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SUCCESS STORY

Tourism Office Promotes Local Business

USAID, Municipality Target Tourism Sector to Create Jobs



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Mimoza Shuli, Owner of “Perla” Hotel, has placed her hotel brochure in the new Tourism Information Office in Pogradec. This quaint family-owned and operated hotel with rooms overlooking tranquil Lake Ohrid in Pogradec, has seen a 65% increase in winter season clients this year.

Pogradec’s tourism information office is generating business for local hotels and tour operators. USAID is building public-private partnerships between local governments and businesses to create more business friendly environments.

It has been a while since the city of Pogradec last enjoyed the liveliness and energy flowing from the presence of tourists during the winter season. For most domestic and foreign tourists, this city is more attractive during the summer season when they can enjoy the lake and fresh air. Although there are many businesses that offer special and characteristic winter-time services in this city, the number of visitors and tourists that have access to information related to these services is small.

In October, the Municipality of Pogradec opened the city’s first Tourist Information Office to help boost employment and economic development in the city. Partnering with USAID local governance program and a local marketing company, Celesi, the office provides free-of-charge high-quality professional tourism information services to the visitors.

USAID’s four-year program improves governance in select municipalities and builds public-private partnerships to create a “business friendly” environment in which the local private sector can flourish.

Local businesses are reaping the rewards.

“This was the first season that we actually organized a New Year’s celebration in our hotel,” explained Mimoza Shuli, owner and manager of Perla Hotel in Pogradec. “This year, for the first time, we had requests from people living in Tirana, Korca, Elbasan, and other cities who wanted to celebrate the New Year’s evening at Perla Hotel.

Pleased with the positive role that the information office is playing to increase the number clients requesting her hotel’s services, Shuli quickly revised her hotel’s leaflet to include the new services offered by her business and placed them in the information office.

“Through this office, I was able to advertise my business and notify people that Perla Hotel had made arrangements for the big New Year’s celebration.”

“In the last two months, the hotel has seen a 65% increase in clients compared to the year before,” continued Mrs. Shuli. “As a result, our seasonal employees were increased by 50%. If the number of clients continues increasing as it did this year, we will seriously start thinking to expand our business.”