

Call for ideas to promote sustainable tourism in Albania leading to job creation

1. Introduction

The RisiAlbania Project is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), in partnership by the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Albania and implemented by a consortium consisting of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and Partners Albania for Change and Development. The overall goal of the project is to contribute to an increase in employment opportunities for young women and men (age 15-29) in Albania. This goal will be achieved through:

- (i) Enhanced growth and job creation by the private sector in three selected subsectors agro business, tourism, and ICT,
- (ii) Improved access to job opportunities and labor market information and services (intermediation), and
- (iii) Improved skills of young people by improving the offer of private training providers in the three selected sectors (labor supply).

In tourism, seasonality and a concentration on coastal areas are among the most prominent symptoms of a current market dysfunction in the Albanian tourism sector: there are few products that offer alternative experiences for tourists and the capacities of rural businesses to engage in tourism activities are weak. However, international tourists have trip requests that far exceed this high seasonality trend: there is potential to expand Albania's tourism offer to cover additional months.

Moreover, Albania has great potential to enter the sustainable tourism market and offer to tourists to experience new cultures, encounter and engage with local people and to live authentic experiences. Therefore, new sustainable tourism packages have inclusive impact in urban and rural communities. In Phase 2, RisiAlbania supported local tour operators to develop sustainable tourism packages that include many rural areas and offer employment opportunities for young people.

2. Objectives of the Call

RisiAlbania goal is to increase capacities of local tour operators to promote sustainable tourism packages, following international standards¹ and in line with the [National](#)

¹ An example definition of sustainability is given by GSTC: 'Sustainable Tourism refers to sustainable practices in and by the tourism industry. It is an aspiration to acknowledge all impacts of tourism, both positive and negative. It aims to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the positive ones (Negative impacts to a destination include economic leakage, damage to the natural environment and overcrowding to name a few.

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Tourism Strategy², and enable them to access new tourist segments and markets. We invite local tour operators to submit proposals they can implement with RisiAlbania support. We will support proposals that promote touristic products which extend beyond the high season and target sustainable tourism, proposals that will enable TOs to comply to specific criteria of sustainable tourism standards (such as GSTC or others) in existing or new products, proposals that promote thematic routes, and other ideas that enable tour operators to access sustainable national and international markets. It is expected that increased access in sustainable tourism markets will result in increases of sales, and job creation in tour operators, guesthouses, and other tourism businesses.

The following criteria will be considered in choosing the proposals:

- The new sustainable products are developed and organized in collaboration with the rural businesses and communities, in line with sustainable standard recommendation.
- The tours create new jobs, both direct and indirect, for young women and men (for example, by bringing tourists to remote areas where local inhabitants can sell their services).
- Tour packages are organized during shoulder or winter seasons and/or extend the duration of the stay during the high season and meet sustainability standards.
- At least 30% of the per nights of the tours take place in rural villages or small remote cities: this means that while the tour can include major touristic sites, it should also cover rural areas.
- Tour packages submitted for the call need to be environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable (show mechanisms, processes and tools used: in protecting cultural interactions & heritage, artifacts; in conserving resources and reducing pollution, carbon footprint etc).

Applicants should:

- Be registered incoming tour agencies in Albania and have a proven track record of selling and running tour packages.
- Have links to international agencies and be able to use these links to promote new travel packages.
- Have their own marketing channels such as Website and social media.

Each proposal needs to specify what type of support will be required (see section 3 below).

Positive impacts to a destination include job creation, cultural heritage preservation and interpretation, wildlife preservation landscape restoration, and more)²

² National Tourism Strategy 2019-2023.

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3. Content of the proposal

The proposal must specify the strategy for the marketing and promotion of the tour packages, and need for support from RisiAlbania:

- **Business overview.** Brief overview of your business including staffing, sales volumes and number of clients over at least the past 3 years. [maximum half a page].
- **Vision and growth strategy.** Present the business growth vision in the medium and long term? Where do you see your company in the future? What do you want to change? Explain why you want to change it and how will you do it. [maximum one page].
- **Marketing Strategy.** A brief description of your sustainable tour packages to be promoted including geographic location and unique selling points. Provide a clear competitive analysis of other competing products in the Albanian market. Explain which new market are targeting and why you believe there is demand for such a product. Provide a marketing strategy on how you plan to sell the tour packages to the new markets, and the projections of the numbers of tourist and in time. Estimate sales forecasts, and whether an increase in sales will lead to developing other similar packages etc. Where applicable, include a description of the kind of support that the tour operator provides to rural businesses to ensure standards are respected (e.g. hospitality trainings, information network, rescue and first aid trainings, advice on authentic restoration...) [maximum two pages].
- **Impact.** Describe the impact the packages have in the rural areas of Albania, including a list with the cities, villages, the local businesses and actors that are involved (as guest houses, restaurants, producers, artisans, cultural activity organisers). Outline how increasing sales of the tour packages will help create jobs. [maximum one page].
- **RisiAlbania support.** Provide an indicative budget showing your financial contribution, and the financial support that you expect from RisiAlbania [maximum one page].
****Note that RisiAlbania does not cover fixed costs such as rent, salaries or utilities.***

Applicants must submit electronically:

- Business proposal ([download template here](#))
- Financial plan ([download template here](#))
- Historic Extract from National Business Centre (QKB)
- Balance sheet / Expenditure statements for the last 3 years (if applicable)
- Latest audit report (if applicable)
- List of permanent staff of the company and organization chart

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4. Submission of the proposals:

We expect proposals to be submitted in English via e-mail by **18th March 2022, at 14:00**. Proposals handed after this deadline will not be accepted.

The email must be addressed to info@risialbania.al with the subject line “**Promoting sustainable tourism in Albania**”. Proposals should be sent as .pdf documents and should be signed in all pages.

For any questions you might have related the application, please, write by email: info@risialbania.al within March 16th, 2022.

5. Selection process

The proposals submitted to RisiAlbania will be evaluated and scored against the following criteria.

Selection criteria	Scores (100 total)
Number of new jobs that will be created at the tour operators and rural businesses	35
Vision for expansion in sustainable tourism. Ideas that contribute to extend the season will be favorably considered.	35
The number of rural businesses involved in the packages, indicating the value of increased income, and number of people benefitting from employment opportunities	20
Value for money of the expected support	10

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