



**USAID**  
NGA POPULLI AMERIKAN  
OD AMERIČKOG NARODA

USAID Kosovo EMPOWER Private Sector  
Newsletter No. 12, March 2016

## EMPOWER THROUGH JOB CREATION!

### FAST FACTS

#### Four New Grants Create Some 90 New Jobs

A grant will support **Electroni**, a manufacturer of concrete pillars for electricity distribution systems, to acquire 4 new concrete pillar molds.

New Jobs Expected: **16**

A grant will co-finance the purchase of a sugar grinder and a cutting machine for **Liri**, a producer of confectionary products.

New Jobs Expected: **32**

A grant will enable **Marles**, a trader of imported semi-finished wood parts, to construct and install the new production lines.

New Jobs Expected: **21**

A grant will enable **Doni**, a producer of solid wood furniture, to acquire a CNC machine needed for expansion to serial capacity production and achieve global standards quality.

New Jobs Expected: **21**

### Support to Wood Processing Sector Yields Promising Results

Foreign markets have a great potential for furniture and interior elements made in Kosovo. On the other hand, there are many Kosovo companies that can produce at the quality required by these markets. One of the main goals of USAID support to the wood processing sector of Kosovo is to sustainably increase export sales of producers, along with quality and process efficiency improvement, so these companies can be competitive in the new markets.

Lack of exposure of Kosovo companies to foreign markets - especially in the EU, is an obstacle for the companies to realize the opportunity. USAID EMPOWER Private Sector has been working closely with the Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo (AWPK) to facilitate a more strategic exposure of Kosovo's products abroad, and to establish professional sales relationships with agents in the EU market.

In March, AWPK and EMPOWER Private Sector signed an agreement facilitate the establishment of a producers' sales agency in Germany for Kosovo producers of furniture and interior elements to increase their export sales.

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*“It is not easy for Kosovo businesses to connect directly with large European buyers. That is why we need a professional sales agencies. The new agency in Germany is a direct result of the participation of Kosovo companies in MOW Trade Fair in Bad Salzuflen, Germany, in 2015”*  
– Arieta Vula Pozhegu, AWPK Executive Director

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Furniture made in Kosovo exhibited in Skopje Fair

Also, In March, six companies exhibited in the International Furniture Fair Tirana in Albania, and three others exhibited in the Skopje Furniture Fair in Macedonia. “In March, Kosovo wood processing companies had a very good international exposure in these two fair,” says Arieta Vula-Pozhegu, Executive Director of AWPK. “This is of importance for the entire sector, as such fairs enable our companies to gain recognition abroad.”



USAID MD James Hope and Elnor Owner Sheqer Ukaj cutting the ribbon

## Supporting the Success of Kosovo Companies

On March 30, 2016, USAID Mission Director James Hope and Elnor Company Owner Sheqer Ukaj marked another milestone of joint collaboration since 2002. Speaking at the ribbon cutting ceremony to inaugurate the newest co-investment that will support higher quality of Elnor's products and expansion to regional markets, Hope said "The success of this company is a great example of innovation, business sense, and hard work – both by the management and team."



USAID EMPOWER Private Sector joined world-wide social media campaign

## Committed to #PledgeForParity

On International Women's Day, USAID EMPOWER Private Sector showed support to worldwide efforts seeking to raise awareness on advancing the role of women in the economy. A story published in "FLATRA" magazine emphasized the message that **gender diversity is the basis for a successful business** through four role models of business women we have partnered with. The message was reinforced on TV Klan Kosova Ora e Pasdites show that focused on the importance of empowering women-owned businesses as a way of creating more jobs for women.



Three grant agreements signed with businesses in the North this month

## USAID Awards Grants in North Kosovo

In March 2016, USAID entered in partnership with three new businesses in the North. Thanks to the grant, Peppermint International, the only large-scale essential oils producer in Kosovo, will acquire a cooling chamber and vacuum drying chamber, creating some 17 new jobs. VGN Net, a cable TV and Internet services operator, needed the grant support to co-finance equipment for the digital upgrade of its technology that will expand and improve customer services, sales and result in some 20 new jobs. The third company, Miloš i Marta is a confectionery producer and with grant support they are expected to hire at least 12 new employees, mostly women.



Kosovo tour operators promoting the country as an attractive destination

## Tourism in the Air

March was a great month for tour operators from Kosovo to promote themselves individually and Kosovo as an attractive outdoor tourism destination. A total of eleven tour operators exhibited their offers in hiking, winter activities, cultural tours, biking, accommodation in traditional *kulla* towers, and general information about Kosovo at the ITB Berlin fair on March 8-12, and Destination Nature Paris trade fair on March 17-20. Both are among the largest annual trade fairs in Europe that attract many interested visitors and businesses alike. These two trade fairs provided good opportunities for Kosovo tour operators to establish professional connections.

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**USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector, which started in July 2014, is a five-year project designed to stimulate large-scale job creation by elevating the competitiveness of Kosovo firms. The project is funded by USAID, and is implemented by Cardno Emerging Markets USA, Ltd.**