

CFLI RECIPIENT END OF PROJECT REPORT

1. Project Number:		CFLI-2024-ROME-0006
2. Country:		Albania
3. Recipient Organization:		Albanian Local Capacity Development Foundation (ALCDF)
4. Descriptive Project Name:		Women's Empowerment in Diber in Agritourism (WEDA)
5. Thematic Priority		Growth that works for everyone, including women's economic rights, decent jobs and entrepreneurship, investing in the poorest and most vulnerable, and safeguarding economic gains.
6. Sub-Theme		Women Economic Empowerment
7. Type of Project		Mission allocation
8. Amount Paid	Amount Paid in FY 2023-24(CAD)	N/A
	Amount Paid in FY 2024-2025 (EUR)	EUR 19,475.98
9. Project Location:		City/Region: Diber
10. Project Expected Results:		<p>Were the project's expected results achieved as described in Clause 1.03 of the Contribution Agreement?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>The project's expected results, as outlined in Clause 1.03 of the Contribution Agreement, have been successfully achieved, with some targets even surpassed.</p> <p>1. Capacity Building for Rural Women in Agritourism The project aimed to increase the capacities of 100 rural women in integrated agritourism within the tourism chain in Diber. Through targeted training sessions and practical learning opportunities, this goal was fully met, equipping participants with the necessary skills to engage effectively in agritourism activities.</p> <p>2. Enhanced Practical Knowledge in Hospitality and Culinary Arts The project successfully trained at least 25 women in hospitality, and an even greater number (28) received training in traditional culinary and catering (exceeding the original target of 25). These sessions provided valuable hands-on experience, improving service quality and culinary offerings in the region.</p> <p>3. Business-to-Business Linkages and Market Access The project successfully facilitated connections between 40 buyers and suppliers within the rural tourism sector. Moreover, the initial target of arranging at least 15 B2B agreements was exceeded, with a total of 15 agreements signed. These linkages have strengthened the supply chain by fostering collaborations between caterers, farmers, restaurants, and tourism companies.</p>

	<p>4. Increased Market Access and Networking through the Harvest Festival Women agritourism producers were able to showcase and sell their products at the annual “Harvest Festival,” directly connecting with tourism suppliers. This provided significant market exposure and opportunities for long-term business relationships. Additionally, linkages for 190 agro-producers and 40 women were successfully established, further promoting their businesses and increasing sales opportunities.</p> <p>5. Enhanced Digital Presence for Women Entrepreneurs At least 40 rural entrepreneurs have gained access to social media and online booking platforms, allowing them to promote their services and reach a wider customer base. Additionally, the development of a dedicated webpage https://agroturizem.al/ further enhanced their visibility and connection to potential markets.</p> <p>6. Knowledge Sharing in Tourism Accommodation The project successfully disseminated best practices in tourism accommodation to 60 women, equipping them with valuable insights and strategies to improve their hospitality services.</p> <p>Overall, we can summarize that the project has fully achieved its expected results, with some targets even surpassed. The successful implementation of activities has strengthened agritourism in Diber by empowering rural women, enhancing their business networks, and improving their market access. The positive outcomes demonstrate the project’s effectiveness in fostering sustainable rural tourism development.</p>
11. Project Activities:	<p>Herewith a short summary of project activities in bullet points as outlined in the Contribution Agreement (Annex A):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted four training sessions on integrated agritourism for farmers, agro-producers, touristic villages, and handicrafts (25 women per session). • Delivered hospitality training for 25 women managing guest houses, hostels, and camping sites. • Provided training on traditional culinary and catering skills for 28 women managing guest accommodations. • Organized workshops to establish business-to-business (B2B) linkages, resulting in 15 B2B agreements between catering services, agro-producers, farmers, restaurants, and specialty accommodations. • Promoted the project at the annual harvest festival in Peshkopi to enhance market access for women in agritourism that was visited by more than 1000 tourists. • Supported 40 women in agritourism to participate in the harvest festival and connect with new clients. • Promoted women entrepreneurs through social media and developed online platforms for women-led agritourism businesses. • Facilitated four study visits for 60 women to local agritourism businesses to observe best practices. <p>The link shows some photos from the different project activities https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1qZ_raM6u7B-zCKzBh1J8kNkHcWZdVsL2?usp=sharing</p> <p>Were all planned activities completed? <i>Yes</i></p> <p>Were all planned activities completed on time? <i>Yes</i></p> <p>Did you encounter any significant challenges implementing project activities? <i>No</i></p>

12. Project Results:	<p>Herewith a short summary of project results, in bullet points, as outlined in the Contribution Agreement (Annex A):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased Capacities of 100 Rural Women in Integrated Agritourism: The project successfully enhanced the capacities of 100 rural women within the tourism value chain in Diber, equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively manage and operate agritourism businesses. A database with contacts of 100 rural women is available. ○ Enhanced Practical Knowledge of Hospitality for 25 Rural Women: Through targeted training, 25 women have gained practical skills in hospitality and cross-cultural exchange, allowing them to significantly improve the quality of service they provide to guests. This hands-on knowledge has enhanced their ability to create a welcoming and professional environment, positively impacting customer satisfaction and business success. ○ Enhanced Practical Knowledge of Traditional Culinary and Catering for 28 Rural Women: A total of 28 rural women have acquired practical skills in traditional culinary arts and catering through a two day on the job training. This training has enabled them to offer high-quality, locally inspired dishes, enriching the gastronomic experiences for visitors and boosting the profitability of their agritourism businesses. ○ Establishment of Business-to-Business Linkages: The project successfully established business linkages between 40 buyers and rural suppliers in the tourism market. Fifteen B2B agreements were arranged between caterers and agro-producers, farmers and restaurants, and specialty accommodations and tour operators, stimulating employment, fostering collaboration, and opening new revenue streams for rural women in agritourism. ○ Increased Market Access for Female Agritourism Producers: A total of 41 female agritourism producers gained significant market access through networking with tourism suppliers. The annual “Harvest Festival” provided a key platform for these women to showcase their products, connect with potential buyers, and secure long-term business opportunities, resulting in increased visibility and sales. ○ Promotion of Agro-Producers and Women’s Businesses at the “Harvest Festival”: The project successfully promoted the products and businesses of 110 agro-producers and 40 women at the “Harvest Festival.” This event helped boost their visibility, attract new customers, and strengthen their presence in the regional tourism market. ○ Increased Access to Social Media and Online Booking Platforms: A total of 40 rural entrepreneurs have gained the tools and knowledge necessary to use social media and online booking platforms effectively. This enhanced digital presence has allowed their businesses to reach a broader audience, increasing their visibility and attracting both local and international customers. ○ Dissemination of Best Practices in Tourism Accommodation: The project shared valuable best practices in tourism accommodation with 60 women, helping them improve the quality and standards of their services. This has led to enhanced guest experience and increased competitiveness within the rural tourism sector in Diber. <p>Were all of your planned project results achieved? Yes</p>
13. Partners:	Were any other partners (local or international) involved in the delivery of this project? No.
14. Beneficiaries:	<p>Based on the number of participants in each activity, we can summarize the direct beneficiaries as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 Rural Women in Integrated Agritourism • 25 Rural Women in Hospitality

- 28 Rural Women in Traditional Culinary and Catering
- 40 Buyers and Rural Suppliers
- 41 Female Agritourism Producers
- 110 Agro-Producers and 41 Women
(Note: overlap with the previous group of women.)
- 40 Rural Entrepreneurs in Social Media and Online Booking
- 60 Women in Tourism Accommodation Best Practices

It's important to note that most women participated in multiple activities. Therefore, the following numbers reflect the count of unique direct beneficiaries, without duplication:

Total # of direct beneficiaries: **134**

of women (18 yrs. +) who directly benefitted from project activities: 125

of girls (under 18 yrs.) who directly benefitted from project activities: 4

of men (18 yrs. +) who directly benefitted from project activities: 5

of boys (under 18 yrs.) who directly benefitted from project activities: 0

of gender diverse individuals (18 yrs. +) who directly benefited from project activities
(OPTIONAL) : 0

of gender diverse individuals (under 18 yrs.) who directly benefited from project activities
(OPTIONAL): 0

Describe how the project supported an individual beneficiary.

From Medicinal Plant Collector to small Entrepreneur: Hajrie Mehmeti's Journey with Project Support

Hajrie Mehmeti, a dedicated collector of medicinal plants from Trepce Village, has long relied on nature's resources to support her family, including her nine daughters. However, despite her deep knowledge of plants, she faced challenges in preserving their quality and finding sustainable market connections. That all changed when she joined the project's activities, which provided her with the knowledge, resources, and connections she needed to improve her business and secure her livelihood.

Gaining Knowledge and Business Connections Hajrie actively participated in all the project's training activities, learning about sustainable harvesting, agro-tourism, and business-to-business (B2B) connections. One of her biggest takeaways was understanding the importance of proper packaging. Previously, she used plastic bags, which compromised the quality of her medicinal plants. The project introduced her to suitable packaging materials, providing her with model packaging sets. This simple yet crucial change immediately improved the preservation of her products, making them more appealing to buyers.

Beyond packaging improvements, Hajrie benefited from the project's networking opportunities. She participated in the harvest festival, where she successfully sold her entire stock. Moreover, she secured agreements with two key buyers, Agritourism Zerja and a local wholesaler—ensuring a stable market for her products. These connections have given her confidence and financial security, allowing her to expand her business.

Empowerment Through Sustainable Technology The project's impact on Hajrie extended even further. Through the network established by the project, she was connected to another initiative that provided her with a solar panel drying system. This new equipment allows her to dry medicinal plants more efficiently, improving their quality and shelf life. But Hajrie didn't stop there—she extended this opportunity to others. "Now we are a group," she proudly

	<p>shares, explaining how other women she met during the project’s activities may also use the drying equipment, creating a collaborative and supportive network.</p> <p>Becoming a Role Model in Her Community The project not only helped Hajrie enhance her family business but also reinforced her role as a mentor and leader. By attending training sessions, engaging in knowledge exchange, and participating in field visits, she realized the untapped potential of her work in agro-tourism. She now understands the growing interest of tourists in experiencing and purchasing local, natural products.</p> <p>Most importantly, Hajrie feels empowered and proud. She sees herself as a role model—not only for her daughters but for other women in her community. She encourages them to recognize the value of their natural resources and to seize economic opportunities. “We are surrounded by wealth,” she tells them. “With the right knowledge and support, we can build a better future for ourselves and our families.”</p> <p>Through this project, Hajrie transformed her business, expanded her market, and strengthened her community. Her journey exemplifies how targeted support, knowledge sharing, and sustainable practices can create lasting economic and social benefits for individuals and their communities.</p> <p>Total # of beneficiaries who benefitted from advocacy activities: N/A</p>
<p>15. Gender Equality Results:</p>	<p><i>Did project activities address the different needs of women and/or girl, and men and/or boys as identified in your gender-based analysis? Yes.</i></p> <p>The project was designed to address the unique challenges faced by women, particularly those engaged in traditional practices such as handicrafts, artisanal food production, and medicinal plant collection. Women often have limited access to market opportunities, business networks, and knowledge of sustainable practices. To bridge this gap, the project provided targeted training, networking opportunities, and material support, including improved packaging solutions, participation in fairs, and promotion through social and traditional media. While women were the primary participants, specific efforts were made to ensure they gained meaningful economic opportunities and capacity-building support.</p> <p><i>How did women and/or girls, and men and/or boys benefit from the project activities?</i></p> <p>Women, particularly those involved in handicrafts, homemade agro-processing, agriculture and medicinal plant collection, gained valuable skills in sustainable harvesting, agro-tourism, and market access. The project facilitated business-to-business (B2B) connections, enabling them to secure stable markets for their products. Additionally, access to improved packaging materials enhanced both the quality and commercial viability of their goods.</p> <p>Men participating in the project benefited from training in integrated agro-business, hospitality and cultural exchange, traditional culinary and catering, as well as management and business development. Knowledge-sharing through exchange visits and training sessions strengthened economic resilience within the community, fostering more inclusive and sustainable business practices for both men and women.</p> <p><i>Describe the participation of women and/or girls in project activities? Did you take any measures to facilitate their participation?</i></p>

	<p>Women were actively involved in the project's training sessions, networking events, and field visits. The initial workshops on integrated agro-tourism provided valuable insights into the needs and challenges faced by women, leading to the creation of a database with over 100 rural women.</p> <p>Recognizing the barriers women often face, such as family responsibilities and social norms, the project ensured flexibility in training schedules and organized activities in accessible locations. To accommodate their busy schedules, particularly during the harvest season, training sessions were planned for late September through December, when participation was more feasible. Additionally, the project covered logistical costs for all women participants, including transportation, food, and refreshments, ensuring their full engagement without financial burden.</p> <p>The formation of peer support groups further fostered a collaborative environment where women could share experiences and learn from one another. A key success of the project was the empowerment of women through leadership roles. Among the participants were women with prior experience in agro-tourism, as well as those engaging in such initiatives for the first time. The project created opportunities for mentorship and skill-sharing, allowing more experienced women to guide and inspire newcomers. These success stories highlight how women not only benefited individually but also became role models, motivating others to leverage natural resources for economic growth.</p> <p>By connecting women with market opportunities, providing essential resources, and removing logistical barriers to participation, the project contributed to their financial independence and long-term economic sustainability.</p>
<p>16. Advocacy & Communications (if applicable):</p>	<p><i>Did you publicly recognize Canada's contribution to your project? Yes.</i></p> <p>Yes. The project ensured visibility of Canada's contribution through multiple channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CFLI identifier was included in all promotional materials, including banners, project leaflet, stickers, and training materials. • The Embassy/High Commission was acknowledged in social media posts (fcb https://www.facebook.com/alcdf.org; Instagram https://www.instagram.com/albanianlocalcapacity/; linkedin https://www.linkedin.com/in/albanian-local-capacity-development-foundation-alcdf-b638bb255/recent-activity/all/, ALCDF web https://alcdf.org/news; press releases, and official communications about the project. • A project banner displaying all necessary visibility elements was prepared and used in all project activities, including training sessions, networking events, and the harvest festival https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oLPc-LYTGqEaLYXB2Z6NCcwJVz--quvH/view?usp=sharing. • Media engagement ensured that Canada's support was highlighted in traditional media outlets (Kurora e Gjelbert newspaper). <p><i>Did your project have a successful advocacy component? No.</i></p> <p>While the project was not specifically designed as an advocacy initiative, it effectively promoted women's economic empowerment among key stakeholders. The project facilitated discussions with local authorities, business owners, and community members about the importance of women's participation in economic activities. Moving forward, a follow-up initiative could focus more explicitly on advocacy efforts, particularly for the creation and</p>

	<p>support of women's groups and the development of economic incentives for women entrepreneurs.</p> <p><i>Media mentions referencing Canada's contribution to the project to date:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of traditional media mentions (tv, print, radio): 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Klan TV coverage of the harvest festival ○ Local media outlets, including <i>Dibra On</i>, <i>Këtu Mblidhen Dibranët</i>, and <i>Kurora e Gjelbër</i> newspaper • Social media mentions (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, website): 50+ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project activities were extensively promoted across various social media platforms. ○ A short video showcasing the harvest festival was produced and widely shared, significantly boosting visibility. ○ A dynamic web platform was created, offering valuable information for over 40 agri-tourism providers.
17. Financial Management:	<p><i>Was the project completed within the approved budget as outlined in Annex A of the Contribution Agreement?</i></p> <p>Yes, the project was successfully completed in line with the approved budget outlined in Annex A of the Contribution Agreement. No activity expenses exceeded 20% of the allocated budget. The total project expenditure was EUR 26,205.23 (equivalent to CAD 39,307), with EUR 21,618.84 (equivalent to CAD 32,428.26) covered by the Canadian Fund. As a result, the remaining balance of EUR 21.24 (equivalent to CAD 71.74) was left at the conclusion of the project.</p> <p>All invoices related to project expenses have been scanned and are available for review via the shared Google Drive link: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1OTy1rYwIMUtasBewdKQfzJVF60E1YK9r?usp=sharing</p> <p>In Activity 7, the development of the web platform, it was deemed necessary to prepare the platform in two languages. However, translation costs for the materials were not included in the original budget, leading to higher-than-anticipated costs for the development of the website <i>agroturizem.al</i>.</p> <p>Regarding Activity 8, study visits, there was a slight variance between the costs for lunch and coffee refreshments. While both budget lines are within the approved total, some service providers were unable to separate the costs for food and refreshments. As a result, the costs for drinks and refreshments were included as part of the lunch expenses. Overall, the total expenses align with the approved budget.</p> <p>The remaining fund is EUR 21.24. As per clauses 5.05 and 19.01 of the Contribution Agreement, any unspent funds are to be returned to the Canadian Embassy/High Commission.</p>
18. Lessons Learned	<p>The following provides a list of lessons learnt during the project implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of Tailored Training Programs One of the key lessons learned is the value of providing targeted training that aligns with the specific needs of the women involved. By offering different training modules—such as integrated agritourism, hospitality, and traditional culinary skills—the project was able to address a broad range of skill gaps and equip participants with practical knowledge that can be directly applied in their businesses. • Sustainability of Training Impact While the training was well-received, it became clear that ongoing support is essential for long-term impact. Offering follow-up workshops, exchange of experiences opportunities, and continued access to resources can help ensure the skills learned are applied effectively.

	<p>Additionally, further investment in developing the online platform will be necessary to ensure its sustainability and usefulness to the women after the project's completion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening Linkages and Networking The importance of business networking and linking participants to local and regional markets was highlighted. Facilitating connections between the women and potential clients, local businesses, and online platforms has proven to be one of the most effective ways to increase visibility and opportunities for women in agritourism. However, it was observed that a longer-term engagement in business development activities (beyond the workshops) would be beneficial for more lasting impact. • Ongoing Promotion and Updates for Online Platforms The web platform developed to promote agritourism in the Diber region holds great potential. However, lessons learned indicate that regular updates and active promotion are critical to keeping the platform relevant and engaging. Without continuous input of new data, the platform's effectiveness in reaching and attracting tourists may diminish. More emphasis should be placed on marketing strategies to ensure that the platform remains dynamic and well-populated with up-to-date information. • Challenges in Measuring Direct Economic Impact While the project aimed to improve the economic empowerment of women, measuring the direct impact on livelihoods proved to be challenging. Economic outcomes such as increased income or business growth may take time to materialize fully, making it essential to monitor and track these indicators over a longer period. Establishing clear metrics and follow-up mechanisms would help in better assessing the success of such projects in the future. • Engagement of Local Stakeholders Engaging local stakeholders, including businesses and government entities, played a crucial role in supporting the success of the project. However, creating more robust partnerships with these groups at an earlier stage would have strengthened the project's sustainability. Their involvement in the promotional activities and post-training initiatives would be valuable in continuing to support the women's endeavors.
19. Sustainability	<p>The project results are expected to remain sustainable even after the funding ends. Through capacity-building efforts, such as training in agritourism, hospitality, and culinary skills, participants have gained valuable knowledge that will continue to benefit their businesses. In addition, the project facilitated key business linkages, including two-year B2B agreements, and boosted visibility through the development of the web platform and promotion at events like the harvest fair in Peshkopi, all of which provide a strong foundation for continued market access.</p> <p>While the web platform https://agroturizem.al/ will need ongoing updates and promotion, the network and partnerships formed during the project, alongside the active involvement of local stakeholders, will help ensure that the benefits last. With local businesses and the community now better equipped to support agritourism, the project's impact is set to continue growing in the Diber region over the long term.</p>
20. Overall Project Assessment	<p>TO BE COMPLETED BY THE CANADIAN EMBASSY/HIGH COMMISSION</p> <p><i>Provide an overall assessment of the project in bullet format. Consider the administration of the project, the recipient, the type of project, its effectiveness, and its possible future impact.</i></p>

Submitted by: Lindita Manga, Executive Director
Submitted on: 19 March 2025