



EMPOWER THROUGH JOB CREATION!

FAST FACTS

EMPOWER signed a grant of €40,920 with EvroTarget to co-finance work equipment. EvroTarget operates in the outsourcing service, and will use the grant to expand and create more than 60 new jobs.

BoneVet makerspace was awarded with a grant of €49,768 to set up two modules in Prishtina, cover the costs of equipment and inventory for the Makerkids Module, and for office equipment. It is expected that up to 1000 young makers will be trained in 2018 in various modules.

EMPOWER supported Kosovo's first meat recycling and animal feed production company AL-TEC with a grant of €30,000. The grant enables the company to purchase four thermo-generators, expand production capacities and create 41 new jobs.

A grant of €10,000 was awarded to work uniform producer Puntex to purchase new equipment. The grant enables the company to expand production and create 12 new jobs.

Wood processing company Binni was awarded a grant of €13,142 to obtain four quality standard certifications which will strengthen the company's internal procedures and support its exports.

The First Albanian Diaspora Economic Forum Enables Business Deals and Connections

For decades, The Albanian Diaspora has provided vital support to the people of Kosovo. The economic assistance they provided was predominantly in the form of remittances. However, many agree that the potential of the Diaspora to improve Kosovo's economic development has been underutilized until now. Kosovo has a lot of potential, having the youngest population in Europe, low taxation and wages, solid banking system and custom-free access to EU and US markets. Creating linkages between the Diaspora and Kosovo businesses seems logical and beneficial for both parties. By connecting with Kosovo businesses, the Diaspora can help create jobs and increase exports of Kosovo-made products. To aid this linkage and foster common goals for economic growth in Kosovo, the first-ever Albanian Diaspora Economic Forum was held on November 25 - 26, 2017 in Prishtina.

Over 300 Diaspora businesses from seventeen different countries, and 150 Kosovo businesses attended the Forum. The significance of the event was further highlighted by the number of dignitaries that attended. USAID Deputy Mission Director Lisa Magno, President Hashim Thaçi, Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj, Minister of Diaspora Dardan Gashi, President of the Albanian Diaspora Business Network Nazar Mehmeti, and Albanian Minister of Diaspora Pandeli Majko all spoke at the Gala Business Dinner which marked the opening of the Forum. In their speeches, they applauded the generosity of the Albanian Diaspora and highlighted the significant role they can further play in supporting Kosovo's economic development. "To the Diaspora who has roots in this country, I commend you for giving back to Kosovo. But as businessmen, I also underscore that it makes business sense to partner with Kosovo entrepreneurs." - said USAID Deputy Mission Director Magno.

As a result of the B2B meetings, nine contracts were signed between businesses in the amount of more than €1.1M, and another 36 potential deals are underway. Two of these contracts were signed during the Forum.



Diaspora company representatives with Energy Expert from Jaha Solar Trim Ternava at the B2B meetings.

Over 350 meetings were held between Kosovo and Diaspora businesses on the second day of the Forum. The registration for B2B meetings was aided by the comprehensive business catalogue 'Our Products – Kosovo Ready to Export'. The catalogue which profiled 90 Kosovo export-ready businesses was developed by EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with Sida specially for the event.

As a result of the B2B meetings, nine contracts were signed between businesses in the amount of more than €1.1M, and another 36 potential deals are underway. Two of these contracts were signed during the Forum. The first contract was signed between Kosovo company ArtaTex and B&D Verwaltungs GmbH company from Germany, while the second contract was signed between Mobileria Max and Bautech GmbH company from Germany. The two Kosovo companies will be provided with technical assistance by EMPOWER Private Sector.

Organized by the Albanian Diaspora Business Network in cooperation with EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with Sida, the first Albanian Diaspora Economic Forum made significant achievements. It created linkages between hundreds of businesses and enabled significant business deals between them. This event proves that joint efforts are necessary to utilize the potential of Diaspora and Kosovo businesses to improve the economic development of Kosovo.



Arben Kelmendi from Schwartzwald Massiveholz, Sheqer Ukaj from Elnor, Ekrem Shahini from Palma, and Besian Mustafa from KIESA (left to right) at the panel sessions of the second edition of the Wood Industry Convention.

Second Wood Industry Convention Empowers Innovation, Exports and Design

The wood processing sector in Kosovo is one of the strongest industries in the country, with Kosovo-made furniture increasingly being exported to Europe and beyond. To further promote the promising industry, EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with Sida, the EU funded project ICEP, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency and the Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo, joined forces to organize the second edition of the Wood Industry Convention. Held in Prishtina on December 6-7 2017, the theme of the Convention was Empowering Innovation, Exports and Design. Over 300 people attended, including companies, designers and architects, institutions, agencies, experts and students. This was an ideal avenue where the relevant stakeholders met, discussed and shared information.

Kosovo's Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj, USAID Deputy Mission Director Lisa Magno, Deputy Head of Cooperation from the EU Office in Kosovo Libor Chlad, and the Kosovo Minister of Education, Science and Technology Shyqiri Bytyqi spoke at the opening of the Convention. They highlighted the importance of such an event in promoting and strengthening the industry. The two-day Convention consisted of an exhibition of Kosovo-made wood products by 21 Kosovo wood processing companies, B2B meetings, and a forum with six panel discussions which covered a variety of industry topics. The Convention also included a display of the top 40 innovative and practical furniture designs created by university students from around Kosovo as part of the Student Design Contest. The event concluded with an award ceremony where finalists of the contest received certificates and prizes.



Runway show featuring Made in Kosovo apparel at the Kosovo Apparel Convention.

Made in Kosovo Apparel in the Limelight at Kosovo's First Apparel Convention

The first ever Kosovo Apparel Convention was held on November 6 2017, in Prishtina. Its mission was to advance the development and growth of the apparel industry in Kosovo. Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj and USAID Deputy Mission Director Lisa Magno participated at the opening of the event. They highlighted the importance of this event to support apparel companies to gain visibility and attract investors.

Leather bags and shoes, clothing, and work uniforms for various industries were exhibited by 22 Kosovo apparel producers at the convention. Three panel discussions where international and local experts presented on key topics in the apparel industry raised a lot of interest among participants. Around 100 people attended the runway show where models presented clothes and footwear produced in Kosovo from 18 Kosovo companies. Additionally, students from four Kosovo design colleges had the chance to expose their talent and compete with their designs at a Student Design Contest. The finalists of the contest were awarded with certificates and prizes at the end of the event. The Kosovo Apparel Convention was organized by the Kosovo Apparel Marketing Association (KAMA) and Empower Private Sector in partnership with Sida.



Pellet produced in Kosovo by local company Thes-ari.

Kosovo-made Wood Pellets Meet European Standards

One of Kosovo's leading wood pellet and briquette producers, Thes-Ari, recently obtained international product quality standard ENplus A2 certification for its wood pellets. EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with Sida supported Thes-ari to obtain in-house laboratory equipment for pellet quality analysis, and to attain the ENplus quality certificate for wood pellet through the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The quality certification proves that Thes-Ari pellets are of high quality and safe to use for heating not only in Kosovo and the regional market, but also the EU market.

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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.