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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; supports the expansion of SME exports to regional, EU, and other markets; and strengthens 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.

RESULTS TO DATE

- Facilitated more than 595 business-to-business meetings between 119 Serbian companies and prospective regional and international buyers at the AgroBelgrade 2023 trade fair, InterConnect matchmaking event, and the Fruitnet Forum South East Europe specialized b2b event.
- Established Revolving funds in partnership with four municipalities (Novi Pazar, Vlasotince, Nova Crnja, and Velika Plana) in the value of \$140,000 that provide interest-free, micro-financing to 53 local farmers who will use the funds to invest in small machinery, irrigation systems, improved varieties, and other technologies. During October and November, four additional Revolving funds were launched in Sjenica, Tutin, Lebane, and Arandjelovac in the value of \$130,000. The initiation of fund distribution is expected to commence at the beginning of 2024.
- Established Youth rural business funds in partnership with a number of municipalities (Požega, Užice, Čajetina, Gornji Milanovac, Arilje, Prokuplje, Svilajnac) that provided grants in the total value of \$53,000 to 32 senior students of agricultural high schools to purchase improved technologies for their families' farms and continue farming.
- The project has stimulated \$ 12.8 million in new investments, mainly in equipment acquisition, facility construction, and improvement of production processes. Of which \$ 2.6 million was invested in the green economy, specifically in biogas projects, solar and energy efficiency.

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

WHERE WE WORK

Nationwide in select municipalities

CONTACT

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