



**USAID**  
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**USAID Kosovo EMPOWER Private Sector  
Newsletter No. 19, October and  
November 2016**

## **EMPOWER THROUGH JOB CREATION!**

### **FAST FACTS**

Baruti GmbH a specialized telephonic customer service provider for German speaking countries signed a grant agreement with USAID EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with Sida some 120 new jobs places reaching up to some 300 in the next three years.

EMPOWER Private Sector signed a grant agreement with Dragaj in Mitrovicë/a, mostly known as producer of wood pellets. Through the grant, the company will co-finance a new line for production of wood biomass briquettes, and create at least 25 new full-time jobs.

OSA Termosistem Company started a new production line of polyurethane injection that was enabled through a grant from USAID EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with Sida. The company will increase its production capacities, production efficiency, and quality, resulting in at least 34 new jobs.

### **Wood Processing on Focus**

On October 19, 2016, the two-day convention with the theme “Wood Processing on Focus: Trends, Technology and Business Environment” opened in Pristina. This is the first Kosovo wood industry convention, and it brought together over 150 representatives of the private sector, public institutions, and donors.

The convention was opened by the Prime Minister of Kosovo Isa Mustafa, with keynote speeches by USAID Mission Director James Hope, and the President of the Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo Hashim Deshishku.

Other activities in the first day of the convention included a panel discussion on the business environment and trends of the wood processing industry in Kosovo and globally; the exhibition “Best of Kosovo” with wood products from local companies, and an exhibition of designs by students. The contest was organized with the purpose of giving students of interior design and architecture from several universities in Kosovo the opportunity to put their creative minds to work, propose designs for furniture pieces of interior design concepts that can be realized in real life, and expose their talent.

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*“The wood industry in Kosovo has its identity. With this sector, we have shown success and have become competitive in the regional markets,” said Prime Minister Mustafa.*

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Drilon Rexhepi from the Faculty of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj/Uroševac (USHAF) is the first place winner of the Students’ Design Contest, part of the first Wood Industry Convention in Kosovo. The other two winners are Fidan Muji and Fatmir Zenuni from University of Prishtina (UP), selected from 40 finalists from UP, AAB, UBT and USHAF.



The Prime Minister of Kosovo Isa Mustafa opened the Wood Convention



Kosovo Apparel producers supported by EMPOWER

## Quality and Efficiency Are Keywords of Support to Apparel Producers

Kosovo apparel producers have great potential and can successfully get into new markets. To have successful exports, the companies need to increase production quantity but also efficiency of production processes.

In continuation of its activities to support Kosovo apparel producers to improve and upgrade production, USAID EMPOWER Private Sector, in partnership with Sida, engaged a foreign expert to assess the quality situation, calculate product prices, and provide recommendations on further development, staff training, and quality standards. The expert visited STAFF Company in Podujevë/o and InverseOne in Dragash/š,



Wood Processing Companies from North Kosovo

## Supporting Wood Processors from North Kosovo

USAID EMPOWER Private Sector, in partnership with Sida, organized a meeting with several wood processing companies from North Kosovo, and the Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo (AWPK). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss their participation in the upcoming Wood Convention that will take place in Pristina on October 19-20. At the Wood Convention, the companies can be part of the forum discussions, exhibit their products, and participate in B2B meetings.



Internship program In the North Kosovo

## Internship with Wood Processing Companies for Youth in North Kosovo

The Executive Director of the Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo (AWPK) Arieta Vula-Pozhegu met with Dragiša Jovanović, owner of Fontana, a cabinetry producer in Zubin Potok, to initiate the internship program for youth in North Kosovo. The purpose of the internship program is to place unemployed youth with wood processing companies to gain new skills and work experience. Four companies from the North: Fontana, Dekor In, Godži, and Marković will engage a total of 21 youth, of whom 8 are women. In total, the internship program will engage across Kosovo 61 youth. They will acquire skills in wood processing, design, and upholstery processes. The internship program is a joint activity by AWPK and USAID EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with Sida, and in cooperation with Enhancing Youth Employment (EYE).



Hykmete Bajrami the Minister of Trade and Industry speaks about the importance of branding

## Kosovo Gets Into Regional Brand Creation

On November 11, 2016, the Women's Chamber of Commerce – G7 organized in Pristina the conference "Regional Branding and Development in Kosovo". Speaking at the event, the Minister of Trade and Industry Hykmete Bajrami emphasized the importance of the national branding concept as a critical economic development concept. "Good branding makes goods and services more attractive for export, increase tourist interest to visit the country and attracts foreign investors," Minister Bajrami said.

EMPOWER Private sector shared the experience with the development of the brands for the wood processing and apparel industries, and the respective web portals. The conference was supported by JICA and USAID, and other entities.

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