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**ALBANIA**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **New Tax System in Fier Improves Public Services**

**FIER, FEBRUARY 23, 2010** The Mayor of Fier, Mr. Baftjar Zaqaj, and USAID Officer Stephen Herbaly launched today a new computerized tax system for the municipality. The system was developed through USAID's Local Governance Program in Albania (LGPA) program. It allows for more efficient and effective administration of tax collections and services that will lead to greater tax revenue for the city and improved services for citizens of Fier.

Until now, Fier's tax department had to do the majority of its work manually. With the new computerized system, the tax department will more accurately be able to calculate tax bills and track tax payments, and even develop the necessary revenue projections and analyses so important for city planners and officials. Computerizing the tax system will help the city improve tax collection and increase tax revenues so that Fier can deliver higher quality services to its citizens. It will also reduce the number of one-on-one interactions with tax officials, which are cited as a source of corrupt practices.

USAID/LGPA's technical and material support to the Fier Tax Department totals more than 4 million Leks.

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

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