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Citizens Channel

Citizens' Panels: A New Way to Engage in Parliamentary Processes

17-19 October 2024, Tirana

Rural and Mountain Tourism

Purpose:

Defining the role that rural and mountain tourism should play in the future of Albania.

Outputs:

A set of recommendations for key stakeholders on considerations of key issues:

Session 1. Economic impact and support for Rural and Mountain Tourism

This session explores the potential of tourism to drive economic growth in rural and mountainous areas. It will address critical questions related to aligning policies with local needs, job creation, and the preservation of cultural activities. Participants will discuss how tourism can generate new business opportunities for local entrepreneurs, influence young people's decisions to stay in these areas, and support local markets and artisans. Additionally, the session will examine the challenges of accessing funding for tourism-related investments and the necessary infrastructure improvements to enhance local businesses. Through collaborative dialogue, we aim to identify actionable strategies that can support sustainable tourism development and bolster local economies. Lastly, it discusses education and training programs, along with targeted initiatives, that are essential for improving stable employment opportunities and addressing underemployment in rural and mountain tourism.

Experts:

- Shpresim Domi, Lecturer, Agricultural University of Tirana (Lead expert)
- Blendi Gerdoci, Lecturer, Faculty of Economics, University of Tirana
- Nevila Popa, Expert in Sustainable Tourism

1. What steps can be taken to ensure that policies effectively align with local needs and conditions?
2. How will the development of rural and mountain tourism impact job creation in these areas?
3. What types of activities can be created or preserved due to tourism development?
4. In what ways can tourism create new business opportunities for local entrepreneurs?
5. How might the development of tourism influence young people's decisions to stay in or leave rural or mountain areas?
6. What are the current challenges faced by local markets and shops in selling local products?
7. What kind of infrastructure improvements are needed to support local businesses and markets?
8. How can rural and mountain areas provide better opportunities and spaces for local artisans to showcase and sell their work?
9. What specific types of facilities or support would be most beneficial for artisans or local businesses?



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10. What are the main challenges in accessing funding opportunities, such as subsidies or grants, to invest in rural and mountain tourism?
11. What improvements or support would facilitate obtaining funding for tourism-related investments?
12. How can education, training programs, and partnerships between institutions and businesses be improved to better prepare individuals for stable employment in rural and mountain tourism?
13. What initiatives and support systems can be developed to create job opportunities and address underemployment in the rural tourism sector?

Session 2. Diversifying Tourism Services and Revitalizing Rural and Mountain Areas

This session will explore how rural and mountain tourism services can be diversified to attract more visitors, enhance the tourist experience, and support local communities. It will discuss the role of new services, such as cultural and eco-tourism, and how tourism can positively impact the social and cultural fabric of these areas. The session will also focus on preserving cultural heritage while promoting tourism and examine the importance of improving education, healthcare, and infrastructure to ensure the sustainability of tourism in rural and mountain regions.

Experts:

- Brunilda Stamo, Rural Development Expert (Lead expert)
- Petrit Dobi, Rural Development Expert
- Marjana Koceku, Entrepreneur, “Neomalesore”

1. How can tourism services in rural and mountain areas be diversified to attract a wider range of visitors?
2. What new types of services or experiences could enhance the appeal of these areas for tourists?
3. What role do information centers play in improving the tourist experience?
4. How can clarity and information be improved to increase access to tourist attractions?
5. How has tourism impacted the social and cultural life of rural communities?
6. What are some examples of positive changes that tourism has brought to these areas?
7. How can tourism contribute to preserving art, crafts, and sites of cultural heritage?
8. What strategies can be used to ensure that cultural heritage is preserved while promoting tourism?
9. How important are quality education and healthcare services for the sustainability of tourism in rural and mountain areas?
10. What improvements are needed in these services to effectively support local communities?

Session 3. Environmental Sustainability

This session will address the environmental sustainability of rural and mountain tourism, focusing on improving waste management, recycling, and conservation efforts. It will explore



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the impact of tourism on preserving protected areas, discuss infrastructure needs for sustainable practices, and examine opportunities for integrating renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies into tourism facilities. The session aims to identify strategies that promote both tourism growth and environmental protection in these regions.

Experts:

- Xhevahire Dulja, Lecturer, Agricultural University of Tirana (Lead expert)
- Rea Nepravishta, Environmental Expert and Activist
- Vilma Kola, Environmental Expert

1. What current waste management practices are in place in rural and mountain tourism areas?
2. How can systems for waste collection, recycling, and disposal be improved?
3. What infrastructure is needed to support conservation and sustainable tourism practices?
4. How does tourism impact efforts to preserve protected areas and environmentally friendly pathways?
5. What opportunities exist for renewable energy sources in tourism facilities?
6. How can energy-efficient technologies be implemented in these areas?

Rural and mountain tourism experts:

Advisory Board:

1. Shpresim Domi - PhD, Lecturer and Researcher, Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT)
2. Xhevahire Dulja - PhD, Lecturer, Agricultural University of Tirana ,
3. Petrit Dobi - Expert on Rural Development
4. Brunhilda Stamo - PhD, Agriculture & Rural. Development Expert
5. Rea Nepravishta, Environmental expert and activist