promote gender equality, we recommend financial support for tourism projects with high social impact while strengthening women's active participation in the tourism sector.
Law no. 68/2017 "On finances of local self-governments."	The benefits for the tourism sector derived from this law focus especially on inclusive and transparent financial management. By requiring local government units to allocate part of their programme objectives to reducing gender inequalities (Article 36)—for example, through grants and tourism projects in budgets—it encourages equal access to resources. In addition, local governments must indicate precisely what they spend on gender equality, making this process transparent and accessible, which increases the confidence of local actors, including women entrepreneurs, in the support provided by the authorities. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is also part of this law.
Law no. 139/2015 "on local autonomy."	This law can promote economic opportunities for women through various schemes, including local subsidies for agriculture and rural development (Article 27) and support for small and medium-sized enterprises (Article 28). These measures can encourage women to engage in rural tourism and handicraft activities, thereby helping to diversify local tourism offerings and enhance community incomes. The introduction of gender-sensitive indicators (Article 33) enables the assessment of the impact of local services on women's lives, ensuring effective monitoring of progress towards equality and inclusion.
Law no. 10019, dated 29.12.2008, "On the Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania," **& Law no. 101/2020** "On some amendments and additions to the Law no. 10019, dated 29.12.2008, 'On the Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania.'"	This law, along with its amendments, plays a crucial role in promoting gender equality. It has beneficial effects in the tourism sector as it strengthens women's participation in local and regional decision-making, which is crucial for the development of sustainable tourism. In addition, by promoting greater female representation in municipal councils and electoral commissions, women's perspectives and needs will be considered in tourism development strategies. Finally, it can boost women's confidence to participate in leadership roles as well as entrepreneurship in sectors such as tourism.

KEY FINDING 3.2. The absence of comprehensive sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive tourism data limits gender-responsive policy design.

The lack of comprehensive sex-disaggregated data remains a critical barrier to the development and implementation of gender-responsive tourism policy in Albania. Within the framework of the current Tourism Strategy, the systematic collection, analysis and reporting of gender-sensitive data is essential for ensuring that tourism policies reflect the diverse realities and needs of women and men alike. This is particularly important not only when women represent a significant portion of the workforce, but also because they play a catalytic role in shaping tourism as a sector, whether as workers, entrepreneurs, or community leaders. Understanding these dynamics is key to designing policies that lead to more sustainable and equitable outcomes across the sector.

Particular attention must be paid to capturing the diversity of women's representation in tourism, including distinctions by geographic location (urban versus rural), migratory status and the specific sub-sectors and forms of tourism in which they are engaged. During stakeholder consultations, interviewers acknowledged the persistent data gap, attributing it to insufficient institutional resources and limited inter-agency coordination. While several non-governmental organizations are engaged in field-level research with women and have developed relevant gender indicators, these efforts are not systematically integrated into national tourism planning or policy processes. Apart from the National Institute of Statistics of Albania (INSTAT), there is no designated institutional body with a clear mandate to lead the collection and reporting of tourism-related gender data. This lack of institutional ownership contributes to persistent challenges in both the quality and comprehensiveness of available data.

The newly established Inter-institutional Committee, as outlined in the decision no.99, dated 12.02.2025, presents an opportunity to address the current lack of sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive tourism data. By bringing together relevant ministries, statistical bodies and sector stakeholders, the Committee can coordinate the integration of gender indicators into tourism data systems, ensure alignment with national gender equality commitments and promote cross-sector data sharing. Its mandate could be leveraged to establish a comprehensive monitoring framework that supports gender-responsive policy design and enables evidence-based decision-making in the tourism sector.[36]

At the request of the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) is currently under development, which aims to measure the economic impact of tourism at the national level. This initiative holds promise for improving the robustness and credibility of tourism statistics. However, the current scope of the TSA is focused mainly on demand-side data, with limited integration of sex-disaggregated indicators, and data is primarily restricted to employment figures. This limitation is largely due to the TSA's reliance on existing data sources, principally those provided by INSTAT and the Bank of Albania, which themselves do not fully capture gender dimensions in tourism. To enable the tourism strategy to better align with international standards on gender equality and inclusive development, it is essential to expand the scope of the TSA and related statistical systems to include a comprehensive set of gender-sensitive indicators across all dimensions of tourism.

36. The newly established Inter-institutional Committee, as outlined in the decision no.99, dated 12.02.2025, presents an opportunity to address the current lack of sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive tourism data. By bringing together relevant ministries, statistical bodies and sector stakeholders, the Committee can coordinate the integration of gender indicators into tourism data systems, ensure alignment with national gender equality commitments and promote cross-sector data sharing. Its mandate could be leveraged to establish a comprehensive monitoring framework that supports gender-responsive policy design and enables evidence-based decision-making in the tourism sector.

Gender data are essential for ensuring the visibility of women's situations and for highlighting the different impacts that specific contexts, policies, or actions may have on women and men. Such data enable us to understand existing gender gaps and to identify opportunities in every sector of the economy and across all dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social, and environmental. This approach fosters more informed and accountable planning and management of public policies, including those related to the private sector. It is important to emphasize that the data themselves are only one crucial component; the process through which they are collected is equally important, whether this is done through quantitative or qualitative methods.

In the context of employment, the lack of a consistent and inclusive definition of "tourism employment" remains a critical challenge for producing gender-sensitive data. As noted in consultations with INSTAT and the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, the current statistical approach relies on a narrow understanding of tourism employment: primarily linked to the accommodation and food service sectors, with limited consideration of transport, cultural services, tour operations and informal work. This does not capture the sector's full scope or the diverse roles that women and men occupy across the tourism value chain. Consequently, tourism employment is inadequately reported under official "tourism statistics."[37]

There is an urgent need for more comprehensive, supply-side data to enable a deeper and more accurate analysis of employment patterns from a gender perspective. Although INSTAT provides some demand-side statistics disaggregated by sex, such as the profile of domestic travellers[38] and employment in related sectors (trade, transport, accommodation and food services, and administrative services), critical information on tourism value chain dynamics is missing. These data gaps limit a full understanding of women's participation, roles and contributions in tourism, particularly in informal, seasonal, or rural contexts. Stakeholder interviews further revealed that gender considerations are not systematically integrated across the data production cycle, including in the design of surveys and questionnaires, training of enumerators, data processing and analytical frameworks. Without such integration, existing data sources cannot fully reflect gender-specific challenges and opportunities in the sector.

Moreover, international databases such as UN Tourism and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) currently lack sex-disaggregated tourism data for Albania, primarily because such data is not systematically produced or reported at the national level. While the INSTAT Labour Force Survey allows for general sex-disaggregated employment statistics, it does not provide detailed insights into women's and men's employment along the tourism value chain, nor does it capture dimensions of social, environmental, or economic upgrading.[39]. According to INSTAT, these limitations stem from insufficient resource allocation for gender-responsive data production, for example, training, and a lack of flexibility within EUROSTAT guidelines to support more nuanced gender-disaggregated tourism data.

In this context, the generation of gender-sensitive tourism data must be framed not only as a statistical priority but as a strategic lever to inform policy design, promote inclusive governance and address sustainable tourism. In the absence of a national legal obligation to produce gender statistics, political will is required to catalyse change. While INSTAT demonstrates awareness of the need for gender data, other institutional actors consulted during interviews expressed limited familiarity with its relevance for tourism planning. The recent decision of the Council of Ministers to establish a Committee for Tourism Statistical Data, coordinated by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, offers a timely opportunity to institutionalize gender data in tourism. To be effective, this inter-institutional mechanism must include representation from the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, which leads the implementation of the National Strategy for Gender Equality. Furthermore, collaboration with the technical team that supports INSTAT's 'Women and Men' publication in Albania is essential, as their methodological alignment with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) could enhance data quality standards and ensure alignment with EU frameworks.

37. The movement of citizens and data on accommodation establishments is reported under INSTAT's Tourism Statistics.

38. Institute of Statistics of Albania (INSTAT). (2023). Tourism in figures 2022: Survey on holidays and trips. https://www.instat.gov.al/media/12919/tourism-in-figures-2022___.pdf

39. Upgrading" refers to the process of enhancing the value, benefits and returns derived from participation in global value chains—while actively addressing structural gender inequalities to ensure that women and marginalized groups equitably benefit from these gains.

Such a coordinated and gender-sensitive approach will not only improve the statistical foundation of the sector but also support the identification of targeted investment opportunities, particularly in high-growth tourism destinations. Reliable, gender-responsive data will allow the sector to design evidence-based interventions, improve service delivery and respond more effectively to the differentiated needs of women and men.

Another key opportunity is the Inter-Institutional Working Group (IIWG) on Gender Statistics in Albania. This newly reactivated national coordination platform brings together INSTAT, line ministries and UN partners (UN Women and the United Nations Development Programme) to harmonize, produce and use gender-disaggregated data aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, EU accession requirements and national gender equality policies.

Given the urgent need to improve data collection, analysis, use and reporting, tourism authorities must be incorporated as a key actor. Their inclusion would ensure that the rapid growth of tourism is properly monitored, unpacking high-level gender data to inform more inclusive policies and strategies.

Despite current gaps, there remains substantial untapped potential to shape tourism policy around the lived realities of women and men. Rather than relying solely on cross-sectoral data, the tourism sector must develop its own dedicated gender data strategy, reflecting its dynamics and diverse value chains at the national level. While tourism can benefit from data generated by other sectors, it is critical that the sector actively produces and manages its own data to both inform and be informed by other policy areas.

Establishing a robust, gender-sensitive statistical foundation will enhance the sector's capacity to identify and monitor gender gaps, track progress over time, and implement transformative measures that promote gender equality alongside sustainable development across Albania's tourism ecosystem.

Case study 3.2.1.

The Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative & South Pacific Tourism Organization - Gender Audit[40]

Led by the Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative in partnership with the South Pacific Tourism Organization, this project aims to promote gender equality in the tourism sector of the Pacific Islands. The project focuses specifically on gender-sensitive tourism data because this was recently identified as a priority in the gender audit conducted with the South Pacific's primary tourism institution. The results of the gender audit demonstrate the importance of collecting gender data and the need for a sustained commitment from public and private institutions to ensure the sector's long-term sustainability. The project also generated new data from the gender audit, providing an overview of the current state of gender mainstreaming in tourism across the entire region. The project's ultimate goal is to adapt the UN Tourism gender mainstreaming guidelines to the regional context.

40. The Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative. (2024.) PSDI and SPTO host women's Talanoa to support gender equality in tour*ism.*

Case study 3.2.2.
Statistics Sweden collects data on gender participation in tourism, focusing on both demand (e.g., tourism trips, overnight stays and expenditure) and supply (e.g., employment in tourism industries). [41]

Suedia është një shembull i fortë, jo sepse ka një sistem të pavarur të të dhënave gjinore në turizëm, por sepse integron të dhëna të ndara sipas gjinisë, objektiva të barazisë dhe politikëbërje gjithëpërfshirëse në të gjithë sektorët –përfshirë ata që formësojnë turizmin. Institucione si Statistikat e Suedisë (SCB) prodhojnë sistematikisht të dhëna të ndara sipas gjinisë në të gjithë sektorët, përfshirë ata që lidhen me turizmin (p.sh., akomodimin, shërbimet e ushqimit, transportit dhe udhërrëfimin turistik). TSA-ja kombëtare e Suedisë përfshin të dhëna të përmirësuara të turizmit, të ndara sipas gjinisë në nivel rajoni përmes të dhënave të transaksioneve që nga viti 2021 – që mundëson një analizë të zgjeruar të modeleve të shpenzimeve të vizitorëve të të gjitha gjinive dhe demografive.

KEY FINDING 3.3. **Gender-responsive budgeting as an opportunity for tourism**

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) offers a critical entry point for advancing inclusive, equitable and sustainable tourism development in Albania. As one of the few countries in the region with an established legal and methodological framework for GRB, Albania is uniquely positioned to apply this approach to the tourism sector, spanning infrastructure, agriculture, rural development and culture, and thus requiring cross-sectoral coordination and policy coherence.

Despite this potential, and according to the interview with a national GRB expert, gender budgeting remains underutilized in tourism planning and investment. Systematic integration of GRB can ensure that public expenditures and investments are aligned with national commitments to gender equality and are directed towards closing structural gaps that disproportionately affect women in tourism. It also enables a shift from gender-neutral to gender-transformative policy design, ensuring that fiscal decisions actively promote equity, participation and empowerment.

Case study 3.3.1.
UN Women – Gender Budgeting and Tourism in Morocco

Led by the Moroccan Ministry of Tourism and supported by UN Women and the Centre of Excellence for Gender-Responsive Budgeting, this project is designed to promote gender equality in the tourism sector's budget planning and programming. Based on an in-depth analysis of gender-related issues, it aims to identify the specific needs of vulnerable populations, particularly women, and put forward concrete recommendations. This initiative highlights the contribution of gender-sensitive budgeting to a more inclusive tourism industry and demonstrates the strategic importance of tourism in reducing inequalities and promoting equitable development, in line with Morocco's national and international commitments.

Source: EQUALAB

41. OECD. (2022.) Tourism in the economy and outlook for recovery: Sweden, available from OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2022.

Although Albania's legislation mandates the application of GRB to all public investments, awareness and technical capacity remain limited within key tourism institutions. Stakeholder interviews suggest that national tourism authorities and agencies, such as AIDA, often lack a sufficient understanding of how GRB obligations translate into operational decisions, particularly when negotiating or managing large-scale investments. Yet GRB is not just about budgeting; it is a strategic governance tool that leverages public finance to redress structural gender inequalities. Even in a sector like tourism, where investment is largely private, the public sector plays a catalytic role through incentives, infrastructure, subsidies and promotional schemes. Integrating GRB into these instruments can help ensure that tourism investments, both public and private, advance gender equality outcomes. This includes incorporating gender-responsive criteria into strategic investment selection, requiring gender analysis for large-scale projects and linking public support to measurable gender-sensitive indicators. To this end, capacity-building, tailored training and inter-institutional coordination are needed to align investment policy with Albania's national commitments to gender equality. Applying GRB across the tourism investment cycle—planning, appraisal, negotiation and monitoring—would help unlock the transformative potential of tourism as a vehicle for advancing women's empowerment and closing gender gaps across the sector.

The application of GRB should be accompanied by the systematic use of gender-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators. This dual approach will ensure that tourism policy is both informed by, and contributes to, national gender equality goals. It will also support more responsible investment practices, attuned to the risks and opportunities presented by a rapidly expanding sector. In this context, gender-responsive budgeting is not simply a technical exercise, but a transformative governance tool. It can safeguard tourism's potential to generate gender-responsive development outcomes, helping the sector to "save itself" from deepening existing gender inequalities as it grows.

3.2. CONCLUSIONS

- The new tourism strategy, along with the activation of the Committee on Tourism Statistics and the Working Group (IIWG) on Gender Statistics in Albania, represents strategic opportunities to promote the systematic production, reporting and use of sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data across all dimensions of the tourism sector.

- National statistical offices must be equipped with clear mandates, technical capacity and adequate resources to collect, analyse, disseminate and use gender-sensitive data. Strengthening inter-institutional coordination is equally vital to ensure the integration of gender in tourism data systems and decision-making processes.

- Public investment in tourism must be mobilized in line with the current legal framework that encourages gender-responsive budgeting. This requires increased awareness, technical training and the allocation of resources to ensure that all stages of the budget cycle—planning, implementation, and monitoring —promote gender equality outcomes.

- Given tourism's cross-cutting nature and its connection with multiple economic sectors, efforts must be coordinated to assess the sector's gender budgeting impact and promote responsible investments from a gender perspective.

- Rather than depending solely on data and policies from adjacent sectors, the tourism sector must develop its own gender-responsive data strategies and accountability frameworks. This will ensure that sector-specific dynamics and value chains are accurately reflected in policies, enabling evidence-based decisions that promote women's empowerment and inclusive growth.

3.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

High Priority

- Capitalize on Albania's established GRB methodology by systematically integrating it into the tourism sector. This should include tailored training for tourism authorities, awareness-raising on the specific opportunities and challenges of GRB in tourism and the co-development of sector-specific indicators. A roadmap should be designed to guide the operationalization of GRB in all tourism-related planning, budgeting and monitoring processes.
- Building on INSTAT's lessons learned and guided by EIGE's standards for gender data, the Committee on Tourism Data and the Inter-Institutional Working Group (IIWG) on Gender Statistics should jointly develop a strategic action plan. This plan should include a baseline assessment and outline concrete steps for initiating the systematic collection of sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive tourism data. It should also establish mechanisms to foster dialogue on gender equality in tourism, introduce SMART [42]gender indicators, define baselines and targets and identify data needs.
- Integrate gender-responsive indicators into INSTAT's current surveys and training programmes on gender-responsive tourism as an entry point for broader, long-term data reforms that strengthen evidence-based policymaking. The development of indicators should follow an inclusive, participatory process, ensuring they are grounded in what can be meaningfully measured and achieved.

Medium Priority

- Tourism-related expenditures should be systematically identified and highlighted within sectoral budget documents. These allocations should be subject to gender analysis using sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators to assess their impact on advancing gender equality. This process should inform budget planning, execution and monitoring to ensure that public resources contribute effectively to closing gender gaps and promoting women's empowerment in the tourism sector.
- Conduct a thorough audit of existing data collection tools and institutional processes to identify gaps in gender-sensitive metrics. Invest in updating instruments and building capacity to ensure the consistent collection, processing and use of both quantitative and qualitative gender-disaggregated data across the tourism value chain.

42. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound

CHAPTER 4.

TOURISM EMPLOYMENT

4.1. KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDING 4.1. **Women's employment in tourism is rising, yet remains below global averages**

Albania's tourism sector has seen significant growth in recent years, contributing to both economic development and increased employment opportunities for women. According to the European Commission's 2024 Progress Report,[43] the country experienced a surge in international tourist arrivals in 2023, surpassing pre-pandemic levels and significantly boosting the contribution of services to gross value added, from 54.2 per cent in 2022 to 55 per cent in 2023. This growth has been accompanied by a steady increase in labour demand within tourism-related sectors. In 2024, the National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES) reported a total of 61,624 job vacancies nationwide, 10,989 (18 per cent) of which were in the accommodation and food service sector. This represents a marked increase from 8,692 vacancies (14 per cent) in 2023 and 4,181 (11 per cent) in 2022,[44] indicating a growing labour absorption capacity within the sector.

The participation of women in the "accommodation and food services" category has increased progressively in recent years (with the exception of 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic), as illustrated in Table 4.1. Almost two-thirds (62 per cent) of women working in the accommodation and food services category are salaried employees (Table 4.2). Nevertheless, a significant portion (32 per cent) fall under categories that the International Labour Organization (ILO) classifies as vulnerable employment, comprising 15 per cent who are self-employed and 17 per cent who are in temporary jobs. Furthermore, the sector remains heavily gender-segregated at the managerial level: men account for 84 per cent of all employers across tourism-related categories. This reflects persistent gender gaps in access to decision-making and business ownership within the sector.

Another area of concern is the proportion of women classified as family workers,[45] particularly within accommodation and food services. This suggests a notable presence of unpaid or informally compensated labour, which often goes unrecognized in official employment statistics and reinforces women's economic vulnerability. To fully realize tourism's potential as a driver of gender equality, increasing the number of women employed is not sufficient—equal attention must be paid to the quality, visibility and formality of women's work, ensuring access to decent employment, social protection and upgrading within the sector.

43. Formore information: https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a8eec3f9-b2ec-4cb1-8748-9058854dbc68_en?filename=Albania%20Report%202024.pdf

44. According to information provided by NAES (personal communication, 26 February 2025)

45. According to the INSTAT 2023 Labour Force Survey, across all economic sectors, 27.2 per cent of employed women work in a family business without receiving a salary. However, to determine the specific number of women in the tourism sector who are not receiving any form of compensation, more disaggregated data is needed.

Table 4.1. **Share of women in the "accommodation and food services" category in relation to total employment (per cent), 2015–2019, available data[46]**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total women	29%	32%	34%	36%	32%
Women from 15 to 29 years old	7%	9 %	10%	15%	12%

Source: International Labour Organization, Sex-disaggregated employment - ILO estimates, ILO, Geneva.

Table 4.2. **Share of women in total employment in "accommodation and food services" by occupational category, 2019 data available**

Category	Share of women in each occupational category with respect to the total category number (per cent) of women in all categories	Share of women in each occupational category with respect to the total number of women and men in that category
Punonjës me pagë	62%	34%
Punëdhënës	6%	16%
Për llogari të tyre	15%	26%
Punëtorë në familje	17%	47%
GJITHSEJ GRA NË SEKTORIN E SHËRBIMEVE TË AKOMODIMIT DHE USHQIMIT (NË RAPORT ME BURRAT)		**32%**

Source: International Labour Organization, Sex-disaggregated employment - ILO estimates, ILO, Geneva.

46. Although accommodation and food services account for only a portion of overall tourism employment, they remain an important source of data for analyzing gender-disaggregated employment patterns in the sector. This has been recognized by UN Tourism since the publication of the first Global Report on Women in Tourism. The figures presented in the table reflect the currently available data.

The data provided by INSTAT[47] offers valuable insights into the employment landscape for women in tourism-related sectors in Albania. As of 2023, the accommodation and food service sector ranked second largest in terms of number of enterprises (following trade), comprising 14.3 per cent of all active businesses. Despite this, it accounts for only 8.2 per cent of total employment, highlighting both the sector's economic relevance and its potential to create labour opportunities, particularly within tourism. The sector ranked fourth in Albania by employment in active enterprises, following wholesale and retail trade (21.8 per cent), manufacturing (15.5 per cent) and construction (9.1 per cent).

Additionally, combined data for trade, transport, hospitality, business and administrative services indicate that this group of sectors constitutes the second-largest source of employment in Albania after agriculture.[48] In 2023, 25.6 per cent of all employed women worked in these sectors, compared to 32 per cent of men.[49] This reflects a modest increase from 2022, when the figures stood at 22.5 per cent for women and 30.9 per cent for men. However, when juxtaposed with the women's labour force participation rate of 58.1 per cent in 2023,[50] these figures suggest that women remain underrepresented in tourism-related employment relative to their broader economic engagement. This discrepancy points to underlying barriers, such as occupational segregation, informality and limited access to career advancement, that hinder women from fully participating in or benefiting from employment in tourism.

The structural relevance of the tourism sector, combined with its potential to support inclusive economic growth, underscores the need to adopt targeted, gender-responsive employment policies. These should not only promote women's entry into tourism-related sectors, but also ensure the availability of decent work, upward mobility and equal opportunities for professional development.

KEY FINDING 4.2. Structural barriers limit women's access to expanding employment opportunities in tourism

According to projections by the World Travel and Tourism Council, the number of new jobs in Albania's tourism sector is expected to reach 314,200 by 2034, representing a 26.8 per cent increase compared to 2024.[51] This growth is expected to contribute ALL 749 billion ($7.3 billion) to the economy, reflecting a 3.5 per cent increase from 2024. In 2024, the sector was estimated to support 278,100 jobs, marking a 24.6 per cent share of total employment, with a 10.2 per cent growth since 2019.[52]

However, fully capitalizing on tourism's growth requires urgent, targeted measures to address women's unemployment, particularly in rural areas, as reflected in the regional trends shown in Table 4.3. Despite rising demand for tourism-related jobs, the registration rate of unemployed women as jobseekers remains low in rural regions. The data highlights persistent gender gaps across regions such as Berat, Dibra and Korça, where women represent a significant share of the unemployed but face barriers to formal registration. Stakeholder interviews revealed multiple structural challenges, including long distances to urban centres where employment offices are located, inadequate transport infrastructure, safety concerns when travelling, and limited access to digital services or reliable institutional information.

Addressing these constraints is essential to ensure rural women can access new tourism opportunities and benefit from the sector's growth.

47. INSTAT. (2024.) Statistics on the demographic events of enterprises, 2021–2023.
48. INSTAT. (2024.) Labour market 2023.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Sex-disaggregated data is not available.
52. World Travel and Tourism Council. (2024.) Albania: World economic impact report.

Table 4.3. **Officially registered jobseekers (most recent available data)**

Region	Year (Lowest Level)	Total Unemployed	Women (Number / per cent)	Year (Highest Level)	Total Unemployed	Total (Number/%)
Berati	2019	2.072	946	2017	3.748	1.930
			(46%)			(51%)
Dibra	2021	5.319	2.646	2019	4.338	2.391
			(50%)			(55%)
Fieri	2020	10.421	5.681	2017	12.152	6.781
			(55%)			(56%)
Korça	2018	5.013	2.456	2021	6.177	3.443
			(49%)			(56%)
Shkodra	2019	5.290	2.634	2021	8.186	3.868
			(50%)			(47%)

Source: UN Women Albania & Supreme State Audit Institution (2023). Women's economic empowerment in Albania: Performance audit report.

Additionally, there is evidence that women, especially in informal contexts, access job opportunities through unregulated networks, further marginalizing them from formal employment systems. This reliance on informal mechanisms also makes them vulnerable to exploitation and exclusion from legal protections and benefits.

In fast-growing tourism zones such as the coastal areas, women tend to be concentrated at the lower end of the value chain, primarily in roles linked to domestic and reproductive labour: cleaning, kitchen work, reception and laundry. These roles offer limited economic upgrading, poor social recognition and few prospects for mobility or autonomy.

By contrast, women are largely absent from higher-value roles (e.g., tour operators, entrepreneurship, management), where professional advancement and financial returns are greater. If tourism is to serve as a true catalyst for women's empowerment and inclusive growth, policies must go beyond job creation and address the systemic barriers that keep women in undervalued, informal and unpaid roles.

KEY FINDING 4.3. **The gender pay gap in tourism remains underestimated and poorly documented**

While INSTAT reports a relatively low national gender pay gap[53] in tourism-related sectors—6.2 per cent in accommodation and food services and 5.7 per cent in trade, transport, hospitality and administrative services—qualitative evidence suggests that these figures may mask deeper inequalities within the tourism labour market. Interviews revealed striking wage discrepancies, particularly in the agritourism sector**,** where women chefs reportedly earn between €600 and €700, while their male counterparts can earn up to €1,500 for similar roles. This disparity is especially pronounced in rural areas, where women are overrepresented in informal, seasonal and family-run enterprises.

A key driver of the gender pay gap is the systemic undervaluation of women's work performance**,** especially in roles linked to caregiving, hospitality and informal services. In small hotels and family businesses, women frequently assume multiple responsibilities— including housekeeping, cooking, front-desk services, reservations and even management—without formal contracts, salaries, or recognition. Cultural and familial expectations further normalize this unpaid or underpaid work, leaving women excluded from labour protections, social security and professional development opportunities.

To gain a more in-depth understanding of the gender pay gap within the tourism sector, additional information is needed. The data on the gender pay gap reported by INSTAT does not reflect the full reality of the tourism sector, which spans accommodation, food services, transportation, guiding, retail and recreational activities. To obtain an accurate picture of the gender pay gap in tourism, it is essential to invest in sector-specific, sex-disaggregated pay data**,** supported by qualitative research on occupational segregation, informality and unpaid labour. Greater representation of women in decision-making roles and higher-skilled occupations is also crucial for narrowing income disparities and enhancing gender equality across the sector.

Case study 4.3.1
Beyond gender bias: factors affecting women employee retention and advancement in the Dutch hotel sector[54]

Një studim i vitit 2023 mbi industrinë holandeze të hotelerisë identifikoi faktorët kryesorë që ndikojnë në mbajtjen dhe avancimin e punonjëseve gra, përfshirë balancën midis punës dhe jetës personale, pasja e drejtuesve mbështetës dhe praktikat gjithëpërfshirëse të rekrutimit. Studimi vuri në dukje se, megjithëse gratë shpesh përballen me sfida të tilla si paragjykimet dhe stereotipet gjinore, organizatat që zbatojnë politika mbështetëse dhe nxisin kulturat gjithëpërfshirëse mund të rrisin mundësitë për zhvillimin e karrierës së grave.

CASE STUDY 4.4. **Advancing fair employment and formalization is essential to protect women workers in tourism**

The rapid growth of Albania's tourism sector has amplified existing structural challenges linked to informality, which undermine fair employment, gender equality and fiscal accountability. The tourism workforce—especially in small-scale enterprises such as guesthouses, bed-and-breakfasts and family-run hotels—remains highly vulnerable to informal employment practices.

53. The CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations on Albania's Fifth Periodic Report highlight a 27 per cent gender pay gap in the industry sector, which includes manufacturing, mining, construction and energy. While the overall national gender pay gap is 6.2 per cent, the disparity is significantly higher in this sector, where women are overrepresented in lower-paid positions.

54. Available online https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376086170_Beyond_gender_bias_Factors_affecting_female_employee_retention_and_advancement_in_the_Dutch_hotel_sector.

Given the growing reliance on migrant labour, including women, in the tourism sector, prioritizing the protection of labour rights and ensuring full compliance with the national legal framework and international standards is essential. This also represents a unique opportunity to accelerate the closing of the gender gap in labour participation.

In response to growing concerns, the Albanian Labour and Social Services Inspectorate has implemented risk-based inspections and awareness-raising campaigns in high-risk sectors, including tourism. Similarly, the tax administration has scaled up its actions to curb informality by:

- Increasing VAT registration;
- Detecting undeclared work;
- Addressing wage underreporting; and
- Combating tax fraud in tourism-linked services.

Informal employment disproportionately affects women.[55] Many women working in tourism-related microenterprises lack access to formal contracts, social protection or labour rights. Despite performing essential tasks such as cooking, cleaning, guest relations, reservations and management, women frequently remain excluded from legal remuneration, business ownership and decision-making. This systemic invisibility not only perpetuates economic dependency but also increases women's exposure to exploitation and workplace discrimination.

The implementation of formalization policies remains uneven and often lacks a gender-responsive approach. The cooperation agreement between the National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES) and Local Self-Government Units to coordinate employment policies at sub-national levels represents a promising step forward. However, its effective execution and monitoring—especially in relation to gender-equal access to formal work—are still in progress.[56]

KEY FINDING 4.5. Labour migration in tourism must be governed by rights-based, gender-sensitive labour frameworks

As Albania's tourism sector continues to expand, labour shortages are increasingly filled by migrant workers, who now constitute a growing share of the hospitality workforce. Between January and December 2024, 1,580 Unique Permits were issued in the Accommodation and Food Service sector, with a gender- balanced distribution (795 men and 785 women). Notably, 57 per cent of these permits were granted to nationals from the Philippines, India, Myanmar and Turkey.[57] By the end of 2023, over 1,100 foreign workers[58] were officially registered in tourism-related activities, particularly in the municipalities of Tirana, Durrës and Vlora, which have emerged as key destinations for migrant labour. An analysis by the NAES confirms that tourism and construction are currently the two sectors most reliant on foreign workers.[59]

In light of this trend, the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation has announced a forthcoming labour agreement with several Asian countries to facilitate regular migration and encourage the employment of migrant women in tourism. However, implementation has been delayed due to unresolved issues regarding contractual conditions, the responsibilities of private and public employers, and compliance with labour permit regulations. These measures are important to consider, particularly for women, as they are often exposed to inadequate or unclear employment contracts, exploitative working hours and low salaries, and social isolation and risk of psychological, physical or sexual violence.

55. According to the European Commission's 2024 Report on Albania, INSTAT estimates that informal employment accounts for 29.4 per cent of total non-agricultural employment. Informality is especially prevalent in the agriculture, wholesale, and retail trade and construction sectors.
56. UN Women Albania and Supreme State Audit Institution. (2023.) Women's economic empowerment in Albania: Performance audit report.
57. According to information provided by NAES (personal communication), 26 February 2025
58. The available data is not disaggregated by sex.
59. Data provided by email by National Employment Agency.

Case study 4.5.1

Qendra Psiko-Sociale "Vatra" – Protecting Women and Girls from Exploitation in Tourism[60]

Qendra Psiko-Sociale "Vatra," based in Vlorë, is one of Albania's leading NGOs working to combat human trafficking and gender-based violence. Since 1999, Vatra has provided crucial support to women and girls affected by sexual exploitation, trafficking and domestic violence. This support includes safe shelters, legal and psychosocial support, and long-term reintegration services. The organization is increasingly aware of how tourism, **while economically important, can also become a channel for sexual and labour exploitation, especially for vulnerable women and girls**. Tourism hotspots, particularly along Albania's coast, can create risky environments when protective systems are weak. To address this, Vatra is preparing to conduct a targeted assessment to better understand how tourism may be linked to exploitation. In parallel, Vatra continues to raise public awareness, train frontline professionals and strengthen coordination between institutions and civil society. Their aim is to ensure that Albania's tourism development is safe, inclusive and free from exploitation. By focusing on prevention, survivor protection and gender-sensitive strategies, **Vatra is helping to ensure that tourism contributes to sustainable development without putting women and girls at greater risk**.

Vatra's work described in the case above, underscores the urgent need to acknowledge and address the risks of exploitation and abuse. In 2024 alone, 35 women were trafficked for sexual exploitation and 8 for forced labour. According to data from Vatra,[61] eight women (five from Myanmar, two from the Philippines and one from Nigeria) were found working under exploitative conditions in hotels across Shkodra, Tirana, Saranda and Korça. These women had arrived through recruitment agencies under formal contracts, yet were subjected to serious violations such as passport confiscation, non-payment of wages, excessive working hours, restricted mobility and psychological coercion. From January to July 2025, 45 women were identified as victims of sex trafficking, and one additional case of labour exploitation was reported in a hotel in Durrës. Many of these foreign women were lured with false promises of employment (e.g., as waitresses or dancers) and were instead coerced into prostitution.

The Labour Inspectorate plays a critical frontline role in identifying victims of labour trafficking, especially in sectors like tourism, where informal and seasonal employment are common. However, when labour inspections are limited in scope or quality and inspectors lack the training to recognize indicators of exploitation, such as withheld wages, restricted movement, fear of the employer, or lack of contracts, cases may go undetected. Victims may effectively "pass" inspections without being identified, remaining outside the institutional protection and justice system, and cycles of abuse continue.

To ensure that the growing demand for labour does not result in new forms of gender inequality, abuse and violence, Albania must adopt a comprehensive protection framework for migrant workers, grounded in national and international labour and human rights standards. This includes adherence to the National Guidelines on Ethical Recruitment, which stipulates:[62]

- Transparent and fair contract terms;
- Equal access to labour rights, decent working conditions and social protections;
- Access to legal remedies and reporting mechanisms in cases of abuse;
- Opportunities for language training, family reunification and cultural integration.

60. Available online here.
61. According to information from Vatra internal reports (interview, 29 July 2025)
62. IOM Development Fund. (2023.) National guidelines on ethical recruitment in Albania for implementing and human rights-related institutions.

Such measures are especially critical for migrant women, whose compounded vulnerabilities, due to gender, migration status and informality, require targeted safeguards to prevent exploitation and promote dignified work in the tourism sector.

KEY FINDING 4.6. The underrepresentation of women in leadership undermines inclusive governance in the tourism sector

The limited participation of women in leadership and decision-making roles within Albania's tourism industry poses a major obstacle to building an inclusive, representative and gender-responsive tourism sector. Fieldwork conducted in Tirana, Shkodra and Vlora, confirmed a significant gender imbalance within the leadership of tourism associations and business networks. This underrepresentation prevents the incorporation of women's perspectives in shaping strategic decisions, investment priorities, and workplace cultures across the sector.

While the tourism sector is often portrayed as one that provides substantial employment opportunities for women, this alone does not translate into opportunities for career advancement or access to decision-making spaces. Interviews with professionals and managers, mostly women, revealed a series of structural and cultural barriers that limit women's access to leadership roles, including:

1. Rigid work schedules: Employers' prioritization of full availability over work-life balance was cited as a source of dissatisfaction among several employees. Women reported feeling that their professional advancement depended on suppressing their personal needs, which contributed to a broader sense of disempowerment. One woman, a floor manager in a large hotel in Vlora reported avoiding requests for time off to attend a professional course, fearing it might be viewed as a lack of commitment and thus jeopardize her position.

2. Difficulties in reconciling work and family responsibilities: Unmarried women or those without children were systematically favoured in recruitment processes. Employers admitted, both directly and indirectly, that candidates with family responsibilities were considered less desirable. This practice effectively excludes many women—especially mothers—from accessing employment opportunities.

3. Lack of formalized processes to stimulate and promote women's access to positions of responsibility: The absence of formal gender equality policies leaves women particularly vulnerable and reinforces informal norms that prioritize employer convenience over employee rights and women's leadership. Women working under these conditions frequently described a silent expectation to delay personal goals, such as continuing education, professional development, or family planning.

4. Gender stereotypes that perpetuate traditional roles: Hotel managers expressed a clear preference for hiring young women, particularly recent graduates. This was commonly justified by the perception that they are more flexible, easier to manage and less likely to request time off due to childcare or family obligations.

KEY FINDING 4.7. Addressing gender-based violence is a prerequisite for safe and equitable access to employment in the tourism sector

Gender-based violence (GBV) continues to be a critical issue in Albania, with nearly 50 per cent of women[63] reporting having experienced some form of violence in their lifetime. In a sector such as tourism, which is recognized as Albania's main source of economic growth and employment, failure to address GBV risks undermining not only women's fundamental rights but also the integrity and sustainability of the sector itself.

Tourism-related activities are recognized in the context of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 190 as ones in which workers, particularly women, are at heightened risk of experiencing violence and harassment, including sexual harassment. The tourism environment, which often involves informal settings, close interactions with clients and hierarchical structures, can amplify the risks women workers face unless protective mechanisms are in place.

63. UN Women Albania and INSTAT. (2019.) National population survey 2018: Violence against women and girls in Albania.

Despite these risks, field evidence and national data indicate a serious gap in workplace protections, safety protocols and employer accountability. This gap is particularly acute in hospitality subsectors such as accommodation and food services, where many women workers operate without contracts, complaint mechanisms, or training on their rights.

Tracking GBV in Albania is a critical issue, as social norms remain permissive and often tolerate violence against women. Table 4.4 presents available data on societal attitudes towards intimate partner and domestic violence. The figures reflect a concerning level of acceptance and normalization of violence and abuse toward women. According to the available data,[64] there is a higher perception of sexual harassment and abuse in the country's general labour market in two specific segments: young people between 16 and 25 years of age and women, regardless of their age.[65] According to the same source, 29 per cent of men believe that sexual harassment is inevitable, compared to 14 per cent of women. Furthermore, 70 per cent of women employees believe that cases of sexual harassment often go unpunished due to factors such as fear of reporting due to risk of stigmatization or retaliation, lack of knowledge about the consequences of such harassment, and lack of tools and resources to deal with it.

Tabela 4.4. Gender norms around intimate partner domestic violence against women[66]

Gender norm	Per cent of people agreeing with the gender norm
All or most people in the community believe violence between a husband and wife is a private matter and others should not intervene.	55%
All or most people in the community believe a woman should tolerate some violence to keep her family together	47%
All or most people in the community believe a woman should be ashamed or embarrassed to talk to anyone outside of her family about abuse or violence in her marriage.	28%
All or most people in the community believe when a woman is beaten by her husband that she is partly to blame or at fault.	28%
All or most men in the community sometimes hit or beat their wives	14%
All or most men in the community sometimes hit or beat their wives for refusing to have sexual intercourse	11%

Source: UN Women Albania & INSTAT. (2019). National population survey 2018: Violence against women and girls in Albania. https://data.unwomen.org/publications/national-population-survey-2018-violence-against-women-and-girls-albania

64. Specific data/studies on violence in the tourism sector are not available.
65. Together for Life. (2024.) Sexual harassment in the workplace: National study on perceptions, experiences and institutional response in Albania.
66. The number of women and men who answered the statements is unknown.

Interviews revealed that sexual harassment remains a significant concern within tourism establishments, creating an unsafe work environment for women employees. Many women reported feelings of vulnerability and a lack of support when addressing such behavior. It is important to note that at the national level, only 38 per cent of sexual harassment complaints are reported at the workplace, while 51 per cent are reported only among friends or family members.[67]

Between December 2024 and May 2025, Empowerment through Self-Defense (ESD) trainings were conducted by UN Women Albania in several major hotels in Tirana, Durrës, and Vlorë, reaching 306 women working in the tourism and hospitality sector. Pre-training surveys showed that 80% had never received any safety training, 65% had experienced workplace harassment, and 87% lacked confidence in their ability to set boundaries. Post-training results showed a significant change: 95% reported a marked increase in self-confidence, and 90% felt equipped with practical tools to handle unsafe situations. The trainings also highlighted the need for clear policies against sexual harassment and for stronger reporting mechanisms.

Several businesswomen shared experiences of incidents of sexual harassment perpetrated by tourists against women workers in their lodging facilities. They consider this a major concern and believe that urgent action is necessary to address the problem. There is significant interest within the private sector, especially among women-led companies, in addressing sexual harassment and abuse. This emerging leadership from within the tourism business community represents a strategic opportunity to position Albania as a tourism destination committed to human rights, gender equality and the principles of ILO Convention 190. By taking a leadership role in implementing ILO Convention 190, Albania's tourism sector can catalyse change across the broader economy, demonstrating that gender-responsive governance and safe, inclusive workplaces are essential pillars of sustainable development and competitive positioning in the global tourism market.

Case study 4.7.1.
Marriott Hotel at Tirana[68]

In the context of international hotel chains, gender-sensitive hiring processes are often more formalized than in independent hotels and allow chains to implement procedures that promote equality in employment. Furthermore, it is more common for these establishments to have Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) charters that promote the inclusion of women in the workplace and address critical workplace issues such as sexual harassment and abuse.

Marriott Hotels can serve as a benchmark for best practices. It has standardized protocols integrated into its hiring processes, as well as continuous training for its staff, including awareness-raising actions on sexual harassment and workplace safety

67. Together for Life. (2024.) Sexual harassment in the workplace: National study on perceptions, experiences and institutional response in Albania.
68. According to a personal interview conducted with Marriott staff on 4 October 2024.

Case study 4.7.2.

Finding a voice: Empowering women in hospitality[69]

In the United Kingdom, the hospitality industry has been actively working to empower women in leadership roles. A 2023 report by JLL emphasized the importance of increasing women's representation in senior positions, noting that diverse leadership teams contribute to improved productivity and organizational success. The report advocates for initiatives that support women's advancement, including mentorship programmes, flexible work arrangements and targeted leadership training.

4.2.CONCLUSIONS

- The terms and conditions of women's employment in the tourism sector present significant challenges, including high levels of vulnerability and gender bias. This situation often results in women being assigned roles with strong parallels to domestic work, characterized by limited economic and social recognition.

- The absence of comprehensive, sex-disaggregated data, particularly on the supply side, obstructs efforts to understand the mismatch between the sector's growing labour demand and persistently high levels of unemployment among women. Without this evidence, gender-responsive policies and interventions cannot be adequately designed or evaluated.

- The significant presence of immigrant workers and the initiatives for international labour agreements concerning the integration of Asian workers must be given due consideration, with particular regard to the needs of women and the framework for enhancing safe and regular immigration.

- Sexual exploitation of women in the tourism sector remains a pressing concern, particularly in contexts with weak enforcement mechanisms. Strengthening the role of the Labour Inspectorate is critical for ensuring accountability and protecting women workers from abuse. Coordinated efforts are needed to improve monitoring, reporting and victim support systems.

- The underrepresentation of women in the tourism labour market, coupled with challenges they face in attaining leadership positions, hinders the incorporation of their voices and perspectives in formulating strategies and policies for the industry's equitable and sustainable development.

- It is vital to understand that addressing gender-based violence in all its dimensions is a prerequisite for the long-term sustainability of tourism, and specific protocols and mechanisms for the sector must be established. In addition, accessible and reliable systems for reporting situations of sexual harassment and abuse must be put in place.

- To position tourism as a driver of gender equality, Albania must move beyond basic inclusion towards a transformative approach. This includes institutionalizing gender-responsive employment policies, strengthening formalization processes, expanding skills development for women, and ensuring equal access to leadership, finance and innovation within the tourism value chain.

69. JLL. (2023.) Finding a voice: Empowering women in hospitality. https://www.jll.com/en-uk/insights/finding-a-voice-empowering-women-in-hospitality

4.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Prioritet i lartë

- Develop a programme to raise awareness and implement ILO Convention 190 in the tourism sector through training and discussion forums with all sector stakeholders.
- Develop a specific protocol for the implementation of ILO Convention 190 in tourism together with both the private and public sector.
- Design and institutionalize mechanisms to collect, process and report sex-disaggregated data on tourism employment, including disaggregation by job category, contract type, level of formality, geographic location and wage levels. Emphasis should be placed on tracking the gender wage gap and its contributing factors.
- Support targeted assessment of the links among tourism, sexual exploitation and labour trafficking. This research will generate critical evidence to inform prevention strategies and policy actions.
- Pilot work-life balance policies in selected tourism enterprises to enable women's career mobility.

Prioritet mesatar

- Conduct a gender risk assessment of pending labour migration agreements to assess the potential implications for migrant women workers in tourism. The analysis should consider recruitment channels, contract conditions, occupational segregation, housing, protection from violence, and access to services.
- Develop an analysis of the labour market for women in tourism, disaggregated by sex and location (rural and urban), considering a wide range of jobs in the sector and the formal and informal sectors.
- Draw up a guide on how to incorporate the gender approach in the framework of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), including mechanisms to promote women's leadership in the sector, adopt family-friendly policies, prevent GBV, and support equal pay and professional development.
- Promote gender equality by raising awareness and building the capacity of the Labour Inspectorate to identify gender-specific risks and needs, with a focus on preventing and addressing exploitation in tourism-related sectors.

CHAPTER 5.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

5.1. KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDING 5.1. Women's entrepreneurship in tourism is predominantly small-scale and concentrated in agritourism.

Women-led entrepreneurship in Albania's tourism sector remains limited in scale and scope, despite growing interest and policy support for inclusive economic participation. National-level data reveal persistent gender disparities in business ownership and leadership as a whole:[70] only 16.9 per cent of registered firms are led by women; just 18.1 per cent of top managerial positions are held by women; and the majority of women-led enterprises are microbusinesses (1–4 employees), meaning their capacity for growth and innovation is limited. However, in tourism-relevant sectors, women's participation exceeds the national average: 43.8 per cent of enterprises in Accommodation and Food Service Activities and 43.2 per cent in Trade are owned or managed by women. This indicates a relatively strong female presence in segments of the hospitality and food services value chain. Yet women-led businesses tend to be concentrated in lower-revenue, lower-capital areas. Structural barriers—including limited access to finance, training and asset ownership—undermine women's capacity to scale and diversify. For example, in 2018, only 23.2 per cent of women owned a dwelling (either alone or jointly), compared to 52.2 per cent of men,[71] reflecting the gender gap in property ownership that restricts collateral access and investment potential.

A critical yet often overlooked barrier is the low level of business formalization among women entrepreneurs. Many women operate informally, particularly in rural, agritourism and handicraft contexts. This informality limitsaccess to finance, technical assistance, markets and professional networks, trapping businesses at the subsistence level.

Case study 5.1.1.
Natyra Ime: A Success Story of Business Formalization

The experience of Jetmira Kajoshi, founder of the women-owned business Natyra Ime, illustrates the transformative impact of formalization. Initially intimidated by the process, she described registering her business as the best decision she ever made. Formalization opened the door to technical support, competitive grants and new market opportunities, enabling her to scale beyond local sales and position her products competitively.

70. INSTAT. (2023.) Burra dhe gra 2023, Men and women.
71. World Bank. (n.d.). Gender data portal: Albania.

Strengthening women's entrepreneurship in tourism will require addressing informality head-on—not just as a compliance issue, but as a pathway to economic empowerment, competitiveness and greater participation in the tourism value chain. The promotion of women's entrepreneurship in agritourism has emerged as a key strategy within Albania's national tourism development agenda. Out of 38 certified agritourism enterprises nationwide, 11 (28.9 per cent) are co-owned or owned by women.[72] This reflects a promising trend, though more targeted support is needed to address entrenched gender disparities within the agritourism value chain. Field observations in Shijak revealed that while agritourism enterprises are predominantly male-owned or -managed, women perform essential roles, particularly in branding, marketing, customer engagement and food preparation. Despite their contributions, women often lack formal recognition, ownership rights and influence over strategic decisions.[73]

In addition to structural challenges**,** sociocultural norms, and internalized gender bias**,** such as imposter syndrome, limit many women entrepreneurs' confidence in their leadership capacities. Interviewees reported feelings of inadequacy, undervaluation of their achievements and hesitation in making high-stakes business decisions. These psychological barriers, often rooted in gendered socialization, further restrict women's potential to lead and grow successful enterprises.

Despite policy efforts and emerging initiatives, progress in expanding women's entrepreneurship in tourism remains modest. Women entrepreneurs continue to face systemic barriers to integrating into the sector's value chain, shaped mainly by gender biases and the persisting gendered division of labour.

The family business model, which is particularly prevalent in rural and agritourism contexts, often exacerbates the burden of unpaid and paid work for women. In these settings, women are typically expected to manage both domestic responsibilities and business-related tasks, ranging from guest services and food preparation to administrative duties, without formal recognition or compensation. This overload of responsibilities, combined with restricted time and mobility, significantly limits women's ability to access training, funding and other resources essential for business development.

Many women entrepreneurs also report feelings of isolation and lack of institutional or community support, which can hinder self-confidence and reinforce social exclusion. The absence of structured opportunities for peer exchange, mentorship and collective advocacy further constrains their access to markets, professional networks and decision-making spaces. These limitations are especially acute for women in remote or underserved areas, where access to digital tools and infrastructure is also limited.

Case study 5.1.1.
LAGHI D'ALBANIA

A good example of gender dynamics in Albanian tourism is the "Laghi d'Albania" project, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS). Focused on sustainable tourism around Lake Shkodra and Lake Pogradec/Ohrid, the project engaged 213 beneficiaries in its second year, highlighting gender disparities across age groups:

- Up to 30 years: 67 participants (69 per cent women, 31 per cent men)
- 31 to 50 years: 99 participants (25 per cent women, 75 per cent men)
- Over 50 years: 47 participants (49 per cent women, 51 per cent men)

72. Ministry of Tourism and Environment. (2025). Certified agritourism activities in Albania.

73. According to Decision No. 22 (12.1.2018), agritourism businesses must include agricultural, recreational and educational activities. In Albania, they mainly operate as family-run enterprises, reflecting the sector's intimate and community-based nature.

KEY FINDING 5.2. **Institutional support for women's entrepreneurship in tourism remains limited in scope and does not yet fully address structural barriers such as access to finance, training and networks.**

While institutional efforts to promote women's entrepreneurship in tourism are increasing in Albania, current interventions remain fragmented and insufficiently aligned with a gender-transformative approach. Many initiatives have focused primarily on enhancing women's visibility and improving access to financing to support product development and compliance with quality standards. However, these efforts often lack a comprehensive framework that addresses the structural and gender-specific barriers faced by women entrepreneurs across the tourism value chain. One example is the handicrafts sector, which has been identified as a national priority for both central and local governments.

The 2024 Albanian state budget includes a commitment to supporting women artists and craftswomen. Yet, the absence of clear budgetary allocations, disaggregated targets, or accountability mechanisms undermines the potential impact of this measure. Moreover, many women entrepreneurs—particularly in rural areas—face significant challenges in accessing information, navigating formalization processes and utilizing public support schemes, due to bureaucratic complexity and infrastructural limitations.

Women's entrepreneurship represents a critical entry point for economic empowerment and rural development. Ensuring that these efforts are gender-transformative, rather than merely gender-inclusive or equal, is essential to building a more resilient tourism economy. To foster meaningful participation of women in tourism entrepreneurship, it is essential to recognize and address the invisible barriers, such as time poverty, limited access to networks and emotional labour, that are often overlooked in mainstream economicdevelopment programmes. This requires not only gender-sensitive policies but also gender-transformative strategies that redistribute responsibilities, expand women's access to resources and create enabling environments for collective empowerment.

Institutional efforts to promote entrepreneurship should incorporate a **gender perspective**.

KEY FINDING 5.3. **A gender-responsive investment strategy is crucial for maximizing the impact of tourism financing and development.**

Despite the existence of various investment and funding schemes in Albania, women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector remain significantly underrepresented in formal financing channels. Without a comprehensive, gender-responsive investment strategy, current financial instruments risk reinforcing existing inequalities and failing to reach women with the greatest potential to contribute to inclusive, sustainable tourism development.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development indicates that only 11 per cent of women in Albania access formal loans, compared to 22 per cent of men. At the national level, official data reveals that the proportion of women benefiting from AIDA support schemes decreased from 46 per cent in 2018 to 44 per cent in 2019.[74] Between 2014 and 2017, only 77 women entrepreneurs accessed these benefits.[75] During the 2014–2019 period, tourism grants targeting women accounted for just 3 per cent of the total number of financial schemes. The main beneficiaries were women entrepreneurs in the handicraft (54 per cent), food industry (15 per cent) and textile (12 per cent) sectors.[76] No data is available on the type of support received or the profiles of the women and businesses that applied for such aid.

74. INSTAT. (2024). Men and women in Albania, 2023.
75. UN Women. (2021). Albania: Women's empowerment factsheet.
76. Gender Alliance for Development Center (GADC). (n.d.). Women in business: Gender and entrepreneurship in Albania.

In a meeting with AIDA representatives, it was acknowledged that women are underrepresented as owners or shareholders and that, in general, they tend to apply for small grants. There is a lack of financial schemes tailored to the specific needs of agritourism or women entrepreneurs in this sector. The reasons remain unclear, but it is evident that more work is required to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality in the context of private investment. Addressing this issue is essential, as local women entrepreneurs require access to resources in order to compete with their counterparts within the Albanian tourism value chain and foreign companies.[77]

Another key financing initiative is the European Union's Programme of Assistance for Rural Development in the Accession Process (IPARD). This €5 million programme[78] is designed to provide financial support for projects related to the tourism sector. These projects may include the expansion of tourist accommodation facilities, with a maximum limit of 40 rooms, as well as the improvement of equipment or the implementation of sanitation systems, such as those necessary for kitchen facilities. Women constitute 34 per cent of the beneficiaries across all rural tourism initiatives supported by IPARD II, with 27 women supported out of a total of 79 individuals.[79] Interviews revealed that women encounter significant challenges when fulfilling the requirements to access this type of finance scheme, such as the lack of decision-making related to land ownership,[80] which is predominantly male ownership (80 per cent),[81] and the need for technical assistance to be able to submit applications. Indeed, IPARD is currently working to provide subsidies for the technical support required to complete the funding application process.

Another funding scheme available at the national level is Start-up Grants, which are made possible by the implementation of the Startup Law. This regulatory framework encourages the creation and development of startups, both domestic and foreign, through one-stop services for completing procedures such as business formalization, access to financing through competitive procedures, tax incentives and other support measures.

In this context, Startup Albania[82] is beginning to establish a solid reputation as a financial scheme for the tourism industry. While the programme is not specifically designed to target rural women entrepreneurs, partly due to the organization's limited resources, it has been identified as a future objective. The goal of the programme is to ensure equitable access to information, with women having clear and direct access to all processes. Despite efforts to date, women still receive limited benefits. Women submitted 39 per cent of the total applications and received 28 per cent of the financial scheme.[83] During a meeting with Startup Albania representatives, it was highlighted that one of the factors limiting women's participation in these financial schemes is their lack of time, especially in the case of women with care responsibilities. This is an important consideration, given that almost 75 percent of women entrepreneurs in Albania are married and have children. Women's tendency to use informal channels to obtain information on financing was also mentioned, and that this does not always guarantee the reliability or quality of the information obtained.

77. UN Tourism. (2024). Tourism doing business: Investing in Albania.
78. Agency for Agricultural and Rural Development
79. Data provided by the Agency for Agricultural and Rural Development
80. Gender Alliance for Development Center. (2023.) Gender-sensitive climate value chains and agrotourism in Albania.
81. Ibid.
82. Agency affiliated with the Minister of State for Entrepreneurship and Business Climate
83. Of the 2024 winning initiatives, only four projects are linked to tourism. No data is available on how many of them are led by women.

5.2. CONCLUSIONS

- Significant national tourism authorities should ensure that any efforts to promote entrepreneurship in the tourism sector are organized within a clear strategy and with detailed planning that incorporates a gender perspective to maximize their impact.

- Policies related to finance schemes—private and public—must consider the particular constraints women face in accessing financing to boost entrepreneurship.

- Support measures must be accompanied by robust monitoring and evaluation systems that include sex-disaggregated data collection and long-term impact assessments. This is critical to ensure accountability, adapt programmes based on evidence and measure the sustained success of interventions promoting women's entrepreneurship in tourism.

- Tourism entrepreneurship policies must consider the differentiated roles of women across tourism value chains, including emerging areas such as agritourism, creative tourism and the circular economy. Integrating this perspective will contribute to a more realistic and resilient tourism model.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

High Priority

- Include in the new tourism strategy an operational plan to finance actions with a positive impact on women entrepreneurs (urban and rural), tailored to businesses of different sizes (micro, small and medium).
- Expand support for women-led agritourism to increase the number of certified agritourism enterprises co-owned or owned by women.
- Conduct a gender-responsive assessment of women's entrepreneurship from a value chain perspective in the prioritized regions of the new tourism strategy, including investment as a key category.
- Carry out a gender analysis to support the design and implementation of quotas and indicators in the strategy, ensuring that numerical targets translate into meaningful outcomes for women across the sector.
- Undertake an evidence-based study on the links between tourism, informality and gender to inform the work of the Task Force on Informality.
- Implement the new tourism strategy in line with the action plan and governance system of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions in Tourism (approved June 2024). Review the governance system to clarify the roles of key national stakeholders and assess its impact on gender equality in tourism.
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework with a gender lens, fully integrated into the overall tourism strategy. This should include SMART gender indicators, baseline data and accountability mechanisms.
- Design a gender mainstreaming strategy for the Task Force on Informality to ensure that gender equality is systematically embedded in its goals, actions and monitoring processes.

Medium Priority

- Develop a financial scheme for agritourism with expanded indicators in consensus with grassroots organizations and with the active participation of the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture and AIDA.

CHAPTER 6.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR COMPETITIVENESS

6.1. KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDING 6.1. While women are increasingly enrolled in tourism education, structural barriers limit their access to equitable and transformative career opportunities

Tourism has become an increasingly attractive field of study for women in Albania, reflecting the sector's growing importance as a source of formal employment and income. However, despite high levels of female enrolment in certain training programmes, persistent gender disparities in access, progression and outcomes reveal the need for more targeted, gender-sensitive interventions in tourism education and skills development.

Data from the NAES indicate that as of end of 2024, 1,249 students are currently enrolled in tourism-related training programmes, with women accounting for 64 per cent. Female participation is especially high in courses such as pastry (78 per cent) and chef training (69 per cent), while male students dominate other tracks like pizza chef training (79 per cent) and road tourism services (70 per cent).[84] However, in vocational schools offering hotel and tourism education more broadly, female enrolment drops to just 24 per cent, and in some food technology programmes, there are no women enrolled at all. In 2024, the NAES reported 16 Vocational Education and Training (VET) schools offering hotel tourism and food technology programmes across Albania, along with 10 vocational training centres providing short-term tourism courses in Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Gjirokastër, Korçë, Tirana, Shkodër and Vlorë, including mobile centres.[85]

Interviews with university instructors suggest that, while many women pursue tourism studies in the hope of gaining stable employment, there is a lack of research on whether this training translates into better job placements and career advancement. Some estimates suggest that 24–38 per cent of graduates in Hospitality/Tourism and Business/Economics earn more than ALL 50,000 (EUR 500) and 28 per cent of tourism sector employees earn over ALL 80,000 (€800).[86] However, only 14 per cent of women with backgrounds in tourism report earning more than ALL 35,000 (€360), compared to 81 per cent of men, highlighting a stark gender pay gap among tourism graduates.[87]

The development of professional skills in the tourism sector **must take women entrepreneurs into account**.

84. According to information provided by NAES (email communication, 26 February 2025).
85. Ibid.
86. In the second quarter of 2023, the average gross monthly wage in Albania reached ALL 70,905, an increase of 16.9 per cent compared to the same period in 2022.
87. Skills for Jobs. (2024.) Tracer study report: Hamdi Bushati vocational school (2022). https://skillsforjobs.al/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/TRACER-STUDY_-Comparative-Report-2024.pdf

Further fieldwork is required to ascertain the correlation between the training provided and the requirements of the work market. Additional data must be collected to ascertain whether the training provided is enabling women to secure more senior positions within the sector or facilitating upskilling opportunities. During field missions in Vlora and Shkodra, women reported several issues regarding access to training, including long working hours due to unpaid domestic work and a lack of support from employers.

For instance, women who are responsible for key operations such as guest services or administrative tasks may require the male owner's permission to participate in training programmes, especially if they involve travel or a significant time commitment. This is often linked to a traditional mindset in which men are concerned that a woman's professional development might lead to greater independence, or even cause her to leave the family business. This further restricts her opportunities for growth and autonomy.

Rasti studimor 6.1 1.

UN Tourism – Tourism Skills Training for Women Entrepreneurs across Rural Areas in the Republic of Moldova[88]

The project "Empowering Young Women: Sustainable Livelihoods through Tourism in the Republic of Moldova" was conceived to emphasize gender equality in tourism, the global challenges facing women in the sector and best practices for empowering women. It aims to support women in tourism while advancing several of the Sustainable Development Goals. A series of 11 training courses were designed and delivered through hands-on workshops and personalized support, helping more than 250 participants develop essential skills in business management, digital marketing and sustainable development. Best practices emphasized the importance of training tailored to the local context and the value of mentoring in professional development. The initiative demonstrates how skills development can contribute to the growth of rural communities as key contributors to the tourism sector.

The fieldwork identified the need for awareness-raising initiatives and training programmes aimed at educating both employers and workers about the importance of formal labour practices and the benefits of equal access to job opportunities and fair compensation.

A recent investigation, based on interviews with VET institutions in Vlora and Shkodra, revealed a lack of integration of gender balance, advancement and equity considerations within their programmes.[89] This omission emphasizes the need for targeted initiatives to promote gender equality in VET curricula and practices. Furthermore, issues related to gender balance, career advancement and equality should be incorporated into vocational and technical school programmes.

88. UN Tourism. (2024.) Tourism skills training for female entrepreneurs across rural areas in Republic of Moldova; UN Tourism. (2024.) UN Tourism and Moldova launch joint project for female leadership in tourism.

89. Field interviews, Vlora (29 September 2024) and Shkodra (4 October 2024).

> Vocational training for women in tourism **must be connected to employability** in the labour market

KEY FINDING 6.2. Skills development in tourism must reflect the realities and needs of women entrepreneurs.

As the tourism sector continues to expand rapidly in Albania, the need to invest in professional development for women entrepreneurs—both urban and rural—is becoming increasingly urgent. Women-led businesses must be supported not only to survive but to scale, innovate and occupy higher-value positions along the tourism value chain. In addition to technical training, many women entrepreneurs emphasized the need for psychosocial support to break down the "concrete ceiling" (a term used to describe deeply entrenched social and psychological barriers that limit women's agency), particularly in male-dominated or family-owned business environments. Reports of limited family support, feelings of loneliness and low self-confidence were common among participants, especially in rural contexts.

The tourism sector requires a convergence of skills related to agriculture, hospitality and business management, with a focus on women-led businesses. It is important to note that vocational schools lack formal training programmes in traditional Albanian crafts, such as filigree/wood/stonework, which contributes to the gradual decline of these heritage skills and the disempowerment of women-led businesses in this field. In the context of agritourism, this is particularly significant. Indeed, this form of tourism can be a strategy to encourage more women to enter the tourism sector, and a clear training strategy must be promoted with real benefits for women.

For instance, in the context of agritourism in Tirana, there is a pressing need to enhance access to quality education and training to address the shortage of highly skilled human capital.

6.2. CONCLUSIONS

- There is a significant need for awareness-raising initiatives and training programmes to educate both employers and employees about the importance of formal employment practices and the benefits of equitable compensation.
- There is an urgent need to implement gender policies and comprehensive training programmes to raise awareness of gender equality, create safer work environments and empower women in the hospitality sector.
- The tourism associations' leadership could benefit from a deeper understanding that, while the tourism sector provides employment opportunities for women, it does not inherently guarantee equal employment conditions or growth opportunities compared to those of their male counterparts.

6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

High Priority	↘ Develop a need assessment on gender issues for women entrepreneurs in urban and rural tourism. Based on this assessment, design training courses and support mechanisms to help women put their knowledge into practice.
	↘ Develop a gender-responsive diagnostic tool and roadmap to better understand gender-sensitive opportunities and challenges in tourism education-to-employment transitions.
	↘ Develop a specific gender training assessment for the private sector in tourism. Based on this assessment, develop a set of practical guidelines and training resources on gender and tourism to be used by companies. Priority should be given to the implementation of ILO Convention 190.
Medium Priority	↘ Provide gender-responsive training programmes in tourism—for national authorities, staff, principals and directors involved in tourism—to enhance their capacity to promote gender equality, implement inclusive teaching methodologies and create a supportive learning environment.

CHAPTER 7.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS AS CATALYSTS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

7.1. KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS 7. 1. **Women travellers represent a strategic opportunity for advancing responsible and gender-sensitive tourism in Albania**

Women travellers are becoming a priority for strengthening tourism with a gender perspective. According to UN Tourism, the global tourism market is increasingly women-centric.[90] In 2023, women represented more than half of international tourists, and the number of women travellers continues to grow. For 2023, it was estimated that $125 billion were spent by women on travel worldwide.[91]

In Albania, women represent 50.3 per cent of all domestic travellers,[92] positioning them as a key demographic for tourism development. While current data does not yet fully capture the nature of their travel preferences or spending patterns, their presence suggests a significant opportunity to develop tailored, gender-sensitive tourism products and services.

Investing in this market segment involves more than recognizing its size—it requires a transformative shift in how women's travel experiences are understood, designed and delivered. This includes:

- Ensuring high standards of safety and freedom from violence in all tourism spaces,
- Promoting experiences that reflect women's interests, values and cultural contributions,
- Empowering women as both tourism providers and consumers, and
- Creating tourism environments that reflect respect, inclusivity and authenticity.

90. In 2022, 52 per cent of women globally took a solo trip, with a growing preference for safe, empowering and culturally immersive destinations. Countries such as Iceland and New Zealand have capitalized on this trend by marketing themselves as safe, gender-equal destinations with strong representation of women in leadership roles within the tourism industry.

91. Condor Ferries. (n.d.) Female travel statistics.

92. INSTAT. (2023.) Tourism in figures 2022: Survey on holidays and trips.

Case study 7.1. 1.
Turismo Violeta – Ecuador[93]

adopted a pioneering gender-sensitive approach to solo women travellers that goes far beyond the mere expansion of the women-centric market. The objective is to establish connections with responsible women travellers who seek tourism experiences that meet their specific needs while positively impacting local women and contributing to the reduction of gender disparities. Enhancing the tourism sector's skills and capacities to effectively plan and manage tourism from a gender perspective is critical. Particular attention must be paid to ensuring the safety and security of solo women travellers. Insecurity is the worst threat for tourism marketing . Gender-sensitive security includes the right to physical security, mobility, housing and basic services such as water, health and hygiene. It is an essential prerequisite for tourism development and must be addressed for the benefit of both the women and girls whose lives it shapes and the tourists visiting destinations.
The project's overarching objective is to appeal to tourists, both male and female, who value gender equality, are knowledgeable about, and and who expect their travel to have a transformative effect, while always making sure that destinations' safety levels match their expectations.

Rasti studimor 7.1.2.
Costa Rican Tourism Institute and National Institute for Women – RED SOFIA Programme[94,91]

The RED SOFIA programme is dedicated to promoting gender equality and enhancing women's safety within the Costa Rican tourism industry. Inspired by women solo travellers, the initiative aims to create a safe and welcoming environment for women visitors while raising awareness of gender issues among tourism stakeholders. The primary objective is to promote safe tourism practices with a view to encouraging women to visit the country. RED SOFIA is a collaborative effort involving a network of tourism businesses, local communities and committed stakeholders, underscoring the significance of cross-sectoral cooperation. Key highlights include gender-based violence prevention training, actions to promote the importance of gender equality in the tourism sector and the use of a certification to build trust and ensure safe travel experiences. The programme illustrates how tourism can become a lever for more responsible and sustainable tourism.

93. Based on the consultancy work done by Dr. Daniela Moreno Alarcón
94. Costa Rican Tourism Institute. (n.d). Programma Red Sofia.

Focusing on women travellers strengthens a responsible market niche, where women are the driving force of the tourism experience in both supply and demand. On the demand side, this includes promoting responsible consumption[95] and using marketing language that speaks to autonomy, community connection and ethical engagement. On the supply side, it means creating opportunities for women to design and lead tourism experiences, particularly in areas such as cultural heritage, wellness, crafts, rural tourism and ecological preservation. Additionally, women are a key influence in travel decision-making,[96] and their active engagement on social media platforms has led the travel industry and tourism marketing to adjust their strategies. For instance, research indicates that women are more likely than men to write online reviews and to express dissatisfaction via social networks. [97]

Women play a vital role in preserving Albania's cultural and natural heritage, and their active participation in the tourism sector is essential for promoting the country's sustainable development. Recognizing and amplifying women's contributions while implementing gender-sensitive marketing strategies can position Albania as an inclusive and appealing destination for both women travellers and women working in tourism.[98]

From March to June 2025, UN Women Albania piloted women-only tourism experiences in Tirana, Vlora and Shkodra to create safe, empowering and inclusive spaces for women travellers while enhancing women's visibility and economic participation in the tourism value chain. The tours connected travellers with local women artisans, farmers and guides, promoting community engagement, cultural preservation and women's economic empowerment. Participants highlighted the unique value of women-centred content, inclusive group dynamics and the showcasing of women-led initiatives, demonstrating the transformative potential of gender-responsive tourism to foster confidence, inclusion and community.[95]

Case study 7.1.3.

Balkan Pearls (established programme) – "Petrela Day Trip for Moms and Kids"[99]

Balkan Pearls, një operator i besuar, ka pilotuar një përvojë të përqendruar në natyrë për nënat dhe fëmijët, duke mundësuar avancimin e turizmit gjithëpërfshirës dhe me orientim familjar dhe këndvështrim gjinor. Kjo nismë nuk e konsideron kujdesin për fëmijët si pengesë për lëvizshmërinë e grave, por përkundrazi përqafon realitetet e ofrimit të kujdesit si një nga faktorët në organizimin e udhëtimeve argëtuese dhe të realizueshme. Udhëtimi nxori në pah vlerën e mirëqenies dhe udhëtimit të disa brezave, duke zbuluar njëkohësisht edhe fushat ku mund të bëhet përmirësim. Reagimet theksuan nevojën për tregime të përshtatshme për moshën, mësim interaktiv për fëmijët në moshë shkollore dhe fleksibilitet më të madh në përputhje me motin, terrenin dhe energjinë e grupit. Përmirësimi i ritmit, i ushqimeve të përgatitura, dhe menaxhimi më i mirë i kohës u identifikuan gjithashtu si përparësi. Në të ardhmen, përmirësimi i aftësive të moderimit dhe trajnimi i punonjësve për të ofruar përvoja të përgjigjshme gjinore dhe tërheqëse do ta forcojë më tej këtë produkt.

95. Gender-sensitive branding is an essential component of promoting equality within the tourism industry. By prioritizing the representation of women in tourism campaigns, destinations and businesses signal their commitment to fostering gender equality, a value that is increasingly important to both travellers and locals.
96. Andreas Bayerl and Yaniv Dover. (2023). Behind the paper: Gender rating gap in online reviews. Springer Nature Research Communities.
97. According to Skift's The woman traveller key data and insights, women travellers are a dominant force in the travel industry and their influence is far-reaching: 82 per cent of all travel decisions are made by women, whether choosing the destination, booking accommodations, or deciding on tours and activities.
98. UN Women Albania. (2025.) A new way to travel: Albania empowers women through gender-inclusive tourism.
99. UN Women Albania. (2025.) A new way to travel: Albania empowers women through gender-inclusive tourism.

Case study 7.1.4.

Hello Albania (growth phase) – "Vlora Escape for Solo Women Travellers"[100]

In a coastal region with few women entrepreneurs in tourism, Hello Albania piloted a safe, empowering product for solo women travellers. The pilot confirmed strong demand but highlighted areas for improvement, clearer itinerary communication, better time management and a stronger focus on women's stories. Guests suggested adding facilitated group reflections and consistent English-language guidance for inclusivity. The experience underscores the need for capacity- building across the tourism value chain—especially in logistics, safety and gender-sensitive communication, ensuring all staff, from guides to drivers, can support respectful, women-positive travel experiences.

Case study 7.1.5.

Guided Albania (start-up) – "Women-Only Retreat in Shkodra"101

Guided Albania, a young woman-owned business, piloted a women-only retreat combining wellness, cultural exchange and community engagement. Backed by municipal support and strong local networks, it offers a promising model for gender-responsive tourism in Northern Albania. Participant feedback emphasized the need for more accurate storytelling and inclusive facilitation, particularly for solo travellers or those unfamiliar with the language. Moving forward, training guides and partners on women's rights, gender equality and respectful conduct will be key to creating safe and empowering experiences

100. Top Channel Albania. June 21, 2025. Travel only for women! The tourist trend that is spreading in Albania, the security is higher.
101. UN Women Europe and Centra Asia. UN Women promotes Gender- inclusive tourism in Albania

Table 7.1. **The importance of gender equality when creating marketing promotional campaigns:**

Foster Diverse Representation in Marketing Content	Current tourism marketing in Albania frequently portrays a narrow demographic of women, often failing to reflect the diversity of travellers and residents. Effective content should include women from all backgrounds, encompassing various ages, ethnicities, body types and abilities. Representing diverse groups—such as Albanian, Roma and other minority women—enjoying Albania's landscapes, culture and activities creates a more inclusive and appealing narrative. This approach will strengthen Albania's position as a destination that values equity and embraces diversity
Challenge Stereotypes in Tourism Content	Traditional tourism marketing often reinforces gender stereotypes, portraying women in passive roles such as spa-goers or shoppers. While these activities may appeal to certain audiences, showcasing women engaging in adventurous, cultural and outdoor activities broadens perceptions and attracts a wider demographic. Content featuring women hiking the Albanian Alps, rafting on the Vjosa River, or cycling through rural areas can challenge outdated stereotypes and reflect the diverse interests of modern women travellers.

7.2. CONCLUSIONS

- The travel industry is increasingly focusing on the niche of responsible women travellers. These women are informed, committed to gender equality and seeking transformative and empowering tourism experiences for themselves and other women.
- Betting on this type of tourism strengthens a responsible market niche in which women drive tourism experiences that defy gender stereotypes, both in terms of supply and demand.
- It is imperative that the tourism supply chain ensures a high standard of safety, particularly in preventing any form of violence or harassment, for both women tourism workers and women tourists.
- The promotion of women's contributions to the preservation of Albania's cultural and natural heritage, the development of the tourism sector and the sustainable growth of the country through inclusive marketing strategies has the potential to position Albania as an attractive tourist destination for women travellers.

7.3. 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.

CHAPTER 8.

COMMUNITY AND CIVIL SOCIETY

8.1. KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDING 8.1. "Inclusive community" in tourism is an opportunity to envisage the role of women in the sector

Investing in "inclusive community" is not only a strategic response but also a necessary one for ensuring that the economic, social and environmental benefits of tourism are equitably distributed and retained at a local level. An "inclusive community" is not a tourism product or sub-sector: it is a development strategy that must be embedded across all types of tourism that aims to place women and men at the centre of sustainable growth. Noting that "equitable" does not simply mean "gender equality," the UN Tourism AlUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development[102]99 emphasizes the need to promote women's role in communities. It achieves this by adopting a gender-responsive and sustainable approach to considering women's needs at the community level. In the field of community development through gender programming the latter is recognized as a key priority.

The non-profit organization Planeterra[103] sees "Community Tourism"[104] as an opportunity to build better relationships between visitors and places. This model addresses social, environmental and economic challenges by creating value for communities, travellers and the entire industry. While conventional tourism often channels most revenue to large international corporations, leaving little benefit for local communities, Community Tourism ensures those benefits are shared more fairly.

BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITIES: Community Tourism gives communities control over tourism, allowing them to make decisions and manage their own development. It provides stable income, develops skills, strengthens the role of women and youth and protects cultural heritage and the environment. It creates dignified jobs and fights discrimination, building fairer societies.

BENEFITS FOR TOURISTS: Community Tourism offers authentic and unforgettable experiences that go beyond superficial visits to places. It gives tourists the opportunity to connect with local people and stories, promoting empathy and more conscious travel. It meets the demands of modern travellers for meaningful and valuable experiences.

BENEFITS FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY: Community Tourism is a profitable strategy that meets the growing demands for responsible and authentic tourism. It creates a competitive advantage by offering unique and culturally rich products. It supports businesses' goals for sustainable development, improves their brand reputation, increases customer loyalty and ensures long-term sustainability for businesses. It also helps fight "tourist overload" by distributing visitors and strengthening local supply chains, and protects the environment by promoting a low-impact approach that focuses on ecological management and climate sustainability, transforming into a tool for the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity.

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102. UNWTO. (2020.) AlUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development through Tourism.

103. Planeterra is an impact-driven non-profit that uses tourism to uplift communities. It helps local organizations and communities leverage tourism as a catalyst to improve lives, protect natural environments and celebrate culture, striving for a more sustainable and equitable future for all. Through the development of Community Tourism, it encourages and supports tourism experiences that are owned, led, or meaningfully co-created by the communities in which they operate.

104. Planeterra's definition of Community Tourism: Community tourism refers to travel experiences owned, led and run by communities – non-profits, cooperatives, social enterprises.

Inclusive community tourism ensures that **economic, social and environmental gains are shared by women** and men—especially those traditionally left behind.

The ripple effect of Community Tourism explains how money spent by a tourist has multiple and widespread impacts on a local community. This effect works in three phases:

DIRECT IMPACT: Money goes directly to the community, activating social enterprises or community organizations that offer accommodation, meals, activities, transportation and artisanal products.

INDIRECT IMPACT: natural ecosystems and source products and services from nearby suppliers such as farmers, herders and small producers.

INDUCED IMPACT: The income earned by community residents is spent again within the area, supporting various initiatives and enterprises and generally improving the quality of life with respect for nature.

Community Tourism[105] is a strategy that can be used to achieve "inclusive community" in Albania. This approach fosters resilience by empowering communities, particularly women, to assume an active role in tourism planning, management and benefit-sharing. It fosters social cohesion, strengthens local governance and preserves both material and non-material heritage for future generations. Research by Booking.com[106] reveals a significant shift in traveller consciousness, with a growing awareness of tourism's impact on local communities. In today's climate, travellers are increasingly seeking experiences that enrich their lives and benefit the destinations they visit. Finally, Community Tourism reduces pressure on coastal hotspots and strengthens inland economies through locally-led initiatives.

Case study 8.1.1.
Albergo Diffuso in Albania[107]

The Albergo Diffuso model, first implemented in Kruja, transforms abandoned village homes into a network of guest accommodations managed by local families. Women play a leading role in hosting, traditional cuisine and cultural storytelling—ensuring the preservation of Albania's intangible heritage while generating income. By centering women's knowledge and labour, the model fosters inclusive economic development, revitalizes rural communities and supports gender-responsive tourism.

105. CNN, A girl's journey in search of "treasures" in Shkodra, YouTube, published July 6, 2025, https://youtu.be/3nBLMr7NRzo?si=UhyJeZP4Fq4rNUJf
106. Booking.com. (2025.) Travel and sustainability report 2025.
107. https://www.risialbania.al/revitalizing-cultural-heritage-albanias-first-albergo-diffuso-opens-in-kruja

In Albania, Community Tourism offers significant opportunities to catalyse women's empowerment, enhancing their visibility and voice in traditionally male-dominated sectors. It promotes inclusive governance and builds local capacities for decision-making, aligning with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

Case study 8.1.2.
Rural Women's Empowerment in Northern Albania

In 2025, a €2.1 million project led by the Albanian government, UN Women, and AICS was launched to support 220 women in Shkodër, Bulqizë, Malësi e Madhe and Dibër. Focused on agritourism, beekeeping and food production, the initiative provides training, combats gender-based violence and promotes gender-sensitive value chains. It strengthens local governance and showcases how integrated, gender- responsive development can empower rural women communities and foster inclusive economic growth.

KEY FINDING 8.2. **Rapid, uneven tourism growth risks widening gender gaps**

Albania is experiencing one of the fastest rates of tourism growth in Europe[108] and there is increasing concern that this rapid expansion may undermine the country's rich cultural heritage and fragile ecosystems link to communties. The concentration of tourism along the coastline, combined with increasing pressure on infrastructure, endangers both tangible and intangible heritage. Furthermore, a rapid- gender blind development could exacerbate the gender gap, as women remain underrepresented in tourism leadership, decision-making and formal employment, particularly in rural areas. As part of the Mediterranean region, Albania is also becoming increasingly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including biodiversity loss, water scarcity and higher temperatures.[109]

In this context, investing in Community Tourism is not only a strategic priority but necessary to ensure that tourism's economic, social and environmental benefits are distributed and locally retained according to the needs of women.

By placing communities at the heart of tourism, Albania can protect what makes its destinations unique while ensuring that development is gender-responsive and sustainable:

- Beyond public initiatives, there is a growing opportunity for the Albanian tourism sector—both public and private—to adopt tools that measure and increase the local economic impact of tourism. Embracing such approaches can help ensure that tourism growth translates into tangible benefits for local communities, especially women and small enterprises, while fostering greater accountability and inclusiveness in the sector.

- Investing in capacity-building ensures that community members have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively manage and benefit from tourism activities. This must focus on women's needs as they engage with Community Tourism, enhancing their personal skills to develop their leadership abilities across the tourism value chain.

108. UN Tourism. (2025.) Albania first in the world for tourism growth.
109. The World Bank Group. (2021.) Climate risk profile: Albania

- Community Tourism offers Albania an opportunity for an effective coordination among these stakeholders, which is essential to ensure that tourism benefits are equitably shared, culturally respectful and environmentally sustainable. Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), as recognized in Article 5 of Albania's Law on Tourism, provide a strategic platform for local-level coordination. When developed with a gender-responsive approach, DMOs can bring together municipalities, tourism businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and residents to co-design tourism strategies that promote women's leadership, support community-owned enterprises and align with local values.

Case study 8.2.1.
Vjosa Wild River National Park[110]

Declared Europe's first Wild River National Park in 2023, the Vjosa River stands as a powerful example of community empowerment and collaborative environmental stewardship. Local communities—together with women co-led NGOs, adventure tourism operators, grassroots tourism enterprises and national and international networks—played a central role in mobilizing public support and advocating against hydropower development. Their coordinated efforts not only safeguarded the river's ecological integrity but also elevated the work of environmental organizations and scientists. Today, Vjosa is guided by a Management Plan, in which the community is placed at the heart of the park's protection, development and sustainable tourism strategies, ensuring that conservation goes hand-in-hand with local empowerment and inclusive governance.

8.2. CONCLUSIONS

- Albania's fast-growing coastal tourism sector risks exacerbating regional disparities and gender inequalities. Women, particularly those in rural and remote areas, remain significantly underrepresented in formal tourism employment, leadership and decision-making processes.

- Community Tourism offers inclusive opportunities for women to generate income, develop leadership skills and increase their social visibility, especially in underserved regions. Locally driven models such as Albergo Diffuso, agritourism and the Vjosa Wild River National Park demonstrate how tourism can contribute to preservation efforts.

- There are currently limited mechanisms in place to assess the social, gender and environmental outcomes of Community Tourism initiatives. The absence of inclusive, data-driven monitoring systems hinders evidence-based policymaking and equitable investment.

110. Vjosa Wild River National Park Designation Project. (2024.) A Management Plan 2024-2030.

8.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

High Priority	↘ Strengthen the development of Community Tourism under the National Tourism Strategy 2025–2030 by ensuring its implementation includes gender-responsive objectives, dedicated budgeting and intersectional performance indicators across all related development plans. ↘ Create a National Network of Women in Community Tourism to facilitate knowledge exchange, peer support and joint advocacy.
Medium Priority	Adopt transparent and gender-sensitive monitoring frameworks and tools—such as the Ripple Score —to measure and communicate the local economic, social and environmental impact of tourism. Use this data to inform policies and strengthen accountability.

CHAPTER 9.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The rapid growth of tourism in Albania is positioning the sector as one of the country's main economic drivers. However, if this growth is to be sustainable economically, socially and environmentally, it must be guided by a gender-responsive approach that ensures equitable access, participation and benefit-sharing for all. This requires the design and implementation of evidence-based, gender-sensitive policies that are informed by a deep understanding of women's roles in the sector, the challenges they face and the differentiated ways in which tourism affects women and men.

One of the most critical challenges identified through this assessment is the limited availability of sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data. The absence of reliable, contextualized data hinders the ability to measure gender gaps, assess the impact of tourism on women's livelihoods and inform inclusive policy planning. Strengthening Albania's gender data systems is not only essential for diagnosing inequalities, but also for designing gender-responsive budgets, a key tool for ensuring that public investments in tourism are equitable, efficient and aligned with national development goals.

In this regard, Albania has a notable advantage. It is one of the few countries in the region with an established methodology and legal framework for gender-responsive budgeting (GRB). While implementation remains uneven—particularly in tourism—this foundation presents a unique opportunity to lead by example. Integrating GRB into tourism strategies, investments and evaluation mechanisms can help ensure that the sector contributes meaningfully to gender equality and inclusive growth.

Finally, the development of a sustainable and gender-responsive tourism model requires a robust legal and institutional framework that empowers public institutions to produce, analyse, use and disseminate gender data. This must be supported by adequate authority, capacity and resources and must respond to the realities of local communities and diverse tourism contexts. By placing gender equality at the core of its tourism strategy, Albania has the opportunity not only to strengthen its competitiveness and resilience, but also to position itself as a regional leader in inclusive and transformative tourism development.

ANNEXES

1.STAKEHOLDERS MAPPING

Several players in or connected to the tourism sector are likely to play a role in promoting equality between women and men. This includes, first and foremost, public players, but also economic players such as tourism businesses and international organizations. Last but not least, civil society organizations also play a crucial role through their advocacy activities.

Public and semi-public stakeholders

Title	Sector	Main missions	Potential transformative capacity
Albanian Development Fund	Development	↘ Encouraging sustainable, balanced and cohesive socio-economic development at the local and regional level ↘ Supporting government's policies through various projects and programmes, particularly in terms of infrastructure development, local governance and rural development.	↘ Trajnim për gratë në menaxhimin e projekteve në komunitet ↘ Integrimi i grave në zhvillimin e turizmit të qëndrueshëm përmes projekteve lokale: mikpritje turistike, aktivitete kulturore, aktivitete artizanale ↘ Inkurajimi i projekteve wqë integrojnë dimensionet gjinore, përfshirë në turizëm ↘ Ngritja e imazhit të grave në industrinë e turizmit
Ministry of Tourism and Environment	Tourism, Environment	Formulating and implementing policies related to environment, nature protection, waste management, environmental monitoring, forests, water quality, and protected areas.	↘ Integrating gender into sector strategies ↘ Training and awareness on gender issues ↘ Encouraging women's economic empowerment ↘ Supporting women-led initiatives in the tourism sector ↘ Recognizing the role and contribution of women in the tourism industry ↘ Promoting "best practices" for women's empowerment in tourism businesses

Title	Sector	Main missions	Potential transformative capacity
Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation	Economy, Culture	Creating a favourable environment for the growth and development of cultural and creative services/ products, in both the public and private sectors.	↘ Integrimi i perspektivës gjinore në strategjitë e sektorit ↘ Njohja e rolit dhe kontributit të grave në industrinë e turizmit ↘ Vënia në dukje e rolit dhe kontributit të grave në përvojat kulturore të sektorit të turizmit ↘ Mbështetja e industrive krijuese duke promovuar karrierat e grave në sektorët e kulturës
Ministry of Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship	↘ Responsible for communicating with entrepreneurs ↘ Helping and protecting private entrepreneurship ↘ Promoting inter-institutional cooperation to improve public services for entrepreneurship ↘ Identifying business obstacles and formulating intervention strategies to reduce barriers	↘ Integrimi i perspektivës gjinore në strategjitë e sektorit ↘ Trajnimi dhe ndërgjegjësimi për çështjet gjinore ↘ Nxitja e sipërmarrjes së grave dhe i fuqizimit ekonomik të grave në turizëm ↘ Njohja e rolit dhe kontributit të grave në industrinë e turizmit
INSTAT	Economy, Statistics	↘ Main institution producing official statistics and coordinating the national statistical system ↘ Providing transparent, neutral and timely statistics within the country	↘ Promoting understanding of gender inequalities by producing data and analysis on the situation of women, specifically in tourism ↘ Recognizing the role ↘ and contribution of women in the tourism sector
Tourism Municipality of Tirana	Tourism	Tourism promotion at local scale	↘ Including women in tourism development initiatives ↘ Training for jobs in the sector ↘ Recognizing the role and contribution of women in the tourism industry

Title	Sector	Main missions	Potential transformative capacity
Agricultural and Rural Development Agency	Agriculture	↘ Responsible for administering the agricultural and rural development funds ↘ Assisting farmers and agricultural cooperation agencies by offering guidance ↘ Implementing state policies, development programmes and measures on agricultural and rural development.	↘ Integrating gender into sector strategies ↘ Recognizing the role and contribution of women in the tourism industry ↘ Training women farmers and integrating them into agricultural value chains ↘ Supporting women-led agritourism projects
National Agency for Employment and Skills	Employment	Responsible for employment and skills development	↘ Integrating gender into sector strategies ↘ Raising awareness and trainings for professionals on gender-related topics ↘ Encouraging women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment ↘ Professional training and support for women to enter the job market, especially in tourism
Albanian Investment Development Agency	Development	↘ Enhancing the competitiveness of the private sector Strengthening the export potential of Albania ↘ Promoting and supporting foreign direct investment ↘ Promoting Albania's tourism potential	↘ Integrating gender into sector strategies ↘ Raising awareness and training for professionals on gender-related topics ↘ Promoting "best practices" within tourism businesses ↘ Supporting women entrepreneurs by facilitating their access to financing ↘ Promoting investments into projects in the tourism sector that foster women's inclusion
Institute for Sustainable Development, Environment and Tourism	Tourism, Environment	↘ Providing independent studies and research to inform and influence policymaking, implementation process and private actors operating in all sectors of the economy. ↘ Providing knowledge on sustainable development models ↘ Taking action to support sustainable development in Albania and the region. ↘ Promoting social dialogue, cooperation and coordination between different social groups	↘ Integrimi i perspektivës gjinore në strategjitë e sektorit ↘ Nxitja e pjesëmarrjes së grave në iniciativat e qëndrueshmërisë dhe në menaxhimin e mjedisit ↘ Trajnimi për projekte ekologjike, veçanërisht në turizmin e qëndrueshëm ↘ Njohja e rolit dhe kontributit të grave në industrinë e turizmit

International organization stakeholders

Title	Sector	Main missions	Potential transformative capacity
World Bank	Development	↘ Reducing poverty and supporting sustainable prosperity ↘ Investing in infrastructure, education, health, governance and climate resilience ↘ Assisting, financing and fostering access to technical resources for developing countries to help them achieve their development goals	↘ Significant financial resources and development expertise to initiate systemic changes in infrastructure and policies ↘ Encouraging structural reforms in critical sectors such as tourism ↘ Financing sustainable tourism projects that include a gender perspective ↘ Promoting local and sustainable development while fostering greater economic inclusion for women
International Labour Organization	Labour	↘ Promoting international standards for decent working conditions ↘ Supporting job creation, social protection and labour rights ↘ Combating forced labour and child labour ↘ Combating discrimination in the workplace	↘ Strong capacity to influence labour rights in tourism ↘ Influencing improved working conditions for women in low-income industries ↘ Promoting the adoption of policies to improve the quality of life and safety standards for women working in tourism ↘ Promoting ethical tourism by fostering the rights and social protection of women working in the sector
UN Women	Women's rights	↘ Promoting gender equality and empowering women ↘ Promoting women's economic rights ↘ Supporting women leaders and women's participation in political decision-making ↘ Combating gender-based violence	↘ Major influence in promoting women's rights, notably by raising awareness of gender inequalities ↘ Major influence in international and sometimes local policies to integrate a gender perspective ↘ Promoting more inclusive tourism by supporting women's empowerment initiatives in the tourism sector ↘ Creating economic opportunities for local women ↘ Combating violence and exploitation of women in the sector
GIZ	Development	↘ Supporting sustainable development in developing countries ↘ Supporting rural development projects, renewable energies and governance ↘ Institutional and local capacity building	↘ Substantial transformative impact through technical expertise and support for the implementation of public policies and sustainable development projects, often in partnership with local governments and other international organizations ↘ Promoting sustainable tourism through local rural development initiatives and environmental protection programmes ↘ Training to enhance the skills of women working in the tourism sector

Title	Sector	Main missions	Potential transformative capacity
Swiss Foundation for Technical Cooperation	Development	↘ Promoting sustainable economic development ↘ Supporting vocational training and economic integration of vulnerable populations ↘ Supporting microfinance initiatives and small businesses	↘ Fostering women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion for small businesses ↘ Promoting sustainable and inclusive economic models ↘ Possible support for ecotourism and rural tourism by working with women-led local small businesses ↘ Professional training to develop local skills in hospitality and tourism services, with a focus on women's specific needs

Private Sector Stakeholders

Title	Sector	Main missions	Potential transformative capacity
Food service businesses	Food	↘ Providing catering services to tourists and local residents ↘ Attracting and retaining customers through quality services and culinary experiences	↘ The food service sector can be transformative for women by creating employment opportunities in the restaurant industry ↘ Training programmes to encourage women's participation in leadership roles ↘ Supporting women in agriculture by sourcing from businesses run by women, employing women, or committed to women's empowerment and rights ↘ Promoting the role and contribution of women in the tourism sector ↘ Supporting micro-enterprise programmes for women wishing to open their own restaurants or cafés for tourists
Local guides	Tourism	↘ Assisting tourists by providing information on historical, natural and cultural sites ↘ Creating authentic and visitor-friendly experiences to promote local culture and heritage	↘ Training for tour guides on business management, hospitality, and promotion of local cultural specialties, raising the profile of women in the tourism sector and promoting a more inclusive and diverse approach to local heritage. ↘ Supporting women guides ↘ Integrating tours highlighting women (e.g., crafts, agriculture) and women's entrepreneurship ↘ Enhancing the image of women in the tourism sector ↘ Promoting the role and contribution of women in the tourism sector ↘ Empowering women by offering them flexible jobs, particularly in rural and cultural areas where women can share their local knowledge and traditions.

Title	Sector	Main missions	Potential transformative capacity
Marriott Tirana	Tourism, Hospitality	Offering accommodation, dining and leisure services to travellers	↘ Better consideration for women through diversity and inclusion policies ↘ Promoting career opportunities for women in the hospitality sector ↘ Contributing to women's empowerment through training, mentorship and leadership programmes, creating stable and well-paid career opportunities. ↘ Encouraging women to engage in various roles within the tourism sector, such as management, hospitality and service operations
Tour Operators	Tourism	↘ Planning, managing and selling tour packages ↘ Coordinating groups and individual experiences for tourists	↘ Diversifying job opportunities for women (e.g., administration, logistics, organization, guiding) ↘ Promoting training and career paths for women, including in the management of tour operations ↘ Including and highlighting circuits and experiences led by women ↘ Promoting experiences that showcase women's local perspectives and skills, enhancing their visibility and role in the tourism sector ↘ Elevating the image of women in the tourism industry ↘ Highlighting the role and contributions of women in the tourism sector

Civil Society Organization Stakeholders

Title	Sector	Main missions	Potential transformative capacity
Alliance for Development Centre	Social, Gender Equality	↘ Promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and social inclusion ↘ Researching gender-related issues ↘ Carrying out awareness-raising campaigns ↘ Implementing development projects, capacity-building and advocacy for social justice	↘ Working for women's rights and gender equality in various sectors, including tourism ↘ Developing strategies aimed at reducing gender inequalities in various sectors, including tourism ↘ Training and awareness on gender issues ↘ Empowering women through educational programmes and mindset change initiatives ↘ Supporting women-led initiatives in areas related to tourism (e.g., hospitality, tour guiding, services), particularly in rural and isolated areas ↘ Promoting sustainable tourism initiatives that respect women's rights ↘ Elevating the image of women in the tourism industry ↘ Highlighting the role and contributions of women in the tourism sector

Title	Sector	Main missions	Potential transformative capacity
Albanian Tourism Operators Association	Tourism	↘ Creating equal conditions of competition for all businesses ↘ Protecting tour perators and travel agencies in Albania against unfair policies	↘ Promoting the inclusion of women in tourism businesses ↘ Training women for roles in management, marketing and leadership within the industry ↘ Supporting policies that ensure equal pay and equitable access to funding for women entrepreneurs in tourism ↘ Supporting mentorship programmes and awareness-raising initiatives ↘ Encouraging women's participation in all aspects of tourism
Agritourism Association in Albania	Agriculture, Tourism	Promoting rural tourism and agritourism in Albania	↘ Offering significant opportunities for women in agritourism, particularly in rural areas ↘ Supporting women farmers by integrating them into tourism value chains ↘ Training in management, marketing and hospitality ↘ Empowering rural women by providing a stable source of income and valuing their skills in handmade products, accommodation and tourism services
Albanian Tourism Union	Tourism	Representing and defending tourism workers' rights	↘ Fighting for gender equality in rights and wages within the tourism sector ↘ Promotion of fair, safe and decent working conditions for women: equal opportunities, fair pay and recognition in decision-making roles ↘ Elevating the image of women in the tourism industry ↘ Highlighting the role and contributions of women in the tourism sector
Laghi d'Albania	Tourism, Environment	↘ Developing sustainable tourism ↘ Promoting the conservation of lakes and aquatic ecosystems in Albania ↘ Raising awareness among local populations and tourists about environmental preservation	↘ Creating opportunities for women in local communities by training them in sustainable natural resource management and involving them in ecological tourism projects ↘ Supporting local initiatives that promote women's access to jobs related to the management of natural spaces and environmental awareness ↘ Encouraging women's participation in the management of natural resources and in tourism activities related to ecotourism

2. STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT DURING FIELD MISSIONS

Palët e interesuara të përfshirë gjatë misioneve në terren për projektin e UN Women në Shqipëri: "Rritja e konsumit dhe ofrimit të shërbimeve turistike në Shqipëri."

No.	Organization/ Institution	Contact Person	Title/Position	Type of Meeting & Place of Meeting
National level and Tirana				
1	UN Women	Michele Ribotta	UN Women Representative to Albania	In person, near the UN Women premises
2	Ministry of Tourism and Environment	Herida Duro	General Director of Tourism	In person, near the Ministry premises
3	Municipality of Tirana	Alba Tuci	Employee at the Directorate for Tourism Industry Promotion and Development	In person at their office
4	INSTAT	Anisa Omuri, Elona Sevrani, Olsida Capo	Director, Directorate of Social Statistics & Director of the National Accounts Directory & Member, Board of Directors	In person at their office
5	GADC - Gender Alliance for Development Center	Mirela Arqimandriti	Director	In person, Tirana
6	GIZ	Sofjola Kotelli, Adela Llatja	Programme Manager & Component Leader & National Coordinator	In person at their office
7	Albanian Tourism Operators Association	Kliton Gerxhani	President	In person at their office

8	Faculty of Economics, Tourism Department	Klodiana Gorica	Academic Staff	In person, Tirana
9	Local guide & sustainable tourism activist	Albiona Mucoimaj	Local tourism guide	In person, Tirana
10	Hotel Xheko Imperial	Eni Xheko	Manager & Entrepreneur	In person, Tirana
11	AIDA	Ornela Gjini, Geraldina Fejzaj	Specialists, Directorate of Investments	In person at their office
12	Albanian Tourism Union	Rrahman Kasa	President	In person at their office
13	Agritourism Association in Albania	Blerina Bombaj	President	Online
14	Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation	Bledar Taushani	Director, Directorate of Employment and Migration Policies	In person, Tirana
15	Gender Expert	Erlad Lamja	Gender Expert	In person, Tirana
16	Albanian Development Fund	Astrit Alikaj, Donald Vullnetari	Representative, "Economic & Gender Inclusion" programme	In person at their office
17	Swiss Entrepreneurship Program	Blendina Cara	Country Programme Officer	Online

18	COSV	Isijda Sinjari, Jonida Shano	Country Director in Albania & Team Leader	In person at their office
19	Feel Albania	Aida Gjecaj	CEO	Online
20	Hotel Marriott Tirana	Nicholas A. Rana, Sonila Toptani	General Director, Director of Sales and Marketing	In person at their office
21	Start Up Agency Albania, Ministry of Entrepreneurship	Jorina Kadare	Head of EcoSystem Support Sector	In person at their office
22	Slow Food Movement	Dhurata Thanasi	Food Activist	In person, Tirana
23	Agriculture and Rural Development Agency, Ministry of Agriculture	Mirgjana Gjermizi	Sector for Quality Assurance and Risk Management	In person at their office
24	National Employment and Opportunities	Klevis Hysa	Director	In person at their office
25	Tourism Satellite Account, IDRA	Elektra Marticanaj John Kester,	Employee at IDRA & TSA Expert	Online
26	ILO (International Labour Organization)	Fiorela Shalsi	National Project Coordinator Lifelong Empowerment and Protection in Albania (LEAP)	Online
27	Psycho-Social Centre 'Vatra'	Entela Avdulaj	Programme Manager at 'Vatra'	Online

No.	Organization/ Institution	Contact Person	Title/Position	Type of Meeting & Place of Meeting
Shkodër Region				
1	Municipality of Shkodra	Rudin Beka	Nënkryetar Bashkie	In person, Shkoder
2	Qendra Rinore Arka/ CODE PARTNERS	Arta Nikolli	Director	In person, Shkoder
3	Hotel "Tradita Geg e Toske"	Raimonda Sulaj	Co-Owner	Phone call
4	Margjelo Filigran Albania	Aurora Piranej	Owner	In person, Shkoder, close to the business premises
5	Hostel "Shtëpia imë është shtëpia jote"	Alma Naraci	Owner	In person, Shkoder, close to the business premises
6	Camping Legjenda	Linda Nikaj	Co-Owner	In person, Shkoder, close to the business premises
7	Well Point Association, Hiking and Birdwatching Guide	Aurora Piroviq	Self Employed	In person, Shkoder
8	Shkodra University	Aurora Dibra	Professor	Phone call
9	Hotel Çoçja	Indira Çoçja	Manager	In person, Shkoder, close to the business premises

10	Tourism Information Tamare & VIS Albania	Drita Tanazi	Local Development Agent & Tourism Operator	Phone call
11	BID Shkodra	n/a	n/a	Phone call
12	Hotel Rozafa	Kristina Ulqinaku	General Manager	In person, Shkoder, close to the business premises
13	Vocational secondary school “Hamdi Bushati”	Merita Zeneli	Director	In person, Shkoder, close to the school premises

No.	Organization/ Institution	Contact Person	Title/Position	Type of Meeting & Place of Meeting
Vlora Region				
1	Municipality of Vlore	Arlinda Tepelena	Director in the Directorate of Economic Development and Tourism	In person, Lungomare Vlore
2	ARTA Tourism NGO Vlora	Dionis Sota	President	In person, Historic Centre of Vlore
3	AULONA Cultural Centre	Sejmen Gjokolli	Director	In person, Lungomare Vlore
4	Hotel Kraal	Anisa Ceno	CEO/Entrepreneur	Phone Call
5	Ismal Qemali University	Shkëlqim Sinanaj	Professor in Tourism Department	In person, Vlore
6	Restaurant & Beach Bar Minimal Vlore	Ornela Kovaçaj	Administrator	In person, close to the business premises
7	Commercial School Vlore (VET)	Deni Llanaj	Teaching Specialist	In person, Vlore
8	Hotel Buddha & Cocktail Bardha	Lorjana Doga	Manager	In person, close to the business premises
9	Hello Albania Shpk	Stela Gockaj	Tour Operator & Travel Agency	In person, Vlore

10	Pasticeri Likaj	Likaj	Co-owner & Manager	In person, close to the business premises
11	TID Vlora	Netilda Gunbardhi	CEO	Phone Call
12	Marina Bay	Sokol Cukani	F&B Manager	In person, Vlore
13	Restorant & Hotel Vela	Briseida Mosko	CEO	In person, Lungomare Vlore

UN WOMEN EXISTS TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS.

As the lead UN entity on gender equality and secretariat of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, we shift laws, institutions, social behaviors and services to close the gender gap and build an equal world for all women and girls. Our partnerships with governments, women's movements and the private sector coupled with our coordination of the broader United Nations translate progress into lasting changes. We make strides forward for women and girls in four areas: leadership, economic empowerment, freedom from violence, and women, peace and security as well as humanitarian action.

UN Women keeps the rights of women and girls at the centre of global progress – always, everywhere. Because gender equality is not just what we do. It is who we are.

UN WOMEN FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

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