



SUCCESS STORY

Investing in Organic Pays Off

“Cooperation with USAID’s AgBiz Program started at just the right moment! Getting organic certification made us qualified in EU organic tea markets. Prior to this, we couldn’t start serious negotiations since potential buyers were asking for organic certification. Now thanks to USAID support we have increased our sales by more than 95%!” said Viktor Kolovski, Manager of Koro



Photo: AgBiz Program Staff

*Viktor Kolovski Supervising an EU Shipment
of Koro Brand Organic Herbal Teas*

AgBiz is assisting Macedonian agribusiness value chains with good export growth potential to understand market demand and make their products more competitive on export markets!

The small Macedonian family owned company Koro, involved in processing and packing high quality vinegar and tea, is on track to significantly expand its sales into global organic products markets. For more than 18 years “Koro” brand products have been well-known and appreciated in Macedonia and the region. Koro is the second largest producer of Macedonian filter teas. Koro’s parent company Konimex has a well developed network for purchasing wild gathered raw materials, involving close to 10,000 people throughout Macedonia.

AgBiz helped Koro enhance its competitiveness and enter EU markets by awarding them a grant for a business expansion project to adopt organic production standards, establish a new organic product line and enhance the visual identity of the Koro brand. AgBiz supported implementation and certification for organic collecting and processing of wild gathered products, and provided financial support to Koro’s renewed export marketing activities, including re-designing packaging and designing new promotional materials for targeted export markets.

Successful completion of this project has allowed Koro to expand its market share in Albania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo and enter new EU markets. So now, in addition to conventional filter teas and other familiar products, Koro is also supplying organic certified herbal teas to its customers. The company now offers a more diverse range, including organic products, and has significantly improved their processing capacity. But, this is only the beginning of Koro’s plans for expanding production and sales of organic certified products. Meeting US National Organic Program certification and market requirements related to organic production and exporting to the USA is the next challenge for the Kolovski family. Konimex is taking another step toward making their business sustainable by starting to cultivate organic medicinal and aromatic plants, and thereby reduce dependence on the unreliability of wild gathered raw materials.

During the last two years, when Koro has actively participated in AgBiz capacity enhancement activities such as trade fairs, study tours and training programs, the company increased sales by 20% in 2008 and 95% in 2009.

As one of the most successful wild herbal tea exporting companies in Macedonia, Koro enjoys great respect from their colleagues. Therefore the owner of Konimex, Pavle Kolovski, was elected Vice President of “Skumski Plod”, the wild gathered products trade association established with AgBiz support, whose members are the largest exporters of wild gathered products from Macedonia.