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BIG SMALL BUSINESSES

Big Small Businesses is a five-year activity that empowers Serbian market actors to lead localized initiatives that spur small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) growth. The activity strengthens SME linkages with business support providers to improve their productivity and profitability; expand SME exports to regional, EU, and other markets; and strengthen SME access to financing instruments. By accelerating economic growth and increasing equitable prosperity, the activity contributes to USAID's overall goal of a more prosperous and democratic Serbia committed to European integration and self-reliance.

ACTIVITIES

- Employ a facilitative, market systems approach that puts Serbian actors in the lead and enables regionally tailored implementation in the focus sectors of agriculture, food, equipment and machines, as well as creative, green, and digital cross-cutting sectors.
- Pilot, adapt, and scale innovative approaches through a \$3.2 million Transformational Partnership and Innovation fund that supports partners to deliver new services to clients.
- Foster local entrepreneurial ecosystems of sector-specialized firms by supporting business service providers and financial institutions.
- Improve SME marketing and exports through business services, strengthened supply chain relationships, sectoral cooperation, and enhanced quality and traceability.
- Diversify the financial products and services available to SMEs, improve SME utilization of financial services, and leverage the considerable public, private, and donor resources available for investment.
- Expand opportunities for women, youth, and marginalized groups through actors in workforce development, the private sector, and the education system.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Support at least 1,000 Serbian enterprises and improve productivity and profitability of SMEs through enhanced management and modernization.

- Expand SME exports through improved market alignment and adaptations.
- Increase SME utilization of financing instruments. To date the project has:
 - Partnered with the Divac Foundation and the municipalities of Novi Pazar, Bela Palanka, Vlasotince, and Nova Crnja to establish four revolving funds with a total value of \$140,000. The funds have enabled local farmers to receive interest-free financing to invest in small machinery, hail protection systems, and seeds.
 - Partnered with the Divac Foundation, municipalities from Zlatibor district, and a Secondary Farming School in Požega to establish the Youth Rural Business Fund. Senior students will receive financing worth around \$30,000 in total, together with mentoring to develop business plans and apply for grants to purchase agricultural machinery.
- Improve human capacity development and create at least 1,200 new jobs in the agricultural and food and equipment and machinery sectors.
- Generate \$50 million in new investment.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PROJECT FUNDING

U.S. Agency for International Development
(USAID/Serbia)

PROJECT DURATION

April 2022 – March 2027

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

ACDI/VOCA, Center for Advanced Economic
Studies (CEVES), Ana and Vlade Divac
Foundation, J.E. Austin Associates

TOTAL FUNDING

\$18,221,339

CONTACT

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WHERE WE WORK

Nationwide in select municipalities