



## EMPOWER THROUGH JOB CREATION!

### FAST FACTS

On July 17<sup>th</sup> 2017, EMPOWER announced a call for applications for the Solar Roofs Pilot Project, to promote the use of solar panels in businesses and residential houses in collaboration with Jaha Solar.

EMPOWER signed a grant of 15,000€ with the Kosovo Manufacturing Club to support the Made in Kosovo campaign for the second year running. The campaign aims to increase awareness on the economic benefits from the consumption of Kosovo-made goods.

The Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo received two grants from EMPOWER to support the participation of wood processing companies at two international fairs-SwissBau and IMM in January 2018.

Sweets producer Konditoria was awarded a grant of 10,000€ to purchase new equipment that will enable the company to expand its production capacities and create over 23 new jobs.

The call for grant applications (APS #3) to finance innovative activities that create jobs and advance economic development is open. The application deadline is December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

### A Greener Future on the Horizon for Kosovo

The long winter months will soon bring coal grey skies in the capital Pristina. However, the recent Green Festival has hinted that a greener future is on the horizon for Kosovo. The turnout and interest at the festival held in Pristina in September has shown that Kosovars are attuned to the latest world trends in the green industry and are catching up to the global green energy movement.

This second edition of the Green Festival was held to promote Kosovo's green businesses and raise awareness and interest in recycling, renewable energy and energy efficiency. Organized by USAID EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with Sida and supported by ProCredit Bank Kosovo, the objective of the event was to offer a networking platform for green businesses, government agencies, donors, and all relevant green energy stakeholders – and it certainly did do that and more. This year, 23 local companies exhibited their Kosovo-made products at the Green Pavilion – a solid increase in number from the 16 that exhibited the previous year. It seems that Kosovars have learned a lot in one year.

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*“Last year people picked up wood biomass pellets and asked what they were, this year they’re asking about the price for a ton”- said Ismete Thaqi from Thesari, a wood pellet company that exhibited at the festival.*

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The exhibiting companies were thrilled at the turnout of around 2000 visitors, while visitors were delighted with the variety of businesses showcasing their products. They were surprised to find that Kosovo is producing, for example, mosaic tiles from recycled glass, plastic insulation sheets from recycled waste, LED light bulbs, and solar photovoltaic panels, among other products. Many were there to find a good deal. In fact, 45 new sales contracts were made to the amount of €1.3million during the three-day event. Additionally, a few export sales were made in Albania, whilst negotiations were initiated for exports to Egypt and Switzerland.

Although green business and renewable energy are still relatively new concepts in Kosovo, the strong turnout at the Green Forum sessions proved that there is a lot of interest in the industry. Over 200 people attended the forum presentations delivered by 25 international and local green energy experts over two days. Kosovo business owners found the forums beneficial as they learned about the future of the industry. “The forums on the price changes in the industry were particularly interesting for our company”, said Green Energy Technology owner Visar Kelmendi.

The festival also encompassed many parallel activities that promoted renewable energy, recycling, and the sustainable use of materials, creating much interest among visitors. These included the BONEVET electric car and the Klan Kosova auditorium replica made from recycled and sustainable materials by Anarch.



Visitors talking to businesses at the Green Pavilion of the Green Festival

When the event was over and the lights were turned off, the organizers were pleased that they didn't create waste in the environment. The tables and booth boards specifically created for the event from chipboard material were granted to be reused by EMPOWER Private Sector beneficiaries BONEVET and KOSICT conference. Thus, the recycling continued after the festival, with the hope that some energy was instilled into people to support green business, and do their bit in making Kosovo greener.



*DokuFest volunteers greeting tourists with a smile at the Tourist Information stand in Prizren*



*Jaha Solar employees making solar panels.*



*US Ambassador Delawie and USAID Mission Director Hope at Binni production facility in Vushtrri*



*Executive Director of KAMA seeing firsthand the products of the apparel companies in Albania*

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## Promoting Kosovo Tourism at DokuFest

Kosovo tourism was promoted at the DokuFest International Documentary and Film Festival in Prizren, from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> of August. Adventure tour operators presented Kosovo's touristic offers to international media and festival participants at a Tourist Information stand with the support of EMPOWER Private Sector in Partnership with Sida. On day three of the festival, the US Ambassador to Kosovo Greg Delawie stopped by the Tourist Information stand where local tour operators and volunteers presented the different adventure tours on offer. In addition, during the festival, nine videos showcasing Kosovo with a focus on the Via Dinarica were shown before and after each film screening, including the opening and closing ceremonies.

## JAHA Solar - The Only Producer of Solar Panels in the Region

US Ambassador Greg Delawie and USAID Mission Director James Hope visited Jaha Solar on July 25<sup>th</sup> 2017. Jaha Solar is the first company to produce photovoltaic solar panels in Kosovo and the region. EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with SIDA has joined forces with Jaha Solar in the Solar Roofs Pilot Project to promote solar panel installations and the use of renewable energy resources. Furthermore, EMPOWER has supported Jaha Solar to obtain necessary product quality certifications for its photovoltaic solar panels, so it can expand its production and increase exports to international markets. Established last year, the company currently has a professional staff of 37, 11 of which are mostly women engineers.

## Binni Expands Further in EU Markets

On July 24<sup>th</sup> 2017, US Ambassador Greg Delawie and USAID Mission Director James Hope visited furniture manufacturer Binni. The company recently opened a new modern showroom in France, through which it sells its quality kitchens, doors, windows, and other Kosovo-made furniture. Binni has a strong presence in Kosovo with showrooms in Prizren, Pejë, Vushtrri, and soon in Graçanicë. In 2015 EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with SIDA supported Binni with a grant to purchase a wood-processing machine, which resulted with 28 new jobs. The company currently employs 120 people, and exports 50% of its products to the EU market.

## Sharing Best Practices in the Apparel Industry

On July 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 2017, seven Kosovo apparel company representatives, visited apparel companies in Albania. The purpose of the visits was to share best practices and gain first-hand knowledge on increasing the efficiency of their productions. Company representatives from both countries found that there is a great potential for job creation and export expansion by sharing best practices and collaborating in the labor-intensive apparel industry. The visit was supported by EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with SIDA, and the Kosovo Apparel Marketing Association (KAMA).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

The first Kosovo Apparel Convention will be held on November 6<sup>th</sup> 2017, at the Emerald Hotel, Prishtina. The event will offer a networking platform for Kosovo apparel manufacturers, government agencies, donors, international buyers, and apparel industry stakeholders.

The Wood Industry Convention will be held on December 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> 2017, at the Emerald Hotel, Prishtina. The convention will be an opportunity for both larger companies and SME size wood processors to gain visibility, negotiate business, and attract investors.

**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.**