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## ENGENDERING UTILITIES PARTNER PROFILE KOSTT, KOSOVO

USAID is proud to work with Kosovë Operator Sistemi, Transmisioni dhe Tregu, SH.A. (KOSTT) in their commitment to improve gender equality in the energy sector as part of their path to long-term success.

When women serve as leaders and employees of companies – including those in the energy and water sectors – businesses benefit and performance improves. **USAID’s Engendering Utilities program seeks to strengthen the energy and water sectors by increasing economic opportunities for women and improving gender equality in the workplace.** KOSTT is working with USAID through the Engendering Utilities program to collaboratively design tailored interventions that directly increase opportunities for women within the company and enhance the utility’s operations.

Established in July 2006, KOSTT serves as both the transmission system operator and the electricity market operator for Kosovo. In 2019, 18 percent of the company’s 340 employees were women. A high percentage of senior management (20 percent) and middle management (40 percent) positions are occupied by women. However, most of the female staff (72 percent) work in non-management/non-supervisory positions. At KOSTT, 26 percent of engineers are women, however only five percent of technicians are female and there are no female field/line workers at the utility. **KOSTT recognizes the importance of women’s empowerment, and the utility hopes to increase their gender balance and encourage more women to enter the electricity sector. In the coming years, the utility will focus on becoming a leading company in Kosovo.**

PHOTO: JASMINE BÖHM

## **KOSOVO'S ENERGY SECTOR**

Kosovo has around 1,565 megawatts (MW) of installed electricity generation capacity,<sup>2</sup> primarily from two coal-fired power plants: Kosovo A and Kosovo B.<sup>3</sup> Renewable energy (mostly hydropower) accounts for approximately five percent (77 MW) of installed capacity, which Kosovo intends to increase to 25 percent by 2020 through the National Renewable Energy Action Plan.<sup>4</sup> In early 2018, Kosovo's Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj announced plans to open the energy market to solar and wind power.<sup>5</sup>

## **GENDER EQUALITY IN KOSOVO**

In 2004, Kosovo adopted an “Egalitarian Law Package” including the Law on Gender Equality, the Inheritance Law, and Family Law, as demanded by the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.<sup>6</sup> Kosovo's constitution and laws consistently declare women as equal to men – but in practice and daily life, Kosovar women still face struggles for access to property, social resources, personal security, and cultural equity.<sup>7</sup>

Only one in five females of working-age are active in Kosovo's labor market, compared with about 65.7 percent of working-age males.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, Kosovo faces one of the lowest female labor force participation rates in the world – well below other Western Balkan countries.<sup>9</sup> The exceptionally low employment rates of women can be explained by low education levels, lack of childcare institutions, the persistence of traditional social roles, and low market demand for female labor.<sup>10</sup> A study by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare found that Kosovar women express nearly the same desire to work that men do, but feel reluctant and doubtful about their opportunities.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, women are more likely to build their careers and to have supervisory roles in the public sector than in private companies. Enterprise surveys show that women in Kosovo account for just 0.3 percent of top managers – the lowest share in Europe and Central Asia.<sup>12</sup>

Education is a major determinant of labor market outcomes. Men with university education are over three times more likely to have a job than men who completed only basic education. The education premium is even higher for women: female university graduates are over 28 times more likely to be employed than women with basic education.<sup>13</sup>

## **GENDER EQUALITY IN ACTION**

Prior to working with Engendering Utilities, KOSTT began taking initiatives to improve gender equality in their company. The utility has already undertaken several steps to increase the number of females in leadership positions. KOSTT is now focused on increasing the percentage of females in technical positions.

To continue building on their positive efforts, KOSTT has been working with USAID through the Engendering Utilities program since 2018 to assess and identify high-impact interventions that can improve gender equality within the organization. Through Engendering Utilities, USAID is providing tailored coaching to KOSTT staff on gender equality and business best practices and select utility personnel participated in a 12-month Gender Equity Executive Leadership Program (GEELP) in collaboration with Georgetown University.



PHOTO: KOSTT

With the support of their dedicated change management coach, KOSTT is identifying opportunities to address gender equity areas for improvement. The utility plans to develop a gender equity policy to guide their efforts through Engendering Utilities. Through coaching sessions, KOSTT also identified a need to revamp their communications strategy and update their website to ensure they are attracting diverse talent. The utility will also place a strong emphasis on engaging influential male leaders as champions of gender equality.

## IMPACT

Immediately upon commencing its partnership with Engendering Utilities in November 2018, KOSTT made several changes. In December 2018, KOSTT honored five employees with an “Employee of the Year” distinction, two of which were awarded to female employees. The utility is discussing potential interventions such as dedicated sections within its internal newsletter featuring successful females. Actions like these increase the visibility of women in the Kosovar electricity sector and can serve to inspire young girls to pursue careers in the sector. To support the girls who show an interest in the company, KOSTT will aim to increase the quality of internship of female students by adding supportive measures such as a structured mentoring approach.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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## NOTES

- 1 Figures provided by utility in 2019.
- 2 CIA. (n.d.) The World Factbook: Kosovo. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kv.html>
- 3 The World Bank. (2013). Energy infrastructure in Kosovo. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kosovo/brief/energyinfrakosovo>
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- 5 Bellini, E. (2018). Kosovo embarks on renewables path. Retrieved from <https://www.pv-magazine.com/2018/03/22/kosovo-embarks-on-path-to-renewables/>
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- 13 Ibid.