

Empowering Albania's Rural Tourism: TUI Care Foundation launches new Futureshapers programme

- *TUI Futureshapers Albania strengthens 200 rural tourism businesses through tailored training and capacity building*
- *Project promotes sustainable tourism and supports new jobs across Albania's underdeveloped regions*

Berlin, 6 November 2025. *Albania's rural communities have long faced challenges in accessing the benefits of the country's growing tourism sector, which has largely concentrated on urban and coastal destinations. Many local businesses lack the skills and resources to meet international standards, limiting their ability to attract visitors and generate income. TUI Futureshapers Albania addresses this gap by equipping rural micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with the tools needed to thrive in a competitive tourism market.*

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In collaboration with the German Development Agency (GIZ) and implemented by the Institute for Sustainable Development in Tourism and Agriculture (ISDTA), the project supports 200 MSMEs operating in hospitality, agritourism and outdoor activities, such as hiking and cycling. Over two years, businesses located along key tourism routes - including the Shepherd's Trail, the TransDinarica Cycling Route, and the High Scardus Trail - receive targeted training in hospitality, gastronomy, food safety, waste management and customer service. The initiative aims to train 400 staff members from these MSMEs, contributing to job creation, business resilience and the diversification and enhancement of tourism offerings in Albania's rural regions.

TUI Futureshapers Albania begins with a comprehensive assessment of rural tourism businesses to identify gaps in service quality and operational efficiency. Based on these insights, the project delivers tailored support to guesthouses, agritourism establishments, local producers, and other tourism-related MSMEs. This includes one-on-one coaching, group workshops, and business-to-business (B2B) events that encourage collaboration between local producers and tourism operators. To further support growth, the project also provides promotional activities that increase visibility and market access for participating businesses.

The project complements the GIZ Albania - Sustainable Rural Development initiative. By improving service standards and expanding tourism beyond the summer season, TUI Futureshapers Albania helps position the country as a year-round destination whilst fostering long-term economic growth in rural communities.

The initiative is part of the global TUI Futureshapers programme which includes projects in 17 destinations including Greece, Portugal, Sweden, Dominican Republic and North Africa, and empowers people to turn social challenges into entrepreneurial opportunities in holiday destinations.

About the TUI Care Foundation

Building on the potential of tourism as a force for good, the TUI Care Foundation supports and initiates projects which create new opportunities and contribute to thriving communities in tourism destinations all over the world. Connecting holidaymakers to good causes, it supports education and training opportunities for young people; drives the protection of natural habitats and the marine environment; and helps local communities to thrive sustainably and benefit from tourism. The TUI Care Foundation builds on strong partnerships with local and international organisations to create meaningful and long-lasting impact. The independent charitable organisation was founded by TUI, one of the world's leading tourism businesses, and is based in the Netherlands.

About GIZ

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The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH works on behalf of the German Government to promote sustainable development worldwide. In Albania, GIZ mainly operates on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the EU. Its work focuses on 1. Economic development, training and employment, 2. Climate and energy 3. Good governance. GIZ works together with the private sector, intermediary organisations and the Government to promote economic development, training and employment. It helps companies to broaden their skills and develop innovative models.

About ISDTA

ISDTA is driven by the need to improve the socio-economic conditions of rural enterprises and works to enhance the welfare and living standards of rural communities. It has implemented a diverse range of applied and fundamental projects across Albania, managing both hard and soft investments. These initiatives have supported local development by fostering cooperation, encouraging innovation, and promoting entrepreneurship—ultimately driving sustainable growth in the tourism and agriculture sectors.

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