

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

1. Introduction

The RisiAlbania Project is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by a consortium consisting of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and Partners Albania. 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 shows potential to meet trends that indicate the focus of tourism will be to enable tourists to experience new cultures, encounter and engage with local people and to live authentic experiences. Albania has the potential and tradition to offer these authentic experiences.

2. Objectives of the Call

RisiAlbania is inviting tour operators that are interested in expanding their sustainable tour packages to submit ideas for increasing their sales, accessing new markets, extending the season and entering new destinations.

The following criteria will be considered in choosing the proposals:

- The tours create employment opportunities, 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 not only during the high season, but also during shoulder seasons or winter;
- 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.

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).

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].
- **Idea.** A brief description of your idea including geographic location and unique selling points. Also provide the rationale for why you believe there is demand for such a product. [maximum half a page]
- **Marketing Strategy.** Provide a clear competitive analysis of other competing products in the Albanian market. Provide a marketing strategy on how you plan to sell the tour packages, delivery models, existing and target markets, sales forecasts, whether an increase in sales will lead to developing other similar packages etc. [maximum one page].
- **Growth and impact.** Describe the impact the packages have in the rural areas of Albania, including a database 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. 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 one page].
- **RisiAlbania support.** Provide an indicative budget showing your financial contribution, and the financial support that you expect from RisiAlbania [maximum one page].

Applicants must also submit the following documents:

- 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

Note that RisiAlbania does not cover fixed costs such as rent, salaries or utilities. The total contribution of the project for each selected proposal is up to 10,000 EUR.

4. Submission of the proposals:

We expect proposals to be submitted in English or Albanian (English preferred) in 1 hard copy and 1 electronic copy (on USB stick or CD) in closed and stamped envelope to the address given below, by **February 11th, 2020, at 15.00 o'clock**. Ideas handed outside the indicated timeline may not be considered.

RisiAlbania,
Reference: Sustainable tourism promotion call
Rr. Ismail Qemali, P.18, H.3, Ap.15,
Tirana, Albania
Tel.: +355 4 2248527

For any questions you might have related the application, please, write by email: info@risialbania.al within February 7th, 2020.

5. Selection process

The concepts submitted to RisiAlbania will be evaluated and scored against the following criteria. After selection, RisiAlbania will work with shortlisted applicants to write a full proposal and business plan for the new project idea prior to receiving Risi funding.

Selection criteria	Scores (100 total)
Number of tourists expected through increased sales and jobs that will be created at the tour operator	35
Vision for expansion in sustainable tourism. Ideas that clearly show an intention to extend the season will be favorably considered.	35
The number of rural businesses involved in the packages, where possible indicating: number of persons getting a better income, and number of people benefitting from employment opportunities	20
Value for money of the expected support	10