



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# FASTFACTS

ON USAID'S ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

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# Serbian Government Endorses Recommendations to Boost Competitiveness

**BELGRADE**—On January 21, 2010, the Government of the Republic of Serbia formally adopted a series of measures proposed by the National Competitiveness Council (NCC) to improve the country's competitive position. The 38 recommendations comprise concrete actions to advance Serbia's competitiveness and were formulated by five working groups on infrastructure, energy efficiency, goods and market efficiency, human capital and innovations, and public administration.



From the National Competitiveness Council's session: Tanja Kuzman, Dragan Đuričin, Božidar Đelić, Dragoljub Vukadinović, Radmila Milivojević, Toplica Spasojević, Ana Trbović, and Goran Radosavljević

The NCC measures aim to remove administrative barriers to doing business and strive to improve Serbia's position in the World Economic Forum Competitiveness and the World Bank Doing Business rankings.

High priority proposed actions include adopting by-laws to both the Law on Protection of Competition - to further clarify competition policy - and the Law on Planning and Construction - to improve efficiency and transparency in issuing construction permits. Other actions include reducing local communal taxes as a means to encourage foreign investment, drafting a Law on Rational Energy Use to promote energy efficiency, and introducing performance metrics for Universities on timely graduation and job placement as a mechanism for allocating government budget resources.

"It is very important that we discuss our competitiveness seriously, and that the Government adopted the recommendations proposed by the Council, but the implementation of these recommendations will be crucial. The private sector will carefully monitor the Government's work," said ITM Group President and NCC Member Toplica Spasojević, following the Government's adoption of NCC recommendations.

The National Competitiveness Council of Serbia was re-established in January 2008 to analyze gaps in Serbia's competitiveness and propose an annual program based on tangible recommendations to enhance Serbia's competitiveness. The NCC boasts 29 members representing the business and academic sectors and the highest Government institutions. Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration Božidar Đelić is President of the Council.

The USAID Serbia Competitiveness Project supports the work of the Council and is actively involved in the development and implementation of policy measures that will lead to improving Serbia's competitive position in international markets.

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## Public Property Law on Government's Agenda

**KRAGUJEVAC** –Fiscal and property decentralization were key items for a roundtable discussion held on December 8, 2009, in Kragujevac. The event gathered representatives from USAID's Municipal Economic Growth Activity, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities and more than 30 city and municipality mayors across Serbia.

**The City of Kragujevac joined forces with USAID's Municipal Economic Growth Activity** to organize a roundtable aimed at strengthening the dialogue between central and local government representatives. Discussion points included decentralization, transfer cuts to local governments, and city and municipality property ownership.

**"I hope that this meeting will give us concrete results and that the Public Property Law will find itself in the national parliament as soon as possible,"** said Mayor of Kragujevac, Veroljub Stevanović.



Mayor of Kragujevac, Veroljub Stevanović, and Tony Levitas, Public Finance Expert, USAID Municipal Economic Growth Activity Program, with representatives of 20 local governments

The USAID Municipal Economic Growth Activity Program's **Tony Levitas**, a U.S. expert on local government finance and a senior researcher at the Urban Institute, held a presentation on Sharing the Burden of the Economic Crisis. Levitas pointed to the high level of fiscal centralization in Serbia.

"While European governments are trying to assist their local governments in overcoming the crisis, I think the central authorities in Serbia are not doing so, as they are decreasing transfers to the local level instead and making their situation even more difficult. I believe that the consequences of such actions will be significant, and will include local governments becoming increasingly dependent on their own revenues, relying more on income from taxes, which will affect the everyday life of the citizens," emphasized Levitas. He added that local governments should reduce employee numbers and become more efficient in their work and the provision of services.

State Secretary for the Ministry of Economy **Dejan Jovanović** said the new Public Property Law would allow increased autonomy for local governments, thus enhancing their efficacy. Jovanović said that in 2009, a mere 22 local governments, including Kragujevac, had less than a 20% share of transferred budget resources in their finance structure; only these local governments managed to attain sustainable levels of financing.

## Biotrend Exports to EU Markets, Expands Business by 30%

**COLOGNE, Germany** – Biotrend has successfully placed its products in large retail chains in Serbia, Hungary and Slovenia. The Novi Sad-based company, which produces and markets vegetable-based sauces and salads, participated in the October 2009 Anuga International Food and Beverage Trade Fair in Cologne, Germany, with the support of the USAID Agribusiness Project.



Negotiations with a potential buyer at the Anuga Fair in October 2009

**Biotrend Donato** is a Novi Sad-based company that produces and markets vegetable-based sauces and salads. Current owner **Ljubica Stankov** founded the family owned business in 1990. As part of its program to assist companies involved in vegetable production and processing, the **USAID Agribusiness Project** has helped Biotrend to expand its operations in 2009, despite the global recession.

Over the past year, Biotrend has participated in a range of Project-supported programs. All have had a positive effect on the growth of the company. Early in 2009, Biotrend joined a number of Serbian companies who exhibited their products at a Project-supported booth at Novi Sad's Agricultural Fair, one of the largest of its kind in Europe. Stankov was so pleased with the outcome of the fair that she decided to team up with 24 other Serbian companies presenting their products at the **October 2009 Anuga International Food and Beverage Trade Fair in Cologne, Germany**.

Ahead of the fair, the project assisted Biotrend to re-design the company's packaging and labeling and create new marketing and promotional materials. The new packaging created a more updated image and helped to facilitate sales to potential customers.

**Biotrend successfully negotiated a contract** with Hungary's largest distributor of products in a controlled regime. As a result, Biotrend's products will be sold in the four largest supermarket chains in Hungary. The first supply of the Serbian-made sauces and salads will be exported by end of February 2010. Biotrend also signed a contract with a Slovenian distributor that will place the company's products on Interspar and Spar supermarket shelves in Slovenia starting in March 2010.

**Stankov participated in a USAID Agribusiness Project training program on improving business skills.** The knowledge she gained led her to successful negotiations with Serbia's largest domestic retail chain. The chain introduced Biotrend products in 30 of its shops, without charging the usual listing fee, which can be high, particularly for companies that produce a wide range of products.

**Asked if she is pleased with the success of her company, which started as a small family business and developed into a successful export oriented company, Ms. Stankov says: "I am living the American dream - in Serbia!"**

## Innovative Food Drying Technology

**NOVI SAD** – *The NTim Technology company manufactures original solar food dryers that exhibit nine newly patented processes.*



The Solaris food dryer uses an innovative design that includes solar heating and recirculation of waste heat. The dryer also condenses the evaporated moisture, rather than venting it to the atmosphere.

**"A patent here, a patent there.** All together there are nine recognized new inventions in one drying machine," explains **Nenad Veselinović**, a retired fireman, inventor, and owner of **Ntim Technology**. Named **Solaris**, the dryer derives its heat from a solar panel, a technology that delivers significant energy savings.

The dryer can be used to dry medical and aromatic herbs, fruits, vegetables and mushrooms. After learning about the new technology and seeing it in action, the **USAID Agribusiness Project recognized the potential of NTim** and supported the company to exhibit at the 2009 Novi Sad Agricultural Fair.

"This is fantastic. The dryer's capabilities are unique and in demand, offering drastic energy savings through the use of solar power and other drying process efficiencies. This results in an improvement in the quality of processed products, a 100% product utilization rate and low start-up costs," observed a visitor and potential buyer at the fair.

An independent audit conducted by **Louis Timmermans**, an expert from the Netherlands-based PUM consulting company, found that the new dryer preserved the structure, taste and flavor of dried products. He concluded this resulted from the low temperature during the drying process.

**From May to December 2009**, initial market exposure at the Novi Sad Fair has resulted in \$250,000 in sales of new dryers for NTim Technology. "These are our very first commercial sales, and the money earned will serve us to further develop our business ideas. We are very grateful that the USAID Agribusiness Project recognized the potential of our company and provided us with a spot at the fair," said Veselinović.

Veselinović is currently negotiating selling both the dryers and the license for the production of this innovative technology to interested buyers in Indonesia and countries in South America.

For additional information on NTim Technology, visit: [www.ntim.rs](http://www.ntim.rs)

**NTim Technology has been nominated for the annual USAID Technology Award.**

# Marketing and Branding Support Turns Serbian SMEs into Regional Business Leaders

*The increasing success enjoyed by South Serbian small and medium size enterprises at top regional trade fairs is no surprise for all those following the activities of USAID's PPES program. Companies recorded immediate after fair sales in excess of \$395,000 at two regional Trade Fairs in the fall of 2009, one in Priština, and the other in Skopje.*



**The higher rate of success** is the result of economic programs implemented by the Economic Security Program to support the development of South Serbia and the Sandžak regional business communities. The projects led by the Economic Security Program are expediting economic recovery in the two regions. As companies grow, they create new jobs and offer more opportunities for their communities, with unemployment figures significantly higher than the national average.

In one of the most intensive business support activities managed by the Economic Security Program, 25 companies are trained, coached and mentored in Sales, Finance, Operations, and Human Resource Management. A key element of the program is the development of new branding and marketing materials

with special emphasis on important improvements to the companies' Internet sites. The goal is to make the companies more appealing in order to attract new customers and increase sales revenues. As the Economic Security Program supports the companies to participate in trade fairs throughout Europe, the new visual identities and materials deliver a sophisticated message that easily communicates to potential buyers that Serbia's products are of the highest quality and offer superior value.

**The next major International Fair to be attended by USAID PPES is the CPD in Dusseldorf**, one of the most important Fairs for Women's Wear and Accessories this season. The Economic Security Program has partnered with the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, SIEPA and GTZ to create a branded booth called Jeans from Serbia!

PPES has supported the jeans manufacturers in marketing themselves as a unified industry that is on the scene and expects to regain its reputation across Europe as the leader in high-quality denim. The manufacturers' urban styling made Serbian jeans a must among young buyers during the 1980's. Consultants and experts working with the Economic Security Program developed a strong marketing message and competitive edge for the companies traveling to Dusseldorf this month. In addition to style and quality, Jeans from Serbia promotes its location, which offers important savings in transportation costs, especially in the current economic condition.

The current schedule for 2010 calls for PPES to support companies in five trade fairs. If past performance of companies supported by the Economic Security Program is any indicator, expectations are high for immediate after fair sales and long term growth for each company that attends a fair.

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## Support for Success: Pegasus

**VRANJE** – *Pegasus, a private company founded in 2002, creates leather furniture for commercial and home use. The company has successfully produced furniture for premium hotels and for homeowners looking for elegant interior design. The company's attention to detail, quality and design has earned it two important industry awards: the Vojvodina Chamber of Commerce Award for Quality and the Gold Medal for Product Design, both at the Novi Sad Furniture Fair.*

Ranging from traditional marketing communications such as PR and advertising to technology-based marketing, including website development, the USAID PPES offers significant support to Pegasus for business development. This support has prepared the company to succeed in its participation at international fairs.

# Students from Serbia Compete in Entrepreneurship Challenge Day

Students across Serbia are preparing to compete against their European peers representing more than 38 countries in an Entrepreneurship Challenge Day, to be held in Belgrade in April 2010.



JAS Skills@Work Challenges - Linking young people with the challenging world of business

In December, more than two hundred students from **Belgrade** and **Novi Pazar** spent an intensive day collaborating and learning how to solve complex business problems using the latest technology and business methods. Two more **Skills@Work Challenges** are scheduled in February; they will be held in Niš and Novi Sad. The sessions will help select the Serbian participants for the **European Skills@Work Challenge, to take place in Belgrade in April 2010.**

The challenges were organized by **Junior Achievement Serbia (JAS)**, in cooperation with the **British Council**. Through the Challenges, students are introduced to intensive teamwork with new colleagues and the process of innovative problem solving and decision-making. The program allows students to test what they have learned while participating in the JA program.

In Belgrade, students from 20 high schools participated in the competition. They worked in teams to solve business problems presented by JAS' business partner, Oracle. At the end of the day, the teams were timed as they solved an actual business challenge faced by a Serbian telecom company. In Novi Pazar, the **Sandžak Economic Development Agency (SEDA)** presented Challenge activities. Members of the winning teams from both competitions will be a part of the Serbian national team at the European Skills@Work challenge.

The successful entrepreneurship curriculum introduced into Serbian high schools by JAS has engaged more than 4,000 students this year. JAS activities teach students through the experience of managing their own companies as well as through a curriculum developed internationally and modified to the Serbian context.

**On the global level, Junior Achievement receives support from some of the most successful companies in the world – Microsoft, Exxon Mobile, American Express Bank, HSBC, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Bata Limited – all of whom took time to work directly with students as well as provide financial support. Companies like Oracle, Microsoft and Erste Bank are among the high-profile supporters of JA in Serbia.**

High school teachers serve as the mentors and trainers for this after-school program. As part of the program, JAS provides teachers with annual trainings and curriculum support. The educational program for teachers has been certified by the Ministry of Education, thus participating teachers receive credits toward their nationally-mandated, annual continuing education requirements. Teachers are given coursework in business-related subjects, including Business Ethics, Enterprise without Borders and Banks in Action. The teachers also participate in workshops on Marketing and Fundraising. The success of JAS lies in its ability to introduce Serbian students to the global economy while they develop the skills most in demand by the labor market.

For Serbia, **Junior Achievement is an important partner** in the transition from a centrally planned to a market economy. It is a successful youth activity and an investment in local communities and the future of Serbian society. Activities that develop business skills and create a culture for future entrepreneurs are fundamental to the long-term development of Serbia's economy. This is why they rank high on the priority list of the **USAID PPES Economic Security Program.**

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# Internship Guide: Best Practices from Serbia 2010

The USAID Serbia Competitiveness Project drafted the *Internship Guide: Best Practices from Serbia* in order to assist companies to establish and enhance their internship programs.



The **Serbian language guide** is based on interviews with HR managers and other executives involved in structuring and leading internship programs in seven companies and organizations in Serbia. They include **Infostud, KPMG, Oracle, the USAID Serbia Competitiveness Project, H.ART Development Center, Holcim and the Center for Tourism Research and Studies (CTRS)**.

The guide includes findings from the American Chamber of Commerce Serbia (AmCham) survey on internship programs in AmCham member companies. The March-June 2009 survey, a joint effort between **AmCham Serbia and the USAID Serbia Competitiveness Project**, is presented as background analysis on the status of internship development in Serbia. The

Guide is available at <http://www.compete.rs/?q=en...>

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## SERBIA IN INTERNATIONAL MEDIA:

### Full Speed Ahead for Serbia, Eurofruit, January 2010 Eurofruit

Magazine interviewed **Igor Novaković**, Export Promotion Advisor at the Serbia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SIEPA), **Nataša Vujović**, SIEPA's Head of Marketing and Research, and **Remer Lane**, Director of Marketing and Sales for USAID's Serbia Agribusiness Project. The article discusses Serbia's potential for exporting fresh fruit and vegetables as international demand for these products rises. For the text in full please visit

[www.agrobiznis.net/documents...](http://www.agrobiznis.net/documents...)



# Assembly of the European Advertising Producers Association in Belgrade, South East Europe Culture

January 29, 2010



On February 4 and 5, the European Federation of Advertising Producers (CFP-E) will organize its annual Assembly in Belgrade, Serbia. This is the first time Belgrade will host the gathering, which will enjoy the support of the Serbian Association of Advertising Producers (SAPA) and the USAID Serbia Competitiveness Project.

CFP, the European Federation of Advertising Producers and Features, protects the interests of advertising producers and other creative associates on projects and encourages the development of the advertising industry. The Serbian Association of Advertising Producers (SAPA) has been a member of the European federation since October 2008. All SAPA members, including Cyber Entertainment, Emote Productions, Media Plus, Red Production, Semio Film, TV production i Baš Čelik Film House are associate members of the European Federation CFP. All are part of a global initiative to promote the Serbian Film Association and Serbia as a thriving film location.

On February 4, the CFP Assembly will meet to introduce members and associate members. The discussions will include plans for future cooperation on specific projects. On February 5, all CFP members will gather to discuss issues related to the business of production companies and risk management. The aim of the conference is to outline obstacles to project implementation, discuss ways to improve collaboration with customers and customer advertising and define strategies to protect the interests of production companies and their employees.

CFP has developed the Young Director Award (YDA) as a way of promoting up and coming advertising directors. The event aims to encourage young talent to be proactive in the field of advertising production. All CFP members and their partners will have an opportunity to view YDA commercials. All European Producers' Federation member companies can submit commercials produced by emerging directors. There is no age limit to YDA selection; the only requirement is that the entrant must not have previously produced more than four commercials. The event attracts young producers, promotes sales of commercials, and encourages production companies to focus on talented up and coming directors.

## For All the Right Reasons, Locations Magazine 2010



FOR ALL THE RIGHT REASONS  
[www.filminserbia.com](http://www.filminserbia.com)

 **FilminSerbia**  
Serbia Film Commission

# STAY CONNECTED



## BioFach - Nuremberg, Germany; February 17-20, 2010

Seven Serbian companies will exhibit the very best of Serbian produce, including organic fruits and vegetables, juices, jams and spreads, at the BioFach World Organic Trade Fair in Nuremberg. The companies will showcase their goods under the Serbia Organica Association umbrella. Approximately 2,500 exhibitors and 45,000 visitors from around the world are expected to attend BioFach. The participation of Serbian producers was made possible by the USAID Agribusiness Project, in coordination with the Serbian Ministry of Agriculture, SIEPA, and GTZ.



## Skills at Work Challenges - Novi Sad and Niš, Serbia, February 24 - last week of March, 2010

The Challenges are organized by Junior Achievement Serbia (JAS), in cooperation with the British Council. Through the Challenges, students are introduced to intensive teamwork with new colleagues and the process of innovative problem solving and decision-making. The two Challenges will help select the remaining members of the Serbian team for the European Skills@Work Challenge taking place in Belgrade in April 2010.

## Serbian Local Government Credit Rating Competition - Belgrade, Serbia; February 25, 2010

The USAID Municipal Economic Growth Activity is organizing a public competition aimed at assigning the first international credit rating to local governments in the Republic of Serbia. The 16 towns and municipalities participating in the program will present their financial results, plans, and potential to participants representing international and domestic markets. The three winning local governments will be selected to receive an international credit rating from Moody's Investors Service, the global credit rating agency.

## Promoting Newly Branded Companies in South Serbia - March 2010

The Economic Security Program is supporting 25 PPES supported companies in South Serbia to create new branding and marketing materials. Special emphasis will be placed on enhancing companies' websites. The activity is one of the most robust business support activities managed thus far by the Program. The March event will showcase the newly branded companies.

## MoU Signings with 42 Municipalities - Belgrade, Serbia; March 15, 2010

The USAID PPES program will sign MoUs with 42 municipalities for introducing youth entrepreneurship activities (30 municipalities) and expanding youth entrepreneurship activities (12 municipalities). The event will highlight the partnership between Serbia's Ministry of Youth and Sports, USAID and local governments on strengthening youth entrepreneurship activities.



## National Competitiveness Council Annual Conference - Belgrade, Serbia; March 29, 2010

The USAID Serbia Competitiveness Project is working closely with the Cabinet of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Science and Technology Božidar Đelić to support the work of the National Competitiveness Council of Serbia (NCC). From October 2009 to December 2009, the NCC considered priority actions and made recommendations that were adopted by the Serbian Government in January 2010. These recommendations will be announced to the public during the NCC's conference, which will gather senior Government officials and private sector representatives.

## Invest in Serbia - Belgrade, Serbia; March 31, 2010

The USAID Municipal Economic Growth Activity will organize the Invest in Serbia local government competition. This year marks the third time the Municipal Economic Growth Activity has organized the event, in which 32 towns and municipalities compete to demonstrate their ability to attract and retain investors. The goal of the competition is to increase the competitiveness of Serbian towns and municipalities in attracting investment and to showcase each local community as a unique investment destination.

# PEOPLE

## DUŠAN VASILJEVIĆ

Head of the Policy Advocacy Team of USAID's Municipal Economic Growth Activity (MEGA)



**Dušan Vasiljević** has headed the USAID Municipal Economic Growth Activity's Policy Advocacy team since 2005. Vasiljević has worked on economic development and policy reform for local governments since 2001. He has participated in working groups that have prepared the Law on Local Government (2002), the Law on Local Government Financing (2006), the Law on Planning and Construction (2009), and a number of other laws and by-laws. From 2007 to 2008, Vasiljević was Advisor to the President of the National Assembly. From 2003 to 2005, he served as an assistant for the Public Administration course at University of Belgrade's Faculty of Political Sciences. Between 2002 and 2006, he worked on the reform of legal and institutional frameworks through USAID's Serbian Local Government Reform Program. Prior to that, he served as Project Director at the Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (PALGO). He has authored a number of articles on public administration and local self-government.

# LINK TO WEBSITES

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USAID Mission to Serbia: [serbia-montenegro.usaid.gov](http://serbia-montenegro.usaid.gov)

Booz Allen Hamilton: [www.boozallen.com](http://www.boozallen.com)

Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI): [www.dai.com](http://www.dai.com)

Serbia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SIEPA): [www.siepa.gov.rs](http://www.siepa.gov.rs)

USAID Competitiveness Project: [www.compete.rs](http://www.compete.rs)

USAID Agribusiness Project: [www.agrobiznis.net](http://www.agrobiznis.net)

USAID Preparedness, Planning and Economic Security Program: [www.scopes-serbia.org](http://www.scopes-serbia.org)

USAID Serbia Economic Growth Activity: [www.bep.org.rs](http://www.bep.org.rs)

National Alliance for Local Economic Development: [www.naled-serbia.org/](http://www.naled-serbia.org/)

FIDIC: [www.fidic.rs](http://www.fidic.rs) and [www.aces.rs](http://www.aces.rs) (FIDIC)

BIRN (Balkan Investigative Reporting Network): [www.birn.eu.com](http://www.birn.eu.com)

Infostud's brochure on HR: <http://mojtim.infostud.com/?language=sr>

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