



SNAPSHOT

Hi-Tech parts producer in Kosovo expands Specializing in low-volume but high profit electronics

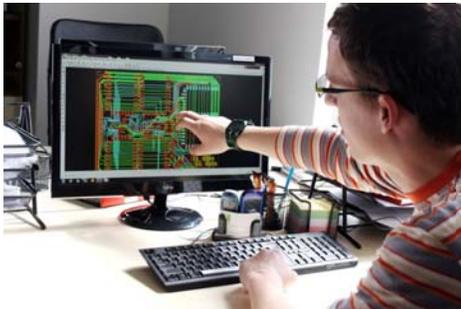


Photo: USAID Youth Entrepreneurs Program

Krenar Spahija, development engineer at “Tekfuze explaining the design and assembly of embedded controls.

“Our approach is unique. No one else out there is doing what we are,” says chief operating officer Edi Bunjaku.

The ordered tangle of blue, green and red lines on Krenar Spahija’s computer screen may well map out the way to a prosperous future for Kosovo, this small country in Southeastern Europe.

The engineer’s design for a printed circuit board provides a rare glimpse of a high-tech product being made in a country with a largely low-tech economy. It’s just one way that Spahija’s employer, Pristina-based Tekfuze, bucks expectations.

Founded in 2011, Tekfuze employs 22 people in the design and assembly of embedded controls—the electronics that perform specific tasks within larger machines. Its products are made to be put together Lego-like, following a modular approach that allows for the mixing and matching of hardware components. “It’s a matter of selecting the modules you need and then customizing the software, so it’s as if the hardware goes away,” says co-founder Edi Bunjaku.

USAID helped Tekfuze get off the ground, providing early on intensive employee training that helped the company integrate an inclusive gender approach and today, women dominate its engineering staff, marking another way the dynamic firm stands apart.

In Summer 2012, USAID helped purchase two pieces of equipment to allow for volume manufacturing. For now, Tekfuze manufactures only one product - a fuel sensor that is incorporated into the GPS units used to track fleets of trucks. The tiny sensor monitors fuel levels and consumption. A regional fleet management systems provider from Lithuania is now evaluating the sensor for possible purchase, which Tekfuze already sells domestically. Where many electronic firms zig, by only manufacturing in developing countries, Tekfuze zags, by focusing on lucrative design work too. Still, even with a young, skilled and motivated workforce, Tekfuze knows it cannot compete in creating consumer electronics for the mass market. Instead, it seeks to design and assemble low-volume but high-margin industrial products, Bunjaku says. These include a controller for pellet-fired boilers that Tekfuze is poised to begin producing.

“Our approach is unique. No one else in Kosovo is doing what we are,” Bunjaku says.

Tekfuze is one of the companies that have benefited from USAID’s Young Entrepreneurs Program activity that run from September 2010 through September 2013, and was designed to assist Kosovo’s new and emerging entrepreneurs, ages 18 – 35.