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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Tax Payer Services Improved in Elbasan and Gramsh**

**ELBASAN AND GRAMSH, JUNE 17, 2010** The Mayor of Elbasan, Mr. Qazim Sejдини, the Mayor of Gramsh, Mr. Kastriot Zera, and USAID Officer Stephen Herbaly launched today new computerized tax systems in both cities. The systems, which were developed through USAID's Local Governance Program in Albania (LGPA), allow for more efficient and effective administration of tax collections and services that will lead to greater tax revenue for the cities and improved services for citizens.

Until now, both Elbasan and Gramsh's tax departments have done the majority of their work manually. With the new computerized system, the tax departments will more accurately be able to calculate tax bills and track tax payments. The system also allows city planners and officials to develop important revenue projections and analyses for future city planning and development. With better tax collection and tax revenues, cities are able to deliver higher quality services to their citizens. It will also reduce the number of one-on-one interactions with tax officials, which are cited as a source of corrupt practices.

In Elbasan, the new tax system is located in the same building as the city's National Registration (NRC) and Licensing Centers (NLC) service windows, providing a one-stop shop for local businesses. In one place businesses can now register at the National Registration Center, apply for licenses at the National Licensing Center, and register and receive information from the Municipal Tax Department.

To date, USAID/LGPA has introduced computerized tax systems in 8 municipalities, including Lezhe, Fier, Fushe-Kruje, Korce, Pogradec, Shkodra, Elbasan, and Gramsh. In total, USAID/LGPA is contributing more than 370 million Lek to computerize 10 municipal tax departments including almost 1.9 million Lek in Elbasan and over 2.5 million Lek in Gramsh.

USAID's Local Governance Program in Albania (LGPA) works with ten municipalities throughout Albania to foster local economic growth, improve local governance, and strengthen civic and private sector engagement in local development. LGPA's partner municipalities are: Elbasan, Fier, Fushe-Kruje, Gramsh, Korçe, Kukes, Lezhe, Librazhd, Pogradec and Shkoder.

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