Traveller and the Olive Grove
A cross sectoral approach to sustainable tourism development in Albania

Final Project Report
second edition
Project Partners:

- Ministry of Tourism
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Urban Development
- Albanian National Coastal Agency
- Municipality of Himara
- GIZ
- Worldbank
- ASCU
- ADF
- Sondor Travel
- Elite Travel
- Outdoor Albania
- Urban Research Institute

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Albania is often quoted as a hidden gem for tourists. But when I googled ‘agro tourism in Albania’ about a year ago, just because I like to get out of Tirana, all I found were studies. Of course some great initiatives are there, but you still have to carefully look for them. With its amazing food, beautiful mountains, and coastlines, this country deserves a much broader public that comes to visit, than the ‘off the beaten track tourist’.

The Dutch government sees corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a business case. Albania can still make a choice to go left or go right. To go for mass tourism or for high quality small scale agro tourism. Looking at what already exists in the country and in the region, and looking at the scale at which Albanians like to do business, it seems quite clear that there is fertile ground for small scale sustainable business concepts. That is why the Dutch Embassy supported a cooperation with MVO Nederland, Cityförster, and other partners, to work on an inspiring concept for sustainable tourism, combining it with agriculture. This is best developed in a concrete area, and Qeparo, an old village along the beautiful coastline of Albania, seemed an interesting destination.

The Albanian government has a vision. In the development of its regional plans, the metabolism of the country, a concept also developed by Dutch experts, is a basis for regional urban planning. It means working from an integrated perspective, taking into account local energy, food and water maps before doing your urban planning. Many of the challenges that exist in this country are actually CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) related. Sustainable tourism therefore really is the sensible thing to do.

Ideas are sometimes at risk of remaining stuck in plans, laws or roundtables. I am excited that we can present to you 18 business cases in and around Qeparo. Small ones, such as taking a hike with a shepherd, or buying local produce, and bigger ones, such as creating a local tourism activity and training centre or restructuring the beautiful aqueduct. Albanian and Dutch experts together with local citizens have identified these concrete opportunities for cooperation. Albanian women, men, farmers, and small entrepreneurs are ready for a fruitful harvest in Qeparo.

Dewi van de Weerd
Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
01. INTRODUCTION

CSR countryscan, 2014

In 2014 CSR Netherlands, a Dutch networking organization supporting companies in striving for Corporate Social Responsibility, conducted a country scan of Albania on the subject of CSR development and sustainable business opportunities, commissioned by the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Albania. Important conclusions from that project were the high potential for sustainable tourism and the development of organic and eco-friendly agriculture. Challenges such as waste management, uncontrolled real-estate development, landownership and individualistic attitude of companies where identified as important bottlenecks for sustainable development. One outcome of the country scan was the intention to take steps toward creating a pilot area where these opportunities could be further developed, while working on the challenges that lie in the way of success.

Unveiling the Riviera, 2014

Cityförster had previously conducted an exploratory mission to understand spatial potentials and urgencies along the Albanian Coast. The project was supported by the Dutch Creative Industries fund and Atelier Albania, an agency set up with help of the Dutch Embassy in Albania to promote coordinated and sustainable urban and national development. Although focussed on spatial urgencies, the report of the mission listed a number of recommendations with a broad and integrated focus. The potential of the two main economic sectors, agriculture and tourism became especially evident during the mission. While recommendations were formulated to strengthen the sectors individually, the need for an integrative approach was emphasized and concrete projects articulated.

A logical follow up

Both projects delivered different reports providing stakeholders with advice and prospect for action for government and entrepreneurs. This was, however, in the opinion of the experts involved not the end of it: both projects lead to the goal of working on practical follow up activities. In June 2015 a team was formed consisting of experts from tourism, agriculture, spatial development and project management. The general ambition was formulated to work on a cross sectoral, integral pilot, developing a specific area. By doing so creating an experimental place where ideas from all fields of expertise on sustainable development could come together and provide an example for policymakers, NGO’s and entrepreneurs in different value chains as well as in other area’s of Albania or even beyond.
Project Team

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Fedde Germans: Founder and owner of Originate, specialised in identifying value and quality in people, organisations and cities

Acknowledgements:

We would like to express our deep gratitude for the support and active participation of numerous local and national stakeholders that have shared their knowledge, insights, data and experience with us.

We have been overwhelmed with hospitality, in itself and its intensity an Albanian specialty and have met many ambitious, hard working and open minded people. On a special note, we have been very impressed by the collaborative atmosphere both during the preparation and the mission itself. Contrary to earlier warnings we have met local stakeholders as sharing and caring, which we find exemplary.

Our special thanks go to:

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Photo Credits

The photography of this report, unless otherwise stated is the commendable work of Armand and Rosita Habazaj, that have accompanied us during our one week mission in Qeparo and surroundings. All pictures have been taken there and no actors or props have been involved.
02. Executive Summary with Overall Recommendations

For national government and agencies:

- Use pilot areas as experimental zones to cut across the boundaries of policy areas and work together to try out strategy and policy (2 to 3 year period);
- Establish inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial working groups to develop integrated economic concepts. Territorial development can and should take a leading role in this as it is the place where the different sectors come together. Aligning and coordinating policies therefore is essential to its success;
- Create short feedback loops by working closely with all stakeholder groups: local government, entrepreneurs, community and civil society. This can provide reason and motivation to adjust policy and strategy based on practical insight as we go;
- Use lessons learnt in other area’s to create spin-off and scale up the effect of sustainable development (after 1 or two years);
- Make plans and documents publicly accessible and actively communicate. Too often initiatives are doubling up or are pulling in different directions;
- Limit general construction and aim for small but excellent developments and the upgrading of the existing investments;
- Continue investment in high quality public space;
- Invest in training and developments of standards. People are hungry for guidelines and standards;
- Develop a tourism sector-wide approach around best practices on water, energy, and waste efficiency.

For local government:

- Use the momentum of this pilot to create critical mass for the development of a training and educational centre on the Ionian Riviera coast;
- Work on Public Private Partnership initiatives to make this work: the goals, costs and benefits for such a centre are neither purely public nor private;
- Partner up with local community and international experts to make the initiative for building guidelines and guidelines for products and services into a sustainable success;
- Facilitate and work together with national government and agencies to create a pilot area where initiatives for development can be supported and brought into practice in a swift, transparent and orderly manner;
- Establish a database on local economic activity to help monitor development and direct investments. Data is convincing. If baselines are not clear, estimates cannot be made and goals cannot be set;
- Create policy and business environments which maximise engagement with sustainable tourism in Qeparo. (Develop planning requirements and laws related to planning, siting, design, construction, materials, renovation, demolition and impact assessment to protect natural and cultural heritage and local communal rights)

For Qeparo community and specifically entrepreneurs:

- Put effort into fine-tuning the local model for development and make sure it has as much support as possible. This can function as the foundation for future activities and initiatives and can be used as the basis of any discussion;
- Get organised. If sustainable development is the ambition for the Qeparo area, entrepreneurs and community should get organized and create leverage in all future processes and discussions with developers, government and companies from outside or to lobby for public funding. We believe this to be THE crucial piece of the puzzle to make any initiative work;
- Work on the collective sense of ownership of public space. Competition with other places in Albania that attract local and especially international visitors and customers can be won in the long run by having a clean and well organized area where people can be proud to live and work;
- Declare protected areas and public assets. Find agreements on how to protect and exploit these assets collectively (eg: monastery, Qeparo fishnet, olive grove, beach);
- Develop a destination management plan based on responsible tourism management, integrating views, roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders that enter into a destination partnership with stakeholders representing the Visitors, Industry, Communities, Environment (VICE);
- Develop and promote sustainable products and services that are compatible with their ecological, social, cultural and economic circumstances;
- Determine a joint (public sector/industry) destination marketing plan including quality visitors profile, length of stay, yields, and local spending (based on the VICE).

For international and national NGO’s and donor organisations:

- Use the concept of joint pilot area’s to bundle efforts of different organisations and create maximum impact;
- Do so by creating round tables for these area’s and involve organisations that cover different themes to prevent unnecessary competition or crowding out;
- Make use of national and international communication channels, for instance from specific value chains such as tourism or processed foods to communicate successes;
- Document approaches and concepts developed and share openly. Good examples are happily followed;
- Make micro-loans available and offer additional step-by-step incentive packages that become available when previous phases are implemented or milestones have been reached;
- Provide assistance in preparation of investment projects. The requirements are often very high and it is difficult to take the first steps.
03. A CROSS SECTORAL APPROACH

The most important motivation for bringing together an expert team from the different disciplines represented on the local level is the belief that sustainable development can only take place if done in a holistic and integrated way. There are countless examples of initiatives focussed on one sector or value chains that do not succeed or do not create the maximum added value due to limited connection to other surrounding forces of influence.

There are different reasons for this. Individual entrepreneurs can hardly be expected to think far beyond the boundaries of their own activities. At the same time government is organised in a way that stimulates a sector approach: agriculture, tourism and spatial development are separated in different ministries and even within ministries tourism development and other economic development are divided due to separated budgets and different policy focus. There is hardly an incentive to work on integrating visions and strategy let alone joint activities. A way out of this is the creation of an experimental area where all different policies and interests of all stakeholders can be taken into account.

Important questions for working on such a pilot area are:

- What government policies and strategies are in place and how do they complement, contradict and overlap each other?
- How can different sectors create added value for one and other?
- What are the enabling factors for developing one sector and how do these effect other sectors or stakeholders?
- How can mistakes be prevented by taking all possible social, environmental and economic dimensions into account when “designing” a plan for a specific area?
- How can such an experiment create a common (play)ground and provide short feedback loops between entrepreneurs and customers, between government and local community, between commercial developers and NGO’s, etc.?
Circular and Inclusive Model

The answer to these questions starts with the concept of inclusiveness and circularity. This project is not about choosing the poorest area of Albania and providing locals with ideas on how to escape poverty. But it is not about enhancing business for mainstream entrepreneurs and corporations either. It is aimed at creating maximum value for all stakeholders present in a designated area and providing all with prospect of future business and the opportunity to get into action, whether it is on an individual level or on the level of the community or government. Furthermore we aim to identify as many ways as possible to create closed loops in value chains. How can for instance local agricultural activity contribute to the issue of energy demand? Or how can the tourism sector create additional income for agricultural entrepreneurs and vice versa? How can the issue of waste be transformed into business opportunities and create multiple values? Cleaner scenery, healthier food, happy tourists, etc.

Design as the Binding Factor

In order to keep all stakeholders at the table and make stakeholders from different sectors (agriculture, tourism, processing, spatial development) or levels (national government, local government, local community and entrepreneurs) have common understanding about “where we are and where we want or need to go”, it is critical to have a common language or framework. Design does exactly that. It visualizes the present situation and can help build scenarios for the future. It provides a visual context preventing people from getting stuck in different languages.

It is also a way of prototyping complex webs of relationships and testing their reciprocal influences. Often, drawing the plan reveals aspects that were not visible before: How do the actions of one actor affect another and how do they affect the over-all situation? Capturing all steps for development in a visual design provides powerful material to communicate to stakeholders and follow-up partners, needed to put the ideas into practice.
Steps in the Process

The approach for cross sectoral local development has a number of steps that can more or less be used in any situation.

**Step 1:** Identify local needs
Before deciding on bringing in experts and working on an action plan the local needs must be articulated by “problem owners” so that local ownership is evident and secured for the future. These needs can be identified by local organisations, government, entrepreneurs and embassies.

**Step 2:** Analyse potential
In a first exploratory phase the core of experts will analyse potentially connected sectors in a country, existing government strategies, and the role and interests of various stakeholders. Furthermore, the team will come up with a rough prediction of successful interventions working towards a sustainable (business) future.

**Step 3:** Define a pilot area
In order to bring together the potential development of different sectors on different levels it is crucial to define a pilot area, a living lab where stakeholders can work on common understanding.

**Criteria for choosing a pilot area**
- Focus sectors from national policies sufficiently represented
- Communication between stakeholders on local and national level
- Sufficient critical mass of entrepreneurs active and involved in the area
- Potential elements for sustainable development are present such as:
  - cooperation between stakeholders,
  - willing and active local government,
  - sufficient landscape and agricultural elements,
  - Sufficient potential business cases on individual and joint level.
  - Potential demand for products and services
  - willingness to change

**Step 4:** Define outlines of a local strategy/model
To work with local community and entrepreneurs on sustainable business development, the common framework or model is a matter of preference. This framework is based on the outcome of interviews and workshops in the pilot area combined with relevant content of government strategies and policy. In this local model, social, environmental, economic and spatial elements need to be taken into account from the start. Important in this process is determining the enabling factors.
**Step 5: Collect potential projects, business cases and future scenarios**

Based on a common understanding of a sustainable future for all sectors involved, the next step is to define a multitude of opportunities in all sectors, preferably with strong links to each other. On the individual business level, on the level of cooperation between companies / value chains, and on the level of local community.

**Step 6: Communication**

An important part of the process is sharing the preliminary results with the most important local, national and international stakeholders to validate conclusions and assumptions, to involve key player for future up scaling and replication. This is also the moment in the process to engage with media and press to create awareness about the initiative, ownership, and the pride of local stakeholders.

**Step 7: Work on the business cases**

All the potential business cases need to be put to the test. The (financial) feasibility and ownership need to be clear. In this phase business plans are made, development strategies for public space and the organisation of parties involved take shape.

**Step 8: Safeguard the overall development and encourage up-scaling and replication.**

The connection to the general strategy or model needs to be guarded. This is partly the task of all local parties involved, possibly within an organisation structure, and partly a public task for government and development partners.

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**Results of the Process**

- Taylor made strategy for a specific area
- Network of local entrepreneurs and stakeholders with joint ownership over strategy and individual ownership over individual potential business cases.
- A multitude of follow-up possibilities/business scenarios
- Blueprint for development replicable in different areas
- Insight in the implications of national strategy for specific local situations
04. AGRICULTURE: OBSERVATIONS, TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Agriculture: Trends and Development

With the world population ever rising and expected to reach 11 billion in the long term, the key issue related to future developments in agriculture is whether we will be able to keep feeding the world. While most scientists agree that this is possible, there is much more debate on how to reach this goal. Some proclaim that the future lies in industrialization of agriculture, making food production more and more like production in factories. Others believe that agriculture based on how natural functions can also feed the world. In this context it is important to realize that intensive agriculture, the dominant system in more developed countries, has a negative long-term impact on future agricultural productivity. This is a result of negative impacts on the natural assets needed to produce food, not to mention negative impacts on the environment and climate change. One striking example of a negative pact of intensive agriculture is soil degradation and erosion.

However, well-designed and well-managed modern farming systems can give very high yields while at the same time greatly reducing negative impacts. While organic agriculture is by some believed to be the system of the future, it is not necessarily the only system that can do the trick. Other alternative systems and well-managed conventional systems can also be successful. Integrated pest management (IPM), and Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) are approaches that can be applied in these contexts. These methods of agricultural development lend themselves well to being combined with sound landscape development and management in which the landscape also contributes to agriculture via so-called ecosystem services. When agriculture and the landscape more broadly are managed wisely, the overall impact on climate change will be lower. Likewise, agriculture and the broader landscape will be more resilient to the negative impacts resulting from climate change.

For instance, reforestation contributes to more water infiltrating in the soil during heavy rains that will occur more frequently under climate change, which increases the availability of water for the agricultural plots in the area. Moreover, it reduces flash floods and erosion, thus contributing to keeping agricultural soils and the landscape productive.

For more detailed information about the soil, please see “Research Maps” in the Annex.
Agriculture in Albania

With agriculture in Albania in full development, the opportunity exists to choose the right development path. To use the lessons learned in other parts of the world with over-intensive agricultural systems that have negative impacts on future agricultural productivity and on the environment. This holds in general for Albanian agriculture but even more so for agriculture and landscape management in the Albanian Riviera. Due to the mountainous nature of the Riviera, agricultural fields are much smaller and areas with high fertility and deep soils are smaller, too.

Large Scale vs. Small Scale

Water availability is also a large challenge. These characteristics make the Riviera unsuitable for large-scale intensive systems and could therefore not compete with other areas in Albania and the world much more suitable to mass production. Opportunities therefore lie in aiming at other market segments for high quality food of superior taste, local uniqueness, and higher prices.

Imports and Exports

Although Albania does export agricultural products, mostly to neighbouring countries, the import sector is much greater. It includes crops and food that are also produced in Albania such as citrus, grapes, and olive oil. While very developed and high-value markets such as the Netherlands and other NW-European countries are interesting export destinations, it will be very hard for Albanian producers and traders to meet the quality and certification standards required for those markets. It will also be difficult to produce sufficiently large and constant volumes of produce to generate economies of scale and compete in international markets. Aligning periods of supply with periods of market demand is also a critical challenge.

Water Management

Due to the topography, high rainfall intensity during parts of the year, and the quality of soil, erosion is a problem on the hills and mountain regions of the area. Particularly when soils have been denuded from vegetation either by overgrazing or unsustainable agricultural practices. Low-lying areas consequently may suffer from poor drainage and frequent floods when heavy rains occur. These effects will in the future be more common and severe as climate change will lead to more extreme weather events, including heavy rains. Various irrigation systems are in use from sprinkler to gravity irrigation, though these are often not functioning or not functioning properly.
When talking about the link between agriculture and tourism, the general public usually thinks of farm visits and farm stays. Farms, comprising of the farm buildings and the pastures, fields and forests, that are attractive and representative of the region, while being hospitable, pleasant places to be with good facilities, possibly complemented by farm activities, processing of food (e.g. cheese making) and a farm shop, are certainly an important component of agro-tourism. However, there are several more ways in which agro & tourism can be combined. It is this multitude of ways that make it a promising opportunity for the Albanian Riviera.

As the example of the region around Almeria in Spain versus Burgundy in France clearly illustrates, massive high-intensive agriculture can destroy other assets of a region, most importantly the touristic potential. A more local and specific approach, related to the territory can yield a more ‘natural’ system, that is less dependent on technology and can thus also have a more appealing physical appearance. At the same time, this does not imply that the agriculture is not productive. Most likely it will not be as productive as under highly intense production systems. However, while maintaining the spatial design and crop and animal husbandry composition traditionally specific to the region, improvements can be made in terms of farm management and thus productivity, while maintaining an attractive landscape. While organic agriculture lends itself well to a combination with tourism, well-designed and managed conventional production systems can also provide an attractive landscape.

Specialties
In addition to the landscape design, the choice of crop and animal species, and specifically the choice of crop varieties of a certain crop and the animal breeds of a certain animal species, make a successful link with tourism possible. Crops, cattle and varieties and breeds that are unique for the area are essential ingredients for the local cuisine and add to the experience that tourists/visitors will have. This is well known by the general public for products such as wine and increasingly also olive oil, but also applies to other fresh produce and food products. When local restaurants and hotels source their ingredients at local farms and producers and use region-specific quality produce and animal products, the visitor’s experience and the ‘branding’ of the region is enhanced.
Seasonality

One challenge, however, that needs to be overcome is the strong seasonality of tourism, leading to a mismatch between supply and demand of food produced locally. For that reason opportunities such as described above (e.g. further developing the domestic market, selling to higher-end quality shops in larger cities) need to be developed and processing needs to be explored to conserve and valorise food produced outside the tourist season.

DOC olive oil, preserving produce into tasty processed foods (e.g. grilled bell peppers ‘sottolio’ or conserved in water), combining the above with links to the tourist sector (production site visits possible, supply to restaurants and hotels catering to higher-end tourism, and linking with harvest festivals e.g. an olive fest). Based on the above, on ingredients being used in typical Albanian dishes, and on crops that could be interesting additions to the current crop portfolio, the following short-list of crops of potential interest to the tourist sector that could be cultivated in the pilot area was established: Onion, Leek, Broccoli, Asparagus, Artichoke, Cucumber, Thyme, Mint, Lavender, Chicory, Olive, Tomato, Calendula.

Market Approach

This approach fits very well with market opportunities that we see: being in better paying niche markets. The following stepping stone approach to market development of better paying market segments, by focusing on the national market for products such as olive oil and fruits and vegetables, is recommended:

1. Supply to the tourist sector, particularly the higher end of the tourism market.
2. Supply to qualify restaurants willing to pay a price premium for quality / tasty produce.
3. Further develop the domestic market, thus working towards import substitution.
4. All the above steps offer opportunities to gradually develop the agricultural products and value chains towards higher levels. Once such levels are attained this can be used as a jumping board to export markets, for which the sector will then be better prepared.

Part of such a stepping stone approach is to add more value within the region or country. This can be done by proper transport & logistics (maintaining the quality of the produce also over longer period and travel distances), proper and attractive packaging and marketing, processing produce into high quality end products (e.g. DOC olive oil).
Menfi, Italy

Menfi is located at the southern coast of Sicily and is characterized by small scale agriculture, mostly in wine. Farmers are organized in two main cooperatives and collectively market their product on a global market.

The cooperatives also actively engages in the promotion of a number of local "Slow Food" specialties, most notably Carciofi Spinosa. Around the agricultural products activities are organized that serve as entertainment program for visitors that the region attracts, mainly due to its high quality beaches.

As a result organic farming is developing successfully and is strengthening other economic sectors. Farmers are not so much working on the optimization of individual yields, but rather have three or four sources of income, such as agricultural products, hospitality through small AirBnBs, and additional revenue, for example through cooking workshops or similar.

Traditional food is served everywhere and recipes can be learned in special workshops in different guest houses. Wine is an essential part not only of the economy of Menfi, but also its culture. Each member of the community’s life on the vineyard is a unique experience, so every wine has a different story to tell.

Wine Tasting Event

Activities

- Visit the vineyards and winery
- Enjoy traditional organic food served in winery
- Experience the vineyards harvesting atmosphere
- Learn about wine tasting in an workshop
- Visit the coast with a sailing ship
- Attend lectures in traditional cooking

- Take basic lessons in equestrian centre
- Harvest olives
- Scuba dive
- Learn archery
- Fly over the country
- Mountain bike through the natural terrain

Agriculture: Observations, Trends and Opportunities
Uka Farm, Albania

Uka farm is a perfect example of agritourism right outside of Tirana. A family run oasis in an area that is predominated by seemingly uncontrolled urban sprawl. Uka is based on organic and biodynamic principles that can inspire enterprises and projects throughout Albania.

Uka Farm is a biodynamic & organic farm, restaurant, and winery run by Uka family. Flori Uka is a young oenologist in Albania. Combining his fathers knowledge of farming and Italian schooling makes this young man a winemaker to watch. He serves his hand crafted wines only at his Restaurant. The grapes used are all from Albania. The dishes are delicious with a simple preparation using organic vegetables from their Farm. Meat, such as chicken and steak are locally raised.

Standardi më i lartë i verës Shqiptare
Deemed by Unesco to be an outstanding example of a Mediterranean landscape, the Amalfi Coast is a beguiling combination of great beauty and gripping drama: coastal mountains plunge into the sea in a stunning vertical scene of precipitous crags, picturesque towns and lush forests. The Amalfi coast is not only known for its beautiful Mediterranean landscape, but also for its many terraces filled with lemon trees, that creates an authentic look and enjoyable paths for walking. Agriculture is the reason for the specific beauty and the special region's products, such as limoncello and lemon candy. These products are highly ranked, it’s the region’s quality product. Aside from its sheer beauty, the region is home to some superb restaurants and hotels. It is also one of Italy’s top spots for hiking, with well-marked trails providing a great means of getting away from the coastal clamour.
International tourism is a market/sector in constant development - larger cruise ships, higher hotels and tourists moving from one place to another. From season to season, new countries become popular and other countries fall from grace. Trends like culinary tourism and a staggering increase of use of social media, create a world where consumer and service provider are virtually on each other’s laps. Before understanding the situation, challenges and opportunities for development of the sector in Albania, it is important to develop a holistic understanding of international trends and the importance of the sustainable development of tourism.

General, international observations

Digital means and ubiquitous internet create a huge potential even for smaller destinations to attract new target groups. Travellers can easily share their experience and interaction on social media. In no-time they can be the ambassadors of a destination. They want to show the sense of place, the people they are with, where they are staying and the meal they are eating. Travellers want to enrich themselves with local experience such as cooking workshops, learning crafts, attending festivals and other activities showing them the ‘local’ way. Here is a huge potential for destinations like Qeparo to develop e.g. culinary tourism and to organize itself in a way that is independent of large tourism corporations.
Trends European Customer

- **Digital and internet**: the internet – make it visible and bookable – show special experiences with locals.

- **Travelers - ambassadors - sharing the experiences and interactions**: #braggie. A ‘braggie’ or ‘show off’ is similar to a ‘selfie’, the central part are elements around a person, while the selfie it is about the individual. A #braggie typically contains pictures of vacations that show sense of place: where you are, the people you’re with, where you are staying or the meal that you eat.

- **Sharing Economy**: through knowledge and exchange services with locals by doing activities together, small-scale networks where both parties benefit are created. It is aimed at peer2peer experiences and is similar to concepts that we know of like Airbnb.

- **Travel Enrichment**: travellers want to gain educational experiences that enrich them as individuals, such as attending ceremonies, participating in activities, experiencing ‘the local way’, or learning crafts.

- **What goes around, comes around**: sustainable tourism stems from the feeling that more and more travellers want to do something good for the country they are visiting. Does the money stay with the locals?

- **Local expertise**: travellers are looking for authentic and exceptional experiences traveling. Sustainable tourism can provide these experiences through unique learning experiences directly tied to a country’s people and culture.

Profile of the European Customer

Customers are looking for more authentic experiences and are more predisposed to sustainable tourism messages than ever. However, there is only a small portion (5 – 10%) of the European customer that actively seeks sustainable holidays on the basis of ‘sustainability wordings’. Yet there is a large group (60%) who would be inclined to buy the product when the ways in which the quality of experiences or products are increased are communicated. It is worth looking at engaging, inspiring, driving purchases, and creating loyalty with this target group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Ethical”</td>
<td>5-10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Feel Good”</td>
<td>60 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Just want to switch off”</td>
<td>20 - 30 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Invest in the Sustainability of Tourism Development?

Preservation of Destination
Happy, healthy destinations are essential for tourism. When a destination is not developed in a responsible way, taking into consideration the balance between visitors, industry, communities, and the environment, the destination will lose its original attractiveness after a short term of exploitative (easy) prosperity.

Pressure from society (NGO’s, Unions, Government and consumer)
There are numerous examples of societal ‘stir-ups’ when tourism has a negative impact on groups of people, areas, or whole countries. When tourism is developed in an unbalanced manner, the destination will lose its attractiveness and quality both for locals and visitors.

Cost savings
Utility and environmental costs are rising and predicted to grow further. Investments in sustainable practices can lead to cost savings on energy, water, and waste, and prevent harmful events such as flooding, landslides, fires, and diseases.

Access to capital
International donors, microcredit organisations, and regular banks have a growing demand for initiatives and projects to comply to sustainability preconditions. Banks provide better loans when the (tourism) business is sustainable and can show sustainability credentials.

Improved service and better performance
Many companies that have chosen a more sustainable approach (social and environmental) have proven that this has a positive effect on their level of service as well as the performance of the entrepreneurs and the staff. (Why Greener travel matters, TUI UK & Ireland, November 2010)

Revenue growth
Sustainable tourism is being increasingly linked to product differentiation and a better customer experience. It can lead to earlier booking curves, higher customer satisfaction, retention, and superior margins.

Risk management and brand value
By working together with other industry sectors, destinations, and stakeholders on tackling common sustainability issues the travel industry can mitigate risk and regulation before it becomes a case for compliance.

Consumer trends and expectations
Today’s customer expect travel companies to build sustainability in their product offer.

Goal and Objectives
The goal is to strengthen a destination like Qeparo by a multi-stakeholder approach to create a better place to live and to visit.

Key objectives
The key objectives that should be adopted by local stakeholders to ensure a true sustainable development of tourism and adjacent sectors.

1. Develop a destination management plan based on responsible tourism management, integrating views, roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders that enter into a destination partnership with stakeholders representing the Visitors, Industry, Communities, Environment (VICE).

2. To create policy and business environments which maximise engagement with sustainable tourism in Qeparo. (Develop planning requirements and laws related to planning, siting, design, construction, materials, renovation, demolition and impact assessment to protect natural heritage, cultural heritage, and local communal rights)

3. Develop and promote sustainable products and services that are compatible with their ecological, social, cultural and economic circumstances respecting VICE.

4. Introduce a capacity building, awareness & training, and improvement program regarding sustainable tourism that includes monitoring.

5. Make sustainability criteria part of quality management programs.

6. To develop a tourism sector-wide approach around best practices on water, energy, and waste efficiency.

7. Determine a joint (public sector/industry) destination marketing plan including quality visitors profile, length of stay, yields, local spending (based on the VICE).

In the appendix “I. Implementation Plan” you find a detailed oversight of the short term steps that can be taken to reach these objectives.
Best practises

Aristi, Greece

Aristi is a popular village in Zagoria, Greece. It is part of the Vikos-Aoos National Park. The resort is built at the upper part of Aristi, one of the most traditional villages in Greece. The resort is not just a hotel, but aims to be refuge for those seeking beauty in nature. Open all year round, it can be a starting point for hikers and anyone who wants to visit the Zagorochoria villages and a place for those wishing to experience nature while having top quality facilities available to them.

All buildings are built in a traditional manner and local architectural style. Wooden roofs and the walls built of local grey stone tiles blend in with the surrounding landscape and preserve the harmony of the area. The changing seasons endow Aristi with different colours and images.

Not only are local materials used, but sustainability in general is highly valued. The brochure also advertises that the operational needs of the buildings are both environmentally sustainable and have a very low impact on nature. To diminish the use of oil, heat pumps have been installed and LED bulbs are used for the lighting.

The Resort also provides the only spa in the region, with an indoor heated pool facing the surrounding mountains and villages, a jacuzzi, sauna room, Turkish steam bath (hamam) and massage services, offering moments of relaxation and revitalization. The staff of the resort consists of local people.

“This is Artisti Mountain Resort & Villas', at the heart of the gorgeous and untamed region of Zagori in Greece.”
Mrizi I Zanave, Albania

Mrizi I Zanave is a perfect example of Agro-tourism in Albania. Its owner has gained insights and experience in Italy and translated it to the Albanian context. He works closely with different value chain partners in the surrounding area and shares knowledge with them on sustainable and ecological production and processing. As shown in Blog below, Albanians are appreciating this more and more. This is a strong indication for future success of agro-tourism initiatives throughout Albania.

Extract from Blog site on traveling in Albania:

“A restaurant with its farm, vineyard, and vegetable garden, its own olive plantation, delicious wine, lovely nature of the countryside with historic significance sets the ground for a unique experience for many visitors. I’m referring to Mrizi I Zanave in village Fishte of Zadrima commune. This place apart from the historic importance as the birthplace of Gjergj Fishta known as one of the most prominent figures of the Albanian literature and politics of 19th century with significant contribution to the Albanian cause, sets a fine example of a newborn social-economical tourism pattern in traditional Albanian gastronomy. Last weekend i visited Mrizi i Zanave for the first time and I was immediately impressed. The food was delicious, modern touch spicing up local tradition. Everything 100% BIO, 100% Albanian. Freshly picked vegetable from the garden cooked and served in ceramic plates from a nearby ceramic business, dairy products such as goat or cattle cheese processed by the restaurant staff, country ham preserved down in their basement, red Kallmet wine from the local vineyards, local fruit dessert, originate an authentic dining experience even for us locals. The owner of this place Altin Prenga, who’s passion goes beyond the ambition of a young passionate Albanian cook, had a broader prospective of his investment. The core of his business is offering delicate taste of rural culinary in its natural habitat with absolute fair pricing, through promoting not only values of environment preservation, but also by enhancing the development of local economy in the region. I found this extremely useful as certain Agritourism initiatives are new in Albania. This modern form of intra-cooperation between local businesses in building sustainable Agritourism can sure lead to an increased interest in the quality of regional products, as well as awareness of replicating such business models in other parts of the country.”

“There is no need to reserve a table in advance in most restaurants here, but not at Mrizi I Zanave. I called 2 days in advance to book a table for three in the weekend and I got one only after 3:30 pm. That’s what’s a pattern of successful investment with multiple positive trickle down effects in local economy. That’s a great example to follow. Made in Albania.”

Tourism: Observations, Trends and Opportunities
Madeira Levada Walks, Portugal

Madeira - a hiker’s paradise... With its mountain footpaths and levadas (aqueducts), the island is perfect for walkers. By hiking people are introduced to the island’s natural history. About 100 years ago, farmers developed a footpath along the north coast, which was the only way for them to get their local products to a small hand-shaped harbor at Ponta de São Jorge (Ponta do Clérigo).

Hiking in Madeira, one can see famous forests and exotic plants, breathtaking views to São Jorge and other towns, experience Madeira’s oldest footpath to Curral da Rocha that goes along the cliffs, visit the lighthouse of São Jorge, and many other attractions, hidden spots, and secret viewpoints. Safely explore the highest peaks along the levadas through www.madeira-a-z.com, www.visitmadeira.pt, www.lido-tours.com www.portugalnaturetrails.com/madeira-great-walks/4591563145 www.portugalnaturetrails.com/madeira-great-walks/4591563145 www.waldspaziergang.org/category/wandern

“Levada” is a Portuguese word that derives from “levar”, which means to carry and is very loosely interpreted as “carriageway”. A more correct translation would be mini-canal. The levadas were originally created in the 16th Century to bring water from the rainy northern part of the island to the sun soaked south where crops such as sugar, bananas and grapes grow. The original settlers chipped away at the cliffs and tunnelled through solid rock to make channels and tunnels all with a very slight slope so that the water meandered down towards its destination. To this day, the Levadeiro remains one of the oldest jobs on the island. These men are in charge of opening and shutting the gates which control the flow of the levadas. In total there are 2500 kms of levadas on the island and many were created even before the first roads! Today, these levadas provide travelers to Madeira with an extensive network of walking paths and scenic trails. Visitors can wander along the relaxing countryside or tackle the crumbling ledges known for inducing instant vertigo. Levada walks are very popular in Madeira as the way is cleared by maintained paths running along the water making it a calming experience with a scenic background of nature at its most lush.

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In the process of narrowing down to a shortlist of potential pilot areas, our desk research has resulted in some key facts and data that is partially documented in the following pages.
Tourism Agencies

Albanian Agencies

An analysis of seven Albanian tour operators shows a focus on the coastal areas both in north and south and on the heritage sites, that are located mainly in the south. The daily distances covered are relatively large and tours often cover the entire country, with relatively few stops. Qeparo is passed on almost every tour and no tour operator stops there or even stays over night.

Dutch Agencies

The routes of five Dutch Tour organizations, operating in Albania shows that there is a strong focus on the south of the country, that is the traditional holiday destination, also for local tourists. Rather than focusing purely on the coastal areas with strong cultural heritage, the mountainous areas are increasingly accessed under the umbrella of outdoor tourism. The relative weight on the Hinterland is also partially explained by the popular access through Ochrid Airport in Macedonia. It can also be observed that Dutch tour operators have a more varied choice in locating overnight stays. Especially along the Riviera many more towns and villages are accessed. Qeparo, again, is basically always passed through but never stopped at.
Accessibility

International & National

One of the most important criteria of choosing a tourism destination is the accessibility of that area. While Qeparo is located along virtually all routes of local and international tour operators and thus enjoys a high visibility with group travellers, it is relatively difficult to reach for individual travellers. As shown on the map below, Tirana is the only international airport in Albania. A 5 hour drive follows to the final destination: Qeparo.

There is a vision to build a second international airport in Saranda. This would allow much easier access to the southern coastal area and would make Qeparo viable as a main destination and not only as a “passing-through” visit.
A new national road has been planned that ends, or begins, in the centre of Qeparo. This means accessibility will improve for Qeparo, leading it to be a destination which is easier to reach, for holidays but also for shorter stay as day trips. As such Qeparo will also become a ‘gateway’ to the Riviera. It will be the place where the coast is first accessed coming from the capital.

Assuming that the Airport in Saranda will be made available for international flights and the new bypass road from Vlora would make Qeparo perfectly accessible, Qeparo would still be just off the ‘beaten track’ of destinations less than 1.5 hours away from an airport (the criteria usually considered by large and all-inclusive resorts).
Tourism Potential

Activities in Nature

Albania boasts a multitude of literally untouched nature, hard to find in a comparable extend in Europe. The difficult accessibility may be a downside for mass exploitation but still reserves a very adventurous experience for the visitors who dare to enter and/or reach out for local guides.

The Adriatic and Ionian Coast are obviously the main attraction, especially for regional tourists, but increasingly the mountainous have become a destination for adventure tourism including rafting, mountain-biking, snow-shoeing, and paragliding.

National Parks

Although Albania in general has many pristine natural features, relatively few are currently defined and protected as National Parks. The most notable ones are the areas around Thethi, Valbona, and the area around Divjake, Butrint Lagoon.

Closest to Qeparo are the National Park of Karaburun (Vlora).

Historic Facilities

Albania has a rich ancient history and many discovered and even more undiscovered monuments from different periods. Most notable are early Greek and Roman Settlements (eg. Butrint), Orthodox churches and monasteries (Dhermi etc.).

Qeparo is located in the vicinity of three UNESCO World heritage sites: Butrint (2h), Girokastra (2,5h) and Berat (1,5h). Porto Palermo Bay, just next to Qeparo is ranked as first among 15 Undiscovered European Destinations for 2014 by Huffington Post.
Agricultural Potential

Albania has a diverse range of agriculture. Vegetables and fruits are mostly processed in the west where the climate is most suitable, while cattle herds are held mostly in mountain areas for grazing. Wild and seeded herbs are most likely to be found in mountain areas because of the suitable climate.

From soil and climate research, we can conclude that grapes for wine could be grown all over Albania. Yet data maps show wine production in just a few places in Albania. One reason for the discrepancy between suitable growing conditions and the amount of wine produced may be the lack of history of wine culture and production. The strength of knowledge about wine production is therefore fairly low.

Citrus fruits, various mountain herbs, and different types of cattle such as goats and sheep, are currently the main agricultural products in and around Qeparo.
07. QEPARO, THE PILOT AREA
As a result of desk studies, speaking with local contacts, numerous interviews with stakeholders from the Albanian government, NGO’s, and national tour operators, the options of locations for applying the concept of circular and inclusive place making into practice, were narrowed down to two places in the south of Albania. During a visit to both areas Qeparo proved to be an almost perfect match to the criteria.

Representative of the ASCU (Albanian Savings and Credit Union) and owner and manager of a local supermarket, Mr. Fatiq Bufi explained a family oriented approach to tourism, small scale agriculture and relatively undeveloped upper Qeparo. He also showed a strong willingness and ambition to work on sustainable development in the area and indicated the presence of entrepreneurs that were motivated to go along in that development. This proved to be right during the mission that followed in March.

But what do we know about Qeparo? How does it fit into the Albanian context? Here is some general information and a rough SWOT analysis based on desk studies and observations.
Tourist Guide for Qeparo

Qeparo is part of a project by German Development Corporation GIZ to promote sustainable tourism. The project has invested heavily in making the area accessible for alternative ways of tourism, mainly focussed on an international market. As part of this, for example bike-routes were mapped and marked, brochures were developed, an image campaign launched, and local entrepreneurs were trained in different skills.
**SWOT Analyses**

**Strengths**

**Small Scale Tourism**

For years Qeparo has been a place where families go for holiday. The local community have kept out big developers and noisy clubs. This has resulted relatively small number of large investments until last year when a new promenade was constructed.

Qeparo also lies at a point where the four typical territorial zones of Albania come close together. It is thus a perfect starting point for the development of a sustainable tourism model that can strengthen the Riviera, strengthen Qeparo and serve as an example for other parts of Albania.

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**Five zones concept of national territorial plan**

- **12 Miles Sea zone**: Consider the activity and users as an important part for the municipal plan.
- **Coastal Zone**: Ports, harbours, coastal activities, natural sensitive areas (lagoons and wetlands).
- **Urbanization Zone**: City of the first belt, strengthen agriculture to support tourism with food production (foot hills, hills and valleys).
- **Hinterland**: Cities that influence tourism with cultural heritage such as Gjirokastër, Berat, Elbasan.

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Qeparo, The Pilot Area
Diverse Landscape / Diverse Potential of Tourism Products

Qeparo is located in a blessed territorial position, which provides the village area with a broad diversity of landscape typologies. In general the Albanian southern coast is characterized by a unique declination of Mediterranean climate and landscape. Here in fact, mountains are very close to the coast, and the mountainsides steeply dive into the sea, other areas in the Mediterranean have hills next to the seaside, as in Liguria (Italy) or Provence (France), but few have such high peaks so near to the water.

Small Scale Agriculture

The absence of large scale agriculture has its downsides from a one dimensional, economic point of view. However for the development of a integrated circular model for local development it is an advantage. Each individual agro entrepreneur can have a role in creating added value for integrated tourism product. The scale of agriculture and tourism allow for closing local chains: local farmers supplying tourism and tourism adding local farm or production experience to their product portfolio.

Limited Urban Development

Unlike other villages and cities along the Albanian Coast, Qeparo has seen relatively modest development in the past years. This has established the village as a preferred location for high-end local visitors, especially families. The local territorial plans, currently under review but not expected to change significantly, support this position in limiting construction basically to the areas currently build up (yellow). This leaves to be expected that the urban fabric will consolidate and densify but also that large areas along the coast, such as the agricultural valley of Qeparo will be free from permanent construction. It is also foreseen to establish an Eco Camping in the Area (T3, see also Case O6).

Functional zoning plan of Qeparo and surroundings
SWOT Analyses
Weaknesses

Bad Infrastructure

Good infrastructure does not only increase safety, it also increases everyday comfort. With good infrastructure, children are able to play outside and the tourists have a comfortable walk to the beach instead of going by car. A good example of the negative effects resulting from the focus on car traffic in recent infrastructure developments are the sidewalks blocked by trees, which makes it impossible for pedestrians, let alone someone with a stroller or wheelchair to use it.

No Guidelines for Building

Qeparo owes its beauty to the landscape and architecture that blends into the surrounding landscape, using local materials such as stone and wood. It is this quality that will make high-end tourist visits and make the tourist come back. By building hotels and houses that do not fit in this balanced environment, the intrinsic value of Qeparo is endangered.
No Collective Ownership of Public Space

If Albania wants to move ahead and attract more diverse, more high-end tourists, a change of attitude towards public space needs to take place. Waste management, maintenance of façades, infrastructure and public green facilities must be taken seriously. Management of public space is one of the key enabling factors for development of Qeparo as well.

Unclear Landownership

A certain scale of agriculture is necessary to provide for the needs of the local community as well as visitors. Furthermore a good balance between agriculture, landscape and real-estate is crucial in a sustainable development model. For both reasons, it is important to have a clear picture of land ownership of the numerous parcels of land in and around Qeparo. In many cases it is not clear who owns the land. In other cases more than one claim exists. Yet, in other cases owners are abroad and hang on to the land for speculative reasons.

Lack of Vision on Tourism Services and Products

When entering Qeparo there is an visible lack of vision and tourism strategy for the village and the surrounding area. The business is focused too much on the summer months. There are a great number of hotels and bed and breakfasts but these are hardly visible and there is no cooperation between the different service providers. For the guest, Qeparo is also not recognizable as one destination. There is a lack of product development considering the customer journey and a respective communication. There is no recognized standard for services and accommodations.

Lack of Cooperation

In order to make any initiative work, sustainable cooperation is essential. The history of clans and families and a traumatic period of forced cooperation during communism have left Albanians with an individualistic approach of business with obvious consequences. This is one of the biggest challenges in Albania and Qeparo is no exception. People tend to not work together and are suspicious of people from outside of their family or personal network.

“...one of the biggest problems is that all young people want to make a fortune as soon as possible.”

- Marinela Papajorji, Restaurant owner in Qeparo

Lack of Professional Workforce

Young people move away from the village and only come back for high season. This prevents them from developing and working on their future in the village. A number of young people from Qeparo have indicated that if they saw sufficient opportunities they would move back to where their roots are.

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Opportunities

**Future Entry Point to Riviera**

When the new road between Vlora and the Riviera is finished, Qeparo will be right at the new entry point to the coast. This position will provide Qeparo with a unique opportunity. As a first stop, it can play a role in informing visitors of all that the Riviera has to offer. When considered the other way around, it is the exit point for tourists returning to the north and thus can be a place where tourists buy local products to take home.

**Shifting of International Demand for Tourism Destinations**

Due to safety issues and changing demand, international tourists are on the move. Countries such as Turkey and Egypt are experiencing a decline in number of visitors. These tourists will obviously look for other destinations. By reaching and triggering the right segments of these travelers, the Albanian Riviera can benefit from these trends. The effects of this trend are already evident. For example, Dutch Tour operator Savoede experienced a 100% increase of organised holidays to Albania over 1 year.

**Upcoming Forms of Tourism such as Adventure and Culinary Tourism**

Qeparo has an opportunity to position itself as a culinary destination or as a gateway to adventure activities in the hinterland. Both of these types of tourism are on the rise in Western Europe and in Albania there are signs that domestic travelers are starting to appreciate these as well. There is a clear interest in slow food restaurants, juice bars in Tirana, food festivals, a rising demand for rafting, hiking and cycling etc. Arber Togani (winner of Master chef Albania and member of the expert team) has shown that the potential of the area is enormous.

**Upcoming Demand for Sustainable and Healthy Products and Services**

The culinary and traditional trends in Tirana, but also the increasing public debate on urban development, quality of education, and energy consumption show that there is a growing awareness and demand for sustainable and high quality produce and experience. Starting assumedly with the upper class, highly educated Albanians from Tirana and Durres, this trend can be expected to reach a broader population soon.

**Return migration from Greece (and Italy)**

The Albanian diaspora is the migration dynamic that, after the fall of the communist regime in 1992, hit the country depriving it of a big part of its human capital. In just a few years, more than 800,000 Albanians migrated mainly towards Greece, Italy, Turkey, Germany and the United States. After the 2008 financial crisis, Greece and to a lesser extent Italy, lost their economical appeal to Albanians who did and are still (partially) coming back to their own country. Such return migration can be temporary or permanent; this human capital of ‘natives’ coming back will only stay if the economical conditions will allow them to achieve a certain well-being and not force them to move, once again.

Today Qeparo, as many other villages in the coastal area, is facing the return migration, and has the opportunity to invest in it, revitalizing the economy with new forces. Tourism and agro-tourism and the landscape with all of its products can be the starting point for new prosperity.

Qeparo: The Pilot Area

Arber Togani looking for local herbs and crops to make his signature dish for Qeparo.
Development of Local Cuisine

There is potential for development of a local and traditional cuisine. Trends in Tirana show growing demand for traditional food experience. There are a number of restaurants and hotels that could provide this traditional food experience in and around Qeparo.

Hotel Riviera

The Hotel is located on the beach, offering great views and a nice ambience. It has its own restaurant located on the ground floor, which is open not only to guests of the hotel but also for other visitors. The location, the interior and the stone oven create an enjoyable atmosphere.

Hotel Te Stefi

Located next to the beach is Hotel Te Stefi with a beautiful canopied restaurant that faces a promenade. Here you can enjoy a meal while enjoying the stunning view.

Qeparo Bakery

In this bakery one can find many delicious pastries. According to locals, it is also the place to find the best bread in the whole Riviera area.

Veranda Bar Restaurant Qeparo

The Verdana Restaurant is the first place you see when you enter Qeparo. It is a well known and favored location for coffee and food in the area and is suitable for groups of all different sizes. It welcomes everyone to sit and rest and it is open all day, all year long.
Tourists often visit Albania as part of a larger tour that includes neighbouring countries. On the other hand, there is a large population of Albanians in neighbouring countries. This, along with the fact that the European Union’s pre-accession assistance often focuses on cross-border projects, to foster peace and understanding in historically tumultuous areas like the Balkans, suggest the design of links and routes to destinations outside of the country.

For example, the recent establishment of a hiking route in the north of Albania ‘Peaks of the Balkans’ crosses Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo is a great success. Via Egnatia, an ancient Roman trade route between Durres and Istanbul, is under development and appears very promising, following the success of transcontinental hiking routes such as the Santiago de Compostela.

For sailors and cruise ships, since Albania is not yet part of the European Union, checking in at one of Albanian ports allows vessels to reduce the duration of their stay in European Waters.
SWOT Analyses

Threats

Lack of Enforcement of Regulations

Although regulations are often established, in several cases there is a lack of reinforcement and compliance. In Qeparo, we did, unfortunately, witness an extreme case.

During our trip, we learned from the local community about the presence of an old aqueduct that used to bring water, for irrigation, from the river in Borsch to the dry agricultural lands of Qeparo. The aqueduct does not work anymore because the water level at the source cannot reach the channel. The water, in fact, is used by a Hydro Power Plant in Borsch to such extent that the river cannot feed the irrigation infrastructure anymore. This situation is only possible because the company owns a contract that allows them to get around regulations. The power plant, in theory, can only use up to 70% of the water during autumn, winter and spring and 30% during dry season. The regulation is clear, and if respected it will not allow the dry aqueduct situation to happen.

Waste Management Issues

One of the most urgent improvements is the ubiquitous wastelands in the country. A seemingly simple problem however is complicated to solve in reality. A formal waste collection system is only in place for one year now and currently limited to collection on the main streets. On the positive side, Himara now has a functioning waste disposal site and that collection is gradually expanded. However, old habits cannot be changed quickly and residents often prefer to dump waste on a village site. This wasteland may be is out of sight for the city residents, but can be visible to visitors to the village.

Future Professional Workforce Move Away

From interviews with the young generation of Qeparo, we arrived at a clear picture of young people migrating to the capital and abroad. The opportunities offered locally are not enough to attract this essential group back to their place of birth. This is one of the most important factors for all future development. Each concept, idea or plan should consider the need to turn this development around and make people (at least periodically) move back to their hometown.

Climate Change

As mentioned before, climate change will lead not only to higher temperatures, but also to more extreme weather events such as longer droughts, as well as more frequent and heavier rains. This calls for making agriculture and the wider landscape more adaptive to such changes. Reforestation of the hills and mountains in the Riviera will contribute to reducing floods and erosion by capturing water. This source of water can also be used for irrigation. The droughts also call for renovating and improving irrigation systems that have deteriorated or are out of use. Better soil management, through increasing the organic matter in the soil, will also enhance the resilience of crops to droughts and may contribute to erosion prevention.

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08. Activities in Qeparo, March ‘16
**Project Outlines**

**Key questions for the mission**

How can agriculture, tourism and spatial planning as well as adjacent sectors work together in a circular model adding maximum value to a sustainable year round local economy? How can this lead to more economic relations between Albanian and Dutch companies?

**Showcase**

It is extremely difficult to envision a solution without concrete examples. For this reason, it is essential to put effort in creating an area of successful combinations between agro-food production, the development of tourism and the development of infrastructure and other spatial elements. During previous events, a number of entrepreneurs who have a product and service level that could function as a starting point for desired quality level of supply in Albania were identified.

**Optimal scale**

To build these “living labs” it is important to find an optimal scale: big enough to bring all these elements together and create enough body for impact, small enough to keep things going without making implementation costly and difficult.

**Local context**

The Ministry of Tourism has well thought through strategies and plans in place to develop tourism in Albania. At the same time the agricultural sector is developing the great potential in several areas. The Ministry of Urban development has very clear ideas on how the coastal areas in Albania can be developed. But do these powers strengthen each other or do they in certain cases threaten one and other? In a period when government and sector organizations, in cooperation with international organizations such as the Worldbank and GIZ are working on the actualization of plans and strategies, individual entrepreneurs are working on sustainable tourism and agriculture and providing practical cases and best practices that really stand out and are inspiration for others to follow.

How can these powers come together and complement each other in such a way that the result is a well-structured and smart approach by local and national government to an integrated and sustainable agricultural and tourism sector? And how can they at the same time stimulate the emergence of best practices based on ideas and business cases that have a strong link to this approach?

**Objective**

Objective of this project is to create insight among high level stakeholders on potential for sustainable alternatives to mass tourism. Furthermore this mission will result in understanding of possibilities and practical implications of implementing a sustainable tourism strategy in a specific location (pilot area), working on development of agro tourism in a narrow sense, on the level of accommodation, as well as in a broader sense by linking agro production, spatial design, infrastructural planning and tourism to show the interdependency as well as the potential to create added value for all three sectors. This project will contribute to the start of a development of sustainable (agro) tourism in Albania, ultimately leading to relevant supply for northern European tour operators and further opening Albania to European market for sustainable tourism.
NEW ACTIVITIES

- Be Friends
  - Promote a positive attitude
  - Support each other
  - Encourage healthy habits
  - Provide a safe environment

- Be Community
  - Foster a sense of belonging
  - Promote local culture
  - Celebrate diversity
  - Support local businesses

- Be Environmentally Conscious
  - Reduce waste
  - Conserve resources
  - Protect natural habitats
  - Advocate for sustainable practices

- Be Healthy
  - Encourage physical activity
  - Promote mental well-being
  - Support healthy eating
  - Foster a healthy community

- Be Creative
  - Support local artists
  - Foster creative expression
  - Promote cultural events
  - Encourage community creativity

- Be Educated
  - Support local schools
  - Promote lifelong learning
  - Foster a culture of knowledge
  - Support educational initiatives

- Be Engaged
  - Participate in community events
  - Support local government
  - Advocate for causes
  - Foster community involvement

- Be Active
  - Encourage outdoor activities
  - Support local sports
  - Promote exercise
  - Foster an active community

- Be Connected
  - Foster social connections
  - Support local networks
  - Encourage community bonding
  - Foster a sense of belonging
Putting together a team

To work on cross-sectorial objectives with a strong design, it is important to bring together a team of experts from all trades. This group of professionals should not only be specialized in specific areas but should be able to work with experts from other fields, in order to co-create a total solution for a given area. From the existing networks at CSR Netherlands and from personal networks of Cityförster came a number of professionals that formed the “Traveller and the Olive Grove” team, led by Arber Togani and photographers Armand and Mirton Resuli of the Urban Research Institute in Tirana.

Data collection and stakeholder interviews

In 2015, Martin Sobota and Meine van der Graaf worked on the framework for a project that could meet these objectives. During a number of meetings and stakeholder interviews in Tirana and the Riviera, national challenges were identified, along with some potential pilot areas where these challenges could be addressed using a multi-stakeholder approach to bring the bottom-up initiative together with the city ambitions.

Choice for pilot area

“We know what needs to be done, we just can not do it alone” - Fotaq Buffi, local contact in Qepara person and owner of local supermarket.

As mentioned earlier, Qepara was chosen as the designated pilot area. We have arrived at this choice through evaluating a number of variables. Some of the most important criteria are:

- Area is already on or very close to the existing routes for tourists
- Area has high potential for small scale tourism
- Area has high potential for development of suitable forms of agriculture
- Local community understands and approves of the need to develop sustainable agro-tourism
Program

Monday March 14th

Field visits and interviews with local entrepreneurs.

Municipality of Himare

“There is a big need for vocational training and training for tourism entrepreneur skills on the coast. The only available education for young people is in Tirana and focuses on a different kind of tourism than we have to offer.”

- Jorgo Goro, Major of Himara

A pig during its hours of free walks in the olive grove.

Sheep farmer answering questions in his sheepfold.

Questions and answers from Jorgo Goro at his office in the municipality of Himara.
“This visit makes me think in a different way about my business.”

- Dimitris, vegetable farmer & honey producer

Honey Farm

Honey farmer shows the honey and bees hives.

Fish Farm

View of the fisherman's fishnets.

Olive press 1

Visit to an olive press, showing the process of olive oil making.

Olive press 2

Visit to another olive press.
“By joining a booking agency like booking.com, we have extended our season tremendously.”

Owner Riviera Hotel

Qepar Promenade

Discussing one of the recent major investments done in Qeapro.

Riviera Hotel

Talking to the owner of the Riviera Hotel.

Processing First Results

Discussing the first results, sharing experiences and encounters with entrepreneurs.
Tuesday March 15th

**Upper Qeparo**

Discussing the value of old qeparo as a tourism commodity.

**Old Himara**

Tour by local architect and house owner, Egda.

**Kudhes**

Visiting Kudhes: example of individual and joint renovation.

**Pilur**

Visiting Pilur: an example of poor public space maintenance.
Collecting local ingredients for Qeparo signature dish by Arber Togani.

Visit to the local Shepard to join the Shepard trail route: a potential product development for tourism.

Preparation of First Stakeholder Meetings

Discussing and finalizing during breakfast at the hotel.
Wednesday March 16th

Stakeholder Presentation

Discussing common values and beliefs with local community, entrepreneurs, tourism companies and local government.
Presentation and discussions leading to a basic model for Qeparo:

- Trust and Cooperation
- Common Goals and Beliefs
- Local and Individual Ownership
- Common Agreement
- Gateway to the Southern Albanian Riviera
- Pure and Authentic
- Family Approach
- Traditional and Historical

Presentation of local signature cuisine, made from readily available ingredients. Prepared by Arber Togani and his team along with Marinela Papajaj, owner of the Riviera restaurant.
HOSTELRIES:

- hotels
- natural
- microlite

Landscape

- drinking water
- soil of woods
- lavandus
- natural fo
- clear water

Activities (hiking, climbing)

- join as part of the family and live in totality
- traditional
- strong community sense
- make wine and drink it together
- cleaner (than other villages)
- closed 10 June
- coexistence of 6 churches
Thursday March 17th

Design and business planning sessions with entrepreneurs on agriculture, hospitality, tourism services, urban planning and product design.

Finalizing presentation of outcomes and enjoying local cuisine and quality pork from local pig farmer, prepared by the masterchef.
Friday March 18th

Final presentation in Qeparo attended by local entrepreneurs and stakeholders as well as government and NGO representatives from Tirana.

Enjoying a buffet of finger food prepared from all local ingredients.

Introduction of Dutch Ambassador Dewi van de Weerd.
Matchmaking Event At Uka Farm, May 24th

After processing all the input and defining a great number of potential pilot projects, "The Traveller and The Olive Grove" team met with entrepreneurs and government officials as well as international donors and NGOs to discuss possible follow-up steps. Out of this event came a great number of potential next steps:

• Bottom-up approach will be an important addition to efforts in assisting policy makers. Without practical examples, these strategies and policies risk ending up in a desk drawer.

• A number of organisations have expressed interest in working together on some of the separate challenges that have been discussed.

• The local community has already taken steps to bring some of the advice into practice. First steps have been taken in constructing a tourist information centre and outlining an entrepreneur association. Furthermore, a campsite has already been established.

• There are a lot of good ideas to bring events in the coastal area into reality such as festivals and markets. A number of attendants underline that these events can bring more international and local tourists traveling to the Riviera earlier in the season.

• The municipality of Himare is very willing to work on several different projects and there are already ideas on how to work together in PPPs to realize a training centre.

• Besides these easily attainable results, more structural challenges such as water supply, water management and energy have been pointed out during several workshops as crucial to bring the development of coastal villages forward.

• A number of possible funding opportunities have been brought to our attention, which we together with local organisations will follow up in the near future.
International Team

Boer Bos
Paul Bos
Farmer & Coach

PUM
Gjart Smaja
Representative

Originate
Fedde Germans
Consultant, Coach, Trainer, Facilitator & Founder

Cityförster
Tea Hadzizulfic
Architect

Cityförster
Martin Sobota
Architect & Founder

Openfabric
Francesco Garofalo
Landscape Architect & Founder

Sawadee
Chantal van Gent
Product Manager

MVO
Meine van der Graaf
Project Manager

Alterra Wageningen UR
Tomek de Ponti
Agriculture Business Innovator

gutundgut
Rafael Enzler
Placemaker
National Participants

- Niko Goro
  Tourism Director
  Himara Municipality

- Armando Ormeni
  Architect

- Zana Vokopola
  Director at Urban Research Institute

- Arber Togani
  Master Chef

- Amarildo Lala
  Sous Chef

- Auron Tare
  Director at National Coastal Agency

- Enri Leka

- Alba Zhorri
  Southern Albania Development Project

- Simon Battisti
  Architect

- Rosita Habazaj
  Artist

- Daniela Nasto
  Hostel Owner in Tirana

- Ilva Gjuzi
  Atelier Albania

- Celeste Goncalves
  Hostel Owner in Tirana

- Dewi van Weerd
  Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
“Walking the mountain with the experiences we want to share Shepherd, is precisely one of the with our costumers.”
“Yes, of course! I am happy to bring tourists with me in the country side.”
“Restoring the aqueduct would help to implement mixed farming in the terraces.”
09. CASES
Qeparo Model for Development

Qeparo is a traditional village with outspoken wish to remain that way. Family tourism, agriculture and a strong community are some of the characteristics you encounter when staying in the area. Another thing that stands out is the abundance of olive trees. They have played a central role in the history of the area. Some types of olive trees are unique to the area and have very good reputation. The olive tree is the basis of a design model developed from a mission in March.

Local Characteristics

Based on the interviews, site visits as well as the results from the working week we had in March 2016, we have concluded that the four common understandings on four main characteristics for Qeparo are:

• The Gateway to the southern Albanian Riviera
• Family approach (by families, for families and treated as family)
• Traditional and Historical
• Purity and authenticity

These characteristics are the existing qualities of the area and form the roots of the Qeparo region. It is sensible to build the business cases and initiatives upon these characteristics, as well as using them as references to check if things are being developed in the right direction.

Enabling Factors

To use these characteristics to their full potential there are a number of enabling factors that need to be in place. The degree to which these enabling factors are taken seriously determines how successfully an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable model can be implemented and maintained:

• Local and individual ownership
• Trust and cooperation
• Common goals and beliefs
• Common agreement on and understanding of desired quality of hospitality, agro production and processing, public and private space ultimately resulting in guidelines and standards.
Case 01
Entrepreneur Association

Background
To have a common goal and to have results in a short time the association should try to take ownership of one or two projects (for example, a food festival). It is well known that villages such as Qeparo are not particularly charmed by the concept of entrepreneurs showing a great deal of energy and commitment to develop and earn, organizing and working together in official constructions such as cooperatives and associations.

This individualism has led to a lot of development that does not contribute to a coherent picture. This arises when one overlooks all that is offered (products and services). When people claim that they need a “model for development” they are reluctant to admit that what they really need is a model for trust and cooperation across borders of family or clan. What is needed is a model for an active entrepreneur association.

Benefits of Organized Entrepreneurs
By organizing themselves, entrepreneurs can create a stronger voice when interfacing with government, inhabitants, customers, and value chain partners. With this stronger position they can contribute to the development of Qeparo (or another given area) in a structured way. We believe that such an association is one of the most important enabling factors for the success of any intervention in an area such as Qeparo. Therefore the business case is not one that stands alone.

The association should be by and for entrepreneurs and thus the business case should be focused on a system of contribution by members. If any additional financing is required, the association should make sure that the government does not play too big a part so that the association remains neutral, benefiting entrepreneurs.

Already at least ten entrepreneurs have indicated the willingness to get organized and have emphasized the importance of becoming a “legal entity” in order to promote development in their area quickly. This does not stop at the perimeter of the village but also involves entrepreneurs from neighbouring villages.

“We believe that working together can really help us in our joint and individual efforts to create a better and more prosperous Qeparo.”

- Marinela Papajorgji, Restaurant owner in Qeparo

Potential Project Partners
- Local entrepreneurs (starting with most active and modern thinking)
- Municipality
- International donor organizations focused on supporting the development of sustainable private sector
- Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade & Entrepreneurship, AIDA
- MVO Nederland and Originate to bring in experience in organizing SME’s

Next Steps
- Identifying local ownership
- Define development process and steps
- Write outlines of organization plan
- Find private (partner contribution) and public (subsidies) finance

“This association could create leverage to resolve issues such as sanitation, irrigation system, coordination of works, as well as stimulating government intervention to solve these problems.”

- Fotaq Bui, Supermarket owner and local counterpart in organization of the field mission
Case 02
Pig Farm and the Connection with Restaurants

Background

There is a constant mismatch between supply and demand when it comes to fresh produce such as meat and vegetables in areas such as Qeparo due to fluctuations in demand caused by high and low seasons in tourism.

This makes it extremely hard for producers to tune their supply. In the end it comes down to either overproduction in low season or lack of supply in high season. Food processing can be part of the answer to this predicament.

A visit to a pig farm owned by Mr. Kokedima, indicated that he and others in the sector have no tradition in processing meat. At the same time Arber Togani (winner of Master Chef Albania and restaurant owner in Tirana) indicated the lack of available high quality processed meats in Albania.

Potential Business Case

With relatively small investment pig holders can diversify and create new markets for their product. This specific case could serve as a showcase for others to others in Albania.

Success rests on individual initiative but should be discussed with micro finance organization. Possible project partners: Mr. Kokedhima, Mr. Togani, local international entrepreneurs interested in investing in quality meats. Suppliers of equipment for climate control, etc.

If done right, this case can be used as an example and replicated for other places and products. This specific case could serve as a model for different value chains where demand and supply can be brought together by processing food into different products.

“I would like to hear more about the possibilities for sustainable crudo from Albania”

- Jaap Frerichs of Fairmeat, Netherlands

Tourism Potential

At the same time Western customers are not used to understand the whole process behind the products on the supermarket shelf or on their plate. In Albania these value chains are still very short and potentially accessible. Tourists who value the food chain and would like to see the process of animal farming, can visit a farm and find out how it works. In contrast to the Western meet industry farming, the tourists can see an traditional, honest and sustainable way of farming and potentially also the boning.

In the Netherlands they have one farm that gives the meet lovers a chance to see the farm and meet the animals. You can choose to lease an animal or buy one beforehand. Eventually, the meet lovers who bought half a pig, can join the boning and get to know everything of the meet they will eat, explained by a retired butcher. Customers see the value and are willing to pay more than for the meet on the supermarket shelf.

Next Steps

- Make a simple business plan with cost and benefit calculation based on available market information. Price for one kilo raw pig meat has average price of 600 Lek. Price for cured ham: 1500 to 3500 Lek.
- Explore possibilities to link to space in training centre and make it into a more publicly backed initiative.
- The alterations that need to be done to the facilities need to be defined. Important is to take sustainability, hygiene and animal welfare into consideration in all decisions.
- Investigate if facilities can meet Albanian or even international standards and what is needed to do so.
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- Investigate if facilities can meet Albanian or even international standards and what is needed to do so.

“If Mister Kokedhima can provide high quality prosciutto in the near future I will commit to buying it. There is a great need for high quality local processed products. This does not only concern meat but others products as well.”

- Arber Togani, winner Master Chef Albania
Case 03
Development of Festivals & Events

Potential Business Case

Besides prolonging the season and generating economic activity, creating a modern festival that attracts young Albanians with a sense of connection to culture and art, as well as an interest in cuisine, can contribute to a change of image for an area that suffers from an ongoing exodus of young people.

Potential Project Partners

- National Restaurant Association
- Local restaurant owners, Restaurant owners and chefs in Tirana such as Master chef winner Arber Togani
- Organisations and entrepreneurs with experience with event organisation in Albania and abroad in the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany
- NGO’s with a focus on developing entrepreneurial skills
- NGO’s with a focus on cultural development
- Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade & Entrepreneurship

Next Steps

1. Identify local parties ready for the task of organizing the festival
2. Develop a concept together with local parties
3. Identify potential financial partners
4. Find committed media partners
5. Organize (local) restaurant owners, hotel owners, food producers and festival planners into a committee for the festival
6. Draw up a business plan
7. Connect with financing

“We would love to move back to Qeparo in the future but there is no work. Getting started with some people to organize such a festival could be a start for us to change that!”

-Dhimitrulla Bufi, originated from Qeparo

“Food and cultural events can right example is set others with other sustainable trends really work in Albania, if the will follow. We see the same such as juice bars.”

-Celeste Goncalves, hostel owner in Tirana

Background

Just like other places along the Riviera, Qeparo has a high number of accommodations during peak season. To prolong this high season, effort needs to be put in developing additional attractions and events to attract new national and international client groups.

Description

A Riviera Food and Culture festival at the end of the summer season could stimulate additional tourism to Qeparo and help position the region as a centre for agricultural and culinary tourism. The festival can showcase local products prepared by acknowledged chefs (national and international). Existing restaurants can be included in the festival.

Additional pop-up restaurants can be created by local artists (under the olive trees and on the rooftops) and be set up as an additional attraction. Cultural components such as music, dance and visual art can be added to enrich the event and attract a broader audience.

• There is potential for a number of different business cases that are related. The main business case harnessed revenue generated from the event. Ticket income and sponsorship are the main sources of income as is profit from catering.
• If festivals are strategically timed at the start and end of the tourism season; they can extend the season.
• Ownership and Cooperation between local and national players are essential for success.
• Local entrepreneurs support the idea of such recurring events and understand the direct and indirect value for their community. Restaurant owners and hotel owners as well as agriculture companies have reacted positively on the idea of events in their area.
• A number of individuals and organisations in Tirana have already been identified as possible contributors.
• Festivals can help to diversify target groups for tourism product in Albania: culinary and cultural traveller.

Cases

Tourism
Agriculture
Spatial Design
Cuisine
Processing

Processing

Cases
Cross Sectoral Training Centre

As a result of workshops during “The Traveller and the Olive Grove” project, the need for a training facility in order to improve the quality of the available workforce was articulated by different stakeholders. At the same time, entrepreneurs have shown a need for refining entrepreneurial skills to develop and enrich their products and services to meet current and future (international) demand. Additionally, a training and community centre can function as a centre point for strategy and quality control for projects that are rolled out and safeguarding a local model for development of tourism agriculture and food processing.

The training centre could target entrepreneurs active in tourism as well as adjacent agro/processing and young professionals who are currently only working in tourism areas in high season and afterwards moving to Tirana or Greece. It should service entrepreneurs not only from Qeparo but also around from other parts of the Riviera or even Albania or abroad. Developing such a training centre is not limited to Qeparo but should provide a model that can be replicated along the coast or inland.

This training concept relies on the principle of public private partnership. 1. Concerning the investment in hardware (building and facilities), as well as the initial investments in software (setting up organisation and creating curriculum), the government and NGO play the largest part. 2. The private part of this value proposition lies in the exploitation of the training facility. Further research is necessary to understand if there is potential in such a model for individual entrepreneurs that are part of cooperatives to take responsibility for the exploitation and have ownership over the curriculum and training programs.

Qeparo’s main income is from the tourism industry. A training centre will contribute greatly to the development of personnel for sustainable hospitality, agriculture and adjacent value chains. They will be more qualified and have better insight in business opportunities.

The business case for training can be twofold: proprietor of training facility can have an income by providing materials and services. Entrepreneurs and teachers providing the trainings can have additional income for their contribution. Students can pay a basic fee for joining training programs.

The long-term business case for local government is the increase in more capable entrepreneurs and employees. The program would create job opportunities, add value to specific regions and ultimately increase attractiveness for (international) tourists.

By providing training before and after the high season, specific areas will have a longer period of programmed activities. In the long run, this training instrument should help provide tourism and agriculture models that attract other tourists besides beach lovers, such as those interested in outdoor tourism, bird watching, watersports, and culinary tourism, all of which can be developed (internationally and nationally) for early (May and June) and late (August and September) season.

The training centre could target entrepreneurs active in tourism as well as adjacent agro/processing and young professionals who are currently only working in tourism areas in high season and afterwards moving to Tirana or Greece. It should service entrepreneurs not only from Qeparo but also around from other parts of the Riviera or even Albania or abroad. Developing such a training centre is not limited to Qeparo but should provide a model that can be replicated along the coast or inland.

This training concept relies on the principle of public private partnership. 1. Concerning the investment in hardware (building and facilities), as well as the initial investments in software (setting up organisation and creating curriculum), the government and NGO play the largest part. 2. The private part of this value proposition lies in the exploitation of the training facility. Further research is necessary to understand if there is potential in such a model for individual entrepreneurs that are part of cooperatives to take responsibility for the exploitation and have ownership over the curriculum and training programs.
Potential Project Partners

- Embassy of the Netherlands
- Municipality of Himare
- National operating incoming agents
- Educational institutes (local and international)
- National government and NGO’s interested in capacity building
- Individual customers: entrepreneurs (young) professionals active in hospitality or adjacent sectors
- International tourism partners, tourism and agro-associations in Albania

Organisations represented by members of “The Traveller and the Olive tree” team can play a part in hardware and software design as well as provide support for the implementation of plans.

During an event at UKA, farm first contacts were established between Albanian partner organizations and the municipality to explore possibilities for a future PPP

Next Steps

1. Conduct a needs assessment
2. Draw up a concept paper about the training centre
3. Connect with potential financing partners
4. Choose a location
5. Draft a design of the training centre
6. Evaluate existing school concepts and potential school partners

Qeparo as Pilot Location

The choice for Qeparo as a (first) location for training centre might seem arbitrary but is based on a number of observations and conclusions of the expert team connected to this project (see information on project):

- It will become the entry point for the Albanian Riviera when the road from Vlora is finished.
- It has a scale of agriculture and tourism that befits the concept of training individuals and companies of small and medium size.
- Qeparo has potential for sustainable agriculture and sustainable tourism.
- It has a potentially perfect facility in the old school based at the entrance of the village.
- Qeparo has a number of entrepreneurs that are interested in the concept of organising and developing their area in a sustainable way.
Case 05
Olive Press Company

Background

There are a number of reasonably well-developed oil press companies near Borsh and Qeparo that sell their oil to local olive grove owners and as bulk product to wholesalers in Tirana, other Balkan countries, and Russia. In some cases the oil is branded and sold on local and national markets. The entrepreneur in question is considering leaving the area and moving to Tirana.

The companies are not at all benefiting from tourism in the area and tourists are not made aware of possibility to buy high quality oil or even visit the factory. This does not harness the market’s full potential.

Potential Business Case

One company is situated by the road that separates the olive groves in the valley from the coast. It has a second floor where there are rooms to rent and a space that is currently unused. By combining B&B with the company, using vacant space for a store for olive oil and related products, and for creating an education center on the tradition and industry of olives in the area, more value can be added and the complex can act as a showcase for an integrated approach for tourism agriculture (and nature preservation). The development of a regional brand for tourism and agriculture products should also be considered.

The investment in a simple and artisan store above the olive press factory (and maybe covering the bare walls with plants) does not necessarily need to be a big investment and can potentially be done in collaboration with olive grove owners.

Potential Business Partners

This case is of interest to local olive grove owners as it provides them with a place to make their tradition and product visible. It is also of interest to Agencies such as GIZ and USAID for adding value to interventions that are already financed by their organizations, such as is the case for the olive oil company financed by organizations such as GIZ and USAID and others at the entrance of Qeparo.

National stakeholders that can play a role are government and non-governmental organizations interested in creating individual examples of cross-sectoral integrated approach to tourism and agriculture.

International involvement can come from organizations such as Air B&B, Trip Advisor, and Eliza Was Here when a certain level of quality is reached. In the Netherlands and Switzerland, possible chain partners for local Albanian olive oil will be vetted.

Next Steps

1. The olive oil company, B&B and shop have the potential to become eye catchers when entering Qeparo along the coastal road. Therefore it should be developed into a place that fits the vision of what Qeparo has to offer. Lessons can be learnt from Home fresh shop in Himare town center. Furthermore the model for developing Qeparo should be taken into account. Shop will be on the second floor overlooking stretch of olive trees and the sea.

2. Seeing that the building has not been built in a traditional or otherwise attractive style for visitor it can be “equipped” with a vertical garden covering the facade and thus creating a green and agritourism look and feel.

3. If this location is not suited, an effort should be made to find alternatives for presenting and selling olive oil and related product such as cheese planks or plates made from old olive wood.
Case 06
Eco Camping with the Olive Grove

Background

During desk research the functional zoning of Qeparo was studied and plot T3 was identified as eco-camping.

During presentation in Qeparo the validity of the zoning map was confirmed by the mayor of Himare but through a chance encounter during a field visit with one of the proprietors of the area, we found out that he wasn’t aware of this potential. He currently runs a beach-café but would be happy to expand his business. He needs guidelines and needs to cooperate with owners of different plots.

Supporting the development of an eco-camping with replication in mind can greatly contribute to sustainable tourism development along the coastline. There are examples of eco-camping sites although first inquiries show that there is still a lot to be improved before these are really ECO.

Potential Business Case

The area determined as eco-camping is currently an Olive orchard. The camping activities can be developed under the olive trees, which would add value to the camping because they shade the area and give it a natural ambiance and quality.

It is a very small effort to maintain the camping and it could be done easily on the side. A good eco-camping will attract more adventurous travelers from outside Albania that often travel off-season. A comparable camping sites, for example, is Lake Shkodra resort which had very high occupancy rates, even in September/October. The site is currently subdivided in several plots, based on certain regulations. People use the plots for very small scale agriculture, mainly Olive trees. If they could reach an agreement with one entrepreneur to lease the land to him and have him exploit it as camping there would be additional profit without additional effort.

A local entrepreneur and owner of one of the plots in the zone has expressed great interest in setting up the camping. Ecovolis in Tirana, who run eco-camping sites elsewhere in the country have shown readiness to support the effort.

Well organized eco-camping will bring additional tourist to villages such as Qeparo and can prolong the season. This will certainly have economic benefits for an area: restaurants, shops, tours etc.

Albania will participate in 2008 at Germany’s International Camping Fair. An implementation of this case on short time would allow the country to get credit from this event.

“There is a growing worldwide demand for what is called ‘barefoot luxury’. Eco campings sites and basic accommodation can provide in that need and create new market.”

- Gerben Hardeman, Dutch Tourism association ANVR

Potential Partners for the Project

1. Ecovolis
2. Municipality
3. Local land owners of different olive groves
4. Rui Albania
5. LIR

Next Steps

- Bring potential partners together
- Decide on ownership of plots
- Decide on ownership of camping that runs on the plots
- Agree on rent conditions
- Conduct a market scan for demand for eco-camping sites and desired level of luxury
Background

When entering the southern coastal area one cannot miss the bee hives that are scattered over the hills between beautiful fields of spring flowers. The honey from this area is of very high quality because typical vegetation has very unique qualities. These unique attributes can be used far more extensively when producing packaging and distributing this beautiful product. It is currently sold mostly locally and in bulk. Only sporadically do you see branded products from a specific area. It is an underdeveloped value chain.

Potential Business Case

This business case offers the opportunity to combine agriculture and tourism. It could potentially also extend the tourism season, since stimulating the local honey production can lead to Qeparo branding, which could support a local harvest fest event off-season. It stimulates local cooperation since the local honey producer will have to join forces with the local store, restaurants, hotels, and outlet sites. The same channels can then also be used for other local quality products such as processed/conserved vegetables such as tapenade, olives, bell peppers ‘sottolio’, herb tea etc.

This development can significantly increase the income of the beekeepers by creating a higher-end market for the honey, where the honey is currently much less valued in local markets. A vibrant honey sector also contributes to maintaining local biodiversity and the landscape that bees depend on. It can be linked to regional branding and a harvest fest event.

Local beekeepers have shown interest and expressed commitment to developing their business.

Potential Project Partners

- Local honey producer(s)
- The Future Entrepreneurs Association
- Value chain partners such as local hotels and restaurants, Himara home grown shop as well as shops in Tirana and Sarande.
- Possible investment partners ASCU, MoA, the municipality, the NOA micro-credit scheme, and donors.

Next Steps

1. Work on proper packaging and labelling
2. Hygienic processing and compliance with (international) regulations
3. Coach producer and/or assist with market entry
4. Make basic cost-benefit calculations
5. Sample the honey for experts and potential value chain partners
6. Find seeding funds for first steps
Case 08
Mixed-farming

Potential Business Case

The goal of the 'Perfect Hectare' is to create a model of mixed-farming for Qeparo (and around) area. The case is about growing more crops beneath the olive grove canopy, bearing in mind that the light and moisture conditions are peculiar. Some crops will not grow well under lower light conditions in terms of size and yield. Some crops also will have problems with pests and diseases due to higher moisture levels in the crop, supporting fungi. Therefore a specific selection of crops is needed.

The hectare is a square of 100m edge, containing 196 olive trees and divided in 4 equal areas as following: 1. Lettuce and Radicchio, 2. Zucchini and Pumpkin, 3. Grass and Alfalfa, 4. Asparagus.

The first 3 areas have to rotate every year while the Asparagus has a 10 years life span.

The rotation works as following: (see diagram)

The consequential yield of each crop is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Normal yield</th>
<th>Estim. under tree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lettuce</td>
<td>70 000</td>
<td>45 500 pieces/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zucchini</td>
<td>80 000</td>
<td>90 000 kg/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumpkin</td>
<td>160 000</td>
<td>25 000 kg/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Asparagus</td>
<td>30 000</td>
<td>25 000 kg/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rucola</td>
<td>75 000</td>
<td>48 750 kg/ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The farmers who often own olive groves and grow vegetable gardens only for family use reported this issue repeatedly. Furthermore, the area has plenty of abandoned land which at the moment is not worth cultivating.

I have not personally received input from farmers specifically on the agronomic side of the cultivation system, i.e. an expressed need from their side of doing more with the olive grove land. Hence I cannot really add to this paragraph. So feel free to base this on your findings.

Description

Training is a must for enabling the ‘Perfect Hectare’, and it’s twofold: it should prepare the farmers to grow crops they are not in some cases familiar with, and create knowledge about the rotation techniques. On the other hand, training should prepare farmers to process and conserve food, increasing the quantity and diversity of the supply, overcoming the seasonality of the demand.

Alongside the training, food events such as markets and fairs can be organized to advertise and sell the (new) local products, both raw and processed.

Background

The agriculture areas of Qeparo, similarly to other villages of the region, are characterized by the monoculture of the olive tree. Although the climate and soil typology allow a broader range of potential crops, there is an extremely low agrobiodiversity. Not taking advantage of the local production capacity, results in a very limited diversity in food supply, which damages both the farmers and the food outlets.

Potential Project Partners

- Municipality of Himara, farmers
- University of Tirana, Arber Togani (Master chef)
- Ministry of Agriculture
- International partners: World Bank, Alterra (agriculture), Openfabric (landscape architecture)

Next Steps

First step is to find a farmer (or more) who is/are willing to use part of their land as test site. Landscape architecture practice along side research centres will lay down a plan of the ‘perfect hectare’ in order to efficiently exploit the land and integrate it with the surrounding landscape. Research centres Alterra; University of Tirana will follow the 5-year process and evaluate the outcome.

After the first test-year, a system of subsidies and basic training for farmers should be organized.

“I will ask neighbouring land owners if they are willing to experiment with this concept. Together we could start with a try out of mixed farming just as they do at UKA farm”

- Detjon Prenga, hotel and land owner in Qeparo
Case 09
Food Processing

Background
Farmers do not cultivate outside of tourist season because of poor market(s) / market prices. Creating a product with added-value that can be stored offers income opportunities outside of season.

Potential business Case
Like honey and ham, processing and conservation of fresh produce creates added value by opening new markets that have so far not been tapped into. It stimulates local co-operation since farmers need to interact with local/ regional market players such as restaurants, shops, and hotels. If they are not processing themselves, then they will also need to cooperate with a local processor or cooperate with other producers of similar products to have shared facilities for processing.

The business case offers the potential for significantly increasing the income of farmers, extending the season from only 2 months to several months. The product, with increased value in and of itself, adds value to local cuisine in restaurants, which ultimately contributes to the branding of Qeparo.

This case targets farmers, restaurants, shops, and hotels. The approach can also be used for other localities in Riviera and other tourism-dependent production areas. It contributes to agricultural and rural development and to regional branding.

Potential Project Partners
- ASCU, MoA, municipality, the NOA micro-credit scheme
- Donors with focus on development for small holders and agricultural development
- Future entrepreneur association
- Agricultural University of Tirana
- Ministry of Agriculture
- National and international food processing companies
- “The traveler team” may be involved in follow up mostly through our local/national partners, with back-stops from an international team

Next Steps
1. Find limited seeding funds (25,000 Euro per product) for feasibility study and design and sample of new packaging.
2. Make a sample batch, have local restaurants/ hotels taste it, get a starter contract for first batch, if successful expand production even further.
3. Coach farmers and/or assist them with market entry
4. Make cost-benefit calculations to determine economic feasibility.
5. Maximize number of farmers involved to create economy of scale.
6. Support on cultivation of crops concerned will be required: improve yields, sustainability of system, and high and constant level of quality & quantity of produce.
7. Involve future entrepreneur Association
Case 10
New Crops, New Possibilities

Background

Company visits, interviews and workshops with local producers and customers such as supermarket owner and restaurant owners resulted in the design of the “crop demand calendar” and “crop supply calendar”. These calendars identify seasonal gaps between supply & demand. Some crops such as broccoli and rucola are in demand by restaurants, but are currently not cultivated by local farmers. Available soil and climate data indicates the potential for cultivating these crops.

“Combine local demand during tourist season with demand for high quality produce in bigger cities during low season to bridge the gap in the calendar.”

- Arber Togani, Winner Master Chef Albania

Potential Business Case

By diversifying the available crops a number of advantages can be realized. It will improve the variety of dishes served in local restaurants based on local availability. It will provide supply for future farmers markets. It will create seasonal focus of certain crops as well as year round availability of others. In general it will contribute to a local sustainable and circular economy.

Farmers need to work closely with local/regional market players such as restaurants, shops, and hotels in order to tune in to their needs. Only then can they adjust their production and create new added value for their local business. The further development and fine tuning of the crop calendars should be an effort by all value chain partners.

During workshops and interviews suppliers and buyers have indicated their interest in a system that will provide more of a variety of locally produced crops. This calendar and the transparency of supply and demand can be developed for Qeparo but can easily be used in other places as well. It has potential to be transformed into an application for online use or even smart phones.

Initial investments are small and mainly limited to purchasing seed material. Most work is done manually, so no additional machinery is needed. Other pest & disease control agents may need to be used and purchased. Other inputs should be similar to those already used for current crops.

Next Steps

- Verification of available varieties of crop suitable for local conditions.
- Coach farmers and/or assist with market contacts in new sales areas.
- Cost-benefit calculations.
- If more farmers involved --> economies of scale.
- Support on cultivation of crops concerned (improve yields, sustainability of system, and high and constant level of quality & quantity)

Potential Project Partners

- Local Farmers
- Restaurant and hotel owners
- ASCUL, Ministry of agriculture, Agricultural University, municipality, NOAA micro-credit scheme, donors
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Local consultants, local crop experts. Possibly “Traveller team expertise” as advisor on how to proceed.
**Crop Calendars**

2 bars per crop

- **external bar**: current match between supply and demand
- **internal bar**: potential local production
- **drop of water**: extended supply by increasing irrigation (see the aqueduct business cases)
- **introduced crops**
- **extended supply**
- **X**: current supply/demand mismatch

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**This is one of the best cases to be used as “proof of the pudding” if an entrepreneur association would become a fact!**
Case 11
Shepherd and the Water Reservoir

Potential Business Cases

The ‘Shepherd Path’ is the experience of following the herd alongside the shepherds; the experiences are two-fold:

1. The daily grazing: lasting from October to June, this is a 5 hours trek. It starts and ends at the shepherd’s downhill shed.
2. The transhumance: in June, this is when the herd moves into the mountains for the summer. It is a 2 days trek, with 2 nights of camping, where the shepherds cook traditional dishes. The track starts from the bottom of the hill, the downhill shed to the mountains.
3. In September, the transhumance goes down-hill, following the animals from the mountains to the base shed in the valley.

The shed area in the mountains bears the potential of being developed in the interests of the shepherds and the tourists, as follows:

1. a water reservoir of 130,000L (dimensioned for a 500 sheep herd);
2. a paved gathering point with a central space for bonfire;
3. basic services to assist the campers; All (landscape) architecture elements will be realized with local materials aiming to be completely integrated with the mountain scape.
4. The potential players are the shepherds and the tourist agents who will organize the tours. Furthermore, the up-hill shed area needs some spatial design, implying the need for landscape architects and architects.

Background

In our mission we visited some shepherds in the inland of Qeparo and Borsh. Having in mind some reference in the Balkans and in Italy, of tourist trails that follow the herds during the transhumance, we found immediate interest in both the shepherds and local tourist operators.

Our case study was a shepherd with a 500 sheep herd, who showed interest in bringing tourists along for, obviously, a small sum of money. We joined the shepherd in the daily grazing to understand, together with tourist operators, the level of trekking experience needed in order to frame the perfect target groups: backpackers and trekkers with medium-level experience.

What also emerged from our discussion is the need of a water reservoir in the mountains to quench the herd.

Potential Project Partners

- Shepherds
- Outdoor Albania
- World Bank
- Openfabric (landscape architecture)
- Cityförster (architecture)

Next Steps

1. Find interested shepherds and start right-away with the ‘daily grazing’ experience.
2. Establish an effective and reliable communication system between tourist operators and shepherds.
3. Prepare a brochure and expand the service to the transhumance that will include food and camping overnight. Keep it simple, including the description of the services, location of the shepherds, and costs.
4. Look for funds to spatially develop the mountain shed area.
5. Improve the mountain shed with a water tank, paved gathering point, and basic services for campers.
Case 12
Restore Terraces and Aqueduct

Background
The topic of water repeatedly came up while talking with local farmers. Although there is an abundant amount of rainfall during the year, there is nearly no rain during summer months. Locals also explained that the lack of maintenance in the terraces is normally due to the lack of water. We immediately found out about an old irrigation channel from the 40s, not in use anymore, which was used to bring water from a reservoir in Borsh to Qeparo. After the realization of a hydro power station in Borsh, the water level of the reservoir decreased below the level of the channel. Furthermore, an electricity pylon was built next to the infrastructure in Qeparo, interrupting its track. As a first step, we walked along it and mapped it, stumbling into an outstanding landscape experience.

Potential Business Case
The old irrigation channel has the potential to be reactivated. The channel has terraces which can provide continuous irrigation. A surface of 161,000 sqm of terraces would need an amount of water ranging from 9,660-20,125 cubic meters. Solving the summer irrigation demand can foster a more intensive cultivation (mixed-farming) of the terraces and consequential better maintenance. This will result in a drastic improvement of the local landscape aesthetic and celebrate the landscapes productive qualities. By restoring the water inlet the channel can feed the terraces and becomes a tourist attraction as well. In fact, a very simple path can run along the infrastructure rendering it accessible, and becoming a new pedestrian connection to link Qeparo with Borsh.

Potential players should include the Municipality and the Hydro power station company on one hand, and spatial design and agriculture expertise on the other.

Description
The causes of the neglect of the irrigation channel need to be addressed. The water inlet at the Borsh source needs to be re-established, probably by a mechanical pump. The damage caused by the electricity pylon in Qeparo needs to be fixed. An extensive repair and maintenance plan for the primary and secondary channels is crucial for the restoration of the infrastructure, and the local community can play an active role in this initiative.

Potential Project Partners
- Main counterpart: Himara Municipality, Hydro Power station company
- Possible funding: World Bank, Southern Development Cooperation, University of Tirana
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Landscape design: Openfabric
- Agriculture: Alterra Wageningen

Next Steps
1. Next step are the following:
2. Finding extra funds in order to develop a more advanced spatial and agricultural strategy.
3. Present the project to the main local counterparts (Himara Municipality, Hydro Power station company)
4. Seek for larger scale (national and international) subsidy sources in order to make the project feasible.
Case 13
Accommodation Guidelines

Potential Business Case
Albania has a great potential to remain an authentic destination and offer personal and authentic hospitality which are grounded in the small scale. In order to meet the travellers’ expectations, the means to meet these expectations should not be by inviting large corporate hospitality multi nationals but by explaining the expectation to the local hosts preserving the local flavour, care and authenticity. Therefore a set of guidelines is needed. A set of guidelines that is relatively inexpensive to produce can be distributed and raise the level of quality for the tourist immensely.

The case consists of three parts: First, develop the guidelines. Second, develop a training course for local people working in the hospitality industry. Providing the respective information during workshops, in an e-learning course and with a small handbook/manual could make the training even more efficient. An additional manual will support this process. Third, in order to keep the quality up to standards, a mechanism should be developed to assure or audit the quality offered.

Background
There is a large gap in the market between the needs of travelers for authentic, affordable, but quality accommodation and the existing offering in Albania. Especially high value travelers with basic requirements, as simple as a functioning shower and a healthy breakfast are required to seek refuge to big chains and 5-star hotels. However, they are actually looking for carefully maintained small scale accommodations (6 to 12 persons).

According to several owners of local accommodations, they don’t have access to the necessary knowledge how to professionally run their business and to which standards they have to adhere to.

Potential Project Partners
- International hospitality schools, Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade & Entrepreneurship
- GIZ, Municipality Himara, Albanian Tour operators such as Our own Expedition and outdoor Albania
- Best practices B&B owners
- Local Architects with relevant experience and vision
- For tips AirBnB.com and Wander.al

Next Steps
- Research basic hospitality standards, data on best practises, documentation the status quo, develop a questionnaire for guests, and look into innovative ways of coaching (see for example AirBnB’s assistance to their hosts)
- Secure micro loans for investments such as furniture and house textiles
- Identify beneficiary organisation, attract funding for content development and training, and establish distribution channels.
- Decide on mechanism to audit/maintain the standards.

“Albania is very attractive for people who have seen the whole world. But they have also seen a lot of hotels and know what to expect.” - Nancy Tare, Our Own Expeditions.
Case 14
Old Town Centre as One Big Hotel

Background

Travellers like to see the old ‘charm’ of the village and its buildings. During our visit to Kudhes we discovered that a number of buildings were renovated through a ‘roofs and façades program of the Fund for Regional Development (Fondi i Zhvillimit të Rajoneve). The funds cannot be used for the inside of the houses which are meant to be programmed and renovated by the owners.

Through the project 20 houses, an assembly hall, a bar, and the village square were renovated.

Unique Lodges of The World*. Because of its quality, this kind of promotion is possible which contributes to a higher value and opens doors to potential tourists who are interested in such authentic and unique places.

Next to converting a house into a hotel, one could also think of additional uses such as a small museum or craft stores.

An example of a best practice in Greece is Aristi Mountain Resort and Villas. This gathering of beautifully renovated traditions houses is part of a little village and now serves as one hotel. We see a potentially similar concept for Kudhes.

Potential Business Case

Renovating the old houses’ interiors and developing a management model similar to Aristi, would offer travellers the authenticity and a small scale look and feel of the old village, while providing the high level of services and amenities of a big scale resort.

Aristi resort is highly ranked, fully booked and provides prices of €100 per night! It has even been the winner of “World Luxury Hotel Awards” and has been included in “National Geographic

Next Steps

1. A model needs to be developed for fair earnings: how can it be ensured that the owners earn a decent percentage? The model should also include guidelines on “how to let your house”.
2. In addition, people need to be found who are interested in taking the responsibility of being the coordinator of the “hotel” or resort.
3. Find a group of house owners willing to apply a model like this to their property.
4. Contacting owners of the potential houses and ask for their willingness and ability to invest.
5. Two potential avenues exist:
   • Low profile: find person that manages 3 to 4 units as separate airbnb’s or brings together owners to equip their houses and put them online.
   • High profile: Find an (international) investor that is willing to develop the property into a resort comparable to Aristi.

The low and high profile could follow up on each other.

Potential Project Partners

- Locally: owners of individual houses.
- National: Fund for Regional Development (Fondi i Zhvillimit të Rajoneve) has a complete list of owners through the roofs & façades project, Ministry of Tourism for Development of Pilot, Micro Credit Institutions or larger banks for higher profile approach.
- Internationally: investors and/or donors.
Case 15
Guidelines for Traditional Building and Public Places

Background
There is a big contrast between traditional and new buildings in villages such as Qeparo. Although new buildings are starting to become dominate, it is the presence of traditional buildings that makes Qeparo and surrounding villages authentic and attractive for international tourists.

Some of the new buildings are very colourful and use non-regional materials: this disturbs the authenticity of the traditional buildings and therefore the authenticity of Qeparo. Some of the new buildings are very big which disturbs the view of beautiful buildings such as the ancient monastery on the hill at the entry of the village.

The Case
To keep Qeparo’s value high and to encourage the development of international tourism, Qeparo should cherish its identity. The traditional buildings should not be in the shadows of the new buildings.

The municipality of Himara could develop and implement new and more strict building codes and guidelines which refer to traditional building style and materials. Regarding, for instance, the types of balconies, colours, roof tiles etc. Strong and unambiguous statements should be made about the use of material and the design of the building envelope. Additionally, guidelines for urban planning needs to be taken into account so that individual benefits do not overrule the public interest.

Potential Project Partners
- NGO’s with a focus on beautification, traditional building and cultural heritage
- Municipality of Himara
- National planning agency and Atelier Albania
- Local community

Next Steps
- The Guidelines on building can be worked out as a first project in the future training facility/community centre in cooperation with national and international knowledge partners.
- By involving community, companies and local government this project can be a test case for a public-private partnership.
- Communicate in order to replicate. Each village or area potentially has its own specific guidelines.
Overview Qeparo’s Reshaping Public Space
Reshaping Public Space

Background
Moving around Qeparo, one experiences the national road that passes through the village centre. Vehicles drive fast and they park on the side of the road, often even on the road itself. This results in Qeparo not having enough public space and the space that does exist is unsafe for pedestrians. Other things that stand out are the lack of facilities for children such as playgrounds. Where there could be public space there are walls or storage for firewood. This has an affect on liveability, atmosphere and economy all year round, in large part because young families with children move away. It is not a good place for their children to grow up.

Luckily, the land use plan for Qeparo and the region suggest the construction of a by-pass road which would reduce traffic in the town. This only tackles part of the challenge. Reshaping the public space will require a plan that fits the model for development of Qeparo so it will look and feel like a gateway to the Riviera, offer barefoot luxury tourism, have a family atmosphere, and radiate tradition and history.

Potential Business Case
The Albanian government is currently investing in public spaces at the main tourist attractions such as waterfronts etc. but we believe that an investment into the actual village is even more important.

If Qeparo wants to become the new gateway to the Riviera, this entrance should also be marked and given an “entrance hall”, a place to arrive and orient oneself. Making this entrance take the form of a main square, would not only be more efficient for tourists, but also enhance the social cohesion of the locals. Around this entrance hall/square basic services could be located such as an outdoor centre and a tourist information point.

A planned by-pass road would allow to turn the entire section of national road passing through Qeparo into a pedestrian road. Doing so, all three squares of Qeparo could be redesigned.

To avoid cars being parked on the road, more parking areas or plots should be realized, especially for high season. To avoid a desolated feel off-season, the parking spaces need to be designed as a flexible green space.
“Our children have no place to go to when they want to be outside, no sidewalks, no playground. Just the beach.”

- Local Entrepreneur

Potential Project Partners

- Major of Himara municipality, surrounding café’s and businesses
- URI, Albanian development fund
- Fondi i Zhvillimit të Rajoneve
- International donors with a focus on infrastructure and beautification
- American Albanian Development Foundation
- National Planning Agency and Atelier Alb
- Cityförster and Openfabric

Next Steps

Prepare conceptual design with cost estimate and financing. Also, discuss the possibilities for reducing traffic with National Road Authority.
Case 17
New Road Profiles

Background

One of the unique experiences visitors take home from Albania is the omni-presence of sheep, goats and cows on the road. It is proof of the pure and simple rural culture in Albania and gives a sense of travelling back in time. It is worth preserving as a unique feature of the country.

It does also create potentially dangerous situations, especially on curvy roads, at night, and when drivers are maintaining a high speed.

Local stakeholders have indicated that dangerous roads form an important challenge for them in providing a safe environment for themselves and for visitors.

The municipality now penalizes farmers for letting the cattle walk on the roads even though there are no significant accidents caused by animals.

A Possible Solution

It is not uncommon for example in Switzerland, a highly developed country with a strong sense of safety, to also have cows on the roads. It is a sensible, double use of infrastructure, adding also a certain romantic atmosphere.

However, it needs to be thought through and the safety and maintenance aspects need to be covered.

It is possible the roads could contain a segment that is multifunctional and can serve cyclists and pedestrians as well as cattle. A cattle path instead of a bike-path.

Another possibility could be to limit the access of cattle to certain times of the day.

Potential Project Partners

- Municipality maintaining and cleaning roads, giving permissions for passage of animals.
- National regulation for road safety, signage. Insurance companies.
- Countries with similar issues and their own solutions can be consulted on the topic.

Next Steps

1. Investigate current status of measures for road safety.
2. Compare with policy of countries like Switzerland and Italy.
3. Create pilot area -road or village- where possible new approach can be tested.
Case 18
Outdoor and Tourism Center

Background
It is virtually impossible for visitors to reserve accommodation upfront online and there is no central place in Qeparo to make reservations on site. Furthermore, there is no central point for collecting information on activities (hiking, walking, tours, water sports, etc.) in the area.

Local entrepreneurs have already initiated the first steps in creating a tourist information point. A space has been allocated at the main village square and people have committed themselves to running the service all year round.

Potential Business Case
Tourists need a place where they get all the necessary information about tourism offers, a place where they can centrally book all relevant services for tourists and rent materials like bikes, donkeys, water sport equipment and also purchase souvenirs.

The new central place of Qeparo could be the hub that highlights all activities that Qeparo and its hinterland has to offer. Therefore the centre could be a starting point of the exploration of Qeparo and the surrounding by providing an outdoor (activities) and tourism centre. Both with an off line and online presence. By doing so, the number of tourists will grow, tourism season will be extended, and locals could benefit from increased profit.

We believe that an online and off line centre is imperative for the success of tourists coming to the region. Moreover, the tourism centre connects accommodation, existing and new activities (such as those mentioned in this report) and will serve as a spider in the web, so to speak, for the economic growth of Qeparo and its region.

In summer 2016, a group of locals will start a tourism information centre. This initiative should be supported and be used as a base for further development of tourism services in Qeparo.

Potential Project Partners
Locally:
- Owner of the new centre square
- Fotaq
- Municipality to provide upper floor of the existing school building

Nationally:
- Outdoor Albania

Internationally:
- Sawadee

Next Steps
1. Fund a local tourist association
2. Develop a business plan, operation concepts for an outdoor and tourism centre
3. Generate necessary funds
4. Find local people who would like to operate the outdoor and tourism centre (possibly run by the entrepreneurs organisation)
From the research, stakeholder meeting and activities in and around Qepro we have accumulated a great number of insights and recommendations for different stakeholder groups. First of all we want to frame these insights and experiences in the context of national policies that address one or more of the sectors that we have focussed on.
Tourism Integrated Model of Albanian Ionian Riviera (TIMAIR)

Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship

The TIMAIR is a model that provides direction for sustainable development, approaching the tourism potential of the region through planning, integration and investments. It focuses on how the tourism sector can contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Southern coastal area of Albania as a destination.

TIMAIR defines 5 different zones (similar to the ones used in Chapter 04 on tourism) parallel to the Albanian Coastline that each have specific features and require a specific approach:

- **The Sea Zone / Blue Zone**: sea coastal area where ports, marinas and floating docks can be constructed.
- **The Beach Zone / White Zone**: including all the beaches, part of which should remain virgin, without any construction at all, and the other part as beach stations, which can accept only light and movable constructions.
- **The Shore Zone / Green Zone**: land shore area right next to the beach, where resorts, hotels and camping areas can be constructed.
- **The Hill Zone / Grey Zone**: the area in the upper part of the hills where most of the traditional coastal Mediterranean villages are already situated.
- **The Mountain Zone / Brown Zone**: the hinterland where the mountainous villages are situated, and farming and agriculture activities support the tourism development with local bio food and agro-tourism activities.

Qeparo has a unique position where all four zones come together. This creates a possibility to develop specific, products characteristic to these zones in a relatively small area.
Furthermore Qeparo has the potential to cover a number of the elements of TIMAIR such as:

Potential mixed use of resorts, hotels, guest houses and diffused hotels
The variety of accommodations in Qeparo should be further developed and quality standards implemented to fulfill the needs of international travellers. This can be done by developing diverse accommodations such as beach hotels and bed and breakfasts in the village as well as agro-tourism accommodation in the hinterlands.

1. Diversified tourism products due to the close proximity of different zones.
There are limited places worldwide where beach and mountain vacations can be combined as easily as in Qeparo. This offers an opportunity to extend the season by attracting different segments such as outdoor tourists, bird watchers, hikers, etc. But to realize this, a consequent product development and a quality shift in the field of accommodation is necessary.

2. Working towards shared infrastructure
Urgent and necessary infrastructure investments offer a possibility to add value beyond their specific use. An aqueduct can also serve as a hiking path, a water treatment plant can produce energy and fertilizer, shading elements above parking areas can generate energy; maintenance roads can serve as access to remote camp sites, etc. Especially in the development of road infrastructure, other modalities than vehicles need to be considered (pedestrians, cyclists, animals).

3. Protection of landscape, scenery and nature
In order to protect the landscape, it is crucial to share a common understanding of what ‘landscape’ is. The old fashioned and limited interpretation of landscape as solely aesthetic (natural) sceneries should be permanently abandoned. Instead, it should be considered as ‘an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’.

Seen from this perspective, the local landscape preservation is twofold: on the one hand the preservation of natural landscape as wild and ‘untouched’, where the human presence is kept to a minimum (sea, coast and mountains). On the other hand rural and urban landscapes should be sustainably exploited to avoid neglect and abandonment; their identity should be reinforced in order to reflect the past and future of the territory and its communities. The heritage of the traditional houses in upper Qeparo and the nowadays-abandoned agriculture terraces, for instance, are landscapes with enormous potentials, to be restored and re-imagined.

4. Unique and sustainable positioning of Albanian Ionian Riviera Destination
Small destinations such as Qeparo need to rely on a regional or national approach to be marketed abroad. Recent initiatives of the Albanian government, but also of institutions such as GIZ and the National Coastal Agency, help to formulate common goals and instruments for the successful implementation of a sustainable tourism strategy. It is extremely important to have the wider context and especially regional competitors in mind when developing such a strategy and formulating the unique selling propositions of a location. For more information, please refer to the Appendix “Implementation Plan for Tourism”.

Recommendations
National Strategy for Development and Integration

Qeparo and Surrounding Area as a Living Lab for National Program Priorities

In the second national strategy for development and integration, the Albanian central government elaborates on numerous themes, strategies of different ministries and ambitions for the future to grow towards EU integration. The development of Qeparo along the lines of integrated, cross sectoral, inclusive and circular strategy as proposed in this report potentially provides the government with a living lab for a large number of their own ambitions and strategies.

It can, in general, provide an arena to work on at least four of the six National Program Priorities: (1) providing innovative citizen-centred good governance; (2) increasing the availability of irrigated and drained land; (3) more cost-effective availability and reliability of power (electrical) supply; (4) enhanced innovation and competitiveness; (5) greater security of land tenure and resolution of outstanding property issues (NSDI II second draft 31 July 2018).

A designated area could perhaps be earmarked as a “Green zone” or “sustainable development zone”. In that way new strategies, regulations and policy, together with initiatives from private sector, can develop in a more or less protected environment where innovation will not be held back by rules and regulations that are in place “outside” the area.

Furthermore the integrated approach for Qeparo applies to all the principles of sustainability that are essential for EU integration. A number of these principles are already visible in the results of this project so far.

Principles of sustainability:

- **Human development and social cohesion**, where Albanian citizens are at the centre of development, in a free, democratic, socially inclusive, cohesive, healthy, safe and just society with respect for fundamental human and civil rights, and a rejection of all forms of discrimination.

- **Environmental preservation**, through the promotion of sustainable production and consumption, the prevention of environmental degradation, the integration of environmental issues in all sectoral strategies, in the notion of corporate social responsibility, and in the application of the precautionary principle in planned activities.

- **Participation and consultation**, where citizens, civil society and the private sector participate in or are consulted on policy decision-making, and where social dialogue is promoted and encouraged.

- **Investments into sectors and market segments** that yield profits without diminishing the base of these profits. This means a reduction of impact but also a long term vision that includes life-cycles of investments and products. A new hotel can, for example, in its first years serve to an exclusive high-end clientele. Towards the end of the investment cycle the target group may change and prices can be lowered, until the end of the investment cycle is reached, a renovation becomes necessary and the standards can be upgraded to the latest standards and the product cycle can start again.

The Qeparo pilot in the context of Agricultural development strategy according to NSDI II*

The government priority of “increasing the availability of irrigated and drained land” clearly is a relevant issue that also came forward from our mission’s fieldwork. The interlink age between agricultural, landscape and tourism development on the one hand, and the need for proper irrigation on the other is highlighted in the case, “Restore Terraces and Aqueduct” (case 12 on page 177-188) as a means to revitalize terrace agriculture, making the terraces productive for food production as well as attractive to tourists. It is recommended that not only the Qeparo irrigation system, but also those of other communities along the Riviera are renovated and made operational. When combined with reforestation of denuded hills this will not only contribute to increased water storage, but also to reducing flooding, and to making agriculture, the landscape, and communities more resilient to the effects of climate change.

A longer-term recommendation would be to assess the local cultivated and wild biodiversity to determine which have the greatest potential of being cultivated locally for higher-end markets. This could include location-specific varieties of common crops with distinct culinary characteristics as well as wild plants and herbs to be used in cuisine and in herbal medicine or for pharmaceuticals.

Considering the many actors and projects active in the Riviera it will be very valuable to get insight into all that is going on by a map-based application (just as in Google maps) that allows projects to be mapped literally and be linked on the basis of the content of the projects. One such example is the tool developed by Trimpact (www.trimpact.nl).

* see appendix I for the extract from NSDI II on Agricultural strategy
Summary of Overall Recommendations

For national government and agencies:

• Use pilot areas as experimental zones to cut across the boundaries of policy areas and work together to try out strategy and policy (2 to 3 year period);
• Establish inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial working groups to develop integrated economic concepts. Territorial development can and should take a leading role in this as it is the place where the different sectors come together. Aligning and coordinating policies therefore is essential to its success;
• Create short feedback loops by working closely with all stakeholder groups: local government, entrepreneurs, community and civil society. This can provide reason and motivation to adjust policy and strategy based on practical insight as we go;
• Use lessons learnt in other area’s to create spin-off and scale up the effect of sustainable development (after 1 or two years);
• Make plans and documents publicly accessible and actively communicate. Too often initiatives are doubling up or are pulling in different directions;
• Limit general construction and aim for small but excellent developments and the upgrading of the existing investments;
• Continue investment in high quality public space;
• Invest in training and developments of standards. People are hungry for guidelines and standards;
• Develop a tourism sector-wide approach around best practices on water, energy, and waste efficiency.

For local government:

• Use momentum of this pilot to create critical mass for the development of a training and educational centre on the Ionian Riviera coast;
• Work on Public Private Partnership initiatives to make this work: the goals, costs and benefits for such a centre are neither pure public nor private;
• Partner up with local community and international experts to make the initiative for building guidelines and guidelines for products and services into a sustainable success;
• Facilitate and work together with national government and agencies to create a pilot area where initiatives for development can be supported and brought into practice in a swift, transparent and orderly manner;
• Establish a database on local economic activity to help monitor development and direct investments. Data is convincing. If baselines are not clear, estimates cannot be made and goals cannot be set;
• Create policy and business environments which maximise engagement with sustainable tourism in Qeparo. (Develop planning requirements and laws related to planning, siting, design, construction, materials, renovation, demolition and impact assessment to protect natural and cultural heritage and local communal rights)

For Qeparo community and specifically entrepreneurs:

• Put effort in fine-tuning the local model for development and make sure it has as much support as possible. This can function as the foundation for future activities and initiatives and can be used as the basis of any discussion;
• Get organised. If sustainable development is the ambition for the Qeparo area, entrepreneurs and community should get organized and create leverage in all future processes and discussions with developers, the government, and companies from outside, or to lobby for public funding. We believe this to be THE crucial piece of the puzzle to make any initiative work;
• Work on a collective sense of ownership of public space. Competition with other places in Albania that attract local and especially international visitors and customers can be won in the long run by having a clean and well organized area where people can be proud to live and work;
• Declare protected areas and public assets. Find agreements on how to protect and exploit these assets collectively (eg: monastery, Qeparo Fishat, olive grove, beach);
• Develop a destination management plan based on responsible tourism management, integrating views, roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders that enter into a destination partnership with stakeholders representing the visitors, industry, communities, and environment (VICE);
• Develop and promote sustainable products and services that are compatible with its ecological, social, cultural and economic circumstances;
• Determine a joint (public sector/industry) destination marketing plan including quality visitors profile, length of stay, yields, and local spending (based on the VICE).

For international and national NGO’s and donor organisations:

• Use the concept of joint pilot area’s to bundle efforts of different organisations and create maximum synergy;
• Do so by creating round tables for these area’s and involve organisations that cover different themes to prevent unnecessary competition or crowding out;
• Make use of national and international communication channels, for instance from specific value chains such as tourism or processed foods to communicate successes;
• Document approach and concepts developed and share openly. Good examples are happily followed;
• Make micro-loans available and offer additional step-by-step incentive packages that become available when previous phases are implemented or milestones have been reached;
• Provide assistance in the preparation of investment projects. The requirements are often very high and it is difficult to take the first steps.
I. EXTRACT FROM DRAFT NSDI II
ON AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY OF
ALBANIAN GOVERNMENT
1. Promote sustainable food production and quality by developing a competitive and innovative agro-food sector that is able to cope with competitive pressures.

2. Meet the standards and requirements of the EU market by 2020 through:

   1. Targeting at least an 8% annual increase in agriculture labour productivity for the annual work unit (AWU) / full time employees;
   2. Ensuring that all farms and registered agro-processing operators are in full compliance with EU standards (application of standards for 80% of all farms and registered agro-processing operators as per EU norms);
   3. The increase in average farm size to at least 2.5 hectares and increased average size of commercial farms to 3.5 hectares;
   4. Improved organization of the value chain through the creation of 100 associations and groups of producers and similar types of cooperation among farmers;
   5. Improve the export-import ratio to 1:3; and
   6. Ensuring the overall sustainable management of natural and agricultural resources through the development of applicable national GAPs that take into account specifics of landscape, soils and climate in Albania.

3. Ensure the sustainable management of natural resources and undertake climate action through:

   1. Better management of forests and water and the application of agricultural production methods in environmental protection and mitigation of climate changes;
   2. A targeted 1,000 increase in the number of certified organic farms by 2020; and
   3. An increase in the number of farmers benefiting from irrigation infrastructure to 300,000 by 2020.

4. Balance territorial development in rural areas by promoting diversification of economic activities, creation of employment, social inclusion and improvement of living conditions by 2020 through:

   1. The creation of 9,000 new jobs in agro-processing activities;
   2. The creation of 50-100 new micro-enterprises with an associated addition of 500-1,000 new jobs in rural areas through diversification of income-generating activities;
   3. The creation of 5,000 new jobs in non-agricultural activities and other services; and
   4. An increase in the number of farmers with off-farm income to 210,000.

Vision:

“An efficient, innovative and sustainable agro-food sector, able to cope with competitive pressure in the EU market and productive rural areas that provide economic activities and employment opportunities, social inclusion and quality of life for rural residents”
II. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR TOURISM

An Area's Tourist System Players and Operational Scales

Source: Ph. Moisset, Plan Bleu
Suggested Implementation Plan
To achieve the objectives as set out above, it is recommended to develop a 10 year Responsible Tourism Management Plan. In the overview below the high, medium and low priorities are set out following the issues and priorities indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: General focus of the planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short Term Planning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Plan will focus on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High Priority Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Creating a comprehensive framework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Stakeholders
Responsible Tourism is about each stakeholder taking responsibility for tourism and it cannot be achieved without a multi-stakeholder approach.

| Table 4: Implementation plan short term 2017-2019 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Key Performance Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsible tourism planning and management</td>
<td>1. Review existing plans and policies and incorporate into a new Responsible Tourism Plan that focuses on future growth taking in all aspects (marketing, visitor numbers and capacity).</td>
<td>1. Degree of stakeholder involvement in the planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Involve all stakeholders by conducting interviews/meetings to review current policies and organise focus groups with the local community.</td>
<td>2. Representation of stakeholder interests on tourism decision-making bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Assess existing revenue streams</td>
<td>3. Number of partnerships created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Develop policies to regulate tourism development Ensure all policies fit current national law.</td>
<td>4. Environmental Criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Sustainable Visitor Numbers</td>
<td>5. % of revenue benefit local communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Develop a visitor management plan especially for domestic tourists</td>
<td>Leader, local consultant &amp; entrepreneur association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Review any existing policies</td>
<td>Others: international project team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Evaluate current visitor flows (nationality, age, type of transport, length of stay)</td>
<td>All Government Departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Carry out visitor satisfaction surveys</td>
<td>Local Community Tourism Industry Investment Groups NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Determine recreational carrying capacity</td>
<td>NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A visitor management plan that acknowledges visitor numbers, types of visitors, routes, Satisfaction surveys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Key stakeholders and leader</th>
<th>Key Performance Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Marketing</td>
<td>1. Establish a separate Tourism, Marketing and Promotion Board which will liaise with the leading organisation.</td>
<td>• Leader: Steering Committee • Local Community • Tourism Product Development Plan’s key objectives, and leader</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Comprehensive Market Analysis</td>
<td>• A marketing plan that has a clear strategy that fits with the Destination Plan’s key objectives, taking in the forecast future growth of tourism in the region.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Prepare positioning and branding strategy that positions Qeparo as an attractive destination for both domestic and international tourists.</td>
<td>• A visitor management plan that takes in responsible tourism practices with adapted positioning, branding, product development, promotion, distribution channels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Analyse current and future distribution channels</td>
<td>• Key Performance Indicators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Ensure marketing supports product development master plan (see below)</td>
<td>• Key Performance Indicators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
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<th>Key Performance Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism product development</td>
<td>1. Determine organizational structures – establish a steering committee,</td>
<td>• Leader: Steering Committee • Local Community • Tourism Product Development Plan’s key objectives,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Evaluate existing policies</td>
<td>• Investment Representatives • NGO’s • Provincial Government Representatives including Department of Planning and Investment, Department of Construction, Department of Transportation, Department of Nature Resources and Environment, Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Assess existing activities and products that are currently offered. Develop a SWOT analysis</td>
<td>• (see figure 4) • A marketing plan that presents a strategy for the development of new products that are beneficial to local communities, preserve the environment yet meet consumer demands. This should include key indicators that can be monitored in a quantitative way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Identify and develop new product that have potential for tourism (supply and demand) and are in line with the new Destination Plan</td>
<td>• A Tourism Product Development Plan that presents a strategy for the development of new products that are beneficial to local communities, preserve the environment yet meet consumer demands. This should include key indicators that can be monitored in a quantitative way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Determine which products suit which markets and segment according to size</td>
<td>• A Tourism Product Development Plan that presents a strategy for the development of new products that are beneficial to local communities, preserve the environment yet meet consumer demands. This should include key indicators that can be monitored in a quantitative way.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Assess the economic, environmental and social impact of introducing new products</td>
<td>• A Tourism Product Development Plan that presents a strategy for the development of new products that are beneficial to local communities, preserve the environment yet meet consumer demands. This should include key indicators that can be monitored in a quantitative way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Train key stakeholders on Responsible Tourism Products</td>
<td>• A Tourism Product Development Plan that presents a strategy for the development of new products that are beneficial to local communities, preserve the environment yet meet consumer demands. This should include key indicators that can be monitored in a quantitative way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Environmental Management

- Strengthen or develop policies for environmental management of resources for the tourism sector and related infrastructure such as airports.

<table>
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<th>Key stakeholders and leader</th>
<th>Key Performance Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Strengthen or develop Environmental Management</td>
<td>- Leader: Tour Operators</td>
<td>% of tourism employees with formal tourism training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implement tourism training programs across all sectors</td>
<td>- Leader: Department of Education and Training, Tourism Industry</td>
<td>% of tourism training taking place for low income communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Local Communities</td>
<td>Number of people completed tourism training per year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Local Government</td>
<td>Number of places available in formal or informal tourism training courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tourism Industry</td>
<td>Knowledge of objectives/tourism plans by tour operators</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Livelihoods and poverty reduction

- Involve local communities in decision and policy making.
- Create awareness about tourism to local communities.
- Develop a support structure for local communities to enter the tourism market.
- Develop new products that benefit local people.

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<td>• Strengthen policies on tourism infrastructure plan to include protection of the environment</td>
<td>- Leader: Local Communities</td>
<td>% of tourism employees with formal tourism training</td>
<td></td>
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### Responsible Tourism Infrastructure Development

- Integrate sustainability criteria at key tourism infrastructure sites (new hotel developments, proposed projects).
- Assess current policies towards tourism infrastructure development.
- Prepare a plan that takes into account all aspects of tourism infrastructure (including economic, social and environmental impacts).

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<td>- Tourism Industry</td>
<td>% of tourism training taking place for low income communities</td>
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<td>- Local Communities</td>
<td>Number of people completed tourism training per year</td>
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<td>- Local Government</td>
<td>Number of places available in formal or informal tourism training courses</td>
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<td>- Tourism Industry</td>
<td>Knowledge of objectives/tourism plans by tour operators</td>
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III. RESEARCH MAPS
Climate

Temperature

Topography

Precipitation
Cambisols (CMca (Calcaric Cambisol) and CMdy (dystric))

Fluvic Cambisol sampled in the area of Çiflig in Saranda in 2001. Soil profile collection of Prof. P. Zdruli

Cambisols are characterized by the absence of a layer of accumulated clay, humus, soluble salts, or iron and aluminium oxides. They differ from unweathered parent material in their aggregate structure, colour, clay content, carbonate content, or other properties that give some evidence of soil-forming processes. Because of their favourable aggregate structure and high content of weatherable minerals, they usually can be exploited for agriculture subject to the limitations of terrain and climate. Cambisols are the second most extensive soil group on Earth, occupying 12 percent of the total continental land area—mainly in boreal polar regions, in landscapes with high rates of erosion, and in regions of parent material resistant to clay movement. In order for a soil to qualify as a Cambisol, the texture of the subsurface horizons must be sandy-loam or finer, with at least 8 percent clay by mass and a thickness of 15 cm or more. These soils naturally form on medium- to fine-textured parent materials under any climatic, topographic, and vegetative-cover conditions. In Albania, Cambisols occupy about 3% of the territory, making them the dominant soil in the country. Throughout the alluvial flatlands, same in the area of Saranda, Fluvic Cambisols are often associated with Fluvisols and Gleysols, Calcaric Cambisols dominate the surrounding hills and mountains in the area.

Phaeozems (PHca (calcaric))

Phaeozem soil profile © ISRIC, www.isric.nl

Phaeozems are characterized by a humus-rich surface layer covered in the natural state with abundant grass or deciduous forest vegetation. They are highly arable soils and are used for growing wheat, soybeans, and pasture for cattle, as well as for wood and fuel production. Occupying about 1.5 percent of the continental land area on Earth, Phaeozems are found principally in the North American prairies, the South American pampas, and the subtropical steppes of Asia. Phaeozems have a high content of available calcium ions bound to soil particles, resulting in a very permeable, well-aggregated structure. These soils occur in association with Chernozems but under more humid climatic conditions (more than 550 mm of rainfall per year), which results in the absence of calcium carbonate or salt accumulation in subsurface layers. They may exhibit a layer of clay accumulation, however. Their surface layers are usually higher in humus than those of Chernozems.

Regosols (RGca (calcaric))

Regosol soil profile © ISRIC, www.isric.nl

Regosols are characterized by shallow, medium- to fine-textured, unconsolidated parent material that may be of alluvial origin and by the lack of a significant soil horizon (layer) formation because of dry or cold climatic conditions. Regosols occur mainly in polar and desert regions, occupying about 2 percent of the continental land area on Earth. They are usually found under their original natural vegetation or under limited dryland cropping. Regosols often show accumulations of calcium carbonate or gypsum in hot, dry climatic zones. Regosols are similar to the soils in the Entisol order of the U.S. Soil Taxonomy that occur in either very cold or very dry and hot climatic zones. They differ from the FAO soil groups Andosols, Arenosols, and Vertisols in parent materials, from Gleysols in having lower water content, and from Leptosols in having greater soil profile depth. Regosols occupy in Albania 13.2% of the territory and are largely distributed in the mountainous regions. Calcaric Regosols are spread in the mountain chain linking the districts of Vlorë and Sarandë.
IV. AROUND QEPARO
Qeparo and Surroundings

Historical Sightseeing

Upper Qeparo

Upper Qeparo, also called Qeparo Fshat or Old Qeparo, is located on a hill just behind (new) Qeparo. The village has an Orthodox Church dedicated to Saint Demetrius, dated 1760. The village is now for the most part abandoned. Owners live in bigger cities or in other countries, such as Greece. The houses are beautifully built with local materials, which creates an authentic look.

The Fortified Settlement of Karos

It is located near the village of Qeparo. The location was clearly chosen for its natural defences, as the fortress is situated atop a hill. Approachers from virtually any direction would face a difficult climb up a rocky slope. Origins of the settlement are unknown, but archaeological artefacts represent a wide range of inhabitants from the Early Iron Age to the 4th century C.E.

Borshi Castle

Kalaja e Sopotit, also known as Borsh Castle is situated north of the village Borsh. In the medieval period it was adopted as a military garrison and the castle was reinforced beginning in the late 18th century by Ali Pasha Tepelena. The only mosque on the Albanian Riviera, built by Ali Pasha, can be found here.

Ali Pasha Tepelena Fortress

The fortress is situated in the bay of Porto Palermo, a few kilometres north of Qeparo along the Albanian Riviera. The well preserved castle is commonly asserted to have been built in early 19th century by Ali Pasha of Tepelena. Visitors can explore its well preserved grounds, and take in the coastline’s picturesque scenery.

Submarine Tunnel

The base is located under a huge mountain. It was built in the early 1960s during the Cold War when Albania was a member of the Warsaw Pact.

Naval Base Pasha Liman

This was the only Soviet base in the Mediterranean in the 1950s. It was the hot spot of conflict between the Russians and the Albanians in 1961 when Albania pulled out of the Warsaw Pact. Most strips currently there are out of operation. Following the collapse of the Communist regime, the base was rebuilt by Turkey and under a bilateral agreement the Turkish Navy has the right to use it.
Activities

Hiking Qeparo to Pilari
sipatours.com/activities-albania/hiking-in-albania/

Leave Qeparo Beach and hike up to the village of Kudhes - visit the village of Old Qeparo along the way; hike through the mountains to the village of Pilari (vertical climb 800 m). Accommodation can be organised in traditional village homes around Pilari.

Sea Kayaking
outdooralbania.com/activities/kayaking

Sea kayaking itineraries run along the stunning villages of the Ionian coast, which is noted for its steep cliffs, small hidden bays, white gravel beaches and caverns of all shapes and sizes. The beauty of the sea is towered over by the massive 2000m high Mount Çika, while the hills are covered with olive and citrus groves, and other Mediterranean flora. While kayaking, one can also enjoy fishing, swimming and camping. As an alternative to camping, accommodation can be organised in traditional village homes along the coast. Kayak trips can also be combined with visits to some of the most important historical and archaeological sites in Albania.

Boat tour along the Ionian coast.
adventure-fun.al/tour_big.php?id=50&lang=2#tabs1-1

The first stop is at the Pirate’s Cave. The cave is more than 30 m long, 8 m wide and 10 -12 m high. A stone block pillar divides the entry into two parts. It is possible to enter the cave, if the sea is calm. The tour continues in the direction of Ngjipe. The canyon of Ngjipe is situated along the lower part of Ngjipe stream, between Vuno and Ilias. Formed by water erosion, it is more than 2 km long and 100 m deep. Walking along its length is particularly impressive. The landscape is attractive, the beach is clean, and the water is clear. The last stop is at Jali Bay.

UNESCO Cycling Tour
outdooralbania.com/tours/unesco-cycling-tour

“This tour is for fit people who enjoy cycling into the nature and history of the southern coast, known as the “Albanian Riviera.” We will pass through scenic natural parks, home to some of Albania’s most astounding landscapes. We will visit fascinating UNESCO World Heritage Sites, stop in picturesque villages, and most of all enjoy the active adventure of Albania by bike.”

Cycling Tour South Albania
outdooralbania.com/tours/cycling-tour-south-albania

“This tour is for active people who want to explore the coastal mountains of Southern Albania by bike. We will cycle through hills covered in olive groves, around the magnificent Lake Ohrid, and along the sparsely inhabited ionian coast. We will visit picturesque villages, the ancient cities of Gjirokaster and Berat, quiet beaches, and the archeological site Butrint. The climax of this tour is at the Llogara Pass, where the road climbs more than a thousand meters to a wonderful viewpoint before plunging into deep forest on the other side.”
V. PROJECT TEAM BACKGROUND
Project manager, facilitate workshops and work on new business cases at CSR Netherlands:
Networking organization and Centre of Excellence for Dutch companies striving towards corporate social responsibility. It is a fast-growing business network comprised of over 2000 members.

CSR Netherlands offers support to Dutch companies in the Netherlands as well as in international value chains. We support our partners by facilitating networks, transition programs and by developing products and tools.

Looking forward to contributing to a successful project in which we connect people from different sectors and layers of society. I will facilitate workshops and together with Gojart Smaja, our local power, I will make sure that all experts and local entrepreneurs have everything they need to work on their business plans, define next steps and establish new business relations along the way.

A sustainable alternative to mass tourism and luring destructive agricultural development so that Albania can maintain its purity and authenticity which make it such a unique country in Europe.

SME’s are the backbone of the intended development. They understand tradition as well as long term economic viability for their business. By working on short and circular value chains, by connecting small and medium sized entrepreneurs from different sectors and connecting them with counterparts from other European countries we intend to boost the development for the area.

The results of this program will be a mosaic of investable business scenarios brought together in a spatial design of the area.

The next step will be to get the plans worked out and executed.

“No man is an island and the same goes for organizations or even sectors. Connecting and working together will create added value beyond all expectations”

MANAGEMENT & FACILITATION

MVO
Meine van der Graaf

www.mvonederland.nl
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+31 (0) 650215263
My company is specialised in identifying value and quality in people, organisations and cities. By doing so, we make business cases within the context of a variety of stakeholders who often have many (contradictory) interests and agenda’s. We are experts in valueing and combining a variety of (technical) expertise into one strategic story and business case. We do this by using multi stakeholder management models and tooling as well as our “soft” skills in building trust between parties.

I will be joining the team from Wednesday 16th till Friday 18th of March and will be helping the team on formulating the business cases and looking for synergies as well as facilitating parts of the meeting.

My personal goal is to make sure that all parties involved see positive business cases from which they can all benefit both financially and non-financially.

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MANAGEMENT & FACILITATION
PUM
Gojart Smaja
www.pum.nl
gojart.smaja@gmail.com

“Connecting all existing qualities and value into one complete story makes my day.”

“I am eager to work on sustainable business development in Albania. Key to success is that this project is truly demand driven.”

Acting as Representative in Albania for PUM Netherlands Senior Experts and contributing as local consultant for MVO Nederland and other international projects. PUM senior experts (all volunteers) and local representatives provide business advice and technical assistance to organisations in developing countries and emerging markets, taking away bottlenecks and facilitating sustainable paths for growth. A strong private sector requires the availability of knowledge. Knowledge to overcome bottlenecks, knowledge to innovate, knowledge to seize business opportunities. PUM has been active since 1978 to help to close the ‘knowledge gap’ that still exists in many countries around the world and that hampers growth in the private sector.

Assistance in designing mission exploration to create insight among high level stakeholders on potential for sustainable alternatives to mass tourism based on worst and best practices elsewhere and in Albania. Help understand and coordinate real possibilities and practical implications for implementing a sustainable tourism strategy in a specific location, working on development of agro tourism in a narrow sense, on the level of accommodation as well as in a broader sense by linking agro production, spatial design, infrastructural planning and tourism to create added value for all three sectors.

Open new horizons and opportunities for a long term development of sustainable (agro) tourism in Albania, ultimately leading to relevant supply for Northern European and International tour operators and thus opening Albania to European and other International markets for sustainable tourism.

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Open new horizons and opportunities for a long term development of sustainable (agro) tourism in Albania, ultimately leading to relevant supply for Northern European and International tour operators and thus opening Albania to European and other International markets for sustainable tourism.
“Sustainability is not about doing business differently, but doing business even better.”

Chantal van Gent

TOURISM

Sawadee Reizen offers group tours with individual freedom. Within our portfolio we offer more than 250 tours worldwide. One of them is our beautiful Albania tour. Sawadee aims to give our travellers a special and unique travel experience. Who travels with Sawadee will experience a country from the heart. Our traveller will see, feel and gets in contact with the local people.

Within the offer of Sawadee we have many CSR projects were we can learn from. I will share bad and best practices. Together with the entrepreneurs I will look at the possibilities to develop CSR projects that will be attractive for tourists. After developing a project in Albania, Sawadee can also contribute with marketing and support the project.

Offer a successful and unforgettable CSR project for our travellers. Collect material and information about the most attractive projects.

Stimulate and inspire local people to develop agro tourism.

“A successful sustainable project will support the main income of the entrepreneur, it will not 100% depend on tourist support.”

Gerben Hardeman

Background

Working as a sustainable tourism manager for the ANVR. This is the travel trade association in the Netherlands representing entrepreneurs in outbound tourism and travel market. Collectively the members represent approximately 90% of the outbound package travel market. The aim of the ANVR is to combine the strength of its members in pursuit of their common social and economic interest, so that the organization can play a prominent national and international role as the representative of the Dutch travel industry.

Responsible tourism is one of the core values ANVR stands for.

We regard responsible tourism as the creation of better places for people to live and to visit and are convinced that tourism can contribute to reduce negative impacts and enhance positive impacts. As a sustainable tourism manager working for the Dutch association of entrepreneurs in travel I would like to contribute to a dialogue on destinations development since we all have a common interest to provide better experiences for local communities and visitors and to care for people culture and nature, as that is part of the product and service our industry is offering. We see a lot of interest in holidays in the Mediterranean coastal regions and it would be interesting to share and exchange knowledge and experience in the field of responsible tourism.

Qeparo will be a better place to live in and to visit

Project will lead to commercially and financially viable model for development of sustainable tourism/agriculture

Project will provide insights in multi stakeholder / cross sectoral approach

Goals

Contribution

Appendix
**TOURISM**

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<tr>
<th>Gutundgut</th>
<th>Rafael Enzler</th>
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<td><a href="http://www.gutundgut.ch">www.gutundgut.ch</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:rafael.enzler@gutundgut.ch">rafael.enzler@gutundgut.ch</a></td>
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<td>+41 79 261 30 87</td>
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**Background**
Rafael Enzler has a degree in economics and tourism management and worked for several years internationally as destination manager and consultant in the tourism industry. He is co-founder of gutundgut, a team of business partners of different backgrounds, with broad-based experience in the field of „place making“. Place making is the process of discovering, creating, developing and realizing ideas and concepts for reconstructing place/resorts/destination identities, their defining traits and ‘genius loci’ and subsequently building the sense of place, by efforts and investments in hardware (e.g. infrastructure, buildings), software (e.g. events, stories), orgware (e.g. cooperative organisational structuring) and virtual ware (e.g. symbolic actions, websites).

**Contribution**
Multidimensional approach when designing, thinking and working. Architecture, tourism, culture and communication complement each other in projects as well as in the team. Our approach helps to develop social, economic and ecologic sustainable projects.

**Goals**
Find partners to develop sustainable tourism projects with a strong local support. Make friends in a so far unknown country.

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**AGRICULTURE**

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<th>Alterra Wageningen UR</th>
<th>Tomek de Ponti</th>
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<td><a href="mailto:tomek.deponti@wur.nl">tomek.deponti@wur.nl</a></td>
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**Background**
Alterra is the applied research institute for our green living environment and part of Wageningen University & Research centre, one of the leading agricultural research centers in the world. Expertise areas of Alterra include soil, water, climate, spatial and urban development, nature conservation and valorization of waste streams. Agriculture and agricultural development are key areas where we put our expertise into practice.

**Contribution**
Having worked on the integration of agricultural and rural development, the conservation of cultural and agricultural heritage and tourism in Bhutan, a kingdom in the Himalayas, I will contribute to the project by using that experience in the context of development in Albania in general and Qeparo in particular.

**Goals**
The people of Qeparo and other Albanian counterparts have experienced our team input as very valuable in moving ahead in their development, improving the wellbeing of their families / companies / country / region / landscape.
That the work we will have done with the people of Qeparo and other Albanian counterparts creates that much enthusiasm that we will have formed the basis of at least one project that will implement the plans we have jointly made to succesfully link agricultural and spatial and tourism.
Establishing many new contacts that may lead to even more collaboration with Albanian partners.
“Project planning is like how a seed will grow. Just change the circumstances, and it will grow automatically...”

Paul Bos

Background
Entrepreneur/farmer, experienced in local arrangements.
Background and experience in marketing & communication.
Consultant for Rabobank about metropolitan agriculture/food projects.
Member of InnovationCouncil Meerlanden Company (recycling).
Chairman Bouwland Regio Schiphol (part of Urgenda).

Contribution
Long term experience in marketing & communication projects.
Talent for coaching farmers because of my own background.
Experience with working with several in other issues for transition projects (the Netherlands, Middle East & Africa)
Broad network in sustainability, circular economy and companies, like the Dutch bank Rabobank.

Goals
To build up a sustainable network with entrepreneurs/farmers from Albania and the Netherlands.
To inspire a lot of farmers with new possibilities between farming and tourism.
To connect 10 farmers with the needs of the city/tourism and make concrete arrangements.
To arrange three new concrete deals.

“Albania is such a blessed country. Now it’s time to protect and develop these blessings into a professional product.”

Tea Hadzizulfic

Background
ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING
CITYFÖRSTER
Martin Sobota
Tea Hadzizulfic

Contribution
Goals
“There is another way.” This is also true for architecture and urban planning, if both are understood as parts of larger systems. CITYFÖRSTER thinks of designing, planning, and building as team work, enabling the best ideas to prevail. For this reason CITYFÖRSTER works as a partnership supported by an interdisciplinary network to develop better solutions for working and learning, housing and living.
CITYFÖRSTER has a long history in Albania and has realised a number of signature projects, amongst which are the housing complex AnA in Tirana and Cape Square in Durrës, commonly referred to as “Sfinxit”.

Together with MVO Nederland and the generous support of the Dutch Creative Industries Fund we have initiated this Pilot project and have assembled a team of distinct experts from two seemingly opposing fields of expertise: agriculture and tourism. We strongly believe that these two sectors have to work together to make Albania prosper. Our task will be to make sure that they do not conflict but complement each other. As architects and planners we will do this by understanding, moderating, ordering and putting things into the right place.

The outset of this initiative is to provide Albania and Albanians with proof of a viable investment alternative. Albania needs businesses that respect the blessings of this country and provide visitors with a unique experience while developing the local economy and improving the livelihood of people. Our aim is to prove that agriculture and tourism can co-exist on a commercial level and take the next step together with local stakeholders and investors in making this dream come true.

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A comprehensive thinking is needed to reconsider the local landscape on a new angle.

**Background**

Founding partner of Openfabric, Francesco is a landscape architect with broad international experience, with a recent focus on Albania.

Openfabric is a young landscape architecture and urbanism practice that is currently engaging in different countries and specializing in different topics as coastal redevelopment, climate mitigation plans, infrastructures and public space design.

**Contribution**

Openfabric with its expertise can bridge the gap between agriculture and spatial planning. A comprehensive thinking is needed to reconsider the local landscape on a new angle. Looking back at the tradition is the starting point to address future potentials of sustainable growth. New patterns of uses are possible, and the change has to be addressed side by side with the locals, in the respect of the natural and cultural heritage, looking at the future generations.

**Goals**

To develop methods of intervention that can be used to sustainably exploit the landscape for agro-touristic purposes. Identify pilot projects and business cases to apply the knowledge of the international team altogether with the local stakeholders.

---

**Openfabric**

Francesco Garofalo

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www.openfabric.eu
This report has been prepared in collaboration of CITYFÖRSTER, MVO Nederland and:

If you have any questions or remarks, please do not hesitate to contact us:

martin@cityfoerster.net
+31624738041