

REGIONAL FORUM

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UNECE REGION

29 – 30 MARCH 2023 | HYBRID EVENT | GENEVA & ONLINE



SIDE EVENT CONCEPT NOTE

Event title

Rural women, agritourism and digitalization: practices and experiences that contribute to sustainable development

Background and Rationale

Agritourism has high potential to serve as a factor for economic stability in times of multiple crises, by creating jobs, preserving rural and ecological landscapes, promoting local products and contributing to recreation needs. The advantages of agricultural tourism are particularly important for rural women, and include the diversification of sources of income, the creation of marketing opportunities for agricultural and handmade products, and the longer-term contribution to women's economic empowerment. In recent years, agritourism has become increasingly associated with digital transformation and the benefits and opportunities that open up because of this connection. However, despite the fact that rural areas in the region are generally well covered by mobile and internet services, the 'triple divide' – a digital, rural and gender divide – places women working in small farms in rural areas in the most marginalized position when it comes to access to and use of ICTs. Among other things, the divide further contributes to the gender pay gap, with women earning between 60 and 85 percent of men's salaries and having lower access to decent jobs and off-farm employment. This increases their risk of falling into poverty, especially in older age.

There is a lack of experience sharing in the region on the ways in which agritourism can act as a driver for local development, and furthermore, how digital tools can be used to their full potential and how rural women can benefit. This upcoming side event will address the knowledge gap by showcasing promising practices from the region which focus on bridging the divide between urban and rural populations, narrowing gender gaps and promoting sustainable development.

The side event addresses the intersection of multiple SDGs, including: SDG 1 – No Poverty; SDG 2 – Zero Hunger; SDG 5 – Gender Equality; SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth; and SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities.

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Session objectives and expected outcomes

Objectives

- To share promising practices of agritourism development for preserving rural and ecological landscapes, promoting local products and contributing to local tourism development in times of multiple crises (the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the impact of natural disasters and climate change).
- To exchange regional and global experiences in using gender-friendly digital tools for sustainable agritourism development
- To showcase the opportunities for economic empowerment that agritourism brings for rural women, including income diversification, job creation, and marketing of agricultural and handmade products in the region.

Expected Outcomes:

- Greater awareness and understanding of the advantages of agritourism for rural women, including income diversification, job creation, and marketing of agricultural and handmade products.
- Increased awareness of the gaps in gender-responsive digital tools for sustainable agritourism development and improved knowledge of promising practices from the region that are bridging the divide between urban and rural populations, narrowing gender gaps and promoting sustainable development.

Organizers

Lead organizers: FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Contributors: Georgian Farmers' Association

Focal points: Dono Abdurazakova, Jacopo Bordignon

E-Mail: dono.abdurazakova@fao.org; jbordignon@unwto.org;

Agenda and Structure

The event will be held in a word café format, where panellists share their experiences and insights on each topic.

Co-moderators: Federica Iellici, Programme Officer, Tourism for Rural Development Programme, Market Intelligence and Competitiveness, UNWTO; Pedro Marcelo Arias, Economist, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

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Agenda

Welcome and introduction to the topic of sustainable agritourism development

Opening remarks from UNWTO and FAO

Antonio López De Ávila, Global Manager, Tourism for Rural Development Programme, UNWTO

Tania Santivanez, Regional Agricultural Officer and Regional Initiative “Managing natural resources sustainably and preserving biodiversity in a changing climate” Delivery Manager, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

Session 1: Overview of agritourism development in the region

Experiences from Albania, Chile, Georgia, Spain and Uzbekistan

Session 2: Advantages of agritourism for rural women

Presentation and discussion on the advantages of agritourism for rural women, including income diversification, job creation, and marketing agricultural and handmade products: experiences from Albania, Chile, Georgia, Spain and Uzbekistan

Session 3: Promoting agritourism with gender-responsive digital tools

Panellists share promising practices and insights related to gender-responsive digital tools for sustainable agritourism development

Session 4: Open mic

Panellists and participants share their key takeaways and any additional thoughts or questions they have on the topic and issues raised

Wrap-up and closing remarks

List of Panellists

Panellists:

Valbona Ylli, gender and community development consultant, Albania

Nino Zambakhidze, chairwoman of the Georgian Farmers Association and Ms Ana Patchikashvili, Agrogate World, Georgia

Anna Costa, tourism manager, Rupit, Catalonia, Spain

Andrea Céspedes Pérez, municipality tourism coordinator, Puqueldón, Chile

Suna Park, international political expert, specialist in integrated territorial development, ex-Deputy Director “Charvak” sustainable tourism zone under the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan

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Sign-up / Registration Link

https://fao.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DR8OCe0ETH6gn_PHXexQfg