



GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONS

Program budgeting workshop results in reforming and defining budget terms

Workshops presenting modern approaches to municipal program budgeting resulted in the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MFE) committing to reform and define budget terms. Additionally, the Ministry will be working with the Treasury Department to ensure that coding procedures for budget preparation will be standardized.

The two budgeting workshops on April 12 and 13, organized by USAID's Local Government Initiative in cooperation with the Ministry, are the first such seminars to address legal requirements as well as practical procedures for utilizing "program budgeting."

Finance officers and CEOs from 26 municipalities discussed the need for both political and administrative leadership, as program budgeting requires municipal leadership to think differently about managing resources and being transparent about budget decisions. The workshops also addressed the evolution of budgeting, medium term budgeting, budgeting and the annual work plan, and the development of program mission statements.

Improving courts operations

Progress in eliminating the backlog in civil cases is being made. That's what court representatives learned during a workshop in Pristina followed by a seminar on court system modernization on April 18 -19.

The progress of a pilot case backlog reduction program in Kosovo was presented by Dr. Barry Mahoney, President Emeritus of the Justice Management Institute in Denver, Colorado. Court representatives talked about their courts had done since the last December to reduce the backlog of civil cases.

The three pilot courts examined steps each had taken to reduce their case backlog, results of each court's activities, what worked and what didn't work, and planned their next steps.

The workshop was followed by the seminar on court administration and court system modernization, addressing issues that members of the newly established Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) will find significant in their new roles. The topics discussed included key ideas relevant to court system modernization, values and characteristics of a well-functioning judicial system, common obstacles to court system improvement, court system development, and court performance standards and their importance.

The workshops were organized by USAID's Justice System Reform Activity implemented by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC).

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Balanced reporting sought on bird flu

Educating journalists about avian influenza in order to achieve balanced reporting was the aim of a half-day conference organized by the Kosovar Poultry Producers & Feed Millers Association (ShPUK) on April 14 in Pristina.



Avian Flu reporting - Journalists questioning

According to the Kosovo Veterinary Agency, out of 563 samples examined by the agency none has resulted to be H5N1 positive, confirming that there are no cases of bird flu in Kosovo. In spite of this, many poultry producers are faced with a decrease in egg and chicken sales after each broadcasted confirmation of a bird flu case elsewhere in the world.

Over 40 journalists participated, along with many experts, including Acting Minister/Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development Tome Hajdaraj, Minister of Health Sadik Idriz, and Ken Yamashita, USAID/ Kosovo Director.

Conference assistance was provided by USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support Project and Kosovo Media Assistance Project, implemented by Chemonics International and International Research & Exchanges Board respectively.

Matching soil with the most suitable fertilizer

Thirty-five farmers were presented with practical recommendations on the most suitable farm fertilizers on April 17 by the Kosovo Development Center (KDC).

Supported by USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support Project, KDC conducted 80 soil analyses throughout Kosovo. The results, presented at the Agriculture Institute of Peja, will help farmers use the most suitable mineral fertilizers. The USAID project is implemented by Chemonics International.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Kosovo TV shows kids the way to get to "Sesame Street"

Whether learning to read or exploring new adventures, the educational experience gets more furry and fun with Sesame Street. Twenty-six episodes will air on Kosovo television starting this fall. The series addresses the educational needs of children and encourages respect and understanding between ethnicities.

The new series, comprised of materials from "Sesame Street's" international library and new live action films being produced in Kosovo, will feature children from various ethnic groups, providing a window into Kosovo's rich diversity.



Ruga Sezam- Ulica Sezam, the name of the show in local Kosovar language

"Ruga Sesam" (in Albanian) and "Ulica Sezam" (Serbian), 30-minute shows, will be broadcast throughout Kosovo on RTK, the Kosovowide public television station, and regionally by three Serbian language broadcasters, DTV, TV Most and TV Herc. Season two (the series started to air last year) sees the return of Elmo, Cookie Monster, Bert, Ernie and the rest of the "Sesame" friends as they share in more laughter and adventures.

Viewers and their caregivers can also look forward to new Muppet and animation segments tailored to enhance important educational skills for children ages three to six, and the production of two new storybooks and a facilitator guide for teachers as part of the program's outreach initiative, developed in cooperation with UNICEF, to be distributed free of charge.

"Ruga Sesam" and "Ulica Sezam" are made possible by the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and United Nations Childs Fund (UNICEF).

Upcoming Events

May 1 - The new group of legal praktikants starts their internship, supported by Professional Legal Development Project

May 4 - Dr. Ken Yamashita, USAID Kosovo Mission Director will visit several USAID projects in Ferizaj region

May 4-5 - Municipla Integration Support INitiative organizes a two-day seminar for Municipal Information Officers.

May 8 - Welcome to Heather Goldman, the new USAID/Kosovo Deputy Director



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