Midwest Social Sciences Journal

Volume 24 | Issue 1 Article 8

10-15-2021

Environmental Sustainability Practices of Albanian Micro Enterprises and SMEs

Engjellushe Icka
Nehemiah Gateway University

Jeffery Adams
Roosevelt University, jadams32@roosevelt.edu

Ralph G. Kauffman
University of Houston-Downtown

Environmental Sustainability Practices of Albanian Microenterprises and Small and Medium Enterprises[*]

ENGJELLUSHE ICKA
Nehemiah Gateway University

JEFFERY ADAMS
Roosevelt University

RALPH G. KAUFFMAN
University of Houston-Downtown

ABSTRACT

There is a growing global awareness about the importance of sustainability practices. Some major reasons for this growing awareness include increased legal requirements by governments, customer demands, and political/societal pressure. This paper discusses environmental sustainability practices of microenterprises and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Albania. Nine Albanian SMEs were interviewed about their sustainability practices, and the results are discussed. The results of this study show that even though Albania has a lack of detailed sustainability requirements, many SMEs are aware of environmental sustainability and are beginning to implement sustainability practices. For some Albanian SMEs and microenterprises, the implementation of sustainability practices is viewed as a requirement for accessing lucrative international markets, such as the European Union.

KEY WORDS Sustainability; Microenterprises; SMEs; Albania

Sustainability policies such as the development of industry regulations and education about sustainability practices are not well developed in Albania. Although Albania has been moving to enact environmental laws and regulations that approximate those in the European Union, progress in implementation has been slow (European Commission 2019). The government has not developed sustainability standards or incentives for

[*] Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Jeffery Adams, Roosevelt University, Heller College of Business, 430 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605; jadams32@roosevelt.edu.

industries (World Bank 2015). In addition, a lack of resources exists for monitoring and ensuring full compliance with environmental standards. Growth in implementation of sustainability practices by Albanian businesses is constrained by a lack of knowledge concerning environmental issues. Albanian microenterprises and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are often unaware of environmental management practices (European Investment Bank 2016).

Little is known about implementation of sustainability practices by Albanian micro businesses and SMEs. A survey conducted by Shyle (2018) discovered the low level of knowledge by students and business owners in Albania of the concepts of sustainability development; so far, the lack of knowledge has resulted in misunderstanding the importance of sustainability activities. More specific statements and actions taken are more difficult to agree with, and a certain gap between attitudinal statements and actual initiatives is apparent (Dewhurst and Thomas 2003), and there is a need for measures to improve (Shyle 2018).

There is no universal definition of sustainability. One literal definition is the ability to continue a defined behavior indefinitely. For this paper, we define sustainability as "leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems" (Inskeep 1998:21).

One purpose of this paper is to assess the status of sustainable development and implementation among a small group of Albanian microenterprises and SMEs. Another purpose of this research is to identify drivers and motivators of the adoption of sustainability practices for a developing country such as Albania. For this paper, a total of nine Albanian microenterprises and SMEs were interviewed about sustainability practices in their organizations and supply chains. A conceptual model of supply chain environmental sustainability development is discussed, based on Hayes and Wheelwright's (1984) four-stage operations development model. The four-stage model presented is specifically based on sustainable development in supply chain activities in microenterprises and SMEs (Khoja et al. 2019). This model is used to assess and classify sustainability practices of Albanian microenterprises and SMEs in our sample of businesses.

MICROENTERPRISES AND SMES IN ALBANIA

The definition of SMEs differs around the world. In the European Union, a small enterprise is defined as a firm with fewer than 50 employees, annual turnover of less than 10 million euros, and an annual balance sheet of less than 10 million euros. Medium-sized businesses are firms having from 50 to 249 employees, an annual turnover of 10 million to less than 50 million euros, and an annual balance sheet of 10 million to less than 43 million euros (European Commission 2003).

The Albanian definition for SMEs is similar to the EU's in employee numbers, but the annual turnover level is lower (Table 1):

Microenterprise: 0–9 employees, annual turnover or balance sheet of 0–10 million ALL (Albanian Leke; ~95,000 USD)

DOI: 10.22543/0796.241.1041

Small Enterprise: 10–49 employees, annual turnover or balance sheet of 50 million ALL (~475,000 USD)
Medium Enterprise: 50–249 employees, annual turnover or balance sheet of 250 million ALL (~2,375,000 USD)

Table 1. EU and Albanian Definitions of Microenterprises and SMEs

	Enterprise Type	No. of Employees	Annual turnover (max)	Annual turnover (max) in Euros
EU	Micro	1–9	2M Euro	2M
	Small	10–49	10M Euro	10M
	Medium	50–249	50M Euro	50M
Albania	Micro	1–9	10M ALL	80,000
	Small	10–49	50M ALL	400,000
	Medium	50–249	250M ALL	2M

Note: 100ALL = 0.82 Euro (as of November 2, 2018; Bank of Albania).

Sources: INSTAT (2019), Muller et al. (2017), Albanian Law No. 1042 (2008).

The mountainous country of Albania is in southeastern Europe on the Adriatic Sea. Since the fall of the communist regime in 1992, Albania has been a multiparty democracy with a market-based economy. In 2009, Albania joined NATO and is a potential candidate for EU membership. Over the past 10 years, the Albanian economy has shifted from agriculture toward industry and services, and this growth has allowed for greater development in the microenterprise and SME sector. Services were 46.7 percent, industry and construction 21.1 percent, and agriculture 19.9 percent of GDP in 2016 (INSTAT 2018a). Albania ranks low in business growth and competitiveness compared to peer countries in the Balkan region (European Investment Bank 2016).

At 99.8 percent, microenterprises and SMEs are by far the most common business organizations in Albania (Table 2). Of this 99.8 percent, the trade sector constitutes 41.4 percent, and other services constitute 20.8 percent. Extractive industries, such as mining, have the lowest percentage, at 0.4 percent, followed by electrical power, water supply, and waste management, at 0.6 percent (INSTAT 2019). The average Albanian business has 3.7 employees, which is smaller than businesses in the EU, which average 4.3 employees. SMEs account for 80.3 percent of total employment in Albania, of which the trade sector has 29.2 percent of SME employees, the other-services sector has 19.6 percent, and the processing sector has 18.7 percent (INSTAT 2019).

According to official Albanian government data (Table 3), micro businesses comprise 95.1 percent of all business organizations in Albania, small enterprises comprise 3.9 percent, and medium enterprises comprise 0.9 percent (European Investment Bank 2016). The Albanian Ministry of the Economy reports that SMEs represent 73 percent of Albanian GDP). Albanians are employed by SMEs by 13.7

percent more than are workers in the EU. This is explained by the fact that large domestic businesses cover 13.9 percent more of the EU labor market than the Albanian labor market. Microenterprises and SMEs employ most of the workforce in Albania, whereas in the rest of the world, big businesses and public administration have a larger share of the employed.

Table 2. Active Albanian Microenterprises and SMEs, 2018

Enterprises	No. of Employees	Annual turnover (max, ALL)	Annual turnover (max, Euros)	No. of Businesses, End of 2018
Micro	1–9	10M	80,000	154,067
Small	10–49	50M	400,000	6,801
Medium	50–249	250M	2M	1,967

Note: 100ALL = 0.82 Euro (as of November 2, 2018; Bank of Albania).

Source: INSTAT (2018b).

Table 3. EU–Albania Microenterprise and SME Comparison, 2017

		Micro	Small	Medium	Total Micro and SME	Large (+250 employees)
EU (28 members)	% of total businesses	93.0	5.8	0.9	**99.8**	0.2
	% of total employment	29.8	20.0	16.7	**66.6**	33.6
Albania	% of total businesses	94.4	4.4	1.0	**99.8**	0.2
	% of total employment	39.1	19.4	21.7	**80.3**	19.7

Sources: INSTAT (2019), Muller et al. (2017).

Microenterprises and SME organizations often lack resources and have high failure rates, but they can have advantages over lager organizations, such as having informal management structures that are flexible and are able to quickly respond to market changes. SMEs often suffer from several significant disadvantages, however, such as lack of financial resources and management specialists, often leaving individual managers responsible for several functions. SMEs also can lack leverage with suppliers and have a short-term focus with no formal documented business strategy (Adams et al. 2012; Hanks and Chandler 1994). In 2013, the Institute of Business Ethics in London presented a business case for social responsibility in SMEs, and the website Sustainability4SMEs.com

had resources supporting the economic benefits of sustainability for SMEs (Sustainability4SMEs, 2013). There has been significant research on sustainable business practices in SMEs (see, for example, Ayuso et al. 2013; Sashi et al. 2018); overall knowledge of sustainability practices in small organizations is somewhat lacking compared to that in large organizations, however.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Drivers and Barriers to the Implementation of Sustainability Practices by Albanian Businesses

Business Sustainability Practice. In the sustainability literature, some authors refer to sustainability using a three-pillar approach: social, economic, and environmental. Economic sustainability is the ability economically and financially to indefinitely support a defined level of production. Social sustainability is the ability of a social system to function indefinitely at a defined level of social well-being. Finally, the third pillar, environmental sustainability, means that things such as rates of harvest, pollution creation, and resource depletion can be continued indefinitely. In business operations, environmental sustainability has the largest impact. The sociocultural, environmental, and economic realms are interdependent, and the aim of a sustainably managed business should be the optimization of all three (Elkington 2004; Hitchcock and Willard 2009). Business organizations often focus attention particularly or primarily on environmental issues regarding sustainability and therefore fail to acknowledge the holistic principle of sustainable development (Sharpley 2000; Swarbrooke 1999).

Drivers of Sustainability. The benefits of sustainable business practices are related to the medium and long range, and as the first step, they should be introduced with the initial investments of the business. Improvements in company reputation, customer loyalty, and employee commitment are a few of the many intangible benefits a company can seize by integrating environmental strategies into its operations (Esty andWinston 2009). The operations and supply chain management activities of a business have some impact on economic and social aspects of sustainability, but the main sustainability impact of supply chains is environmental. As a result, the major focus of this study is on environmental sustainability activities in Albanian SMEs. Tangible benefits of the implementation of sustainable supply chain management practices in the operations of an organization include efficiency improvements and production cost reductions. External drivers of sustainability practices are legal and regulatory requirements. Additionally, customer requirements can be an important driver of sustainability practices. Not just consumers but also shareholders, nongovernmental organizations, investors, and governments are increasingly requiring information about corporate social and environmental performance (Willard 2005).

Barriers to Sustainable Practices. Barriers to implementing sustainability practices include lack of information on how to implement sustainability practices and of

knowledge of the benefits of such practices to business organizations. Research by Shyle (2018) indicates a high reluctance in businesses toward adopting sustainability practices. Sixty-two (62) percent of respondents saw no reason to implement sustainability practices because they were not required to do so and they saw no benefit to the practices. Other barriers to implementing sustainability practices are lack of organizational resources and competing organizational strategies for capital and management resources. Relating to the occurring and differing demands of the business, sustainability often loses out because it is not an immediate need and requires a longer-term focus.

In Albania, the issue of cost as the main barrier of sustainable practices should be evaluated from the point of view that investing in sustainability in the long run improves quality and reduces costs. A study conducted by Frooman (1997) revealed that negative environmental behavior by companies was negatively correlated with shareholder wealth. According to Shyle (2018), "Most ... companies (65) answered that the barriers for implementing sustainability strategy are high cost of implementation, the government does not offer stimuli (45%), lack of interest by the customer (40%), [and] investors did not estimate these initiatives (38%)."

Model of Sustainable Development

A conceptual model of supply chain environmental sustainable development is presented in this paper, based on the four-stage operations development model from Hayes and Wheelwright (1984). The four-stage sustainability model used in this paper is based specifically on sustainable development in supply chain activities in SMEs (Khoja et al. 2019). The supply chain sustainability model uses the Hayes and Wheelwright model stages of relative development, going from a negative state of contribution to an advanced state of contribution to the firm's goals and objectives.

The four stages in the supply chain sustainability model (from Khoja et al. 2019) are

1. reactive sustainability,
2. awareness sustainability,
3. emergent strategic sustainability, and
4. advanced strategic sustainability.

Stage 1: Reactive Sustainability. The reactive sustainability level consists of the following traits: sustainability is not on the active agenda of management and is likely not in the firm's business objectives; the business may be unaware of environmental and sustainability legal requirements; and what sustainability activities exist, if any, are limited to legal or customer-required actions.

Stage 2: Awareness Sustainability. For a firm at stage 2, sustainability activities are not a high priority and are not linked to the firm's strategy, but the business is aware of sustainability as a potentional or an actual organizational objective, and the business is attempting to meet legal requirements and is identifying industry best practices.

DOI: 10.22543/0796.241.1041

Stage 3: Emergent Strategic Sustainability. In the emergent strategic sustainability level of development, supply chain sustainability is linked to and is part of the firm's business strategies. Performance-monitoring systems are used to measure progress in sustainability implementation, and industry best practices in sustainability have been implemented. Because of the implementation of sustainability practices, a temporary competitive advantage may be achieved.

Stage 4: Advanced Strategic Sustainability. At this level of sustainable development, the business is taking a lead role in supply chain sustainability strategies in its industry. The organization has a long-term perspective on sustainability activities and is developing innovations for supply chain sustainability. As a result of its sustainability efforts, the business enjoys improved efficiency, customer satisfaction, and public image, which gives the organization a sustained competitive advantage.

RESEARCH OBJECIVES

The purpose of this research is twofold. The first and primary purpose is to assess the status of sustainable development and implementation among a small group of Albanian microenterprises and SMEs. The second objective is to develop and conceptually test an approach to assess sustainability practices of Albanian microenterprises and SMEs.

METHODOLOGY

The approach to identify current supply chain sustainability practices in small organizations consists of applying the four-stage model of strategic contribution to sustainability practices from Khoja et al. (2019). Because of resource and time constraints, only a small number of local businesses could be interviewed. Nine Albanian SMEs were interviewed; these businesses were selected from the authors' Albanian contacts in the Pogradec region. Businesses in this region of Albania are often involved in food processing, services, or light manufacturing. The size of the firms ranged from 2 to 175 employees. Most of these businesses focus on the production of food products, and the oldest was created in 1992, one year after the fall of communism in Albania (Table 4).

From the interviews, we learned the status of sustainable supply chain activities in these organizations. We then compared these results with the stages of the sustainability model to assess the degree of progress.

The following questions were asked of the businesses to determine their level of sustainable development.

Stage 1: Reactive sustainability

- Is sustainability on the active agenda of our supply management activities?
- Is sustainability included in documents or other forms of supplier interactions?
- Are we aware of legal requirements that affect us pertaining to sustainability?
    - Are we engaging in any sustainability activities because of customer requirements?

Stage 2: Awareness sustainability

- Is sustainability a potential or actual objective of our firm?
- Is sustainability a high priority in our firm?
- Is sustainability linked to our firm's business strategies?
    - Are we attempting to meet legal requirements and to identify best practices in sustainability in our industry?

Stage 3: Emergent strategic sustainability

- Is supply chain sustainability linked to and part of the business strategies of our firm?
- Do we use performance-monitoring systems to measure sustainability implementation progress?
- Have we implemented industry best practices in supply chain sustainability?
    - Are we achieving any competitive advantage as a result of our sustainability practices?

Stage 4: Advanced strategic sustainability

- Is our firm taking a lead role in supply chain sustainability strategies in our industry?
- Do we have a long-term perspective on sustainability?
- Are we developing innovations for supply chain sustainability?
    - Do we enjoy improved efficiency, customer satisfaction, and public image as a result of our sustainability activities?

DOI: 10.22543/0796.241.1041

Table 4. Business Demographics

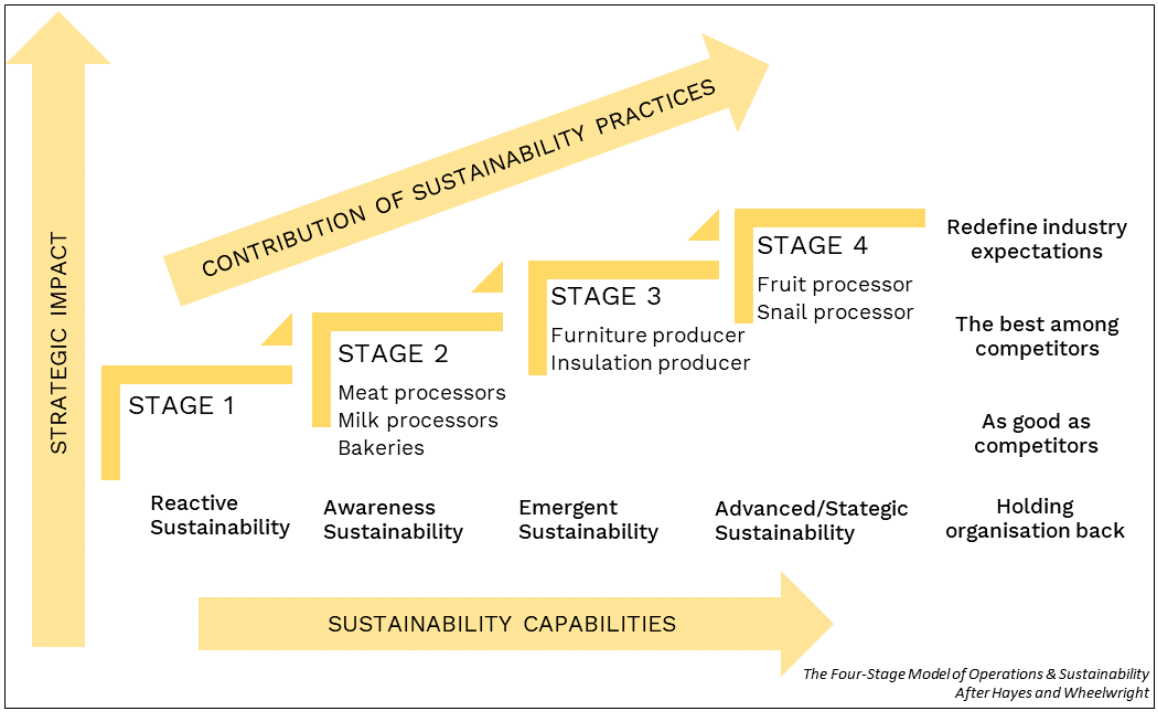
	No. of Employees	Business Type	Year Founded
1	133	Meat processing	1992
2	175	Milk processing	1994
3	91	Meat processing	2003
4	10	Bakery	1994
5	6	Bakery	2012
6	2	Insulation company	1999
7	6	Furniture production	1998
8	42	Fruit juice production	1999
9	40	Processing snails for food	2009

RESULTS

The interviews revealed that all the firms were aware of sustainability and that many were considering or implementing sustainability activities. Agriculture and food products that export seemed to be the most focused on sustainability activities. Some of the companies were working with their suppliers on sustainability efforts. This may have been because of the nature of their business and because of customer requirements. Almost all the businesses indicated that government regulations had a large impact on their sustainability activities. All the businesses were at least considering investment recovery, and most were beginning to implement programs in this area. Customer requirements had a large impact for some of the SMEs, but not so much for others (Figure 1).

From our discussions with Albanian microenterprises and SMEs, we found little to no difference regarding sustainability awareness and implementation between production and service businesses. Sustainability is not required by many customers of Albanian microenterprises and SMEs and is therefore not a major concern for the owners. For small organizations with more direct contact with foreign markets, however, it is of increased importance. Tourism is a growing business in Albania, and as Ball et al. (2007:107) point out, “environmental impacts are often exacerbated as tourism expands, and these impacts in turn are likely to adversely affect the tourism product and demand.”

Figure 1. Business Sustainability Levels



Summary of Albanian Microenterprise and SME Interviews

All the surveyed businesses were at or above the first stage of sustainable development. All of the businesses were fairly young; the oldest was founded in 1992 and the latest in 2012. These organizations had survived by meeting the needs of the Albanian marketplace and adopting their operations to satisfy market needs. Laws and regulations in Albania or in key customers' countries were the most important factor in determining sustainability practices. The businesses were meeting the current limited Albanian laws and regulations. Sustainability for all the businesses was more than a concern; it was a future risk they had to face in order to survive.

Most of the businesses in this study had advanced to the second and third stages of sustainable development. The increase in the contribution of sustainability practices was in response to customer feedback, which increased the direct competition between meat processors, milk processors, and bakeries. Market leadership went to the organization that invested more in sustainability practices. Each investment was in line with standard requirements that satisfied the EU in addition to national applied standards. This will help them adopt new market requirements the moment Albania is accepted into the European Union.

Two organizations that focused strongly on their updated and revised strategies based on the external environment—the furniture producer and the insulation company—were in stage three. These businesses had a small part of their customers in neighboring

DOI: 10.22543/0796.241.1041

countries North Macedonia and Kosovo. This meant they were facing global market standards for their finished products. Their market was international, and some sustainability practices had been implemented.

Two businesses were in stage four and had customers in the EU that demanded a high level of environmental practice. Sustainability practices were a natural process relating to the consistency of their operations, traceability of their suppliers, implementation of ISO standards, and the like. At this advanced stage were the snail processor, which exported its entire produced capacity, and Agrofruit, the fruit processor. Agrofruit exported only 1 percent of its product, but its Albanian customers considered it a premium product. The fruit processor had clear traceability of its raw materials and controlled all tiers of suppliers. Its biggest issue was developing the capacity to meet the demand of the EU market.

The results of this study show that even though the Albanian government lacks detailed sustainability requirements, many SMEs are aware of sustainability activities and are beginning to implement them. For Albanian businesses, the implementation of sustainability practices should be considered an important part of the long transition of the economy and society toward the country becoming a member of the EU. It is important for the Albanian government to develop sustainability standards that will help businesses become more aware of sustainability activities.

IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of sustainable practices is especially important if Albania is to successfully complete the EU membership process. According to Prochazkova (2007), one of the basic tools for sustainability implementation is citizens' education, schooling, and training. Bos-Brouwers (2012), in a report of research for innovative solutions, stated that SMEs are estimated to be responsible for 80 percent of industry's destructive environmental impacts and more than 60 percent of commercial waste.

Of sustainability drivers analyzed by Aghelie (2017), government regulations are the most important. According to Aghelie, the most challenging barriers to implementation of such practices are access to finance and lack of adequate training and consultancy by authorities. In Albania what is also missing is the existence and enforcement of sustainability regulations. According to a 2015 World Bank report, it is important for Albanian law to move toward and harmonize with EU legislation and standards. (The government says it is moving toward this goal.) The 2019 report of the European Commission on Albania explicitly states, "The lack of a secondary legal framework is hampering the establishment of an adequate process and assessment of environmental liability for damage to the environment." Legal and administrative support toward environmental sustainability first must be seen from a long-term point of view to improve customers' and consumers' living standards, and then support the long-term development of businesses as stakeholders in the process.

Other challenges in improving sustainability practices in Albania include the weak capacity of the environmental authorities at both the central and regional levels, and

a lack of resources for monitoring and ensuring full compliance with environmental standards (World Bank 2015). Shyle (2018) recommends creating a legal draft in which each business would be required to implement at least the initial initiatives toward sustainability practices. As Albania increases requirements for sustainable practices that ensure a continuous long-range interrelated process, the circular process itself starts and ends with suppliers (Kearny 2013). Suppliers are considered the easiest barrier for SMEs and microenterprises to overcome (Aghelie 2017).

The connection of sustainability with the niche market, where the customer is extremely important to a company's reputation, is important in the export activities of Albanian small organizations such as the snail processor. The example of Agrofruit shows that customers with high concerns for natural products are the ones targeting the niche products, although the company's market share in Albania is 1 percent. If the green business is further developed, the consolidated purchasing practices and the economies of scale will lead to higher generated income and more investments in sustainability activities.

The benefits of implemented sustainability programs show that being unsustainable can be detrimental to a business in both the short and long terms: "It is not surprising that tougher environmental standards impose costs on companies. The aim of such standards, after all, are to force polluters to internalize costs previously inflicted on society" (Cairncross 1994). Sustainability itself means higher quality that in short and average time frames could seem costly but that is definitively perceived and considered as adding value to society in the long term.

Traceability of supply sources is an important aspect to ensuring sustainability practices within food supply chains. Unfortunately, traceability can be difficult for Albanian small organizations. According to Schwägele (2005), "tracing is the ability to identify the origin of an item or group of items, through records, upstream in the supply chain." Additionally, "traceability is a concept relating to all products and all types of supply chain" (Regattieri et al. 2007). The only successful business interviewed that had control of the upstream supply chain was Agrofruit, which achieved vertical integration to control its suppliers. This is not only an Albanian concern; Kros et al. (2019) noted that organizations today face significant visibility and supply chain issues due to the length and complexity of global supply chains. In Albania, businesses need investment and also support from expert institutions, which can facilitate access to products in the global supply chain. These issues can be exacerbated by poorly managed or nonexistent traceability systems within firms and throughout their supply chains (Kros et al. 2019).

CONCLUSION

This paper provides information on the status of environmentally sustainable supply chain management practices in Albanian microenterprises and SMEs. Additionally, the model presented in this paper can serve as a planning tool for sustainable development in Albanian SMEs and microenterprises. The first step to increase sustainability activities in Albanian businesses is developing laws and regulations that require the implementation of green business practices. Regulations and customer requirements can provide

motivation for individual businesses to implement green practices that will help Albania integrate its business activities into the EU. To achieve the regulatory framework, laws should be prepared in line with the ongoing EU practice. Next, management of businesses needs to be convinced of the importance of sustainability practices, because "the most serious barriers to change in business are attitudinal" (Dewhurst and Thomas 2003). Information through training can lead to better acceptance and implementation of sustainability concepts. Customers and potential export markets such as the EU are an important driver of sustainability activities. Opportunities such as agrotourism in Albania and food exports to the EU will stimulate the need for better sustainability practices. Government regulations are also a factor that force manufacturing firms—especially food manufacturing firms—to implement traceability (Skees et al. 2001).

Finally, as one of the most important stakeholders, the community must understand and accept the importance of sustainability practices. Sociocultural sustainability is concerned with the social interaction, relations, behavioral patterns, and values between people (Mason 2003; Roberts and Tribe 2008). A tool that may help with this is the recently introduced ISO 26000, which defines how an organization can contribute to the full spectrum of sustainable development through socially responsible behavior, with an aim of a sustainable global system.

REFERENCES

Adams, J., F. Khoja, and R. Kauffman. 2012. "An Empirical Study of Buyer-Supplier Relationships within Small Business Organizations." *Journal of Small Business Management* 50(1):20–40.

Aghelie, A. 2017. "Exploring Drivers and Barriers to Sustainability Green Business Practices within Small Medium Sized Enterprises: Primary Findings." *International Journal of Business and Economic Development* 5(1).

Albanian Law No. 10042, date 22.12.2008, Article 4, "Amendment of the Law No. 8857, date 17.10.2002 for Small and Medium Enterprises." Official Publications Center, 2010.

Ayuso, Silvia, M. Roca, and R. Colomé. 2013. "SMEs as 'Transmitters' of CSR Requirements in the Supply Chain." *Supply Chain Management* 18(5):497–508. doi:10.1108/SCM-04-2012-0152.

Ball, S., S. Horner, and K. Nield. 2007. *Contemporary Hospitality & Tourism: Management Issues in China and India*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Bank of Albania. 2018. "Official Exchange Rate." Retrieved (https://www.bankofalbania.org/Tregjet/Kursi_zyrtar_i_kembimit/).

Bos-Brouwers, Hilke Elke Jacke. 2010. "Corporate Sustainability and Innovation in SMEs: Evidence of Themes and Activities in Practice." *Journal of Business Strategy and the Environment* 19(7):417–35.

Cairncross, F. 1994. "Environmental Pragmatism." *Foreign Policy* 95(Summer):35–42.

Dewhurst, H., and R. Thomas. 2003. "Encouraging Sustainable Business Practices in a Non-regulatory Environment: A Case Study of Small Tourism Firms in a UK National Park." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 11(5):383–403.

Elkington, J. 2004. "Enter the Triple Bottom Line." Pp. 1–16 in *The Triple Bottom Line: Does It All Add Up?* edited by A. Henriques and J. Richardson. London: Earthscan.

Esty, D. C., and A. S. Winston. 2009. *Green to Gold: How Smart Companies Use Environmental Strategy to Innovate, Create Value, and Build Competitive Advantage.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.

European Commission. 2003. "Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003." *Official Journal of the European Union* 124(20.5.2003):36–41.

European Commission. 2019. "Albania 2019 Report." Commission Staff working document. Retrieved January 10, 2020 (https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-albania-report.pdf).

European Investment Bank. 2016. "Assessment of Financing Needs of SMEs in the Western Balkans Countries. Country Report: Albania."

Frooman, J. 1997. "Socially Irresponsible and Illegal Behavior and Shareholder Wealth: A Meta-analysis of Event Studies." *Business and Society* 36(3):221–49.

Hanks. S., and G. Chandler. 1994. "Patterns of Functional Specialization in Emerging High-Tech Firms." *Journal of Small Business Management* (April):23–36.

Hayes, R. H., and S. C. Wheelwright. 1984. *Restoring Our Competitive Edge: Competing Through Manufacturing*. New York: John Wiley.

Hitchcock, D., and M. Willard. 2009. *The Business Guide to Sustainability: Practical Strategies and Tools for Organizations.* 2nd ed. London: Earthscan.

Inskeep, E. 1998. *Guide for Local Authorities on Developing Sustainable Tourism.* World Tourism Organization.

INSTAT. 2018a. "Albania in Figures 2017." Retrieved (http://www.instat.gov.al/media/4156/albania-in-figures-2017.pdf).

INSTAT. 2018b. "Business Register." Retrieved June 18, 2019 (http://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/industria-tregtia-dhe-sh%C3%ABrbimet/regjistri-statistikor-i-nd%C3%ABrmarrjeve/#tab2).

INSTAT. 2019. "Statistika mbi ndermarrjet e vogla dhe te mesme 2017." Retrieved June 18, 2019 (http://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/industria-tregtia-dhe-sh%C3%ABrbimet/statistikat-strukturore-t%C3%AB-nd%C3%ABrmarrjeve-ekonomike/publikimet/2019/statistika-mbi-nd%C3%ABrmarrjet-e-vogla-dhe-t%C3%AB-mesme-2017).

International Organization for Standardization. N.d. "Management and Leadership Standards: ISO 26000." Retrieved June 17, 2019 (https://iso26000.info/isosust/).

Kearny, A. 2013. "UK Environmental Policy and the Small Firm: Broadening the Focus." *Business Strategy and the Environment* 12(1):26–35. Retrieved (http://ww2.frost.com/).

Khoja, F., J. Adams, R. Kauffman, and M. Yegiyan. 2019. "Supply Chain Sustainability in SMEs: An Application of the Hayes and Wheelwright Model and Identifying Stages of Development Using Cluster Analysis." *International Journal of Integrated Supply Management* 12(4):309–33.

Kros, John, Ying Liao, Jon F. Kirchoff, and James E. Zemanek Jr. 2019. "Traceability in the Supply Chain." *International Journal of Applied Logistics* 9(1):1–22.

Mason, P. 2003. *Tourism Impacts, Planning and Management.* Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Muller, Patrice, Jenna Julius, Daniel Herr, Laura Koch, Viktoriya Peycheva, and Sean McKiernan. 2017. "Annual Report on Annual SMEs 2016/2017." European Commission. Retrieved (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0b7b64b6-ca80-11e7-8e69-01aa75ed71a1).

Prochazkova, D. 2007. *Strategy of Management of Safety and Sustainable Development of Territory* (in Czech). Prague: Policejní akademie České republiky v Praze.

Regattieri, A., M. Gamberi, and R. Manzini. 2007. "Traceability of Food Products: General Framework and Experimental Evidence." *Journal of Food Engineering* 81(2):347–56.

Roberts, S., and J. Tribe. 2008. "Sustainability Indicators for Small Tourism Enterprises: An Exploratory Perspective." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 16(5):575–94.

Shashi, Roberto Cerchione, Piera Centobelli, and Amir Shabani. 2018. "Sustainability Orientation, Supply Chain Integration, and SMEs Performance: A Causal Analysis." *Benchmarking: An International Journal* 25(9):3679–3701.

Schwägele, F. 2005. "Traceability from a European Perspective." *Meat Science* 71(1):164–73.

Sharpley, R. 2000. "Tourism and Sustainable Development: Exploring the Theoretical Divide." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 8(1):1–19.

Shyle, I. 2018. "Awareness of Individuals and Businesses in Albania for Sustainable Development." *European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 3(1).

Skees, J., A. Botts, and K. Zeuli. 2001. "The Potential for Recall Insurance to Improve Food Safety." *The International Food and Agribusiness Management Review* 4(1):99–111.

Sustainability4SMEs. 2013. "Eliminating Barriers to Small Business Sustainability." *TriplePundit* Blog. Retireved November 25, 2013 (http://www.triplepundit.com/2013/08/eliminating-barriers-small-business-sustainability/).

Swarbrooke, John. 1999. *Sustainable Tourism Management.* Wallingford, UK: CABI.

Willard, B. 2005. *The Next Sustainability Wave: Building Boardroom Buy-in.* Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

World Bank. 2015. "Albania: World Bank Group Partnership Program Snapshot April 2015." Washington, DC: World Bank. Retrieved January 10, 2020 (https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/eca/Albania-Snapshot.pdf).