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SUCCESS STORY

EXPO-REAL Fair – Another Opportunity for the Municipality of Korçe to Withdraw Investors

USAID Local Governance Program in Albania funded an urban design study for the renovation and expansion of the city's sports complex.



Niko Peleshi, Mayor of Korçe Municipality and Rajmonda Nase, GTZ representative, discussing on the opinions of Expo Real fair visitors on how to improve the city's sports complex project.

Every year EXPO-REAL fair in Munich brings together businesses, potential investors, and central and local governments from around the world. In 2007, EXPO-REAL attracted 1,823 exhibitions from 43 countries and 23,800 visitors from 77 countries. The Municipality of Korçe was represented in 2007's fair with a project for the establishment of a private university in the city. Even though major efforts were put by the municipality's staff into this project, it wasn't a high level representation. Thereby, visitors visiting Korçe Municipality's stand of did not show any type of interest in this project.

With the support of USAID's Local Governance Program in Albania (LGPA), the Municipality of Korçe had the opportunity to do a dignifying presentation in October 6-8, 2008's fair which increased the chances for funding.

LGPA funded an urban design study for the renovation and expansion of the city's sports complex, the only one of its size in the country, which was constructed during 1975 – 1980, but which currently is non-functional. The city will obtain ownership of the sports complex from the central government as a result of the asset transfer process, currently underway. The proposal to revitalize this complex and bring it to modern levels has come from the Municipality of Korçe in cooperation with the Albanian Sports Federation. This initiative is consistent with the long term vision of the municipality to make Korçe an important urban center of southeastern Albania. The promotional materials prepared with LGPA support included a conceptual design report, an initial financial feasibility report, and an animated 3-D tour of the sports complex site.

Sofjola Kotelli, Specialist at the Department of Economic Development in the Municipality of Korçe, said that unlike 2007's fair, EXPO-REAL's 2008 fair was visited by 40 visitors, of whom at least 10 showed further interest in knowing details of the project. The visitors also gave their opinions on how to improve the feasibility study and the business plan aiming at increasing funding opportunities for 2009.

The idea of learning by doing and the optimistic feeling we got from the visitors who showed interest in our project, said Mr. Sotirajq Filo, Vice Mayor of Korçe Municipality, made the Municipality's management think on how to improve 2009's fair presentation. Following this, the municipality's staff established a new communication strategy for 2009's fair potential investors, sending them in advance the catalogue with the improved project. In addition, considering the high importance of EXPO-REAL fair, the Municipality of Korçe decided to increase its budget by 4,000 Euros for 2009, amount that will be used to promote this project in the forthcoming fair.