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**USAID Kosovo EMPOWER Private Sector
Newsletter No. 15, June 2016**

EMPOWER THROUGH JOB CREATION!

FAST FACTS

Four Grants Expected to Create Some 131 Jobs

ArtaTex to start a new production line for underwear thanks to a grant awarded to support sale expansion and increase employment by creating at least 40 new jobs.

Ēmbëlsia was awarded a grant to support the confectionary producer bring at least three new products to the market, and create some 20 new jobs.

EkoFarm is going to use the grant to co-finance build new facilities and begin production of biomass fuel pellets, while creating some 37 new jobs.

Dekoriti is a producer of high quality wood furniture and interior elements. With the awarded grant the company will expand its production capacities and create at least 34 new jobs.

Kosovo Furniture Showroom Opens in Germany

On June 16, the Minister for Trade and Industry Hikmete Bajrami inaugurated the first Kosovo furniture showroom abroad, which opened in Stuttgart, Germany. Minister Bajrami was joined by representatives of the Union of Kosovo Businesses in Germany, Kosovo Consulate in Stuttgart, the Municipality of Altenstiegl, the Association of Wood Processors in Kosovo, the Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency, and USAID Kosovo.

“German-speaking markets are major markets for furniture and wood interior elements made in Kosovo. Our companies are capable of producing the required quality and are highly competitive,” says the Executive Director of Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo Arieta Vula-Pozhegu.

The showroom is managed by Kelmendi Holzmöbel, a professional sales agency, identified by USAID EMPOWER Private Sector. The agency has a consolidated business model, complete with promotional tools and plans for sales expansion to ensure more efficient exporting. Nearly 80% of sales will be generated online under their branding Schwarzwald massivholz on portals such as www.amazon.de and www.cleveroo.com

“For many years, Kosovo furniture producers have strived to grow and expand. The opening of this showroom is a result of their efforts to achieve competitive quality.” – Kosovo Minister of Trade and Industry Hikmete Bajrami.



Minister of Trade and Industry Hikmete Bajrami (left) at the inauguration of the Kosovo furniture showroom in Germany.

The Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo, with support from EMPOWER Private Sector will continue to facilitate all tasks related to a sustainable business relationship between Kosovo furniture producers and the sales agent in Germany, such as identification of qualified exporters, development of designs that respond to market requirements, and selection of products.



Inauguration of the first solar panel factory in Kosovo



Kosovo uniform producers at the trade fair in Switzerland



USAID Mission Director James Hope at the launch event for Kosovo Apparel Marketing Association Web-Portal



Women in Economic Growth Coordination Meeting

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Supporting the Success of Kosovo Companies

USAID Kosovo, in partnership with Sida and the newly-inaugurated J.v.G. Jaha Energy - the largest regional solar panel production factory in Kosovo, are collaborating for the "10,000 Solar Roofs" initiative to encourage the use of renewable energy and increased energy efficiency. The Speaker of Kosovo Assembly Kadri Veseli, H.E. Ambassador of Germany Angelika Viets, and Minister of Labor and Social Welfare Arban Abrashi officiated at the inauguration ceremony in June 2016.

Promoting Kosovo Apparel Producers

On June 22-24, three Kosovo producers of uniforms exhibited their products at the bi-annual International Fair for Occupational Safety, Health Protection, & Health Promotion in the Workplace in Bern, Switzerland. "Exhibition at this fair gave Kosovo companies a chance to gain knowledge of product and market trends; they made great buyer and agent connections and we expect to see results soon," says Agron Morina, Executive Director of Kosovo Apparel Marketing Association. All three exhibiting companies: Arta Tex, Puntex, and Fashion Network, specialize in production of uniforms and workwear for diverse sectors. Their exhibition was co-financed by EMPOWER Private Sector, Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency, UNDP/DEED and the exhibitors.

In June, the Minister for Trade and Industry Hikmete Bajrami and USAID Mission Director James Hope opened the event launching the Kosovo apparel industry web portal, the first of its kind, which will channel efforts to increase market awareness, promote Kosovo textile products, increase sector sales, and thereby create new jobs. The web-portal is the first major initiative of the EMPOWER-catalyzed Kosovo Apparel Marketing Association (KAMA). "This portal will enable the entire Kosovo apparel sector find foreign business partners and buyers," said USAID Mission Director James Hope at the launch event. "We are proud to have partnered with KAMA in developing one of the first industry-specific web portals in Kosovo." More at www.kosovoapparel.org

Investing in Women Has Great Returns

At the regular meeting of the Women in Economic Growth (WEG) Coordination Group members took a key step forward that will ensure sustainability of the group's goals when it was first established in May 2015. Riinvest, which was awarded a grant from USAID through ATRC / E4E will take over the coordination of the process to advocate and advance women's economic empowerment. The WEG coordination group was established and facilitated jointly by EMPOWER Private Sector (funded by USAID and Sida) and Promoting Private Sector Employment (funded by Swiss Development and Cooperation.)

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 Sida, and is implemented by Cardno Emerging Markets USA, Ltd.