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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.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Support at least 1,000 Serbian enterprises and improve productivity and profitability of SMEs through enhanced management and modernization. To date, the project has provided technical assistance for 103 SMEs on climate change in agriculture and digitalization.
- Expand SME exports through improved market access. To date, the project has facilitated more than 275 business to business meetings between Serbian companies and prospective buyers.
- Increase SME utilization of financing instruments. To date, the project has:
 - Established Revolving funds in partnership with four municipalities (Novi Pazar, Bela Palanka, Vlasotince, and Nova Crnja) with a total value of \$143,000, that provide interest-free, micro-financing to local farmers to invest in small machinery, irrigation systems, improved varieties and other technologies in order to adapt to climate change.
 - Established Youth rural business funds in partnership with a number of municipalities (Požega, Užice, Čajetina, Gornji Milanovac, Arilje, Prokuplje, Svilajnac) that will provide grants in the total value of \$54,000 to senior students of agricultural high schools to purchase improved technologies for their families' farms and continue farming.
- 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. To date, the project has stimulated \$1 million in new investments through various pilots.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PROJECT FUNDING

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

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

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

WHERE WE WORK

Nationwide in select municipalities

PROJECT DURATION

April 2022 – March 2027

TOTAL FUNDING

\$18,221,339

CONTACT

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