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Gender-Sensitive Value Chain Analysis Agritourism Sector



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Abbreviations

AIDA	Albanian Investment Development Agency
AKPA	National Employment and Networking Agency
ANDR	Albanian Network for Rural Development
ARDA	Agricultural and Rural Development Agency
A2F	Access to Finance
BKT	National Commercial Bank
CCIT	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tirana
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EU	European Union
F&V	Fruit and Vegetable
F2T	Farm-to-Table
GADC	Gender Alliance for Development Center
GEEA	Gender Equity and Equality Action
GIZ	German government international aid agency
GQSP	Global Quality and Standards Program
GSVC	Gender Sensitive Value Chain
InSET	Institute for Sustainable Development in Agriculture and Tourism
KASH	Albanian Agribusiness Council
MAP	Medicinal and Aromatic Products
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MTM	Ministry of Tourism and Environment
SECO	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SHASH	Albanian Agritourism Association
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
UBT	Agriculture University of Tirana
UNIDO	United Nations for Industrial Development Organization
UNWTO	UN World Tourism Organization
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VC	Value Chain



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INTRODUCTION

Agritourism, which involves the combination of elements of the tourism industry with elements of agricultural activities bringing consumers on farms¹, is becoming increasingly relevant in numerous economies around the world. Popular in Italy and other Mediterranean countries since the 1970s, agritourism involves furnishing farms with guesthouses and restaurants to serve tourists. More recently, Albania, Croatia and other countries in south-eastern Europe have adopted the model of agritourism.² A study by Allied Market Research³ in 2021 projected growth of just over 13% by 2027 for the sector, worldwide.

Agritourism in Albania has been considered a high-priority sector in the economy, contributing to rural development, income generation, and sustainable tourism practices⁴. Although the agritourism sector in Albania has emerged over the past years, it is expected to grow rapidly⁵ since it offers a great potential for the development of agritourism, as an agricultural country and rich in culinary and gastronomy. Referring to the GDP of economic activities in Albania, the largest contribution in the economy for 2021 continues to be occupied by the services sector with 47.86%, including the activities such as trade, transport, accommodation and food service⁶. Meanwhile, the tourism sector makes a significant source of income for the country, as it has been ranked among the most popular tourist destinations in Europe⁷ and has been positioned in the third spot globally⁸ for the period spanning January to July 2023. This robust performance underscores the tourism sector's pivotal role in contributing financially to both state revenue and Albanian people. The data further highlights the financial significance of tourism, with over 7.5 million tourists annually and foreign expenditures reaching a record-breaking 2.84 billion euros in 2022.⁹

Due to its significant economic potential and developmental impact, agritourism has gained the policy-makers attention, reflecting a national commitment to nurture this emerging sector. Albanian national legislation distinctly regulates agritourism compared to other forms of rural tourism, demonstrating a targeted approach to its development. It is considered as a catalyst for rural development, particularly in agriculture areas that have experienced declines¹⁰ due to the migration to urban areas and emigration abroad, which poses a risk of depopulation in rural villages and mountainous regions¹¹. In 2015, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture and

¹ Sharpley, R., Vass, V., Tourism, farming and diversification: An attitudinal study, Tourism Management, 2006.

² Agritourism offers brighter prospects for Albania's small farmers, Financial Times, 2023.

³ Agritourism offers brighter prospects for Albania's small farmers, Financial Times, 2023.

⁴ Ecotourism World. Albania Travel: A Paradigm Shift Toward Sustainable Tourism - Ecotourism World, 2023. Online: <https://ecotourism-world.com/>

⁵ Albanian Agribusiness Support Program and Creative Business Solutions, The agritourism sector in Albania: Potentials for development and financial needs, 2019.

⁶ INSTAT, Gross Domestic Product, 2021, <https://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/ekonomi-dhe-financ%C3%AB/llogarit%C3%AB-komb%C3%ABtare-gdp/publikimet/2022/produkti-i-brendsh%C3%ABm-bruto-final-2020-gjysm%C3%AB-final-2021/>

⁷ New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/travel/52-places-travel-2023.html>

⁸ UNWTO: Albania tops Europe in global tourism ranking. Online: <https://euronews.al/en/unwto-albania-tops-europe-in-global-tourism-ranking/>

⁹ Bank of Albania, <https://bankofalbania.org/>

¹⁰ Sharpley, R., Vass, V., Tourism, farming and diversification: An attitudinal study, Tourism Management, 2006.

¹¹ MacroTrends. (2023). Albania Rural Population 1960-2023, MacroTrends. Retrieved December 4, 2023. Online: www.macrotrends.net



Rural Development, drafted and approved Law no. 93/2015 “For Tourism.”¹² This law was further complemented in 2018 by the approval of Decision no. 22¹³, which established criteria and procedures for the certification of agritourism activities and related structures. Furthermore, the Albanian government's agricultural policy framework aligns with EU policies, with regular monitoring by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. This harmonization is complemented by other strategies to ensure a cohesive approach to agritourism development. Fiscal incentives have been introduced to support agritourism entities, including a reduced profit tax of 5%, a VAT rate of 6%, and exemption from infrastructure impact tax.¹⁴

Despite its considerable potential for economic growth and national development, this sector encounters several challenges and constraints that hinder the growth of it. There is a *lack of financial literacy* among entrepreneurs and farmers, leading them to predominantly rely on self-funding and rent while avoiding loans to mitigate financial uncertainties. The *limited availability of training and educational opportunities* has contributed to a shortfall in the necessary expertise, hindering the sector's potential for growth and sustainability. The agritourism sector is affected by the *seasonality and lack of work-life balance*, causing instability and irregular jobs. There is a *lack of experience* and a *low level of management skills* among farmers and agribusinesses. The existing national and international literature on agritourism¹⁵ has provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by men and women farmers¹⁶, as gender plays a significant role in entrepreneurship in the agritourism sector. However, several other gaps still exist, including *gender-based discrimination, limited access to resources such as land and finance, lack of training and networks, and the need to balance domestic responsibilities* with business demands.¹⁷

Based on the significant economic importance that the agritourism sector presents, this gender-sensitive value chain analysis (GSVCA) focuses on understanding and addressing gender-related issues and inequalities within the selected value chain of **Farm-to-Table (F2T)** as a culinary approach that prioritizes fresh, locally sourced ingredients in creating a sustainable dining experience.¹⁸ GSVCA is a powerful tool that enables a comprehensive understanding of gender roles, challenges, and opportunities along the entire value chain¹⁹. Despite the significant role of agritourism in the economy and development of the country, the potential benefits of agritourism may not be realized if gender

¹² Ministry of Tourism and Environment, (2015). Law no. 93/2015 “For Tourism”. Online: <https://turizmi.gov.al/>

¹³ Decision, No. 22, dated 12.1.2018, "On the approval of the criteria and procedures for the certification of agritourism activity and the construction of structures/objects in its function". Online: <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Vendim.pdf>

¹⁴ AIDA, Factsheet - Agriculture, Agrotourism and Aquaculture Sector, April 2022.

¹⁵ Kizos, T., & Filippousis, G. (2017). Unlocking the Potential of Women in Agrotourism: A Value Chain Perspective from Greece. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 51, 162-172.

¹⁶ Kaso, I., Dhamo, S., & Gruda, S. (2019). Agritourism in Albania: Challenges and potential for rural marketing. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 11(1), 148-159.

¹⁷ Fernandez, S., & Buhalis, D. (2019). Gender entrepreneurship and tourism: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 41, 96-105.

¹⁸ Exploring the Goals of Farm-to-Table: Unveiling the Essence of Sustainable Dining. Online: <https://www.flavorfulfeas.com/2023/08/24/exploring-the-goals-of-farm-to-table-unveiling-the-essence-of-sustainable-dining/>

¹⁹ Morales-Zamorano, L. A., Camacho-García, A. L., Bustamante-Valenzuela, A. C., Suarez-Hernández, A. M., & Holguin-Moreno, O. (2020). Value chain for agritourism products1. *Open Agriculture*, 5(1), 1-10. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1515/opag-2020-0001>



disparities and inequalities persist in the sector²⁰. Therefore, a GSVCA is necessary to identify and address the gender-specific barriers and opportunities for women's participation and empowerment in the agritourism value chain in Tirana Municipality, Albania.²¹

Understanding these constraints is crucial for creating an enabling environment that fosters the growth and development of agritourism, empowering farmers and entrepreneurs alike. Thus, several key opportunities have been presented in this report to contribute to the growth and development of this sector in Tirana. The possibility of long-term and sustained strategic interventions with a strong focus on gender empowerment and community engagement are explored and recommended accordingly among different stakeholders such as local and governmental institutions, as well as national and international organisations.

Apart from the traditional analyses, this analysis specifically examines how women and men are differently involved in and affected by each stage of the value chain. This involves assessing participation, access to resources, income distribution, and the gender-based division of labour. Through using gender lens, this study aims to identify and examine gender disparities, ensuring that interventions and improvements in the value chain promote inclusivity and empower both women and men.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The economic empowerment of women is critical for the continuing improvement of agriculture and further development of this sector in the municipality of Tirana. Increased participation of women in value-added productive activities requires an understanding of all of the barriers that limit their participation along the value chains. Addressing these barriers can transform women's role in this sector and catalyse their economic empowerment. This report is developed based on the approach of the GSVCA that recognizes and addresses the gender-specific dynamics and inequalities within the various stages of a product or service's value chain. A value chain encompasses all the activities involved in creating, designing, producing, marketing, and delivering a product or service to the end consumer. A gender-sensitive perspective ensures that the analysis considers the different roles, needs, and constraints of women and men at each stage of the value chain, and identifies and maps all the stages in the value chain. In addition, this analysis highlights the key actors, stakeholders, and decision-makers involved in each stage. The most important aspect is that it examines the roles played by women and men in different stages of the value chain in the agritourism sector, identifies gender-specific constraints, opportunities, and disparities.

This analysis provides information on the development of agritourism in Tirana and aims to contribute to women's economic empowerment within the value chains of the agritourism sector. The analysis developed in this report highlights the following findings:

Agritourism sector is a promising sector of the Albanian economy and employment. Hence, it needs more attention from the government to transform such a sector into a well-organized industry/sector.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.



Human Capital Development

- The agritourism sector in Tirana faces significant human capital challenges, primarily due to skills gaps in agriculture, hospitality, and entrepreneurship.
- Staffing challenges are exacerbated by geographical remoteness and the lack of targeted recruitment strategies.
- There is a notable absence of gender diversity in key roles, particularly in culinary positions, which affects the sector's overall dynamism and innovation.

Empowering Women in Agribusiness Chef Roles

- Women's participation in culinary roles within agritourism is markedly low.
- Existing gender stereotypes and cultural norms limit women's access to leadership positions in this sector.
- There is a lack of mentorship and networking opportunities specifically tailored for women in agribusiness.

Access to Finance

- Agritourism businesses face significant challenges in accessing financial resources due to a lack of supportive financial policies.
- There is a general lack of financial literacy among farmers and agritourism entrepreneurs.
- The bureaucratic processes associated with obtaining financial support are cumbersome, deterring many potential beneficiaries.

Quality Standards

- Compliance with international standards in agritourism establishments is inconsistent, affecting the sector's competitiveness and reputation.
- There is a need for improved quality infrastructure and consumer confidence in the agritourism products and services.
- Agritourism establishments often lack the knowledge and resources to implement and maintain quality management systems.

In addition, this study offers valuable insights on how different actors—specifically women—in the value chain function and how they are influenced by the enabling environment.

The analyses conclude with intervention strategies to address key constraints and make use of key opportunities that are both comprehensive and practical to immediately start improving the position of entrepreneurs of the agritourism sector.

The following are key recommendations for immediate strategic interventions:

1. Enhancing Human Capital Development

- *Comprehensive Training Programs:* Develop and implement comprehensive training programs tailored to the specific needs of the agritourism sector, focusing on agriculture, hospitality, entrepreneurship, and customer service skills.



- *Partnerships with Educational Institutions:* Establish partnerships with universities, vocational schools, and other educational institutions to create a pipeline of skilled graduates who are well-prepared for careers in agritourism.
- *Professional Development Opportunities:* Offer ongoing professional development opportunities, including workshops, seminars, and mentorship programs, to enhance the skills and knowledge of current employees.
- *Targeted Recruitment and Retention Strategies:* Implement targeted recruitment campaigns to attract a diverse talent pool and adopt strategies to understand and reduce staff turnover, such as competitive remuneration packages, career advancement opportunities, and a supportive work environment.
- *Gender Diversity Initiatives:* Launch initiatives to promote gender diversity in the workforce, including public awareness campaigns to challenge stereotypes and encourage more women to pursue careers in agritourism, particularly in leadership and culinary roles.

2. Empowering Women in Agribusiness and Chef Roles

- *Skill Development and Mentorship Programs:* Collaborate with educational institutions and industry experts to offer specialized training and mentorship programs for women aspiring to culinary and leadership roles in agritourism.
- *Networking and Promotion:* Facilitate networking opportunities and platforms for women chefs and entrepreneurs to showcase their talents and exchange ideas.
- *Equal Opportunity Policies:* Advocate for and establish equal opportunity policies within agritourism businesses to ensure fair hiring practices and to create an inclusive work environment.

3. Improving Access to Finance

- *Supportive Financial Policies:* Work with financial institutions and government bodies to design and implement supportive financial policies and programs tailored to the needs of agritourism businesses.
- *Financial Literacy Training:* Provide training and resources to agritourism entrepreneurs to improve their financial literacy, understanding of financial services, and ability to effectively manage financial aspects of their businesses.
- *Simplified Access to Funding:* Streamline procedures for accessing financial services and decrease bureaucratic hurdles, making it easier for agritourism businesses to obtain the funding they need.

4. Raising Quality Standards

- *Training on International Standards:* Initiate training programs to educate agritourism businesses on international quality standards and best practices.
- *Quality Recognition Programs:* Develop recognition programs and certifications for establishments that comply with high-quality standards, enhancing consumer confidence and market competitiveness.
- *Support for Quality Infrastructure:* Advocate for financial assistance and implement cost-sharing initiatives to help businesses improve their quality infrastructure, including equipment upgrades and adoption of sustainable practices.

5. Creating an Enabling Environment for Agritourism Growth

- *Collaborative Governance*: Encourage collaboration between various ministries, local government bodies, industry associations, and international donor agencies to create a supportive policy and regulatory environment for agritourism.
- *Infrastructure Development*: Advocate for and support the development of infrastructure crucial to agritourism, such as transportation, digital connectivity, and eco-friendly facilities.
- *Marketing and Branding Initiatives*: Develop and implement marketing strategies to promote Albania's agritourism domestically and internationally, highlighting unique experiences, local culture, and sustainable practices.
- *Strengthening Stakeholder Networks*: Foster the development of networks and associations for agritourism stakeholders to facilitate information exchange, collaborative marketing efforts, and joint advocacy.

DESCRIPTION OF METHODOLOGY: STUDY OBJECTIVES, APPROACH AND DELINEATION

Approach

A value chain describes 'the full range of activities that are needed to bring a product or service from conception, through different phases of production to final consumers'²². In this process the raw materials, intermediate products and final products are owned by different individuals or organizations, called **value chain actors**. The product goes through different stages where value is added: such as production, collection, processing and marketing.



Figure 1: Value Chain Stages

The value chain approach was embraced by development cooperation, because of the need to replace working with certain target groups in isolation, by seeing them as part of and influenced by a 'system'. An important element of the value chain approach is the right-end of the value chain: the consumers or **market**. The chain can only function if there is demand for a product. With this commercial interest the value chain can operate **sustainably**. The other key element of the value chain approach is its **interconnectedness**. The way the different actors are linked and cooperate with each other determine the efficiency of the VC, as well as the extent to which the different actors benefit.

In addition, the production of these actors also depends on **services** available, such as input providers, transport services, financial service providers and skill development organizations. And, the **enabling environment** also influences production, and is composed of law and regulations, implementation of these, availability of technology, but also climate, macro-economic trends, such as inflation and socio-cultural norms and behavior. The value chain operates in and is influenced by a system (see figure 2).

²² R. Kaplinsky, M. Morris, A handbook for value chain research (2000) & Mackie & Mayoux, Making the Strongest Links, ILO 2008. pg. 9.

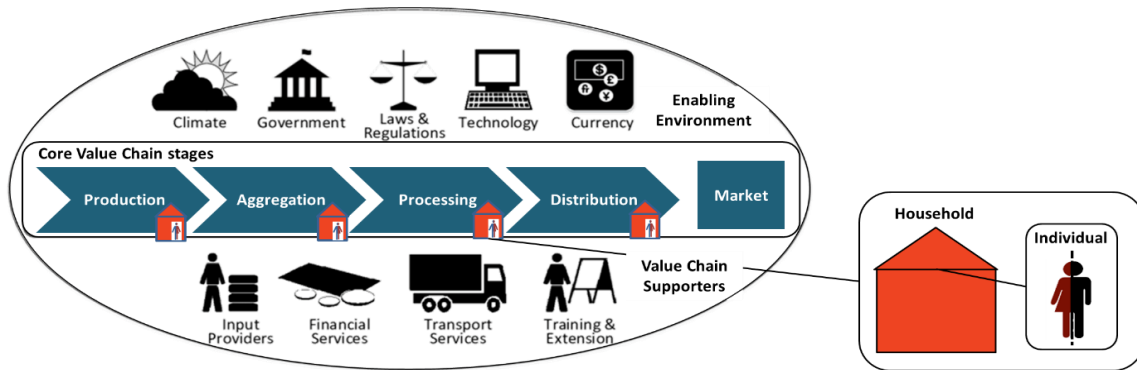


Figure 2: Operation of the value chain influenced by a system²³

In the **gender-sensitive value chain approach** the dimension of the individual and the household is added to this value chain system. Instead of assuming that value chain actors act as the ‘homo economicus’²⁴; doing what is economically the best choice, we acknowledge that in real life, people are influenced and driven by many other factors. Circumstances determine to which extent an **individual** person is able to make use of services & opportunities around her/him. This depends on a person’s sex, age, place where you are born, wealth status of the family she/he is born into, etc. Additionally, the actions of an individual are also influenced by the **household** dynamics it lives in, and gender dynamics in particular²⁵.

Value chain development projects generally aim to improve the position of certain target groups (e.g. the markets for the poor approach/M4P). Likewise, the Value Chain approach can be used to improve the position of women that operate in the value chain system. The value chain approach aims to understand the root causes of constraints in the value chain system, to address them in a sustainable way. To do a sound gender-sensitive value chain analysis the following tools as gender-sensitive value chain mapping, gender-based constraint identification and gender-based constraint analysis & intervention design are applied.

1. Gender-Sensitive Value Chain Mapping

Gender-sensitive value chain mapping was first introduced by Mayoux and Mackie in 2008, and more widely distributed as ‘tool’ by the AgriProfocus network²⁶, amongst others. Women contribute enormously to the economy, yet women’s contributions are often invisible or not recognized. Women disproportionately work in the informal sector and carry out unpaid family labor. They are often not benefitting according to their effort and have limited access to necessary resources and inputs. Apart from being unfair, this leaves women’s economic potential untapped. The mapping exercise aims to make visible where the women are in the value chain and the type of positions they hold.

2. Gender-based Constraint Identification

²³ FAO, 2016, Developing gender-sensitive value chains. A guiding framework. Rome, 2016.

²⁴ The term Homo economicus or economic man is the portrayal of humans as agents who are consistently rational and narrowly self-interested, and who pursue their subjectively defined ends optimally. It is a word play on Homo sapiens, used in some economic theories and in pedagogy. (Zak, Paul J. (2010-12-16). Moral Markets: The Critical Role of Values in the Economy. Princeton University Press. p. 158. ISBN 9781400837366. Retrieved 22 June 2018)

²⁵ FAO, 2016, Developing gender-sensitive value chains. A guiding framework. Rome, 2016.

²⁶ Mayoux & Macki, Making the Strongest Links, ILO 2008. AgriProfocus, 2013, Gender in Value Chains. Practical Toolkit to integrate a gender perspective in agricultural value chain development.

When the actors of the value chain and how they are linked are mapped, there is zoomed into bottlenecks or constraints that affect an efficient flow of products or certain target groups to benefit. In this study, apart from identifying and analyzing these general constraints, there has been particular attention for gender-based constraints. The gender-based constraint was introduced by USAID in 2009²⁷. A **Gender-Based Constraint** is a constraint that a woman or man faces because of what is expected from a man or woman in a certain society. To identify a constraint, it is important to be clear in which stage of the value chain and by whom the constraint is experienced. Likewise, the consequence of this constraint should be clear to know why we should address it. A lack of market information is very different and has different consequences for a male-owned medium sized processor than for a remote female smallholder farmer. Preferably the constraint selected should have an effect on both the efficiency of the value chain as well as on the position of women.

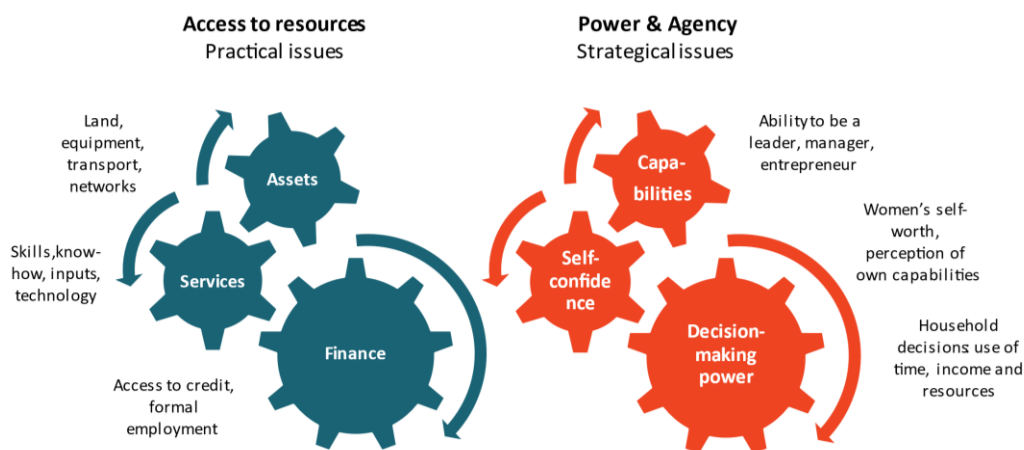


Figure 3: Two dimensions of Women's Economic Empowerment²⁸

3. Gender-based Constraint Analysis & Intervention design

Next to the identification of a clear gender-based constraint and the consequence of the constraint, a tool developed by Terrillon, J. in the analysis "AgriProfocus' Gender in Value Chains"²⁹ continues to analyze the **causes** of each constraint. In this analysis it is crucial to probe and use the **why-why-why** method in interviewing. To address a constraint in a sustainable manner the root causes should be understood. When analyzing gender-dynamics a careful and thorough analysis is even more important. Often the causes are multiple and touch upon different dimensions of women empowerment. Constraints around 'Access to resources' are often taken into account when doing gender analysis. However, also including possible **Power & Agency** issues (see figure 3), the constraint could be addressed in a sustainable way. Decision-making power and self-confidence determine a large part of the opportunities of an entrepreneur. This way not only symptoms are addressed, but the root causes which could stimulate lasting systemic change.

The interventions proposed in the recommendations address the different causes and dimensions of the identified constraints and opportunities in the value chain. Moreover, the roles of stakeholders and organizations that have incentives or a mandate to address the constraints have been clarified to stimulate change that will be taken up by the value chain system.

²⁷ USAID, 2009, Promoting gender equitable opportunities in agricultural value chains: a handbook.

²⁸ Lentink, A & A. Senders for FAO, 2016.

²⁹ AgriProfocus, 2013, Gender in Value Chains. Practical Toolkit. p. 63.



Rationale and study objectives

The existing literature on gender-sensitive value chain analysis in the agritourism sector has provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by men and women, as well as strategies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. However, several gaps still exist that require further investigation.

- *Firstly*, there is a need for more case studies and empirical evidence that specifically focus on the agritourism sector in Tirana Municipality. While the existing studies³⁰ have examined gender dynamics and interventions in different contexts, there is a lack of research specifically addressing the unique challenges and opportunities within the local agritourism value chain.
- *Secondly*, there is a need for a comprehensive analysis of the gendered division of labor within the agritourism value chain in Tirana Municipality. This includes examining the roles and responsibilities of men and women at each stage of the value chain, as well as the factors that influence their participation and decision-making power.
- *Lastly*, there is a need for research that evaluates the effectiveness and impact of gender-sensitive interventions and initiatives in the agritourism sector. While existing studies³¹ have highlighted various strategies to promote gender equality, it is essential to assess their outcomes and identify best practices that can be adapted to the specific context of Tirana Municipality.

By addressing these gaps, this study aims to contribute to women's economic empowerment within the selected value chain of the agritourism sector. The focus will be on analyzing the value chain of **Farm-to-Table product**, involving the examination of the farming practices, harvesting, transportation, and marketing of farm products to restaurants. The main approach used for the gender sensitive value chain analysis is Farm – to Table (F2T). This approach ensures the production, processing, distribution, and consumption of the product align with principles of sustainability, local sourcing, and transparency. A detailed description of this approach is explained in the following sections of this study.

The **overall purpose** of carrying out this gender-sensitive VC analysis is to collect data on how the different value chain actors are linked, the activities and value of each stage in the value chain, and how the wider system, including the enabling environment and service providers, affects the core value chain of the agritourism sector.

In the end, through making practical recommendations, it aims to support and empower women, by accessing and benefiting from economic opportunities both in rural and urban areas of the Tirana municipality.

This gender-sensitive value chain analysis sets out to answer the following research questions:

1. Who are the agritourism VC actors and how are they linked together?
2. What are the different activities of individuals and businesses involved in the selected value chain of the agritourism sector?
3. Which service providers and factors from the enabling environment influence the value chains?

³⁰ Xhoxhi, O., & Guri, B. (2020). Gender equality in agrotourism value chain: A case study from Albania. *Journal of Agribusiness in Developing and Emerging Economies*, 10(5), 545-561.

³¹ Ibid.



4. What are the gender-specific constraints and opportunities faced by the owners of agritourism farms in the value chains of the agritourism sector?
5. What are interventions that can be implemented to address the constraints and enhance the opportunities for women in the value chain of the agritourism sector?

The methodology used for this analysis is mainly qualitative, combining both secondary and primary sources. Secondary sources include the consideration of different reports and data that were mainly gathered from official publications and statistics of the Institute of Statistics in Albania, the Municipality of Tirana, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, as well as data and information obtained from previous studies and projects conducted by national and international organizations in the relevant field. Moreover, legal framework documents including the law and strategies on agritourism have been revised with the aim of demonstrating the main articles, mechanisms and potential plans for the development of this sector within the country.

Due to the niche and diverse nature of the agrotourism field, quantitative data on the value chain is not readily available. To address this, 44 in-depth interviews have been conducted. Primary data are collected by semi-structured interviews with tailored questionnaires for different actors in the value chain, especially farmers (agripreneur³²; landowners); agriproducers, owners, donors, experts, academics, tourism agencies and clients. The study sample includes:

- 7 agritourism owners (5 females)
- 4 workers in the agritourism sector (2 females)
- 18 institutional representatives (13 females)
- 3 academics (1 female)
- 3 tourism agency representatives (2 females)
- 9 clients in the agritourism (5 female)

Questions were designed to (a) probe more information from the agritourism sector in different areas (center and periphery) of Tirana municipality, (b) identify the main constraints and opportunities for agribusinesses, and (c) understand how all the main stakeholders can work together to address these challenges/constraints.

Methodological limitations

This study on agritourism in Tirana faces few limitations that are important to acknowledge. A *primary limitation* is the lack of readily available data specific to the agritourism sector, particularly data that is disaggregated by gender. The Institute of Statistics in Albania currently does not maintain a dedicated database or information system that focuses exclusively on agritourism. Consequently, this analysis primarily relies on data derived from the broader tourism and agriculture sectors in Albania, supplemented by information from other relevant stakeholders identified in this report, as well as direct inputs from farmers themselves. *Another limitation* is the sample size limitations and the results may not be representative of the population in Tirana which has been studied in this analysis. This can lead to a lack of generalizability of the results.

Furthermore, the study was mainly located in some agritourism of the municipality of Tirana. Farmers in Tirana may have different constraints from the farmers in other rural areas or small cities outside

³² An agripreneur is a person who supports and manages a business venture by focusing on the agricultural sector only.



the capital. However, there are a few references to them in the report, but not a clear and complete overview.

Finally, another significant limitation is the potential for bias in the opinions provided by key informants. To mitigate this, a diverse range of informants was selected to ensure a wide spectrum of perspectives. Additionally, the study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative insights from these informants with quantitative data analysis. This approach aimed to balance subjective viewpoints with objective data, thereby enhancing the reliability and comprehensiveness of the findings. Despite these efforts, it is important to recognize that some degree of bias and data limitations may still influence the study's conclusions.

Value Chain – Farm to Table Approach

Agritourism is a diverse sector that offers various opportunities for value chain analysis. In this report, the focus is to analyse the value chain of Farm-to-Table Restaurants, involving the examination of the farming practices, harvesting, transportation, and marketing of farm products to restaurants. In addition, based on all the research and literature review done for the purpose of this study, it has been shown that Farm-to-Table product are almost 99% applicable in the region of Tirana.

Farm-To-Table product have gained popularity in recent years due to the increased interest in organic and locally-sourced food. The Farm-to-Table (F2T) is a culinary approach that prioritizes fresh, locally sourced ingredients in creating a sustainable dining experience.³³ As an approach, it aims to create a sustainable and ethical food system that promotes local agriculture, small-scale farmers and food producers, and reduces the environmental impact of food production and distribution. Moreover, it encourages consumers to be more aware of the origin of their food, promoting a connection between the food they eat and the people who grow it.

The concept of F2T can be traced back to the early 1970s, when a handful of chefs and farmers began collaborating to create menus that highlighted the freshest, locally sourced ingredients. These pioneers were inspired by the traditional French practice of “marché” or market-driven cuisine, which emphasized seasonal and regional ingredients.³⁴ Today, the farm-to-table has grown and evolved with an increasing number of restaurants, farmers, and consumers committed to supporting sustainable agriculture and local food systems. Organic farms and farm-to-table restaurants are the booming concepts in tourism and agritourism and agriculture sectors. From urban gardens and rooftop farms to small-scale, regenerative farms and ranches, the farm-to-table movement is creating a more resilient and equitable food system, one plate at a time.

³³ Exploring the Goals of Farm-to-Table: Unveiling the Essence of Sustainable Dining. Online: <https://www.flavorfulfeas.com/2023/08/24/exploring-the-goals-of-farm-to-table-unveiling-the-essence-of-sustainable-dining/>

³⁴ Ibid.



The key principles of F2T approach are as follows:

1. **Local Sourcing:** Local producers, who are usually located close to the restaurant, are relied upon by Farm-to-Table restaurants. Farm-to-table advocates and prioritizes sourcing ingredients from local farms and suppliers.³⁵
2. **Supporting Local Communities:** By sourcing locally, these restaurants support local farmers and producers³⁶. Thus, it supports local economies and helps build a stronger sense of community between producers and consumers.
3. **Raise Awareness:** Farm-to-table restaurants may take on an educational role, raising awareness about the importance of sustainable, locally sourced food. Some may offer educational programs or workshops for their customers.
4. **Freshness:** Ingredients are used as fresh as possible, with minimal processing and storage. This enhances the quality and taste of the dishes. As stated in the interview with the owners of agritourism farms, organic products and locally-sourced food are the most popular products which attract both local customers and tourists. According to them, their agritourism restaurants/farms have become popular as they provide a direct link to fresh and locally sourced products/food.
5. **Sustainability:** Farm-to-table restaurants often embrace sustainable and environmentally conscious practices. By choosing to support local farmers and producers, we can play a part in creating a more sustainable and vibrant food system for ourselves and future generations.³⁷ Moreover, the adoption of sustainable practices demonstrates a commitment to protecting the environment and paves the way for innovative culinary experiences.³⁸
6. **Seasonal Ingredients:** The menus of farm-to-table restaurants change with the seasons, reflecting the availability of fresh, locally grown ingredients. This focus on seasonality ensures that the food served is at its peak flavor and nutritional value. During the interviews done for the purpose of this study, one of the interviewed farmers said that the menu is based on the seasonality of fruits and vegetables. Another farmer said “We offer totally 100% seasonal food. We aim to promote fresh, good and clean products”.
7. **Transparency:** Many farm-to-table establishments aim to be transparent about where their ingredients come from. Some may provide information about the specific farmers and techniques, allowing diners to connect with the sources of their food. According to an article, local food sourcing allows consumers to establish a connection with the people who grow their food.³⁹ This transparency fosters trust, encourages responsible farming practices, and raises food safety standards.

³⁵ Farm-to-Table Movement: Embracing Locally Sourced and Sustainable Ingredients. Online: [Farm-to-Table Movement: Embracing Locally Sourced and Sustainable Ingredients - From Hunger To Hope](#).

³⁶ Farm-To-Table Movement and Local Food Sourcing. Online: <https://agric4profits.com/farm-to-table-movement-and-local-food-sourcing/>

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ From Farm To Table: A commitment to sustainable practices. Online: <https://www.fairhopemarket.com/do-farm-to-table-restaurants-have-a-commitment-to-using-sustainable-practice>⁵

³⁹ Farm-To-Table Movement and Local Food Sourcing. Online: <https://agric4profits.com/farm-to-table-movement-and-local-food-sourcing/>

- 8. Regional and Cultural Influences:** The menus of farm-to-table restaurants are often influenced by the culinary traditions and ingredients of the region in which they are located. This makes the dining experience more connected to the local culture.

Following these key principles of the F2T approach, the focus of this study will be on analysing the value chain of F2T product as the most applied product in the agritourism sector.

Overview of Agritourism Sector in Albania

General overview of the sector

As any type of entrepreneurial development, agritourism has evolved to maximize farmer's economic and non-economic gains while responding to specific clientele interests and needs⁴⁰. Such a supply-demand interaction has created a wide range of agritourism opportunities worldwide, ranging from emerging destinations (e.g., Maharashtra in India) to very sophisticated and popular ones (e.g., Napa Valley in the USA). Global agritourism experiences also have different tones as its development depends on the farm's agricultural resources and the cultural and natural landscapes of the surrounding communities.⁴¹ Such localized resource dependence has allowed Italy to become a staple of wine tourism, Spain to insert historic *casas rurales* within their farms capes, and Peru to turn the cultural and indigenous communities into experiential offerings.

Notably, geopolitical and economic contexts have influenced the development of agritourism. Due to the geographical position, combined with its natural resources and landscapes, historical and cultural tradition, Albania has become an ideal place for the development of this sector. This diversity in geography and climate offers a wide range of agricultural and agritourism experiences for the people in the country.



Figure 4: Municipal units of Tirana⁴²

According to Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), Tirana as the capital city of Albania, occupies about 33.5% of the population, namely 925,268, continuing to be one of the most populated districts of the

⁴⁰ Tew C., Barbieri C., The perceived benefits of agritourism: The provider's perspective. *Tourism Management*, 2012, pg. 215-224.

⁴¹ Gao J., Barbieri C., Valdivia C., Agricultural landscape preferences: Implications for agritourism development. *Journal of Travel Research*, 2014, 53, 366-379

⁴² <https://zgjedhje2015.reporter.al/profil-i-bashkise-tirane>



country.⁴³ Municipality of Tirana consists of 24 administrative units and 3 neighborhoods. Following the 2015 Administrative-Territorial Division Reform, 13 new rural administrative units were added to the new Municipality of Tirana⁴⁴. The new divisions and their corresponding villages are as follows: Petrela, Farka, Dajt, Zall-Bastar, Bërzhitë, Krrabë, Baldushk, Shëngjergj, Vaqarr, Kashar, Peza, Ndroq, and Zall Herr. In each of these units, there are different cultural monument and natural attractions, such as: the castle of Tirana, the mosaic of Tirana, the castle of Dajti, the castle of Tujani, the castle of Ndroqi, the castle of Petrela, etc., traditional restaurants and agritourism businesses, which have influenced the increasement of agritourism agricultural farms and activities, as well have tried to preserve the elements of Albanian tradition and culture.

Being one of the most populated districts of Albania, Tirana has not only the largest number of agritourism and greenhouses, but also the largest number of consumers. Referring to the publication of Business Registers 2022, the number of farmers in Albania provided with NIPT at the end of 2022 is 84.369, marking an increase of 34,1% compared to farmers at the end of 2021⁴⁵, from where 3,411 are active farmers based in Tirana⁴⁶. From the number of active farmers in Tirana, only 23 farms are certified as agritourism⁴⁷.

According to an article dedicated to an interview with the professor of the Agriculture University of Tirana (UBT) Lorena Shele, agritourism in Tirana is a concept that is evolving day by day.⁴⁸ The fast urban living/rhythm of life and pollution of the environment in the city are pushing people towards the rural areas. Residents of big cities like Tirana mostly are looking for environments and areas where they can spend time and enjoy nature. Due to the increase of the interest of people in agritourism experiences, the number of agritourism farms have increased in the last few years.

Moreover, the development of the agritourism sector in Albania has attracted the attention of the central and local government. Albanian national legislation regulates agritourism in a different manner with respect to other forms of rural tourism. In 2015, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development drafted and approved the Law no. 93/2015 "For Tourism"⁴⁹, while in 2018 drafted and approved the Decision no. 22⁵⁰ "For the approval of the criteria and procedures for the certification of agritourism activity and the construction of structures/objects in its function". According to the Decision no. 22, of the Law no. 93/2015 "For Tourism" the concept of agritourism is defined as a hosting activity on a farm or agricultural unit aimed at attracting visitors and enabling their participation in agricultural activities. This form of tourism is oriented towards sustainable development in rural areas, emphasizing environmental protection, tradition preservation, and promotion of local products.

⁴³ INSTAT, January 2023, <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/11653/popullsia-e-shqiperise-1-janar-2023.pdf>

⁴⁴ Informative manual for administrative-territorial reform in Albania, pg. 18, Tiranë, 2017, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5bsW3XJg15CRUR3bVhiLXdqS2c/view?resourcekey=0-aYTdLoYluat3MOgt0q_iEw

⁴⁵ INSTAT, Business Registers 2022, pg. 9.

⁴⁶ Ibid, pg. 23.

⁴⁷ UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the Rural Association Support Programme, Agritourism development in Albania, Tirane, 2020, pg. 15.

⁴⁸ Agrotourism, an opportunity for the economic development of Tirana. Online:

<https://albanianpost.com/agroturizmi-mundesi-per-zhvillimin-ekonomik-te-tiranes/>

⁴⁹ Ministry of Tourism and Environment, (2015). Law no. 93/2015 "For Tourism". Online:

<https://turizmi.gov.al/>

⁵⁰ Decision, No. 22, dated 12.1.2018, "On the approval of the criteria and procedures for the certification of agritourism activity and the construction of structures/objects in its function". Online:

<https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Vendim.pdf>



Furthermore, Albania's agricultural policy framework is harmonised with EU policies and implementation is monitored regularly by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. This harmonization is complemented by other strategies to ensure a cohesive approach to agritourism development. The National Strategy for Agritourism Development in Albania⁵¹ represents the Albanian government's document aimed at defining the national vision in relation to the agritourism sector, also through an evolution of agriculture in a multifunctional perspective and the valorization of the national agricultural product.

6% VAT for accommodation facilities certified as agritourism subjects
5% INCOME TAX for agritourism subjects
0% TAX OF IMPACT on infrastructure for agritourism subjects

In addition, the taxation system for the agriculture sector remains unified and imposes few taxes on the farmers. The Albanian government offers fiscal facilities for the agritourism entities like 5% profit tax; VAT 6%, and exemption from the infrastructure impact tax.⁵²

In addition, the Municipality of Tirana considers rural tourism as an important element of Tirana's economy, thus is paying special attention to road and electrical infrastructure. The Municipality of Tirana has recently invested in the placement of informative and orientation signs in the main tourist areas of the city, the placement of flag signs in each administrative unit, as well as equipped with signs and tourist maps for 5 rural administrative units (Petrela, Baldushku, Peza, Ndroqi and Vaqarr).⁵³

The mayor of Tirana, Erion Veliaj has underlined the importance of agritourism for the development of the economy of the capital city of Tirana. According to him⁵⁴ Tirana offers not only very good agricultural and livestock products, but also has a nature that offers fantastic opportunities for the development of agrotourism and absorbing as many visitors as possible.

A number of dedicated associations for agritourism have been established such as *Albanian Agrobusiness Council (KASH)*⁵⁵; *Association of Agrotourism Albania*⁵⁶; and *Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANDR)*⁵⁷ etc. Their mission and goal is to protect and contribute to a more sustainable development of the agritourism industry, and more broadly, the agriculture and tourism sectors. Thus, agritourism has created value through its activities and has involved several stakeholders in its value chain.

⁵¹ National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development 2018-2022.

⁵² AIDA, Factsheet - Agriculture, Agrotourism and Aquaculture Sector, April 2022.

⁵³ Municipality of Tirana, Survey summary report - Discovery of rural tourism in Tirana, February 2020. Online: https://tirana.al/uploads/2020/10/20201005135240_sondazh-zbulimi-i-turizmit-rural-ne-tirane.pdf

⁵⁴ Agritourism and organic products of the areas of Tirana in Lunder. Online: <https://tiranapost.al/shihni-cpo-ndodh-ne-festen-lokale-te-agroturizmit-dhe-produkteve-bio-te-zonave-te-tiranes-ne-lunder/>

⁵⁵ KASH is the biggest organization reaching all sectors of Agriculture. KASH has 23 nationwide member associations with elected bodies in 12 Prefectures and 36 districts of the country. KASH mission is advocacy and promotion of the business that operates in agriculture. Advocacy is done through lobbying on legislative and executive organisms.

⁵⁶ Agrotourism, Online: <https://agrotourism.gov.al/>

⁵⁷ ANDR is a non-governmental organization established in December 2015. ANRD is a mechanism to support and implement policies for rural development in Albania in the spirit of the principles that guide the integration processes of the country in the European Union.



Box 1 - The minimum criteria of classifying/certifying agritourism units⁵⁸

The Decision no. 22, of the Law no. 93/2015 "For Tourism" defines the minimum criteria that must be met in order for a unit to be classified as an agritourism unit. The criteria are related to the minimum area of agricultural land, accommodation and food service capacities, sources of products, etc. More specifically, the criteria are:

- **Land** - 1 ha in open area or 0.5 ha in the protected area.
- **Services** - Agritourism units must have one of the following public services: food, accommodation, recreational services.
- **Accommodation capacities** - 6 to 30 accommodation rooms.
- **Architecture of the buildings** - In line with the Decision of Council of Ministers VKM no. 711 and 730 for "Conditions, criteria and procedures for the classification of accommodation structures".
- **Restaurants** - from 6 to 60 tables for food service.
- **Origin of the products** - at least 30% of the food and drinks offered in the agritourism units must be farm products, the rest of 70% can be bought from other farms around. So, agritourism cannot be seen as separate from agricultural activities.

Relevance in the Albanian Economy

Agritourism is a hybrid concept that interconnects two complex sectors, agriculture and tourism, and furthermore, a diversifying strategy of agricultural complementary revenue through utilizing on-farm resources.⁵⁹ According to the professor and researcher Shpresim Domi⁶⁰ from the Agricultural University of Tirana, agrotourism is an industry that connects two priority sectors for the country such as agriculture and tourism, and considers it as an alternative or potential opportunity for economic development.

Referring to the GDP of economic activities in Albania⁶¹, the largest contribution in the economy for 2021 continues to be occupied by the services sector with 47.86%, marking an increase by 8.41%. Industry and construction account for 20.75% of GDP, marking growth of 10.44% and 18.01%, respectively. While agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing account for 18.36% of GDP with an increase of 1.80%.

Specifically, the main contribution was made by the activities of the economy such as: "Trade, transport, accommodation and food service" with +1.64 percentage; "Construction" with +1.61 percentage; "Industry" with +1.17 percentage; "Public administration, education and health" with +0.94 percentage; "Professional, administrative and support activities" with +0.40 percentage; "Real estate activities" with +0.35 percentage; "Agriculture, forests and fishing" with +0.35 percentage; "Information and communication" with +0.30 percentage; "Financial and insurance activities" with +0.24 percentage.

⁵⁸ Decision, No. 22, dated 12.1.2018, "On the approval of the criteria and procedures for the certification of agritourism activity and the construction of structures/objects in its function". Online: <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Vendim.pdf>

⁵⁹ UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the Rural Association Support Programme, Agritourism development in Albania, Tirane, 2020, pg. 9.

⁶⁰ Interview with an expert/academic for the purpose of this research.

⁶¹ INSTAT, Gross Domestic Product, 2021, Online: <https://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/ekonomi-dhe-financ%C3%AB/llogarit%C3%AB-komb%C3%ABtare-gdp/publikimet/2022/produkti-i-brendsh%C3%ABm-bruto-final-2020-gjysm%C3%AB-final-2021/>

As per data shown in the graph below, accommodation and food services make a significant contribution in the economy of Albania, constituting the main source of income and employment in the country.

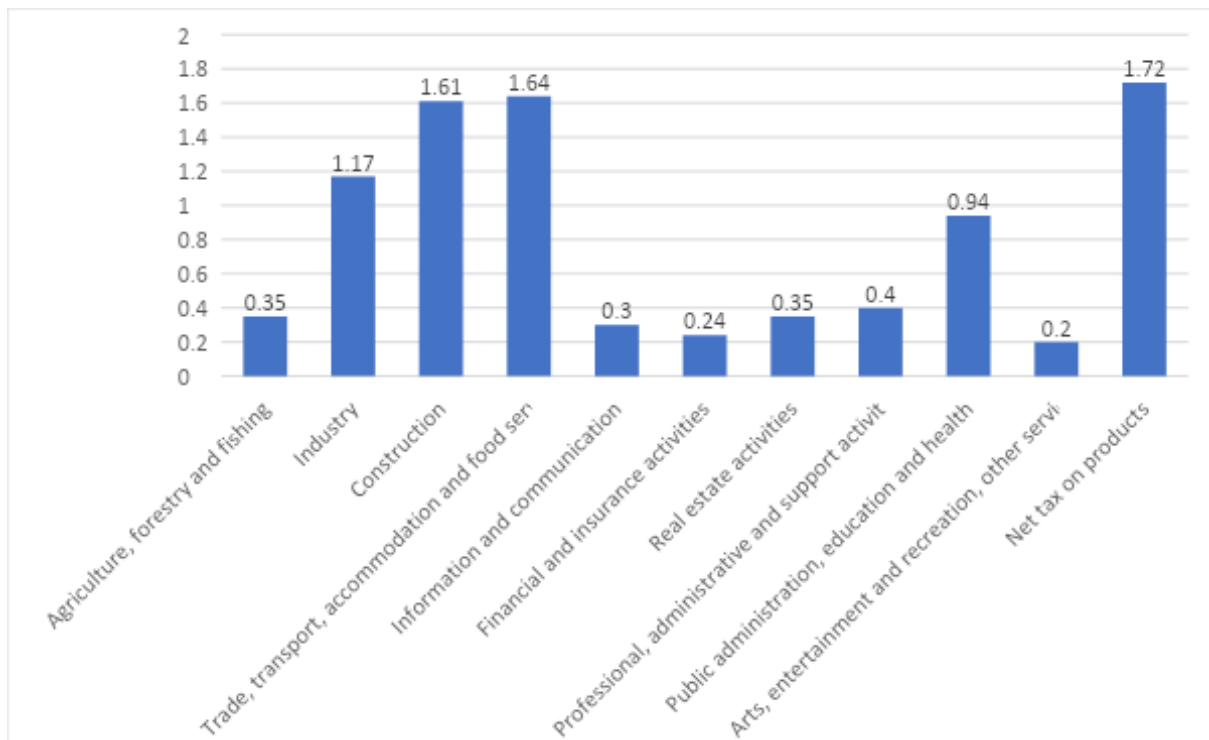


Figure 5: The contribution of the main branches of the economy to the real GDP growth rate of 2021, in percentage points

Also, the tourism sector makes a significant source of income for the country, as it became the keyword of our country's national, social and economic development, especially in the last decade. The UNWTO World Tourism Barometer⁶², a regular tracker of short-term tourism trends providing updated insights into international tourism, has positioned Albania in the third spot globally for the period spanning January to July 2023.

The data show the growth of tourism as one of the sectors that bring more revenue to the state and family budgets in Albania. With over 7,5 million tourists a year⁶³, the expenditure by foreigners traveling in Albania reached a record of 2.84 billion euros in 2022, surpassing the record of 1.07 billion in 2007, according to data from the Bank of Albania⁶⁴. The statistical data in travel and tourism during the first 6 months of 2023 (January–June) show that there is an increase of 33.0% compared to 2022. Also, this year there is a significant increase of 58.9% compared to 2019.⁶⁵ According to the Bank of Albania⁶⁶ tourists brought a record of 1.55 billion euros in the first 6 months of 2023.

⁶² UNWTO: Albania tops Europe in global tourism ranking. Online: <https://euronews.al/en/unwto-albania-tops-europe-in-global-tourism-ranking/>

⁶³ INSTAT, Tourism, Online: [Turizmi | Instat](https://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/industria-tregtia-dhe-sh%C3%ABrbimet/turizmi/#tab2)

⁶⁴ Bank of Albania, Online: <https://bankofalbania.org/>

⁶⁵ INSTAT, Tourism Statistics, 2023, Online: <https://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/industria-tregtia-dhe-sh%C3%ABrbimet/turizmi/#tab2>

⁶⁶ Bank of Albania, Online: <https://www.bankofalbania.org/>



Figure 6: Number of tourists visiting Albania between 2018-2022

Agritourism, as a vital sector of the Albanian economy, provides employment opportunities for around half of the population in rural areas and accounts for around 20% of the country's GDP.⁶⁷

As stated in the interviews with the farmers, more than 70% of fresh products they get from the locals in the area. Thus, agritourism farms are becoming the most important source of income for them in rural areas.

Why does Albania need Agritourism?

Agritourism, which involves the combination of agriculture and tourism, is becoming increasingly relevant in many economies around the world. It is relevant to the economy as it offers various economic benefits, ranging from job creation and income generation to rural development and the preservation of cultural heritage. It contributes to the diversification and sustainability of rural economies, making it an important aspect of regional economic development. Below are some key aspects of the relevance of agritourism in the Albanian economy:

- **Job Creation:** Agritourism creates employment opportunities in rural areas. It generates jobs for local residents from farming and food service to marketing and hospitality. As stated in the interview with the owners of agritourism farms, almost all the agritourism farms have employed the locals of the area. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) highlights that rural tourism stimulates local economic growth and social change by contributing to the GDP and job creation.⁶⁸
- **Income Generation:** Farmers can generate incomes by opening their farms to tourists and offering activities such as guided tours, farm accommodations, and farm-to-table dining experiences.
- **Development of Small Businesses:** Agritourism encourages the development of small businesses in rural areas, such as accommodation/hotel/camping, artisanal food producers, craft shops, and local tour operators. This can stimulate entrepreneurship and contribute to economic growth.

⁶⁷ Intesa SanPaolo Bank, A new agricultural economy for Albania, Online: <https://www.intesasanpaolobank.al/en/retail/bota-jone/growing-business/A-new-agricultural-economy-for-Albania.html>

⁶⁸ Rural tourism, Online: <https://www.unwto.org/rural-tourism>



- **Increase Education and Awareness:** Agritourism activities often raise awareness about agriculture and environmental sustainability. Tourists gain a better understanding of the food production process and become more interested in learning the origins of their food, understanding farming practices, and reconnecting with nature. Also, agritourism makes rural areas more attractive to live and work. Agritourism is mostly managed by younger managers⁶⁹ (on average roughly 35 years old) in Albania. This shows the impact and importance of education and awareness towards agritourism.
- **Increase the Revenue of Tourism Revenue:** Development of agritourism can boost overall tourism revenues, attracting tourists interested in experiencing the rural way of life, farm visits, and participating in agricultural activities.
- **Preservation of Cultural Heritage:** Agritourism often involves the preservation and showcasing of local cultural and historical heritage, from traditional farming practices to handicrafts, folklore, and historic sites. This can attract tourists interested in learning about the traditions, customs, and history of rural communities.
- **Infrastructure Development:** To support agritourism, the government or municipality may invest in infrastructure improvements, such as better roads, accommodations, and recreational facilities. These investments benefit both tourists and local residents. As mentioned above, the municipality of Tirana has paid a special attention to the road and electrical infrastructure. Informative and orientation signs in the main tourist areas of the city have been placed in each administrative unit, as well as equipped with signs and tourist maps.
- **Promotion of Sustainable Practices:** Many agritourism operations emphasize sustainable and organic farming practices, which can encourage broader adoption of environmentally responsible approaches in agriculture.

Due to these various economic benefits from the agritourism sector towards the economy and development of the country, it shows and proves the significance potentials this sector has for further growth and development.

GENDER SENSITIVE VALUE CHAINS IN THE AGRITOURISM SECTOR

This study report synthesizes critical insights from both field and desk research to comprehensively analyze the structure, potential, and participants in the Agritourism sector value chain. The key stages within this sector's value chain are mapped, considering geographical locations and the presence of diverse markets. The report digs into organizations influencing the value chain, including regulatory bodies, non-governmental entities, and business associations, assessing their functionality and impact, particularly in promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment. A thorough gender analysis examines the involvement of both women and men in specific stages of the value chain, revealing their contributions to agriculture, food processing, and on-farm accommodation services for national and international markets. The GSVC analysis stresses the need for a detailed analysis to differentiate the specific roles and engagement patterns of women and men, highlighting gender biases inherent in market systems that affect equitable access to supporting functions and compliance with formal and informal rules and market regulations.

⁶⁹ UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the Rural Association Support Programme, Agritourism development in Albania, Tirane, 2020, pg. 16.

Gender Sensitive Value Chain Map

This GSVCM is built on the Farm to Table (F2T) type of activity for the Agritourism sector in Tirana region. It is designed like a detailed journey, aiming to understand various aspects of the value created throughout all stages and actors involved. This map is designed based on desk and field research data and all the insights expressed within it are according to the field research conducted through interviews of 44 actors involved. It brings clarity to economic activities happening within the value chain and then, it looks closely at the different people/actors involved, noting where women and men are positioned. It quantifies their participation shown in percentages. The percentage data shown on the map below are based on the field interview with the actors of the sector in Tirana region.

This map estimates how much value is added at each stage, and it identifies the most powerful actors in the chain, highlighting their roles. As we follow the map through the value chain, it reveals market opportunities and potential issues, helping to understand inequalities and power dynamics among those involved. The mapping did find that women play a crucial role in Agritourism farms' restaurants and accommodation facilities. This opens up opportunities for supporting this sector and tourism in areas with potential, impacting the livelihoods of families and communities. At the end, it highlights how locals, including women, can earn income and shows the economic potential for local communities in the study area.

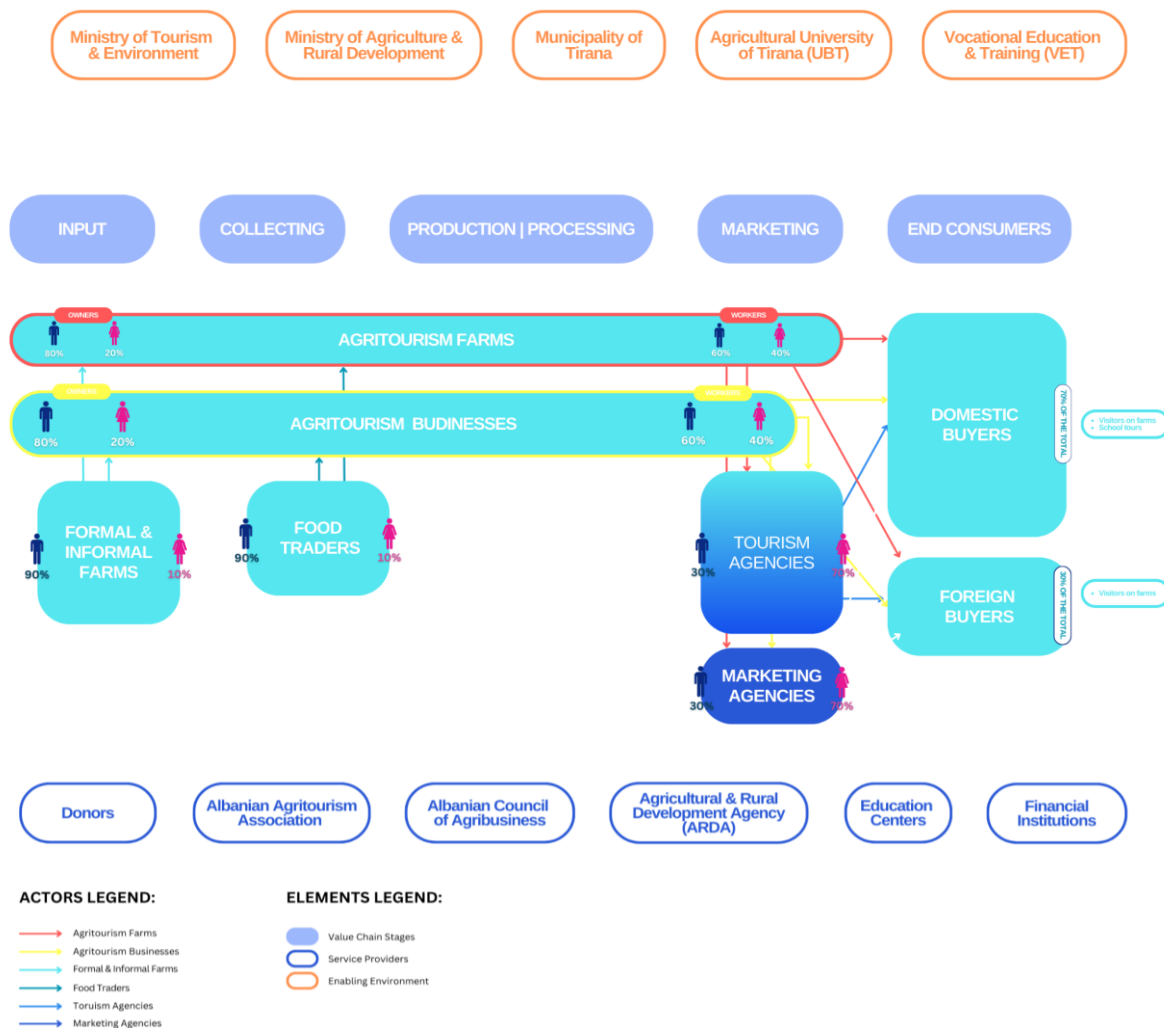




Figure 7: GSVC Map of Agritourism Sector in Tirana Region

VALUE CHAIN ACTORS

The most important actors in the core VC are agritourism businesses and agritourism farms, input suppliers, cultivators and harvesters, consolidators and processors, exporters hereafter called informal and formal farms, food traders, and tourism agencies. There are also other actors in the value chain who offer various services such as advice, certification and technical assistance that are part of the enabling environment and are analyzed for the purpose of this chapter.

Describing the value chain of agritourism presents a challenge due to its direct connection with two distinct sectors: agriculture and tourism. Therefore, it becomes essential to explain the relationships that agritourism shares with both agriculture and the various stakeholders in the tourism sector. The following sections in this chapter aim to comprehensively clarify this relationship across different stages of the value chain.

Agritourism businesses

Agritourism, as defined by the Decision No. 22, dated 12.1.2018 "For the approval of the criteria and procedures for the certification of the agritourism activity and the structure of the structures/objects in its function"⁷⁰, should have ownership of an agricultural or livestock farm or agricultural unit, coupled with the provision of recreational/educational activities, food and beverage services, and accommodation facilities.

This specialized form of rural tourism, known as agritourism, is designed to strengthen local tourism resources, fostering the development of alternative tourism products. Its primary objectives include promoting agricultural/livestock production, revitalizing rural areas, and creating a new market for agricultural/livestock products.

Agritourism activities are legally sanctioned on specific types of farms, namely:

- a) Agricultural farms, with a minimum of 1 hectare of land dedicated to agricultural crops.
- b) Livestock farms, maintaining at least 10 head of cattle, 100 head of sheep/goats, or 200 head of poultry.
- c) Agricultural units engaged in the processing of agricultural, livestock, or aquaculture products, meeting specified criteria.

Integral to agritourism is the provision of guesthouses and restaurants on farms to take care of tourists, contributing to poverty reduction in rural areas and fostering a renewed interest in farming, particularly among the younger generation.

Based on data from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism only 25 (twenty five) farms have received official certification as Agritourism⁷¹ establishments. While, there are 27 (twenty seven)

⁷⁰ Decision No. 22, dated 12.1.2018 "For the approval of the criteria and procedures for the certification of agritourism activity and structure of structures/objects in its function", Online: <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Vendim.pdf>

⁷¹ List of Subjects equipped with Certificate "Certified Subject for The Activity Of Agritourism", Online: <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/LISTA-ME-SUBJEKTET-E-PAJISURA-ME-CERTIFIKAT%C3%8B-.pdf>



farms⁷² demonstrating the potential to undergo transformation into certified agritourism facilities. This underscores the new opportunities within the country for further development and expansion of agritourism ventures.

Based in the Decision No. 22, dated 12.1.2018 "For the approval of the criteria and procedures for the certification of the agritourism activity and the structure of the structures/objects in its function"⁷³ Agritourism businesses should include aspects such as agricultural settlements, farm activities, entertainment, and educational components.

Agritourism in the country predominantly operates as a family business, reflecting a closely-knit and familial approach to this emerging sector.

The majority of agritourism businesses have been established for periods ranging from 3 to 30 years, with official certification as agritourism entities occurring within the last decade. From the field research conducted through interviews of at least 44 actors in the region, the data gathered showed that the ownership landscape is predominantly male, constituting 80%, with 20% being women. Most agripreneurs simultaneously own the land where their agritourism businesses are located. These businesses operate year-round, experiencing peak seasons from April to October.

Business sizes vary from medium to large, with the primary service being the restaurant, focusing on a farm-to-table approach. The majority of these businesses offer accommodation services as well. The restaurant brings the biggest part of the income of the business. Employment within these agritourism businesses typically ranges from 10 to 30 individuals, achieving a balanced gender distribution among employees, and the employees usually live in close proximity to the area, which facilitates their daily job in the business.

Desk research data about the owners of agritourism businesses in Albania⁷⁴, as well as the field research data from conducting 44 interviews to agritourism businesses and actors of this sector, showed that agritourism business is primarily undertaken by a younger generation of managers, typically ranging between 30 to 50 years old (34%), representing a young age of agripreneurs. Interestingly, even retirees and age 50-60 years old (33% of the interviewed) express interest in establishing agritourism farms, highlighting the diverse age range of farm owners.

However, the field research through direct interviews showed a clear difference between male and female agripreneurs, with 80% being male and 20% female from the agritourism businesses interviewed in the region of Tirana.

Through the interviews conducted it was shown that women are perceived as particularly well-suited for agritourism, given their traditional roles on family farms. Their perceived strengths in specialized competencies, including cleaning, cooking, and caregiving, align seamlessly with the core activities integral to the daily management of agritourism.

Women typically take on roles related to sanitation, kitchen operations, service, and agriculture, while men are involved in kitchen activities, service provision, and agriculture.

⁷² List of Subjects provided with "Previous Certificate for Certified Host Operators as Agritourism", Online: <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Lisat-e-subjekteve-me-Certifikate-Paraprake.pdf>

⁷³ Decision No. 22, dated 12.1.2018 "For the approval of the criteria and procedures for the certification of agritourism activity and structure of structures/objects in its function", Online: <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Vendim.pdf>

⁷⁴ List of Subjects equipped with Certificate "Certified Subject for The Activity Of Agritourism", Online: <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/LISTA-ME-SUBJEKTET-E-PAJISURA-ME-CERTIFIKAT%C3%8B-.pdf>



Quote: "We have always noticed that working women are much better in terms of communication with customers."

Noteworthy is the observation in women-owned and managed businesses, where a special insight is seen—these enterprises often choose to collaborate and employ only women, excluding male employees from their workforce.

Quote: "Only women are employed in our business. The products are produced and dried in a natural way and are served by the employed women."

Location is important for agritourism businesses due to their aim to attract visitors. Agritourism cannot exist in isolation from other tourism traffic. The research results and in field research by the authors showed that most of the agritourism businesses around Tirana region are located less than 30 km far from the capital area.

Agritourism has emerged as an important player in the agricultural value chain, strategically marketing and selling its products directly to consumers. Agritourism businesses achieve this through various channels such as on-site restaurants, meal provisions at accommodation units, and direct sales of fresh products to visitors. This approach has effectively shortened the agricultural value chains, leaning the balance in favor of the farm.

Furthermore, some agritourism extend their support to local farms by providing spaces, like restaurants or other areas on the farm, for them to sell their fresh products. This collaborative arrangement not only benefits the local farms but also capitalizes on the influx of visitors to the agritourism.

A distinctive feature of agritourism is their focus on producing and selling locally originated products. Origin products, deeply connected to a specific geographic location in terms of biodiversity and historical production practices, serve as a significant draw. These products, originating from the local community and produced by its people, are integral to the cultural and historical fabric of the area. As a result, origin products are recognized as a reason for visitors to choose agritourism, creating a connection between people, places, and locally sourced products.

Despite the great opportunities that agritourism as a business offers, they still face challenges, such as financial constraints, staff-related issues and difficulties in recruitment, infrastructure limitations, and for women in particular, occasional hesitancy in taking the initiative to assume roles as head chefs in the kitchen. Additionally, other challenges include marketing and visibility hurdles, obtaining necessary certifications, and adapting to seasonal fluctuations in demand. On the other hand, women agripreneurs encounter challenges, in terms of limited access to subsidies and credit facilities. This highlights existing disparities and barriers that need to be addressed to ensure equitable opportunities for women in the agritourism sector.

Box 1: Blerina Farm House

Rruga Muhareem Bajraktari Blerina Farm House, 1030 Laknas, Albania –
Excellent location – show map

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Blerina's Farm is a small agritourism which offers local, seasonal and traditionally cooked food. With 13 years' experience, this is a woman owned medium sized business. It has 20 employees and around 30% of them are women. Roles of women in this agritourism are management of the business, dairy production, kitchen works, cleaning and cooking. While men roles are also general management of the business, services and agricultural works.

Quote: "Most women might not initially want to take charge in the kitchen. My chef worked for a long time as an assistant to the male chefs and did more work than them. It took some convincing, but she finally agreed to be the boss, and she's doing a great job at it."

The owners' goal is to bring customers closer to nature, as well as provide natural and healthy food, and allow visitors to enjoy the seasons and all the elements of an Albanian village, such as planting, livestock and handicrafts. The special thing about this agritourism is the space dedicated to children, with activities that bring them closer to nature and encourage their creativity.

Agritourism Farms

According to the Decision No. 22, dated 12.1.2018 "For the approval of the criteria and procedures for the certification of the agritourism activity and the structure of the structures/objects in its function"⁷⁵ a "farm" is recognized as the fundamental economic unit in agriculture, composed of activities dedicated to food or livestock production on a specific land area.

While in the context of Agritourism Farms, the same legal criteria states that agritourism can be developed on an agricultural farm with a minimum of one hectare of land, a livestock farm breeding at least five heads of cattle or 50 heads of sheep/goats or 100 heads of poultry, or an agricultural unit engaged in beekeeping and honey production with at least 30 beehives.

Agritourism farms in Tirana region were established in the last years, ranging from 3 to 13 years as the field research revealed. Their primary function revolves around the restaurant, highlighting the farm-to-table approach, with accommodation services being a less common offering. In addition to their core activities, these farms provide supplementary experiences such as farm tours, animal encounters, harvesting engagements, and activities tailored for children.

These farms typically range in size from small to medium, employing a workforce of 4 to 20 individuals. According to the interviews conducted and field research data gatherings, a balanced gender distribution is maintained among the staff, with 50% women and 50% men.

⁷⁵ Decision No. 22, dated 12.1.2018 "For the approval of the criteria and procedures for the certification of agritourism activity and structure of structures/objects in its function", Online: <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Vendim.pdf>



The peak season for agritourism farms is pronounced with more flow during September-October and April-May, aligning with the seasons and respective product availability. During peak seasons, an additional 2-5 staff members are employed to manage increased demand.

Agritourism Farms are often family-run enterprises and primarily male-owned, where the owners are typically landowners with partially rented lands. They often involve other family members such as brothers, sisters, fathers, or grandfathers, and mothers with both men and women playing key roles. Men typically oversee and manage farm operations, while women are predominantly involved in kitchen activities and product production such as dairy products.

Quote: "The kitchen without women doesn't work."

Wine production is exclusively handled by men, with the belief that it involves strenuous work not suitable for women. Conversely, the processing part of the business is entirely managed by women. There is a perceived gender-based division of labor, where men are designated as chefs, driven by the notion that women may lack innovation or initiative in this role.

Quote: "Women are very traditional in food, they don't have any new ideas or initiatives to experiment with the product, with men it's the complete opposite. We have a Male Chef."

Despite their notable contributions, agritourism farms face several challenges that impact their operations and overall success. Many agritourism farms, especially smaller ones, face financial difficulties, including limited resources for marketing, infrastructure development, and maintaining the overall business. Finding and retaining qualified staff, particularly during peak seasons, is also challenging. The need for suitable infrastructure, including accommodations, restaurants, and recreational areas, pose a challenge for them. Upgrading or establishing these facilities is financially demanding. Agritourism farm activities often depend on seasonal variations, leading to fluctuations in customer demand.

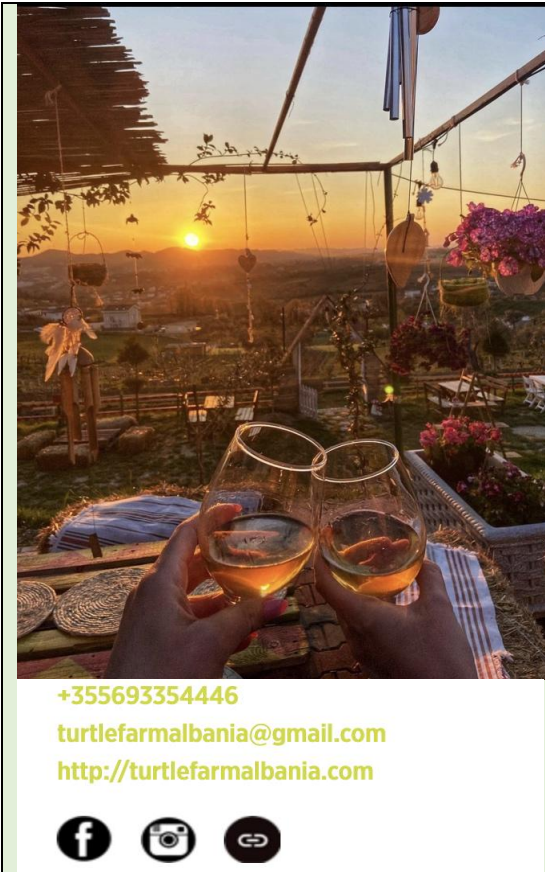
Smaller agritourism farms struggle with marketing and visibility, making it challenging to attract a steady stream of visitors. Effective promotional strategies are crucial for success. These challenges are in depth analyzed in chapter 3 of this report.

For some agritourism farms, especially those owned or managed by women, challenges in accessing subsidies and credit facilities are present, limiting their ability to invest in business expansion or improvements.

Quote: "We feed the earth with more care and kindness and benefit from its food."

"Agriculture is a house without a roof."

<p>Box 2: Turtle Farm Albania</p>	<p>Nestled in the serene countryside, the family-owned farm-to-table business of the Turtle Farm Albania has operated for three years now. Led by a passionate male owner, the farm also includes brothers, mother, brother's daughter-in-law, and father, all weaving their skills into the farm's existence. It is a small sized business with a peak of season from April to October, while winter prompts a temporary closure due to a lack of indoor facilities. Its team of 10, comprising 5 women and 5 men, forms the backbone of its operation. Women engage in animating children's activities and culinary artistry, while men engage in diverse roles from farming services to client</p>
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outreach. Decision-making leans towards the men, creating a delicate balance during peak seasons when both genders commit full-time.

Turtle Farm Albania offers restaurant and bar service with a panoramic view. The food is organic with products grown on or near farms. On the farm it is produced red and white wine, raki (similar to grappa), olive oil, and more. The typical dishes of the area include chicken with rice, homemade meatballs, pancakes, cheese, fig jam and more.

Quote: "Women make all the products but men sell them." Women are more dedicated, more fruitful, they give more, but at the moment they are not directly involved in the management of the farm.

The Turtle Farm offers additional services apart from farm to table such as Turtle tour de farm, paintball game area, camper parking space, picnic area. Turtle Farm Albania also offers agricultural education for children and adults. The farm also offers the opportunity to "adopt" a turtle: they will stay on the farm but "the foster parent" can come and visit at any time.

Informal farms

In the local community, families are actively engaged in cultivating fruits and vegetables within greenhouses. These families typically own small farms dedicated to cultivating crops or raising animals for meat and milk.

They cultivate a diverse range of crops, sometimes choosing multiple varieties to meet local demands and preferences. Embracing flexible and adaptive farming practices, these informal farmers adjust to changing conditions and market demands without strict structures, relying on manual labor or basic tools due to limited access to mechanized equipment.

In contrast to purchasing seeds each season, they engage in informal seed saving practices, preserving seeds from previous harvests. These seeds often include local and traditional varieties adapted to the local climate and soil conditions.

Maintaining a strong connection with the natural environment, informal farmers rely on traditional knowledge to predict weather patterns and plan agricultural activities accordingly. Due to cost and environmental concerns, these farmers choose fewer agrochemicals, and go for organic or traditional methods for pest control and soil management.

The workforce structure is informal, primarily consisting of family members, including spouses and part-time involvement of children. During peak agricultural seasons, additional labor may be hired on a seasonal basis.

The research with interviews conducted reveals a gender distribution, with 60% being male and 40% female. Notably, women primarily focus on household responsibilities, whereas men play a more prominent role in the cultivation and commercial aspects of selling the agricultural products.



They trade their products to the nearby businesses such as agritourism businesses and farms, food traders, or small and big markets in the region.

Despite primarily selling their products to these businesses, they face constant exposure to competition from imported goods, leading to occasional challenges such as fluctuations in stock levels and occasional substantial losses.

Operating informally, without legal registration, they face barriers to formal recognition by law.

The informal farmers operate on smaller, often family-owned plots of land, limiting the scale of their agricultural activities.

They struggle with challenges such as the burdens and lack of knowledge, information, and financial resources to legally operate in the market. Timely access to market information is a significant hurdle, impacting their ability to make informed decisions about planting and selling.

Additionally, formal financial services, like credit, are almost universally restricted for informal farmers, leading to reliance on personal savings or alternative financing methods.

Formal farms

In contrast with the informal farms, formal farms are legally registered entities, complying with local regulations and often obtaining necessary licenses for their operations.

They are larger in size compared to informal farmers. These farms typically operate on a larger scale, utilizing extensive land areas and machinery to meet commercial production demands. They also function in the majority of the cases as a family business, but they also employ other workforce needed to fulfill the workload, especially in peak seasons. The workforce on formal farms includes skilled and professional farm managers, agronomists, and other specialized personnel to ensure efficient operations

Their size ranges from small to medium sized businesses. There tends to be a significant gender disparity in the workforce, with 90% of the workforce being male and 10% female⁷⁶, reflecting certain gender dynamics within formal farming operations.

Formal farms use modern agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, improved seed varieties, and advanced machinery to enhance productivity. There is a structured and organized production process involving the use of various inputs like land, machinery, fertilizer, seed, and labor to produce a specific output. The use of technology, including machinery and possibly precision agriculture practices, is commonly used in formal farming to optimize production processes.

The primary focus of formal farms is often market-oriented, with the intention to sell crops to traders or processors for further business use. The output of formal farms serves as input for downstream processors (agritourism businesses in our case) or traders, creating a vertically integrated supply chain. Maintaining and ensuring the quality of the output is their aim, with potential pursuit to industry standards and certifications.

The different segments of the formal farming chain are intricately linked by logistics, including transport services and storage facilities, ensuring a seamless flow of inputs and outputs between each stage.

Formal farms engage in structured and commercial relationships with traders and processors, contributing to a more organized and systematic value chain.

⁷⁶ Interviews' insights processed by authors.



Some of them are integrated and the others have the potential to be integrated into global supply chains, exporting agricultural products to international markets and engaging in international trade.

Beyond primary production, some formal farms are engaged in value addition processes such as processing, packaging, and branding to enhance the market value of their products.

Formal farms have better access to timely market information, allowing them to make informed decisions about crop selection, planting, or other agricultural and animal husbandry activities, and selling to maximize profitability. They also have better access to formal financial services, making them eligible to secure loans, credit, and other financial instruments to invest in equipment, technology, and expansion.

However, they also face some challenges such as market fluctuations, including changes in commodity prices and demand, impacting their profitability, high operational costs due to use of modern technology, large-scale operations, and compliance with quality standards, recruiting and retaining skilled labor, changes in weather patterns and the unpredictability of climate conditions.

Food Traders

Food traders play an important role as intermediaries in the agritourism value chain, bridging the gap between farmers and processors by gathering production and performing essential operations such as drying and cleaning. Many food traders have made significant investments in warehousing capacity, highlighting their commitment to efficient storage and handling of agricultural produce.

They operate in the formal market and are legally registered, with business sizes ranging from small to large enterprises. Predominantly male-dominated, this sector commands a market share of 90%, with women constituting the remaining 10%⁷⁷.

Engaging in intermediary and trade activities, food traders buy and gather products from both local and international markets, selling them domestically and for export markets.

The products of large processors, managed by food traders, find their way into various retail outlets, including groceries, supermarket chains, and "big-box" food traders like hypermarkets. Domestic supermarket chains, acting as major buyers, particularly benefit medium-sized firms.

The growth of supermarket chains presents a dual opportunity and challenge for Albanian producers, as these chains import a significant portion of their products while serving as outlets for locally produced "Made in Albania" goods. Small local groceries and specialist organic food shops, though growing in number, cater to niche markets, selling gourmet and traditional foods to a specific customer base.

International food traders like *Big brand supermarkets*, while largely importing products, contribute to the market as outlets for Albanian products, presenting both challenges and opportunities for local producers. Specialized food traders focusing on gourmet and traditional foods are expanding, offering unique products to a specific customer base.

Despite the growth of specialty shops, they often operate on a smaller scale, focusing on quality over mass market appeal.

⁷⁷ Interviews' insights processed by authors.



Focused on improving supply chain efficiency, many food traders invest in logistical capabilities, including transportation and storage infrastructure. They offer a diverse product range, fulfilling a broad consumer base demand, and may engage in partnerships with local brands, providing visibility to smaller producers.

Adapting to evolving consumer preferences, food traders respond to the growing demand for organic, gourmet, and traditional products. Small local groceries and specialty shops, while facing market entry challenges, contribute to the economic development of the region by supporting local farmers and producers.

The consolidation business, however, is not without challenges. The high volatility of prices for fruits, vegetables, as well as dairy and meat products introduce complexity and risk into their operations. Some consolidators, appointed by exporters, contribute to supply chain efficiency by monitoring farmers' cultivation, collecting produce, and managing drying and storage facilities.

The labor-intensive nature of food trading operations necessitates a substantial workforce for tasks such as collection, drying, and storage. The regional collector landscape is undergoing changes, marked by a decline due to squeezed profit margins, reduced local production, and heightened competition from exporters striving to streamline supply chains.

Tourism Agencies

The list of certified Tourism Agencies in Albania consists of around 600 businesses, according to Ministry of Tourism and Environment data⁷⁸. 65% of these certified agencies are located in Tirana region. While there is a list of 222 certified⁷⁹ tour operators in Albania that also are the promoters of tourism in the country.

Tourism Agencies in Albania typically are micro, small to medium sized businesses owned by women and men, where women dominate the share of the market with around 70% agencies women owned, versus 30%⁸⁰ of men owned tourism agencies. Differently appears the situation with tour operators where men dominate this segment of the sector.

In the collaborative sphere between tourism agencies and agritourism businesses, a partnership ranging from 1 to 5 years has evolved, as the actors interviewed admit, marked by a suite of services. These include personalized guides, rural experiences, event planning, and strong marketing initiatives.

The selection of agritourism destinations by the tourism agencies revolves around key criteria such as geographical location, accessibility, offered gastronomy, and the warmth of hospitality. Criteria also extend to the mode of cooperation, ensuring accommodation for more than 10 guests, traditional furnishings, and restaurants serving local culinary delights.

Carefully curated packages for tourists that Tourism Agencies create in collaboration with agritourism businesses include wine tasting, visits to vineyards, engagement in farm activities, and participation in local festivities. Accommodation options range from full-day experiences with three meals and hiking to shorter one-day packages featuring lunch and hiking.

⁷⁸ List of travel agencies, Online: <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Lista-e-agjencive-te-udhetimit.pdf>

⁷⁹ List of tour operators, Online: <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Lista-e-operatoreve-turistike.pdf>

⁸⁰ Interviews' insights processed by authors.



Promotion strategies are diverse, starting from websites, social media, fairs, customer reviews, and positive testimonials from partner establishments. The interviews with tourism agencies reveal an average of 150 mixed tours, with a gender distribution of 40% female participants and an age range from 20 to 75 years old visitors/tourists.

These tourism agencies express that customer preferences tend towards wine and olive oil tastings, coupled with an interest in educational programs. The booking process involves advanced reservations through phone and WhatsApp, with timely notifications to the guesthouse/restaurant before arrivals.

Despite obstacles such as language challenges and occasional service weaknesses, the cooperation mode remains direct, encouraging engagement and overcoming barriers. Challenges faced include the need for updated information, infrastructure limitations, and human resource constraints on Agritourism businesses and farms.

Package pricing, slightly above average, is justified by inclusive services, with agency commissions based on visitor numbers or exclusive net fees. The added value for agritourism businesses extends to combining agrotourism with cultural or alternative tourism packages, promoting joint business activities, and collaborating with various entities, including universities and international organizations.

INPUT STAGE

In the Input stage of the agritourism value chain, the focus lies on crucial elements such as resources, both financial and natural. The effective management of suppliers is not only about the procurement of necessary inputs but also extends to the active involvement and perceived benefits of stakeholders. This collaborative approach enhances the value of services offered to agritourism, contributing to increased negotiating power with input suppliers, engagement with public service providers, collaboration with allied companies, partnerships with institutions, and rapport with creditors. In the Tirana region case, the Agritourism businesses and farms generally produce the input they use in the restaurants by themselves, but in some cases, when there is shorten periods for the products, or winter season, or for some products that they cannot produce themselves, they rely on other input suppliers such as from formal and informal farms in the area, food traders of imported products, and beverage businesses for wine, raki, or water.

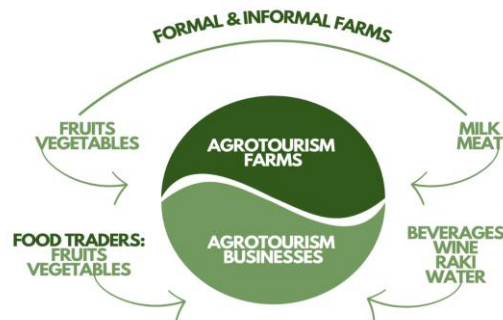


Figure 8: Input products flow



In the agritourism sector of the Tirana region, a nuanced analysis of input utilization within the value chain reveals a multifaceted approach to sourcing products. Agritourism businesses primarily rely on self-produced inputs, such as vegetables and fruits, cultivated in substantial quantities. However, supplementing their own production, and residents from various regions of Albania. The products consistently maintain a local origin, with only a minimal portion of meat being imported, such as beef ribs and meatballs.

Until October, a significant 80% of the products originate from their own sources, shifting to 70% during winter, with the remaining 30% being purchased, as stated by agritourism businesses and farms during the field interviews conducted. Local products such as chickens, lamb, sausages, and dairy contribute to the authenticity of the offerings. Notably, these businesses boast a distinction by maintaining a seed bank in agriculture, reinforcing the "From farm to table" concept.

Quote: A lot comes from the farm, but there are products in the season when there is no capacity from the farm that are also bought.

Beyond the complexities of input management, the agritourism businesses and farms are committed to sustainability and community engagement. The focus on self-produced inputs aligns with the broader movement towards F2T practices, promoting a connection between the source of the products and the end consumers.

The field research revealed that these agritourism businesses also contribute to the local economy by processing products from nearby agricultural units and distributing them to stores in Tirana, Durres, Elbasan, and Vlore. In terms of specific input products, they acquire milk, flour, fruits, vegetables, and meats.

Dairy production such as cheese is mainly produced in-house and involves keeping cows and sheep within the farm or business surrounding land.

While some fruits and vegetables are cultivated around the farm, additional supplies come from neighboring villagers or, in shortage periods, from import markets.

Regarding the beverages used in their restaurants, the actors interviewed during the field research expressed that grapes for wine production are sourced from different regional locations, including their own land and then "raki" and wine are crafted in-house. They declare that revenue generated from wine consumption indicates a reliance on agritourism F2T (80%), distribution to foreigners (15%), and wine shops (2%).

Meat, on the other hand, is sourced from rural areas around Tirana, with the *Allgjata* brothers in Pezë Helmes being a notable supplier mentioned by majority of businesses interviewed.

Olive oil is acquired from the wineries in the area, ensuring the quality of an organic product.

The supply chain of all the above mentioned products involves informal farms and family businesses.

The gender distribution of these suppliers revealed by the field research data gathering is around 90% male, primarily located in Tirana, Leskovik, and surrounding areas.

Despite the predominantly male composition of suppliers, the agritourism businesses recognize the importance of engaging with female-led businesses and they reveal the example of the Munellë area,



where the supply chain is predominantly composed of family businesses, all led by women. This not only promotes gender inclusivity but also provides economic opportunities for women in agriculture.

To manage the dynamic flow of all these daily needed input products, logistics is efficiently managed with personal cars, often managed directly by the owners, ensuring control over the supply chain and reflects a hands-on approach to business operations. This approach contributes to the businesses' agility in adapting to seasonal variations and changing market demands.

However, challenges arise in ensuring the quantity and quality of products from local farmers meet desired standards, often encountering substandard produce.

These challenges highlight the complexities of managing input quality standards. Collaborative efforts with local farmers and ongoing dialogue can potentially address these challenges, encouraging a more resilient and reliable supply chain.

PRODUCTION/PROCESSES STAGE

The production stage in the agritourism sector in the Tirana region, focusing on traditional foods such as bread, wine, pies, meatballs, salads, dairy products (Milk; Yoghurt, Cheese, Cottage cheese), self-produced dairy products, raki, vegetables, seasonal fruits, Cheese, meats, Planting seedlings, *Trahana* with vegetables, *Trahana* with milk, *Trahana* with yogurt, *Dromka*, *Petka*, *Yufka*, Pasta with vegetables, Biscuits with lavender, pickles, compote, jam, is characterized by a blend of traditional methods and a commitment to quality over quantity.

The production of these products done by the agritourism businesses and farms is mainly a commitment to artisanal practices, with a characterized balance of 30% mechanization and 70% manual labor in the production processes, as stated by them during the field interviews.

In winemaking, a shift towards dedicated technologies is evident, though certain productions, like raki and some wines, maintain a nod to tradition through the use of specialized machinery overseen by the owner or the family members.

The diagram below illustrates the complex connections among “influencers” in the daily operations of an agritourism business and farm. It maps out the process of producing its products, culminating in their delivery to end consumers, with employees and end consumers serving as the most important components of this mechanism. On the other side, product suppliers, tourism agencies, and marketing entities play crucial roles in facilitating the day-to-day functions of agritourism businesses and farms.

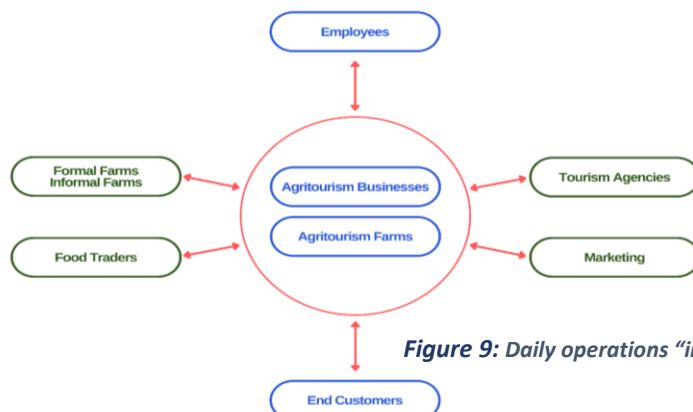


Figure 9: Daily operations “influencers” in agritourism businesses and farms



The employees are the ones that are engaged in both, producing the products from the farm and serving them to the table. In this regard, gender roles are distinct, with women playing a crucial role in cultivation, gathering, and processing, while men predominantly engage in the cultivation of vegetables and fruits.

Quote: "Our production is done by hand, especially the production of Trahana and Dromka, many tourists come to see these processes, especially the making of Trahana and Dromka."

Operational management is a joint effort, with both genders contributing substantially. Women take charge of the restaurant menu and dairy product production, especially during peak periods, while men focus on beverage production, services, and promotional activities to attract tourists.

The agritourism businesses and farms adapt dynamically to seasons, offering a range of attractions from vibrant flower displays in summer to autumn pumpkin decorations for Halloween. The off-season becomes a strategic planning period for innovation, leading to the introduction of new products and adaptations to traditional offerings.

In the quieter winter period, the farm slows down due to the scarcity of seasonal raw materials, providing an opportunity for producing preserved products such as pasta products or jams and planning for the future season.

Challenges are acknowledged, particularly in the need for more advanced machinery, notably in ploughing and wine production. The farm's pursuit of ecological packaging machinery underscores its commitment to sustainable practices.

The production and processing of goods primarily occur on the farm, serving the dual purpose of supplying the on-site restaurant and catering to customers purchasing directly from the farm shop. Several customers, primarily foreign tourists, express keen interest in the farm's cheese, raki, and wine. However, due to logistical constraints, some agritourism farms are unable to make deliveries beyond Albania. Consequently, these customers choose to personally visit and collect their desired products during their stay in the country. Compounding this challenge is the farm's limited production capacity, making it challenging to meet the high demand for deliveries.

MARKETING STAGE

The marketing stage in the agritourism sector is a thoughtful strategy aimed at understanding the entire value chain. It involves using innovation and market research to continuously find ways to improve services and stand out to potential clients.

Traditionally, selling agricultural products involved various channels like roadside sales, wholesalers, processors, and direct sales at markets.

The marketing process in agritourism is a blend of traditional and modern methods, addressing challenges while striving for consistent growth and diversification. The changing dynamics of distribution channels, consumer preferences, and collaboration with different stakeholders highlight the sector's strength and potential for ongoing development.

Based on the findings from the field research through interviewing the agritourism actors in Tirana region, it was evident that all the agritourism businesses and farms went beyond the conventional farm-to-table services or accommodation offerings. The spectrum of additional activities provided by these businesses also covered: an Emotional Tour addressing the Challenges of Agriculture, Wine Tasting experiences, and engaging Animators dedicated to children. Visitors were treated to a diverse range of experiences, including guided tours of farm animals, an exclusive area showcasing turtles,



active participation in fruit and vegetable harvesting, as well as immersive sessions in the extraction of traditional raki and wine. Further complementing the visitor experience, farms organized tours around the surrounding lands, offered paintball gaming areas, and designated parking spaces catering to campers and picnickers alike. These businesses also demonstrate a commitment to community engagement by organizing activities in collaboration with local schools, inviting children and young individuals to spend quality hours on the farm, promoting a deeper connection with agriculture and rural life.

Quote: "Every activity takes place inside the farm and in the moment".

Education of children through schools for good nutrition, seasonal fruits and vegetables, knowledge of gastronomic traditions, etc. Food talks on traditional Albanian products, such as *Trahana*, noodles, olive oil, etc. Organization of many events, especially on the weekend dedicated to the cooking of traditional products from the first ingredient to the final cooking. Accompanied by historical lectures, personal events, etc. are some other additional activities found in these businesses.

All of them unanimously stress the important role of additional activities in attracting a greater influx of tourists and visitors to their agritourism businesses. They act as one of the best promoters of the business and customers ask more and more for additional services.

According to data derived from field research conducted with agritourism clients, it becomes evident that these diversified activities significantly influence their choice of a particular agritourism establishment, particularly among parents with children. The provision of engaging activities alongside the culinary experience becomes a key determinant in their decision-making where to go and spend the day.

In terms of marketing strategies, the consensus among agritourism businesses is a recognition of the great importance of online media in achieving effective promotional outcomes.

Collaborations extend to both local and foreign agencies, with concerted efforts to engage the local community by contracting decorators, animators, event agencies, or additional cooks for specialized events based on demand.

Strengthening social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, these businesses actively work on their products' promotion and are content with the extensive media coverage they've garnered, including interviews, participation in shows, and features in renowned publications such as The New York Times. Feedback is systematically collected through platforms like Google reviews, TripAdvisor⁸¹, and various social networks. The certified by law agritourism businesses and farms have their presence in the platform "Agroturizëm"⁸² created and maintained by the government of Albania, which serves as a good promotion channel for these businesses. This platform and mobile app are widely used in Albania by the enthusiasts of Agritourism concept.

The agritourism businesses and farms boost collaborations with tourism agencies, one of them mentioning the collaboration with a Polish Agency that uses to bring tourists to the farm every year, introducing the farm as a day tour in conjunction with the Kruja museum for all tourists.

One of the agritourism farm was using the strategic listing on the international "Park for Night"⁸³ application that attracts campers from foreign countries, who, while parking for free, contribute significantly to the farm's revenue by utilizing the restaurant and purchasing farm products during their stay.

⁸¹ Trip Advisor website: <https://www.tripadvisor.com/>

⁸² Agritourism platform: <https://agrotourism.gov.al/>

⁸³ Park for night platform: <https://park4night.com/en>



Participation in various fairs, both organized by the Municipality and culinary/agritourism fairs, is a testament to their proactive engagement in the local and regional agritourism community. This multifaceted approach to marketing underscores their commitment to not only attracting tourists and visitors but also encouraging meaningful collaborations within the agritourism sector.

Quote: The importance of technology and online platforms: they bring more visitors and Instagram posts give a very good impact to bring other visitors.

Quote: "For example, if on Saturday a beautiful post is posted on social networks from the farm, such as the sunset, turtles, children playing on the farm, the next day the farm is full of visitors that exceed the capacity of the farm."

The marketing of the agritourism businesses and farms is distinctly done by the female owner, whose professional and effective approach towards clients stands out prominently. According to the field research conducted for this study, over 40% of the marketing is done by women.

Few of the businesses interviewed have contracted marketing agencies to deal with the promotion of their business, the others did this themselves that's why these agencies don't play a strict role on the value chain chosen in this report.

Quote: "Women have better communication".

What importantly caught the eye during the field research, is the fact that all of the agritourism businesses and farms mentioned that they strategically were planning future marketing initiatives, thus highlighting the importance of marketing strategies in this sector.

Initiatives such as Food Day, Wine Day, Olive Oil Day, Bean Day, Tomato Day, *Fërgesa* Day, and more are on the horizon, reflecting a forward-thinking approach to engage and attract diverse audiences.

Recognizing the contemporary landscape, the role of technology and online platforms is considered very important. Their plans included the creation or renewal of dedicated websites with modern standards and ensuring an excellent digital experience for potential visitors and promoters, influencers focused on their production processes, highlighting the dedication to increase online visibility and accessibility.

END CONSUMERS

The end market or end consumers in the agritourism sector presents a distinct picture, where 70% of the customer base consists of locals, while 30% is from foreign visitors and tourists⁸⁴ primarily seeking to experience local wine and traditional foods.

The domestic customers are often the ones that seek to have a break from the city life and want to engage with village life, take clean air and taste organic and good quality food. They often spend some hours in the agritourism or farm premises or even one weekend with their family. They mostly spend on food at the restaurant and accommodation. But also, they tend to organize family events in these businesses and they tend to spend more.

Quote: "Extra activities such as the tour with the animals, nature and the sunset, the children liked it very much."

⁸⁴ Interviews' insights processed by authors.



The presence of foreign visitors and tourists comes with some challenges for Tirana region agritourism businesses and farms. As per their experience, the foreigners, although intrigued by the nature and agritourism concept, make small purchases and stay for extended periods, impacting the overall business.

The primary customers are those visiting the restaurant or the farm itself, intending to take farm products home. Notably, the business refrains from selling to wholesale or retail customers due to capacity constraints.

While online requests for products are numerous, the low-capacity limits significant sales and distribution. Customers often choose to collect products themselves. The diverse customer base includes locals, families, work groups, foreigners, representatives of international organizations, and tourists, with occasional customers and restaurants predominantly being Albanian (70%).

The field research with some end customers of these businesses showed that the customer acquisition channels vary, with 55% learning about agritourism businesses through word of mouth, and 33% discovering them through social media. The motivation for visits is rooted in culinary experiences, organic food, and the additional educational activities offered, providing a welcome escape from city life. The majority of customers' express satisfaction, citing clean air, beautiful nature, engaging farm activities, tasty and good quality food, tours of farm animals, and involvement in village work.

Feedback from customers' highlights areas for improvement, including increasing capacities, accommodation services, considering additional activities on some farms, and ensuring more parking spaces. Despite these suggestions, all customers express a willingness to recommend agritourism businesses and farms to friends and family, drawing attention to the positive impact of these experiences on customer loyalty and potential word-of-mouth marketing.

VALUE CHAIN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT AND SUPPORTERS

In the agritourism sector, as in any other sector of the economy, the success depends also on a supportive environment and collaboration with key players in the value chain. This section draws conclusion to the factors and partnerships that create a favorable atmosphere for agritourism businesses and farms. From government policies and community involvement to partnerships with local businesses and the tourism sector, this supportive framework is crucial for the development of agritourism in Albania.

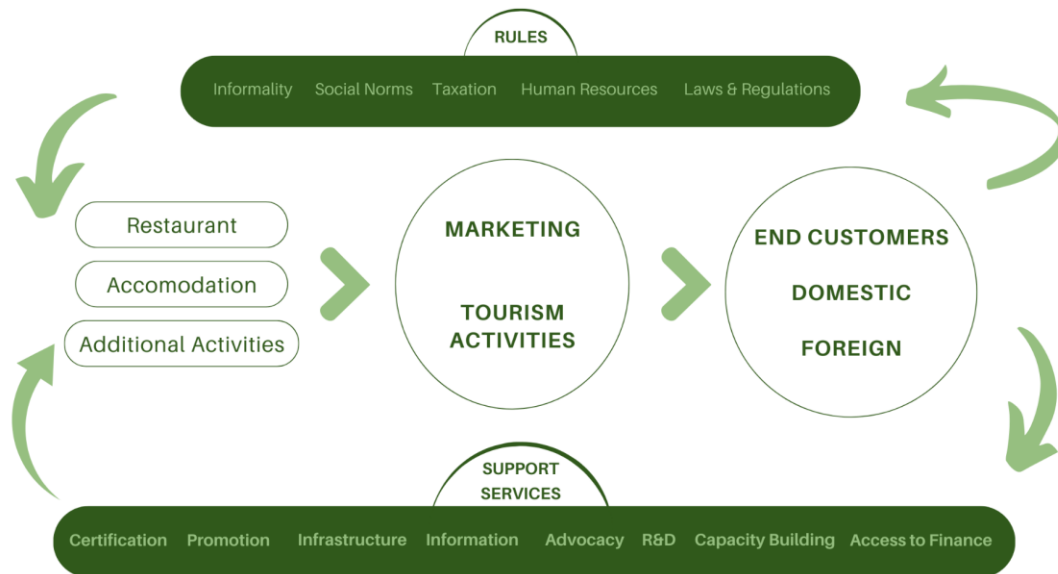


Figure 10: Enabling environment dynamics

The success of agritourism, like any other economic sector, relies on a favorable environment and collaboration with key players in the value chain. This section concludes by highlighting the current situation of factors and partnerships that contribute to a favorable atmosphere for agritourism businesses and farms and what still needs to be done to support the further development especially in terms of gender focused initiatives in this sector. Examining elements such as government policies, community engagement, and collaborations with local businesses and the tourism sector, the below box underscores the significance of this supportive framework for the ongoing development of agritourism in Albania.



Government bodies are actively contributing to the development of the agritourism sector, highlighting investment promotion, quality standards enhancement, and adherence to national sustainable tourism strategies. However, focused policies are still needed in terms of skills and work force and empowering women in agriculture.

Various **financial entities** in Albania are playing an important role by offering customized loan products and financial support to agritourism businesses, facilitating their growth, and encouraging investments in infrastructure and equipment. Still certain financial products require extension in their duration or necessitate reactivation and restructuring for enhanced effectiveness.

Academic institutions recognize the importance of agritourism, providing study programs, training sessions, and curriculum correspondence with market needs to ensure a skilled workforce and foster industry development. The collaboration between them and private sector is needed to match the workforce with sector needs.

Organizations representing the **private sector** are actively protecting interests, coordinating activities, and promoting original products, contributing significantly to the growth and sustainability of agritourism businesses. Strengthening and prioritizing agritourism associations is essential.

Collaborative efforts with **international organizations** operating in Albania are giving their contribution to the policy-making, technical support, and the promotion of agritourism businesses at both national and international levels. Their assistance programs must align with the current needs and challenges of the sector.

Various **projects**, such as those focusing on sustainable practices, quality standards compliance, and the empowerment of marginalized groups, are providing valuable support and resources to agritourism ventures. Their sustainability and extension in the duration is crucial.

Networking platforms and advocacy groups are playing a key role in connecting agritourism businesses, sharing information, and lobbying for sector-related causes, contributing to a collaborative and supportive environment. Nevertheless, there is a need to enhance and strengthen a more interconnected and efficient network.

Initiatives for **capacity building, training, and skills development** in the agritourism sector remain inadequate; there is a necessity for increased and targeted efforts aligned with the sector's current and actual needs.

Efforts to **promote** agritourism businesses on national and international platforms, participation in fairs, and inclusion in promotional campaigns are present and contribute to market visibility and expansion. Additional support and concerted efforts are required to facilitate the increased participation of agritourism businesses and farms in these promotional activities and market exploration.

Support for **innovative models, sustainable tourism practices, and compliance with quality standards** needed to further enhance the resilience and competitiveness of agritourism businesses and farms.

More programs needed in **supporting women** in agritourism, recognizing their essential roles and contributing to a diverse workforce.



The collaborative efforts of various stakeholders, encompassing government bodies, financial institutions, educational entities, private sector representation, international collaborations, and project initiatives, collectively create a conducive environment for the growth, sustainability, and innovation within the agritourism sector. A detailed table of key stakeholders initiatives and policies is part of the annexes of this report.

ANALYSIS OF KEY CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Identification and analysis of key constraints

The agritourism sector in Tirana Municipality exhibits immense potential as a catalyst for rural development and cultural preservation, yet it faces a spectrum of challenges that warrant careful consideration. The intricacies of the farm-to-table experience reveal a landscape shaped by various constraints, impacting the sector's overall dynamics. These challenges, identified through a gender-sensitive value chain analysis, encompass aspects ranging from human capital development to financial accessibility and legal intricacies. In navigating these constraints, the sector grapples with the seasonal nature of its operations, coupled with environmental and sustainability concerns.

"Running a business in Albania is undoubtedly difficult, even more so in agritourism. The basis of an agritourism business is the production of products, which is a very difficult sector to develop, starting from the lack of electricity, finding workers, and so on." – Agritourism Owner

This holistic view of challenges within the agritourism sector lays the groundwork for targeted interventions aimed at fostering resilience, inclusivity, and sustainable growth in Tirana's agritourism landscape. The following list encapsulates the key constraints faced by agritourism businesses in Tirana, as gleaned from comprehensive field research and a gender-sensitive value chain analysis.

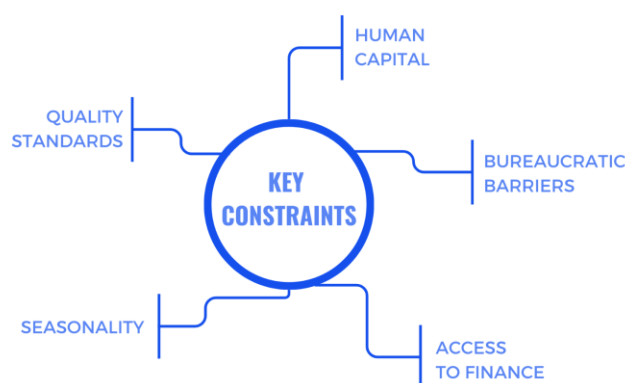


Figure 11: Key constraints



1. Human Capital

The agritourism sector in Tirana faces a significant challenge in the form of a **human capital constraint**, as highlighted in interviews with various agritourism establishments and supporting institutions. A key dimension of this constraint is the **prevalent skills gap among** individuals engaged in different roles within the sector. This gap encompasses a range of skills, from agricultural practices to farming expertise and customer service. The limited availability of training and educational opportunities has contributed to a shortfall in the necessary expertise, hindering the sector's potential for growth and sustainability.

A prominent constraint within the human capital aspect of agritourism businesses in the region is the **challenge associated with staffing**, characterized by **difficulties in securing adequately trained, professional personnel**. Agritourism establishments often encounter obstacles in recruiting staff who possess the requisite skills, professionalism, and a demonstrated understanding of the nuances involved in agritourism operations.

This challenge is compounded by the **geographical remoteness** of many agritourism businesses from urban centers, leading to a limited pool of available talent. The constraints manifest in various ways, including a scarcity of qualified individuals willing to work in agritourism, resulting in a potentially unprofessional workforce. The recruitment process itself poses challenges, with businesses encountering difficulties in identifying candidates who both desire and possess the necessary competencies for the diverse roles within agritourism, ranging from agricultural practices to culinary expertise and customer service.

The logistical aspect further aggravates the staffing challenge, particularly when agritourism businesses are situated at a considerable distance from urban centers. The remote location prompts two prevalent scenarios: either incurring additional expenditures for transporting staff to the agritourism site, impacting operational costs, or sourcing staff from the local area. The latter often translates into a reliance on younger, less experienced individuals who lack the professionalism required for the multifaceted demands of agritourism. Furthermore, the perceived lack of enthusiasm or commitment among available staff stems from a limited understanding of, or interest in, the unique attributes of agritourism work.

“Acquiring suitable staff poses a challenge for us, particularly in securing individuals with the necessary qualifications. We find ourselves compelled to recruit workforce, both male and female, from the vicinity of the farm due to the considerable expenses associated with hiring more qualified personnel from the center of Tirana and facilitating their transportation to the agritourism site, and vice versa. Furthermore, the allure of higher wages in the city makes it difficult to attract skilled staff to join our team.” - Agritourism Owner

This results in employees appearing disinterested or unprepared for the specific tasks involved, contributing to a diminished quality of service and overall visitor experience.

Another notable aspect of the human capital constraint is **the need for increased access to education and training opportunities for the workforce** in Tirana's agritourism businesses. The intersection of agriculture, hospitality, and entrepreneurship requires a unique skill set that isn't adequately addressed by traditional educational programs. As a result, individuals entering the sector lack the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the complexities of agritourism operations.

Also, there's a call for diversification of roles, encouraging cross-training initiatives to equip staff with a broader skill set. This might involve farmers gaining culinary knowledge or hospitality staff



understanding essential agricultural practices, enhancing the overall efficiency of the value chain. This resistance to change and a lack of awareness about the potential benefits of role diversification further hinders the adoption of cross-training initiatives. Some agritourism businesses **do not fully recognize the value of having staff with a broader skill set**, and there are concerns about potential disruptions during the transitional phase.

Furthermore, historically, individuals in agritourism have been trained and employed in specific capacities, such as farmers focusing mainly on agricultural practices or hospitality staff dedicated only to customer service and culinary aspects.

In conjunction with the identified skill gap constraint, consistently highlighted by the majority of agritourism stakeholders, is the notable phenomenon of staff turnover. This turnover is attributed to a perceived lack of incentive for agritourism establishments to invest in training programs as employees, upon acquiring necessary skills, often opt to seek employment elsewhere, frequently within competing organizations.

“I don’t do staff training anymore, it is useless, they leave as soon as they get the training. And where do they go? To our competitors. And they also declare to know something more to them so they get paid more.” – Agritourism Owner

The underlying cause of this staff departure stems from the apparent challenges faced by agritourism businesses in retaining skilled personnel, raising questions about the overall work environment, remuneration structures, or potential gaps in professional development opportunities.

The constraint within human capital in agritourism businesses raises notable questions about the representation of women, **particularly the absence of women chefs**. Despite the wealth of talent and expertise, **the underrepresentation of women in culinary roles stems from deeply ingrained stereotypes, gender biases, and societal expectations**. Rooted in historical norms, the culinary industry has often been perceived as male-dominated, leading to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes that discourage women from pursuing chef positions or making it seem like they aren’t fit for it. Based on the field interviews, a lot of agritourism business owners mentioned that their chefs are men and women stand in the position of chef assistants.

“We currently have a male chef in our kitchen, chosen for what we perceive as traits conducive to creativity and innovation. The belief is that men tend to work swiftly, consistently devising new approaches to present food to our customers. While it is acknowledged that a kitchen without women would be dysfunctional, there is a stereotype that associates women with traditional cooking roles, potentially discouraging them from pursuing leadership positions. As a result, women often find themselves in the role of chef assistants.” – Agritourism Owner

The root cause behind the predominance of male chefs and the relegation of women to assistant positions in agritourism businesses **is attributed to entrenched gender norms and biases that persist in the culinary industry**. The owners also mentioned that they believed more on male chefs because all the chefs in all the best restaurants are male, and that women are not as creative as men. **This gender dissemination is a manifestation of systemic challenges that hinder women's advancement into leadership roles** and slightly shows their desire to preserve this type of growth and career development.



2. Bureaucratic barriers

The agritourism sector in Tirana confronts a substantial challenge marked by bureaucratic barriers, a sentiment echoed by numerous establishments in the region. Bureaucratic complexities and regulatory frameworks, often shaped by government policies, contribute to challenges faced by agritourism establishments in dealing with land-related issues. The implementation and interpretation of laws, including those related to land use and ownership, create hurdles for businesses seeking to establish or expand agritourism operations. The multifaceted nature of these challenges encompasses complexities in land usage governed by Law for the Land⁸⁵ creating hurdles in acquiring and utilizing land for agritourism activities.

The constraints related to **bureaucratic barriers** are also influenced by environmental protection regulations or zoning laws^{86,87} established by the government. These regulations, while designed to safeguard natural resources and ecosystems, inadvertently pose challenges for agritourism businesses, particularly in obtaining or utilizing land for agricultural and tourism purposes. Agritourism businesses, which often rely on the utilization of land for both agricultural and tourism purposes, may face challenges due to these regulations. Environmental protection regulations and zoning laws, designed to safeguard natural resources and ecosystems, can impact the ability of agritourism establishments to obtain or use land in ways that align with their business objectives. This connection highlights the need for agritourism businesses to navigate regulatory landscapes, ensuring compliance with environmental regulations while still fostering sustainable and engaging agricultural tourism experiences. The strict enforcement or unclear guidelines regarding land use within specific zones limits the potential expansion or development of agritourism activities.

Taxation-related struggles further compound the bureaucratic issues, introducing complexity in the calculation and payment of taxes, particularly concerning the costly resources crucial for agritourism operations, such as water and energy.

The administrative processes tied to compliance and licensing add an additional layer of complexity, demanding significant time and resources, thereby diverting attention away from core business activities. Inconsistent implementation of regulations and a lack of clarity in interpretation contribute to the challenges faced by agritourism businesses.

"My workspace is inundated with stacks of paperwork concerning taxes and land issues, and honestly, I struggle to comprehend how to address them effectively. Furthermore, the incentives for agribusinesses and governmental support are scarcely discernible in the agritourism sector. We constantly grapple with a barrage of documents, yet it often feels like our efforts yield little tangible outcomes in the end." – Agritourism Owner

The resource-intensive nature of bureaucratic compliance hampers operational efficiency and innovation, as substantial resources are allocated to navigate regulatory complexities. Smaller enterprises, in particular, grapple with legal awareness and access to assistance, intensifying their

⁸⁵ Law Nr. 7501, date 19.7.1991 "For land", Online:

<https://euralius.eu/index.php/sq/biblioteke/prona/ligje?task=download.send&id=70&catid=364&m=0>

⁸⁶ Zoning laws refer to specific rules and regulations for pieces of land divided into "zones" by the government or a municipality.

⁸⁷ AKZM, Zoning Guideline, 2020, Online: https://akzm.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/UDHEZUESI_ZONIMIT_TERRITORIT_ZM.doc



struggles with compliance costs. Root causes include the intricate legal framework, inconsistent enforcement, and resource-intensive compliance requirements, collectively forming a challenging environment for agritourism businesses in Tirana.

3. Access to Finance

The agritourism sector in the visited farms faces multifaceted constraints regarding **access to finance**. One prominent factor is **the inherent risk aversion within these businesses**, leading them to predominantly rely on self-funding and rent while avoiding loans to mitigate financial uncertainties associated with the seasonal and cyclical nature of agritourism. Relying on rent rather than loans happens due to a combination of risk aversion, predictable expenses, and asset ownership considerations. The risk-averse nature of medium-sized or family-owned agritourisms leads them to favor rent, avoiding the potential financial risks associated with loans, such as interest payments and income fluctuations. Rent payments offer a stable and predictable expense structure, providing businesses with a fixed cost that are easily budgeted.

"As the owner of our little agritourism spot, we like playing it safe, you know? We're more into renting than dealing with loans and all that money stuff. Loans come with a bunch of risks like interest payments and money going up and down, and that's just not our style. Renting gives us a steady and predictable cost, making it way easier to plan our budget for the farm fun we're offering."
– Agritourism Owner

The limited use of formal financial systems is attributed to a **lack of financial literacy among entrepreneurs**, impeding their understanding of loan dynamics and fostering a preference for more familiar funding sources. Additionally, the perceived unavailability or inaccessibility of private finance tailored to agritourism's unique needs, coupled with the sector's seasonal income fluctuations, poses challenges for businesses seeking loans. The lack of suitable collateral inhibits loan accessibility; as traditional lenders often require assets that agritourism businesses do not possess. Furthermore, the sector's current low perceived need for private finance, driven by successful reliance on existing funding sources, discourages exploration of loan options. Lastly, the absence of some industry-specific financial products tailored to agritourism's requirements, coupled with a potential lack of awareness about the benefits of loans, contribute to the limited engagement of these businesses with the formal financial system.

Another constraint based on the lack of Access to Finance (A2F) is the **fragmented industry awareness**. This constraint in the agritourism sector underscores the challenges arising from a lack of cohesive and centralized knowledge dissemination. As the industry undergoes rapid growth, businesses within the agritourism sector face difficulties in maintaining a comprehensive understanding of the myriad opportunities, regulatory frameworks, and best practices that could shape their operations.

The absence of a centralized source of awareness contributes to a disconnection among businesses, hindering their ability to collectively address shared challenges. This fragmentation is particularly evident in the realm of information related to funding options, market trends, and collaborative initiatives that are pivotal for enhancing financial resilience.

The low level of "communication" between Agritourism businesses and support function providers, contributing to the fragmentation evident in information, is attributed to a combination of systemic factors. The fragmented nature of information exchange hinders the synergistic development of agritourism, emphasizing the critical need for improved communication channels, collaborative



platforms, and a shared understanding among stakeholders to unlock the sector's full potential. Some of the key systematic factors contributing to this constraint are:

- The cumbersome paperwork required to access support from providers often lacks necessary documentation or clear instructions, creating obstacles in the application process. This administrative challenge not only causes delays but also adds complexity, hindering agritourism businesses from effectively accessing the support they need. Based on the field interviews, agritourism businesses expressed frustration with the bureaucratic hurdles involved in obtaining support, emphasizing the paperwork's frequent lack of necessary documents and clear instructions.

"We consistently contemplate expanding our business by incorporating solar panels, and we've considered applying for a grant through the agritourism association. However, we often encounter challenges with missing criteria related to the required documentation. Applying for grants, in general, proves to be challenging for us, as we perceive the processes as complicated, intertwined with opaque procedures, and difficult to navigate." – Agritourism Owner

- The absence of centralized platforms or industry-specific hubs limits opportunities for stakeholders to share information, hindering cohesive communication. Agritourism businesses and support function providers often lack organized events or forums for networking, impeding their ability to establish meaningful connections. Diverse stakeholder objectives and potential resource constraints further complicate communication efforts, as the priorities of support function providers do not always align with the specific needs of agritourism businesses.
- The absence of collaborative initiatives within the agritourism sector, identified as a root cause contributing to the financial constraint, stems from various interconnected factors. The prevailing challenge of limited collaborative efforts within the agritourism sector exposes a fundamental issue— the overall **lack of awareness and incentives for collective problem-solving**. This deficiency in a collaborative culture signifies more than a mere absence of cooperation; it reflects a deeply ingrained competitive mindset. In this landscape, individual success often takes precedence, overshadowing the potential benefits that could arise from concerted efforts. The consequence is a disjointed industry where businesses operate independently, lacking a shared platform for cooperation and missing out on the synergies that collective action could unleash for the greater advancement of agritourism.

The lack of industry associations, a key component of collaborative initiatives, signifies a gap in organizational structures that could foster shared knowledge, create synergies, and advocate for the collective interests of agritourism businesses. The root cause here lies in the challenges associated with establishing and maintaining such associations, including a lack of leadership, resources, or a perceived need for collective action.

Also, the lack of financial resources poses a significant additional constraint for agribusinesses aiming to meet the demands of end consumers by expanding services such as building accommodation facilities or increasing the capacities of restaurants. This financial limitation inhibits the ability of agribusinesses to invest in infrastructural developments that could enhance the overall agritourism experience. The shortage of funds may restrict their capacity to construct lodging facilities, upgrade existing infrastructure, or expand dining establishments to accommodate a larger number of visitors. Consequently, the constraint of insufficient financial resources becomes a critical factor influencing the growth and diversification potential of agritourism ventures in Tirana.



Without these collaborative structures, businesses remain isolated, limiting their ability to pool resources, share insights, and collectively address financial hurdles.

4. Seasonality

Seasonality poses a significant constraint for agritourism businesses, impacting their operations, revenue streams, and overall sustainability. The nature of agritourism activities often aligns with specific seasons, creating pronounced peaks and lows in customer demand. During peak seasons, such as harvest time or special events, businesses experience a surge in visitors, requiring additional resources and manpower to meet the heightened demand.

However, during off-peak seasons, the number of visitors' decrease, resulting in decreased revenue and potential financial strain. This downturn in customer activity creates a challenging financial scenario for these establishments. With fewer visitors engaging in farm tours, activities, or purchasing products, the primary income streams of the agritourism business are compromised. On the other hand, operational costs such as staffing, maintenance, and utilities remain relatively constant or even increase due to ongoing responsibilities, regardless of the reduced customer influx. These fixed costs pose a significant burden on the business when revenue is diminished.

"In the quieter seasons, the diminution in visitor numbers poses a challenge for agritourism establishments, culminating in a reduction in revenue and potential financial strain. This decline in customer activity engenders a complex financial scenario for our businesses." - Agritourism

Moreover, the fluctuation in revenue impacts cash flow management. Agritourism businesses experience cash shortages during off-peak periods, making it challenging to cover ongoing expenses. This financial strain limits the ability to invest in improvements, marketing efforts, or other initiatives that could enhance the overall sustainability and competitiveness of the business.

The impact of seasonality on agritourism farms goes beyond fluctuations in customer demand, influencing the very core of agricultural activities and offerings. Different crops and agritourism experiences are inherently tied to specific seasons, and their viability or appeal is often contingent on environmental and climatic conditions.

This seasonal dependency on specific crops or activities result in a limited diversity of offerings throughout the year. During periods when certain products are not in season or certain activities are not feasible, agritourism farms face challenges in providing a varied and engaging experience for visitors. This limitation leads to periods of inactivity or reduced attraction, as visitors are less inclined to explore the farm when the expected products or experiences are not available.

Moreover, the reliance on seasonal offerings impact the overall appeal and competitiveness of the agritourism farm. If other farms or attractions in the region offer a more consistent and diverse array of experiences throughout the year, it diverts potential visitors away from farms constrained by seasonality.

To navigate this constraint, agritourism farms often diversify their offerings, implementing strategies to extend the availability of certain products or experiences or introducing alternative attractions during off-peak seasons. This could involve planning events, introducing indoor activities, or promoting the farm's unique attributes beyond seasonal variations to maintain visitor interest and engagement throughout the entire year.

The seasonality constraint, manifested in the unavailability of essential farm products throughout the year, presents a significant challenge for agritourism businesses. The reliance on specific crops or



agricultural activities tied to particular seasons results in periods when these essential products are not accessible or available. This limitation directly impacts the consistency and reliability of offerings for visitors, leading to potential dissatisfaction and extra costs due to buying the missing products from other local farms.

The cyclicity of agritourism, driven by the peaks and troughs of seasonal demand, introduces intricate workforce challenges for businesses operating in this sector. During peak seasons, agritourism businesses often experience a surge in visitor numbers, necessitating the hiring of additional staff to meet the heightened demand. While this surge in staff is crucial for providing optimal customer service and managing increased operational activities, it comes with inherent challenges.

This necessity to hire temporary staff during peak seasons poses a significant challenge for agritourism businesses, leading to heightened labor costs. Bringing in temporary workers entails additional expenditures for training, supervision, and integration into the existing team, thereby incurring extra costs associated with recruitment and onboarding processes.

"In peak seasons, hiring temporary staff is a crucial but cost-intensive necessity for agritourism businesses. The additional expenses for training, supervision, and integration into the existing team contribute to increased labor costs."- Agritourism Owner

Finding skilled temporary workers poses another challenge during peak seasons. Agritourism businesses struggle to secure individuals with the necessary expertise and experience to efficiently contribute to various roles within the farm operation. This impacts the overall quality of service, potentially affecting the visitor experience and the reputation of the business.

Conversely, during off-peak times, agritourism businesses face the dilemma of retaining a skilled workforce when demand decreases. The reduced number of visitors do not justify retaining a full staff, leading to potential layoffs or reduced working hours for existing employees. This scenario poses challenges in retaining skilled workers, as they seek alternative employment during periods of reduced activity.

The intersection of seasonality and market dynamics poses a significant constraint for agritourism businesses. Seasonal variations not only impact the availability of farm products and activities but also influence the overall demand and preferences of the market. Matching the seasonal nature of agricultural offerings with the fluctuating demands of visitors becomes a delicate balancing act.

During peak seasons, when the farm is abundant with products and vibrant activities, the challenge lies in effectively capitalizing on the heightened market interest. The business needs to align marketing strategies to attract a larger audience, manage increased foot traffic, and ensure a seamless visitor experience. However, this comes with the risk of potential saturation or competition with other agritourism businesses during popular times.

Conversely, during off-peak seasons, the challenge shifts to sustaining market engagement when fewer visitors are inclined to explore the farm.

The constraint of seasonality in conjunction with infrastructure presents a dual challenge for agritourism businesses. Seasonal variations not only impact the availability of farm products and activities but also influence the infrastructure requirements necessary to cater to varying visitor demands.



In the field interviews, many agritourism businesses mentioned having infrastructure issues related to challenges with energy and water.

"Running an agritourism is like tending to a wild garden—thrilling, but with its fair share of challenges. Our friendly farm sometimes faces hiccups, especially in the energy and water department. Picture this: trying to charm visitors with flickering lights and a tap that plays hide-and-seek!" – Agritourism Owner

During peak seasons, when agritourism businesses experience a surge in visitors, the existing infrastructure faces strain due to increased foot traffic, parking demands, and the need for additional amenities. Inadequate infrastructure results in congestion, negatively affecting the overall visitor experience and potentially limiting the farm's capacity to accommodate a larger audience in some of the agribusinesses.

Conversely, during off-peak seasons, maintaining and managing infrastructure poses a different set of challenges. The infrastructure investments made to cater to peak demand appear underutilized during slower periods, leading to concerns about cost-effectiveness. Balancing the need for robust infrastructure during peak seasons with the efficient use of resources during off-peak times becomes a critical consideration.

5. Quality Standards

Quality, encompassing standards, storage, inputs, and sustainability, **stands as a pivotal constraint for agritourism businesses and farms in Tirana.** The challenge extends across multiple dimensions, starting with the assurance of high-quality products and services that meet stringent standards. Maintaining consistent quality requires effective storage solutions, ensuring that agricultural produce retains its freshness and nutritional value.

Ensuring high-quality products and services that adhere to rigorous standards constitutes a multifaceted challenge for agritourism businesses in Tirana. This challenge spans various dimensions, requiring meticulous attention to detail and a comprehensive approach. To meet stringent standards, businesses must consistently deliver products and services that not only meet but exceed the expectations of customers and regulatory bodies.

This assurance of quality begins with the cultivation and production processes, where agritourism establishments must implement best practices and adhere to industry standards. From the careful selection of seeds and inputs to the cultivation and harvesting methods, every step must align with the prescribed benchmarks for quality. Additionally, the challenge extends beyond the production phase to encompass storage, ensuring that products maintain their freshness, nutritional value, and overall quality.

The challenge of sourcing local products for agritourism businesses introduces a notable constraint, particularly when certain items are out of season. The reliance on local farms for a consistent supply of diverse products aligns with the ethos of supporting the community and promoting sustainable practices. However, the seasonal variability in product availability poses a logistical challenge for agritourism establishments. Ensuring a year-round supply of local products demands strategic planning, effective communication with local farmers, and the implementation of storage solutions to overcome the limitations imposed by seasonal fluctuations. This constraint underscores the need for agritourism businesses to navigate the intricacies of local sourcing while addressing the temporal disparities in product availability.



The challenge of maintaining consistent quality when sourcing products from local farmers further adds complexity to the agritourism value chain. While local sourcing promotes community engagement and sustainability, variations in farming practices and environmental conditions impact the quality of the products. Agritourism businesses face the task of establishing robust quality control measures to ensure that the products obtained from local farmers meet the expected standards.

"As an agritourism owner, the challenge of maintaining consistent quality from products sourced from local farmers is a delicate balance. While we value the unique offerings and support for our local community, ensuring that these products meet our high-quality standards requires careful attention. It's a continuous effort, working hand-in-hand with local farmers, implementing stringent quality control measures to deliver an authentic and exceptional experience to our visitors. This constraint underscores the importance of collaboration and dedication to excellence in every aspect of our agritourism business." – Agritourism Owner

The choice of quality inputs, including seeds, fertilizers, and equipment, becomes a critical factor in shaping the final output. The sourcing and management of these inputs demand careful attention to guarantee the desired standards. Moreover, environmental and sustainable concerns add an extra layer of complexity. As the global push for sustainable practices intensifies, agritourism businesses are faced with the responsibility of aligning their operations with eco-friendly principles. This includes adopting technologies and infrastructure that minimize environmental impact, implementing sustainable farming practices, and addressing concerns related to waste management.

The interplay of these factors presents a multifaceted challenge, requiring agritourism businesses to navigate a delicate balance between meeting quality standards, ensuring efficient storage, sourcing reliable inputs, and embracing sustainable practices.

Identification of key opportunities

In the heart of Tirana, a flourishing landscape of opportunity unfolds for agritourism businesses, beckoning with the promise of growth, sustainability, and enriched visitor experiences.

The Ministry of Tourism and Environment in Albania has made public the data of tourist inflows for the period January-July 2023, which are over 5.1 million visitors, exceeding by 31% those of the same period of 2022.⁸⁸

Within agribusiness, agritourism is a blooming micro sector. It allows visitors to explore the countryside through its produce and restaurants.

"Albania is small but has a lot to offer. As Albania has a variety of natural resources ranging from the Dinaric Alps in the North to the Ionian Sea coast in the South of the country, it has a great potential to develop tourism further focusing on rural spots."⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Tourism Bulletin, 2023, Online: <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/BULETINI-I-TURIZMIT-KORRIK-2023.pdf>

⁸⁹ "A new agricultural economy for Albania", Intesa Sanpaolo Bank, 2023, Online: <https://www.intesasanpaolobank.al/en/retail/bota-jone/growing-business/A-new-agricultural-economy-for-Albania.html>



Amidst the lush fields and farm-to-table businesses, a tapestry of possibilities awaits those keen on navigating the dynamic intersection of agriculture and tourism. The key opportunities that emerge provide a panoramic view of potential avenues for success. From embracing technological advancements and forging collaborations with local producers to cultivating sustainable practices and diversifying offerings, these prospects paint a vivid picture of a sector poised for innovation. As agritourism businesses in Tirana contemplate the horizon, the landscape is dotted with the potential for community engagement, niche market exploration, and strengthened marketing efforts. It is within this canvas of opportunities that these local businesses find the tools to not only thrive but also contribute meaningfully to the cultural and economic tapestry of the region. Some of the key identified opportunities consist of:

- **Unlocking untapped potential - Diversification of Agritourism Offerings**

Unlocking untapped potential and diversifying agritourism offerings in Tirana are interlinked opportunities that can elevate the city's agritourism sector. A collaborative effort involving various stakeholders is essential to identify and harness latent opportunities within the sector. Agribusinesses, as primary actors, can explore novel experiences, unique offerings, and undiscovered facets of their operations to attract a wider audience. Comprehensive market research to identify niche markets, emerging trends, and unique opportunities is crucial. Networking with local and regional agritourism associations ensures staying well-informed about potential collaborations and emerging opportunities.

Customizing agritourism experiences based on specific interests identified through market research is essential. Forming strategic partnerships with local businesses, event organizers, and cultural institutions expands the range of activities and experiences offered. Hosting themed events or festivals celebrating local culture, traditions, or seasonal offerings can attract a diverse audience, enhancing the overall experience. Furthermore, agribusinesses can diversify their offerings by including a range of products, services, and experiences appealing to different customer segments.

To ensure gender inclusivity in unlocking untapped potential and diversification, agribusinesses should actively involve women in the ideation, planning, and decision-making of new experiences. Encouraging women's leadership roles contributes to a more comprehensive and innovative approach to agritourism. In promoting gender inclusivity, efforts should be made to ensure that women actively participate in brainstorming sessions, decision-making processes, and innovative ventures within agritourism. This can be achieved through mentorship programs, training sessions, and awareness campaigns that emphasize the value of diverse perspectives.

Adding accommodation services or guesthouses is a valuable opportunity for agribusinesses that currently do not offer such facilities. By incorporating lodging options, these businesses can tap into a new revenue stream and enhance the overall agritourism experience for visitors. Offering on-site accommodation allows guests to prolong their stay, fostering a deeper connection with the agricultural environment and the local community. This can be done by agritourism businesses collaborating with each other or tourism agencies to create joint packages or thematic experiences, thereby diversifying their offerings collectively.

Also, by being part of an association and coming together to ask from the government to offer financial incentives or tax breaks to businesses that diversify and contribute to the development of a more varied agritourism landscape. By participating in training programs from NGOs and agricultural



associations when they organize training programs to equip farmers and businesses with the knowledge and skills needed for diversification.

By collectively embracing these opportunities, agritourism in Tirana can evolve into a dynamic and diversified industry, attracting a broader audience and contributing significantly to the region's economic and cultural landscape.

- **Technology Integration and Innovation**

Embracing technology integration and innovation presents a significant opportunity for agritourism businesses in Tirana to enhance efficiency, reduce operational costs, and improve overall visitor experiences. This initiative can be realized through a collaborative effort involving local businesses, government bodies, NGOs, agribusinesses, technology providers, and financial institutions.

In collaboration with a supportive ecosystem, agribusinesses in Tirana can embrace technology integration and innovation to revolutionize their operations for their farm-to-table activity. This involves adopting digital tools for farm management, implementing online booking systems, and incorporating technologies for efficient inventory control. Seeking guidance from technology providers, participating in training programs, and collaborating with tech developers are essential steps for agribusinesses to successfully navigate this technological transformation.

In Tirana's agribusiness sector, agribusinesses have the opportunity to leverage a range of digital tools and platforms for the integration of technology and innovation. On the farm, the adoption of precision agriculture technologies, such as GPS-guided tractors, drones, and sensors, enables optimal resource utilization. This ensures precise application of water, fertilizers, and pesticides based on real-time data and current farm conditions.

Additionally, online platforms, including dedicated agritourism booking platforms or integrated features on existing websites (e.g., Booking.com, Airbnb, or custom-built solutions), enhance customer convenience by facilitating easy scheduling of farm tours and other experiences.

For effective inventory management, the implementation of cloud-based inventory systems, like QuickBooks⁹⁰, Zoho Inventory⁹¹, or specialized agricultural inventory solutions, enables real-time monitoring and control of stock.

By embracing these technologies, agribusinesses can improve operational efficiency, offer a seamless experience to visitors, and effectively manage farm operations and inventory. The choice of specific platforms can be tailored to the business's scale, unique requirements, and the preferences of its target audience.

- **Collaboration with Local Producers**

The prospect of collaborating with local producers presents a promising opportunity for agritourism businesses in Tirana. By forming partnerships with nearby farmers, agritourism establishments can enhance the authenticity of their offerings through the integration of fresh, locally sourced produce. This collaborative approach extends beyond mere product integration, encompassing joint marketing

⁹⁰ Intuit QuickBooks - Smart, simple online accounting software for small business, Online: <https://quickbooks.intuit.com/global/>

⁹¹ Zoho Inventory - Inventory management software for growing businesses, Online: <https://www.zoho.com/inventory/>



initiatives and shared experiences that showcase the close connection between agritourism businesses and local producers.

Agritourism businesses can take the lead in initiating these collaborations, actively reaching out to local producers and incorporating their high-quality products into the overall visitor experience. Simultaneously, local producers play a crucial role by providing fresh, regional products and engaging with agritourism businesses to enrich the offerings.

Agribusinesses in Tirana have promising opportunities for collaboration with local producers in various ways. They can establish connections at Local Farmers' Markets, participating in these events to create opportunities for joint ventures.

Additionally, joining or forming Agricultural Associations provides a structured platform for networking with local producers, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Attending Networking Events, such as local agricultural gatherings, conferences, or workshops, enables agribusinesses to meet and connect with nearby producers, paving the way for collaboration. Exploring Joint Initiatives, such as themed events or workshops, can enhance mutual visibility and support between agribusinesses and local producers.

Furthermore, collaborative efforts can extend to Product Bundling, where different local producers and agribusinesses combine their offerings, providing customers with diverse experiences. Engaging in Shared Marketing Efforts, both online and offline, amplifies the reach of both parties, attracting a wider audience. Exploring opportunities for Shared Resources, such as equipment or storage facilities, reduces operational costs for both agribusinesses and local producers.

By embracing these collaborative initiatives, agribusinesses contribute to strengthening community ties, broadening product offerings, and creating a mutually beneficial network that enhances Tirana's overall agricultural landscape.

- **Adopting Sustainable Practices**

The opportunity for agribusinesses in Tirana to adopt sustainable practices marks a crucial avenue for both environmental conservation and long-term business viability. This entails incorporating eco-friendly methods in agricultural operations, waste management, and overall business practices.

Agribusinesses can take several steps to embrace sustainability, such as implementing organic farming techniques, reducing the use of harmful chemicals, and prioritizing water and energy efficiency. Adopting sustainable practices aligns with the growing consumer demand for environmentally conscious choices, providing a competitive edge in the agritourism sector.

Also, agribusinesses have the opportunity to embrace sustainable practices by addressing key aspects of their operations. This encompasses on-farm initiatives where they can implement eco-friendly methods for cultivation, pest control, and soil management. Extending these sustainable practices throughout the supply chain is crucial, necessitating collaboration with suppliers and distributors committed to environmentally conscious processes.

Additionally, integrating sustainability into agritourism activities becomes a valuable avenue, educating visitors about eco-friendly farming practices and promoting responsible tourism. Achieving sustainability involves investing in training and education programs to enhance the understanding of farmers and staff, pursuing recognized certifications, and actively collaborating with environmental organizations, NGOs, and government agencies.



The adoption of eco-friendly farming techniques, such as organic farming and permaculture that could be applied by getting a loan from supporting banks like NOA and BKT, becomes pivotal for prioritizing soil health and biodiversity. Furthermore, investing in renewable energy sources, like solar or wind power, can significantly reduce the carbon footprint of farming operations. Implementing waste reduction strategies, including composting, recycling, and utilizing waste products for energy or fertilizers, further contributes to a holistic approach to sustainability.

By undertaking these measures, agribusinesses not only contribute to environmental conservation but also enhance their brand reputation and cater to the rising demand for eco-friendly products and experiences. This transformative shift towards sustainability requires a concerted effort involving education, certification, collaboration, and thoughtful decision-making across various stages of both agricultural and Agritourism processes.

- **Strengthening Marketing Efforts**

The opportunity for agribusinesses in Tirana to strengthen their marketing efforts holds immense potential for expanding their reach and enhancing brand visibility. By leveraging various marketing channels and strategies, these businesses can effectively showcase their unique offerings, farm-to-table experiences, and sustainable practices.

To enhance their presence in the competitive agritourism sector, agribusinesses in Tirana can strategically focus on specific marketing strategies and channels. They can leverage online platforms like social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) to showcase engaging content and visuals that highlight their products, experiences, and the overall agritourism atmosphere. Collaborating with local tourism agencies, participating in food and travel events, and creating engaging promotional materials are additional avenues to bolster marketing efforts.

Additionally, participating in local events, farmers' markets, and community gatherings provides a direct avenue for engagement with the local audience, fostering brand awareness and customer connections. Employing content marketing, businesses can create compelling narratives around agritourism experiences, sustainable practices, and unique offerings, enhancing their online presence through regularly updated blogs.

Collaborating with local influencers, bloggers, or food enthusiasts who align with the business values can extend the reach and credibility of the brand. By introducing promotions, discounts, and special packages, agribusinesses can attract visitors during specific seasons or events, encouraging repeat visits and word-of-mouth recommendations.

Investing in high-quality visual content, including professional photography and videos, becomes a powerful tool for showcasing the beauty of the farm, the production process, and the overall agritourism experience. To ensure inclusivity and diverse perspectives, actively involving women in marketing decision-making processes, content creation, and outreach strategies contributes to more comprehensive and appealing campaigns.

Through these strategic marketing efforts, Tirana's agribusinesses can enhance visibility, attract a wider audience, and establish a distinctive brand identity in the dynamic and competitive agritourism landscape.

Also, in the dynamic landscape of Tirana's agritourism sector, the enticing opportunity to explore niche markets emerges as a strategic avenue for businesses seeking differentiation and sustainable growth. This initiative revolves around the identification and tailored catering to specialized interests or demographics that may be underserved in the current market.



In this endeavor, agritourism businesses play a central role, supported by the local government through incentives and regulations, NGOs and associations offering guidance, and tourism agencies assisting in promotion.

The process involves meticulous market research, forging strategic partnerships, and implementing targeted marketing campaigns to raise awareness about these unique experiences. Moreover, fostering the inclusion of women in leadership roles and empowering them through specialized training programs and collaborations with women's groups are integral to ensuring a diverse and vibrant exploration of niche markets. This comprehensive approach aims not only to expand market reach but also to foster an inclusive and innovative agritourism sector in Tirana.

- **Investment in Employee Training and Development**

The opportunity for agribusinesses in Tirana to invest in employee training and development presents a pathway to enhance the overall efficiency, professionalism, and sustainability of the sector. By prioritizing training programs, businesses can equip their staff with the necessary skills in areas such as hospitality, sustainable farming practices, and customer service. This initiative contributes to delivering a superior agritourism experience and ensures that the workforce is well-prepared to meet the evolving needs of the industry.

Agribusinesses can significantly enhance their operations by investing in targeted employee training and development strategies. They can establish on-site training facilities, providing practical sessions on essential skills like farming practices, hospitality, and customer service. Collaborating with local educational institutions, agricultural schools, and training centers can offer access to specialized courses that align with the agribusiness needs.

Tailored training programs addressing unique requirements, including sustainable farming practices, customer engagement, and safety protocols, can be developed. Leveraging online learning platforms for flexible and accessible training opportunities is a valuable approach, covering areas such as agribusiness management, sustainable agriculture, and hospitality. Prioritizing technical farming skills, customer service, and hospitality in training can greatly enhance the visitor experience during agritourism activities.

Ensuring safety protocols and compliance with agricultural regulations through training programs fosters a secure and legally compliant working environment. To encourage women's involvement in leadership roles and training initiatives, agribusinesses can establish mentorship programs, create a supportive work culture, and actively identify and develop women's talents within the organization.

By strategically implementing these initiatives, agribusinesses in Tirana can empower their workforce, fostering professional growth, ensuring compliance, and ultimately enhancing the overall success of their agritourism ventures.

- **Community Engagement and Events: Cultivating Connections for Agritourism**

The prospect of community engagement and events presents a golden opportunity for Tirana's agritourism sector to cultivate meaningful connections with local residents and visitors alike. Agritourism businesses hold the key to enhancing this engagement by organizing events, workshops, and collaborative initiatives that foster a sense of community. These activities can range from seasonal festivals celebrating local produce to educational programs on sustainable farming practices.

The primary drivers of this opportunity are agritourism businesses themselves, collaborating closely with local government bodies to secure necessary permits and logistical support. NGOs and



community associations can also play a crucial role by providing expertise, facilitating partnerships, and promoting these events to a wider audience.

To incorporate the voice of women in this opportunity, proactive measures should be taken to ensure their active participation and representation. Women owners, supported by NGOs and associations, can be instrumental in organizing events that highlight the contributions of women in agriculture and agritourism. Additionally, partnerships with women-led organizations and the inclusion of diverse perspectives in the planning process contribute to a more inclusive and vibrant community engagement strategy.

Agribusinesses in Tirana recognize the significance of cultivating community engagement and hosting events to enrich their agritourism ventures. Primarily, they can choose to organize on-site events directly at the farm, establishing a space where community members can actively participate in diverse activities and experiences. Moreover, forging partnerships with local businesses, community organizations, and artisans for joint events is pivotal, fostering a profound sense of community and simultaneously supporting local enterprises.

They can do this through engaging with the local community through collaborative efforts, seeking their input and involvement in event planning. This ensures that the activities resonate with the community's interests and preferences. Utilizing online platforms, including social media, community forums, and local event listings, is crucial for promoting upcoming events, expanding outreach, and generating excitement.

All of this can be done through hosting seasonal festivals celebrating local produce, traditions, and cultural heritage can be a powerful draw for both locals and tourists alike. Additionally, conducting educational workshops on sustainable farming practices, cooking classes, and other relevant topics offers a valuable opportunity to share knowledge with the community. To cater to a diverse audience, organizing family-friendly activities such as farm tours, petting zoos, and interactive experiences is essential.

By strategically implementing these community engagement and event initiatives, agribusinesses in Tirana can fortify their connections with the local community, amplify their brand visibility, and create a welcoming and inclusive agritourism environment.

- **Investment in Infrastructure: Nurturing Agritourism Growth**

The opportunity for investment in infrastructure stands as a pivotal avenue for catalyzing the growth of Tirana's agritourism sector. This initiative encompasses a spectrum of possibilities, and the collective efforts of various stakeholders can transform this vision into reality. Agritourism businesses can take the lead by identifying areas for improvement, such as upgrading facilities, enhancing accessibility, and incorporating eco-friendly technologies.

In Tirana, agribusinesses aiming to boost agritourism growth can strategically invest in infrastructure, encompassing various aspects to enhance the overall visitor experience. Directing resources towards on-farm enhancements, such as upgrading facilities and creating inviting visitor centers, contributes significantly to fostering a positive environment for tourists.

Collaboration with government initiatives focused on rural development and agritourism provides additional avenues for funding and support, strengthening the impact of infrastructure projects. Employing strategic planning and engaging in public-private partnerships are key methods to ensure the effective development of infrastructure aligned with long-term agribusiness goals and evolving agritourism needs.



Investing in visitor facilities, integrating technology, and implementing eco-friendly initiatives are vital components of this strategic approach. Moreover, active involvement of women in decision-making processes and project planning ensures a more diverse and inclusive perspective, contributing to the success of agritourism infrastructure projects.

Through these strategic initiatives, agribusinesses in Tirana can not only enhance their appeal to visitors but also create a sustainable and welcoming environment, thereby fostering the overall growth of the agritourism sector.

- **Presence in Agritourism Associations and Networks**

A promising opportunity beckons agribusinesses to explore and engage with agritourism associations and networks. This initiative envisions businesses actively participating in existing associations or collaboratively establishing networks, fostering collective growth through shared knowledge and sustainable practices.

Agribusinesses can take the lead by joining established associations or co-creating networks that facilitate information exchange and joint marketing efforts. Local government support becomes pivotal in encouraging these collaborations, offering resources and incentives for shared endeavors.

Exploring agritourism associations and networks is a valuable opportunity for agribusinesses in Tirana, offering avenues to enhance visibility and collaboration within the industry. Actively participating in local and regional agritourism associations and networks provides a platform to connect with like-minded businesses, share experiences, and stay abreast of industry trends. Engaging with the local Chamber of Commerce further facilitates networking opportunities, as it often hosts events that enable businesses to connect, collaborate, and advocate for common interests.

To maximize these opportunities, attending networking events, seminars, and workshops organized by agritourism associations is crucial. These gatherings offer a chance to meet potential collaborators, share insights, and stay informed about the latest industry developments. Utilizing online platforms, forums, and social media groups dedicated to agritourism provides a digital space for joining discussions, exchanging experiences, and exploring collaboration opportunities.

Actively engaging in collaborative initiatives with other agritourism businesses, such as joint marketing campaigns or themed events, showcases the diversity of agritourism experiences in the region. Moreover, fostering a culture of information sharing within the agritourism network can lead to mutual benefits, including shared knowledge, joint promotions, and collective advocacy.

To ensure gender inclusivity, agribusinesses can encourage women's participation in leadership roles within these associations. Establishing mentorship programs, providing training opportunities, and creating an inclusive environment amplify women's voices and contributions.

By strategically navigating and participating in agritourism associations and networks, agribusinesses in Tirana can cultivate collaboration, enhance visibility, and actively contribute to the growth and development of the local agritourism sector.

- **Cultivating Culinary Diversity: Empowering Women in Agribusiness Chef Roles**

The strategic promotion and inclusion of women as chefs in agribusinesses present multifaceted opportunities that can significantly benefit the agritourism sector. By collaborating with educational institutions, including culinary schools and vocational training centers, agribusinesses can tap into a pool of aspiring female chefs, thereby enriching their talent pool. This collaboration not only provides



women with the necessary skills and knowledge but also fosters a pipeline of culinary talent entering the agritourism industry. Engaging with local communities and women's groups serves as a means to identify and encourage women with existing culinary skills or a keen interest in cooking, further expanding the talent base.

Implementing mentorship programs within agribusinesses, led by experienced chefs, not only supports the professional growth of aspiring female chefs but also creates a supportive and inclusive work environment. These mentorship initiatives contribute to the retention and advancement of women in culinary roles, ensuring a diverse and skilled workforce. Specialized training opportunities, such as workshops and seminars, represent avenues to enhance women's culinary skills, providing them with additional tools for success in the agritourism culinary landscape.

Fostering an inclusive workplace culture that values and supports women in leadership roles is crucial for the sustained success of these initiatives. By establishing policies for equal opportunity hiring and offering flexible work arrangements, agribusinesses not only acknowledge but also actively address the unique challenges women may face, contributing to a more equitable and supportive work environment.

Showcasing the talent of women chefs in marketing materials and promotional campaigns serves to challenge gender stereotypes and inspire others. This representation not only highlights the diversity within the agritourism sector but also positions women as integral contributors to the culinary team. Facilitating networking opportunities for women chefs to connect with industry professionals further enhances their visibility, fostering career growth and potentially attracting a broader audience to agritourism establishments.

In essence, the strategic initiatives aimed at involving more women as chefs in agribusinesses create a win-win scenario. Not only do these efforts contribute to gender equality and diversity in the workforce, but they also enhance the overall culinary landscape of agritourism, making it more dynamic, inclusive, and appealing to a diverse clientele.



INTERVENTION STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS KEY CONSTRAINTS AND MAKE USE OF KEY OPPORTUNITIES

This section provides an overview of intervention priorities and corresponding activities within the agritourism sector. These priorities include critical areas such as human capital, empowering women in agribusiness chef roles, access to finance and quality standards. The below intervention strategy outlines the strategic initiatives and expected outcomes designed to empower and foster growth for the agritourism sector of the economy.

Priority Intervention 1	Human Capital			
Main Objective	Overcoming the human capital constraints faced by agritourism businesses in Tirana by addressing the skills gap, staffing challenges, and promoting gender diversity, encouraging sustainable growth and competitiveness in the sector.			
Identified barrier	Activities to address barriers	Potential stakeholders	Expected Outcome	Term of impact (short term/ medium/ long)
Significant skills gap among individuals engaged in different roles within the agritourism sector	Identification of key skill areas lacking in the current workforce through collaboration with agritourism businesses, industry experts, and educational institutions.	Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Municipality of Tirana, VET - AKPA, Albanian Council of Agribusiness, AIDA, Agricultural University of Tirana, Chambers of Commerce, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects	Reveal of substantial skills gap among individuals fulfilling various roles within the agritourism sector. Address of the identified gaps and improvement of the overall competency of the agritourism workforce.	Medium term
	Development of specialized training programs focusing on agriculture, hospitality, and entrepreneurship, in collaboration with agricultural experts, culinary professionals, and customer service trainers.	VET - AKPA, Albanian Council of Agribusiness, AIDA, Agricultural University of Tirana, Chambers of Commerce, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects	Increase of capacity addressing skill gaps in the agritourism sector.	Medium term
	Provision of on-site and off-site workshops to develop skills in agricultural practices, culinary expertise, and	Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, VET -	Enhancement of skill sets in agricultural practices, culinary expertise, and customer service	Short term



	customer service and education of agritourism businesses about the benefits of cross-training.	AKPA, Albanian Council of Agribusiness, AIDA, Agricultural University of Tirana, Chambers of Commerce, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects	among agritourism professionals. Increased awareness within agritourism businesses about the benefits of cross-training, promoting a more multi skilled and competent workforce.	
The remote locations of agritourism establishments challenges recruiting trained professionals, leading to a reliance on younger, less experienced individuals who may lack the needed professionalism for agritourism roles.	Development of partnerships with local educational institutions to create pipelines for skilled graduates.	Ministry of Finance & Economy, VET - AKPA, Albanian Council of Agribusiness, AIDA, Agricultural University of Tirana, Chambers of Commerce, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects	Encouragement of a continuous stream of well-prepared individuals entering the agritourism workforce, thereby increasing the talent pool in the sector.	Long term
	Implementation of targeted recruitment campaigns to attract qualified individuals, highlighting the unique aspects and benefits of agritourism employment.	Albanian Council of Agribusiness, Chambers of Commerce, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects	Increased awareness and appreciation of the unique aspects and benefits of working in agritourism, contributing to the recruitment of skilled professionals within the sector.	Medium term
Challenges in staff leaving after being trained. Agritourism businesses hesitate to invest in training programs due to the likelihood of employees leaving for competing organizations.	Introduction of competitive remuneration packages and benefits to incentivize staff to stay within the organization. Provision of recognition and rewards for employees who complete training programs and contribute to the organization's success.	Albanian Council of Agribusiness, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects, Agritourism businesses and farms	Creation of a strong incentive for staff to remain with the organization. Promoting a culture of skill retention and continuous professional development.	Long term
	Implementation of professional development programs to encourage career growth within the agritourism sector. Establishment of a	Albanian Council of Agribusiness, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects, Agritourism businesses and farms	Improvement of staff professional trajectory.	Medium term



	professional development fund to support employees in acquiring additional skills and certifications.			
	Conduction of surveys and interviews to understand the specific reasons behind staff turnover in agritourism establishments.	Albanian Council of Agribusiness, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects, Agritourism businesses and farms	Insights into the specific reasons behind staff leaving, enabling targeted strategies for retention and improvement	Short term
Gender stereotypes and biases contribute to the underrepresentation of women in culinary roles within agritourism businesses, often confining them to assistant positions. Systemic challenges further limit women's progress into leadership roles in the sector	Launch of a public awareness campaign challenging stereotypes in the culinary industry. Implementation of awareness campaigns to challenge gender stereotypes and biases within the agritourism sector.	Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Ministry of Finance & Economy, Municipality of Tirana, VET - AKPA, Albanian Council of Agribusiness, AIDA, Agricultural University of Tirana, Chambers of Commerce, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects	Challenge and dismantle gender stereotypes and biases. Promotion of inclusive and diverse environment, equal opportunities and breaking down barriers in both culinary and agritourism professions.	Medium term
	Partnership with culinary schools to encourage women to pursue careers in agritourism.	VET - AKPA, Albanian Council of Agribusiness, AIDA, Agricultural University of Tirana, Chambers of Commerce, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects	Support of women in pursuing careers in agritourism. Empowerment of women to thrive in diverse roles within the agritourism sector.	Long term
	Recognition and celebration of the achievements of women in agritourism through awards and recognition programs.	Albanian Council of Agribusiness, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects, Agritourism businesses and farms	Promotion of a culture of recognition and inspiring further advancements in their careers.	Medium term
	Establishment of mentorship programs to support women in pursuing leadership positions, showcasing	Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Ministry of Finance & Economy, Municipality of Tirana,	Featuring successful female role models, promoting a collaborative environment that empowers women and facilitates their	Short term



	successful female role models.	VET - AKPA, Albanian Council of Agribusiness, AIDA, Agricultural University of Tirana, Chambers of Commerce, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects	professional growth and development.	
	Creation of an online platform to connect experienced women professionals with those seeking mentorship.	Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Ministry of Finance & Economy, Municipality of Tirana, VET - AKPA, Albanian Council of Agribusiness, AIDA, Agricultural University of Tirana, Chambers of Commerce, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects	Provision of a virtual space for meaningful mentorship relationships, increasing knowledge transfer, skill development, and professional guidance for women in the industry.	Medium to Long term

Empowering Women in Agribusiness Chef Roles				
Priority Intervention 2				
Main Objective	Overcoming the human capital constraints faced by agritourism businesses in Tirana by addressing the skills gap, staffing challenges, and promoting gender diversity, encouraging sustainable growth and competitiveness in the sector.			
Identified barrier	Activities to address barriers	Potential stakeholders	Expected Outcome	Term of impact (short term/ medium/ long)
Lack of information channels regarding workshops, training programs and skill development.	Collaborate with educational institutions, including culinary schools and vocational training centres.	Ministry of Education, Professional Schools, NGOs, Ministry of Education, Vocational Training Centres, Albanian Agrobusiness Council, Association of Agrotourism Albania, Albanian Network for Rural Development	1.Enhanced women's culinary skills. 2.Creation of a pool of aspiring female chefs entering the	Medium term



	Offer specialized training opportunities, such as workshops and seminars.	Ministry of Education, Professional Schools, NGOs, Ministry of Education, Albanian Agribusiness Council; Association of Agrotourism Albania, Albanian Network for Rural Development	agritourism industry. 3. Enhanced the overall culinary landscape of agritourism, making it more dynamic, inclusive, and appealing to a diverse clientele.	Medium term
Less opportunities to engage with talented women chefs.	Implement mentorship programs within agribusinesses, led by experienced women chefs.	NGOs, Albanian Agribusiness Council, Association of Agrotourism Albania, Albanian Network for Rural Development		Medium term
	Engage with local communities and women's groups to identify and encourage women with existing culinary skills, further expand the talent base.	NGOs, Albanian Agribusiness Council, Association of Agrotourism Albania, Albanian Network for Rural Development		Medium term
	Facilitate networking opportunities for women chefs to connect with industry professionals nationally and internationally.	NGOs, Albanian Agribusiness Council, Association of Agrotourism Albania, Albanian Network for Rural Development, Municipality of Tirana		Medium term
	Showcase and promote the talented women chefs in marketing materials and promotional campaigns.	NGOs, Media, international organisations, Albanian Agrobusiness Council, Association of Agrotourism Albania, Albanian Network for Rural Development		Medium term
Lack of dedicated policies supporting women in leadership.	Establish policies for equal opportunities, hiring and offering flexible work arrangements.	Municipality of Tirana, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development		Long term
Priority Intervention 3	Access to Finance			
Main Objective	Overcoming the human capital constraints faced by agritourism businesses in Tirana by addressing the skills gap, staffing challenges, and promoting gender diversity, encouraging sustainable growth and competitiveness in the sector.			
Identified barrier	Activities to address barriers	Potential stakeholders	Expected Outcome	Term of impact (short term/



				medium/ long)
Lack of loans and financial investments	Design supportive financial policies for the farmers.	Financial Institutions, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Chambers, Municipality of Tirana, Ministry of State for the Protection of Entrepreneurship	1. Increase financial instruments for farmers. 2. Increase the low interest loans for young farmers and small farms. 3. Increase the investment for infrastructural developments of agritourism. 4. Increase the number of new agritourism and initiatives. 5. Improved financial knowledge and management.	Long term
	Design and offer funding programmes and support for young farmers and small farms.	Financial Institutions, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Chambers, Municipality of Tirana, Ministry of State for the Protection of Entrepreneurship		Long term
Lack of financial literacy of agritourism/farmers	Design and provide training programs and info sessions on how to apply for financial services.	Ministry of Economy and Finance, Municipality of Tirana, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of State for the Protection of Entrepreneurship, Financial Institutions, Chambers, AIDA, KASH, ANDR		Medium term
	Facilitation of procedures and decreasing bureaucracy and paperwork.	Ministry of Economy and Finance, Municipality of Tirana, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of State for the Protection of Entrepreneurship, Financial Institutions, Chambers, AIDA, KASH, ANDR		Medium term



Lack of centralized source of awareness	Chambers can initiate awareness campaigns to inform about funding options, market trends and collaborative initiatives.	Albanian Agrobusiness Council, Association of Agrotourism Albania, Albanian Network for Rural Development, Local Chambers, Business Development Centers, Ministry of State for the Protection of Entrepreneurship		Medium term
Absence of collaborative initiatives and structures	Establish agritourism hubs to provide a structured environment to network, learn, exchange experience and information etc.	Ministry of State for the Protection of Entrepreneurship, Municipality of Tirana, Associations		Medium term

Priority Intervention 4	Quality Standards			
Main Objective	Foster a culture of compliance, enhance infrastructure, and provide financial support to elevate the overall quality standards in the agritourism sector, thereby promoting sustainable growth and competitiveness.			
Identified barrier	Activities to address barriers	Potential stakeholders	Expected Outcome	Term of impact (short term/ medium/ long)
Limited awareness of international standards and inconsistent compliance practices in agritourism establishments.	Initiate comprehensive training/ workshop programs designed to educate agritourism establishments on relevant international standards. Collaborate with industry experts and regulatory bodies to conduct informative sessions that cover key aspects of compliance. Simultaneously, foster partnerships with local educational institutions to integrate these standards into relevant courses and	Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Ministry of Finance & Economy, Municipality of Tirana, Albanian Council of Agribusiness, AIDA, Chambers of Commerce, Albanian	Increased proficiency and adaptability of the agritourism workforce due to ongoing training initiatives. A resilient and adaptable agritourism sector that can navigate evolving international standards and contribute to the sector's long-term success.	Medium term Long Term



	<p>curricula. This approach ensures a dual strategy where both current business owners and the next generation are well versed in international standards.</p>	<p>Agritourism Association, Donor projects</p>		
	<p>Introduce/ Require recognition programs or certifications for agritourism establishments that exhibit exemplary compliance with international standards.</p>	<p>Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Albanian Council of Agribusiness, Chambers of Commerce, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects</p>	<p>A culture of continuous improvement and a sector that is recognized globally for its commitment to compliance and quality standards.</p>	<p>Long term</p>
	<p>Support for Academia and VC Interactions</p>	<p>Universities (department of agriculture/plant protection), VET schools</p>	<p>Develop material for university agricultural schools and agriculture colleges on the role of standards, quality assurance, accreditation and metrology in ensuring quality of agriculture, production and manufacturing processes in the VCs; Facilitate interactions between Academic Institutions and farmers, including practical placements for students in farm and food processing companies to establish long-term sustainable relationships.</p>	<p>Long Term</p>



	Awareness building	MTE, Experts, C4Q Influencers in the selected VCs	Develop an annual awareness campaign for the rural agricultural community on the importance and benefits of quality of goods and services for presentation during world quality month (November) in Albania and regionally (cross-sectoral);	Long Term
Quality Infrastructure (QI)	Provide the appropriate internationally recognized standards, metrology and accreditation services for the agritourism value chain.	MoFE (DPS, DPA and DPM), Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Albanian Council of Agribusiness, Chambers of Commerce, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects	Improved quality assurance practices across the agritourism value chain. Agritourism establishments align their operations with established benchmarks, ensuring compliance with essential quality standards. Improved Consumer Confidence in the safety and quality of agritourism products and services.	Medium term Long Term
	Provide testing, inspection and accredited product and management system certification as acceptable evidence that the exported products meet technical regulations and those demanded by the market (both contractually or inferred).	Private sector companies, Donors	Implementation of the measures needed to achieve international recognition in the selected VCs including (ex. Organic, Kosher, GlobalGAP, Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance), all in which can add value to the products for export markets.	Long term
	Explore and advocate for financial assistance programs or grants	Government Bodies, NGOs, Donors, Chamber	Engage with governmental and non-governmental	Long term



Financial Constraints	specifically designed for agritourism establishments.	of Commerce, Financial Institutions, International Development Agencies	organizations to secure funding for compliance-related initiatives.	
	Establish cost-sharing initiatives where multiple agritourism businesses collaborate to share the financial burden of implementing quality standards.	Albanian Council of Agribusiness, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects, Agritourism businesses and farms	Collective sharing of the financial burden associated with implementing quality standards by fostering a supportive network, ensuring that even smaller establishments can access resources and expertise, ultimately enhancing the overall quality and compliance standards within the agritourism sector in Tirana.	Medium term
	Establish partnerships with financial institutions to create tailored financial products or loans for agritourism businesses looking to invest in quality infrastructure.	Banks, Microcredit Institution, Albanian Council of Agribusiness, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects, Agritourism businesses and farms	Increased accessibility to funds for investments in quality infrastructure by providing agritourisms establishments with customized financial solutions, fostering their ability to implement and uphold stringent quality standards, thereby enhancing the overall quality of agritourism offerings in Tirana.	Long Term
	Work with governmental bodies to implement tax incentives for agritourism establishments investing in quality standards.	Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Ministry of Finance &	A more favorable financial environment for businesses by encouraging and rewarding compliance with quality standards, promoting the	Medium term



		Economy, Municipality of Tirana, VET - AKPA, Albanian Council of Agribusiness, AIDA, Agricultural University of Tirana, Chambers of Commerce, Albanian Agritourism Association, Donor projects	adoption of best practices in the agritourism sector and contributing to the overall improvement of quality infrastructure in Tirana.	
Agritourism value chain compliance with international standards and technical regulations	Identification and strengthening of relevant Producer and Manufacturer Associations	Producer and Manufacturer associations for the VC; AIDA; Konfindustria; Academia; Experts	Identification or support of the formation of active and strong producer associations by helping them to make a positive contribution to developing the agritourism VC (e.g. by benchmarking with other local and international associations; development of a strategic plan; packaging of product data available to the associations and academia for inputs to the development of appropriate standards; profiling capacity and utilization of existing processing facilities; incorporation of new technologies, etc.)	Long term
	Design and implementation of a supplier development programme supported	Albanian Government; AIDA; Experts, Albanian Council of Agribusiness, Albanian	Training and expertise to be provided to business support institutions (e.g. AIDA) and other partners involved, to ensure the	Long Term



		Agritourism Association, Donor projects	development of the necessary competencies and capacities, e.g. on how to build a successful supplier programme in line with international best practice.	
	On-line directory		Development of an on-line platform (directory) containing information on the Agritourism VC (e.g. market information, buyers, listing of research, processing facilities, technical regulations, standards, conformity assessment bodies active in the industry, funding agencies, associations that assist with exports, etc.) for all relevant stakeholders	Long term
No implementation of GAP, GACP, GAHP, GMP, and other relevant quality management systems as appropriate along the value chain	Evaluation of the Gap analysis	NGO experts with academic background; Donors, academic institutions, Associations	Evaluation of the current practices and identification of the areas where the use of standards will enhance the quality of the Agritourism products and increase productivity/yields. Undertaking surveys to identify skills and knowledge gaps needed by the various actors involved in the Agrotourism value chain.	Medium Term
	Development of Guidance Tools	Industry Associations;	Development of guidance tools for	Long Term



		Experts	GAP, GACP, GAHP, GMP and quality management systems (e.g. ISO 9001, HACCP, Kosher and Halal) as needed by the Agritourism value chain.	
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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: STAKEHOLDERS MAPPING TABLE

Stakeholder type	Stakeholder Name	Stakeholder Policies/Programs/Projects relevant to the sector
Government	The Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTM)	<p>MTM is the primary and key actor in the enabling environment for the agritourism sector. They promote investments in tourism; help them increase the standards and quality of services; Increasing the accommodation capacity and providing quality accommodation of agritourism structures; Increasing well-known hotel "brands" and tourist operators; Improving the tourist infrastructure in agritourism; Categorization and certification⁹² and increasing the services of agritourism structures. The selected services are also harmonized with the National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development 2019 – 2023⁹³.</p> <p>MTM is in continuous cooperation with the new Albanian Agritourism Association, to coordinate the services offered to agritourism.</p>
Government	The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)	<p>MARD together with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the MTM, the MFE, have launched the "Agribusiness and Tourism Support Program"⁹⁴ as one of the mechanisms by which agribusiness and tourism are supported. This Program offers and will continue to offer support in dedicated lines of credit for agribusiness, facilitating agribusiness for risk sharing, giving incentives at the level of 10% for investments for agribusiness as well as technical assistance. The program is part of the coordinated efforts of the EBRD, the Albanian Government and the EU to improve access to financing for Albanian SMEs that develop activity in these sectors. About 180 million euros have been allocated for this loan program and through risk sharing with partner banks in the country.</p> <p>MARD launched an application called "Portali i Fermerit"⁹⁵ (Farmers' Portal), to provide smallholders with real-time prices at open-air markets across the country. The aim is to help small farmers look beyond guesthouses to sell their produce across Albania and internationally.</p>
Public – Private Initiative	TIP platform⁹⁶	<p>This platform is an opportunity to contribute to the sustainable development of rural tourism in Albania. Through a competitive process, TIP will evaluate the best ideas of the submitted models. Selected applicants will receive support,</p>

⁹² Application for equipment with "Certificate Entity certified for agritourism activity": https://e-albania.al/eAlbaniaServices/UseService.aspx?service_code=14014

⁹³ NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT 2019 – 2023: <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/National-Tourism-Strategy-2019-2023-EN.pdf>

⁹⁴ EBRD steps up support for tourism and agribusiness in Albania: <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-steps-up-support-for-tourism-and-agribusiness-in-albania-.html>

⁹⁵ Farmer's Portal: <https://www.agroalbania.al/>

⁹⁶ Tourism Innovation Platform: <https://tip.com.al/>



Government		including mentoring during hackathons in 6 regions, funding opportunities up to "10,000 euros" and opportunities to create new connections with similar businesses in Albania, especially in the counties of Tirana, Shkodra, Vlora, Gjirokastra , Korça, and Dibra. TIP is made possible with the support of GIZ, MTM, MARD and private service providers.
	Agricultural and Rural Development Agency (ARDA)	ARDA gives financial support from the state budget fund and the EU for agribusinesses and agritourism businesses, through National support scheme for agriculture ⁹⁷ . The criteria are to be businesses in the field of agritourism. Implement the project with their own funds, own or rent land, regular financial documentation, etc. Businesses with female representatives benefit first. IPARD ⁹⁸ is an EU and state budget funded program to support Albanian agriculture. IPARD offers Grants to farmers based on the application projects they make. Applications must be for investments that the program supports, within the terms, rules and criteria of the application, according to each call for applications. While the IPARD III Program is under preparation an upgraded financial support of 146 million euros will be injected to the sector.
Government	The Ministry of Finance and Economy (MFE)	The MFE main aim is to make a business promotion policy. Drafting policies for business promotion. Organization of tables for dialogue to hear sector challenges, barriers and identify opportunities. The MFE is working on an export guide. Facilitating participation in fairs.
Private Organization	Albanian Council of Agribusiness (KASH)	KASH aim is the protection of interests of the private sector, coordination of activity between the public and private sectors. Representation in the executive and legislative bodies of the private sector operating in the field of Food Economy. Promotion of agribusiness, including Rural Tourism. One of the services it offers is the supply and promotion of the variety of indigenous organic products. It is implementing an assistance program for agritourism subjects, for the processing of organic waste in rural areas, for the production of ecological organic fertilizer from this waste, for the deodorization process, as well as that of disinfection ⁹⁹ . KASH uses its own network and that of member associations throughout the country to cooperate with agritourism entities. KASH has 25 national associations and 12 Regional Agribusiness Councils with 235 elected to their governing boards. The "Tourist Union of Albania" association is also a member of the Agribusiness Council. Also, KASH publishes twice a month the Agribusiness Newspaper with 16 pages, it offers it for free for agritourism businesses and there are articles about Agritourism recently taking a priority place ¹⁰⁰ .

⁹⁷ National Support Scheme for Agriculture and Rural Development 2020:

<https://azhbr.gov.al/service/investo-ne-agroturizem-dhe-perfito-50-financim/>

⁹⁸ IPARD program: <https://azhbr.gov.al/programi-ipard/>

⁹⁹ Albanian Agribusiness Council: <https://kash.org.al/>

¹⁰⁰ Agribusiness newspaper: <https://kash.org.al/gazeta/>



<p>Government</p>	<p>The Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA)</p>	<p>AIDA's mission is to increase the competitiveness of the private sector, support MSMEs of different sectors, strengthen the export potential of the country, promote the support of foreign direct investments in Albania, as well as promote the tourist potential of the country. AIDA through strategic investment law promotes investments in Agritourism¹⁰¹. AIDA supports agritourism businesses by enabling them to participate in Albania's stand at national and international fairs, as well as promoting their products in the Made in Albania "Choose the country" campaign. Also, AIDA has a constant focus on informing these businesses about the activities taking place, organizing informational sessions as appropriate. There is one agritourism business up to now, beneficiary of the incentives of this law¹⁰². In 2022, AIDA in cooperation with KASH has published a brochure "Food Economy Agriculture" where the development of Agritourism is included among the sub-sectors¹⁰³. In 2022 AIDA also published the annually online brochure "Factsheet: Agriculture, Agrotourism and Aquaculture Sector"¹⁰⁴ aiming to give insights of the sector for the potential foreign and domestic investors. Some agritourism businesses that want to promote their products, AIDA has supported them through the "Made in Albania" campaign, where it has published 3 catalogs with Albanian products¹⁰⁵.</p>
<p>Education</p>	<p>Agricultural University of Tirana (UBT)¹⁰⁶</p>	<p>As per UBT agritourism is an industry that connects two priority sectors for the country (agriculture and tourism), develops rural areas, contributes to employment (average 9 for each agritourism). Priority importance for the economic development of rural areas and the return of a successful model for long-term development. UBT has a two-year professional study program "agritourism and hospitality". There is a strong connection through the Faculty of Economics and Agribusiness. They organize study visits in agritourism businesses. Correspondence of curricula is around 60% of what the market requires. Every year, 20-30 students register at UBT for the agritourism and hospitality study program. Some academics of this university are engaged in post-doctorate work in this sector¹⁰⁷.</p>

¹⁰¹ Strategic Investments: <https://aida.gov.al/sq/investimet-strategjike/kriteret-e-perzgjedhjes/sektoret-dhennensektoret>

¹⁰² Decision No. 17/5 Date 18 / 07/ 2022 for the approval of the "Assisted Procedure Investment/Strategic Investor" Status for the "Zagroturizum" Investment Project: [https://aida.gov.al/images/PDF/Vendimet-e-komitetit/VENDIM%20I%20KOMITETIT%20TE%20INVESTIMEVE%20STRATEGJIKE%20\(KIS\)_ZAGROTURIZEM.pdf](https://aida.gov.al/images/PDF/Vendimet-e-komitetit/VENDIM%20I%20KOMITETIT%20TE%20INVESTIMEVE%20STRATEGJIKE%20(KIS)_ZAGROTURIZEM.pdf)

¹⁰³ Publication "Economics of Food - Agriculture": <https://aida.gov.al/sq/te-reja-publikime/publikime/1124-ekonomia-%20e-food-agriculture>

¹⁰⁴ Publication "Agriculture, Agritourism and Aquaculture Sector 2022": <https://aida.gov.al/sq/te-reja-publikime/publikime/1245-the-sector-of-agriculture-agritourism-and-aquaculture-2022>

¹⁰⁵ Catalog Made in Albania 3: <https://aida.gov.al/sq/te-reja-publikime/publikime/1305-katalogu-made-in-albania-3>

¹⁰⁶ Agriculture University of Tirana: <https://www.ubt.edu.al/>

¹⁰⁷ Assessing the relationship between biodiversity conservation and slow food culture in selected protected areas in Albania: <https://doi.org/10.13057/biodiv/d230316>



Government	AKPA	Vocational Education and Training (VET) are also an important vein in fulfilling the sector skills. They offer a lot of professional courses that fit the needs of this sector, such as courses in agriculture or tourism and hospitality. AKPA is the state agency designated to supervise these schools and, in its website, there is the updated list of schools and courses offered ¹⁰⁸ .
Private Loans	Financial Institutions	<p>Intesa Sanpaolo Bank Albania offers customized products for agribusinesses to encourage their growth in the market¹⁰⁹. Through the agribusiness loan products offered from this Bank, agritourism businesses and farms can purchase equipment, production lines and modern machinery or the necessary materials that will improve their products, build assets or suitable environments for storing inventory, increase the planted areas by investing in greenhouses, or increase their livestock. For all farmers and producers, processors, traders, and collectors, it offers credit financing, different types of credit lines and advances on contracts for any investment plan needed by the agribusinesses.</p> <p>FED INVEST offers credit line customized for agritourism businesses and farms¹¹⁰. BKT Albania¹¹¹ offers banking and financial services, financial support, and participation with GGF. NOA¹¹² finances the establishment and expansion of the activity of Albanian businesses and farmers, and aims to contribute directly to the improvement of the quality of life for thousands of families who benefit from the increase in income, from new jobs, from the increase in economic activity, as in cities as well as in rural areas of the country. With 25 years of experience and thousands of financings for farmers who have sought to expand their agricultural activity, NOA's financial products for Albanian farmers and Agri processors are adapted to every need, to every calendar and to every agricultural crop.</p>
Private Organization	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tirana (CCIT)	CCIT offers services such as consultations with business communities in the interest of their challenges and is in contact with the media to make them public for a wider range of interested parties. Every year, it organizes a certain number of training sessions with employees of different businesses on certain topics according to interest, including issues of strategic management and business planning, financial management, project management, internationalization, marketing, etc. Organizes fairs and exhibitions in the country, but also facilitates businesses to participate in international fairs. It promotes them in its activities and fairs, one of the most

¹⁰⁸ Professional education: <https://www.puna.gov.al/profili/punekerkes/arsimiProfesional>

¹⁰⁹ A new agricultural economy for Albania: <https://www.intesasanpaolobank.al/en/retail/bota-jone/growing-business/A-new-agricultural-economy-for-Albania.html>

¹¹⁰ FED INVEST Products: <https://www.fedinvest.al/produktet?kredia>

¹¹¹ Eco Loan for Individuals: <https://www.bkt.com.al/me-duhet-kredi/kredia-eko>

¹¹² NOA Products: https://noafin.al/kredi/familje-individe/kesti-fiks?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA6byqBhAWEiwAnGCA4BBxVS1nAbxquVcBZyybfvHiF9xyiQEzrERm9BNdcCbddsbtXAbk_hoCySoQAvD_BwE



Private Organization		successful fair that CCIT organizes is AGRO ¹¹³ . Provides specialized legal, scientific and technical consultancy for its members as well as all businesses operating in the district of Tirana in the field of Industrial Property (Trademarks and service marks, Patents of inventions; Geographical Names; Industrial Designs; Law of the Author; Protection of Industrial Property issues before courts of all levels.
	Institute for Sustainable Development in Agriculture and Tourism (InSET)¹¹⁴	InSET main goal is to contribute to the further and sustainable development of the tourism and agriculture sectors. Encouraging entrepreneurial culture in tourism and agriculture with the aim of creating new jobs and increasing well-being in the community. Provides training and consultancy for actors involved in the tourism and agriculture sectors with the aim of transferring knowledge and raising the necessary human capacities. It offers consultancy for all members of the Agritourism Association of Albania, for projects and consultancy, advocacy, marketing, etc.
Private Program	Global Quality and Standards Program (GQSP) Albania¹¹⁵	GQSP is a program funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and implemented by the United Nations for Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). The overall objective of the country project in Albania is for market access of SMEs in the medicinal and aromatic products (MAP) and fruit and vegetable (F&V) value chains (VC) to be sustainably increased through stronger quality and standards compliance capacity. The project aims to align Albania's Agri-Food quality infrastructure institutions and services. The awareness campaign will cover the three main areas of quality infrastructure, namely metrology, accreditation and standardization, and capitalize on established global efforts in this sense, such as the world metrology, accreditation and standard days and the quality month (November). This program has close collaboration and coordination with the respective national institutions (i.e., DPS, DPA and DPM) in the development of the campaign. The awareness campaign is and will continue to explore the feasibility of establishing a national quality promotion forum, as well as a joint collaboration between MARD, MFE and other key stakeholders. It also aims to support women in advancing in these sectors. The role of women in protected crops harvesting and in post-harvest activities is particularly important, and as such they must be a key target for culture for quality efforts, as they represent the backbone of the workforce dealing with a key step related to food safety. Most women in the F&V sector have no previous education in agriculture, other than that acquired through working with their male peers. Moreover, participation in

¹¹³ Tirana Chamber of Commerce and Industry: <https://www.cci.al/en/>

¹¹⁴ Institute for Sustainable Development, Environment and Tourism: <https://inset.al/who-we-are/>

¹¹⁵ UNIDO launches Global Quality and Standards Programme in Albania: <https://albania.un.org/en/182029-unido-launches-global-quality-and-standards-programme-albania#:~:text=The%20project%20%E2%80%9Cstrengthening%20Quality%20and,capacity%20in%20selected%20value%20chains>



Private Project		training activities offered by public extension services or other institutions is limited for women, which is particularly true in the context of rural areas. This reduces access to information and know-how among women, inhibiting their power to take production decisions. The program sees it crucial to ensure their participation in capacity-building activities organized under the project, which shall take into account the different needs of men and women in terms of skill levels; safety and security, timing, etc.
	RisiAlbania Project	This project's purpose is to create jobs to stay in the private sector. RisiAlbania ¹¹⁶ has a focus on support for the Agribusiness, Tourism, and ICT sectors. In Agribusiness, the focus is mainly on supporting the export of Fruits, Vegetables and Medicinal Plants to export to high value markets. In this direction, the private sector has been supported by promoting innovative models in the implementation of Quality Standards in Agribusiness (GlobalG.A.P, GRASP, and other standards) in stimulating innovative business models, new practices in agribusiness, mainly in the Fruit and Vegetable sector. fresh, and Medicinal and Aromatic Plants. The other aspect is the support of sustainable tourism by promoting and supporting new products, knowledge about sustainable tourism, cooperation between actors in both sectors in the promotion of good practices and the promotion and provision of information for touristic regions/destinations (such as Visit Gjirokastra).
Private Organization	Albanian Agritourism Association (SHASH)¹¹⁷	SHASH mission is to protect the interests of agritourism businesses and farms, to contribute to the long-term and sustainable development of the agritourism industry, and more broadly, of the Agriculture and Tourism sectors. Supportive in undertaking projects that promote and encourage activities of an economic, social and cultural nature in function of the dynamic and sustainable development of the agritourism industry and the sectors that link agriculture and tourism. It supports the causes and problems of the agritourism sector, lobbying for them, until the problem is solved. Currently, in cooperation with GIZ, it has successfully completed two calls/projects which supported material and training on the topics: "Indigenous seeds" and Hospitality Services Management". There are also three projects under development with the theme: "Support in terms of Food Safety", "Support in terms of Kitchen", and "Support in Landscape Architecture", where for each of the projects there are four beneficiaries, a total of twenty (20) subjects agritourism throughout the country.

¹¹⁶ RisiAlbania: <https://www.risialbania.al/>

¹¹⁷ Albanian Agritourism Association: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/agritourism-association-albania-831563227/>



<p>International Organization</p>	<p>GIZ Albania¹¹⁸</p>	<p>GIZ Albania supports the sector through policy making; strengthening businesses, turning agrotourism into a tourist product, offering technical support, and working together to identify needs and services. International promotion, links with tour operators, international expertise. By working with the sector, it indirectly strengthens the role of women. Future initiatives it will undertake is the Package of agritourism services; linking agritourism with indigenous seeds and local products; Agritourism tours; etc.</p>
<p>Private Organization</p>	<p>Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD)</p>	<p>ANRD focus is related to advocacy for sustainable rural development, capacity building of various actors on integrated local development, networking for exchange and promotion of good practices¹¹⁹. Training and capacity building related to local cross-sectoral partnership; technical assistance in drafting local development strategies; participatory and bottom-up advocacy for policies related to real challenges and needs; innovation support and piloting. ANRD has contacts with agritourism businesses and farms and invites them to activities such as advocacy and training. Furthermore, ANRD advocates that the inclusion of agritourism in the Leader approach is a critical issue. Some of ANRD initiatives¹²⁰ to support this sector are: Slow food¹²¹; the Lakes of Albania project, GREAT project funded by AICS and implemented by UN women; the Albanian Rural Parliament, which among the topics addressed also includes agritourism.</p>
<p>Private Organization</p>	<p>Help Albania NGO¹²²</p>	<p>Help Albania support aims to enhance the socio-economic stability of the region through the economic empowerment of marginalized groups which will in turn enhance their social inclusion and economic prosperity. One of the agritourism farms interviewed has benefited a grant of 2000 Euro from this organization to improve the outside decorations of the farm.</p>
<p>International Organization</p>	<p>The American Chamber of Commerce in Albania (AmCham)¹²³</p>	<p>The main goals of AmCham are to develop mutually beneficial economic relations between the U.S. and Albania; to develop similar economic relations with Europe and other regions; to promote local economic development and make other contributions for the benefit of Albania and the Balkan region; to monitor U.S. legislation and policies that affect the competitiveness of United States businesses abroad, especially in relation to economic developments in Albania; to monitor Albanian legislation and policies that affect business and economic development; and to be an effective partner with</p>

¹¹⁸ GIZ Albania: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/294.html>

¹¹⁹ Albanian Network for Rural Development: <https://anrd.al/kreu/>

¹²⁰ The postulates of the Green Agreement are transferred to small Albanian farms through the pilot investments of the "Farm to Table" Academy: <https://anrd.al/lajme/postulatet-e-marveshjes-se-gjelber-transferohen-ne-fermat-e-vogla-shqiptare-permes-investimeve-pilote-te-akademise-nga-ferma-ne-tryeze/>

¹²¹ Convivia and communities in Albania: <https://www.slowfood.com/nazioni-condotte/albania/>

¹²² Socio-economic empowerment of vulnerable groups in Albania: <https://help-albania.org/blog/2022/02/17/socio-economic-empowerment/>

¹²³ American Chamber of Commerce in Albania: <https://amcham.com.al/about/mission-values/>



and an intermediary between government, businesses, and the media.



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