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## USAID COMPETITIVE ECONOMY PROJECT

The USAID Competitive Economy Project (Project) is a four-year, \$12 million activity to strengthen the competitiveness of the Serbian food processing industry, particularly the fruit and vegetable value chains. The Project aims to increase sales and exports of Serbian food products on local and international markets.

### ACTIVITIES IN SERBIA

USAID's Competitive Economy Project stimulates system-wide support and investments in the food processing industry in order to increase sales and exports, creating a model of support that can be replicated in other sectors. The Project partners with business associations, leading industry firms, financial institutions, academia, and other partners to create a sustainable support system for Serbian companies.

### RESULTS TO DATE

- In partnership with the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, the Development Agency of Serbia and industry associations, 83 companies participated at trade fairs in Europe, the United States and the Middle East. An additional 162 companies exhibited at domestic trade shows, including the Belgrade Food Show for premium food organized by USAID in 2018 and 2019. USAID-supported companies signed 89 contracts with a total value of 11 million USD.
- To consolidate value chains targeting export markets, the Project in partnership with Industry Leading Companies (ILCs) and Industry/Trade Associations, helped 50 blueberry producers receive Global Gap certificates and 34 berry and vegetable producers, as well as 30 SMEs, to enter new value chains. More than 1,650 farmers attended knowledge transfer and educational sessions led by ILCs.
- The Project designed a business support model to help premium food producers enter new markets - the Premium Food Design Hub. More than 37 SMEs received support to upgrade their

products and were able to place 90 new premium products on the shelves of major domestic retail chains.

- The Premium Food Hub initiative was later replicated by the German retail chain dm - drogerie markt that partnered with USAID to help 19 local SMEs develop 57 new products, now sold in their stores country-wide.
- In cooperation with UC Davis, USAID helped the Faculty of Agriculture introduce specialized food industry certification courses to improve the skills of the workforce and increase the sectors' competitiveness. To date, 34 participants from 24 local companies completed the course.
- USAID prepared five food companies for participation in an investment pitching event with nine domestic and international strategic food and beverage investors. Two equity investments and two strategic partnership contracts are being negotiated as a result.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### PROJECT FUNDING

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

### TOTAL FUNDING

\$12 Million

### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Cardno Emerging Markets USA, Ltd.

### CONTACT DETAILS

10L Bulevar Mihajla Pupina, 11000 Belgrade

### KEY COUNTERPARTS

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management; Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia; Serbian Development Agency.

Phone: +381 11-40 11 700

Email: [info@konkurento.rs](mailto:info@konkurento.rs)

[www.konkurento.rs](http://www.konkurento.rs)

### PROJECT SPAN

Nationwide

April 2017 – April 2021