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Picari Company Owner proudly shows his brand footwear collection developed with USAID/Rritje Albania assistance to US Ambassador, Mr. Alexander Arvizu and USAID Albania Mission Director, Jim Barnhart during factory visit. Patos/July11, 2013

Rritje Albania/Competitive Enterprise Development Project

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ACRONYMS

AADF	Albanian-American Development Foundation
AAQM	Authentic Albania Quality Mark Program
ABCCI	Albanian British Chamber of Commerce and Investment
ACA	Albanian Competition Authority
ACIT	Albania Center for Competitiveness and International Trade
ACO	Albanian Copyright Office
AHLEI	American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute
AIDA	Albanian Investment and Development Agency
AITA	Albanian Information Technology Association
AmCham	American Chamber of Commerce
ARBC	Albanian – Russian Business Center
ARG	Albania Rafting Group
ATA	Albanian Tourism Association
ATACT	Association of Traditional and Artistic Crafts and Trades
AUT	Agricultural University of Tirana
B2B	Business to Business
BkVF	Balkan Venture Forum
BYOB	Build Your Own Brand
CC	Career Center
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CDS	Citizen’s Development Corps Development Solutions
CED	Competitive Enterprise Development
CEED	Center for Entrepreneurship Education and Development
CFA	Chamber of Fassion Albania
CGP	Client Growth Plan
CGSP	Certified Guest Service Professional
CHE	Certified Hospitality Educators
CI	Central Inspectorate
CMT	Cut-Make-Trim
CPM	Collections Premiere Moscow
CO	Career Office
DtS	Development & Training Services
DMO	Destination Management Organization
EG	Economic Growth
ESI	European Software Institute - Center Eastern Europe
EU	European Union
FCP	Full Cycle Production
FIAA	Foreign Investors Association in Albania
FSP	Full Service Production
GAP	Global Academic Program Agreement
GFSWG	Garment and Footwear Stakeholder Working Group
GDPT	General Directorate of Patents and Trademarks
GoA	Government of Albania
GIZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</i>
IDRA	Institute of Development Research Alternatives
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
KPI	Key Performance Indicator

KRA	Key Results Area
LLL	Life-long Learning
METE	Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Energy
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTCYS	Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports
MIPA	Ministry of Innovation and Public Administration
MT	Make and Trim
MUDT	Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism
NAAA	National Artisans Association of Albania
NCGFM	National Chamber of Garment and Footwear Manufacturers
PBMP	Performance-Based Monitoring Plan
PEP	Productivity Enhancement Program
PIR	Project Intermediate Result
PMP	Project Management Professionals
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPD	Public-Private Dialogue
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PROTIK	PROTIK ICT Resource Center
PUT	Polytechnic University of Tirana
RASP	Rural Association Support Program
RCI	USAID's Regional Competitiveness Initiative
RfP	Request for proposals
SPI	Software Process Improvement
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
TIC	Tourist Information Corners
ToT	Training-of-trainers
TRAC	Train, Retain, Asses
UFNK	University Fan Noli Korça
UMB	University Marin Barleti
UT	University of Tirana
VET	Vocational Education Training
WBGp	Western Balkans Geotourism Mapguide – Land of Discovery portal
WBGSC	Western Balkans Geotourism Stewardship Council
WWG	Website Working Group

SECTION I

Executive Summary

The USAID Competitive Enterprise Development project, otherwise known as Rritje¹Albania, realized several accomplishments this year, contributing to the project's legacy for Albania's future sustainable growth in the garment, footwear, tourism, and ICT sectors. These accomplishments included the establishment and inauguration of the PROTIK ICT Resource Center; the successful development and marketing of Albanian brands by 20 Albanian garment and footwear companies that are selling and/or negotiating with new buyers in German, Russian and Scandinavian markets and elsewhere; the successful establishment of four (4) Career Centers (university level) and seven (7) Career Offices (department level) at four public and one private university in Albania; the deepening of regional cooperation in the framework of the National Geographic's portal known as the *Western Balkans Geotourism Mapguide – Land of Discovery* to raise Albania's profile and attractiveness as a prime tourism destination; a continuing public-private sector movement to remove barriers to foreign investment related to improving Intellectual Property Right (IPR) legislation and enforcement; and continued firm-level competitiveness enhancements that contributed to an overall 51% increase in total sales (US\$ \$123,418,980 value), a 45% increase in export sales (of US\$ 101,190,166 value) and 5% increase in jobs (452 jobs created) for 141 companies that are directly assisted by USAID/Rritje Albanian project in four target sector.

This is a quick snapshot of the outcomes and impacts of Rritje Albania's work, captured at the end of FY2013, after the project had implemented over the previous year: 99 technical training activities and industry events to help increase the knowledge and skills of 2091 people (1170 female, 921 male) and contributed to a more effective public-private dialogue (PPD) that is improving the competitiveness of Albania's small and medium enterprises (SME). These achievements are particularly remarkable when one considers the fact that the 2012-2013 was a tough year during which time Albania's economic growth declined to 1.6% in 2012 from 3.1% a year earlier.² According to the latest European Commission progress report on Albania, published on October 16, 2013, net exports were the main contributor to economic growth, with foreign sales holding up while imports declined and private consumption remained at low levels. Despite the economic slowdown, the same report confirms that labor market conditions in Albania improved somewhat during 2012-2013 as a result of an overall 2.8% growth in employment due to more private-sector, non-agricultural jobs that are similar to those generated in export-oriented companies that are directly assisted by Rritje Albania.

Implemented by Chemonics International Inc., Rritje Albania project is an integral part of the USAID/Albania's economic growth portfolio and its goals are in line with the Foreign Assistance Framework program areas of trade and investment and private sector competitiveness. The project seeks to build private sector capacity in four target industries and public sector responsiveness to stimulate business expansion, increase sales, create new and better jobs, and thus contribute to the country's broad based, sustainable economic growth.

¹ The word "Rritje" translates as "Growth" in the Albanian language.

² European Commission (2013, October 16). *Albania: 2013 Progress Report, Brussels* (SWD (2013) 414 final). Retrieved from the European Commission website: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/al_rapport_2013.pdf.
RRITJE ALBANIA ANNUAL REPORT (October 2012 – September 2013)

In FY2013, Rritje Albania's implementation approach to activities across target industries and components was informed by current contractual obligations, as well as lessons learned through project implementation, shifting USAID strategic priorities, and contextual changes in Albania's political and economic landscape. However, our strategic approach for working through and creating a large network of partnerships and successful collaborations has remained focused – since year one – on leveraging project efforts and resources to greater effect. In this way, large benefits have accrued in project interventions to build sustainable enterprise competitiveness and private sector capacities at the meso and macro levels of our target industries. Project interventions are organized around three key complementary components aiming to increase trade and investment knowledge and capacity, improve productivity through better management practices and new technologies and encourage workforce development.

This year, Rritje Albania continued to play a catalytic and influential role in shaping policy debates and creating new and effective working relations between key industry stakeholders. The Garment and Footwear Stakeholders Working Group (GFSWG), the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Stakeholders Group, the Tourism Stakeholders Group, and the PROTIK ICT Resource Center were the key public-private mechanisms this year through which policy issues were raised and presented for public-private consultation. These legacy PPD mechanisms and the ensuing public-private partnerships (PPPs) are expected to survive beyond the life of the project because the stakeholders themselves are finding the utility of cooperating with each other, with or without any donor funding.

Project Highlights

With the above in mind, the following provides brief summaries of key project achievements this year:

The PROTIK ICT Resource Centre

A major project milestone achieved at the start of FY2013 was the establishment and inauguration of the first PROTIK ICT Resource Center³ (PROTIK) on October 10, 2013. This was made possible thanks to Rritje Albania's leading role in forging a momentous public-private-partnership, whose members, including the Government of Albania (GoA), agreed to contribute the estimated \$2.7 million needed to construct and equip its offices and cover its first three years of operations at which point it is expected to be operationally sustainable. PROTIK is a major project legacy whose mission is to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the Albanian ICT community. Since its inauguration a year ago, PROTIK conducted more than 85 events for more than 2,500 participants that included successful projects and activities such as the Start-up Weekend, Young Innovator's Club, Internship Lab, Business Speed Dating, Tech Thursday, Microsoft Friday, and so forth. Rritje Albania's assistance for PROTIK this year focused on building its marketing and communication capacities through training of its staff and the development of a state-of-the-art website (www.protik.org) that went live in beta version in September 2013 and will help to secure a greater outreach and enhanced service delivery to ICT stakeholders in Albania.

Build Your Own Brand (BYOB) Program in Footwear

This year, the new BYOB-F program, introduced to leading footwear companies by the project, provided the blueprint for vertical value chain expansion to achieve greater profit margins and reduce market risks. The project helped 11 Albanian companies source, develop, register and/or market their own brand

³ PROTIK is the Albanian acronym adopted as the name of the ICT Resource center, which means being pro information and communications technologies.

collection and negotiate with new clients in the German, French, Dutch and Scandinavian markets to name a few, away from their traditional export targets that are currently troubled by crisis and economic insecurity – Italy and Greece. The BYOB-F firms are setting the paradigm for the future of the Albanian industry. Six of these companies successfully participated as exhibitors with a joint *Made in Albania* industry booth at the MICAM Fiera 2013 fair in Milan, Italy in early September 2013. This was the first time Albanian footwear manufacturers exhibited as a country, and only the second manufacturing sector to do so after the project's BYOB Garment (BYOB-G) exhibitions in Germany and Russia a year ago. Noted to be one of the most important events in the leather and footwear world as a result of its more than 1,600 exhibitors, MICAM is reserved for only the most qualified firms in the industry wishing to showcase and sell their collections. After a full year of intense work and preparation in a number of complex areas, such as design and pattern making, product development, marketing and merchandising completed with the assistance of USAID/Rritje Albania's team of business advisors and short-term product development experts, the six Albanian companies were able to launch and market their own brand collections, alongside prestigious names such as Prada, Bagatt, Christian Louboutin, Kurt Geiger and others. The Albanian firms strategically chose to bring small collections in terms of number of pieces and use this opportunity to meet new buyers and gather market knowledge in order to prepare themselves for a much larger *Made in Albania* exhibit at the upcoming Riva del Garda Fiera (Italy) for the Fall/Winter 2014/2015 season to take place in January 2014.

Build Your Own Brand (BYOB) Program in Garment

Last year, the project helped six (6) Albanian companies develop their own brands and negotiate successfully by exhibiting in fairs in Germany and Russia. The successful sourcing experience last year, and the development and presentation of own brand collections at international garment fairs in Dusseldorf and Moscow represented a significant achievement for these companies as they learned to access new trade knowledge in order to effectively design, develop, and market products that meet the preferences of new customers and markets. Rritje Albania used this positive experience to promote the BYOB-G program this year to a new generation of Albanian companies. Four (4) other garment companies, Ambra, Omega, Madish and OLA1 heard about the success and experiences of the original six BYOB firms and joined the program. All 10 garment firms sourced raw materials, developed new collections, revamped their company profiles and websites, finalized product specifications as per buyers' test orders, conducted B2B meetings and followed up on contacts and sales leads. As a result, Albanian garments are currently being sold in the Russian market thanks to deals that were facilitated with Rritje Albania assistance through the work of a Russian marketing consultant. The Moscow-based consultant researched and put together a packet of crucial information pertaining to the Russian market in terms of sample contracts, trademark and brand registration, software systems, bar codes and labeling, freight, logistics, warehousing, and customs clearance of garments entering Russia. The BYOB-G firms used this information to identify Russian buyers, process test orders and negotiate deals or contract sales agents. The project is also facilitating discussions on the establishment of an Albanian – Russian Business Center (ARBC) in Moscow. This new entity is expected to help Albanian garment and footwear firms enter the Russian market, support their long-term presence, and enable other Albanian firms to follow in their footsteps.

Creating New Market Linkages with Scandinavian Agent and Buyers

In order to increase the sales volume of Albanian manufacturers and open new markets, Rritje Albania introduced 11 garment and footwear companies to a major Swedish company, ABMC Partners (ABMC) that acts as a sales agent for the Scandinavia market with exclusive rights to represent production and manufacturers at a new Simonsland facilities in Borås, a key region representing 50% of the total textile

and garments exports to Sweden. Following two visits to assess potential cooperation with Albanian companies in April and May 2013, ABMC signed contracts with five garment and one footwear company, while a visiting Swedish buyer placed a test order of 800 shirts with Kler and a test order of 2,000 trousers with NPV International. Test orders are anticipated for Fital who sent its latest e-catalogue of the Spring/Summer 2014 collection, while Bella Konfeks, Omega and Sloci are expecting feedback on samples sent to potential buyers. The ABMC also invited four companies (Kler, Omega, Fital and Ambra) to showcase their collections in a new showroom at Simonsland in November 2013. The four will display their collections at Simonsland and share the cost of the exhibit space, giving them a fixed sales point address and foothold in the Scandinavian market.

Servicing Industry Needs through Continuing Implementation of the Productivity Enhancement Program and New Continuing Education Courses

The project continued to build the capacities of the Polytechnic University of Tirana (PUT) to provide valuable services to the garment and footwear private sector. This year, the project hired three lecturers from the PUT Department of Textiles and Fashion to: support 26 garment and footwear companies in making further improvement to their productivity and performance through continuing firm-level implementation of the Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP); provide training in the latest CAD/CAM technology; develop and implement a tracking system for PUT graduates and interns in garment and footwear companies; design new PUT Continuing Education courses in response to specific industry needs. As a result of regular contact with companies and review and analysis of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the PUT consultants identified productivity issues and recommended technical solutions to improve line balancing, quality control, scheduling, human resource management, product design, CAD/CAM services and patternmaking. Several Lifelong Learning (LLL) Courses on topics of Industrial Engineering, Quality Control, Production Management and CAD/CAM Lectra Design have already been developed and included in revised PUT curriculum.

In the long term, these activities will help Albanian companies increase revenues and permit upgrading to higher-value added market segments and improve the prospects of internship placements and employment of PUT students. On the other hand, Rritje Albania's capacity building of the PUT faculty members to conduct consultancies, promote PUT's testing and laboratory facilities, strengthen the internship and career counseling for students, and introduction of technical curriculum enhancements through 12 guest lectures by foreign STTA experts and local business owners, are all helping to build sustainable relationships between public and private sector actors. These partnerships will support the competitive development of Albania's garment and footwear sector for years to come.

An Educational Network of the Latest Garment Design Technology to Train Future Local Designers

In response to garment industry needs for local designers, Rritje Albania in collaboration with the PUT assisted three VET Schools in Tirana, Shkodra and Korça to implement a new garment design course using CAD/CAM technology. The PUT lecturers developed the course outline and teaching materials, while the project successfully negotiated an agreement with the Lectra⁴ representative in Greece (LEC Hellas) to provide 16 Lectra CAD/CAM Software licenses for 12 PUT CAD/CAM laboratory computers and four (4) computer stations at three (3) VET schools. This activity enabled the schools to receive for

⁴ Lectra Modaris is the world leader in CAD/CAM software, equipment, and related services dedicated to large-scale users of textiles, leather and industrial fabrics.

free the latest software with a total commercial value of 256,000 euros and has enabled the creation of a CAD/CAM technology network that will facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience between these institutions and help train students and future workers in skilled positions. Also, properly trained local designers will help Albanian companies to design better and more patterns in less time, reduce the number of prototypes needed, improve the quality and fit of products, save costs by economizing raw materials used and optimize the development of new collections, thus building firm competitiveness.

Setting professional standards for Albania's hospitality sector

As part of its strategy for sustainable tourism development, Rritje Albania worked to improve professional standards in Albania's hospitality sector by establishing partnerships between the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI) and the Destination Management Organization (DMO) to offer certified hospitality training programs for working tourism professionals, and between AHLEI and University Marin Barleti University (UMB) to establish diploma programs in tourism. Widely recognized as the preeminent leader in hospitality certification, AHLEI learning programs conform to best practices in the hotel and lodging industry and are endorsed by the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA).

Three Training of Trainers (TOT) courses on Certified Hospitality Trainer (CHT), Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP) and Certified Train, Retain, Assess, Certify (TRAC) held in July 2013 were implemented in collaboration with DMO. One-hundred percent of the training participants took and passed their certification exams, graded by AHLEI in the USA. Fifteen fee-paying participants passed their CHT certification test and five passed the CGSP and TRAC certification exams. DMO is currently surveying the industry's training needs and demands in order to develop a targeted marketing and business plan to deliver AHLEI certified courses. DMO plans to work closely with the private sector and various associations, as well as with the government of Albania to assist in the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework for Hospitality/Tourism that leverages the Authentic Albania Quality Mark Program (AAQM). Currently AAQM is the only tourism standards program in Albania.

On July 2013, UMB was awarded a \$17,933.91 USD grant by Rritje Albania that is being used to market its bachelor program and to certify a core group of 10 Certified Hospitality Educators (CHE). Upon successfully passing their CHE certification exam following a TOT workshop that took place in early October 2013, trainers will be offered a UMB employment contract to teach the eight AHLEI academic courses included in the Tourism Management degree curriculum. UMB expects that a minimum 30 students per year will enroll and graduate from its three-year bachelor degree program.

The Software Process Improvement IT Mark Program

After introducing Albania to IT Mark in May 2011, Rritje Albania supported the five Albanian ICT firms that applied for IT Mark through an intensive 18-month process that concluded with three firms receiving IT Mark Basic Certification in September 2012 and one firm receiving IT Mark Premium Certification November 2013. In May 2013, Rritje Albania teamed up with the European Software Institute - Center Eastern Europe (ESI CEE) and PROTIK to hold a workshop on the results of the certification program. The workshop was meant to increase ICT industry awareness about ICT process improvement practices by hearing from the firms that successfully achieved certification in order to encourage others to do the same. As evidence of their enhanced competitiveness, in FY2013 the four IT-Mark certified companies experienced an impressive 163% growth in sales and 14% growth in employment.

Increasing Awareness of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Issues in Albania

Rritje Albania helped form and lead the IPR Working Group, in partnership with the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) and Microsoft, with the purpose of sharing information and synchronizing work plans to improve the enabling environment legislation, enforcement and respect of IPR issues in Albania that has hindered business competitiveness. In order to address the group's findings and intensify its IPR advocacy efforts, in FY2013 the project co-funded the second annual *National Conference on IPR* in December 2012, attended by 40 public and private sector representatives. The conference raised issues of IR protection, approximation of Albanian IPR legislation to EU standards, critical challenges faced by Albanian central government and implementing agencies in enforcing IPR rights, and several case studies of IPR infringements and their cost to companies and the Albanian economy.

Following the conference, Rritje Albania collaborated with the General Directorate of Patents and Trademarks (GDPT) and the Central Inspectorate (CI) to deliver, around the country, a series of five (5) roundtables aimed at informing the business community on reform and amendments to two (2) key legislations affecting the private sector, the *Law 9947, On Industrial Designs, dated July 7, 2008* and the *Law 1043, On Inspections, dated June 16, 2011*. Changes to the first law cover aspects of industrial property rights with regards to patents, inventions, designs, trademarks, and online registration process. On the other hand, changes to the second law are meant to ensure public interest while guaranteeing increased inspections effectiveness, reduced administrative burden of inspections on businesses, and protection of businesses against potential corruptive practices on the part of inspectors. These roundtables drew the interest of 107 participants representing 67 companies and several public institutions, private businesses, and several business associations. At the end, the GDPT representative assured participants that the GDPT and its technical experts will consider all issues so that the proposed amendments accurately reflect Albanian private sector concerns and provide the same level of IPR protection as elsewhere in Europe and in accordance with EU directives on the subject.

Establishing Career Offices in Four Public and One Private Universities

Rritje Albania launched an ambitious initiative to establish for the first-time, career offices (CO) at the department level and career centers (CC) at the university level, at four (4) public and one (1) private university, which includes the University of Tirana (UT), Agriculture University of Tirana (AUT), University Fan Noli of Korca (UFNK), Polytechnic University of Tirana (PUT), and the University Marin Barleti (UMB). The initiative is providing students at these universities with career counseling, internships and jobs, as well as creating sustainable links between the schools and public and private employers. After a series of successful TOTs on *Career Office Management* and *Career Counseling* for 20 university lecturers and career counseling staff, project assistance in FY2013 focused on the delivery of one-on-one capacity building and coaching of the newly appointed CO and CC staff that addressed the specific needs of each university.

Project investments in this major initiative have started to yield visible results, with all but the PUT establishing and funding new career centers and/or offices with designated physical space and appointed staff members. In addition to the two career offices established at the UT Faculty of Economics and UT Faculty of Law, a coordinating CC has been set up as part of UT's Department of Communications within the rector's office. Two additional COs are expected to be established by the 2013 year-end at the UT Faculty of Social Sciences and UT Faculty of Natural Sciences. High-level endorsement of UT's career counseling program helped raise new grant funding from the French Embassy in the amount of 40,000 Euro over the next five years. UT Faculty of Economics held its first-ever Career Day in June 2013 drawing wide participation of over 700 students and 41 private sector companies.

At AUT, in April 2013 its senate changed the university charter transforming existing student orientation offices into full-fledged career offices. In addition, a central CC was established at the rector's office, with a very dynamic person named as career counseling coordinator. Since then, AUT engaged 11 additional staff for career activities, one at university level, five at faculty level, and five lecturers, one for each faculty.

The UFNK joined this initiative with a career center existing on paper only. Nevertheless, the rector believed that the career counseling initiative's goals were aligned with the UFNK vision, so he allocated space for the CC at the university's new premises in the city center. Rritje Albania linked the CO staff with Tabita, a local development NGO, with excellent contacts and projects with local companies and the GoA employment office. As a result, the UFNK participated with its own stand at the July 2013 Korca Job Fair, which featured 22 companies and more than 114 students. As a result, 22 UFNK graduating students were hired by local companies and 50 students were hired by the municipality on a fixed-term contract.

UMB is the only private university participating in Rritje Albania's program and its career office and services will be incorporated into a leadership center having a larger mission to provide services and training to companies, as well as scholarships for students. UMB has actively participated in all TOT events and has received one-on-one technical assistance to help it develop its annual CC activity plan.

In summary, these universities have drawn up detailed work plans that were approved by management and the CCs and Cos have started to deliver counseling services to students through such things as career/job fairs, one-on-one career counseling, or incorporating career orientation modules in existing or new courses. They have also begun to interact with private and public sector employers to develop and strengthen links with companies and business associations, chambers of commerce, NGOs and donors, and government agencies such as GoA employment offices and Albania Investment Development Agency (AIDA).

Promoting Albania as a prime tourist destination through the Western Balkans Geotourism Mapguide

As a result of the project's successful collaboration at regional level last year, Albania is now one of six countries featured in the *Western Balkans Geotourism Mapguide – Land of Discovery* (WBGp), an interactive web-portal hosted by the National Geographic. Albania's share of the limelight that comes with the National Geographic's involvement in the promotion of the Western Balkans as a world-class destination will help contribute to its sustainable tourism development and economic health. A positive outcome of this initiative is that the six countries have formed a functioning Western Balkans Geotourism Stewardship Council (WBGSC) and a Western Balkans Tourism Network to develop and promote positive brand image for the region. The WBGSC meets monthly via Skype and has developed a membership package that is used by each country to feature their respective nominees on the portal. This package alongside the WBGp Business and Marketing plan and the MoU signed by the six countries has formalized the operation of WBGp in a sustainable fashion. In addition, Rritje Albania facilitated a WBGSC familiarization tour (Fam Tour) around Albania in April 2013 as part of a regional Fam Tour to discover and promote new travel sites and in June 2013, the project supported the work of two videographers who came to Albania to film six themed mini-documentaries that highlight the distinctive features of the six countries featured in the WBGp that will be released in November 2013.

The Authentic Albania Quality Mark (AAQM) Program

The AAQM program is Albania's first private sector-led initiative to provide a standardized system for evaluating the quality of tourist accommodations. Seven new hotels were given AAQM awards and

special prizes in the first quarter of FY2013, joining another 56 that were awarded last year. However, AAQM implementation stalled this year as result of challenges faced due to the reluctance of the Albania Tourism Association (ATA) to set sustainable full-cost recovery assessment fees and to embrace the requirement of separation of duties that the project had established between the ATA, the Institute for Development Research of Albania (IDRA) that served as the independent assessment agency, and the multi-stakeholder AAQM assessment evaluation committee. However as FY2013 closed, the ATA board revisited its position with regards to the AAQM program methodology and sustainability plan and took the decision to adhere to the AAQM operations manual that it had previously approved and agreed to set full-cost recovery fees for future AAQM hotel assessments.

Project Overview

On March 18, 2009, USAID/Albania awarded Chemonics International and subcontractor partners Development & Training Services (dTS) and Citizen's Development Corps Development Solutions (CDS), the Albania Competitive Enterprise Development (CED) contract, a five-year activity with a value of \$9,774,154. In September 2012, this amount was increased by contract modification to \$10,153,206, approved by USAID on September 17, 2012. The key elements of the contract modification were: (1) increase the contract ceiling by \$379,052 to support the establishment of the PROTIK ICT Resource Center; (2) revise the performance indicators to better capture project activities in greater alignment with the CDCS and the mid-term evaluation report; (3) reduce the size of the grant facility from \$500,000 to \$325,000 and the minimum number of grants from 50 to 22. The project results framework described below and the detailed narrative of project activities at the firm, meso and macro levels fully reflect these agreed-upon changes in a manner that is both in line with the USAID Forward reform agenda and the recommendations from the project mid-term external evaluation conducted in November–December 2011.

To better resonate with local client enterprises and Albanian partners, the project team proposed the name *Rritje Albania (Grow Albania)/Competitive Enterprise Development*; throughout the remainder of this report, the project will be referred to as Rritje Albania. This performance report covers project activities that took place during the period of October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2013, or fiscal reporting year FY2013.

Within three months of start-up, the project identified four key export-oriented industries on which to focus its support: tourism, garment, footwear, and information and communications technology (ICT). The project operates throughout Albania from its one office in Tirana.

Rritje Albania's contract objectives are to support the sustained growth of Albania's non-agricultural enterprises, increase household income, and create gainful employment by developing and strengthening the competitiveness of enterprises. The objectives are achieved through the following three technical assistance components directed at the firm level:

- (1) Strengthening trade and investment capacity;
- (2) Increasing enterprise productivity; and
- (3) Improving workforce development.

The project's FY2013 annual work plan, submitted in October 2012, concentrated activities for the final full year of implementation on building lasting sustainability of several key project initiatives, including:

- Build Your Own Brand (BYOB) program in the garment sector;
- Initiation of a new BYOB program in the footwear sector;
- Establishment of lifelong learning and continuing education/vocational education training (VET) programs at the Polytechnic University of Tirana (PUT) and selected VET schools, focused on developing the garment and footwear sectors' workforce;
- Consolidation of the Authentic Albanian Quality Mark (AAQM) program for hotels;
- Support for the National Geographic Western Balkans GeoMaps website;
- Establishment of the American Hotels and Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI) educational programs in the tourism sector;
- Support for the PROTIK ICT Resource Center;
- Establishment of university career center offices.

In addition, the project continued to play a catalytic and influential role in shaping policy debates and leveraging its relations with key industry stakeholders. The project continued to assist and build the capacities of the Garment and Footwear Stakeholder Working Group (GFSWG), the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Stakeholders Group, and the PROTIK ICT Resource Center staff and Board of Directors, as key public-private mechanisms through which policy issues are raised and decisions are taken and acted upon. These legacy public-private dialogue (PPD) mechanisms and the ensuing public-private partnerships (PPPs) are expected to survive beyond the life of the project as stakeholders come to appreciate the utility of collaboration and coordinating actions for mutual benefit.

Together these legacy initiatives and PPD mechanisms affect all four target industries (tourism, footwear, garment, and ICT), and contribute to results in the three project components: strengthening trade and investment capacity, enhancing private sector productive capacity, and building workforce development.

The project continues to work through its large network of partnerships in order to leverage project resources to achieve greater effect and wider outreach at both the firm and industry levels. By building on its past work and staying true to its proven implementation strategies of working through local actors and structures, Rritje Albania made progress in the last quarter to help build:

- Sustainable development of enterprise and industry competitiveness in the four target sectors;
- Capacities of public educational institutions to better meet the demands for skilled labor;
- Private sector capacity at the meso and macro levels, to effectively articulate industry concerns and influence policy-makers.

Results Framework

Rritje Albania falls under USAID/Albania's Development Objective (DO) 2.0, —Conditions created for broad based, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth.” In addition to contributing to the achievement of DO 2.0, Rritje Albania also contributes to DO 2.0's Intermediate Result (IR) 2.1, —Improved conditions for private sector-led growth” and IR 2.2, —Private sector more competitive.”

Moreover, Rritje Albania's project goals are in line with the Foreign Assistance Framework program areas of trade and investment and private sector competitiveness. Rritje Albania has three complementary components: trade and investment, productivity, and workforce development that are also Project Intermediate Results (PIR). Each has several key result areas (KRA) measuring the output of different

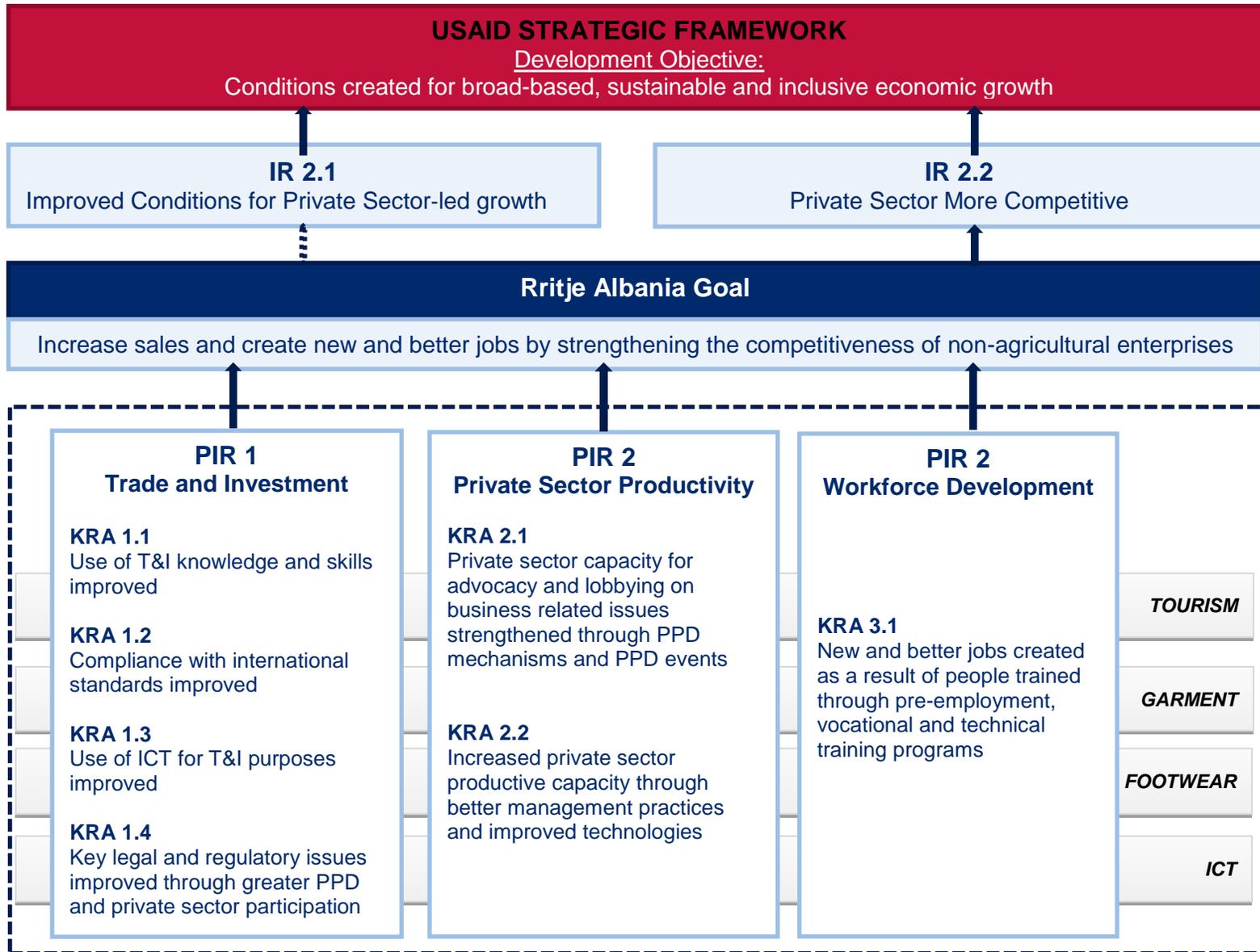
project activities. Results at the KRA levels, which are gender-disaggregated where applicable, lead to outcomes at the component level, which in turn lead to results at the project and DO levels.

In this way, Rritje Albania seeks to build the capacity of the private sector in its target industries, as well as the responsiveness of the public sector, to stimulate business expansion and contribute to the country's broad based, sustainable economic growth.

The project's current results framework was adjusted from its original framework to reflect the new USAID/Albania CDCS 2011-2015 released in September 2011. In it, USAID's economic growth strategy shifted from targeted, firm-level assistance to supporting the establishment of improved conditions for growth at the meso and macro levels. From March 2011, when the first draft of USAID's strategy was shared with Rritje Albania, the project proactively increased its activities at the meso and macro levels of its target industries while remaining faithful to the achievement of the goals and objectives described in its contract. The strategic decision to work at all industry levels has proved to be highly advantageous as constraints to competitiveness are often due to information asymmetries and unequal relationships between private and public sector value chain actors, as well as weak or absent public-private-dialogue (PPD) venues. By working at all levels through its broad and deep network of public and private sector implementation partners, the project has greatly leveraged its resources for the short-, medium- and long-term benefit of Albanian businesses.

In February 2012, Rritje Albania initiated discussions with USAID to revise its results framework in order to better align the project's direct and indirect results with the program elements and sub-elements of USAID/Albania's CDCS. As a result of these meetings, the agreed-upon changes to the project's set of contract performance indicators and targets were incorporated into a contract modification request that Chemonics submitted in May 2012, which was approved by USAID on September 17, 2012. The revised Rritje Albania results framework is illustrated below.

Illustration I.1 – Rritje Albania Project Results Framework



General Technical Approach (Clients, Industries, and Legacies)

Enhancing competitiveness is a complex task that requires interventions at several levels. Rritje Albania practices an inclusive approach to improved competitiveness that includes enhancing trade and investment capacities and access to markets, augmenting product quality through better management of production processes and utilization of new technologies, building workforce capacity, and improving the business environment. The project identifies competitiveness constraints at firm and industry levels then delivers a combination of appropriate technical assistance, training, targeted grants and/or linkages to financing to overcome these constraints.

The project's work is guided by the following principles:

- Implement market-based and demand-driven interventions at all levels of economy
- Foster local ownership and participation
- Leverage resources and prioritize interventions through partnerships
- Focus on results and lessons learned to guide the implementation process

Since its inception, Rritje Albania adopted the approach of working intensively, but not exclusively, with leading Albanian companies in each target sector, with the expectation that other enterprises would follow their example. In addition, Rritje Albania supports stakeholders such as business associations and chambers to provide better services and lobby for members' interests through industry-wide events and conferences that stimulate PPD and create effective PPPs. In so doing, local ownership of initiatives takes place that reflects the needs and priorities of the private sector. Additionally, by seeking significant cost sharing, the project promotes sustainable solutions and initiatives that are not solely dependent on project support to continue.

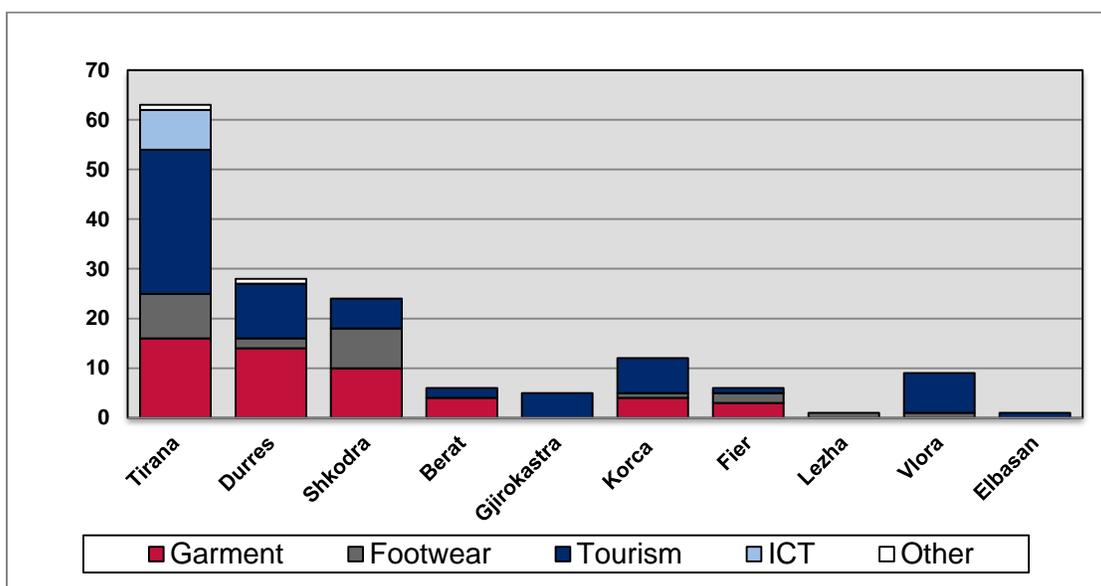
In terms of the number of enterprises and sectors that the project assists, the following table lists the firms with which Rritje Albania signed a Client Growth Plan (CGP) agreement or which are members of the Authentic Albania Quality Mark (AAQM) program. With the exception of new hotels that join the AAQM on a rolling basis, the number of firms receiving direct firm-level support is not expected to increase.

Table I.1 – Enterprises Supported by Rritje Albania to Date

Industry	CGP Clients/AAQM Hotels
Footwear	27 CGP
Garment	52 CGP
ICT	7 CGP
Tourism	7 CGP
	63 AAQM
Other (<i>Recycling</i>)	2 CGP
Total	158

The project has responded to requests for assistance from companies throughout Albania, and the distribution of our current clients by administrative regions is depicted in the graph below.

Illustration I.2 – Rritje Albania Clients by Regional Location



Administration and Finance

This section describes the administrative and financial management aspects of the Rritje Albania project during the reporting period. In addition to the field office positions, the team is backstopped by a Project Management Unit (PMU) at the Chemonics headquarters in Washington, DC. At the close of FY2013, the Rritje Albania staff includes the four key personnel positions of: Chief of Party, Trade and Investment Specialist, and two Competitiveness Specialists (Business Advisors). Other technical positions include the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)/Communications Specialist, M&E/Communications Assistant, Tourism Advisor, and Grants Manager. These individuals are supported by an administrative staff consisting of an Office Manager, Accountant, Translator/Administrative Assistant, and three drivers (two full-time and one part-time).

During the third quarter of FY2013, Rritje Albania received USAID approval to hire a STTA Program Specialist for a six-month assignment ending in November 2013. This person supports Rritje Albania's four technical advisors and works closely with the M&E/Communications team, procurement staff, short-term technical experts, and partner institutions to help ensure that project timelines are kept, results are achieved, and targeted institutions and legacy structures gain the necessary capacity to sustain project activities after Rritje Albania's close.

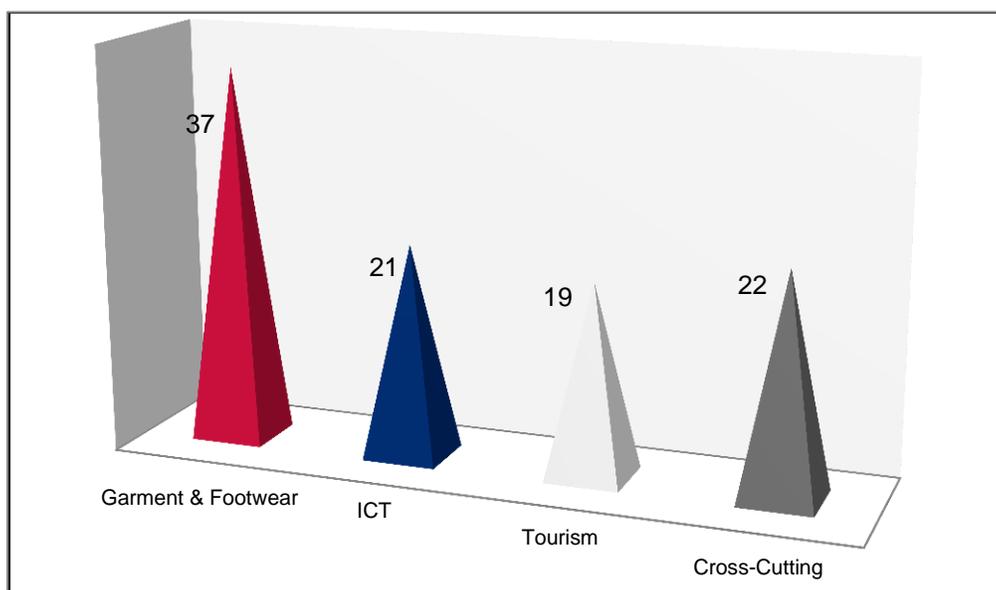
SECTION II

Technical Activities by Industry/Legacy

In FY2013, project activities occurred at both firm and industry levels through technical assistance visits, training events, and industry-wide conferences. During this reporting period Rritje Albania organized and/or co-sponsored 99 technical events that contributed to outputs and outcomes captured under project indicators. Through these events, Rritje Albania reached over 2,091 participants representing firms in the four target industries and other sectors. The results of these activities are captured under the project's results framework indicators and narrated in greater detail under Section IV of this report.

The figure below shows the distribution of project technical activities by industry, which took place in FY2013.

Illustration II-A.1 - FY2013 Technical Events by Industry



Technical activities delivered at firm-level included: support to export-oriented garment companies seeking to shift to value-added production (such as private and/or own label) to learn and apply new sourcing skills, building business linkages and successfully exhibiting at trade fairs; support to garment and footwear companies to improve productivity by utilizing better management practices and innovative technologies; support for tourism companies to achieve international standards of quality and market themselves effectively; support for ICT companies to acquire world class quality standards; and support for several workforce development initiatives to promote greater responsiveness of educational institutions to the private sector's labor needs.

To help build a secure foundation for future sales, the project supported Albanian companies and industry representatives to improve their branding and marketing. In addition, Rritje Albania supported business associations, stakeholders groups, and industry-wide conferences to stimulate much-needed public-private dialogue on important issues that affect the competitiveness of Albanian companies.

The chart and table below show the distribution of participants by gender in all technical activities by industry implemented by the project during FY2013.

Illustration II-A.2 – Participation by Gender in FY2013 Technical Activities by Industry

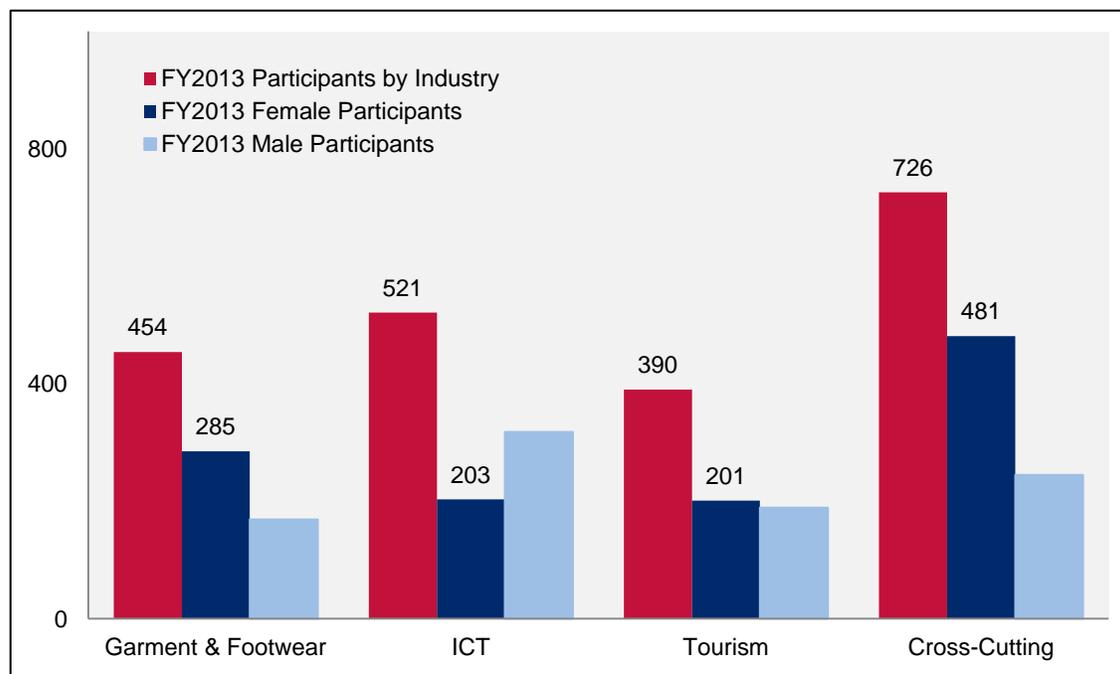


Table II-A.1 – Summary of Participants in FY2013 Technical Activities

Industry	No. of FY2013 Activities	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants
Garment & Footwear	37	454	285	169
ICT	21	521	203	318
Tourism	19	390	201	189
Cross-Cutting	22	726	481	245
Total	99	2091	1170	921

For a detailed summary of all project activities by industry that were implemented during the course of FY2013, including major project milestones and accomplishments please see **Annex D**.

SECTION III

Technical Activities by Component

This section provides a summary of implemented project activities during the FY2013 reporting period by project component. The structuring of the narrative along the lines of the project's result framework (see Illustration I-1) illustrates the project's FY2013 strategic approach, and draws attention to the causal links and the reinforcing complementary nature of project activities designed to affect greater impact at firm, meso, and macro levels. Key initiatives and/or discrete activities of a similar technical assistance theme are grouped together and described under the relevant KRAs for each project component, as follows:

- Trade and Investment Capacity Strengthened (PIR 1; KRAs 1.1-1.4)
- Private Sector Productivity Increased (PIR 2; KRAs 2.1 and 2.2)
- Workforce Development Improved (PIR 3; KRAs 3.1)

A. Trade and Investment Capacity Strengthened (PIR 1)

In responding to specific client demand and taking into account lessons learned during previous years of implementation, the project's trade and investment technical activities during FY2013 supported Albanian enterprises to adopt a proactive, strategic approach to accessing new markets and buyers. Additionally, these activities promoted Albania as a source of high quality products and services. Many activities were undertaken in partnership and/or co-sponsorship with business associations, chambers, partner organizations, and public institutions in each target sector. In doing so, Rritje Albania helped to strengthen the capacities of local associations to support their members, deliver services, increase membership, and improve institutional viability.

A1. Increasing Trade and Investment Knowledge and Skills

Rritje Albania's efforts this year to improve Albanian trade and export promotion performance materialized in the technical and financial support given to client companies in the context of the Build Your Own Brand (BYOB) program in garment and footwear industries, as well as facilitation of B2B contacts and meetings with foreign and domestic buyers. The BYOB program is establishing and promoting a model for the sustainable development of Albania's garment and footwear industries. Building on previous project assistance, the BYOB-Garment (BYOB-G) program provides companies with a blueprint for vertical value chain expansion where higher value-added manufacturing operations are carried out, which increase profit margins and reduce market risk. The BYOB program helps Albanian companies become more competitive internationally, as they transition from limited production stages of simple assembly, make-trim, and cut-make-trim, to full production service and own brand.

BYOB-G program. Last year, the project helped six (6) Albanian companies develop their own brands and negotiate successfully with new clients in the German and Russian markets. This expansion helps companies move away from their traditional export targets of Italy and Greece, which are in economic contraction and insecurity. These firms are setting the paradigm for the future of the Albanian garment industry. Their successful sourcing experience last year, and the development and presentation of own brand collections at international garment fairs in Dusseldorf and Moscow represented a significant achievement for these companies as they learned how to access new trade knowledge in order to effectively design, produce, and sell products that meet the preferences of new customers and markets.

These positive experiences also help promote the value of the BYOB program to a new generation of Albanian companies. Four (4) other garment companies, Ambra, Omega, Madish and OLA1 heard about the success and experiences of the six BYOB firms, and joined the program. Over this past year, these companies have sourced raw materials, developed new collections, made the necessary preparations to enter the Russian and Swedish markets, revamped their company profiles and websites, conducted B2B meetings and followed up on sales leads, and finalized product specifications as per buyers' test orders.

The table below list all garment companies currently active in the BYOB-G program.

Table III.A1. Summary of BYOB-G Brands Developed and Promoted

No.	BYOB Garment Companies and Brands			
	Company	Collection Brand Name	New markets	
			Russia	Sweden
1	Ariee (formerly Metila of NPV International)	ARIEE (newly created)	x	x
2	Bella Konfeks	LA BLANCHE and PLAETOR	x	x
3	Blue Sky	KRIENKO and KJL (newly created)	x	x
4	Kler	ESSERE	x	x
5	Madison Avenue	MADISON AVENUE and FASHIONISTA (newly created)	x	x
6	SAM	SAM	x	x
No.	Newly-added BYOB Garment Companies			
1	Ambra	Ambra (and two others in process)	x	x
2	Madish	Madish	x	x
3	Ola 1	OLA1	x	x
4	Omega	Omega	x	x

During the first two quarters of FY2013, Maxim Perevezentsev, a Russian marketing consultant based in Moscow who supported Albanian firms exhibiting at the CPM Fair in Moscow last September, continued to assist all 10 BYOB companies to identify Russian retailers and sales agents interested in their collections. In close consultation with Rritje Albania's Business Advisor, Mr. Perevezentsev researched and put together a packet of crucial information pertaining to the Russian market in terms of sample contracts, trademark and brand registration, software systems, bar codes and labeling, freight, logistics, warehousing, and customs clearance of garments entering Russia. The BYOB firms used this information to process test orders and conduct negotiations with Russian buyers and sales agents.

In addition to enhancing the trade and investment knowledge of participating companies, the BYOB program is also made up of technical assistance elements that lead to improvements in enterprise productivity, the results of which are captured under the productivity component (PIR 2).

The table provides a summary of the technical assistance given to each BYOB garment company as per individual requirements.

Table III.A2. Summary of BYOB-G Assistance

No	Company	Type of Assistance										
		Market Research	Design	Company Profile	Product Specification	B2B Contacts Meetings & Facilitation	Marketing (Website, brochure, business card)	Translation	Showing Samples	ULTRABRAND (Custom Clearance, Transport & Logistics)	2013 Fair Participation, Visa Logistics, Pre-fair preparation, B2B and follow-up	Brand Registration
1	Ariee (Formerly Metila of NPV International)	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Ambra	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
3	Bella Konfeks	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Blue Sky	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
5	Kler	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Madis	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
7	Madison Avenue	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	OLA 1	✓		✓		✓	✓			✓		
9	Omega	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
10	SAM	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓	

One BYOB-G firm, *Bella Konfeks*, returned to Moscow at its own expense in April 2013 to pursue negotiations with Russian B2B contacts. These contacts were generated at the Lingerie Expo, a specialty garment fair held in Russia on February 5-8, 2013, at which the company exhibited its latest luxury lingerie collection⁵. The company owner, Keti Bazhdari, supported by Rritje Albania's STTA marketing consultant Mr. Perevezentsev, met with four Russian companies that were strongly interested in representing *Bella Konfeks* in Russia. In the end, *Bella Konfeks* reached an agreement with the Russian company Lace and Honey to produce a 200-piece collection to be marketed and sold in Russia for the Summer/Spring 2013 season. A representative of Lace and Honey visited the factory of *Bella Konfeks* in Shkodra at the end of May 2013 to discuss Russian customer preference, assess the company's production capacity, review its marketing and promotional materials, and then return to Moscow with the sample 200-piece *Bella Konfeks* collection that is now being showcased in their showroom in Russia. Mrs.

⁵ The company hired on a free-lance contract a talented Albanian designer, Mrs. Ariela Kule to design their luxury lingerie collection especially for the Lingerie Expo fair. This is the same designer that was originally hired by NPV International to develop the Metila brand, which was set up as a start-up company and re-launched under the new brand name of Ariee.

Bazhdari returned to Moscow at the end of July to review sales of its collection and discuss ways to strengthen their nascent business relationship with Lace and Honey. The project is currently assisting *Bella Konfeks* to trademark its two brand names.

Kler, a manufacturer of high-end men's shirts, is also negotiating new deals with two Russian buyers after successfully completing and delivering test purchase orders they received at the CPM fair in September 2012. The company entered negotiations with three other interested buyers and reached an agreement with a sales agent who will represent *Kler's* branded products in Russia. According to the agent, there is a significant Russian market demand for high-end quality and personalized shirt products such as those produced by *Kler*. *Kler's* owner is planning to visit Moscow in November 2013 to meet with its sales agent to discuss *Kler's* strategy for capturing a piece of this niche market. In addition, *Kler* is looking to enter the French market and is preparing a new collection for exhibition at the next FATEX fair in Paris 2014. Indicative of its new emphasis on boosting its marketing efforts, *Kler* inaugurated this year a new showroom at its factory to exhibit its products to visiting buyers. The project is assisting *Kler* to register its brand name trademark.

In addition to an existing brand, *Madison Avenue* developed a new brand called *Fashionista*. The company reports that it successfully incorporated lessons learned from last year's BYOB-G experience to design and develop the *Fashionista* brand that targets a different market segment. A new retail shop featuring this brand was opened last year at the upscale Tirana East Gate shopping mall. A Polytechnic University of Tirana (PUT) graduate, who previously benefited from project-supported curricula enhancements, was recently hired by *Madison Avenue* as the production manager. Concurrently, the project helped *Madison Avenue* address key production efficiency issues it faced through the application of the Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP) toolkit and firm-level assistance delivered by PUT professors under short-term technical assistance (STTA) contracts. As a result, the company successfully produced its latest *Madison Avenue* collection made up of 70 pieces and the new 50-piece *Fashionista* collection for the Summer/Fall 2013 season. Work has already started on collections for the Fall-Winter 2013-2014 season. Last year the company registered its *Madison Avenue* brand, and is in the process of registering *Fashionista*. Aside from continuing negotiations with Russian contacts, *Madison Avenue* is also pursuing buyer inquiries from Germany, Denmark, Norway and Sweden with support from Rritje Albania's business advisors. Furthermore, *Madison Avenue* has started to expand in the region through a local representative operating out of Kosovo, and is considering the option of selling as a wholesaler. Macedonia is another regional market where *Madison Avenue* has set its sights and the project's STTA Program Specialist Jasminka Varnalieva has been closely supporting the company's efforts in this regard.

During this year, *Ambra* finalized the design of its brand name logo and is currently working to register it with Rritje Albania assistance. As a producer of high-end quality goods, *Ambra* was very interested in securing a sales agent in Russia. *Ambra* was approached by an Italian-Russian agent who came to Albania to visit *Ambra's* factory to review its products and assess its capacities. The two reached an agreement for the production of a test 70-piece *Ambra* collection. The collection was produced and shipped at the end of June 2013 and is now being marketed and sold in Russia. In the meantime, *Ambra* is adding two more floors and at least four more production lines. *Ambra* is also in negotiations with an Italian partner, *Miroglio Vestebene*, to enter a joint venture consisting of a major distribution center based in Durrës that would require a new 5 million Euro investment. The company has asked the project to help them lobby for Government support to identify and acquire a suitable property to house this venture. If all goes as planned, *Ambra's* new venture will start operating within the first 6 months of FY2014.

Metila of NPV International revamped its image and registered as a separate company and brand under the name of *Ariee*. This quarter, *Ariee* agreed to be represented by renowned agent European Moda,

which represents many famous French, Spanish, and German brands in Russia. The deal was facilitated by Rritje Albania's business advisors and Mr. Perevezentsev. According to the agreement, *Ariee* will provide two collections per year that will be showcased and sold at its agent's showroom: a Spring-Summer collection to be delivered each September and an Autumn/Winter collection delivered each January. Since NPV International is undergoing a major factory refurbishment, *Ariee* is now looking to subcontract another Albanian company to produce its collections. *Ariee's* talented young designer, a former PUT graduate, is also exploring the opportunity of designing jeans collection on a freelance contract for *Blue Sky*, another company involved in the BYOB-G initiative. During this year, *Blue Sky* intensified its efforts to further promote its brand *Krienko*, as well as develop and launch a new brand *KJL*, which is an affordable collection targeting the young fashion market.

Illustration III. A1. Product Specification Sheet Developed by Metila (Ariee)



	<p style="text-align: center;">Dress</p> <p>Article Vlora.006</p> <p>Price <small>in euro</small> 45 €</p> <p>Sizes 38 : 40 42 44 46 : 48</p> <p>Fabric Composition Top: Cv:78%, Pas:12% Bottom: Tencel:100%</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Jacket</p> <p>Article Vlora.007</p> <p>Price <small>in euro</small> 30 €</p> <p>Sizes 38 : 40 42 44 46 : 48</p> <p>Fabric Composition Pes:5% Cot:46% Ea:3%</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Skirt</p> <p>Article Vlora.008</p> <p>Price <small>in euro</small> 20 €</p> <p>Sizes 38 : 40 42 44 46 : 48</p> <p>Fabric Composition Pes:5% Cot:46% Ea:3%</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Top</p> <p>Article Vlora.009</p> <p>Price <small>in euro</small> 25 €</p> <p>Sizes 38 : 40 42 44 46 : 48</p> <p>Fabric Composition Cv:78% Pas:22%</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Trousers</p> <p>Article Vlora.010</p> <p>Price <small>in euro</small> 30 €</p> <p>Sizes 38 : 40 42 44 46 : 48</p> <p>Fabric Composition Tencel:100%</p>
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Size Chart	
Italy	38 40 42 44 46 48 50
France, Spain, Belgium, Portugal	34 36 38 40 42 44 46
Germany, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, Netherlands	32 34 36 38 40 42 44
European Size	XXS XS S M L XL XXL

Note:
The Price is calculated for the design, fabric and accessories that compose the prototype regional. Every change on the prototype during order will be reported. Change on patterns are accepted only for big orders and this service is chargeable. The price of the new article will be recalculated.

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Blue Sky was approached by and is currently negotiating with a Swedish buyer, who was introduced by Rritje Albania. The company continues communication with Russian buyers through Mr. Perevezentsev, and is planning to visit Moscow in the Fall 2013. *Omega* and *Madish* have been communicating with, and responding to, requests from potential Russian buyers who have asked for more information on the companies' product ranges and specifications, prices, transport costs, and logistics. Mr. Perevezentsev has recommended that these companies visit Moscow to meet potential buyers face-to-face once they have developed their own collections.

Since Mr. Perevezentsev's contract with the project ended in March 2013, the project facilitated discussions between him and Albanian firms to set up an Albanian – Russian Business Center (ARBC) in Moscow. This new entity is expected to help Albanian garment and footwear firms enter the Russian market, support their long-term presence, and enable other Albanian firms to follow in their footsteps. The plan is for Albanian firms to pay the full cost of the services supplied by the ARBC. Initial reactions are very positive and Mr. Perevezentsev drafted a business plan which foresees the establishment of a

distribution center for *Made in Albania* products in Russia. The business plan is being discussed internally by Rritje Albania before it is presented to BYOB-G companies during the upcoming first FY2014 quarter.

Testimonials from companies who have been receiving support from Rritje Albania's BYOB program may be found below.

Madison Avenue

"...Last year, the BYOB process helped us learn a lot from Rritje Albania experts and the other Albanian companies in terms of better production processes, market research, pricing, negotiations and marketing. The company now has better knowledge on how to do these things, and as a result we have been able to develop a better collection and a new brand, which boast better designs, styles, colors and organization. After returning from Moscow last year, we realized the need and appointed a specific person in the role of Marketing and Exports Manager, who is in charge of finding, communicating and following up with interested buyers and contacts. ..."

Bella Konfex

"We generated good interest from potential buyers for private label work at CPM Fair in Moscow during September 2012. We have continued to follow-up and communicate with 14 Russian buyers that were introduced to us, with Rritje Albania support, by the Russian marketing expert Maxim Perevezentsev. Three Russian buyers asked us to provide specific information such as product quantity, price and specifications, which we have sent to them. We also participated with our own booth space at the Lingerie-Expo-International Exhibition of Underwear, Beach Fashion and Hosiery, during 05-08 February 2013 in Moscow. Maxim helped us set up B2B meetings, process the necessary visa paperwork, reviewing our marketing materials and collection and product specifications... It is very hard work, but we are very excited because it has really paid off for us in terms being able to find a good agent that is now representing in Russian market..."

BYOB-F program. Although there are minor differences in the make-up of Albanian garment and footwear industries, the type of assistance needed to build the competitiveness of both sectors in order to sustain their position as major employers and contributors to Albania's gross domestic product (GDP) is comparable. Given these similarities, during the reporting period, Rritje Albania decided to introduce the BYOB-F program to interested footwear client companies. The BYOB-F program benefits from the project's past experience and lessons learned working in the garment industry, and provide client companies with valuable technical assistance to enhance their competitiveness in the national, regional and international markets. Albanian footwear firms appear to be more developed and sophisticated than their garment counterparts due to their experience producing high-end quality products for Italian buyers. Nonetheless, these companies are overly- dependent on the Italian market and seldom take the initiative to learn the knowledge processes and develop strong marketing and sales skills to look for alternative clients.

The majority of Albanian footwear manufacturers work on a contract basis for a small number of buyers, primarily from Italy, Greece, and Germany and offer only make and trim (MT) or cut-make-trim (CMT)

production. As a result, companies tend to be production- rather than market-driven, and prior to Rritje Albania's assistance, had little in the way of publicity materials or websites.

The project hired short-term footwear marketing and product development expert John England from November 5-10, 2012. Mr. England assessed the BYOB capacities of 11 Albanian footwear companies in the areas of product design, patternmaking, sourcing, merchandising, production technology and distribution. Accompanied by the project's business advisors and two PUT professors, Mr. England met with firm owners and visited factories to determine their potential for expanding sales in the domestic and foreign markets (primarily Europe but also Russia). The expert reviewed the companies' existing collections and marketing tools, noting strengths and weaknesses, and provided tailored assessments for each company that described specific measures and steps to take to successfully produce and sell their own brands or private labels, according to a rigorous timeline to complete sourcing at the Lineapelle fair in Bologna, Italy in April 2013, and exhibit collections at the MICAM fair in Milan, Italy in September 2013 and the Riva del Garda Fiera for the Fall/Winter 2014/1015 season in January 2014.

These companies responded favorably to the recommendations made by Mr. England that required the companies to adopt and apply a range of critical knowledge and skills, many of which are relatively new for them, such as sourcing appropriate raw materials; designing garments and developing patterns and prototypes; establishing the right strategies for costing, pricing, and merchandising finished collections; developing and promoting an appropriate brand name according to the preferences of the target customer for style and quality; identifying and contracting the right sales agents; and successfully navigating the maze of shipping, export/import rules, and product labeling requirements.

Following his initial assignment Mr. England returned in March 2013 to follow-up on the firms' progress against his earlier recommendations and to prepare for the BYOB-F sourcing stage, marked by participation at the Lineapelle⁶ Sourcing trade fair in Bologna, Italy from April 3-5, 2013. In the run up to the fair, Mr. England visited the firms, accompanied by United Kingdom-based Footwear Designer Helen Lawless, who was hired by the project to provide the BYOB-F

BYOB Footwear expert recommendations

- Identify and secure agents for specific target market and expansion in regional market;
- Invest in branding and marketing;
- Better integrate management information and seek ISO 9001 certification;
- Source raw materials worldwide to improve cost competitiveness;
- Identify a designer or design consultant to employ;
- Consider selling to regional market such as Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro as an easier way to build brand loyalty initially;
- Set up a cash and carry wholesale operation from the factory;
- Subscribe to Close Up fashion magazine for ideas and information on footwear trends
- Apply for membership to the Shoe Allied Trades Research Association (SATRA)

⁶ Lineapelle is known to be the largest and the most important leather and leather accessories exhibition in the world. This international leather sourcing fair runs for three days and provides ample opportunity for trading and networking. Exhibitors showcase new designer footwear items, leather products, and other fashion accessories, which are sure to draw the attention of the fair's international attendees. This huge international show is a must-attend for new designers and manufacturers, as well as for newly launched companies or brands. The show brings together leading brands in the design and manufacturing of fashionable leather items and related products.

companies with design assistance and recommendations to develop collections in-line with current European trends for the 2013/2014 season. Ms. Lawless brought considerable experience working for well-known European brands such as ZARA, H&M, Topshop, River Island, Marks and Spencers, and Debenhams. Discussions at firm-level visits focused on identifying the product types, collection range and colors, sizes and pattern-grading, fabric, textures and accessories to match current style and design trends, costing and pricing final products, and marketing collections in the region and in Europe. Rritje Albania's business advisors worked with the BYOB-F companies to provide them with current information and materials on buyers, suppliers and potential contacts and discuss their expectations and concerns for organizing, managing, and following up with B2B meetings and contacts at the Lineapelle fair.

Managing all logistics and paying for flights and accommodations themselves, seven of the 10 BYOB-F companies attended the fair accompanied by Rritje Albania's STTA expert John England, Business Advisor Roland Bagaviki, and the Head of the PUT Department of Textiles and Fashion, Ermira Shehi. The participation of the PUT was deemed important from the perspective of further building the university's capacity and knowledge in the footwear sector. Considering that the majority of these companies were attending Lineapelle for the first time, the goal was to provide them with hands-on assistance for a total of 95 B2B meetings to identify appropriate source suppliers, request samples and negotiate orders, as well as meet with design school and leather tanneries to explore upcoming trends, colors and styles in footwear. In addition, the STTA expert helped identify and recommend 38 appropriate source suppliers to the three (3) other BYOB-F companies that could not attend the fair.



BYOB-F companies, accompanied by Rritje Albania experts and PUT consultant, source and shop for leather and accessories at the international footwear Lineapelle fair, Bologna, Italy, April 2013

Albanian companies found raw material prices to be generally higher than what they expected to pay. This presents a challenge for them, particularly when one considers that the current undersupply of leather hides will push prices up in the future. Once the companies returned from Lineapelle, sample orders were placed and work started on designing and producing the Fall/Winter 2013/2014 collection. Initially, the project planned to prepare companies to exhibit collections at the Riva del Garda Fiere - Spring/Summer 2013 Fair in Milan, Italy in June 2013, and the Global Shoes fair in Messe-Dusseldorf, Germany in September 2013.

However, the project and the BYOB-F companies agreed it would be best to allow more time for the proper development of collections that will go on sale for the Fall/Winter 2014/2015 season, as opposed to rushing the process to catch sales for the Spring/Summer 2014 season. In addition, further research on the Dusseldorf fair suggested that BYOB-F companies may be better off exhibiting at an international trade show that has a larger reach beyond the European market. The BYOB-F timeline (see **Annex G** of this report) was revised accordingly with the MICAM Fiera Milano fair for the Spring/Summer 2014 season in September 2013, and the Riva del Garda Fiera for the Fall/Winter 2014/2015 season in January 2014, being the two key exhibit fairs for the BYOB-F collections. The STTA expert also recommended that the Albanian companies consider looking into suppliers of footwear raw material in China, India, and some African countries, although transportation from these distant locations may prove a challenge from both a time and cost perspective. For a summary of sourcing results please see the table below.

Table III.A1.3. – Summary of BYOB Footwear Sourcing Stage Results

No.	Company	B2B Meetings/ Contacts	Lineapelle Bologna Fair (LBF) Sourcing Results
1.	Alba&N.	10 B2B mtgs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met with 10 leather, accessories, and synthetics suppliers from Italy. Discussed leather and footwear trends with 4 design schools and 4 tanneries
2.	Berttoni	22 B2B mtgs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met with 16 leather, accessories, and synthetics suppliers (12 Italy, 1 Portugal, 1 Netherlands, 1 India and 1 Romania). Discussed leather and footwear trends with 4 design schools and 4 tanneries Ordered soles (accessories/components) from Gommus, Italy.
3.	Donianna	13 B2B mtgs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met with 13 leather, accessories and synthetics suppliers (9 Italy and 1 Portugal, 1 Netherlands, 1 India and 1 Romania). Discussed leather and footwear trends with 4 design schools, 4 tanneries, 6 accessories/components and 3 synthetics/fabrics suppliers. Company is pursuing further negotiations with 3 key sourcing contacts established: Curtumes Rodrigues, Portugal, Jan de Ruiter Waalwijk B.V, Netherlands and Tata International, UK/India.
4.	Endi	13 B2B mtgs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met with 13 leather, accessories and synthetics suppliers (10 Italy, 1 Netherlands, 1 India and 1 Romania.) Discussed leather and footwear trends with 3 design schools and 7 accessories/components suppliers. Ordered leather from Gruppo Mastrotto – Italy Ordered soles (accessories/components) Gommus, Italy.
5.	Picari	17 B2B mtgs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met with 17 leather, accessories and synthetics suppliers (13 with Italian buyers, 1 Portugal, 1 Netherland, 1 India and 1 Romania). Discussed leather and footwear trends with 4 design schools, 4 tanneries, 6 accessories/components and 3 synthetics/fabrics suppliers. Ordered leather from Gruppo Mastrotto, Italy. Ordered soles (accessories/components) from Gommus, Italy.

No.	Company	B2B Meetings/ Contacts	Lineapelle Bologna Fair (LBF) Sourcing Results
6.	Mito	20 B2B mtgs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 meetings recommended by Rritje Albania and 5 meeting on their own. From 15 meetings 11 with Italian buyers, 1 Portugal, 1 Netherland, 1 India and 1 Romania. • Discussed leather and footwear trends with • 4 design schools, 4 tanneries, 5 accessories/components and 2 synthetics/fabrics suppliers. • Ordered leather from Curtumes Rodrigues, Portugal and Jan de Ruijter Waalwijk B.V, Netherlands. • Orders soles (accessories/components) from IPR, Italy.
7.	Patrik	3 B2B contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrik is a partner CMT company with Mito. Although Patrick could not attend Lineapelle, Mito did sourcing work and contacts on Patrick's behalf. Patrick has established contact with 3 synthetics/fabrics suppliers (Coronet, Limonata Spa, and Omnipel Technologies) based on recommendations by Mito and STTA expert John England.
8.	Fital	14 B2B contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although Fital could not attend at the Lineapelle, they have established contact with 14 source suppliers (9 Italy, 1 Portugal, 1 Netherlands, 1 India and 1 China) identified and recommended by STTA expert John England. • Of these 14 companies, 5 are tanneries, 7 are suppliers of leather accessories/components and 2 of synthetics/fabrics.
9.	ImesAlb	8 B2B contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although ImesAlb could not attend at the Lineapelle, they have established contact with 8 source suppliers (7 Italy, 1 Romania) identified and recommended by STTA expert John England. • Of these 8 companies, 5 are suppliers of supply accessories/components and 3 of synthetics/fabrics.
10.	Hotova	10 B2B contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although Hotova could not attend at the Lineapelle, they have established contact with 10 source suppliers (9 Italy, 1 Romania) identified and recommended by STTA expert John England. • Of those 10 companies, 7 are suppliers of supply accessories/components and 3 of synthetics/fabrics.
11.	Mas-Torr	3 B2B contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although Mass-Torr could not attend at the Lineapelle, they have established contact with 3 Italian suppliers of synthetics/fabrics identified and recommended by STTA expert John England.
<i>USAID/Rritje Albania team assisting BYOB companies at LBF sourcing fair</i>		<i>Mr. John England, STTA consultant Mr. Roland Bagaviki, Rritje Albania Business Advisor Mrs. Ermira Shehi, PUT consultant</i>	
Total		95 B2B meetings held at Lineapelle 38 B2B contacts established for companies that did not attend fair	

The participation of six (6) Albanian companies (see table below) with a joint *Made in Albania* industry booth at the MICAM Fiera 2013 fair in Milan, Italy in early September represented a major milestone in the BYOB-F initiative. It was the first time Albanian footwear manufacturers exhibited as a country, and only the second manufacturing sector to do so after the project's BYOB Garment exhibitions in Germany and Russia a year earlier. With the exception of Donianna, MICAM was the first fair where these firms participated as exhibitors. As such, the firms brought collections that were small in terms of number of pieces but they were afforded an excellent opportunity to meet new buyers and prepare themselves for a much larger *Made in Albania* exhibit at the upcoming Riva del Garda Fiera (Italy) for the Fall/Winter

2014/2015 season to take place in January 2014. Noted to be one of the most important events in the leather and footwear world, MICAM is a unique event reserved for the most qualified firms in the industry and as a business platform dedicated to companies wishing to showcase their collections and contact the world's leading footwear markets. This year, over 1,600 exhibitors presented their collections at the MICAM fair.

After a full year of intense work and preparation in a number of complex areas, such as design and pattern making, product development, marketing and merchandising completed with the assistance of USAID/Rritje Abania's team of advisors and short-term experts, the six Albanian companies were able to launch and market their own brand collections, alongside prestigious names such as Prada, Bagatt, Christian Louboutin, Kurt Geiger and others. Over the three days of the fair, a considerable number of interested wholesale and retail buyers from Western Europe, Asia, and North America visited the *Made in Albania* industry booth. The Albanian company owners conducted a large number of B2B meetings where potential deals were discussed, as well as important issues relating to transportation costs, turnaround time, order limits, and so forth. Many of the booth visitors remarked on the impressive quality of the Albanians products and their competitive price. The table below represents a summary of the early MICAM fair results experienced and reported by each company.

Table III.A1.4 Summary of MICAM Fiera Milan 2013 exhibition results

MICAM Fair Results	Berttoni	Donianna	Fital	Mas -Torr	Mito	Picari	Total
Number of B2B meetings held	15	250	25	5	8	26	329
Interested buyers	4	100	9	4	3	6	146
Interest to visit Albania	1 Italy	2 France UK	-	2 Netherlands Spain	1 UK	2 Italy UK	10
Country origin of interested buyers	Germany Italy Macedonia Netherlands	France Germany Macedonia Italy Pakistan U.K	France Germany Italy Pakistan U.K	Italy Netherlands Spain	Italy Israel UK	Algeria Azerbaijan Italy Macedonia UK	-
Sample Size (Male and Female Collections)	50	30 styles for the Made in Albania booth 500 styles for individual company booth space	60 styles	51 styles	50 styles	70 styles	781
Test orders	6	140	20	-	2	5	173
Follow up B2B meetings	3	100	9	2	3	6	123
Old customers	-	30	15	-	2	3	50
New customers	4	90	10	5	3	12	124

Participation in MICAM, followed by the upcoming Riva del Garda, is proving to be effective channels through which Albanian firms can learn about the latest fashion trends and develop long-lasting business relations with buyers. In addition, the success of these companies will also ultimately promote Albania as a secure and dependable source of high-quality products and services. As part of its follow-up agenda, USAID/Rritje Albania and these six companies, joined by others, are planning to hold a series of high-level discussions with the newly elected Government of Albania, including the Prime Minister, which has touted promotion of Albania's manufacturing and export industries in its election platform. To date, Rritje Albania support for these companies, from sourcing, design, marketing and exhibition of new brand collections has approximately amounted to US\$ 73,295 or 38% of the total cost. The remaining 62% of total cost has been covered by the companies themselves. For a detailed summary please see tables in **Annex J** of this report.

In addition, Rritje Albania continued to strengthen the PUT's Department of Textiles and Fashion by including it in the BYOB-F initiative, involving faculty in firm level assistance, financing its participation in the Lineapelle fair, enhancing its curricula and internship program, and promoting PUT's services and testing facilities.

On April 26, 2013 the PUT organized a follow-up workshop to Lineapelle, bringing together faculty, students, the garment and footwear association and firms. Fifty-two participated, including the Picari owner. PUT professor and Rritje Albania consultant, Ermira Shehi, talked about the knowledge and experience she gained at Lineapelle and discussed areas to improve the university's teaching curricula in footwear. Other professors spoke of strengthening the PUT ties to the industry through services and programs, including CAD/CAM design, patternmaking, and testing. Participating students were very vocal about their desire to have meaningful internships and work experiences with companies.

A representative from the Business Albania Association noted the concern of businesses for a better qualified workforce in line with sector demands. He added that PUT's collaboration with Rritje Albania



PUT students exchange contact details with Picari owner during workshop on the Lineapelle fair experience, Tirana/April 2013



STTA Lecture on Footwear Design Process and Market Trends, Tirana/November 2012

in recent years marked a positive step towards strengthening the link and understanding between employers and its future workforce. At the end of the workshop, some of the PUT students had a chance to meet the owner of Picari, who promised to take four interns in the current school year as well as hire an additional three during the summer break.

While in Albania, Footwear Marketing Specialist John England toured the PUT's accredited testing facility and met with faculty to discuss the European market trends and challenges and delivered a well-attended student lecture on November 10, 2012 on topics of footwear design process, market trends and future opportunities for the Albanian footwear industry (see photo). Mr. England reviewed the footwear website, www.albanianfootwear.com, and made specific recommendations on design and content improvements to appeal to the eye and taste of foreign buyers. These suggested changes will be implemented in collaboration with AIDA, which is now in charge of managing the two garment and footwear industry sites created with project support.

Creating new market linkages with Scandinavian agent and buyers - In order to increase the sales volume of Albanian manufacturers and open new markets, Rritje Albania contacted ABMC Partners (ABMC), a Sweden-based company acting as a sales agent for the Scandinavia market. ABMC is a very strong agent that has exclusive rights to represent production and manufacturers at the new Simonsland facilities in Borås, Sweden. Since this region represents 50 percent of the total textile and garments exports to Sweden, this represents an excellent opportunity for Albanian garment and footwear manufacturers to establish a foothold in the Scandinavia market.

After providing information on its industry leaders, Rritje organized a visit to Albania of an ABMC representative in April 2013. During the visit ABMC met 11 companies specializing in shirts, jeans, knitwear, outerwear and footwear manufacturing and evaluated their product quality, production capabilities and standards, prices, and other features important to Scandinavian buyers. ABMC were very satisfied with the visit stating that most of the manufacturers met ABMC standards in terms of working conditions, quality, production capabilities, order flexibility and prices. In May 2013, ABMC paid a second visit to Albania accompanied by a Swedish buyer who wished to assess the manufacturers in person.

The results were outstanding as a mix of local garment and footwear firms assisted by Rritje Albania (Kler, Omega, NPV International, Bella Confex, Sloci, and Fital) signed contracts to be represented by ABMC Partners and the visiting buyer placed a test order of 800 shirts with Kler and a test order of 2,000 pants was placed with NPV. For footwear, Fital provided the agent and the buyer with a recently produced e-catalogue of its Spring/Summer 2014 collection; the feedback was very positive and a test order is anticipated. Similarly, Omega and ABMC sent samples to two other Swedish buyers and received very positive feedback. Sloci and Bella Confex were also believed to be a good match and both expect orders from new buyers after the samples they sent through ABMC are evaluated. ABMC Partners will continue with its efforts to identify appropriate buyers and develop new business opportunities for the newly established partners in Albania, and to that end it plans to carry out a robust marketing campaign in the following months. ABMC invited four companies (Kler, Omega, Fital and Ambra) to showcase their collections in a new show room at Simonsland, which it manages. Starting in November 2013 the four will display their collections at Simonsland and share the cost of the exhibit space, giving them a fixed sales point address and foothold in the Scandinavian market.

Regional cooperation for National Geographic Website Project on Western Balkans. In order to promote Albania as a desirable tourism destination, Rritje Albania continued last year's successful collaboration with USAID's regional competitiveness initiative (RCI) and six Western Balkan countries. The

partnership created and is operationalizing the *Western Balkans Geotourism Mapguide – Land of Discovery*⁷ (<http://www.balkansgeotourism.travel>), an interactive web portal hosted by the National Geographic. The portal highlights the cultural, historic, and natural assets unique to the Western Balkans. Last quarter, the portal was visited 16,116 times by 13,478 unique visitors, 82 percent of whom were new visitors. The number of unique visitors is 30 percent higher than during the January-March 2013 period.

Illustration III.A1.1 Western Balkans Geotourism Portal Snapshot



A positive outcome of this initiative is that the six countries involved formed the Western Balkans Geotourism Stewardship Council (WBGSC), which is establishing a Western Balkans Tourism Network and developing a positive brand/image for the region. The WBGSC meets monthly via Skype and has developed a membership package that is used by each country for their respective nominees to be featured on the website, including nomination criteria, score sheet, application form and fee, logo and promotional material, manual, contract, and so forth. This package alongside the Western Balkans Geotourism (WBG) portal business and marketing plan, and the MoU signed by the six participating countries have formalized and operationalized WBG portal in a sustainable manner. A mobile application of the WBG portal developed with USAID/RCI funding will be released shortly and promoted in each country by the WBGSC members.

In the first FY2013 quarter, Rritje Albania worked with Auron Expeditions, Albania's country representative to the WBGSC, to develop an itinerary for a WBGSC familiarization tour (Fam Tour) around Albania from April 3-7, 2013. This tour was preceded by an earlier one in Bosnia and Herzegovina in December 2012, and was followed by a third tour throughout Kosovo and Montenegro in May 2013. Besides discover and promote attractive tourist sites in the region, The Fam Tours were meant

⁷ Work on the Western Balkans portal started in April 2011 when Rritje Albania signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with USAID's RCI project and the National Geographic after the 2010 successful publication of the *Western Balkans supplement Land of Discovery: 46 Outstanding Ways to Experience Albania, Bosnia And Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia*, in partnership with the National Geographic Traveler magazine.

to foster greater collaboration and communication among the regional stakeholders involved in the initiative. This was the first time that WBGSC representatives visited Albania's key attractions, and their impressions were overwhelmingly positive and exceeded their expectations.

The project also supported the work of two videographers who came to Albania in June 2013 to film six themed mini-documentaries that will highlight the distinctive features of the countries on the WBG portal. The videos will capture the characteristic feel of the Western Balkans region, its cultural heritage and its people, based on six distinctive themes: *Crossroad of Cultures*, *Living Art*, *Outdoor Recreation*, *People*, *Food and Drink*, *Pristine Wilderness*, and *Sounds of Balkans*. A number of Albanian cultural and natural assets were filmed such as the Northern Alps, the Ionian Coast Riviera, Gjirokastra's Old Town and Bazaar, Korça and its unique culinary and cultural traditions, and Albanian music played by the renowned Qerimi family. The films will be about two to three minutes in length, in addition to six short 30-second videos on each theme and are expected to be released at the end of October 201. The final cuts were shared at the latest meeting of the WBGSC organized in collaboration with the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) from September 25-27 in Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina and the final videos will be available for broadcast through online channels, social media platforms, regional travel websites, as well as traditional media.



Behind the scenes of National Geographic's mini-documentaries on Western Balkans, filming in the south of Albania, June 2013

From May 14-15, 2013 the project and Auron Expeditions took part in a regional networking meeting organized by USAID's RCI project in Podgorica, Montenegro. The first day opened with a Western Balkans Photo Exhibition that included promotional photos of Albania produced with Rritje Albania support. The second day's activities focused on generating and sharing innovative ideas to promote the Western Balkans region, and to sustain the momentum of regional tourism cooperation through the work of the WBGSC and updates to the portal.

Based on an action plan finalized with project support, Auron Expeditions developed a list of potential Albania nominees to be featured in the portal. Roundtables planned for FY2013 to promote the WBG portal in Albania and explain nomination criteria and benefits to nominees will take place the first quarter of FY2014.

Supporting the National Tourism Agency to better promote Albania. In response to a request by the former Ministry of Tourism, Youth, Culture and Sports (MTYCS), a key project activity during the third quarter of FY2013 was to assist the NTA to develop a state-of-the-art national website for tourism. The website is conceptualized to serve as a virtual meeting place inviting tourists to learn more about Albania's historic, cultural, and natural attractions, access official tourism information, and get the latest news on tourism-related events. Rritje Albania worked with the MTYCS and the NTA to establish a joint Website Working Group (WWG) and build its capacities for managing the website in an effective and sustainable way.

With this in mind, the project's M&E/Communications Specialist developed and led a training workshop on Strategic Communications Planning, delivered in two parts on January 31 and February 6; the 22 participants represented various MTYCS Departments and the NTA. The aim was to provide participants with an overview of the strategic communications planning process, map audiences and analyze constraints and opportunities in order to guide the WWG towards developing clear communication goals and activities, as well as coordinate actions for timely implementation.

The workshop set the tone for the next WWG meeting on February 12, 2013 during which a concrete plan of action and timeline for the development of the website was finalized. The roles and responsibilities of the MTCYS, the NTA, and Rritje Albania in the website development were agreed to in April 2013 by the outgoing Minister of Tourism, Mr. Aldo Bumçi. In short, the MTYCS and the NTA agreed to research and collect the required information for the website content, while Rritje Albania developed and published a request for proposals (RFP) inviting the best ICT companies to bid to develop Albania's official tourism website (www.albaniantourism.com), to be owned and administered by the NTA.

"...Everyone assumes communication to be a perfunctory function that does not require much knowledge or skills. However, this workshop helped me realize that better communication and coordination was needed between various MTYCS departments and the NTA for us to work effectively together..."

Klodian Pajuni
Chief of Cabinet

DM Consulting was selected by a joint panel of the MTYCS, the NTA, and Rritje Albania and won the website tender. While DM Consulting worked on the technical aspects, in April 2013, Rritje Albania hired an Albanian tourism consultant, Ms. Alma Gerxhani, to coordinate the WWG's work on website content and follow-up on other related tasks. On May 17, 2013, the project supported a focus group meeting, led by Ms. Gerxhani and NTA Director Brikena Arapaj, with 10 representatives of the tourism industry. The aim of the focus group was to invite stakeholder suggestions on the desired features and content of the new NTA website. Suggestions were reflected in the website test version launched at the end of June 2013.

A key feature of the website is that local government operating in all of Albania's regions will be able to post content and updates to the website themselves. To this end, on September 18, 2013, USAID/Rritje Albania organized a training workshop for eight local government administrators of the Korça Region (comprised of three municipalities: Korça, Erseka and Pogradec) in order to give them the knowledge needed to post information on the key touristic features and happenings in the Korça region. The training was an important part of the process to ensure a timely, accurate flow of the latest tourism information from the region to the national level. Aside from covering technical aspects of submitting information, pictures and/or videos on the website, the DM Consulting trainer and NTA representatives facilitated an

open discussion with local government administrators to gather feedback for further improvements to the site. It is expected that the new website will be ready launched in time for the World Travel Market in London, United Kingdom from November 4-7, 2013 at which the new Albanian Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism (MUDT) will be an exhibitor. USAID/Rritje Albania is expected to further support the MUDT to promote Albanian tourism through production of six short videos/documentaries about Albania from the footage of the regional Western Balkans filming crew, who travelled in Albania from June 13-17, 2013.

Additional tourism promotional activities. Rritje Albania was pleased to learn that Albania was featured as the hot new destination in the two front-page spread of the 2013 tours catalogue developed by Gaea Tours. The Swiss travel agency was first introduced to Albania through its participation in a Fam Tour organized by USAID/Rritje Albania in October 2009. The foreign tour operators participating in that first tour had little prior knowledge of Albania as a tourist destination. A snapshot of the Gaea 2013 tours catalogue pages on Albania is shown to the right. For additional examples of how these foreign tour operators now promote Albania tour packages in their target markets, please follow the links below:

- Sabatours
http://www.sabtours.at/fileadmin/user_upload/kataloge/reisen_2013/index.html .
- Sunvil
<http://www.sunvil.co.uk/holidays/greece/holiday-ideas/private-cultural-tour-of-albania>
- Unique Travel
<http://www.uniquetravel.ch/d/hotels/?sub=21&cat=68>



Tours of Albania promoted to German-speaking tourists in Gaea Tours 2013 catalogue, June 2013

During the third quarter of FY2013, Rritje Albania collaborated with the Cooperazione Italiana allo Sviluppo (CESVI) to help re-launch the official website of Përmet (<http://www.visitpermet.com/>) in time for the opening of its tourist season in May 2013. Përmet, often referred to as the City of Roses, is known to be one of the greenest places in Albania and is famed for its breathtaking hiking trails, rafting in the Vjosa river canyons, folk music, and its culinary tradition of local fruit and nut preserves. Rritje Albania helped the Përmet municipality to organize a tourism festival featuring local products and folk music at the opening of its tourist season and assisted the Permet Tourism Information Office and the Cultural Centre to develop a host of marketing materials, including a large banner displayed at the town entrance with the catchy tagline *“In Përmet you will find everything else but the sea from the sea,”* (see **Annex F** in this report). The extensive local and national media coverage of this event helped promote Përmet to a wider audience with little knowledge of this beautiful part of Albania.

Promoting Albania as a Desirable Tourist Destination.

During the second quarter of FY2013, the project provided marketing assistance to two of its tourism clients to exhibit in major international fairs. Project grantee, the Albanian Rafting Group (ARG) exhibited for the first time at the ITB Berlin, the world's leading travel trade show. The 47th edition of the ITB Berlin fair was held from March 6-10, 2013, with 10,086 companies from 188 countries presenting tourism products and services. This was a great opportunity for the ARG, whose activities are having an impressive impact in the local region of Berat and in promoting rafting tourism in Albania. Rritje Albania assisted the ARG in developing and printing a new brochure and marketing materials that were disseminated to B2B contacts visiting the ARG stand. The ARG is following up with three contacts from Spain, Norway and Poland. A group from Spain visited Albania in March 2013 to explore rafting with the ARG in the Osumi canyons - a nice start to ARG's greatest tourist season yet.



Blerina Ago, ARG representative (in blue jacket) and others from the NTA strike a pose in front of Albania's booth at the IBT Berlin fair, Germany/March 2013

Albanian tour operator, Gulliver OK, was another Rritje client to exhibit for the first time at the Ferien Messe Wien, an international event for leisure and holiday travel, and the leading tourism trade fair in Austria. The 38th edition of the Ferien-Messe Wien was held January 10-13, 2013 and included 750 exhibitors from over 70 countries, and welcomed 148,000 visitors in four days.

Earth Day festivities to promote sustainable tourism development in Albania. On International Earth Day, Rritje Albania supported the efforts of the ARG to organize an awareness-raising activity to clean up the Osumi riverside in Berat. More than 130 students from local high schools, as well as representatives of the local government, business community, donors, and other actors participated in the Earth Day activities. Clean river beds are important for tourism development, and the involvement of these stakeholders, including youth, is essential. Prior to the event, high school students submitted essays, paintings, and handicrafts in three different competitions themed around issues of environmental protection. The winners were announced during a small ceremony with ARG offering free rafting trips as winning prizes. Similarly, Rritje Albania supported Destination Management Organization in Korça (DMO), another grantee and local organization operating in the Korça region, to organize a culinary festival, handicrafts, and a food market to celebrate Earth Day in the scenic countryside of Dardha. This was



High school students celebrate after completing Earth Day clean-up action. Berat, April 2013

the first time that an event of this kind was organized in Korca and it featured Dardha's natural beauty and cultural and culinary traditions, which help make it a popular destination with local and foreign tourists alike. The event attracted 170 participants from communities around Korça, Pogradec, and Elbasan. This was an opportunity to showcase Dardha's impressive walking trails and traditional handicrafts made by local artisan women who benefited from project support in the past.

Participants in these two sustainable tourism development activities were part of more than 2 billion people around the world who celebrated the 43rd anniversary of Earth Day. For a more detailed list of activities that took place in Dardha, please see the Dardha Earth Day program developed with project support, attached in **Annex F** of this report.



From left: Dardha walking trail marked with project support; food and handicrafts market and local food tasting during Earth Day, Dardha, April 22, 2013

Albanian ICT industry exhibits at the CeBIT 2013 fair. CeBIT is the world's largest trade fair showcasing digital IT and telecommunications solutions for home and work environments; for five days CeBIT is the pulsing heart of the digital industry. The key attendees are users from industry, the wholesale/retail sector, skilled trades, banks, the services sector, government agencies, science and all users passionate about technology. CeBIT offers an international platform for current industry trends, networking, and product presentations. More than 4,000 companies from over 70 countries showcased the latest cutting-edge hardware and software innovations at this year's CeBIT fair from March 5-9, 2013. The Albanian IT Association (AITA) and two of its members, Tetra Solutions and DM Consulting, as well as the PROTIK ICT Resource Center and the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA) shared a booth at

CeBIT. Rritje Albania provided co-financing support to AITA and the other participating institutions by co-financing exhibit space costs and training AITA staff on trade fair participation, setting up an attractive exhibition stand and managing B2B meetings. Aside from serving as a good B2B platform, the CeBIT fair increased the visibility of AITA and improved its capacity to participate in future fairs.

Supporting Albanian companies to establish regional business contacts. For the second year, Rritje Albania assisted the Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development (CEED) Albania to organize a regional B2B matchmaking event between service-oriented businesses and organizations from Albania (27), Kosovo (15), and Macedonia (30) on April 26, 2013. Participating companies reported an average of 6.4 B2B meetings per company, five new collaborations established, and 18 collaborations generated. The participants' feedback provided through a post-event questionnaire indicated a high interest in such activities and a high expectation for concrete business deals as a result of post-B2B negotiations. Rritje Albania also teamed up with the PROTİK ICT Resource Center and the Italian ICT industry association, Confindustria, from Bari Italy to organize a two-day B2B conference and matchmaking event between Albanian and Italian ICT companies. Italian Ambassador to Albania, Mr. Massimo Gaiani, delivered a speech at the opening that emphasized the history and importance of nurturing good business relations between the Albanian and Italian people. Seven Italian companies sent representatives. This was a great opportunity for the 22 participating Albanian companies interested in expanding their network of business contacts in Italy.



Regional B2B Matchmaking event in collaboration with CEED and Rritje Albania, Tirana, April 2013



B2B Matchmaking Event in collaboration with PROTİK ICT Resource Centre and Italian Confindustria Tirana, May 22-23, 2013

A2. Compliance with International Standards Improved

ISO certification is not necessarily required in the garment and footwear sectors because standards are varied and often buyer-specific. However, project activities supported Albanian enterprises to increase quality control and acquire certifications in global standards through continued implementation of the AAQM program for hotels and the Software Process Improvement (SPI)-IT Mark program in ICT.

AAQM program. The AAQM program is Albania's first private sector-led initiative to provide a standardized system for evaluating the quality of tourist accommodations. The AAQM program tackles several issues which impede tourism development in Albania, including: (1) the lack of a credible standardization or accreditation system, (2) poor product development and marketing, based on a limited understanding of tourism trends and market demands, (3) limited networking opportunities to exchange knowledge and best practices among different actors, and (4) little recognition of Albania's image as a tourist destination in the world marketplace. On the other hand, the AAQM program enables ATA to increase its membership and sustainability by offering better services to paying members. Through this program, hotels are evaluated based on sustainable tourism criteria and then awarded a gold, silver, or bronze classification that is published on travel websites and publications.



AAQM Program in Numbers through 30/09/2013

- 85 applications submitted
- 63 AAQM Awarded
 - 6 Gold Awards
 - 53 Silver Awards
 - 14 Bronze Awards
 - 11 Special Awards
- 52 new paying ATA members

Prior to the AAQM program, the ATA had more than 200 members but fewer than 20 had paid their membership fee of \$150 per year. Thanks to the AAQM program, a total of 85 AAQM applications were received and 52 hotels became new paying members. Since AAQM awards are only valid for a limited period of three years, the assessments must be repeated for hotels to remain in the program.

During the first quarter of FY2013, a total of seven hotels were awarded AAQM certifications and special prizes during ATA's 5th Annual Assembly Conference, December 18, 2012 which is described in greater detail under public-private events in Section III, Part B of this report. Also in the first quarter, three new AAQM assessors were trained by IDRA on November 15-16, 2012, with project support in anticipation of more hotels entering the program. The following table summarizes the AAQM results achieved this year.

Table III. A5. List of AAQM Hotels Awarded during FY2013

No.	Name of Hotel Assessed	Location	Assessment Date	Award Date	Special Prize Given
AAQM Gold Category					
1.	Hotel Socrat	Tirana	30/11/2012	18/12/2012	
AAQM Silver Category					
2.	Hotel Arber	Tirana	30/11/2012	18/12/2012	
3.	Hotel Arvi	Durres	17/10/2012	18/12/2012	
4.	Hotel Kalemi	Gjirokastra	26/11/2012	18/12/2012	<i>Essential Albanian Architecture</i>
5.	Hotel Llogara	Vlora	10/11/2012	18/12/2012	
6.	Hotel Vila Belvedere	Durres	26/11/2012	18/12/2012	<i>Albanian Cuisine</i>
AAQM Bronze Category					

No.	Name of Hotel Assessed	Location	Assessment Date	Award Date	Special Prize Given
7.	Hotel White Dream	Tirana	05/10/2012	18/12/2012	

Despite the AAQM program's fast start to the year with seven hotels assessed and awarded in December 2012, continuing implementation of the program stalled as result of the challenge faced due to lack of willingness on the part of the Albania Tourism Association (ATA) to manage the program in the manner that was previously envisioned and to which it was agreed. As a result, the challenge to sustain the AAQM program was to convince ATA to play its part and take ownership of the AAQM program implementation according to the stated term of agreement with the USAID/Rritje Albania.

As part of its AAQM exit strategy, in June 2013 the project met with the ATA board of directors to state that the project would no longer be driving the AAQM program and that the ATA needed to fulfill all of its roles and responsibilities as codified in the AAQM Operations Manual, written a year earlier with the ATA Executive Director and approved by the ATA board. In particular, the ATA showed reluctance to embrace the requirement of separation of duties that the project had established between the ATA, the assessment agency (IDRA) and the multi-stakeholder AAQM assessment evaluation committee to ensure that AAQM awardees went through a transparent, rigorous and independent assessment to determine their award level. Also, the ATA was unable to articulate and establish a full-cost-recovery fee to AAQM members for their required reassessments every two years in order to remain in the program. With these two critical questions unanswered, starting from the second quarter FY2013 the project withheld its support to pay for new hotel assessments, to which it had agreed, until the ATA affirmed through its actions that it would run the program sustainably. In addition, the project withheld distribution of a package of AAQM-branded materials for awardees to use in their hotels, which included safe hygiene posters for kitchens, "green" notices for guestrooms to voluntarily reduce laundering of linen, promotional materials, and other items of interest. The intent of the package was to induce hotels up for reassessment to stay in the program and to create a positive AAQM brand image amongst hotel staff and guests.

In order to get the ATA to make a decision, in August 2013 Rritje Albania's Chief of Party, Victor Luboyeski, and its Tourism Specialist, Nevila Popa, met with Zak Topuzi, ATA board member and chairman of its hotel sector to summarize the project's financial and technical support to the ATA through the AAQM Program and note the tenuous status of the AAQM program implementation as a result of ATA's inaction. In the end, it was agreed that Mr. Topuzi, who is a strong supporter of the AAQM program as well as the owner of a hotel that wants to undergo its AAQM reassessment, would raise the topic at the next ATA board meeting and urge its members to do what was necessary to run the program in a sustainable manner.

As FY2013 drew to a close in late September, the ATA president, its executive director and Mr. Topuzi announced to the project that it decided to follow the AAQM operations manual as written, that it would charge full-cost recovery reassessment fees and that it wanted to immediately begin to schedule assessments to clear the backlog of more than 20 hotels that applied to join the AAQM program as well as roughly an equal number of hotels applying for reassessment.

Sharing knowledge and experience of IT Mark Certification. In order to develop Albania's ICT industry, the project assists firms to compete internationally and successfully gain international recognition by adopting software development best practices. Following the introduction of the SPI-IT Mark Certification Program last year in collaboration with European Software Institute - Center Eastern Europe

(ESI-CEE), USAID’s RCI, and AITA, five leading Albanian ICT companies applied for and underwent the intensive process of IT Mark certification. IT Mark is a software process improvement model based on the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) designed by Carnegie Mellon and its Software Engineering Institute (SEI). IT Mark was designed specifically for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). After introducing Albania to IT Mark in May 2011, Rritje Albania contracted ESI CEE to assist Albanian ICT firms through an intensive 18-month process that concluded with three firms receiving IT Mark Basic Certification in September of FY2012 and one firm receiving IT Mark Premium Certification in early FY2013. A fifth firm, Tetra, withdrew midway into the program due to high sales demand from its clients that left it with inadequate internal resources to carry out the necessary changes in its operations. On May 14, 2013, Rritje Albania teamed up with the ESI CEE and the PROTIK ICT Resource Center to hold a workshop on the results of the year-long IT Mark Certification program. The workshop was meant to increase ICT industry awareness about ICT process improvement practices and its benefits from firms that successfully achieved certification.



Albanian companies share experience of receiving IT Mark Certification, Tirana/ May 2013

Table III.A3. FY2012-2013 Summary of SPI-IT Mark Program Results

No.	Company	Period of Implementation and Certification	Notes/Certification Obtained
1	DM Consulting	Completed in FY2012	IT Mark + Service Delivery Certification
2	Ikub -INFOSOFT	Completed in FY2012	IT Mark Certification
3	INTECH+	Completed in FY2012	IT Mark Certification
4	INFOSOFT SD	Completed in FY2013	IT Mark Premium Certification

A3. Promoting Greater Public-Private Stakeholder Consultation to Enhance Sector Governance and Competitiveness

Helping the private sector achieve a shared vision for industry development and a clear agenda for public policy and legal and regulatory reform is a critical milestone of effective Public-Private-Dialogue (PPD). To this end, outcomes of project efforts during this reporting period relate to support and assistance given to the Garment and Footwear Stakeholders Working Group (GFSWG) and the IPR Stakeholders Group to articulate their input on important issues that impact private sector development and trade and investment opportunities for Albanian companies. Since the outputs of the PPD process and the related events associated with these policy developments are captured under the relevant Productivity Component indicators, these processes and other project PPD activities are described at greater length in the following Section III, Part B of this report.

B. Private Sector Productive Capacity Improved (PIR 2)

The results of project activities contributing to the improvement of private productivity capacity are captured at two levels, or KRAs. At the industry level, the project's enhancement of sector governance and competitiveness can be seen through the increased use of various public-private mechanisms, many of which were established and/or energized by the project. At the firm level, project activities were shaped or driven by a number of programs designed to enhance business competitiveness through the adoption of better management practices and/or improved technologies. It is important to note that progress in this area requires a behavioral shift on the part of company management to ensure application of the assistance provided.

Therefore, the project pays close attention to not only what constraints its technical assistance addresses, but how its support is delivered and received. In this vein, initiatives such as the AAQM, BYOB-Garment, BYOB-Footwear, the Small Grants program, and follow-up to the Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP), were means by which Rritje Albania improves private productive capacity. These initiatives bring about both firm-level and industry-wide impact as companies receiving U.S. Government (USG) assistance become role models for others and trigger demand for innovation, improved quality standards, and skilled labor.

B1. Promoting Greater Public-private Stakeholder Dialogue to Enhance Sector Governance and Competitiveness

The GFSWG, the IPR Stakeholders Group, and Regional Tourism Stakeholders Group and *PROTIK* ICT Resource Center were the key public-private mechanisms this year through which policy issues were raised and discussed. The following table summarizes the PPD events supported by the project during this year.

Table III.B1.1. Summary of PPD Events during FY2013

Activity/ Event	Location	Date	No. of Institutions	No. of Firms	No. of Participants		
					F	M	Total
Opening Ceremony of PROTIK Centre	Tirana	10 Oct 2012	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
IPR Stakeholders Meeting	Tirana	22 Oct 2012	3	1	5	4	9
Garment and Footwear Stakeholders Group Meeting	Tirana	23 Oct 2012	4	0 ⁸	8	4	12
National Conference on IPR Issues	Tirana	6 Dec 2012	4	9	19	21	40
ATA 5th Annual Conference and AAQM Awards Ceremony	Tirana	18 Dec 2012	6	72	70	68	138
IPR Stakeholders Meeting	Tirana	15 Jan 2013	4	1	7	4	11

⁸ Although no firms were present, the garment and footwear industries were represented by the NCGFM business association representative, Mr. Bardhi Sejdarsi.

Roundtable on Amendments to Law No. 9947, dated 07.07.2008, <i>On Industrial Property Rights</i> with GDPT	Tirana	7 Mar 2013	12	17	25	11	36
2nd Microsoft Imagine Cup Conference 2013	Tirana	15 Mar 2013	15	6	44	80	124
PROTIK Advisory Board Meeting	Tirana	21 Mar 2013	1	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
Roundtable 1 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Fier	25 Apr 2013	3	15	4	15	19
GFSWG Meeting on Garment and Footwear Industry Folder and One-Pagers	Tirana	14 May 2013	5	2	6	5	11
Roundtable 2 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Shkodra	16 May 2013	3	15	9	9	18
STTA facilitates Focus Group meeting with key stakeholders on design, content and establishment of new NTA website (A. Gerxhani)	Tirana	17 May 2013	3	8	7	9	16
ACIT Trade Report 2012 Official Launch Conference	Tirana	17 May 2013	4	0	16	18	34
Roundtable 3 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Korca	22 May 2013	3	15	6	17	23
Roundtable 4 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Durrës	6 Jun 2013	3	8	1	10	11
Roundtable 5 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Tirana	13 Jun 2013	4	16	23	18	41
DMO Korca Grant: Meeting of public-private stakeholders on creating a sustainable network of info-corners	Korça	16 Aug 2013	3	2	2	8	10
BkVF Tirana: Meeting of Stakeholders and Partners to Attract Interest and Commitment	Tirana	5 Sep 2013	1	5	8	12	20
PROTIK: ICT industry stakeholders consultation with newly elected Minister of Innovation and Public Administration (M. Harito)	Tirana	23 Sep 2013	7	8	24	42	66
KRA 2.1.1 Results		20 events	77	200	284	355	639

Raising awareness of IPR in Albania. Intellectual property rights (IPR)⁹ strongly affect the health of the business environment in many ways. Without safeguarding their ideas, businesses cannot reap the full benefits of their inventions, and are less likely to focus on new research and development. Additionally, the protection and enforcement of IPRs is part of Albania's integration agenda¹⁰ into the EU. Public awareness and the provision of a coherent framework for the protection of all types of intellectual activities help increase a country's competitiveness and ensure its economic growth and social progress. For these reasons, the project continued to play a leading role in supporting and coordinating actions between the most important public and private sector stakeholders who are, as a result, beginning to coordinate on the enforcement of IPR in Albania. The IPR working group that was formed last year by Rritje Albania, AmCham and Microsoft mapped out all GoA actors, donors and other actors involved in IPR work with a view to establishing an understanding of the IPR landscape, including unclear enforcement competencies and cooperation challenges between different public institutions dealing with IPR in Albania. Other findings were the lack of institutional capacities, the absence of standard procedures for dealing with related issues, the new IPR law and new trade mark and patent law and their related Criminal Code amendments still pending approval in parliament, and the acute need for generating greater public awareness of IPR issues.

To help address these issues, the project co-funded the second annual *National Conference on Intellectual Property Rights*, which took place on December 6, 2012, in partnership with AmCham, Microsoft, Acromax and Abcom. The conference topics included: the protection of IPR, the approximation of Albanian IPR legislation to EU standards, as well as the critical challenges faced by central government and implementing agencies in enforcing IPR rights in Albania. Key note speakers included the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Mr. Edmond Haxhinasto, the U.S Ambassador to Albania, Mr. Alexander Arvizu and the Head of the EU Delegation to Albania, Mr. Ettore Sequi, followed by a number of private sector stakeholders presenting and discussing several case studies of IPR infringements and their cost to companies and the Albanian economy.

The aim of the conference was to bring together public and private sector representatives to raise awareness of the IPR legislative reforms still pending parliamentary approval that will lead to: the creation of the



Second Annual National Conference on Intellectual Property Rights, Tirana/December18, 2012

⁹ Intellectual Property (IP) rules were introduced for the first time in the multilateral trading system through the World Trade Organization's *Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)*, negotiated in the 1986-1994 Uruguay Rounds.

¹⁰ The GoA adopted Albania's National Intellectual Property Strategy 2010-2015 in September 2010. This strategy defines key objectives during this period, including: a new copyright law to be adopted; a law regulating the establishment of the Internal Market Inspectorate related to IP protection; and amendments to the current Albanian Penal Code recognizing counterfeiting as a criminal offense, to be approved in 2013.

Central IPR Inspectorate, a new Law on Copyrights and other related rights, and IPR amendments to the Albanian Criminal Code to help resolve at least 800 cases of IPR violations filed in court over the past few years. The IPR Stakeholders Group was tasked to follow through on recommendations emerging from the national conference.

Following the conference, Rritje Albania collaborated with the General Directorate of Patents and Trademarks (GDPT) and the Central Inspectorate (CI) to deliver, around the country, a series of five roundtables aimed at informing the business community on reform and amendments to two key legislations affecting the private sector, the *Law 9947, On Industrial Designs, dated July 7, 2008* and the *Law 1043, On Inspections, dated June 16, 2011*. Changes to the first law cover aspects of industrial property rights with regards to patents, inventions, designs, trademarks, and online registration process. On the other hand, changes to the second law are meant to ensure public interest while guaranteeing increased inspections effectiveness, reduced administrative burden of inspections on businesses, and protection of businesses against potential corruptive practices on the part of inspectors. These roundtables drew the interest of 107 participants representing 67 companies and several public institutions, private businesses, and business associations such as the ATA, the AITA, the NCGFM, and the AmCham.

A technical panel of GDPT and CI specialists delivered a series of presentations that provided participants with practical information on the process of registering industrial property patents and trademarks, the elements of industrial property design and geographic indicators, related fees and protection against industrial property falsifiers, the advantages of patterns and trademarks registration for business competitiveness, as well as the rights, rules and new inspection procedures designed to reduce the number of inspection days and high administrative burden on businesses. The expert presentations were followed by lively discussions and comments by noted business companies and private sector representatives, who shared both positive experiences and frustrations with past business inspections. Several business representatives in Korça raised their concern for a greater need for public-private consultation, especially at the regional level, on reforms to the legislative regulatory framework before such reforms are undertaken and approved. In particular, businesses in Fier noted a critical lack of information on patents and the registration process on their part, and welcomed the knowledge and expertise of GDPT representatives in explaining the process.



Roundtables 1 and 4 with regional stakeholders on Amendments to Laws on Industrial Designs and Inspections, April – June, 2013

Participants in Tirana were also able to discuss interesting case studies highlighting both challenges and advantages of trademark registration processes and the legal recourse for seeking industrial property protection, such as the case of Hotel Mondial revealed by Mr. Zak Topuzi, Head of the Albanian Tourism Association (ATA). During these roundtables, the head of GDPT, Mr. Safet Sulaj assured participants that the GDPT and its technical experts will carefully consider the issues raised, so that the proposed amendments accurately reflect Albanian private sector concerns and provide the same level of IPR protection as elsewhere in Europe and in accordance with EU directives on the subject.

The table below provides a detailed summary of private sector participation at these roundtables by city.

Table III.B1.2. Summary of IPR Roundtables in April-June 2013

Date	Activity	City	Participants	Companies
25 Apr 2013	Roundtable 1 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Fier	19	15
16 May 2013	Roundtable 2 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Shkodra	18	15
22 May 2013	Roundtable 3 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Korça	23	15
6 June 2013	Roundtable 4 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Durrës	11	8
13 June 2013	Roundtable 5 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Tirana	41	16
Total			112	69

It is important to note that Rritje Albania's closer collaboration with the GDPT and CI came as a result of the project's key role in coordinating actions between members of the IPR Stakeholders Group. This collaboration was formalized between the project and these two public institutions in April 2013.

Increasing trade knowledge through publication and dissemination of the Albania Trade Report 2012.

The much-awaited publication of the *Albania Foreign Trade Report 2012: New Developments and Challenges*, researched and produced by the Albanian Centre for International Trade and Competitiveness (ACIT) and co-financed by the project, drew significant public and media attention at the end of May 2012. The ACIT Trade Report 2012 provided the latest macro-economic growth and trade data for policy makers and business representatives to develop future strategies and decisions for business and trade investments. A total of 34 participants representing key public and private stakeholders, including GoA agencies, private businesses and associations, NGOs, donor organizations



Conference with public and private sector stakeholders on Albania Foreign Trade Report 2012, Tirana, May 2013

and other international institutions were brought together to discuss the findings of the report at a conference held on May 17, 2013.

—During 2012, the highest increase of exports is in minerals, fuels, and electricity (by 29.6%) followed by food, beverages and tobacco, while exports of machinery and equipment, construction materials and metals, textile and footwear (inward processed products), leather, chemicals and so forth decreased,” pointed out Mr. Ahmet Mançellari, ACIT external expert. —Products in the inward processing (IP) regime (as those of apparel and footwear industries) continue to account for the main part of country’s exports although in a declining share during the last years (from 63.4% in 2009 to 50.3% in 2011 and 43% in 2012”. However, two facts need to be kept in mind when interpreting this statement. The first is that textile and footwear are counted as inward processed products, where inward processing (IP) refers to fasson work, which is the processing of garment and footwear raw materials and work in process that are first imported by Albanian firms and then exported as a finished or semi-finished product. When high value added manufacturers build their own brand from sourcing their own raw materials to finished full-cycle production, their exports are no longer counted under the IP totals. Also, because Albania production of minerals, fuels and electricity showed a large absolute increase in 2012 over 2011, their share of total exports likewise increased vis a vis garment and footwear IP exports, which did increase year-on-year but to a lesser extent than minerals, fuels and electricity.

“I am really impressed by the quality data and information included in the annual ACIT report... This publication continues to be a key instrument and best source of reliable information for private businesses and other institutions in Albania”

**- Bardhi Sejdarasi
NCGM Executive Director**

As the report notes, USAID’s Rritje Albania project played a key role in building Albania’s garment and footwear sector competitiveness: *—In 2012, assisted by foreign donors (primarily USAID and GIZ), an increasing number of Albania’s leading garment businesses are now designing and producing their own brand and collections. Starting as a pilot project, this initiative has helped these companies to find new markets and diversify their geographic sales and partners, which has always been one of the main challenges for the sector. These operators are now moving out of the inward processing (IP) regime and export under their own label, which can be considered an important success. The key result was the successful development of “Made in Albania” products and brands that are now being marketed and sold internationally and domestically. The success of these companies and their products might also ultimately serve to promote Albania to the international garment and footwear industry as a secure and dependable source of high-quality products and services. This successful initiative has been extended to the footwear sector for 2013, in order to establish the same model and create the premises for similar success stories. These selected companies not only have become more successful in exporting independently, but also are playing the role of main suppliers for Albanian companies which still work under IP regime, by engaging them through sub-contracts and expanding their activities. After more than a decade of flourishing of the inward processing sector in Albania, the crisis and its consequences are having some positive effects in motivating companies on upgrading their regime and diversifying their exporting destinations,”* highlights the ACIT Trade Report.

In her remarks for the occasion, USAID/Albania Program Director Clare Mason used the opportunity to note the work and contribution of the Rritje Albania project in helping to strengthen and develop the competitiveness of Albania’s key export sectors. In addition, she emphasized the importance of the ACIT Trade Report in understanding the recent performance and trends of Albania’s trade flows in light of the current Eurozone crisis and its potential impact on Albania’s economic performance in 2013. The trade

report conference was covered widely in all news editions and special headline articles of national media and newspapers. According to ACIT's follow-up report on the event, Albanian economic experts continue to cite and refer to the ACIT Trade Report 2012 in their public comments, analysis, and discussions of foreign trade trends and developments. The report can be found on ACIT's website, <http://www.acit-al.org>.

Creating a sustainable forum for PPD through the Garment and Footwear Stakeholder Working Group.

The project's efforts to establish and strengthen the GFSWG as a credible forum for PPD are paying off in terms of stakeholders increasingly seeing and approaching the GFSWG as the medium for presenting project proposals and strategies of intervention with a view to favorably impacting the competitive development of the garment and footwear sectors. With close project support and mentoring, the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA) is being primed to play the lead role in coordinating activities and exchanging knowledge and information between the GFSWG actors. During this year, AIDA held a series of meetings and interviews with individual members of the GFSWG to help consolidate the strategic long term priorities for each target sector. Furthermore this year, the project hired a local STTA marketing consultant to support AIDA in researching and developing two high quality industry brochures that will be used to promote export sales of Albanian garment and footwear products. The brochures provide an attractive overview of the two sectors in English and Albanian, detailed information on Albanian garment and footwear manufacturers, general contacts of the industry associations and events, references to the two industry websites developed with project supports, a section on "Why Buy/Invest in Albania" and so forth. With project support, AIDA utilized the GFSWG to reach out to 30 garment and 15 footwear companies interested in being part of this initiative, and gather their ideas and feedback on the concept and content of the two brochures. Once the brochures are finalized, the project will support AIDA in putting together a marketing and dissemination plan for reaching the desired audiences, both locally and internationally.

Building a positive image and strengthening the voice of Albania's tourism industry. In December 2012, the project assisted ATA to organize and hold its 5th Annual Assembly Conference at which seven hotels joined the AAQM program. The awards ceremony and the conference's main topic, *Responsible*

Tourism: Path to Future Economic Development" drew a large crowd of public and private stakeholders, including tourism businesses, associations, donor organizations, public institutions, and national media. Recognizing the impact of tourism on the country's economy and employment, the conference serves as an open public-private forum for discussing critical opportunities and challenges for ensuring sustainable and responsible tourism in Albania.

USAID Mission Director Jim Barnhart Williams delivered remarks noting USAID's close supportive partnership with the ATA, the GoA and others to work at the policy and industry-levels to address legislative requirements for



AAQM Awards Ceremony held during ATA 5th Annual Assembly Conference, Tirana/18 December 2012

tourism development, promote industry-wide quality standards through the AAQM program, promoting Albania as a desirable tourism destination through participation in the National Geographic's Western Balkans Geotourism mapguide, and supporting the National Territorial Planning Agency in rolling out comprehensive land-use plans that foster growth while safeguarding the environment. He cautioned that *–Albania's beauty and authenticity are threatened by unplanned, private investments... that risk the long-term attractiveness of pristine areas*", and thus urged all stakeholders that are engaged in Albania's tourism future *–to make land use planning a top priority.*"

A similar message was also echoed in the speech by Deputy German Ambassador to Albania, Mr. Eric Tindrup, who noted the need to make progress in the areas of waste management, decreasing pollution, reversing illegal constructions and appropriately protecting world heritage sites. Expert presentations focused on discussion of ATA's 2012 Tourism Climate Index, Annual Report and 2013 Work Plan, on the relevance and future application of the draft copyrights law to the tourism industry, the issue of VAT reduction for tourism businesses, the delayed draft tourism law prepared with project support in FY2011, and the launch of the AAQM website www.authenticalbania.com. The conference was also marked by two prestigious industry awards ceremonies relating to the Albania Tourism Awards for the best Albanian tourism companies of the year, and AAQM Awards for seven new qualifying hotels.



*Public-Private Partners Inaugurate Albania's First ICT Training and Resource Centre (PROTIK)
Tirana/October 10, 2012*

Building the capacity of the PROTIK ICT Resource Center. A major project milestone achieved at the start of FY2013 was the opening and inauguration of the first PROTIK ICT Resource Center¹¹ on October 10, 2013. The PROTIK ICT Resource Center was created by a public-private partnership that was formalized on October 24, 2011 when the Albanian-American Development Foundation (AADF), the GoA, USAID, Microsoft, Cisco, and Altelecom, signed an MOU in the presence of the Albanian Prime Minister. PROTIK's mission is to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the Albanian ICT community by serving a hub of activity for all public and private sector actors in the industry.

Ritje Albania's assistance for PROTIK during this year consisted of supporting the process of developing and implementing a state-of-the-art-interactive website. A request for proposals (RFP) was issued in February 2013 and by April a subcontract was awarded to a local firm, DM Consulting. By August 2013, the test site work was largely completed and the website went to a live beta version in September 2013. (www.PROTIK.org)

¹¹ PROTIK is the Albanian acronym adopted as the name of the ICT Resource center, which means being pro information and communications technologies.

“...The training by the Communications Specialist of USAID/Rritje Albania’s was really helpful as it provided me with a holistic understanding of the strategic communications process and concrete examples of how I can help improve coordination and communication with my other colleagues at PROTIK. I am already using many of the communications materials and templates that the trainer gave me in order to streamline our internal communications processes, and also develop a strategic communications document for our organization. She also gave us a lot of good ideas for utilizing Facebook and other social media channels to promote PROTIK activities and attract the attention of potential users and collaborators...”

**- Ines Bendi
PROTIK Communications Officer**

As part of the project’s pledge to build the capacities of PROTIK’s new staff, Rritje Albania’s M&E/Communications Specialist, Ms. Tana Lala-Pritchard led a training workshop on Strategic Communications on March 8, 2013. PROTIK employees were introduced to the nine-step process of planning strategic communications and the use of various interactive exercises to develop clear communication goals, tools and activities that will help improve staff coordination in external communications with stakeholders.

Since its inception a year ago, PROTIK conducted more than 85 events for more than 2,500 participants that included such successful projects and activities as the Start-up Weekend, Young Innovator’s Club, Internship Lab, Business Speed Dating, Tech Thursday, and Microsoft Friday. A detailed report on the activities of the PROTIK ICT Resource Center during FY2013 can be found in **Annex K**.

Public-Private Consultation on the new ICT Sector Strategy with the Minister of Innovation and Public Administration. On September, 23, 2013 USAID/Rritje Albania participated at the ICT Strategy Stakeholders Consultation Meeting with the newly elected Minister for Innovation and Public Administration Ms. Milena Harito, hosted by PROTIK, which organized the event in collaboration with the AITA. In attendance were 66 participants representing private sector firms, government and academia. This meeting represented a unique opportunity to discuss key ICT sector issues and concerns for the newly elected Minister to consider as the GoA develops its new ICT sector strategic agenda.

Following presentations from major GoA agencies and AITA, discussions focused on: (1) the provision of fiscal incentives for ICT firms, (2) the need for a transparent bidding process for firms seeking government contracts, and (3) the need to fill the workforce supply-demand gap between educational institutions and the competency needs of employers. USAID/Rritje Albania project was represented by Mr. Victor Luboyeski, Chief of Party who outlined the USAID/ Rritje Albania project’s contributions to the development of the Albanian ICT sector and highlighted sustainability issues for the future.



Public-Private Consultation on the new ICT Sector Strategy with the Minister of Innovation and Public Administration, Tirana/ September 2013

B2. Improving Private Sector Productive Capacity through Better Management Practices and Improved Technologies

Developing high-quality Albanian brands and building garment and footwear industry sustainability through the BYOB program. In addition to ongoing improvements in trade and investment knowledge among BYOB garment and footwear companies, participating BYOB firms are also expected to make a number of productive capacity changes in the coming months as they develop new collections for the Spring/Summer 2014 and Fall/Winter 2014/2015 season.

Considering the lengthy nature of the BYOB process, these changes take time to materialize and capture. The table below provides a visual illustration of the needed improvements that are expected to occur in BYOB-F firms, considering their varying present competency levels and the different types and extent of assistance required, as noted in assessments conducted by short term experts hired by Rritje Albania and the businesses themselves.

Table III.B2.I. Summary of Expected Productivity Enhancements for BYOB Footwear

Assistance Type by Company	Alba	Fital	Donianna	Picari	Mito	Hotova	Mastor	Patrik	Endi	Berttoni	Imess Alb
Design assistance/range building											
Pattern Cutting/bulk development											
Branding/marketing Materials											
Formal Costing System											
Material/component Purchasing											
Layout improvements/ Ind. engineer											
Productivity improvement/ Ind. engineer											
Formal Quality Management Systems											
<i>Color legend by level of assistance/impact</i>				Low			Medium			High	

The BYOB-F companies are currently using tools such as the *Standard Costing Sheet* and the *Footwear Supply Chain Spreadsheet*, developed by STTA John England, in order to help them manage in a timely manner the entire production process from sourcing, designs, and prototypes to bulk production of BYOB collections. An important aspect of Rritje Albania's assistance in improving a firm's productivity is helping companies gain a deeper appreciation for and understanding of the product development process and its tight calendar. As companies market and sell one collection, sourcing for and development of the next collection(s) must start concurrently. This process is new to all but a few advanced BYOB-F firms that have developed limited collections with the help of their Italian partners.

For example, the Spring/Summer season cycle runs from February-September (seven months), while Fall/Winter runs from September-February (5 months). This schedule requires firms to promptly go through sourcing, designing, pattern-making, prototype development, and eventually production. Design and patternmaking continues to be a challenge for all Albanian companies, although the utilization of the ARS Sutoria catalogues and subscriptions, introduced by Rritje Albania, has made a welcome and significant difference for the BYOB-F companies. Rritje Albania closely tracks changes likely to affect the firm's management practices in terms of hiring new middle management personnel in the areas of design, pattern making and marketing; the acquisition and utilization of new sourcing and merchandising skills; and, the sharing of knowledge and experience on the organization of production lines and factory layout for higher quality and efficiencies.

The commitment from BYOB-F companies (listed in the table below) has been considerable, both in terms of increased staffing (designers, resource managers, pattern makers, merchandisers, semi-skilled line labor, among others) as well as capital equipment purchases (CAD/CAM design software, cutting equipment, and so forth) and increased working capital. The amount of new investment depends on the firm's current position in the production value chain, and the level of investment risk assumed depends in large measure on how much financial leverage the firm acquires.

Table III.B2.2. Categories of BYOB Footwear Companies by Production

No.	Company	Own Brand	Markets (primary & secondary)	Production levels
GROUP 1				
1	Donianna	<i>Mici's Shoes</i>	Italy and Europe	Own Brand/ Full Cycle Production (FCP)
2	Fital	<i>Kush</i>	Italy, Spain	Own Brand/ (FCP)
3	Alba	<i>Alba & N</i>	Italy and Europe	Own Brand/ (FCP)
GROUP 2				
4	Bertonni	<i>B & T</i>	Italy and Europe	Own Brand, Cut-Make-Trim (CMT) and Full Assembly (FA)
5	Mito	<i>Caterina Firenze</i>	Italy, Spain	Own Brand/ CM/ FA
6	Picari	<i>Picari</i>	Italy, Germany	CMT/ FA
7	Endi	Under development	Italy, France	CMT/ FA
8	ImesAlb	Under development	Italy and Europe	CMT/ FA
GROUP 3				
9	Hotova	<i>Hotova</i>	Italy, Spain	CMT/ FA
10	Patrik	Under development	Spain, Italy	CMT and Uppers
11	Mas-Torr	<i>La Leon Arch</i>	Italy and Europe	CMT and Uppers

The first group of companies listed in the table above have required less assistance from the project with collection design and/or production, and more support with identifying new markets and trends. Their inclusion in the BYOB-F program is viewed as beneficial for the less advanced companies in Groups 2 and 3, which learn from the more advanced business models of Group 1.

The second group of companies is moving towards FCP and is beginning to create their Own Brand, to varying degrees. These companies have tested FCP and have seen the potential benefits of selling a unique brand. The third group has solid CMT experience and work and is looking to identify the required financing to invest further in their business in order to move up the value chain in 2014.

Improving the performance of tourism sector through better management practices. During the first FY2013 quarter, Rritje Albania teamed with the Dutch Centre for Development of Imports from Developing Countries (CBI) to organize and deliver a two-day training workshop for tourism companies on the topic of *Mastering Assertive Performance*. The training, which took place October 9-10, 2012, was attended by 25 participants from 16 tourism companies. The workshop objective was to articulate the risks and opportunities for improving tourism business performance through better human resource management, and covered soft skill topics such as: creating a motivated and high performing team, successful communication, effective time management, problem solving, and so forth. The format of the training was built around practical activities where participants gave personal accounts of industry trends impacting their management practices; completed psychometric tests to identify their management styles and opportunities for improvement; developed an activity schedule in line with the industry calendar; delegated tasks to motivate and improve team performance; identified and overcame barriers to communication by being assertive and positive when dealing with challenging situations, etc.

According to results of a post-training questionnaire, 94% (15 out of 17) affirmed that they were better able to manage their work as a result of the training, while 80% stated that they were also better equipped to identify the bottlenecks in their organizations.

During the second FY2013 quarter, Rritje Albania teamed again with CBI to organize and deliver a two-day training for tourism companies on the topic of *Sustainable Tourism Practices*. The training, which took place January 15-16, 2013, was attended by 28 participants from 20 companies. The workshop was based on key concepts and principles of sustainable tourism development that participants learned to employ in their own businesses. Participants were introduced to a six-step process of sustainability management and certification, and then asked to come up with a draft sustainability policy and action plan of their own. In addition, participants examined current consumer trends and expectations of EU tour operators and used this



Mastering Assertive Performance training workshop with Albanian tourism businesses, Tirana/10 December 2012



Training workshop on Sustainable Tourism Practices with Albanian Tourism businesses, Tirana/January 2013

information to identify opportunities for sustainable tourism products in Albania, and define appropriate strategies to market them successfully.

Raising the awareness of the tourism sector for appropriate insurance products and copyright obligations. During April-May 2013, Rritje Albania teamed with the ATA, the Albanian Copyright Office (ACO), and the insurance company Sigal Uniqa Group Austria to deliver, in Tirana, Durrës and Vlora, three roundtables on issues of copyrights and insurance products. The objective was to raise the awareness of the new draft *Law on Copyrights and Other Related Rights* and the obligations stemming from it, as well as discuss appropriate third party insurance coverage for tourism companies that meet EU expectations. The need for such knowledge and information was evident by the high rate of satisfaction (94%) with the overall roundtable content.

One outcome of the roundtables was the recognition by Sigal that the third party insurance coverage it offers in Albania was inadequate and has driven local firms to acquire insurance from foreign sources. To remedy this, the ATA will pursue follow-up discussions with Sigal and others in Albania to create and sell insurance coverage that will meet the demands of its members. Furthermore, the roundtables served to increase the ATA's reputation as a good service provider to the industry with at least four hotels expressing interest in becoming ATA members and joining the AAQM program. As a result, the ATA decided to lead more roundtables of this nature and in other regions around the country.

Additionally, the ATA and the ACO agreed to work together to address some of the issues faced by tourism companies vis-a-vis collection of copyright fees by unauthorized agencies such as Sigship, and the lack of a clear methodology for calculating and charging copyrights fees that currently leads to excessive payments and/or corruption that ends up hurting business. The ATA sent a letter to the ACO to take the matter up with the former MTYCS and lobby for the quick approval of the draft copyrights law in Parliament when the new session begins during fall 2013.



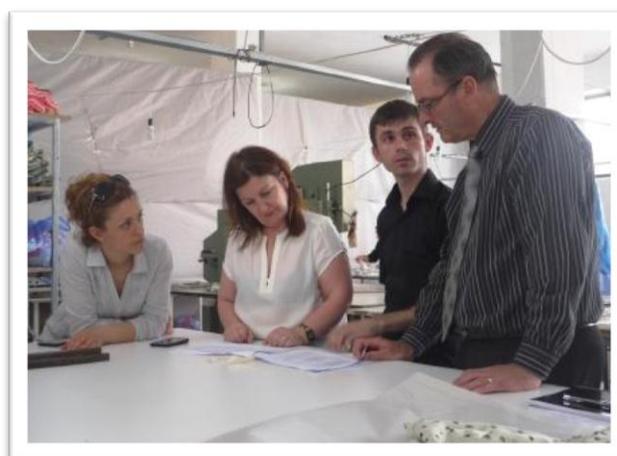
Representative of Sigal Uniqa Group discusses the benefits of insurance products for tourism businesses, Tirana, April 2013

Bringing investors to Albania through the Balkan Venture Forum. In collaboration with Balkan Limited, Crimson Capital and a host of other private equity funds in Europe and the Balkans region, USAID's Rritje Albania project is supporting new investments and innovation in the country by helping to bring to Tirana the 4th Balkan Venture Forum (BkVF), scheduled to take place in November 14-15, 2013. The BkVF is a leading regional investment and innovation forum, which showcases innovative companies to active investors and promotes innovation, entrepreneurship, investment readiness and access to finance in the Balkans. In order to attract the maximum number of Albanian entrepreneurs and startup companies to participate in the forum and apply for the opportunity to pitch their ideas to potential investors, USAID/Rritje Albania organized on September 5, 2013 a BkVF Partners and Counterparts Meeting to introduce the format of the BkVF and encourage wide dissemination of information on related BkVF activities and events. USAID/Rritje Albania has managed to secure local support for the BkVF from the

Foreign Investors Association in Albania (FIAA), the American Chamber of Commerce, the PROTIK, the Albanian ICT Association (AITA) and the Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development (CEED). Additional information on the BkVF can be found at www.balkanventureforum.org. In preparation for the BkVF, 25 young entrepreneurs and start-up owners were selected from 70 aspiring applicants (representing different sectors of the economy) to participate at the Balkan Venture Academy, a two-day training held at PROTIK September 28-29, 2013. The aim was to train the participants on several topics such as: overcoming start-up challenges, the importance of storytelling and distribution channels when starting a business, the key to attracting investors through the perfect elevator pitch, the basic principles of market research, product development, access to finance, and business registration. During the second day, the participants applied their new knowledge by working on their own pitching and business presentation. These participants will have their chance to shine as they use their pitching and business presentation training to apply for the BkVF Pitching Competition, a unique opportunity to address and impress a diverse array of venture capital, private equity and corporate investors that will be present at the 5th Balkan Venture Forum in November 2013.

Improving private sector productivity through facilitation of greater linkages to the PUT as service provider to the industry. In the case of firm-level productivity, Rritje Albania technical efforts are building capacities from the ground up to form a solid competitive base at firms that will lead to an expansion in sales and jobs after the project ends due to the time-lag between cause and effect. During this quarter, Rritje Albania continued to utilize the services of the PUT professors, Ms. Ermira Shehi and Ms. Silva Spahia to strengthen linkages between the PUT and the garment and footwear companies, and to support the sustainability of such project initiatives as the BYOB-G and BYOB-F program, continued implementation of the Productivity Enhancement (PEP) program, and the lifelong-learning (LLL) continuing education program. In doing so, the project paired the PUT consultants with international STTA experts like marketing and product development consultant Mr. John England, footwear design consultant Ms. Helen Lawless, productivity consultant Mr. John Haycock, and workforce development consultant Mr. Visar Ademi. During FY2013, the PUT consultants visited 19 garment and seven (7) footwear companies in order to monitor, analyze and report on company needs and improvements in management practices, efficiency increases and/or cost savings. In addition to the work of Ms. Shehi and Ms. Spahia, Rritje Albania hired a third PUT professor, Ms. Tatjana Kosova, to assist garment companies in carrying out higher value added manufacturing operations by means of developing a course on CAD/CAM technology and consulting with BYOB companies on computerized aided design for producing high quality collections.

In June 2013 the PUT gave its consent to offer non-diploma LLL courses to industry at a full-cost recovery fee for the first time in its history. In November Ms. Kosova will deliver a CAD/CAM LLL course at the PUT premises for interested garment company and VET school teachers. The CAD/CAM course and other LLL courses that will be part of the PUT continuing education initiative are described in greater detail under Section III, part C of this report. During their visits, the PUT consultants disseminated industry tools developed by Rritje Albania, promoted PUT programs and facilities, and invited businesses to establish more and deeper working relations with PUT to



Madison Avenue receiving productivity technical assistance by Mr John Haycock, Tirana/May 2013

the benefit of both university and private businesses. By maintaining regular contact with companies, the PUT consultants helped companies identify production issues and provided technical assistance solutions. (please see text box below for PUT consultant reports on their field visits).

Establishing PUT links with private sector

*“...The designer of **OLA 1** who was trained by our department is now training another person in the company to use the Kaledo software for developing design and patterns. The company is now able to develop product designs successfully on its own. They have managed to secure a new buyer from Turkey who has provided them with regular work lately. For the time being, the company has been working on delivering fasson and limited test FPS orders for the new Turkish buyer. Ola 1 is confident that once the buyer sees the quality of their finished products, they will manage to secure and FPS contract with them...*

*...We visited **Imesalb** to brief the company on the arrival of John England, and follow-up on their experience of using the ARS Sutoria subscription...The company reported to us that they were really happy to be using this tool to identify new trends, colors and styles, thus opening their mind about the possibility of developing new products and own collections in the framework of the forthcoming BYOB program...*

*...After talking at length with a very satisfied owner of **Kler**, Mr. Flamur Hoxha, about current company work and production processes, we got into the subject of potentially offering CAD/CAM software training services for company staff. Mr. Hoxha explained that he currently has two people working on a computerized cutting and pattern-making program called Job-Joy. However, he added that his design and pattern-making staff will also be needing training in Lectra software. We discussed the option of PUT offering such training for **Kler** sometime in February 2013...”*

Excerpt from PUT Consultants Monthly Reports, November-December 2012

*The systematic use of KPIs and related data analysis have been shown to improve performance... and will undoubtedly be of benefit during this difficult trading period....**Ambra** is one of the most dynamic and progressive garment manufacturing companies in Albania. Since my last visit, the company has completed the extension to their factory which now houses a computerized cutting system and an additional three sewing lines...This increased capacity will allow the company to accept some of the numerous orders that they are having to decline at present. **Ambra** is already subcontracting work to three companies in Durres...**Ambra** continues to increase the number of value added products that they manufacture and intend to increase the proportion of their output of their own brands garments.... **Ambra** anticipates increasing their employment numbers from 280 to 350 in the near future....”*

Excerpt from John Haycock’s report covering impact of KPIs implementation by one of the garment companies

C. Workforce Development Improved (PIR 3)

Workforce development is an integral component that affects all target sectors, as well as activities falling under the other two cross-cutting components. The focus of workforce development initiatives for this year continued to center on two main pillars: targeted capacity-building activities and several interventions to help reduce the gap between demand and supply in the labor market.

Major initiatives addressed in this section include project activities supporting the establishment of career office functions at several departments within four public and one private university; capacity building activities for the Polytechnic University of Tirana (PUT) Design and Textile Department, and the establishment of an AHLEI Certification training program for the Albanian hospitality sector. Project efforts that lead to building workforce capacity through other training activities under the previous two components of trade and investment and private sector productivity are not repeated in this section.

C1. Establishing Career Offices for Shaping a Culture of Career-Focused Education

University students in the developed world are commonly provided with advice on career development, job applications, internships, and networking opportunities through their university career offices. These offices play a crucial role in matching the skills of the future workforce to the specific demands of private and public sector entities. In Albania, university career offices are a nascent concept. The issues of allocating dedicated space, staff, and resources to the establishment of university career offices is exacerbated by the lack of practical knowledge to successfully run and manage them, as well as provide appropriate career advice to students.

Universities in CC Initiative

- University of Tirana
- Agriculture University of Tirana
- University of Korça Fan Noli
- Marin Barleti University
- Polytechnic University of Tirana (*curriculum enhancement only with career counseling topics*)

Having identified this need, Rritje Albania launched an ambitious initiative to support the establishment of fully functional career offices at five universities. The goal of this initiative is to institutionalize and formalize linkages between the universities and the private sector by supporting with capacity building the setting up and functioning of Career Centers (CC) that serve the full university and Career Offices (CO) that operate at the individual faculty/department level. Well-functioning of CC/CO will facilitate the access of students to the labor market, and help reduce the gap between labor demand and supply. Career offices prepare students through career counseling, internship and job placement assistance, interview skills training and CV writing and serve as a contact point for employers to interact with the university. Career centers and lecturers delivering career counseling courses will improve students' interactions with potential employers and facilitate their effective entry into the labor market for the first time.

The project hired STTA Workforce Development Specialist Visar Ademi who returned to Albania to follow-up on work with these universities in the prior year. In December 2012 Mr. Ademi met with the universities to assess their vision and plans to establish Career Centers and Offices and help them improve existing services, identify staff training needs, and provide guidance on work plan content and implementation.



USAID Mission Director, Jim Barnhart congratulates the Agriculture University trainee on successful completion Tirana/13March 2013

In March 2013 Mr. Ademi delivered two Training of Trainers (ToT) aimed to address two key needs. The first ToT on *Career Center Management* was an intensive four-day training for 19 career office staff and university lecturers from the five universities that focused on identifying a clear Career Center/Office vision and mission. Mr. Ademi guided participants to establish long and short-term goals, conduct a SWOT analysis, develop a detailed work plan of activities and establish operating rules and procedures. Further, attendees received valuable knowledge on the design and delivery of appropriate career services to students, how to network with private sector companies, and the essential elements of a career center web-portal.

An Albanian IT company, tasked to assist UT in designing its career center web-portal, was also invited to deliver a short presentation on the advantages and functionalities of a career center portal in order to stimulate the interest of other universities in attendance.

The second ToT on *Career Counseling Topics* focused on enabling its 20 participants to develop a Career Counseling Course to be included in the university curricula. Following the training, the five universities started to take the necessary steps to establish such courses at their institutions.

In May 2013, Rritje Albania organized a study tour for 19 career center administrators and university lecturers from the 5 target universities to South East European University (SEEU) of Tetovo to exchange knowledge and experience on career center management and operations and learn how to nurture private sector linkages. The SEEU created its program more than 10 years ago, so it brings considerable experience and knowledge to share. The study tour coincided with SEEU's 6th annual career fair, which

"...The USAID training was valuable in helping us develop a new career counseling course, which we plan to teach next spring. The new course will help our students find desired jobs within their field of study, and give them the confidence and practical knowledge to showcase their skills and abilities to future employees. Moreover, the knowledge that I gained through this training will enable me to be a better career counselor to my students..."

**- Aida BANI
Lecturer**

"..We have just established our Career Center at the Rector's Office, and are currently working to open Career Offices in each of the seven faculties at our university... as a result of the USAID training, I have been able to plan, run and manage my day-to-day activities more effectively, as well as engage more actively with our students..."

**- Migena Malaj
Career Center Manager
University of Tirana**

allowed the Albanian study tour team to have direct exposure to a career office in action delivering services to both students and the business community. With approximately 40 Macedonian companies exhibiting and offering the SEEU students more than 100 internship placements and 60 full-time job opportunities, this career fair was considered to be very successful. During the study tour, Mr. Ademi facilitated a number of meetings with the SEEU management, Career Center staff and SEEU lecturers teaching career development courses.

Study tour participants were able to review the syllabus, topics, grading methodology, and other requirements included in the way SEEU career courses are organized. The lecturers offered to help their Albanian counterparts at distance when they prepare their own courses in the next academic year. The study tour also met with several private sector firms that established successful links with the SEEU and which provided advice on the best ways to initiate and build successful partnerships with the private sector.



Albanian universities visit career fair and career office facilities during study tour to South East European University in Tetovo, Macedonia, May, 2013

Upon return from SEEU, and drawing on the knowledge acquired during earlier ToT delivered by Mr. Ademi for Rritje Albania in March 2013, the UT team became very enthusiastic and decided to organize its very first career fair on June 5, 2013. Rritje Albania and STTA Mr. Ademi worked closely with the UT's career center staff to help them develop a detailed Gantt chart of activities, develop the agenda, design and send out invitation letters, prepare registration form, banners, and other materials required for the fair's successful implementation. Rritje Albania also provided UT with access to its database of business contacts and partners to help ensure a wide outreach. The UT career fair brought together 40 companies and more than 700 university students to discuss internships and jobs. In addition, several business associations such as the Tirana Chamber of Commerce, AITA, and other NGOs showed interest and participated at the fair. In the run-up to the fair, Mr. Ademi delivered two training lectures for 115 UT students on career counseling-related topics such as CV and motivational letter writing skills and successful presentation and interviewing skills. A third lecture for 49 people was held one day after the fair due to high UT student demand.

In May 2013 Mr. Ademi delivered similar lecture training for students of the University of Korça Fan Noli (UKFN) to help students prepare for the Korca job fair, organized in July 2013 by local development foundation Tabita in collaboration with Korca municipality, local companies and the UKFN Career Office. For a summary of all these student-targeted lecture trainings, please see the table below.

Table III.C1.1. Summary of STTA lecture Trainings for University Students

Date	Activity	City	Female	Male	Total
29 May 2013	University of Korca: STTA lecture training on Career Counseling topics for bachelor level students (V. Ademi)	Korça	72	18	90
30 May 2013	University of Tirana: STTA lecture training on Career Counseling for students at the Faculty of Economics, Business Administration – bachelor degree level (V. Ademi)	Tirana	37	5	42
3 Jun 2013	University of Tirana: STTA lecture training on Career Counseling for students at the Faculty of Economics, Business IT – bachelor degree level (V. Ademi)	Tirana	66	7	73
6 Jun 2013	University of Tirana: STTA lecture training on Career Counseling for students at Faculty of Economics, Finance and Accounting - bachelor degree level (V. Ademi)	Tirana	47	2	49
Total			222	32	254

After the series of successful trainings, the project assistance evolved and focused on the delivery of one-on-one capacity building and coaching of the newly appointed CC/CO staff addressing specific needs of each university.



STTA workforce development expert Visar Ademi delivers lecture to students at University of Korça Fan Noli on skills of CV and motivation letter writing, presentation and interviewing for a job interview, Korça, May 29 2013

Project efforts invested in this workforce development initiative for the participating universities have started to yield visible results, although the pace and nature of the results differ by university, with all but PUT establishing and funding new career centers and/or offices with designated physical space and staff. UT, University Fan Noli, University of Kamza and UMB have drawn up detailed work plans that have been approved by management. They have started to promote themselves to students and to private sector companies and are delivering stand-alone career training to students and/or incorporating career counseling modules in existing or new courses. They have started to develop and strengthen the links with companies and business associations such as AMCHAM, Chambers of Commerce, Tabita and others and they established links with government agencies such as AIDA to implement joint initiatives such as the *'Have the Courage and Innovate'* project.

"USAID/Rritje Albania's assistance has been absolutely critical for us in planning and organizing the first ever career fair at our university. Without this assistance, it would not have been possible for us to organize such a successful and wide-reaching fair, especially considering the very short time we had at our disposal."

- Ervin Demo
UT Vice-Rector

In the FY 2014, Rritje Albania will continue to provide in-depth tailored assistance to each university to help implement their planned CC/CO activities and in particular to strengthen their linkages to the private sector. Rritje Albania will also facilitate and support links between universities' career centers and employment portals as a way to increase sustainability of promoting private sector job opportunities to wide range of university graduates.

The success of Rritje Albania's career centers initiative has been recognized by the other important donors in Albania. Based on the information provided by Rritje Albania, managers of the new 'Youth Employment Project' funded by the Swiss Development Co-operation have decided to incorporate support to public universities' career centers/offices in its work plan to be submitted for approval to the Project Director in Switzerland in October 2013. This new financial support will help the career centers/offices become firmly established and smooth the transition when assistance from Rritje Albania ends with the project's close in March 2014.

The section below highlights the specific Rritje Albania assistance provided to each university and their achievements to-date. For a more detailed summary of Rritje Albania assistance and progress to date by each university, please see tables in **Annex H** of this report.

University of Tirana Career Offices and Career Center Development and Achievements

The UT has been very successful in using the knowledge transferred by Rritje Albania's STTA workforce expert. In addition to the two (2) CO established at the Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Law, a supervising CC (1) has been set up as part of the Department of Communications within the rector's office. Two (2) additional CO are expected to be established by the 2013 year-end at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Faculty of Natural Sciences.

It can be safely stated that the concept of career offices is now fully integrated in UT's strategic thinking and operations. To ensure high quality services and coordinated efforts of each CO at the faculty level, UT used the STTA expert to help it develop a monitoring and evaluation plan that is now used by the CC at the rector's office. High-level endorsement of the UT's career counseling program helped to raise new

grants funding from the French Embassy in the amount of 40,000 Euro earmarked for the CC and COs over the next five years. This amount was originally set aside for a francophone program by the Embassy; however the vice-rector's passion for this program convinced the Ambassador to put this grant towards their career program, thus setting the groundwork for future collaboration between the UT and several universities in France, including new scholarships for the UT students.

The vice-rector's strong commitment to the program will be translated into a special line item in the 2014 university budget to contribute to the financial sustainability of the program and its necessary infrastructure. In addition, new courses on career development will be introduced in the Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Law next academic year. One of the UT's high level priorities is to strengthen the linkages with private sector companies and it is developing a web portal to provide online interactions between firms, students and the university.



Students meet with private sector representatives to discuss internship and employment opportunities during Career Day at the University of Tirana, June 5, 2013

The Agriculture University of Tirana Career Offices and Career Center Development and Achievements.

The Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT) has also fully endorsed the program. The progress made by the AUT in a short time is very impressive. In April 2013, the university senate made changes to the university charter transforming the existing student orientation offices into five (5) fully fledged CO.

In addition, a central CC (1) has been established at the university rector's office, with a very dynamic and knowledgeable person named as the career office coordinator. Since then, AUT has engaged 11 additional staff for career activities, one at university level, five at faculty level, and five lecturers, one for each faculty. One of the immediate tasks of the new structure was the creation of linkages with the private sector, and provision of training and mentorship for students. The AUT sent a lecturer from each department to participate in the ToTs on Career Management and Career Counseling delivered by Rritje Albania's Mr. Ademi in March 2013. Since then, these lecturers have developed full courses on career

counseling topics called *Career Management* that will be taught at the AUT in the second semester of 2013/2014 academic year.

The University of Korça Fan Noli Career Center Development and Achievements

The University Fan Noli of Korça (UFNK) joined this initiative with a plan for a CC. Nevertheless, the rector believed that the CC goals were aligned with the university vision and value statements so last year he allocated the CC its own space at the university's new premises in the city center. Although UKFN has a long way to go, the new CC staff has started to promote its functions and services to all faculties in open meetings chaired by the rector. In addition, Rritje Albania linked the staff with Tabita, a local development NGO, which has excellent contacts and ongoing projects with local companies and the GoA employment office. As a part of this cooperation, in July 2013, UKFN CC had its own stand at Korça's job fair and counseled students using the know-how obtained at training led by Mr. Ademi. The job fair was a success with 22 companies and 114 students participating. As a result, 22 graduating students were hired by local companies and 50 students were hired by the municipality on a temporary basis. In addition, seven students expressed interest to serve as interns with the Career Center.

"...As a result of the USAID/Rritje Albania training, I gained theoretical knowledge and practical skills, which I look forward to implementing in my daily work. I believe these skills will help me translate the vision and mission of our career office into concrete activities and valuable services for our students..."

**- Arsinela Xhara
Career Center Coordinator
University Fan Noli of Korça**

University of Marin Barleti Career Office Development and Achievements

University Marin Barleti (UMB) is the only private university participating in Rritje Albania's program. The university has a much smaller number of students compared to the public universities, at fewer than 1,000 students. However, the owner believes in the concept. According to UMB's recently drafted vision and action plan, career services will be incorporated into a leadership center having a larger mission to provide services and training to companies as well as scholarships for students. As of September 2013, UMB started to deliver career counseling to graduating students as well as to newly enrolled students. UMB also set up database of students and companies that is updated daily.

Polytechnic University of Tirana Career Services Development and Achievements

The PUT has been a very important collaborator and project stakeholder for Rritje Albania over the past three years. The cooperation with the PUT's Department of Textile Fashion and Design covers many aspects of the project's assistance to the garment and footwear industries, such as the Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP), the BYOB-F and BYOB-G initiatives, LLL continuing education training, improving VET school textile department curriculum, and industry internships and externships to name a few. However, beyond this PUT faculty, there has been little progress at the rector's level to establish a formal career center of office at PUT. Reasons given by PUT management is the lack of space and budget to equip the space and fund dedicated career center/office salaries.

C2. Facilitating Public-Private Sector Linkages and Curriculum Enhancement to Shape a Culture of Employable Knowledge and Skills

In addition to career guidance services, cooperation between Rritje Albania and the PUT Department of Textiles and Fashion extended to capacity-building activities to its lecturers and students through inclusion in the BYOB Garment program, the new BYOB Footwear, and follow-up work on implementation of the PEP program at firm-level, as already described in Section IV, parts A and B of this report. A company skills inventory and the needs assessment survey¹² conducted by the PUT consultants signaled the need for training mid-level technicians, and building the capacities of secondary level vocational schools. The project's utilization of the three PUT professors in following-up implementation of the PEP Program, introducing a CAD/CAM course, developing a continuing education or life-long program, and transferring knowledge to VET schools led to creation of new linkages between the PUT and VET schools and the garment and footwear sectors. These schools represent an important link in the labor supply-demand picture because they are the institutions tasked with providing garment and textile courses for the preparation of mid-level technicians that the industry requires.

Developing PUT Continuing Education Courses and Enhancing VET Schools Curricula in Response to Private Sector Demands. This year, Rritje Albania hired John Haycock, an STTA garment industry expert to help develop a new lifelong learning program (LLL) for the PUT Department of Textile and Fashion, with short-term, demand-driven, and flexible courses that can be attended by the garment firms' personnel. Mr. Haycock, who had previously supported private garments and footwear firms to implement the PEP program, was well placed to help transfer insights from Albanian garments industry to the PUT and vocational education training (VET) schools.

On December 2-22, 2012, Mr. Haycock came to Albania and visited the PUT and four vocational schools to review their existing facilities and curricula, identify gaps and weaknesses, and provide specific recommendations (see box adjacent) for making curricula training respond better to the needs of the private sector. He assessed the capabilities of the vocational school laboratories proposing the minimum equipment needed; he reviewed the internship scheme already in place and proposed new improvements; he reviewed existing cooperation between the schools and the private sector, and suggested ways to build new linkages between them. The STTA identified that the existing curricula were largely theoretical, lacking in practical elements, and mismatched to the latest developments in the Albanian garment industry. Furthermore, he provided specific recommendations as to how the PUT Department of Textile and Fashion and the vocational schools can streamline their programs and efforts to serve industry needs in a coordinated fashion. With assistance from Mr. Haycock, the PUT Textiles and Fashion Department developed and implemented a students' questionnaire to survey the needs and career expectations of 60 graduating students. Some of the survey results include:

- Around 99% of BA students plan to continue studies at MA level in the Textile Department.
- Around 50% of BA students have seen opportunities in the companies where they completed an internship.
- Around 95% of MA students responded they will seek employment in garment and footwear companies, while only 5% expect to be self-employed.

¹² The need assessment survey of 35 garment and footwear companies was completed by the PUT consultants as part of their PEP follow-up technical assistance assignment from January-June 2012.

- Students prefer employment in the design, pattern-making and general management, and less on quality control, marketing and raw material sourcing.
- Students' remuneration expectations are in the range of ALL 30,000-50,000 per month and a few of them anticipate earning over ALL 50,000 per month.

Mr. Haycock also reviewed the results of the training needs assessment and skills inventory surveys collected by the PUT consultants at the end of September 2012 in order to help inform the types of training that could be delivered by VET schools and PUT. The consultant met with the PUT Department of Textile and Fashion faculty and management to discuss and provide specific recommendations for developing: (1) a series of lifelong learning courses that meet the needs of factories and vocational schools for continuing education; (2) define content and materials needed for an open course with special topics of productivity and industrial engineering; (3) a specific course outline on CAD/CAM technology topics; (5) streamlined curricula between the University and vocational high schools; (6) an externships program at firms to enable faculty to gain practical work experience, as well as further strengthening of its existing internship program.

In addition, Mr. Haycock extended his previous PEP lecture series at the PUT by delivering another well-attended lecture on December 20, 2012 covering required garment industry knowledge and skills to an audience of 48 PUT students from the bachelors and masters programs. Finally, Mr. Haycock re-visited six (6) firms that have put into place his system of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in the framework of the PEP program, in order to assess continuing impact and improvements in management practices and efficiency increases.

In response to Mr. Haycock's recommendations (see box adjacent), Rritje Albania reached formal agreement with the PUT Faculty of Mechanical Engineering at the beginning of the second FY2013 quarter, to develop several continuing education or lifelong learning courses to be taught at the PUT Textiles and Fashion Department. According to the agreement, the PUT assumed responsibility for developing and delivering continuing education courses and charging full cost-recovery fees, while Rritje Albania supported the PUT Faculty to identify potential clients through the BYOB-F, BYOB-G and PEP programs, as well as facilitate collaboration between the PUT department and VET schools.

During his meetings with VET teachers and the PUT, Mr. Haycock re-emphasized the need for developing and implementing a graduate tracking system at these institutions in order to follow up with graduating students, identify their occupation after leaving school and determine the percentage of those who end up being employed in the garment or footwear sectors. In addition, Mr. Haycock assisted the PUT Textiles and Fashion Department to develop a brochure to promote PUT

Productivity Expert Recommendations for PUT and VET Schools

- Develop a series of PUT lifelong learning courses that meet the needs of factories and vocational schools for continuing education;
- Define content and materials needed for open courses including subjects on Productivity, Production Management, Industrial Engineering and CAD/CAM technologies;
- Better streamline curricula between PUT and VET schools;
- Restructure the current internship programs
- Create an externships program at firms to enable PUT and VET schools faculty to gain practical work experience, as well as further strengthening of its existing internship program.
- Develop a Graduate Tracking System
- Develop proper marketing materials to promote PUT and VET school programs, students and services.

services and students as potential interns and employees to the garment and footwear industries. Rritje Albania financed the printing of 1,000 copies that will be used by the department to solicit private sector interest in accepting PUT interns during the April-May 2014 season. A snapshot of the brochure is reproduced in **Annex F** of this report.

As a result of this initiative, the PUT Lifelong Learning Courses on topics of industrial engineering, quality control, and production management and CAD/CAM Lectra design have already been developed and included in revised university curriculum. The PUT is working to quantify the private sector demand for these courses before it announces its first courses and related training schedules in late October 2013. In addition, the project supported the PUT Textile and Fashion Department to develop and use a graduate tracking spreadsheet that enables the Department to keep track of their graduating students and be informed about areas of their employment. This tool will also enable the Department to monitor the career progression of its graduates and assess the relevance of their curricula against the needs of its students and potential private sector employers. The Department will share this information with the PUT Career Center, once its staff members have been appointed by the Rector.

As part of his assignment during the third FY2013 quarter, Mr. Haycock delivered two training lectures for Tirana VET school students and faculty, and one for PUT students and faculty depicted in the summary table below. The first lecture delivered at Tirana VET School on April 30, 2013 was organized in two parts: the first on Garment Industry Labor Needs was meant to give the 20 participants an overall view of the Albanian garment industry and describe careers options and opportunities in the sector. The second part on Productivity Concepts introduced students to key aspects of company productivity and ways of optimizing it in order to ensure and maintain business competitive advantage. Industrial Engineering was the subject of the second lecture at Tirana VET School on May 7, 2013 and at PUT on May 10, 2013. The aims of the trainings were to expose students to the role of an industrial engineer within a garment manufacturing company and describe the aspects of his/her work and specific tasks in monitoring, measuring, analyzing the manufacturing process for greater efficiency and higher quality. Students were able to participate in interactive exercises simulating day-to-day tasks of an industrial engineer.

Table III.C2.1. Summary of STTA lecture trainings for VET School and PUT students

Date	Activity	City	Female	Male	Total
30 Apr 2013	STTA Lecture (PEP): Lecture training on Labours Needs and Productivity Concepts to Tirana VET students (J. Haycock)	Tirana	11	9	20
7 May 2013	STTA Lecture (PEP): Lecture training on Industrial Engineering to Tirana VET students (J. Haycock)	Tirana	13	7	20
10 May 2013	STTA Lecture (PEP): Lecture training on Industrial Engineering to PUT students (J. Haycock)	Tirana	16	1	17
Total			40	17	57

VET Schools and the PUT to employ the latest CAD/CAM software to teach Garment Design courses. In response to garment industry needs for local designers, PUT supported by Rritje Albania is assisting VET Schools to lead a CAD/CAM garment design course in their existing curricula. While the PUT lecturers

have helped develop an appropriate course outline and teaching materials, the project negotiated with the Lectra¹³ representative in Greece (LEC Hellas) to obtain licenses and train VET School and PUT staff on Lectra Software. Lectra offered an Education Partner Program, which enables qualified schools to receive Lectra CAD/CAM software programs for free. PUT Textile and Fashion Department was already enrolled in this program and has benefited in the past from their software and training. During this reporting period, Rritje Albania successfully negotiated an agreement with LEC Hellas to provide: an additional 12 new Lectra CAD/CAM Software licenses for PUT CAD/CAM laboratory computers; software upgrades for three PUT computers running older versions of Lectra’s CAD/CAM modules Kaledo Style, Modaris, and Diamino; and new licenses for four computer stations in three VET schools. Please see the table below for a summary of new Lectra licenses and value by educational institution.

Table III.C2.1. Summary of New Lectra Licenses by Educational Institution

Educational Institution	Number of Computers with New Lectra Licenses Installed	Donated Value in Euro
PUT Textile and Fashion Department	12	192,000
Tirana VET School	2	32,000
Shkodra VET School	1	16,000
Korça VET School	1	16,000
Total	16	256,000 Euro

Rritje Albania supplied three new desktop computers and monitors that met the required hardware specifications and subcontracted LEC Hellas to install the software on three VET schools’ computers in Tirana, Shkodra and Korca. The project covered the costs of installation for the 12 new licenses by subcontracting a LEC Hellas expert to perform the installation service remotely. This activity enabled the schools to receive for free the latest software, which has a commercial value of 16,000 Euros per license, excluding installation and training costs. This has created a network of VET schools and PUT having CAD/CAM software which will facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience between these institutions. The total commercial value of the software installed in all computers is 256,000 euros.

As a condition to providing the VET and PUT CAD/CAM software for free, LEC Hellas required that the PUT be trained by a Lectra representative on the latest versions of their software Modaris, Kaledo Style and Diamino modules. The project covered the costs of the two-day training for three PUT lecturers on June 27-28. As the PUT lecturers are now fully-trained, they will train the VET schools teachers so that they in turn can train their own students. The VET School teachers are very excited for this opportunity to use Lectra software in

“Without the software, teaching CAD/CAM technology is like seeing without eyes”.

**- Bernarda Pikuli
Teacher
Korca VET School**

¹³ Lectra Modaris is the world leader in CAD/CAM software, equipment, and related services dedicated to large-scale users of textiles, leather and industrial fabrics.

“In addition to acquiring up-to-date know-how, the use of this technology will motivate students to seek a career in this industry and remain committed to it. So, the impact of using this up-to-date technology goes beyond just the ordinary use of it. Prior to Rritje Albania assistance, Tirana VET School had no industrial sewing machines at all. At present our laboratory has both industrial sewing machines and CAD/CAM technology. This will help us to improve our reputation within the garment industry.”

**- Adriana Zeko
Tirana VET School teacher**

computers donated by the project to teach garment design. Following the software installation, the PUT consultant delivered introductory course to each VET school, while the full training will be delivered in November 2013 as part of the PUT’s continuing education course offering.

In-line with the efforts to improve the quality of VET school graduates, Rritje Albania and the National Association of Garment Producers submitted to garment companies a list of equipment needed to fully equip the laboratory of the garments department of the Tirana VET School. As a result, several companies including Omega, Kler, Mediterranea and Blue Sky expressed readiness to donate used machines to the school and the Tirana VET School received eight sewing machines from two of the companies. Additional equipment is expected to be donated from other companies to help equip the other two VET schools as well.

Transferring garment productivity knowledge and skills from PUT to VET Schools. During the second and third quarter of FY2013, Rritje Albania supported the PUT and three vocational schools to implement the recommendations of Productivity Expert John Haycock who met with the vocational schools and assessed their curricula and teaching needs in December 2012.

The three PUT lecturers worked closely with the three VET school teachers of Tirana, Shkodra and Korca to help develop new courses training materials on diverse topics. The table provides a summary of course subjects and materials shared by PUT for integration in the VET school curricula:

Titles of Courses (Books/Materials) provided by PUT consultants	VET School Subjects where PUT course materials are integrated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology of garment production (Book) • Fashion Design: Main Principles • Production of Collections and Mini-Collections • Textile and Fiber Knowledge • Manual of Garment Production • Organization of Production Line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Fashion and Costumes • Organization and Legislation of Textile Industry • Introduction to CAD/CAM Technology • Fashion Collection and Marketing • Garment Design

In addition, four teachers and 13 students from the VET School Karl Gega in Tirana participated in their first study visit to the PUT Textiles and Fashion Department on February 7, 2013. The PUT lecturers introduced the department, the academic opportunities offered through the BA and MA programs in each faculty, the PUT leather and fabrics testing laboratory, its CAD/CAM facilities and services and its atelier of garments designed and made by PUT teachers and students.



PUT Lecturer, Tatjana Kosova introduces students and teachers of VET School Karl Gega to the PUT CAD/CAM laboratory and processes, Tirana/February 2013

A week later on February 18, teachers and students of the VET School Karl Gega attended an open lecture at PUT on the subject of CAD/CAM Garment Design. PUT lecturer, Tatjana Kosova introduced the participants to the various types of CAD/CAM systems that are currently being used by the garment industry. She then explained, step by step, the process of garment pattern design using PUT's Lectra Modaris software program. The students were particularly engaged during the interactive part of the lecture when the PUT lecturer demonstrated specific commands to create a basic skirt model and modify it to create variations. On May 22, 2013, the PUT consultants held a lecture for 16 Tirana VET school students on the subject of Quality Control.

The PUT consultants will continue to share know-how and deliver other lectures on production management to VET schools using Rritje developed productivity toolkit. Rritje Albania will follow up with the VET school teachers and facilitate additional training on CAD/CAM topics by supporting the VET teachers to attend the first PUT LLL courses in November 2013.

Advocacy for improved industry-based education for garment and footwear sectors. Rritje Albania initiated a number of meetings with foreign experts Mr. Werner Heitmann and Mr. Stefan Thomas of the EU IPA 2010 Project on Human Resources Development in Albania implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO). This EU project conducted a feasibility study on the expansion of Post-Secondary Vocational Education and Training requested by the Albanian Government. Rritje Albania business advisor shared the experience of the project with the development of LLL courses and the experience of working with PUT and VET schools, in particular on transferring knowledge and skills between industry, PUT and VET schools. Rritje business advisor also pointed out the specific demand for training and labor force development in these sectors and recommended the development of curricula and the offering of post-secondary education program in the garments and footwear sector. As a result, the EU IPA 2010 Project on Human Resources Development in Albania will propose the development of curricula and the offering of post-secondary education program in the garments sector.

C3. Albania holds its second Microsoft Imagine Cup

In March 2013, the project partnered with Microsoft to bring to Albania, for the second time, the Microsoft Imagine Cup¹⁴. The competition was a chance for the country's brightest university students to compete with like-minded peers and be recognized for their skills and abilities by ICT industry leaders. The project's strategic decision to support this activity was seen as a way to identify young student talent to the private sector, as well as encourage the adoption of new technologies and innovation by the Albanian ICT sector.



Q-bit team of PUT wins Albania's 2nd Microsoft Imagine Cup with a software application project called E-Health to link health service providers and the public together. Tirana/March 2013

Albania's 2nd Microsoft Imagine Cup challenged 33 talented teams of as many as 57 university students to come up with innovative technology projects with socio-economic impact in the country. Several of the students were able to use the PROTIK Resource Center and its services to work on and develop their project. The Cup Finals were held on March 15, 2013, and the event attracted support from a host of public and private stakeholders, including the GoA, several donor organizations, AITA, four leading ICT companies, and 35 public and private educational institutions. The best 16 teams were shortlisted to their project-proposals to a panel of 12 expert judges representing donor organization from the public and private sectors, one of which was also the PROTIK Executive Director, Ms. Edlira Kasaj. The student's enthusiasm was contagious and the application of technology was impressive, with ideas ranging from

¹⁴ Microsoft Imagine Cup is an annual worldwide series of student technology competitions focusing around Microsoft technology, Imagine Cup encourages young people to apply their imagination and creativity to technology innovations that can make a difference in the world. Now in its tenth year worldwide, the Microsoft Imagine Cup has grown to be a global event.

mobile applications to cloud services for improving health services, enabling better waste management, helping the visually impaired to learn English sign language, and so forth. This was preceded by a high-level conference attended by a record number of 124 participants, and addressed by Albania's Minister of Education and Science, Dr. Myqerem Tafaj, Minister of ICT, Dr. Genc Pollo, the US Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission, Dr. Henry Jardine, the Head of the EU Delegation to Albania, Mr. Ettore Sequi, and other representatives of the ICT sector and academic world. In his remarks Mr. Jardine noted, in particular, the importance of public-private partnerships to help young Albanian minds play an integral role in the development of the ICT sector and the country's future socio-economic growth.

Participants noted that this year's event attracted much wider university participation with a larger number of teams competing, including the University of Vlora, the first university outside of Tirana to take part. In addition, the quality of the projects presented were significantly improved over the prior first year and the interest of the business community and others were noticeably higher as evidenced by the increased number of sponsors and prizes donated and the large number of IT firm owners present. Following last year's event, a number of IT firms created internship programs for the most promising students at participating universities and several students were offered full-time jobs on the spot. Based on feedback from the firms in attendance at this year's event, this trend has been magnified. Eleven students of the top three winning team received offers of internships and/or employment from four Albanian ICT companies, including project clients IkubINFO and DM Consulting. These students underwent a three-months training on Microsoft IT Academy, offered in collaboration with IkubINFO and Microsoft Albanian at PROTIK. In addition, winning team students received free 4-day training on Microsoft Active Directory at PROTIK. Some of these young student innovators have been approached by the Darmstach Technical University in Germany with offers to apply for its PhD and Masters programs.

The team that won third place was also invited to make a presentation of their Stop Smoking software and mobile application to the Prime Minister's Office, which expressed interest in their project and wanted to see a live demonstration of it.

Albania's Imagine Cup Winners

- **1st Prize: Polytechnic University of Tirana, Department of Information Technology, Project Name: E-Health** - An application software that creates, tracks and updates a central database linking health services providers and patients in a given community through cloud computing.
- **2nd Prize: Polytechnic University of Tirana, Project Name: Eng2AlbSL** - A Windows-based application designed to teach people with hearing impairment English sign language.
- **3rd prize: University of Tirana, Department of Natural Sciences, Project Name: Stop Smoking** - A software application that helps Albanian authorities to identify in real time and deal with breaches of the smoking ban by bars and restaurants.

C4. AHLEI Certifications for the Hospitality Sector

As part of its strategy for sustainable tourism development, USAID/Rritje Albania has improved professionalism in Albania's hospitality sector by establishing working partnerships between the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI) and University Marin Barleti University (UMB) to establish diploma programs in tourism on the one hand and on the other, between AHLEI and the Destination Management Organization (DMO) to offer certified hospitality training programs for working professionals.

Widely recognized as the preeminent leader in hospitality certification, AHLEI learning programs conform to best practices in the hotel and lodging industry and are endorsed by the American Hotel & Lodging Association. Professional certification from AHLEI is the ultimate global distinction of professional excellence for the hospitality industry worldwide. AHLEI certifies and validates competencies in conjunction with academia and industry experts for more than 20 positions in the hospitality industry; designations from front-line to general manager, including the prestigious CHA, the Certified Hotel Administrator. (See more at: <https://www.ahlei.org/>)

AHLEI Academic Program to prepare the future tourism workforce. In late 2011, the project invited AHLEI to visit Albania to meet with institutions of higher education, the Albania Tourism Association (ATA) and the DMO in order to explore the possibility of securing the rights to sell AHLEI-certified hospitality training courses in Albania. The regional AHLEI representative, based in Poland, travelled to Albania in October 2011 and the project organized a roundtable meeting with 14 tour operators, several hotels and 5 public and private higher education institutions that was followed by individual B2B meetings with key stakeholders. Of the four universities expressing interest to partner with AHLEI, private UMB met AHLEI criteria and signed a Global Academic Program Agreement (GAP) with AHLEI to offer courses based on recognized tourism standards to students pursuing a joint Bachelor of Arts diploma in tourism management. According to the GAP agreement, UMB agreed to pay AHLEI annual licensing fees over a five year period, in addition to minimum annual orders of textbooks and teaching materials. The GAP also committed UMB to pay training-of-trainers (TOT) costs in order to certify its faculty to teach AHLEI courses. In October 2012, the Albanian Ministry of Education approved UMB's request to introduce a new Tourism Management degree (bachelor level) based on AHLEI courses, to be taught starting from the 2013-2014 academic year. In this regard, the UMB is the first and only Albanian university to have signed a GAP agreement with AHLEI that entitles it to offer AHLEI courses leading to certifications and a diploma issued by AHLEI in Tourism Management.

On July 2013, UBM was approved to receive a \$17,933.91 USD grant by USAID/Rritje Albania that is being used to market the bachelor program to the public and to identify, train and certify the first core group of ten Albanian Certified Hospitality Educators (CHE), who will be hired to teach the AHLEI tourism courses at the new UMB Tourism Department. Upon successfully passing their CHE certification exam following a TOT workshop scheduled for October 2013, certified trainers will be offered a UMB employment contract to teach the eight AHLEI academic courses included in the Tourism Management degree curriculum. UMB expects that a minimum 30 students per year will enroll and graduate from its three-year bachelor degree program and complete 8 AHLEI hospitality management courses. Students and professionals who attain AHLEI certification are likely to have better employment opportunities, higher wages, and greater job security.

AHLEI Professional Certification to strengthen professional skills and knowledge to meet the tourism sector's immediate workforce needs. Following intensive negotiations facilitated by USAID/Rritje Albania, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed at the end of June 2013 between AHLEI,

the DMO, and the project that covers all aspects of the partners' collaboration and defines the model of industry training using AHLEI course materials. This MOU included three phases of implementing AHLEI professional education and training hospitality courses in Albania:

- Preparation for AHLEI Training of Trainer (TOT) courses
- Delivery of TOT courses
- Continuing education with AHLEI courses offered to industry by DMO

Ritje Albania and AHLEI signed a subcontract to implement the following three ToT courses last year led by a AHLEI Master Trainer from the USA: a Certified Hospitality Trainer (CHT) course July 4-8, 2013; a Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP) course July 9, 2013; and the Certified Train, Retain, Assess, Certify (TRAC) course July 10, 2013. One-hundred percent of the training participants took and passed their certification exams, graded by AHLEI in the USA. Fifteen fee-paying participants passed their CHT certification test and five passed the CGSP and TRAC certification exams.

Following the ToT Master courses in July, DMO prepared two questionnaires that were administered in August/September 2013 that sought to qualify and quantify the supply and demand for AHLEI courses. On the side of training demand, the questionnaires were distributed to a select group of tourism firms whose employees would be expected to attend certification trainings. For the workforce supply side, the questionnaires were distributed to students, which are a large source of the current tourism workforce, as well as individuals working in the sector. The results of the survey will help DMO to prepare a marketing and business plan for the AHLEI certified courses offered by DMO.

DMO plans to work closely with the private sector and its various associations, as well as with the government of Albania to assist in the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework for Hospitality/Tourism leveraging the Authentic Albania Quality Mark Program (AAQM). Currently AAQM is the only tourism standards program in Albania that is led by the private sector.



AHLEI TOT certification TOT, July 2013, Korça, Albania

Building public-private partnership to ensure future sustainability on the AHLEI initiative. The two programs described above, the AHLEI educational programs offered through the UMB, and the AHLEI industry trainings offered through the DMO, are complementary programs that stimulate the demand in Albania for internationally-certified, industry recognized best practices in the hospitality sector. Where one program meets the immediate training needs of Albania's hospitality sector, the other helps to ensure

that future university graduates acquire a practical diploma based on competency-based knowledge and skills that tourism sector employers need.

Regarding public-private partnerships that these initiatives foster, it is envisioned that DMO and UMB will continue to collaborate to increase the demand for AHLEI training in Albania and as they do so, they will draw in other interested, key stakeholders that have vested interests to support UMB's and DMO's commercial endeavors. Among the public and private stakeholders likely to be interested in supporting the marketing and implementation of AHLEI professional and academic training in Albania are: the Ministry of Labor, that currently provides some hospitality training but which is not highly regarded; the Ministry of Tourism, which has drafted a new Tourism Law that sets clear standards and benchmarks for tourism businesses; government bodies concerned with youth employment and entrepreneur development; various business associations, including the Albania Tourism Agency, Association of Hotels, Tour Operators Association, Restaurant Association and others; donors and development agencies; other educational institutions, including vocational educational technical schools; and others.

SECTION IV

Small Grants Program

The Rritje Albania small grants program was launched in mid-January 2011. The initial value of the facility was \$500,000 USD but this was reduced by contract modification to \$325,000 in September 2012. To date, Rritje Albania received a total of 49 grants applications, of which 20¹⁵ were approved for implementation. The total grant funds committed thus far is \$300,000 USD, and the total funds disbursed through September 2013 are \$200,267 USD. The following table summarizes grants to date.

Table IV.1 Summary of Grants through December 2012

FY2011 GRANTS					
	Company/Organization	Sector	Amount	Approval Date	Other notes
1.	Albania Holiday	Tourism	\$14,000	30 June 2011	Grant Closed Oct. 2012
2.	ATACT 1	Tourism	\$10,000	30 June 2011	Grant Closed Jan. 2012
3.	Facilization	ICT	\$19,710	30 June 2011	Grant Closed Dec. 2012
4.	Ola 1	Garment	\$20,000	15 August 2011	Grant Closed Feb. 2012
5.	Picari	Footwear	\$21,000	15 August 2011	Grant Closed Feb. 2012
FY2012 GRANTS					
6.	RASP	Tourism	\$8,913	25 October 2011	Grant closed August 2012
7.	DMO Korça	Tourism	\$9,000	6 December 2011	Grant closed August 2012
8.	Omega Shpk	Garment	\$20,000	14 February 2012	Grant closed Sep. 2012
9.	Albanian Rafting Group	Tourism	\$20,000	26 March 2012	Grant closed Jan. 2013
10.	ATACT 2	Tourism	\$14,707	28 June 2012	Grant closed Dec. 2012
11.	Elite Travel	Tourism	\$16,080	24 September 2012	Completed August 2013
FY2013 GRANTS					
12.	DMO Korça	Tourism	\$14,280	25 January 2013	Completed August 2013
13.	IDRA	ICT	\$18,558	24 April 2013	Under implementation
14.	Facilization	ICT	\$12,610	5 July 2013	Under implementation
15.	Marin Barleti University	Tourism	\$18,730	5 July 2013	Under implementation
16.	Communication Progress	ICT	\$20,991	22 July 2013	Under implementation
17.	National Artisans Association	Tourism	\$5,000	25 July 2013	Under implementation

¹⁵ A grant application from SAM Shpk for machinery was approved by USAID but due to the timing of the approval, the machinery was bought with alternative financing.

18.	DM Consulting Services	ICT	\$20,000	5 July 2013	Under implementation
19.	CEED Foundation		\$15,000	19 August 2013	Under implementation
20.	Mass Torr Shpk	Footwear	\$14,500	Submitted t 26 September 2013	Pending USAID approval

Rritje Albania issued its second Annual Program Statement (APS) in September 2012; the APS was emailed to 452 companies and associations. The APS, Grant Application forms, Grantee Instruction Manual, and other related materials are posted on the Rritje Albania website, in English and Albanian, where they can be downloaded. Grants are first reviewed by the grants manager and later by a three-person Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) and assessed against a set of criteria, as outlined in the Grant Manual. Upon satisfaction of these criteria, the application is forwarded to USAID for approval.

A noteworthy achievement in FY2013 was that USAID approved eight grants, five of which involved the development of customized software solutions and/or innovative ICT technologies in tourism, footwear and garment industries, some of which are described below:

USAID/Rritje Albania grant to Elite Travel. Elite travel used a grant to work with Infosoft Software Development (ISD) to develop customized tour management software named Tour-ISD, which is the first software of its kind developed by a local company that is substantially less expensive than similar software available internationally. Tour-ISD enhances Elite Travel’s competitiveness by improving its customer service and access to products that respond to evolving business needs, providing clients with detailed, quick and accurate reporting and tour plans. ISD plans to market Tour-ISD to other tour operators in Albania and the region and has already begun to respond to inquiries from new potential clients.

USAID/Rritje Albania grant to Communication Progress. Communications Progress is using its grant to design and produce an enterprise resource planning (ERP) integrated software solution that it is developing for Omega Shpk, a leading garment manufacturer and Rritje Albania client. The proposed ERP system will address the problem of fragmentation of information or “islands of information” at Omega. Prior to ERP, Omega had little to no IT system in place, making it extremely difficult to process and analyze internal production data or communicate externally with its larger clients and supply chain suppliers. Once running, the new ERP system will computerize Omega’s entire business with a suite of software modules covering activities in all areas of its business, including production planning, manufacturing, warehouse management, CRM, sales and purchases, human resources, financial and managerial accounting. Such information integration is expected to explicitly optimize the firm’s production performance and greatly support decision making. The ERP solution, and especially its manufacturing module, will help Omega streamline manufacturing processes, track material costs,

Grant Applications Criteria for Eligibility

- Compatibility with overall Rritje Albania goals and objectives
- Potential measurable impact
- Feasibility of proposed initiatives
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms
- Evidence of management and programmatic capacity
- Appropriate overall budget
- Company’s ability to share a minimum of 50 % of total costs
- Extent to which a gender component is incorporated throughout the proposed activity
- Environmental compliance¹ with USAID/Washington requirements.

compute what is the value of its inventory, tally the actual costs of making end products and ultimately help the organization plan its investments and make better production decisions. The estimated annual savings for Omega, after the full implementation of the ERP solution, is expected to be about \$100,000 USD. The software is expected to be fully designed and deployed by December 2013. Once fully implemented at Omega, Communication Progress plans to market the ERP solution to other garment and footwear firms in Albania and the region. Interested companies may purchase the whole software or separate modules as per their particular needs.

USAID/Rritje Albania grant to DM Consulting Services. DM Consulting (DMC) is using its grant to design and implement an e-commerce website for Kler Shpk, a Rritje Albania client that is part of its BYOB-G program. The e-commerce site will provide a sales channel for Kler's agents in Italy, Russia, Scandinavia and elsewhere. The e-commerce site will be based on a "design your own shirt", that will enable clients to place customized orders. Kler anticipates its own brand online sales to reach 12,000 - 15,000 shirts in the first year and over a five year period as much as 50% of its total sales. Kler plans to hire two new full-time staff to manage its e-sales. In addition to the online sales portal, DMC will prepare a white paper on e-commerce in Albania's garment industry, which involves preparing a questionnaire on the e-readiness of companies and administering interviews with 15 - 20 top managers. Besides its work with Kler, DMC expects to achieve the following: generate at least 8-10 leads of firms interested in developing their own e-commerce website; sign three e-commerce contracts with an average value of 8,000 - 10,000 USD; construct 10 websites costing between 1,200 - 2,000 USD; sign 6- 10 renewable one-year e-commerce web site maintenance contracts.

USAID/Rritje Albania grant to Facilization. The ICT firm Facilization is using its grant develop internal capacities and competencies to acquire the capacity and required certifications to sell Oracle banking consultancy and system integrator services (Oracle Flexcube) in Albania. New and existing staff will complete six certification training courses, as well as training in the sale, presale, and implementation of Oracle Flexcube Direct Banking. As a result, Facilization anticipates it will be contracted by an international bank to implement for them a Flexcube Core Banking application in 2013, as well as obtain one additional license and contract to implement internet or mobile banking service solution.

USAID/Rritje Albania grant to IDRA. IDRA received a grant to develop a Market Data Portal that will provide data on all economic sectors including but not limited to tourism, garment and footwear. The main purpose of the first-in-Albania Market Data Portal is to address one of the main constraints that new and existing businesses face: uninformed decision making by providing a set of Albania market and consumer data at the macro and micro level that is easily accessible to Albanian and foreign businesses. The data will be sold at an affordable price to any interested parties, especially small and medium enterprises (SME). As part of its grant activities IDRA will organize a series of educational events for the business community in eight cities: Tirana, Durres, Vlore, Saranda, Gjirokaster, Korce, Shkoder, and Elbasan, with the purpose of providing basic information on market research and the usage of market and consumer data in support of business decision-making processes.

USAID/Rritje Albania grant to University of Marin Barleti. University of Marin Barleti (UMB) is using its grant to build its internal capacity by certifying a number of certified trainers for its new Bachelor of Arts (Tourism) diploma program in cooperation with the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI). With the grant, a core group of 10 - 14 Albanian educators will attend AHLEI trainer-of-trainer courses that will lead to Certified Hospitality Educators (CHE) that UMB will hire to teach AHLEI course materials at its new Tourism Department. UMB expects to enroll at least 30 students per year in its three-year tourism program leading to a dual bachelor's degree diploma plus certification in

eight AHLEI courses on core hospitality and tourism subjects. UMB's Bachelor Diploma Program in Tourism is licensed by the Ministry of Education.

USAID/Rritje Albania grant to Center for Entrepreneurship and Executive Development (CEED). CEED is a locally registered not-for-profit entity with ties to CEED branches registered and operating in other countries in the region and linked to a founding parent in the United States. CEED is using its grant to implement SME training programs that include: A minimum 23 participants are expected to take part in the learning programs and be involved in two types of training: the CEED Top Class Program (two trainings) and the CEED Sales and Marketing Program (six trainings, expected to help create 14 jobs). Business support services will be provided to a minimum five companies that will be expected to show 5% growth with three new jobs created. The CEED Entrepreneurs and Executives Club will include 50 people drawn from the above-mentioned CEED programs or other local companies, and who will be involved in networking activities. The companies will be mainly from the tourism, ICT, marketing, and public relations sectors.

USAID/Rritje Albania grantee NAAA organizes Shkodra Artisan's Regional Arts and Crafts Fair 2013. The National Artisans Association of Albania (NAAA) utilized a grant to encourage sustainable development in the northern part of Albania through promotion of local arts, crafts and cultural traditions in Shkodra. Following a sales and marketing training for local artisans, the NAAA organized a 3-day regional arts and crafts trade fair, held September 22-24th. Over 40 artisans, mostly women, exhibited and sold their handicraft products at a fair reportedly visited by over 300 daily visitors, including tourists from Germany, Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Considering the fair's success the mayor of Shkodra requested the NAAA to extend the fair by one more day. The fair presented a unique opportunity for local artisans to generate greater exposure for their products and greater income, in addition to highlighting Shkodra's distinctive cultural traditions and heritage to potential tourists in the future.



NAAA's Regional Arts and Craft Fair, Shkodra/September 2013

USAID/Rritje Albania Project Grantee DMO Korça establishes network of Tourist Information Corners in Korça region. USAID/Rritje Albania helped to promote sustainable tourism practices in the Korça region by issuing a \$14,280 grant to local non-governmental organization Destination Management Organization Korca (DMO) on January 28, 2013. Through this grant DMO organized and created 10 new Tourist Information Corners (TIC) in strategic touristic locations in the Korca region, functioning together as a network to help conserve natural heritage and offer better services to the growing number of visiting tourists. During the six months period of grant implementation, several events were organized, including

the identification of TIC sites, engaging actors in regular consultation meetings, developing promotional materials, improving the www.visit-korca.com and the www.go-albania.com websites, and leading three technical workshops on the implementation and management of the TIC network.

As an end-of-grant activity, DMO organized on August 15 and 16, 2013 visits to TICs in Prespa and Pogradec and a roundtable meeting involving the Regional Council Representative of the Korca Commune, Municipality of Korca representatives, Mayor of Vithkuq Commune, Mayor of Erseka Municipality and 10 TIC managers and stakeholders. Through this grant, DMO solidified its position as a local champion of tourism development in the region and strengthened local actors by: creating a sustainable grass-roots network of TICs that disseminate information on tourism events and activities happening throughout the region; improving hiking trails and maps for remote locations; and establishing and/or improving tourism portals highlighting the positive features of the region and listing an up-to-date calendar of activities for visitors.



Meeting of Tourist Information Corners (TIC) network representatives, Korça/August 2013

Partnerships and Coordination

Up to September 2013, Rritje Albania has partnered with more than 75 public and private institutions. In so doing, the project leveraged resources and capitalized on synergies to achieve more positive outcomes and greater impact. In addition, technical cooperation with such a wide spectrum of stakeholders facilitates greater PPD and better ensures the transfer of knowledge to local actors to achieve sustainable development, in harmony with USAID's Forward initiative.

Table IV.1. Rritje Albania's Key Partnerships FY2013

	Key Partners by Sector	Partnership Activities
TOURISM	ATA, IDRA, NTA, EBRD's TAM/BAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAQM Program • AAQM Assessors
	NTA, ATA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of Albania as Tourism Destination
	AHLEI, DMO Korca ATA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHLEI certification program for the Albania Hospitality Sector

	CBI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAP training for tourism businesses
	ARF, ARG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of an Albanian Rafting Hospitality and Trainings Centre
	USAID's RCI NTA, ATA, Auron Expeditions, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Geographic Website Project on Western Balkans
GARMENT AND FOOTWEAR	PUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEP-KPIs Program • Internship Program • Career Offices
	CFA NCGFM PUT, VET schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BYOB Garment Program • BYOB Footwear Program • VET Curricula Interventions
	AIDA, GIZ, NCGFM, CFA, PUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garment and Footwear Stakeholders Group • Industry Websites and Folders
ICT	USAID, AITA, Microsoft, AADF, MIICT, Albtelcom, Cisco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROTIK ICT Resource Center
	AITA, USAID's RCI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPI-IT Mark Program follow-up • Start-up Weekend Follow-op • PROTIK training activities
	WIPO, ACO, Microsoft, Inspectorate, Trademarks and Patent Office AmCham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPR Stakeholders' Group • National Conference on Intellectual Property Rights
CROSS-CUTTING	Univ. Tirana Univ. Korca Univ. Kamza Univ Marin Barleti PUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Offices and Career Centers
	Veritas Ventures, Crimson Capital Partners, FIAA, AIDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balkan Venture Partners Counterparts Meeting • Balkan Venture Academy

The partnerships Rritje Albania has created have helped it to engage in and implement meso and macro level initiatives meant to remove constraints to doing business in Albania. The project's revised results framework better captures the project's work in this regard. Many activities and initiatives have emerged from the project's leadership and active involvement in various committees under the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham), the Albanian British Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ABCCI) and the Foreign Investors Association of Albania (FIAA) to name a few. As part of its trade and investment component work, Rritje Albania works closely with the newly-formed Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA).

Rritje Albania collaborates closely with all the major business associations operating in the garment, footwear, tourism, and ICT industries, as well as the PUT. The establishment and inauguration of the PROTIK ICT Resource Center in partnership with the GoA, AADF and other private sector actors, the second annual *National Conference on Intellectual Property Rights* in partnership with AmCham and Microsoft, ATA's 5th Annual Assembly Conference and AAQM Awards ceremony, the series of five roundtables on *Amendments to the Law 9947, On Industrial Designs, dated 07/07/2008 and the Law 1043, On Inspections, dated 16/06/2011* in partnership with the GDPT, the conference on and

publication of the Albania Trade Report 2012 in collaboration with ACIT, the continuing implementation of the career offices initiative in partnership with one private and four public universities, and the meetings of the GFSWG and IPR Stakeholders Group are just a few examples of the high-level PPD events that Rritje Albania supported during the first quarter of FY2013 to leverage influence, resources, and partnership synergies.

The project maintained fruitful collaborations with the following donor and ministry stakeholders: GIZ, MTCYS and the National Tourism Agency (NTA), Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy and the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA), Ministry of Innovation and ICT (MICTI), as well as with donor organizations such as the AADF, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's BAS Program, Dutch CBI, and USAID's RCI Project.

Project Communications

During this year, Rritje Albania regularly communicated its activities and results to a diverse range of actors and stakeholders, including the U.S. taxpayer by way of USAID/Albania and the U.S Embassy; the private sector stakeholders; and the GoA. Our communications goals are focused on generating awareness opportunities for Albanian enterprises to improve their products and increase market competitiveness; on increasing local and foreign investment in the project's target sectors by promoting Albania as a source of quality products and services; and on acknowledging the project's interim results and ultimate impact on the country's broad-based economic growth.

For a summary of all communication and outreach activities accomplished by the project in FY2013 please see **Annex E** of this report.

In addition, Rritje Albania hired STTA video specialist Jordan Gantz and local STTA video production assistant Elton Baxhaku to work with the project's M&E/Communications Specialist to produce two high-quality videos that visually captured the impact of USAID assistance through the Rritje Albania project in promoting broad-based sustainable economic growth in Albania.

The first video, known as *Made in Albania*, is intended to capture the stories of two forward-thinking Albanian garment companies which have undertaken a number of changes to expand their businesses through the project's BYOB program. The purpose of this video is to highlight the advantages of the BYOB process as a means to increase business and industry competitiveness; attract other Albanian garment manufacturers to the business model promoted through the BYOB program; and promote Albania as a secure and dependable source of high quality brand products.

The second video captures the story of the Albanian Rafting Group (ARG), local associations receiving a project grant to promote the sustainable development of adventure tourism in the local area through rafting. The purpose of the video is to highlight the impact of the ARG activities in the local community seen in an increasing number of tourists visiting the area, the generation of revenue for local tourism businesses in remote villages, and new employment and educational/recreational opportunities for young people. This video will also serve to promote a different aspect of Albania as a desirable destination for adventure tourism.

Both videos were filmed during February 11-12, 2013. The first video was finalized at the end of April 2013 and screened for testing purposes and with great success during the PUT Student Fashion Show in May 2013. The second video is currently in post-production and is expected to be released at the end of July 2013. The project has put together a comprehensive dissemination plan for both videos that will be

widely disseminated to various local and international audiences in April 2013 and the ARG will follow later in the quarter.

In addition, the project plans to produce two more videos on successful establishment of university career offices and the PROTIK ICT Resource Center. For this purpose, the project drafted a SOW for the local video producer that has already worked with the project in the production of the Made in Albania and ARG videos. USAID provided its approval for this SOW at the end of June 2013 and pre-production work start in July 10, 2013. These videos are expected to be released at the end of December 2013.

Finally, the project's communication outputs sought to advance Rritje Albania's programmatic and communication objectives towards promoting project initiatives in target sectors, as well as facilitate and affect public-private dialogue at all levels. Although Rritje Albania's work does not focus directly on public sector stakeholders, communication with the GoA and its affiliated ministries and agencies occurs on an as-needed basis, as part of the project's increased focus on macro-level issues concerning target sectors. In light of the new and future partnerships and work activities, Rritje Albania continually adjusts its communication priorities and tools for the intended audiences, particularly those in the Albanian private and public sectors.

Contextual and Implementation Challenges

The uncertainty of the strength and durability of the post-recession recovery coupled with the Eurozone uncertainty overhanging Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Italy has negatively impacted consumer and business optimism in Albania and its trading partners. Many of the project's clients report dramatically reduced orders from customers and delayed collection of receivables. Price competition in all markets is severe and profit margins are being squeezed. Some of Rritje Albania's largest footwear and garment clients have taken former customers to court to collect unpaid invoices and cash flows are under pressure.

However challenges sometimes bring opportunities. On the tourism side, Albania still offers high relative value for money and continues to see steady growth due to this factor as well as favorable press. For garment and footwear firms, management is highly receptive to project assistance to help them move into higher margin production by embracing full package services (FPS) and our BYOB program. In a corollary development, leading firms are embracing new technology and machinery to enhance productivity and reduce costs of goods sold. Firms also continue to be interested in receiving trade and investment technical help to exhibit at fairs to open new markets and attract new buyers. While such improvements build firm-level competitiveness there is an unavoidable lag between the capacity improvements and increased sales revenues and profit levels.

Albania's stronger firms are increasingly diversifying their client base and adding new capacity to meet a European demand for shorter supply chains filled with small, specialty orders that can be rapidly filled and sourced economically from Albania. And, increased interest continues to be seen from European buyers looking to shift business from formerly low-cost countries in Asia and other regions.

With the change in government following Albania's elections in June 2013, there is guarded optimism in the country that the new majority party will reduce the debts owed by the government to private sector businesses for products and services rendered and VAT reimbursements long past due. Also given a chance, the new government's election platform to reduce corruption and informal businesses, promote pro-IPR and foreign investment policies and other enabling environment changes that favor manufacturers and export industries, including the tourism, garment and footwear sectors, may bear fruit if actually implemented.

Reflections and Lessons Learned

The focus of FY2013 Rritje Albania activities was to build sustainability on several of the legacy initiatives that were started in prior years to help ensure that they continue beyond the life cycle of the project. As outlined in FY2013 Work Plan, the nine legacy initiatives include PROTIK, BYOB garment, BYOB footwear, continuing education/VET programs for garment and footwear at PUT and selected VET schools, university career offices, AAQM, National Geographic Western Balkans GeoMaps website, IPR stakeholder working group and the GFSWG.

Since the project began in 2009, Rritje Albania's activities and interventions have revealed several important best practices and lessons learned which have now become indispensable parts of our philosophy and implementation approach. The project will continue utilizing and disseminating such knowledge gained in order to allow other similarly-minded partners, actors, and beneficiaries to share in and replicate the results of our best practices and lessons learned. These are summarized as follows:

Take an inclusive approach to industry competitiveness. Enhancing competitiveness is a complex task that requires interventions at several levels. Focusing on one intervention without considering the others can undermine the impact of any development project. Recognizing major gaps in the industries it has assisted, Rritje Albania developed an inclusive approach to competitiveness that enhances product quality through improved production processes and technologies, establishes market linkages and builds workforce capacity at the firm level, while also working with other industry actors at the meso and macro levels. Although this was not initially part of Rritje Albania's focus, it quickly became apparent that project support was required in this area to stimulate industry growth.

Secure commitment through buy-in and cost-sharing from partners and beneficiaries. The Rritje Albania standard modus operandi is to plan and implement activities with active buy-in and cost-sharing from partners and beneficiaries. For instance, the key BYOB markets and participation in the trade fairs were determined after consultation with leading companies. Likewise, industry associations, educational institutions and other donors and projects are important counterparts and contributors to the project's annual work plan. Partners and beneficiaries who help to plan activities are more apt to share costs; and the combination of planning and cost-sharing leads to strong commitments.

Maintain flexibility in program design and implementation. The ability to adapt and respond to change — both opportunities and constraints — in the global, country, and business environment is critical. To respond to the 2009 global crisis that affected Albania enterprises, Rritje Albania tailored its intervention strategy to provide support for companies in search of new markets other than their traditional export destinations of Italy and Greece. Flexibility in project design can also allow for better coordination of activities and interventions with other projects and donors to leverage resources and scale up activities to assist beneficiaries. In FY2013, this was exemplified in collaborations with CBI, Crimson Capital, GIZ, Microsoft, Norwegian Aid, AITA, AmCham, EU and many others.

Innovate, share, and replicate. Rritje Albania began by selecting leading enterprises with the commitment and capacity to absorb innovations in business processes, product quality and development, and marketing. Sharing implementation results with industry stakeholders allows the project to build industry readiness gradually and expand initiatives to other enterprises in subsequent years. For example, the BYOB program has set a model for the sustainable development of Albania's garment and footwear industry. Building on previous project initiatives, the BYOB program provides companies with a

blueprint for vertical value chain expansion where higher value-added manufacturing operations are carried out, which increase profit margins and reduce market risk. The same can be said for the AAQM program, arousing widespread interest in tourism accommodations wanting to adopt its principles and become a part of it. Similarly, the PROTIK ICT Resource Centre is at the forefront of a drive for innovation and entrepreneurship in the country and its ICT industry.

Promote the country while building firm and industry competitiveness. The project continues to promote Albania and its enterprises as secure sources of dependable, quality, and competitively-priced products and services. Although the establishment of a positive image for Albanian products and services can promote first-time sales, repeat sales are only won by meeting or exceeding buyers' demand for quality, value, and timely delivery. The project has avoided simply introducing Albanian businesses to new buyers without also building their ability to satisfy their customers. Hence, Rritje Albania's technical assistance is fashioned to help firms both increase sales and adopt globally competitive practices that will support sustainable business growth over the long term. Promotion of Albania as a secure source of quality products and services builds firm and industry competitiveness, enhances the marketing efforts of the companies and industries, and helps to deliver sustainable business growth. This is true for all four target industries. However, promoting a country requires strategic focus and commitment from both private and public sector actors. The Made in Albania BYOB-F and BYOB-G programs, the AAQM program and Albania's participation in the National Geographic' Portal on Western Balkans Geotourism Mapguide are good examples of Rritje Albania's approach in this regard.

Clarify focus for greater market diversification. When resources and capacities are limited, it is most effective to focus on the most promising markets. It is important to use trade data and engage stakeholders to help define specific markets for export promotion. In the garment and footwear industries, a major goal for Rritje Albania has been to support market diversification away from Italy, the country's primary exports destination. Through the implementation of the BYOB program, Rritje Albania has helped leading garment and footwear firms discover new markets and negotiate contracts with buyers in Germany, France, United Kingdom, Scandinavian countries and Russia to name a few.

Start promotion and marketing activities early and be persistent. Deals can take time to develop, so market linkage activities should begin quickly. Successful medium- and long-term deals for branded products such as garments/footwear or unique travel experiences through the AAQM program are complex. It takes time for buyers and sellers to understand each other and build trust. A thorough understanding of the market and how business is conducted in a given industry is important, as is evaluating companies' readiness to invest their own money in long-term promotional market development activities. Therefore, continuous promotional activities and repeated participation in trade fairs/exhibitions are key to ensuring sustainable business contacts and successful business deals.

Promote the right product for the right market. Paying attention to product quality — and, most importantly, appropriateness for the intended market — is a prerequisite for successful trade promotion. The AAQM program in tourism, the BYOB and PEP programs in garment and footwear, and the SPI-IT Mark program in ICT are examples of Rritje Albania's tailored assistance delivered to client companies and AAQM hotels to help them improve the quality of their products and services according to the preferences of their target markets.

Foster local ownership and build local capacities. Strong business associations and service providers are essential facilitators of industry competitiveness because they act as agents of trust, cooperation, knowledge, and innovation in support of private sector development. Rritje Albania continues to actively engage key industry representatives and other services providers, such as: ATA, ATOU, NTA, AITA,

ASC, IDRA, CFA, NCGFM, PUT in the implementation of many project initiatives and activities. During this process, the project has also learned that these local structures are best built from the bottom up by allowing them to lead the process, while the project plays the role of active facilitator and champion.

Promote PPDs and establish PPPs. Rritje Albania continues to enjoy success in implementing technical activities through a very broad and varied network of public and private sector partners, which helps to multiply the number and volume of project outputs and outcomes while leveraging Rritje Albania funding and resources. In addition, this implementation strategy helps to dramatically increase the success of any development initiative undertaken by Rritje Albania. The more stakeholders that are striving to achieve the same goal through a coordinated effort, the greater the resources being applied and the greater chance that the resources will be sufficient to achieve broad-based, sustainable results. Specific examples of this include but are not limited to the establishment of the PROTIK ICT Resource Centre through a groundbreaking PPP; the GFSWG; the AAQM Program in partnership with ATA and IDRA; the PEP, LLL and internship programs with PUT; the IPR initiative with AmCham and Microsoft; the tourism certification training with AHLEI, DMO and UMB; the BYOB program with the GIZ, garment associations, VET schools and PUT; and the Career Office initiative with five universities and regional partners such as MyCareer and SEEUT in Macedonia.

The project's firm-level work across all target sectors is complemented by efforts at the meso and macro levels that help to improve Albania's business support environment and regulatory framework; facilitate PPD and PPP on shared and cross-cutting industry concerns; strengthen the organizational and lobbying capacities of key business associations to better represent and serve the interests of their members; seek synergies and opportunities for leveraging resources with public and private sector actors; and proactive participation in regional initiatives. Rritje Albania has managed to shape the debate to help create new and effective working relations between key industry stakeholders. These legacy PPPs and PPD mechanisms are expected to survive beyond the project ending date because the stakeholders themselves are finding the utility of cooperating with each other, with or without any one donor's funding.

The project's strategic approach provides support at these levels to not only enhance impact, but also to help increase sustainable economic growth as measured by firms' sales and jobs.

SECTION V

Quantitative Results by Performance Indicators

This section provides a summary of Rritje Albania's achievements for the FY2013 period against current set of contract indicators and annual targets that were adjusted through a contract modification issued at the end of September 2012. The project proactively pursued this adjustment in response to the new USAID CDCS 2011-2015, and following recommendations stemming from the mid-project evaluation in December 2011. In additions to the firm-level results, the adjusted set of indicators enables the project to capture and reflect more accurately the results of its activities at the meso and macro levels, which are the focus of the new USAID/Albania strategy. The benefits stemming from this revision process are summarized as follows:

- Indicators revised in terms of language and appropriate place in the results framework in order to improve the clarity of causal links between activities outputs and outcomes for greater attribution of results to project interventions;
- New indicators introduced to capture outputs and outcomes of project activities as meso and macro levels;
- Greater precision and refinement introduced in specific indicator sheet definitions in order to capture the results of project activities more discretely under each project component;
- Reduction in the number of overlapping indicators;
- Overall net increase in contract targets;

The project's revised results framework consist of 24 indicators according to these levels:

- Program Indicators: 4 impact-level
- Project Intermediate Results (PIR) Indicators: 7 outcome-level
- Key Result Area Indicators (KRA): 13 output-level

In order to plan for and manage results, the process of monitoring and evaluation is consistently integrated into all facets of implementing Rritje Albania. The project utilizes its revised Performance-Based Monitoring Plan (PBMP) as the overarching framework for effective results-based management, tying in information collected from several data sources, including: quarterly reports of sales and jobs figures from CGP Clients and AAQM Hotels including baseline information and qualitative reports of firm-level improvements and change; event reports from technical staff and/or implementing partners; mini-surveys and/or evaluation questionnaires on trainings workshops and other project activities; technical reports by STTA experts; desk reviews and secondary data researched by the project and other sources. Data collected and analyzed through these various tools was used to compile this report, as well as to inform project strategic planning, management and implementation of activities and results. The regular collection, analysis, and review of results contribute to:

- Best Practices – Identifying and replicating successful approaches to improve the performance and effectiveness of specific activities
- Lessons Learned – Documenting results of interventions and revising the approach as needed, as well as planning new objectives, results packages, and activities based on results. This area also includes management decisions on whether to abandon under-performing activities, strategies, or objectives

- Reporting and Communications – Documenting and reporting on findings on the impact of assistance for internal and external purposes

The following tables provide a summary of individual indicator achievements at all three levels against each annual target. Each table is followed by explanatory notes on the sources of data and information included, definitions employed and/or methodology of calculation.

Table V.1 – Program Indicators: Impact-Level

Impact Indicator	Baseline	FY2012 Target	FY2012 Result
1. Number of assisted enterprises to have increased sales in domestic and export markets	0	155	86
2. Percent change in total sales by assisted enterprises	0	20%	51%
<i>2.a Footwear</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>75%</i>
<i>2.b Garment</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>35%</i>
<i>2. ICT</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>137%</i>
<i>2.d Tourism</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>12%</i>
<i>2.e Other (Recycling)</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>76%</i>
3. Value¹⁶ of sales of Albanian products by assisted enterprises	\$81,892,905	\$98,271,486	\$123,418,980
<i>3.a Value of Footwear Sales</i>	<i>\$32,865,821</i>	<i>\$39,438,985</i>	<i>\$57,432,280</i>
<i>3.b Value of Garment Sales</i>	<i>\$21,468,800</i>	<i>\$25,762,560</i>	<i>\$28,927,713</i>
<i>3.c Value of ICT Sales</i>	<i>\$3,358,190</i>	<i>\$4,029,828</i>	<i>\$7,943,400</i>
<i>3.d Value of Tourism Sales</i>	<i>\$20,935,690</i>	<i>\$25,122,828</i>	<i>\$23,382,193</i>
<i>3.e Value of Other Sales</i>	<i>\$3,264,405</i>	<i>\$3,917,286</i>	<i>\$5,733,394</i>
3.f Value of Exports sales of Albanian products by assisted enterprises	\$70,002,410	\$84,002,892	\$101,190,166
4. Number of jobs created in assisted enterprises	8,807	9,254	9,660
<i>4.a Female Jobs</i>	<i>7,151</i>	<i>7,924</i>	<i>8,270</i>
<i>4.b Male Jobs</i>	<i>1,656</i>	<i>1,330</i>	<i>1,390</i>

¹⁶ Sales are reported in Albanian Lek (ALL) and the project uses the official rate of exchange by the Bank of Albania to convert the total sales value into US dollars. The conversion rate was 1USD = 102.9 ALL as of October 22, 2013, when these indicator calculations were made.

A. Explanatory Notes on Impact-Level Indicators

INDICATOR 1 - Number of assisted enterprises to have increased sales in domestic and export markets

This impact-level indicator captures the number of companies that reported increased FY2013 Sales against their Baseline Sales, following receipt of technical assistance by project and/or its implementing partners/contractors/grantees. The companies include those that have signed a CGP agreement with the project, which governs the type and delivery of project assistance according to individual client needs. The subsidiaries and subcontractors¹⁷ of CGP clients reporting increased sales are also included in the count because the sales figures that CGP clients report to the project include those of their subsidiaries and subcontractors, which also benefit from project assistance. Aside from these, AAQM hotels that reported increased FY2013 sales are also counted in indicator 1. In the case of CGP clients that are also part of the AAQM program, these companies are counted only once.

Upon signing a CGP with the project or joining the AAQM program, each company submits their sales figures for the 12 months prior to the date of the CGP signature. This data covering the 12 months sales achieved prior to USG assistance becomes the client's baseline which is part of the signed CGP agreement.

To date, the total number of companies assisted by the project through a CGP agreement or participation in the AAQM program is 158, including CGP clients' subsidiaries and subcontractors. However, companies have signed CGPs or joined AAQM at different points in time since the project started. So, to analyze the impact of project assistance on clients' sales figures over a sufficiently long period, each company on which we report should have been with the project for at least a 12 month period corresponding to the project's reporting year from October 1 through September 30.

In evaluating the number of project clients against which the project reports its impact indicators results, it is worth noting that the recommendations in Rritje Albania's mid-term evaluation and the new USAID Albania Country Strategy 2011-2015 endorsed a shift of project resources away from primarily firm-level activities towards more meso and macro-level work. As a result, the overall target number of CGP clients expected to receive direct assistance from the project was reduced, and the number of new clients added each year since FY2012 was primarily derived from new hotels joining the AAQM program.

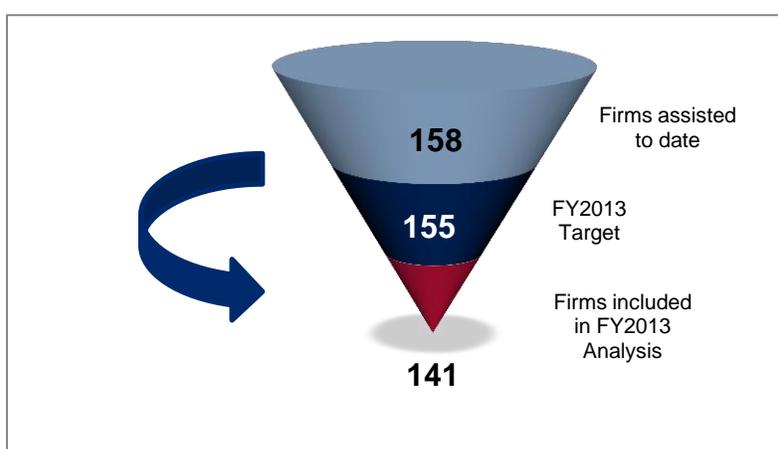
Since the project is reliant on firms to self-report their sales and jobs data, timely collection and accuracy remain a constant challenge, particularly with respect to the large number of AAQM hotels that consistently resist and delay in reporting their sales and jobs. It is commonly recognized in Albania among the tax authorities and even the Albanian Tourism Association (ATA) that hotels and guesthouses frequently underreport their sales revenues to avoid taxes. The frequent reason cited by the business is that it is because the 20% VAT collected on hotel room rentals is exorbitant compared to neighboring countries. Also, it is difficult for authorities to verify occupancy rates, without going door-to-door in the hotel, which they have sometimes done. And, most hotels and guest houses employ family members that are often not officially registered in order to avoid social insurance and income tax payments.

¹⁷ A third annual subsidiary and subcontractor's survey completed by the project in September 2013 quantified the web of subcontracting that characterizes Albanian garment and footwear enterprises by identifying a total of 30 firms that are either subsidiaries or were subcontracted regularly throughout the year by 13 of our existing CGP garment and footwear clients. Since our clients routinely share capacity building assistance provided by the project to their subcontractors, and since the work of these subcontractors is included in the sales that CGP clients report to us, the subcontractors are counted as assisted enterprises.

For these reasons, Rritje Albania believes that the sales and jobs figures it receives from a considerable number of AAQM clients significantly underreport their actual sales and jobs data. Supporting this assumption is the fact that all six (6) incoming tour operators reported increased sales by 66% this year, whereas 26 out of 61 hotels, generally hotels with a smaller number of rooms, reported 50 % decreased sales over their baseline this year. The remaining 29 hotels, which are generally the biggest and well-known hotels in the country, reported an increase of 52% in sales over their baseline this year.

The population of enterprises receiving project assistance on which the FY2013 analysis of sales and jobs data was made is reduced to 141, excluding 17 firms that did not report their full set of sales and jobs data for FY2013 despite their written commitment to do so each quarter. Of the 17, nine (9) are AAQM hotels, five (5) are garment companies, three (3) footwear companies and related subsidiaries.

With these points in mind, the project was able to analyze data from only 141 firms, a number which is below the FY2013 target of 155 firms and also below the total population of firms (158) assisted to date by the project. Please see the adjacent illustration for a graphic representation the 141 of firms included in our FY2013 analysis as it was reduced from the total 158 firms assisted.



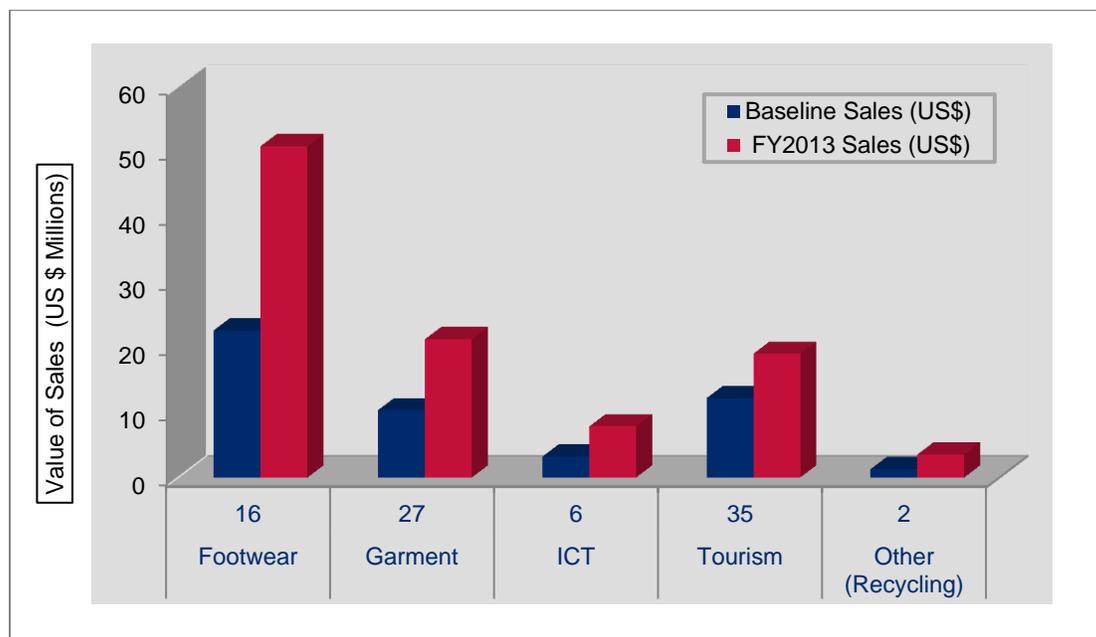
Of the 141 assisted firms reporting sales data, the number of these that reported increased sales in FY2012 was 86, which was 61% of the total number of companies (141) that reported the full set of sales and jobs data to the project by October 20, 2013. Drilling down into the data, it is interesting to note how each industry assisted by Rritje Albania contributed to this result. The percentage growth in sales for these 86 companies was 107%. (As opposed to the overall 51 % sales growth in the 141 companies included in our FY2013 analysis. See explanatory notes on Indicator 3 below).

Table V.2 – Sales Summary of 86 Client Firms Reporting Increased Sales

Industry	Firm Count	Baseline Sales (US\$)	FY2013 Total Sales (US\$)	% Increase
Footwear	16	22,523,824	50,755,241	125%
Garment	27	10,308,832	21,186,661	106%
ICT	6	3,186,573	7,823,679	146%
Tourism	35	12,137,173	18,953,262	56%
Other (<i>Recycling</i>)	2	1,263,362	3,514,121	178%
Totals	86	49,419,765	102,232,964	107%

In addition, the graph below further highlights the difference between reported sales by sector for these 86 companies reporting increased sales in FY2013.

Chart V.1 –Sales Summary of 86 Client Enterprises Reporting Increased Sales



INDICATOR 2 - Percent change in total sales by assisted enterprises

This impact level indicator measures the percentage change in the value of total sales reported by the 141 companies that are included in our FY2013 analysis. As opposed to Indicator 1 which counts the number of companies that report increased sales against individual company baselines, the percentage change in total sales for all 141 companies is calculated against the total of their baseline sales. The target is calculated by adding the values of the 12 month baseline sales for each of the 141 individual companies to arrive at a grand total of baseline sales, and then multiplying this by 1.2 in order to add 20% of the value of all baseline sales. Each year, the annual target is adjusted to account for the addition of new assisted companies, which have been with the project for the qualifying period of time.

The following table provides a summary of the FY2013 Sales and growth of these companies by industry.

Table V. 4 – Summary of FY2013 Sales by 141 Assisted Firms

Industry	Firm Count	Baseline Sales (US\$)	FY2013 Target (US\$)	FY2013 Sales (US\$)	% Change
Footwear	24	32,865,821	39,438,985	57,432,280	75%
Garment	47	21,468,800	25,762,560	28,927,713	35%
ICT	7	3,358,190	4,029,828	7,943,400	137%
Tourism	61	20,935,690	25,122,828	23,382,193	12%
Other (Recycling)	2	3,264,405	3,917,286	5,733,394	76%
Total	141	81,892,905	98,271,486	123,418,980	51%

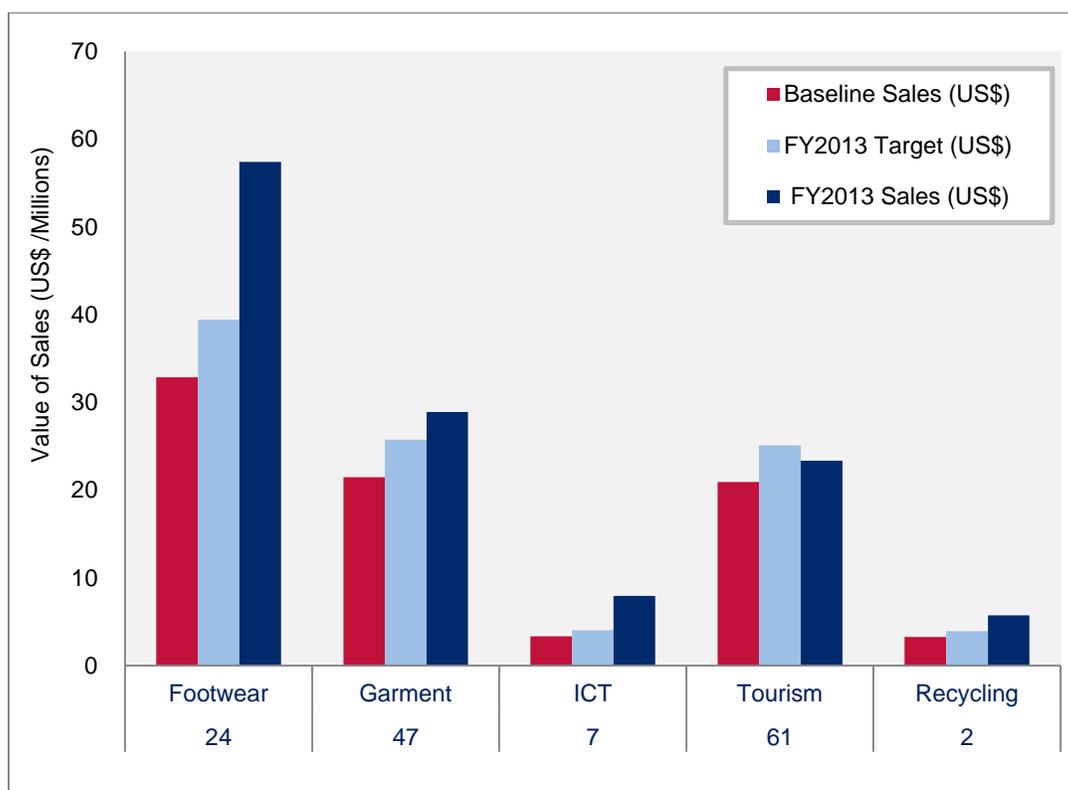
INDICATOR 3 - Value of sales of Albanian products by assisted enterprises

This impact level indicator captures the value of total sales reported by the 141 companies that are included in our FY2013 analysis. The value of total exports is disaggregated from the value of total sales by companies themselves when they report their sales and jobs to the project. If client firms fail to disaggregate their sales, particularly in the case of garment and footwear fasson manufacturers, all sales are assumed to be exported, which is consistent with the GoA officially listing them as export industries.

As described above for indicator two (2), the FY2013 target was calculated by adding the values of baseline sales for each of the 141 individual companies to arrive at grand total baseline sales, then multiplied it by 1.2 to add 20% of the value of all baseline sales.

The following graph illustrates the growth in total sales for the 141 companies against the FY2013 target and baseline, which is then disaggregated by industry. Of particular note is that the larger value of sales per firm reported by footwear companies as compared to garment. This reflects in large measure the greater number of footwear companies that are “full cycle producers”.

Chart V.3 – Summary of FY2013 Sales of 141 Assisted Firms against Baseline and Target



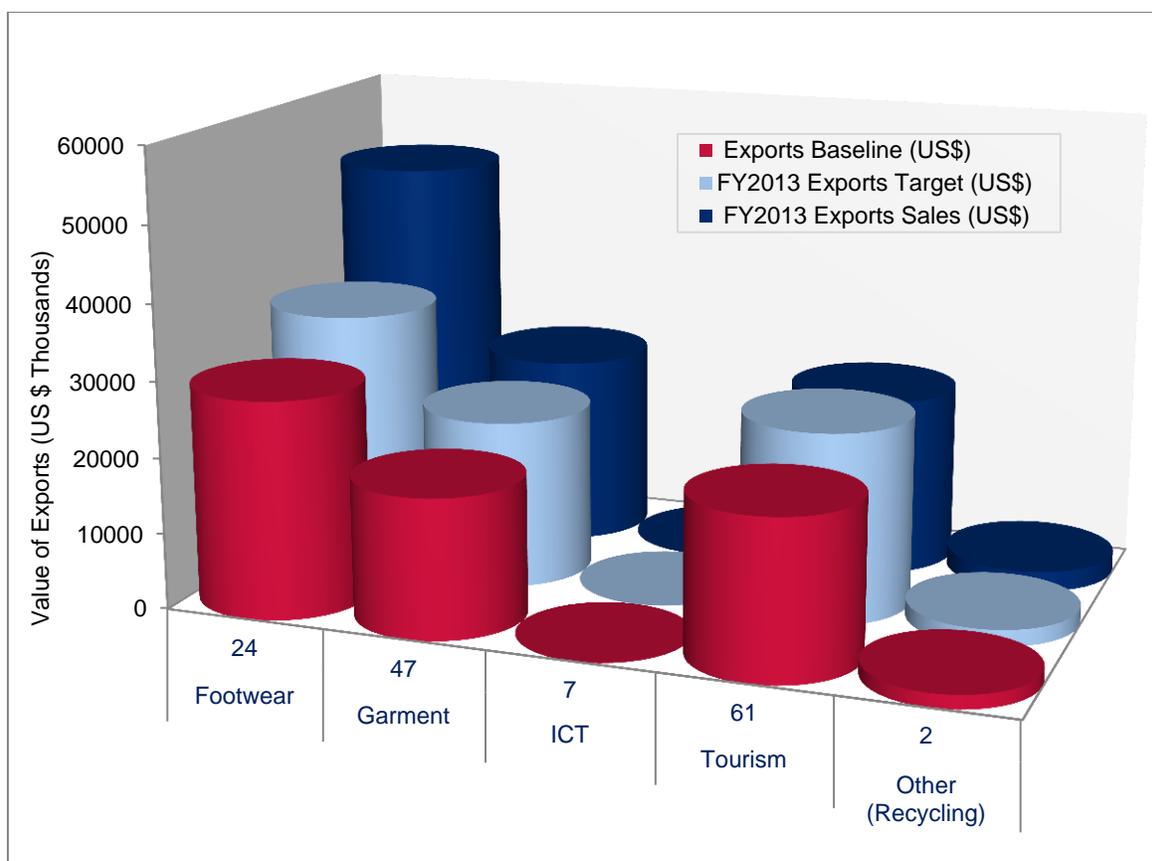
Meanwhile, the following table provides a summary of export sales for the 141 companies against the FY2013 exports target and exports baseline, which is then disaggregated by industry. The FY2013 Exports constitute 82% of all FY2013 Sales of these companies; this year exports of these 141 companies increased by 45%.

Table V.5 – Summary of FY2013 Exports Sales of 141 Assisted Firms

Industry	Firm Count	Baseline Exports (US\$)	FY2013 Exports Target (US\$)	FY2013 Exports Sales (US\$)	% Change
Footwear	24	28,720,095	34,464,114	50,187,718	75%
Garment	47	18,499,501	22,199,402	24,926,790	35%
ICT	7	39,651	47,581	93,789	137%
Tourism	61	20,941,795	25,130,154	23,389,012	12%
Recycling	2	1,821,782	2,186,139	2,622,367	44%
Total	141	70,022,825	84,027,390	101,219,676	45%

The following graph illustrates the growth in total exports sales for the 141 companies against the FY2013 Exports target and Exports baseline, disaggregated by industry.

Chart VI.3 – Summary of FY2013 Export Sales against Exports Baseline and Target

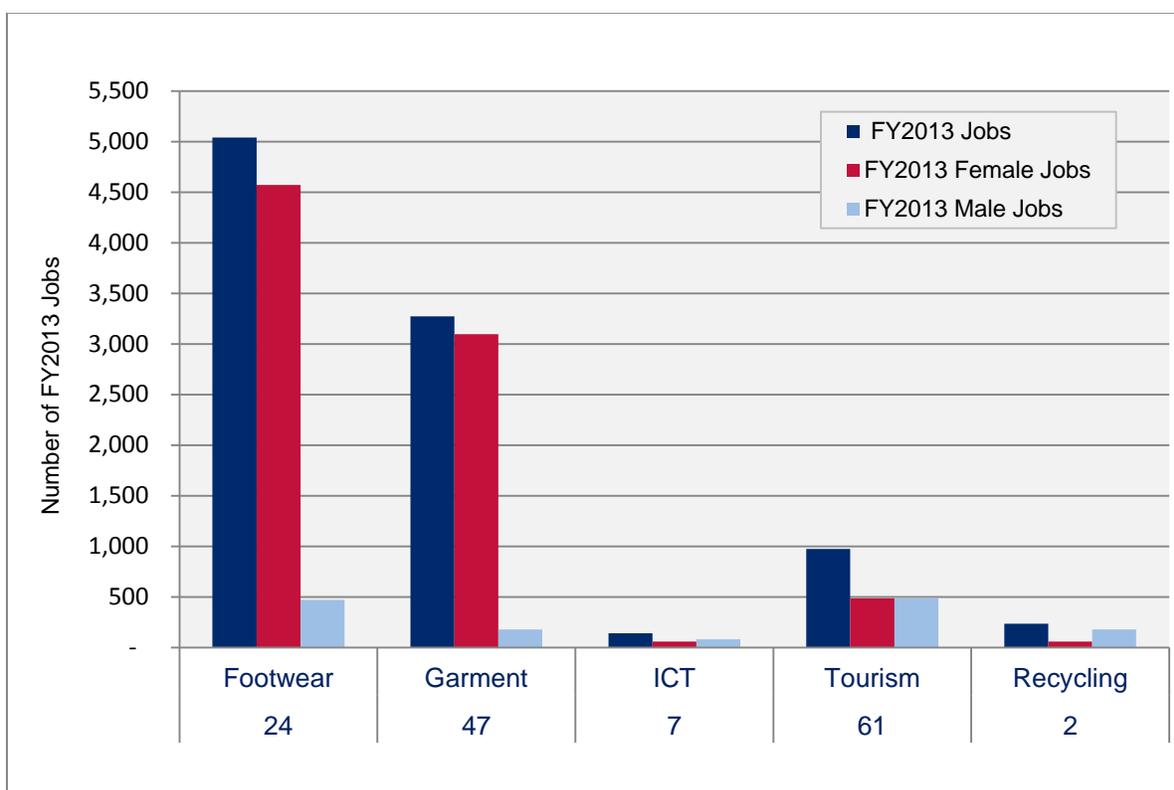


INDICATOR 4 – Number of jobs created in assisted enterprises

This impact level indicator captures the total number of jobs reported by the 141 companies included in our FY2013 analysis. The FY2013 target for this indicator is calculated by adding up the values of the jobs reported by each company in the prior fiscal year reporting period, in this case FY2012, for each of the 141 companies to arrive at a grand total of jobs for all 141 firms and multiplying this by 1.005 to add 0.5% to the total of jobs reported in FY2012. The total number of jobs for each company is calculated as the average of jobs reported monthly over the 12 month reporting period.

The overall number of female jobs (8270) represents 86% of the overall number of jobs (9660) reported by the 141 companies in FY2013.

Chart V.5 – Distribution of FY2013 Jobs by Gender and Industry



The 141 companies reported an overall increase of 5% in the number of jobs compared to FY2012. Garment is the only sector that experienced a slight decrease of 2% in the number of jobs compared to the previous year, which means that the FY2013 target for this sector was achieved by 97.5 %.

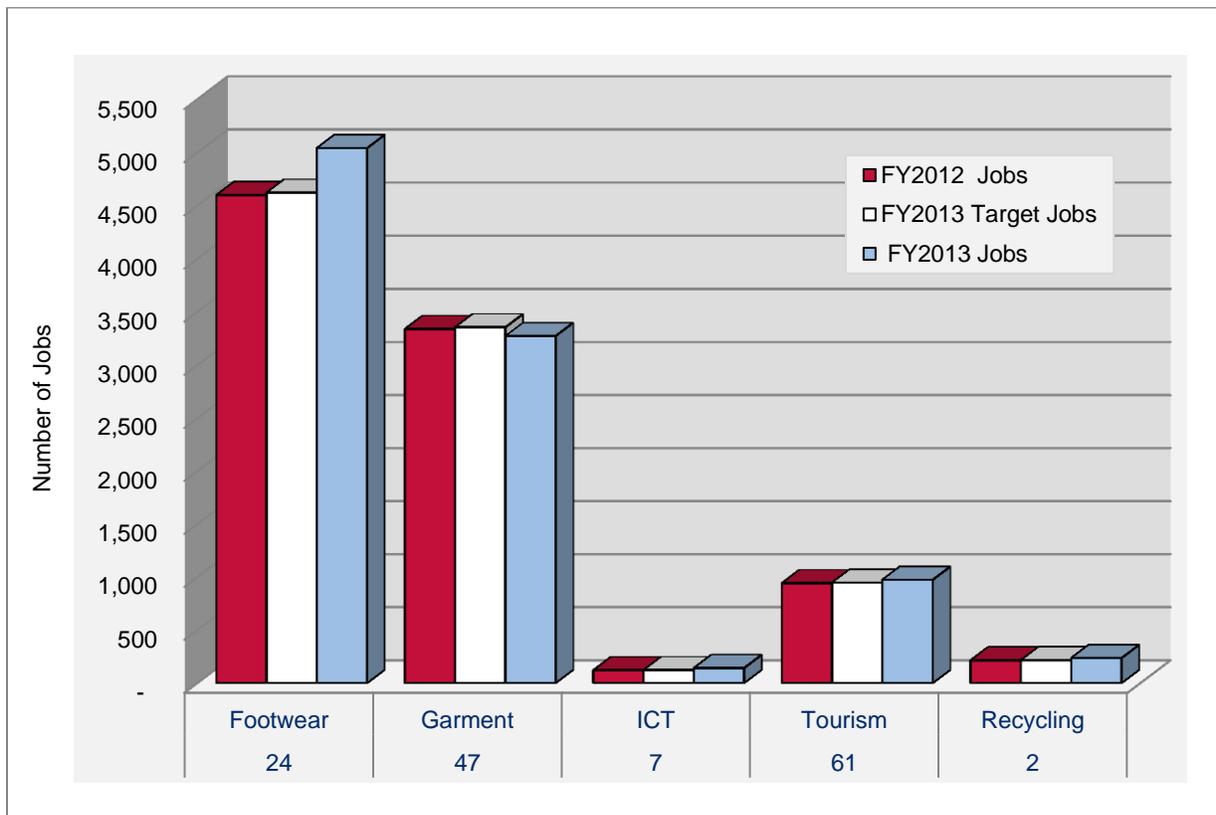
The following table provides an overall summary of the FY2013 Jobs of the 141 assisted companies by industry.

Table V-6 – Summary of FY2013 Jobs by Industry

Industry	Firm Count	FY2012 Jobs	FY2013 Target	FY2013 Jobs	Difference over FY2012	Percent Change over FY2012
Footwear	24	4,597	4,620	5,040	443	10%
Garment	47	3,337	3,354	3,272	- 65	-2%
ICT	7	120	121	140	20	17%
Tourism	61	941	946	973	32	3%
Other (Recycling)	2	213	214	235	22	10%
Total	141	9,208	9,254	9,660	452	5%

The following graph illustrates the FY2013 total jobs for the 141 companies against the FY2012 Jobs and FY2013 target, disaggregated by industry to allow comparisons between their relative performances.

Chart V.5 – Summary of FY2013 Jobs against FY2012 Jobs and FY2013 Target



The tables and explanatory notes that follow relate to the PIR indicators under the three project components of *Trade and Investment*, *Productivity* and *Workforce Development*. These indicators measure the outcomes and outputs of project activities and technical assistance delivered at firm and meso and macro levels

Table V.7. Trade and Investment Capacity Strengthened (PIR1)

PIR Indicators	Baseline	FY2013 Target	FY2013 Result
TRADE AND INVESTMENT CAPACITY STRENGTHENED (PIR1)			
1.1 Number of enterprises able to use necessary information, data and other inputs to improve understanding of international market demand and competitive conditions, and the regulatory standards and other requirements for accessing specific markets.	0	60	91
1.2 Number of assisted enterprises that obtain certification with international quality control, environmental and other process voluntary standards or regulations.	0	40	18
1.3 Number of enterprises employing ICT to improve goods and services, to identify commercial opportunities and establish contacts with potential international business partners	0	50	81
1.4 Number of policy reforms/laws/regulations/administrative procedures/ drafted and presented for public-private stakeholder consultation to enhance sector governance and/or facilitate private sector participation and competitive markets as a result of USG assistance.	0	1	1
KEY RESULTS AREAS (KRA 1)			
1.1.1 Number of USG supported trade and investment capacity building trainings.	0	40	43
1.1.2 Number of participants in USG supported trade and investment capacity building training.	0	600	706
<i>Female</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>360</i>	<i>326</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>240</i>	<i>386</i>
1.1.3 Person hours of training completed in trade and investment capacity building supported by USG assistance.	0	1000	1314
<i>Female</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>600</i>	<i>589</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>400</i>	<i>725</i>

B. Explanatory Notes on Trade and Investment Indicators

Indicator 1.1 - This outcome-level indicator captures the number of firms that received marketing skills training, technical assistance and tools, and/or trade-promotion related information from Rritje Albania,

and utilized the gained knowledge to establish connections with potential buyers, hold B2B meetings, participate in trade shows, participate in buyer/seller match-making programs, perform market analysis to better inform their business decisions, and make the necessary changes to comply with foreign country customs regulations and procedures in order to access new markets and buyers. The total includes all companies that utilized Rritje Albania assistance to successfully source raw materials and/or exhibit in trade fairs and conduct B2B meetings, such as three BYOB-related trade fairs (*CMP Lingerie Expo 2013* in Russia Moscow, the *Lineappelle Sourcing 2013* fair in Bologna, Italy and the *MICAM Fiera 2013* in Milan, Italy, two tourism fairs (ITB Berlin 2013 and the Ferien-Messe Tourism Expo 2013) and the CEBIT 2013 fair for ICT companies in Hannover, Germany. In addition, this indicator captures those companies that established B2B contacts and/or negotiated with potential buyers through a number of B2B matchmaking events facilitated with Rritje Albania support, such as the CED Regional B2B Matchmaking Conference and Meetings, the B2B conference and meetings with the Italian BBAT Confindustria and the Business Speed-dating at PROTIK. Assistance included sharing of market research and intelligence, skills training/coaching on sales and marketing, B2B meetings and trade fair preparation as exhibitor, or co-sponsoring of trips to trade fairs and B2B meetings. Companies that benefit from more than one type of assistance over the year are counted only once.

Indicator 1.2 - This outcome-level indicator captures the number of firms receiving USG assistance that obtain certification for compliance with international quality control, environmental, and other process voluntary standards. The total includes seven (7) new hotels AAQM certifications, once (1) ICT companies that obtained IT mark certification, and one (1) ICT company that obtained Oracle Primavera Certification. The target was not achieved due to the suspension of the AAQM assessments and awards pending receipt of the ATA's sustainability plan as described in the report.

Indicator 1.3 - This outcome-level indicator captures the number of companies that receive assistance from Rritje Albania and/or other implementing partners/contractors to actively utilize ICT to design better products and services, to apply new processes that improve the quality of these products and services, to research new markets and identify new business opportunities, to establish company websites and maintain and update these websites with current information on their products and services so that international buyers can find and contact Albanian companies. The total of this outcome-level indicator includes 63 Albanian hotels that are listed in and utilizing the www.authenticalbania.com to attract customers and book reservations through this site which was developed with support from Rritje Albania. In addition, the results includes 9 CGP footwear companies that utilized ARS Sutoria to establish new trade links and also add new styles to their product collections, as well as seven (7) companies that were awarded and/or are benefiting from Rritje Albania grants to develop innovative ICT products to improve goods, services and trade links with new and existing customer. Companies that benefit from more than one type of assistance in the year are counted only once.

Indicator 1.4 - This outcome-level indicator quantifies a key result stemming from project technical assistance to the IPR Stakeholders Group to coordinate efforts and articulate input in important amendments to *Law No. 9947, dated 07.07.2008, on Industrial Property Rights*, that were discussed over the course of the year during a National Conference on IPR Issues and five (5) technical roundtables held around the country in collaboration with the GDPT. This indicator captures the work of Rritje Albania PPD, encourage reforms and influence national policies that increase private sector competitiveness and enhance sector governance, which are essential factors to attract investment and build competitive markets.

Indicator 1.1.1 - This output-level indicator captures the number of technical trainings events delivered through project assistance that contributed to the building of private sector *trade and investment capacity*,

defined as the collection of services, technologies, equipment and techniques used to enhance private sector response to international trade and investment opportunities. Training is defined as sessions in which participants are educated according to a defined curriculum and set learning objectives, or firm-level technical assessments delivered by experts, which are then used by companies to enhance their trade and investment capacity. These trainings and/or assessment covered trade and investment topics such as: AAQM assessment and certification, IT mark certification, the use of the ARS Sutoria online industry publication by footwear clients, workshops and/or firm-level assistance with BYOB-F and BYOB-G companies on topics of sourcing, marketing, B2B meetings and trade fair participation, five (5) technical roundtables on topics of Industrial Designs and Inspections Reform, as well as B2B events facilitated by the project with Italian BBT Confindustria and the Swedish based ABMC partners.

Indicator 1.1.2 -This output-level indicator includes 463 people who participated in all of the technical training events reported under *Indicator 1.1.1*, as well as 212 people who participated in industry events organized and/or co-sponsored by the project in order to improve trade and investment knowledge and provide industry networking opportunities. The industry events included the second *National Conference on Intellectual Property Rights Issue*, *ATA's fifth Annual Conference and AAQM Awards Ceremony* and the conference on the publication of the Albania Foreign Trade Report 2012 by ACIT.

Indicator 1.1.3 - This output-level indicator captures trade and investment training hours that were delivered in full or in part as a result of project assistance. This support could include provision of funds to pay for trainers, hosting facilities, or other key contributions necessary to ensure that training was delivered. The results of this indicator are calculated by multiplying the length of each training event captured in *Indicator 1.1.1* by the number of people who participated for the entire duration of that training course. The total reported under this indicator were strongly affected by the five technical roundtables on Industrial Designs and Inspection Reform (210 person hours), the CEED Regional B2B Matchmaking Event (96 person hours), and BYOB-F assistance (94).

Table V.8. Component Private Sector Productive Capacity Increased (PIR 2)

PIR Indicators	Baseline	FY2013 Target	FY2013 Result
PRIVATE SECTOR PRODUCTIVITY INCREASED (PIR2)			
2.1 Number of public-private dialogue mechanisms utilized as a result of USG assistance.	0	3	3
2.2 Number of enterprises that have improved management practices or invested in improved technologies as a result of USG assistance.	0	120	160
KEY RESULTS AREAS (KRA 2)			
2.1.1 Number of public-private dialogue events supported as a result of USG assistance.	0	20	20
2.2.1 Number of enterprises receiving USG assistance to improve management practices or to invest in improved technologies.	0	190	132
2.2.2 Number of training events in good management practices and improved technologies.	0	35	44
2.2.3 Number of persons trained in good management practices and improved technologies	0	525	485
<i>Female</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>315</i>	<i>183</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>210</i>	<i>302</i>
2.2.4 Person hours of training completed in private sector productive capacity supported by USG assistance.	0	1000	1749
<i>Female</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>600</i>	<i>788</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>400</i>	<i>961</i>
2.3.1 Number of enterprises receiving USG assistance to access bank and non-bank finance.	0	70	10

C. Explanatory Notes on Productivity Component Indicators

Indicator 2.1 - This outcome-level indicator captures the number of public-private dialogue (PPD) mechanisms utilized as a result of project technical assistance in support of initiatives at the meso and macro levels to help improve conditions for private sector led growth by advancing the quality of PPD on business-related issues. Dialogue mechanisms, as distinct from stand-alone events, are institutionalized platforms for engaging public and private sector participants on relevant issues. The mechanisms counted under this indicator are those that were either established for the first time or others that existed previously but were significantly energized through project assistance. These were: the Garment and Footwear Stakeholders Group (1), IPR Stakeholders Group (2), the PROTIK ICT Resource Centre Advisory Board (3).

Indicator 2.2 - This outcome-level indicator captures the number of firms that were directly engaged in training activities or industry-wide programs supported by the project and/or implemented by project

partners/contractors/grantees (i.e AAQM Program, BYOB program, SPI-IT Mark), which demonstrate results and report benefits in terms of improved management practices and/or use or investment in improved technologies. The total of this outcome-level indicator includes: 103 Albanian hotels that are listed in and utilizing the www.balkan-hotel.com portal to attract customers and book reservations through this site which was developed through the Rritje Albanian grant awarded to *Albanian Holidays*, a CGP client tour operator; the companies that were part of the BYOB garment and footwear programs (19), new hotels that underwent assessment and received AAQM certification (7), ICT firms that underwent and completed the SPI-IT mark program (1); firms that actively utilized the PEP program to improve productivity in terms of implementation of KPIs, skills inventory, and/or CAD/CAM design assistance (12); tour operators and hotels that underwent trainings on *Mastering Assertive Performance* and *Sustainable Tourism Practices* in collaboration with CBI (19), DM Consulting which implemented new changes to their www.duapunë.com portal (1); ICT companies that were part of the Microsoft Imagine Cup (4), and six (6) companies that were awarded and are utilizing project grants to improve management practices and/or introduce new technologies in their business. Companies that benefited from more than one type of assistance in the year are counted only once.

Indicator 2.1.1 - This output level indicator captures the number of high-level or high-visibility industry events supported by the project, involving representatives of both the public and private sectors, aiming to advance PPD and partnerships on key policy issues that impact private sector-led growth. Such events may relate to key milestones in the process of establishing a PPP, or one-off national or regional conferences or roundtable consultations engaging a diverse number of public and private stakeholders at various institutional levels. Notable events among the 20 events supported included: the second National Conference on IPR Issues, ATA's 5th Annual Conference and AAQM Awards Ceremony, the Microsoft Imagine Cup Conference 2013, the BkVF Meeting of Stakeholders and Partners, the ICT Sector Stakeholders Consultation with newly elected Minister of Innovation and Public Administration, Ms. Milena Harito, the meeting of local public-private stakeholders on creating a sustainable network of info-corners in the Korça region, the Conference ACIT Trade Report 2012 Conference, the Roundtable on Amendments to Law No. 9947, dated 07.07.2008, On Industrial Property Rights in collaboration with the GDPT, the Focus Group Consultation with key stakeholders on design, content and establishment of Albania's official tourism website, and so forth.

Indicator 2.2.1 - This output-level indicator captures the number of companies that participate in technical training events and other industry-level activities organized and/or co-sponsored by the project, during which their representatives are exposed to new knowledge, skills and information on improving management practices and/or investing in new or improved technologies. Companies that participate in more than one event are counted only once. The total includes companies exposed to, and benefiting from, project assistance delivered through the BYOB-G and BYOB-F garment programs, the PEP program in garment and footwear, the AAQM program in tourism, the SPI-IT Mark program in ICT, the Small Grants Program, the three (3) Roundtables on Copyrights and Liability Insurance for tourism companies held in collaboration with the Albanian Copyrights Office (ACO), ATA and SIGAL, the *BkVF Tirana Venture Academy: Investor Readiness* Workshop for Young Entrepreneurs, the follow-up workshop on AITA Start-up Weekend and the Microsoft Imagine Cup 2013. For those companies that actually go on to demonstrate improved management practices or invest in new technologies and report their results to Rritje Albania are captured in the higher outcome-level *Indicator 2.2* listed above.

Indicator 2.2.2 - This output-level indicator captures the number of technical trainings events, delivered in full or in part as a result of project assistance, which contribute to improving private sector productive capacity, defined as improving the capacity of businesses to integrate into domestic and international markets through increases in productivity, improvements in management and corporate governance, the

development and application of modern technology and marketing practices. It also includes enhancement of firms and business associations in terms of their corporate governance capabilities and their application of best practices and technologies to achieve increased production and marketing of products and services. It includes adoption of efficient production process, improved labor productivity, environmentally-sound management of natural resources, development of accounting and management systems that helped the company and industry group implement business, labor, product and process standards that enhance business competitiveness. Training is defined as sessions in which participants are educated according to a defined curriculum and set learning objectives, or firm-level technical assessments delivered by experts, which are then used by companies to enhance their productive capacity. The events included relate to all relevant training activities delivered in the framework of the AAQM program (1), Roundtables on Copyrights and Liability Insurance for tourism companies (3), the process of BYOB collection development (19), Grants (3), PEP (5), and Microsoft Imagine Cup (1), the trainings on *Mastering Assertive Performance* and *Sustainable Tourism Practices* in collaboration with CBI (2), Dua Punë Portal (1), workshops on Strategic Communications Planning Session with MYTCS/NTA and local government representatives (3), the Regional Western Balkans Training on Adventure Tourism Sustainability for tour operators (1), the *BkVF Tirana Stakeholders workshop and BKVF Venture Academy: Investor Readiness* workshop for young entrepreneurs (2) and so forth.

Indicator 2.2.3 - This output-level indicator includes 310 people who participated in all technical training events captured in Indicator 2.2.2, as well as 175 people who participated in industry events listed in Indicator 2.2.1, which were organized and/or co-sponsored by the project in order to improve sharing of knowledge on better management practices and/or improved technologies.

Indicator 2.2.4 - This output-level indicator captures person hours of training that were delivered in full or in part as a result of project assistance. This support could include provision of funds to pay for trainers, hosting facilities, or other key contributions necessary to ensure training was delivered. The results of this indicator are calculated by multiplying the length of each training event captured in Indicator 1.1.1 with the number of people who participated for the entire duration of that training course. The end result of this indicator was particularly affected by two (2) intensive two-day CBI trainings for tourism companies (320 person hours), the BYOB and PEP assistance (122 person hours), three (3) grant-funded trainings by Elite Travel and Facilitation on new technologies (171 person hours), the three (3) roundtables on Copyrights and Liability Insurance for tourism companies (108 person hrs.), and so forth. Please note that assessments (14 person hours) related to the AAQM program certification and BYOB-F program (30 person hours) are included in both PIR 1 and PIR 2 because the purpose of these programs is two-fold (1) to help hotels to obtain AAQM certification and footwear companies to identify new markets, and (2) to help these companies identify areas for making further improvements in their management practices through specific expert recommendations.

Indicator 2.3.1 - This output-level indicator captures the number of client and non-client enterprises that participate in training events and awareness-raising activities supported by the project and/or its implementing partners/contractors/grantees to help participants gain knowledge, skills and information on identifying and/or obtaining different types of funds for their business financing needs. Businesses' financing needs relate to investments in new technologies and equipment, working capital, utilization of overdrafts for operational expenses and sourcing of raw materials. The total includes all start-up companies that participated at the *BKVF Venture Academy: Investor Readiness* workshop for young entrepreneurs.

Table V.9. Component: Workforce Development Improved (PIR 3)

PIR Indicators	Baseline	FY2013 Target	FY2013 Result
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IMPROVED (PIR3)			
3.1 Number of persons receiving new or better employment (including better self-employment) as a result of participating in USG-funded workforce development project.	0	100	106
<i>Female</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>70</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>36</i>
New Jobs			29
Better Employment			77
KEY RESULTS AREAS (KRA 3)			
3.1.1 Number of pre-employment, vocational and technical training programs supported.	0	10	11
3.1.2 Number of persons participating in USG-supported pre-employment, vocational and technical training programs supported.	0	200	549
<i>Female</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>445</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>104</i>
3.1.3 Number of persons participating in USG-supported workforce development programs.	0	200	202
<i>Female</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>154</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>48</i>
3.1.4 Person hours of training supported in workforce development supported by USG assistance.	0	1000	3434
<i>Female</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>600</i>	<i>2540</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>400</i>	<i>952</i>

D. Explanatory Notes on Workforce Development Indicators

Indicator 3.1 - This outcome-level indicator captures the number of people who have gained employment or better employment (including self-employment) within six months of participating in workforce development program activities supported by the project and its implementing partners/contractors/grantee, such as internships, short and long-term trainings on increased productivity and better management practices, as well initiatives created in collaboration with private and public stakeholders to facilitate improved workforce opportunities for individuals, such as seminars, roundtables, job fairs, career office activities, etc. Better employment is defined as increased responsibilities within the same workplace; increased job security through new skills and/or certifications acquired, improved performance within the same workplace; promotion to a position of greater responsibility and/or salary within the same workplace, higher retention rates in companies, etc.

Sixty-six percent (66%) of all 106 people gaining employment or better employment (including self-employment) are women.

The total of 29 people gaining employment is distributed as follows: 3 AAQM Assessors trained and hired by IDRA, 1 PUT intern hired after completing internships with garment company OLA1, a CGP client, 5 people hired at PROTIK, 11 students hired by ICT companies following the 2nd Microsoft Imagine Cup, 2 people hired by grantee Elite Travel, and 7 people hired in the university career centers. Fifty-five percent (55%) of all people gaining new employment were women.

The total of 77 people gaining better employment includes the 13 university lecturers gaining training and certification in Career Office Management and Career Counseling, 12 people trained by grantee DMO Korça who are currently running the Tourism Information Corners in the region, three (3) PUT lecturers trained and certified by Hellas in new CAD/CAM Lectra software programs for Garment Design, 23 local artisan women trained in product development and sales and marketing by grantee NAAA, 10 company managers and/or owners assisted through the BYOB-Footwear program, and 16 AHLEI Certified tourism experts. Seventy percent (70%) of all people gaining better employment were women.

Indicator 3.1.1 - This output-level indicator captures the number of workforce development initiatives, and short and long-term training programs supported by the project, defined as cooperative investments in the human resources of a country or area through training or retraining for available or anticipated near-term workforce skills requirements. The objective is to endow target individuals with the skills needed to productively perform the tasks required for new and better formal sector jobs. Workforce development focuses especially on the technical training needed to prepare workers to accommodate workforce demands, and provide for themselves and their families. In order to bridge the workforce demand and supply gap, Rritje Albania works with several existing public institutions, educational institutions, non-profit private sector organizations and enterprises to deliver and support a range of workforce development programs through various methods: Training-of-Trainers for existing curricula; series of competency-based workshops; job fairs and awareness raising activities on career development, technical workshops on CV skills, job interviews and presentation; new curriculum development or existing curriculum enhancement; internship programs to improve linkages between job-seekers and employers; the establishment of career offices and any other activities that prepare job-seekers to enter the job market and help employers to recruit, train and retain employees. The eleven programs supported this year were: the BYOB-Garment program, the BYOB-Footwear program, the PROTIK Internship Program, the PUT Continuing Education Program, the establishment of career offices in four universities and the curricula enhancement programs for three (3) VET Schools in Tirana, Shkodra and Korça.

Indicator 3.1.2 - This output-level indicator captures the number of people who, as a result of project assistance, participated in programs and activities of a pre-employment, technical and vocational training nature. On one hand, these initiatives can provide participants with career development knowledge, job market research and CV/resume writing skills that allows them to identify and secure internships, work placements and/or employment. On the other hand, technical and vocational education programs and activities can provide participants with enhanced curricula and competency-based and/or practical skills training that are closer to the labor needs and demands of the private sector.

This indicator was achieved at an impressive 275 percent level due to a total of 17 training activities that are unique to this component/indicator and which included wide student participation (445 female and 104 male). Notable activities in this area include: five (5) *Career Development* training workshops delivered by STTA consultant V. Ademi on CV skills writing, jobs interviews and presentations with wide student participation (243 female, 33 male); six (6) BYOB and PEP lectures on curricula enhancing topics for the PUT Masters and Bachelor programs to do with sourcing, merchandising, design,

marketing, and costing and pricing delivered by STTA consultants J. Haycock, H. Lawless and J. England and attended 145 PUT students(80 female and 65 male); the participation of 57 university students (16 female, 41 male) in the 2nd Microsoft Imagine Cup competition with innovative technology projects. Other activities contributing to this indicator were a study visit of 19 Tirana VET School students at PUT and a lecture by the PUT consultants to 16 VET school students on the productivity related subject of Quality Control. Eighty-one percent (81%) of all people trained and captured under this indicator were women.

Indicator 3.1.3 - In and of itself, all firm-level technical assistance delivered by the project through a variety of technical activities, in the shape of one-to-one coaching and/or trainings workshops, endow participating individuals with knowledge and practical skills needed to productively perform tasks required for new or better formal sector jobs. This output-level indicator captures the number of participants in 11 workforce development training and grant-funded activities that are unique to this component/indicator, in order to distinguish these from other training activities that are captured under the other two project components. Notable workforce development training participants include: the 26 tourism experts (18 female, 8 male) trained and certified by AHLEI, the 24 tourism experts trained by grantee DMO Korça on establishing and managing Tourism Information Corners, the 25 PUT and VET school lectures (25 female, 0 male) trained and involved in the implementation of curricula enhancement and/or continuing education program, 23 local artisan women trained in product development and sales and marketing by grantee NAAA; and 10 company managers and/or owners (2 female, 8 male) assisted through the BYOB-Footwear program. Seventy-six percent (76%) of all people trained and captured under this indicator were women.

Indicator 3.1.4 - This output-level indicator captures all person hours of training in workforce development that were delivered in full or in part as a result of project assistance in relation to all activities described in Indicators 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 in order to account for project assistance to build workforce skills, at both pre-employment and employment stages. Project assistance included provision of funds to pay for trainers, hosting facilities, or other key contributions necessary to ensure training was delivered. The results of this indicator are calculated by multiplying the length of each training event captured in Indicators 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 with the number of people who participated for the entire duration of that training event. The result of this indicator is particularly affected by the large number of activities (24), the long duration of some of these activities as noted earlier, as well as the large number of people (599 female and 152 male) who participated in these trainings. The total person hours of training relating to pre-employment, technical and vocational activities as those described in Indicator 3.1.2 were 1554 person training hours (1076 female person hrs. and 536 male person hrs.). The total person hours of training relating to workforce development activities as those described in Indicator 3.1.3 were 1,880 person training hours (1,464 female person hrs. and 416 male person hrs.). Seventy-four percent (74%) of all 3434 pre-employment and workforce development person hours reached 599 women.

Annexes

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Annex B

FY2013 Annual Success Stories



USAID | **ALBANIA**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

CASE STUDY Albania has own-brands

USAID helps secure sustainability of Albania's garment industry by supporting development of Made in Albania brand collections



Flamur Hoxha, owner of Kler successfully negotiates business deal with Russian buyers, Moscow/September 2012

"We had been in many trade fairs before and thought the time and money wasted on them was not worth the trouble. Thanks to the USAID/Rritje Albania experts, the BYOB has completed changed our perspective in terms of how much one can learn from trade fairs in terms of sourcing for and exhibiting own collections. ...Exchanging tips and experiences with other companies involved in the BYOB programs has also helped us introduce many improvements to our layout of production lines, marketing strategy and pricing techniques... we have taken up an enormous challenge, but we consider ourselves very fortunate to not have to do it alone..." Rezarta Dervishi, Owner of Madison Avenue

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Simple assembly work once dominated the Albanian garment industry as its main production model, where foreign clients provide the fabric, style patterns, and other raw materials, and the Albanian manufactures assemble the garments. Although this model allows for large orders to be processed, returns are risky and profitability small because simple assembly work means being stuck at the low end of the value chain. In addition, people employed in the local garment factories are typically paid low wages and face greater job insecurity in the current economic climate. Moving to higher levels of the value chain allows companies to mitigate current risks associated with dependence on simple assembly work that can be easily transferred elsewhere.

To address this situation, a new program by USAID's Rritje Albania project, known otherwise as Build Your Own Brand (BYOB), has been helping six forward-thinking Albanian companies to develop and showcase, for the first time, own-brand collections. The complex BYOB work undertaken by these companies was no small feat and resulted in many productive capacity changes that led to the successful development and promotion of Made in Albania brand products fit for the quality-conscious European consumer.

The first collections were realized at the end of July 2012 after these companies completed intensive sourcing work at fairs in Munich and Istanbul during early 2012. To showcase the end products, USAID's Rritje Albania supported the BYOB firms' participation at the Spring/Summer 2012 - Dusseldorf Preview Collections Fashion Week, a key event for the international garment industry. After attracting new customers from Germany, France, and Taiwan, the companies hit the road again to showcase the BYOB collections at the Collection Premiere Moscow 2012 in Russia at the end of September. German, Russian, and other international buyers showed great interest in the Albanian BYOB collections, remarking on their quality, style, design and price. At both fairs, the Made in Albania exhibit space was visited by many interested customers generating as many as 85 business-to-business meetings. Initial test orders reached the value of 23,625 €, while companies reported to have left part or entire collections behind with sales agents continuing negotiations on their behalf.

USAID's Rritje Albania BYOB program required these companies to adopt and apply a range of complex skills, many of which were relatively new for these Albanian companies, such as: sourcing appropriate raw materials; designing collections and developing patterns and prototypes; establishing the right strategies for costing, pricing, and merchandising finished collections; developing and promoting an appropriate brand name according to the preferences of the target customer for style and quality; identifying and contracting the right sales agents; and successfully navigating the maze of shipping, export/import rules, and product labeling requirements.

The successful development and showcasing of own-brand collections by these firms is setting the paradigm for the future of the Albanian industry, shaping its sustainable development for vertical value chain expansion where higher value-added manufacturing operations can be carried out, profit margins increased and market risks reduced.



SNAPSHOT

Teaching universities to create career advice services for their students

USAID pilots the establishment of career offices in five Albanian universities



Photo: Tana Lala/CED Project

Albanian universities lecturers and career office staff complete training on career center management, Tirana, March 2013.

“As a result of the USAID training I gained theoretical knowledge and practical skills, which I look forward to implementing in my daily work. I believe these skills will help me translate the vision and mission of our career office into concrete activities and valuable services for our students,” noted Arsinela Xhara, Career Centre Coordinator, Fani Noli University of Korça.

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University students in the developed world are commonly provided with advice on career development, job applications, internships and networking opportunities through their university career offices. These offices play a crucial role in matching the skills of the future workforce to the specific demands of private sector companies that want to hire the best and the brightest.

In the case of Albania, the idea of university career offices is still in its infancy. The issue of allocating dedicated space, staff and resources to the establishment of a university career office is exacerbated by the lack of practical knowledge to successfully run and manage career offices, as well as provide students with appropriate career advice services.

That is why USAID has launched an ambitious initiative supporting the establishment of fully-functional career offices at five public and private universities in Albania. The initiative involves the University of Tirana, the Polytechnic University of Tirana, the Agricultural University of Tirana, the Fani Noli University of Korça, and the private University Marin Barleti. Aside from stimulating interest and securing commitment of key university decision-makers, USAID helped deliver a series of week-long trainings to 49 university lecturers and career office staff on *Career Office Management* and provision of *Career Counseling Services*.

“..We have just established our Career Center at the Rector’s Office, and are currently working to open Career Offices in each of the seven faculties at our university... as a result of the USAID training, I have been able to plan, run and manage my day-to-day activities more effectively, as well as engage more actively with our students,” states Migena Malaj, Career Centre Manager, University of Tirana.

Another aspect of the USAID trainings dealt with the development of *Career Counseling Courses* in order to teach students CV and cover letter writing skills, and key soft skills for facing the job market. As a result, universities are also beginning to recognize the importance of enhancing their existing curricula with new career counseling subjects and taking the necessary steps for implementing these courses. “The USAID training was valuable in helping us develop a new career counseling course, which we plan to teach next spring. The new course will help our students find desired jobs within their field of study, and give them the confidence and practical knowledge to showcase their skills and abilities to future employees. Moreover, the knowledge that I gained through this training will enable me to be a better career counselor to my students....” said Aida Bani, lecturer at University of Agriculture.

These universities assert the USAID’s assistance which they received will have a lasting impact on their institution and their students. “This experience was particularly important to enhancing the knowledge and practical skills of our newly appointed career office staff members, who will orient our students towards fulfilling careers, facilitate networking with the private sector, and help the students find employment in the future,” remarked Ariana Çadri, Education Coordinator, and University Marin Barleti.



SUCCESS STORY

A bigger and better 2nd Microsoft Imagine Cup

USAID supports Microsoft Imagine Cup to identify young student talent to the ICT private sector



*Photo: Tana Lala/USAID's CED project
Winning Qbit team holds up the Albanian
Microsoft Imagine 2013 Cup, Tirana/March
2013*

"Microsoft Imagine Cup was a very valuable experience for us since we learned how to work in groups and put our ideas into action. Moreover, we had the opportunity to meet several ICT companies have expressed an interest in us and will help us develop our project further. We are optimistic about the future of this project and hopefully after one year we will be able to test our software in several hospitals." said Ardit Mero of Qbit team, winner of Albania Microsoft Imagine Cup 2013.

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"Taking third place at last year did not discourage us from trying again. On the contrary, we put our heads together to come up with a bigger and better project that led to us winning first place this year", said Endrit Ali, member of the Qbit team and winner of Albania's second Microsoft Imagine Cup. Building on last year's success, USAID's Rritje Albania project partnered with Microsoft to organize a bigger and better competition, which challenged 33 talented teams of as many as 57 university students to come up with innovative technology projects with socio-economic impact in the country. To develop projects, several students used the facilities of the PROTIK ICT Resource Center, which was recently established with USAID support through a public-private partnership with the Government of Albania, the Albanian-American Development Foundation, Microsoft, Cisco, and Albtelecom.

The Cup Finals were held on March 15, 2013, and the event attracted support from a host of public and private stakeholders, including the GoA, several donor organizations, the Albanian IT Association, 4 leading ICT companies, and 35 public and private educational institutions. This was preceded by a high-level conference which was addressed by Albania's Minister of Education and Science, Dr. Myqerem Tafaj, Minister of ICT, Dr. Genc Pollo, the US Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission, Dr. Henry Jardine, the Head of the EU Delegation to Albania, Mr. Ettore Sequi, and other representatives of the ICT sector and academic world. In his remarks Mr. Jardine noted, in particular, the importance of public-private partnerships to help young Albanian minds play an integral role in the development of the ICT sector and the country's future socio-economic growth. "Microsoft Imagine Cup is a great opportunity for students to extend their knowledge and contribute to the ICT sector, as well as increase their chances for employment." said Myqerem Tafaj, Minister of Education.

The student's enthusiasm was contagious and the application of technology was impressive, with ideas ranging from mobile applications to cloud services for improving health services, enabling better waste management, helping the visually impaired to learn English sign language, and so forth. This year's winning team, Qbit developed an application software that creates, tracks and updates a central database linking health services providers and patients in a given community through cloud computing. "After consulting with some of public and private hospital staff, we decided to develop an application software that makes patient's health profile available around the world through cloud computing. We worked really hard, spending many sleepless nights, in order to make this work" said Jonid Bendo of Qbit team.

Several of the participating students have already received offers of internships and/or employment from four Albanian ICT companies, including project clients IkubiNFO and DM Consulting. Some of these students have also been approached by the Darmstach Technical University in Germany with offers to apply for its PhD and Masters programs. The team that won third place was invited to make a presentation of their Stop Smoking software and mobile application to an interested company and the Prime Minister's Office, which expressed interest in their project and wanted to see a live demonstration of it. "Microsoft Imagine Cup is a great opportunity for talented students to explore new technologies and develop their talent. Stop Smoking, a project developed by third place winner, Diamond team caught our attention because we believe it provides a practical solution against smoking in public places" said Linda Shomo, Executive Director at EasyPay Albania.

Young Albanian Women Set Sights on IT

Blog article posted at <http://blog.usaid.gov/2013/03/young-albanian-women-set-sights-on-it/> on Friday, March 29th 2013

This year's Women's History Month theme is "Women Inspiring Innovation Through Imagination: Celebrating Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics". In observance, USAID is spotlighting innovative women working in these fields.



Egi Shikaju at the 2nd Annual Microsoft Imagine Cup held in Tirana, Albania on March 15, 2013

“We weren’t aware of how huge the event actually was until the day of the competition. When I saw the people and how important it was, the energy was overwhelming and I knew this was something I wanted to do again and again,” explained 20 year old, Egi Shikaju, about her experience at the 2nd Annual Microsoft Imagine Cup held in Tirana, Albania on March 15.

USAID was one of the main organizers of the 2013 Microsoft Imagine Cup which brought together 15 university-level teams to present their IT projects to judges. After the competition, USAID’s enterprise development project is providing technical assistance to the 2013 winners to help them commercialize their

winning ideas. In addition, qualified businesses and organizations are eligible for a grant of up to \$20,000 to introduce business technologies or innovations. Shikaju was part of a three person team from Epoka University who competed in this year’s competition of innovative software applications. Her team submitted a mobile software application that allows users to upload photos and GPS data of garbage and waste in order to notify local government authorities responsible for clean-up.

“Garbage collection is really a problem that worries us all. Tirana and all the cities in Albania have the problem of waste that isn’t thrown in the right places and at times is thrown in public spaces.” According to Shikaju, the key was to build something that was user-friendly and beneficial. Her mobile solution makes it easier for local authorities to monitor environmental hotspots and gives citizens the option to simply click and report. Just knowing how easy it is to report would serve as a deterrent. While her team placed seventh this year, Shikaju is already thinking about next year’s competition and will participate in “Start-Up Week” in April. As a second year student studying Business Informatics, a new degree program which combines Computer Science and Economics, her future in IT, and that of many young girls like her, looks bright. “I see business informatics, computer science, IT being a trend in Albania for young girls,” said Shikaju. There are currently 23 students in the program, half of whom are women. “Right now there are a lot of systems being developed in Albania,” explained Shikaju. “All the systems in the government are being transferred to computers. Businesses are looking for ways to transfer their business to the Cloud, so that is a sphere as well. I am always surprised with how huge this market is even as small as a country like Albania.”

The main impediment to growth of the IT sector, particularly programming and developing software, is lack of qualified applicants. As Albania’s IT sector expands, young women like Shikaju are jumping at the opportunity to get involved. Shikaju said she surprised how in interviews with people, particularly after the Imagine Cup, there is significant interest in her, not because of her gender, but because of what programming language she knows

Annex C

FY2013 Annual Press Releases



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, March 15, 2013

Email: spepi@usaid.gov

<http://albania.usaid.gov>

PRESS RELEASE

USAID, Microsoft Albania Support 2nd Imagine Cup Competition in Albania

TIRANA, MARCH 15, 2013 With the support from the USAID's Competitive Enterprise Development project (Rritje Albania), Microsoft Albania, and Albania's Ministries of Education and Science and Innovation and ICT, Albania held its second Imagine Cup Competition to support technology and innovation to advance economic and social developments in Albania.

The competition was made possible through partnerships and collaboration among USAID, the Government of Albania, private sector businesses and educational institutions. Albania is seeking to build its ICT sector and support the development of ICT skills among young entrepreneurs in order to increase the competitiveness of businesses.

The Imagine Cup is an annual worldwide series of student technology competitions focused around Microsoft technology and encouraging young people to apply their imagination and their creativity to technology innovations that can make a difference in the world. Now in its tenth year, the Imagine Cup has grown to be a global event. In 2012, the Imagine cup grew to more than 358,000 registered students from 183 countries.

This is Albania's second Imagine Cup competition. The competition challenges talented teams of university-level students to develop inventive projects, by developing innovative software applications. The Albania winning team will receive cash prizes and be eligible to compete in regional competitions and, if successful, in the worldwide final that will be held in Russia in July 2013.

USAID's Rritje Albania project has supported the 2013 Albania Imagine Cup winners by disseminating information on the competition to raise awareness and ensure broad participation and organization of the event. After the competition, USAID will provide technical assistance to the 2013 winners to help them to commercialize their winning ideas. In addition, qualified business and organizations may also apply for a grant from Rritje Albania's Technology and Innovation Grants Facility under which qualified businesses and organizations may receive up to USD\$20,000 for successful grant proposals that feature the introduction or development of new technologies and innovation in businesses.

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USAID Albania Inaugurates PROTIK ICT Resource Center

TIRANA, OCTOBER 10, 2012 The Minister of Innovation and ICT, Mr. Genc Pollo, the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission, Mr. Henry Jardine, the Chairman of the AADF, Mr. Michael Granoff, and representatives from Microsoft and Albtelcom delivered congratulatory remarks at the opening ceremony today for the PROTIK ICT Resource center. PROTIK was created as a public-private initiative with the cooperation of the Government of Albania, USAID, the Albanian-American Development Foundation (AADF), Microsoft Albania, Cisco, and Albtelcom. PROTIK will support the development and use of ICT innovations for small and medium enterprises and promote ICT sector growth in Albania.



Minister of Innovation and ICT, Mr. Genc Pollo, the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission, Mr. Henry Jardine, the Chairman of the AADF, Mr. Michael Granoff, and representatives from Microsoft and Albtelcom at the opening ceremony today for the PROTIK ICT Resource center.

Albania's ICT sector has experienced impressive growth over the past several years, yet its potential is far from realized. Businesses often lack the technical understanding, internal capacity, and support network needed to adopt, manage, and create ICT solutions and innovation necessary to increase sales and compete in regional and global markets. Recent European Union and an International Labor Organization studies both concluded that SMEs in all sectors of the economy demand both ICT technical skills and soft business skills, with the highest priority for assistance in the areas of marketing and sales and innovation and technology.

PROTIK's goal is to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the Albanian ICT community. Its design aims to fill market gaps with education activities, support services, and a state of the art technological environment, and research. Education activities will include training, consulting, and mentoring services for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), entrepreneurs, public-sector, and academic ICT professionals. To support information dissemination, PROTIK will emphasize the promotion of new products, ICT-sector networking, and the dissemination of valuable resources. The center will engage in such events as new product demonstrations, workshops to introduce Albanian products and companies, and innovation and ICT educational contests. To facilitate partnerships and spread awareness of PROTIK's activities, the center will continuously organize networking events including business-to-business meetings, ICT sector meetings (in conjunction with partner associations), and informal networking events.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
18 December 2012
Ritje Albania/CED
Public Information: 35542259838
Email: info@ritjealbania.com

PRESS RELEASE

USAID Albania Supports Conference on Responsible Tourism Development

TIRANA, 18 DECEMBER 2012 – USAID’s Ritje Albania project aligned itself alongside a number of public actors, private sector partners and donor organizations to support the Albanian Tourism Association (ATA) in holding its fifth annual conference on the subject of *Responsible Tourism: Path to Future Economic Growth*, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports (MTCYS). Prime Minister [Sali Berisha](#), Deputy German Ambassador, [Eric Tindrup](#), USAID/Albania Mission Director, [Jim Bamhart](#) and Minister of Tourism [Aldo Bumçi](#) delivered remarks at the opening session of the conference.

Recognizing the considerable impact of the tourism industry in the country’s economy and employment levels, the conference served as an open public-private forum for discussing critical opportunities and challenges for ensuring sustainable and responsible tourism development in Albania. Key expert presentations at the conference focused on the discussion of ATA’s 2012 Tourism Climate Index, Annual Report and 2013 Work Plan, on the relevance and future application of the draft copyrights law to the tourism industry, and the official launch of the Authentic Albania Quality Mark (AAQM) program website www.authenticalbania.com. The conference was also marked by two prestigious industry awards ceremonies relating to the Albania Tourism Awards for the best Albanian tourism companies of the year, and AAQM Awards for seven new qualifying hotels.

Over the past two years, USAID’s Ritje Albania project has been assisting ATA to establish the AAQM award program, Albania’s first private sector-led initiative to provide a standardized system for evaluating the quality of tourist accommodations. Aside from building the quality of the Albanian tourism product and services, the AAQM program is designed to put Albania firmly on the map of the international tourism market.

Through this program, hotels and accommodations are evaluated based on sustainable tourism criteria and then awarded a gold, silver, or bronze classification that is published on travel sites and in brochures and publications for foreign and national tourists. Assessments are conducted by a group of independent Albanian assessors trained by international experts on the AAQM framework, and are reviewed by an independent awards committee composed of government agencies, academic, civil society representatives and USAID’s Ritje Albania project. Since the program began in 2010, 63 hotels have become paying members of the ATA, requested an assessment of their businesses, and been awarded the Quality Mark. The program helps entrepreneurs to improve quality hotel standards that, in turn, further build the credibility of Albania’s tourism businesses.

According to the World Tourism and Travel Council, tourism was forecasted to account for 5.6 % of Albania’s GDP in 2012 and 4.3 % of employment within the country.

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Annex D

FY2013 Project Activities by Industry

1. Garment and Footwear Sectors Summary Table

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
GARMENT AND FOOTWEAR	Garment and Footwear Stakeholders Group Meeting	Tirana	21-Oct				1	12	8	4	0
	BYOB Footwear: Firm-level Assistance to client companies by UK Marketing and Product Development Expert (J. England)	Various	x	x	x	x	1	10	2	8	10
	PEP Program: Firm-level follow-up assistance by Productivity Expert (J. Haycock)	Various	x				1	6	1	5	6
	STTA Lecture on Required Knowledge and Skills by Albanian Garment Industry to PUT Master and Bachelor students (J. Haycock)	Tirana	20-Dec				1	48	46	2	0
	VET Schools Needs Assessment by Productivity Expert (J. Haycock)	Various	x				0	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	PUT Consultants: Firm-level assistance to client companies on KPIs, Testing, Trainings, Internships and other PUT services	Various	x	x			1	13	1	12	12
	PUT Consultants: Online enrollement into Lectra CAD/CAM trainings	Various	x				0	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	ARS Sutoria Training for Footwear Companies	Various	x				1	6	3	3	3

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
	BYOB Garment: Follow-up assistance by Russian STTA Expert post CPM fair (M. Perevezentsev)	Various	x	x	x		1	8	4	4	8
	Firm-level assistance delivered on utilization of ARS Sutoria (RrA BA)	Various		x	x	x	1	9	1	8	9
	PUT CAD/CAM Consultant: Firm-level assistance to client companies on Automated Design, Pattern Making and Grading	Various		x			1	12	1	11	0
	BYOB Footwear: Firm-level assistance to client companies by UK Designer (H.Lawless)	Various		x			1	10	2	8	0
	Continuing Education: MoU signed between PUT and VET schools	Tirana		x			n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Bella Confex exhibits at CPM Lingerie Expo 2013 fair	Moscow, Russia		5-8 Feb			n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	1
	Study-Visit by Tirana VET School students and teachers at the PUT Textiles and Fashion Department	Tirana		7 Feb			1	19	13	6	0
	PUT Lecture on CAD/CAM for VET Schools teachers and students (T. Kosova)	Various		18 Feb			1	4	4	0	0
	STTA Lecture on Introduction to Footwear Sourcing and Design (H. Lawless)	Tirana		9 Mar			1	17	17	0	0
	STTA Lecture on Footwear Marketing Strategy, Costing, Pricing (J. England)	Tirana		9 Mar			1	17	17	0	0

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
	BYOB Footwear: Firm-level assistance on trade fair participation and B2B meeting for client footwear companies attending the Lineapelle Sourcing fair, Bologna, Italy	Various		27-28 Mar			1	11	2	9	8
	B2B meetings facilitated between garment companies and Sweden-based sales agent (B. Minxhozi)	Various			2-6 Apr		1	11	1	10	11
	BYOB Footwear: 7 companies attended Lineapelle sourcing fair and conducted B2B mtgs	Bologna, Italy			3-5 Apr		1	12	1	11	7
	BYOB Footwear: PUT follow-up workshop on Lineapelle Sourcing Fair with students, faculty and industry representatives	Tirana			26 Apr		1	52	46	6	3
	STTA Lecture (PEP): Lecture training on Labor Needs and Productivity Concepts to Tirana VET students (J. Haycock)	Tirana			30-Apr		1	20	11	9	0
	STTA Lecture (PEP): Lecture training on Industrial Engineering to Tirana VET students (J. Haycock)	Tirana			7 May		1	20	13	7	0
	PUT and Tirana VET Faculty at conduct externship visit at Madison Avenue	Tirana			8 May		1	4	4	0	1
	PUT professors and Tirana VET teachers conduct joint externship visit at Omega	Tirana			9 May		1	8	8	0	1
	STTA Lecture (PEP): Lecture training on Industrial Engineering to PUT students (J. Haycock)	Tirana			10 May		1	17	16	1	0
	Garment and Footwear Stakeholders Group Meeting (Local STTA B.Sejdarasi introduces the collaboration of RrA and AIDA on	Tirana			14 May		1	11	6	5	2

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
	industry profiles and website)										
	PUT Consultants: Lecture training on Quality Control to Tirana VET school students	Tirana			22 May		1	16	16	0	0
	Ariea Collection (formerly known Metila/NPV International) signs contract with Russian buyer	Moscow, Russia			Jun		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	1
	Local STTA firm-level visits to garment and footwear companies on production of industry and company profiles (B. Sejdarasi)	Various			4-11 Jun		1	n/c	n/c	n/c	15
	Continuing Education: Lectra Design and Patternmaking software installed at VET Schools	Tirana			25-26 Jun		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Continuing Education: LECTRA CAD/CAM training for PUT Lecturers by Hellas Lectra Expert	Tirana			27-28 Jun		1	3	3	0	0
	PUT Consultants: Introduction training on Lectra CAD/CAM to Tirana VET school teachers	Tirana				2 Jul	1	3	3	0	0
	PUT Consultants: Introduction training on Lectra CAD/CAM to Shkodra VET school teachers	Shkodra				3 Jul	1	3	3	0	0
	PUT Consultants: Introduction training on Lectra CAD/CAM to Korca VET school teachers	Korca				12 Jul	1	4	4	0	0
	BYOB Footwear: MICAM Online Registration and Catalogue update workshop	Tirana				12 Jul	1	6	1	5	5

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
	BYOB Footwear: Workshop on trade fair participation prior to MICAM Milan Fair 2013	Tirana				24 Jul	1	8	1	7	7
	BYOB Footwear: Firms conduct study visit to Fital and discuss final preparations for MICAM Milan Fair 2013	Tirana				30 Aug	1	9	1	8	6
	Footwear Industry and Company Profiles drafted, designed and finalized (in collaboration with AIDA)	Tirana				Sep	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	13
	BYOB Footwear: 6 companies exhibit at the MICAM Milan 2013 Fair with Made in Albania industry booth	Milan				15-18 Sep	1	11	2	9	6
	BYOB Footwear: Follow-up meeting with companies on MICAM Milan 2013 Fair	Tirana				26 Sep	1	11	0	11	6
	RrA supported Garment and Footwear firms to improve websites content and administration (domain name, maintenance fees etc)	Various				Jul-Sep	1	n/c	n/c	n/c	13
	BYOB companies and other client companies obtain national and international trademark registration for their brands/collections	Various				Jul-Sep	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	9
	PUT Consultants: Textile and Fashion department students placed as interns placed at client garment and footwear companies	Various				Jul-Sep	1	23	23	0	n/c
Total Garment and Footwear Sectors							37	454	285	169	163

2. ICT Sector Summary Table

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies	
ICT	Inauguration of PROTIK Centre	Tirana	10 Oct				n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	
	Facilization Flexcube Training	Other	x				1	2	0	2	0	
	Facilization Oracle Primavera Certification	Tirana	Oct-Dec 2012				x	0	0	0	0	
	PMP Overview Training with PROTIK and AITA	Tirana	23-Oct				1	25	12	13	10	
	Facilization Oracle Primavera Product Presentation at PROTIK	Tirana	6 Nov				1	31	14	17	1	
	Follow-up event on AITA Business Start-up Weekend 2012	Tirana	15 Nov				1	15	6	9	3	
	PROTIK Capacity Building Assistance: Drafted, developed and printed PROTIK communications materials.	Tirana	x	x	x	x	2	4	2	2	0	
	Grantee Albania Holidays signs contracts with companies that are listed are now listed at the www.balkan-hotels.com website for reservations and bookings	Various		x			1	n/c	n/c	n/c	103	
	Training on <i>Trade Fair Participation and B2B meeting</i> for AITA/member companies exhibiting at CEBIT 2013 fair in Hannover, Germany (RrA T&I Adv)	Tirana			20 Feb			1	8	5	3	1
	AITA and member companies exhibit at the CEBIT 2013 fair Hannover, Germany	Hannover, Germany			5-9 Mar			1	8	5	3	2

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
	PROTIK Capacity Building Assistance: Training Workshop on Strategic Communications for PROTIK staff (RrA M&E/Comms Specialist)	Tirana		8 Mar			1	4	3	1	0
	33 university student teams sign-up for the 2nd Microsoft Imagine Cup and begin working on innovative technology projects with socio-economic impact	Tirana		x			1	93	31	62	0
	2nd Microsoft Imagine Cup 2013 Conference and Finals	Tirana		15 Mar			1	124	44	80	4
	PROTIK Business Speed-Dating	Tirana	13 Nov	21 Mar			1	19	10	9	5
	PROTIK and RrA host IT Mark Certification - SPI Workshop (Debrief by IT Mark RrA client companies)	Tirana			15 May		1	14	4	10	9
	PROTIK and RrA facilitate B2B meetings and matchmaking event between Albanian ICT firms and the members of the Italian Confindustria - BBAT	Tirana			22 May		1	47	15	32	22
	Grant Approved: Elite Travel and Infosoftware SD on Destination Management and Tour Operators Software (TourISD)	Various			Apr-Jun 2013		1	n/c	n/c	n/c	1
	Grant Approved: Facilitation II on Oracle Core Banking	Tirana			Apr-Jun 2013		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	1
	Grant Approved: IDRA on GIS Database and Software	Tirana			Apr-Jun 2013		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	1
Grantee Elite Travel: TourISD Software Training I	Elbasan			28-Jun		1	12	2	10	1	

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
	Grantee Elite Travel: TourISD Software Training II	Elbasan				29-Jul	1	4	1	3	1
	PROTIK: Follow-up workshop with Start-up Weekend 2013 companies	Tirana				20-Sep	1	24	14	10	4
	PROTIK: ICT Sector Stakeholders Consultation with newly elected Minister of Innovation and Public Administration, Ms. Milena Harito	Tirana				23-Sep	1	66	24	42	8
	PROTIK: 2-months IT Specialist Internship Program	Tirana				Jul-Sep	1	21	11	10	1
	Grants Approved: Communication Progress (Software to be developed and implemented by Omega garment company)	Tirana				Jul-Sep	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	1
	Grants Approved: DM Consulting (E-commerce platform for garment and footwear producers)	Tirana				Jul-Sep	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	1
Total ICT Sector							21	521	203	318	180

3. Tourism Sector Summary Table

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
TOURISM	Technical assistance to ATA in preparation for ATA Annual Assembly Conference	Tirana	x				x	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Technical assistance to ATA in preparing, printing and distributing AAQM promotional materials	Tirana	x				x	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	ATA Annual Assembly Conference and AAQM Awards Ceremony	Tirana	18 Dec				1	138	70	68	72
	Official launch of the AAQM Website	Tirana	18 Dec				x	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	7 x AAQM Hotels Assessments and Certifications	Various	x				1	7	0	7	7
	AAQM: RrA facilitates negotiations between ATA and IDRA on AAQM program roles and responsibilities	Tirana	x	x			x	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	CBI Training on Mastering Assertive Performance for tourism companies and tour operators	Tirana	9-10 Oct				1	25	14	11	16
	AAQM Assessors Training by IDRA	Tirana	15-16 Nov				1	3	2	1	0
	Presentation of AAQM Program: Bridging the gap between hotels and tourism educational institutions	Durres	20-Dec				x	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Meetings held and agreement drafted between ATA, DMO, Univ. Korca and AHLEI to offer certified hospitality trainings in Albania	Tirana	x				x	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Albanian touristic sites promoted through the NatGeo Western Balkans Geo-Maps website	Various	x	x			x	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies	
	AHLEI: Agreement drafted and signed between ATA/DMO/Univ. Korca and AHLEI to offer certified hospitality trainings in Albania	Tirana		x			x	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	
	NatGeo Western Balkan GeoMaps: MOU drafted and signed by Auron Expeditions, MTCYS and Rritje Albania	Tirana		x			x	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	
	NatGeo Western Balkan GeoMaps website: MOU drafted and signed by all 6 participating countries and RCI	Various		x			x	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	
	Supported MTYCS/NTA: Developed sitemap and RFP for www.albaniantourism.com portal to promote tourism in Albania	Tirana		x			x	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	
	Supported MTYCS/NTA: Capacity building workshop on Strategic Communications Planning (Sessions I+II) by RrA M&E/Comms Specialist	Tirana			31Jan 6Feb			1	13	6	7	0
	Gulliver OK exhibits at the <i>Ferien-Messe Wein leisure and holidays travel fair</i>	Vienna, Austria			10-13 Jan			n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	1
	CBI Training on Sustainable Tourism Practices for tourism companies and tour operators	Tirana			15-16 Jan			1	28	16	12	19
	ATA promotes AAQM Program and hotels at the Tourism Promotion to New Markets (TPNM) fair & B2B	Ioanniana, Greece			4-Feb			n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Supported MTYCS/NTA: Working group established and action plan drafted for development of www.albaniantourism.com portal	Tirana			13-Feb			1	12	6	6	0
	Grantee ARG exhibits at ITB 2013 Berlin-Messe fair	Berlin, Germany			5-9 Mar			n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	1

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
	Review of proposals by ICT companies on desing and establishment of NTA website	Tirana			3-Apr		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	RrA facilitates the FAM tour (Albania) of four representatives of the Western Balkans Geotourism Stewardship Council	Various			3-5 Apr		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Roundtable 1 on Copyrights and Liability Insurance tourism companies held in collaboration with the Albanian Copyrights Office (ACO), ATA and SIGAL	Durres			16-Apr		1	14	3	11	12
	Grantee DMO: Workshop on role of Tourist Information Center (TIC) with key local stakeholders	Korca			17-18 Apr		1	24	14	10	0
	Roundtable 2 on Copyrights and Liability Insurance tourism companies held in collaboration with the Albanian Copyrights Office (ACO), ATA and SIGAL	Tirana			19-Apr		1	23	8	15	18
	RrA supports grantee ARG to organize BERAT Earth Day Activities	Berat			22-Apr		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	RrA supports grantee DMO to organize Dardha Earth Day Activities	Dardha			22-Apr		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Roundtable 3 on Copyrights and Liability Insurance tourism companies held in collaboration with the Albanian Copyrights Office (ACO), ATA and SIGAL	Vlora			9-May		1	14	4	10	10

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
	Nat-Geo Initiative: RrA and Auron Expeditions participate and represent Albania at the meeting of the Western Balkans Geo-Tourism Stewardship Council (organized by RCI project)	Podgorica, Montenegro			14-15 May		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	STTA facilitates Focus Group meeting with key stakeholders on design, content and establishment of new NTA website (A. Gerxhani)	Tirana			17 May		1	16	7	9	8
	RrA supports the official opening of the tourist summer season in the Permet region	Permet			19 May		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	RrA facilitates production of six promotional videos in the context of the National Geographic's Western Balkans Geotourism MapGuide Initiative	Various			13-17 June		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	AHLEI Initiative: DMO Korca and AHLEI implement the 5-day TOT on Certified Hospitality Trainer (CHT) for tourism experts with RrA support	Korca				4-8 July	1	16	12	4	0
	AHLEI Initiative: DMO Korca and AHLEI implement 1-day TOT on Guest Service Gold Standard (GSGS) for tourism experts with RrA support	Korca				9 Jul	1	5	3	2	0
	AHLEI Initiative: DMO Korca and AHLEI implement 1-day TOT in Train, Retain, Assess, Certify (TRAC) for tourism experts with RrA support	Korca				10 Jul	1	5	3	2	0
	ATA develops and prints promotional one-pagers for 10 AAQM Hotels with RrA support	Various				1 Aug	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	10
	Grants Approved: Artisans of Shkodra on Regional Artisans Fair 2013 (NAAA)	Tirana				29 Jul	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
	DMO Korca Grant: Launch ceremony of tourist info-corners and meeting of public-private stakeholders on creating a sustainable network of info-corners in the Korça region	Korca				16 Aug	1	10	8	2	0
	Grantee National Artisans' Association: Workshop on Sales and Marketing Techniques	Shkdra				7 Sep	1	23	18	5	0
	Project video on Albanian Rafting Group completed and released on USAID/Albania Facebook	Various				Sep	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Supported MTYCS/NTA: Workshop on Content Input and Maintenance for the www.albaniantourism.com website to Korca Region Municipalities Staff	Korca				18 Sep	1	9	4	5	0
	Local artisans exhibit and sell products at the Shkodra Artisans Fair 2013 organized by grantee NAAA	Shkodra				22-24 Sep	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Nat Geo Initiative: Regional Western Balkans Training on Adventure Tourism Sustainability for Tour Operators	Sarajevo, BiH				25-26 Sep	1	5	3	2	5
	NatGeo Initiative: Regional Tourism Stewardship Council Meeting and release of 6 NatGeo promotional videos on the Western Balkans	Sarajevo, BiH				27-Sep	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Local STTA provides ATA with assistance to improve and update content in the AAQM website www.authenticalbania.com (A. Gerxhani)	Various				Jul-Sep	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
Total Tourism Sector							19	390	201	189	179

4. Cross-Cutting Sector Summary Table

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
CORSS-CUTTING	IPR Stakeholders Group Meeting	Tirana	23 Oct	15 Jan			1	20	12	8	0
	National Conference on Intellectual Property Rights held	Tirana	6 Dec				1	40	19	21	9
	Career Offices: STTA follow-up assistance and meetings with universities (V. Ademi)	Tirana	x				n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Career Offices: STTA training on Career Development with students and lecturers at UT Faculty of Economics (V. Ademi)	Tirana	18 Dec				1	22	21	1	0
	STTA assistance to DM Consulting on WFD portal www.duapune.com (V. Ademi)	Tirana	x				1	4	3	1	1
	Roundtable on Amendments to Law No. 9947, dated 07.07.2008, on <i>Industrial Property Rights</i> , with GDPT	Tirana		7-Mar			1	36	25	11	17
	Career Offices: ToT on Career Centers Management (V Ademi)	Tirana		5-8 Mar			1	19	16	3	0
	Career Offices: ToT on Career Counseling Courses (V Ademi)	Tirana		11-13 Mar			1	20	17	3	0
	University of Korca: Career Centre organizes student workshops on Career Counseling topics	Korca			15-19 Apr		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Roundtable 1 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Fier			25 Apr		1	19	4	15	15

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
	RrA supports the Regional CEED B2B and Matchmaking 2013 event	Tirana			26 Apr		1	68	20	48	27
	RrA supports ACO in producing and printing IPR promotional brochure	Tirana			x		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	RrA in collaboration with ACO and partners support organization of Intellectual Property Rights Day activities	Tirana			26 Apr		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Career Offices: Four Albanian universities go on career office study tour at the Southeastern University of Tetovo (SUT)	Tetovo, FYRM			7-9 May		1	19	17	2	0
	Roundtable 2 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Shkodra			16 May		1	18	9	9	15
	RrA supports publication and conference on ACIT Trade Report 2012	Tirana			17 May		1	34	16	18	0
	Roundtable 3 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Korca			22 May		1	23	6	17	13
	University of Korça: STTA lecture training on Career Counseling topics for bachelor level students (V. Ademi)	Korca			29 May		1	90	72	18	0
	University of Tirana: STTA lecture training on Career Counseling for students at the Faculty of Economics, Business Administration - bachelor degree level (V. Ademi)	Tirana			30 May		1	42	37	5	0

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
	RrA facilitates participation of UT and UMB Career Centers with booth space at the Amcham Job Fair 2013	Tirana			31 May		1	35	27	8	0
	University of Tirana: STTA lecture training on Career Counseling for students at the Faculty of Economics, Business IT - bachelor degree level (V. Ademi)	Tirana			3 Jun		1	73	66	7	0
	University of Tirana: RrA Supports the first Career Fair organized by Faculty of Economy and Law Career Offices (V. Ademi)	Tirana			5 Jun		n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	University of Tirana: STTA lecture training on Career Counseling for students at Faculty of Economics, Finance and Accounting, bachelor degree level (V. Ademi)	Tirana			6 Jun		1	49	47	2	0
	Roundtable 4 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Durres			9 Jun		1	11	1	10	8
	Roundtable 5 on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	Tirana			13 Jun		1	41	23	18	16
	US Ambassador visits RrA client footwear company PICARI Ltd.	Patos,Fier				11 Jul	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
	Career Centers Initiative: University of Korça Career Centre co-organizes Korça Job Fair 2013 and participates with booth offering career counseling and CV editing services	Korca				12 Jul	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c

Industry	Activity	Location	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Event Count	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants	Companies
	BkVF Tirana: Meeting of Stakeholders and Partners to Attract Interest and Commitment	Tirana				5 Sep	1	20	8	12	5
	BkVF Tirana: Venture Academy - Investor Readiness Workshop for Young Entrepreneurs	Tirana				28 Sep	1	23	15	8	11
Total Cross-cutting Sector							22	726	481	245	137

Annex E

FY2013 Communications and Outreach Activities

Month Year	Event/Activity	Outreach Method	Coordinated with	Industry
October - December 2012	RrA interviews BYOB Garment companies	Success Story developed	USAID	Garment
	Inauguration Ceremony of PROTIK ICT Resource Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer Event communication materials Talking Points for U.S Deputy Ambassador USAID Press Release USAID Facebook link 	AADF USAID Mission	ICT Cross-Sector
	National Conference on Intellectual Property Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer RrA website announcement Event communication materials Talking Points for U.S. Ambassador USAID press release USAID Facebook link 	AmCham USAID Mission	Cross-Sector
	ATA's 5th Annual Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer RrA and industry websites announcement ATA Media Advisory USAID Press Release Talking Points for USAID Mission Director 	ATA USAID Mission	Tourism
	AAQM Award Ceremony Launch of AAQM Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer AAQM promotional materials prepared 	ATA USAID Mission	Tourism
January-March 2013	Gulliver OK exhibits at the <i>Ferien-Messe Wein leisure and holidays travel fair in Vienna, Austria</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing and promotional materials developed and printed 	RrA Client company	Tourism
	CBI Training on Sustainable Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer Communications materials developed RrA website announcement Communications materials developed <p><u>USAID/Albania Facebook post on:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training event 	USAID Mission	Tourism
	Sustainable Tourism in Albania	<p><u>USAID/Albania Facebook postson:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Tourism in Albania Auron Expeditions DMO Korca Albanian Holidays 	USAID Mission Auron Expeditions DMO Korca Albanian Holidays	Tourism
	ATA promotes AAQM Program and hotels at the Tourism Promotion to New Markets (TPNM) fair & B2B	AAQM marketing brochures distributed	ATA	Tourism
	RrA Videos on BYOB Garment and the ARG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-production and filming on location in Tirana and Berat 	USAID Mission ARG	Garment

Month Year	Event/Activity	Outreach Method	Coordinated with	Industry
			Madison Avenue Kler	Tourism
	Bella Konfeks exhibits at CPM Lingerie Expo 2013 fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing and promotional materials developed and printed 	Bella Confex	Garment
	BYOB Garment Initiative	<p><u>USAID/Albania Facebook posts on:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Albanian Garment Sector Albanian Garment Website BYOB Initiative and client companies 	USAID Mission	Garment
	Roundtable on Amendments to Law No. 9947, dated 07.07.2008, on Industrial Property Rights, with GDPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer Communications materials developed RrA website announcement GDPT Press release Talking Points <p><u>USAID/Albania Facebook posts on:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roundtable on IPR Laws and their reinforcement Intellectual Property and Copyrights 	GDPT AmCham Microsoft Albania	Cross-cutting
	Career Centers Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ToT event organizer RrA website announcement Communications materials developed Ceremony to award training certificates by USAID Mission Director <p><u>USAID/Albania Facebook posts on:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Centers Initiative Short video-interview clips with training participants 	USAID Mission	Cross-cutting
	AITA and member companies exhibit at the CEBIT 2013 fair Hannover, Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing and communications materials developed 	AITA	ICT
	Grantee tourism company ARG exhibits at ITB 2013 Berlin-Messe fair, Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotional rafting brochure developed and printed 	ARG	Tourism
	2 nd Microsoft Imagine Cup 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer Communications materials developed USAID/RrA press release Talking Points for USAID Mission Director RrA website announcement Success Story on 1st place winners developed <p><u>USAID/Albania Facebook posts on:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd Microsoft Imagine Cup Conference and Competition Short video-interview clips with the three winning teams 	Microsoft Albania USAID Mission	ICT

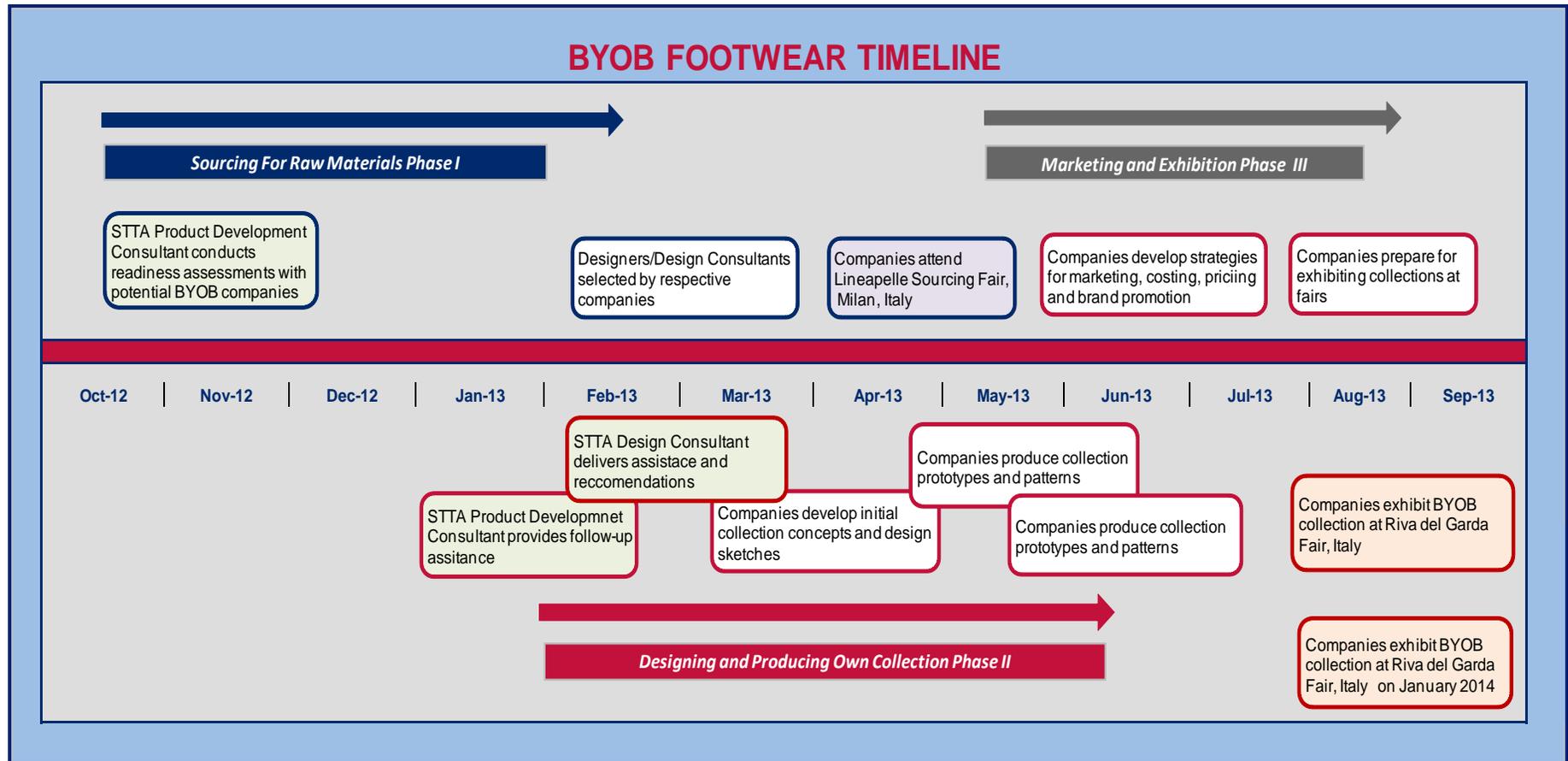
Month Year	Event/Activity	Outreach Method	Coordinated with	Industry
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women in IT Article published at USAID's Impact Blog http://blog.usaid.gov/ 		
	Earth Day Festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer T-shirts developed and distributed Talking Points <u>USAID/Albania Facebook posts on:</u> For activities in Berat and Dardha, Korçe 	ARG DMO USAID Mission	Tourism
April - June 2013	BYOB Footwear Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>USAID/Albania Facebook posts on:</u> Albanian Footwear Sector BYOB Initiative and client companies Lineapelle sourcing fair Bologna participation 	USAID Mission	Footwear
	Intellectual Property Rights Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event supporter RrA website announcement Communications materials developed 	ACO	Cross-cutting
	ARG organized BERAT Earth Day Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event supporter RrA website announcement Communications materials developed <u>USAID/Albania Facebook posts on:</u> ARG Earth Day in Berat 	USAID Mission	Tourism
	DMO Korça Earth Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer RrA website announcement Communications materials developed <u>USAID/Albania Facebook post on:</u> Earth Day Festival in Dardha 	USAID Mission	Tourism
	3 Roundtables on Copyrights and Liability Insurance for tourism companies held in collaboration with the Albanian Copyrights Office (ACO), ATA and SIGAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer Communications materials developed RrA website announcement <u>USAID/Albania Facebook posts on:</u> Copyrights and Liability Insurance for tourism companies 	ACO ATA SIGAL	Tourism
	5 Roundtables on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer Communications materials developed RrA website announcement <u>USAID/Albania Facebook posts on:</u> Roundtables on Industrial Property and Inspections Reform held in collaboration with GDPT and CI 	GDPT CI Business Albania	Cross-cutting
	PROTIK and RrA host IT Mark Certification - SPI Workshop (Debrief by IT Mark RrA client companies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer Communications materials developed RrA website announcement Success story drafted 	PROTIK ESI Bulgaria	ICT

Month Year	Event/Activity	Outreach Method	Coordinated with	Industry
		<u>PROTIK Facebook post on:</u> IT Mark Certification - SPI Workshop		
	Visit Permet Tourist Season Opening Festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event supporter Communications materials developed Website developed and improved for event 	Permet Tourist and Culture Center	Tourism
	RrA facilitates participation of UT and UMB Career Centers with booth space at the Amcham Job Fair 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer Communications materials developed RrA website announcement 	Amcham UMB UT	Cross-cutting
	ACIT Trade Report 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer Communications materials developed Talking Points for USAID Program Office Director RrA website announcement 	ACIT USAID Mission	Cross-cutting
	University of Tirana and University Marin Barleti Career Centers exhibit with booth at the Amcham Job Fair 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event co-organizer Communications materials developed 	Amcham USAID Mission UT UMB	Cross-cutting
	University of Tirana Career Fair organized by Faculty of Economy and Law Career Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event supporter Communications materials developed 	UT USAID Mission	Cross-cutting
	Destination Albania Series of Tourism articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authentic Albania Quality Mark hotels throughout South-East National Geographic Western-Balkans sites in the South-East Albania region RrA client Tour Operators in the South-East Albania region RrA Tourism Sector Grantees in the South-East Albania regions 	USAID Mission	Tourism
	PROTIK Communications Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROTIK website developed www.protik.org with RrA support Promotional materials developed and printed with RrA support 	PROTIK	ICT
July - September 2013	US Ambassador visits RrA client footwear company PICARI ltd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commemorative Plaque developed Event coverage on local media 	USAID Mission	Cross-Cutting

Month Year	Event/Activity	Outreach Method	Coordinated with	Industry
	ATA develops and prints promotional one-pagers for 10 AAQM Hotels and Tour Operators with RrA support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-pagers revised among ATA, NTA hotels and Tour Operators • One-pagers finalized by RrA and printed 	ATA NTA	Tourism
	DMO Korca Grant: Launch ceremony of Tourist Info-Corners (TIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotional materials developed and printed with RrA support 	DMO Local Municipalities	Tourism
	Albanian Rafting Group Video Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official launch of ARG Video through USAID/Albania Facebook Page • 100 hundred envelopes including the video and a letter of gratitude to all the journalist, media, institutions and persons who have contributed in the promotion of rafting during these years • 3 Newspaper and Magazine articles on ARG • 4 Television (ORA News, Klan Tv, Albanian Radio and Television and Vizion+) Show Appearances 	ARG	Tourism
	NAAA Grant: Shkodra Artisans Fair 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banners, posters and invitations developed and printed with RrA support 	National Artisan's Association of Albania (NAAA)	Tourism
	BYOB Footwear: MICAM Milan Fair 2013 Exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Booth layout, posters and banners developed and printed with RrA support • Marketing materials (brochure, footwear sector folder and one-pagers) developed and printed with RrA support <p><u>USAID/Albania Facebook post on:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Leading footwear firms exhibiting with their own brands and collections 	AIDA	Footwear
	Balkan Venture Forum Tirana: Venture Academy - Investor Readiness Workshop for Young Entrepreneurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters and invitations developed and printed with RrA support • Access to Finance One-pagers distributed <p><u>PROTIK Facebook post on:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation to BkVF Venture Academy • Happening Now Venture Academy Training 	Venture Veritas Crimson Capital PROTIK	Cross-cutting

Annex G

Build Your Own Brand October 2012 - September 2013 Timeline



Annex H

Summary of Progress on Career Offices Initiative by University

Name of University	Assistance offered	Steps taken towards establishing functioning COs
<p>University of Tirana</p>	<p>STTA reviewed short and long term plans of CC activities for 2013.</p> <p>Discussed CC activities that can be accomplished this year, including: development of an interactive portal linking students, alumni and employers; and organization of a university job fair during the second half of 2013.</p> <p>STTA discussed options of introducing career counseling subjects as separate courses, namely a Professional Career Course and a Job Search Strategies course.</p> <p>STTA workforce development expert provided recommendations for improving CC marketing material and promotional brochures.</p> <p>UT's lecturers and COs staff completed ToT in <i>Career Center Management</i> in 5-8 March 2013.</p> <p>UT's lecturers and COs staff completed ToT on <i>Career Counseling Topics</i> during 11-</p>	<p>University has opened one (1) central Career Center at the Rector's Office with allocated space and 1 dedicated staff.</p> <p>UT's Faculty of Law has already opened its CO with allocated space and 1 dedicated staff.</p> <p>UT's Faculty of Economics has already opened its CO with allocated space and 1 dedicated staff.</p> <p>UT plans to open CO with at least one dedicated staff in each faculty by May 2013.</p> <p>UT's Faculty of Economics is developing a new elective course on career counseling to be included in the 2013/2014 academic year targeting third year BA students.</p> <p>UT's Faculty of Information Technology is utilizing career counseling modules in a new course to be introduced during the second term (February – June 2013) as a compulsory course for an estimated 200 third year BA students.</p> <p>UT's Faculty of Mathematics, and Statistics, and Applied Informatics will use the career counseling modules to develop an elective course to third year BA students.</p> <p>UT has a written and finalized a plan of career center activities covering the 2013/14 academic year. The plan includes: workshops on career counseling with students (CV, motivation letter, and job interview), a career fair to be held in May 2013 at the UT campus, a</p>

Name of University	Assistance offered	Steps taken towards establishing functioning COs
	<p>13 March 2013.</p> <p>WFD STTA Visar Ademi organized study tour to South East European University in Tetovo on May 8-10 2013.</p> <p>WFD STTA provided hands-on assistance and coaching of CC staff to prepare first career fair at UT, including support for preparation of all necessary documents, promotional materials and contacts.</p> <p>Rritje Business Advisor provided access to data base of companies that could be contacted prior to the career fair.</p> <p>WFD STTA delivered guest lectures on “<i>How to Prepare Your CV</i>”, “<i>Cover Letter creation</i>” and “<i>Interviewing techniques</i>” for more than 200 students.</p> <p>WFD STTA provided feedback on the latest CC plan of activities and advice on how to ensure successful implementation.</p> <p>WFD STTA provided a template with tasks and responsibilities to be included in career center director job description.</p>	<p>series of career open days with participation from private sector companies, and a career web portal that is currently being designed and will be ready for testing and release in April-May 2013.</p> <p>UT’s CC participated with its own stand at the job fair on March 04, 2013, organized in collaboration with USAID’s JUST Project, UT’s Faculty of Law and AmCham. The aim of this job fair was to facilitate linkages between law graduate students and Albanian law firms.</p> <p>UT CC finalized its draft plan of activities which includes organization of career fair, delivering trainings for students and open seminars for companies, organizing Excellence day, organizing Scholar’s Month, developing a web portal, developing promotional materials, etc.</p> <p>A four member team of UT lecturers and CC staff participated in a study tour to South East European University in Tetovo.</p> <p>UT’s CC participated with its own stand at the AMCHAM job fair on May 31, 2013. CC staff assisted students to improve CVs and motivation letters prior to interviewing process.</p> <p>On June 4, 2013 UT organized its first Career Fair with a great success, with 40 companies exhibiting and more than 700 students participating. Several business associations took part in the event.</p> <p>UT Career Office staff started delivering trainings to students aimed to improve CV and motivation letter writing skills and increase success during job interviewing process. They have also invited guest lecturers from leading corporations such as Deloitte, ProCredit Bank and others.</p> <p>Career Center has been integrated in the university structure. Career Office staff of Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Law is now part</p>

Name of University	Assistance offered	Steps taken towards establishing functioning COs
	<p>WFD STTA provided guidance for CC and CO staff on the best ways to coordinate activities and developed a monitoring and evaluation plan.</p> <p>WFD STTA drafted a detailed SoW for an expert tasked to develop software requirement specifications (SRS) that could be used as a guide for web portal development.</p>	<p>of Department of Communications within the Rector's Office.</p> <p>UT is developing a new career counseling course as free elective course, which will be included in the academic year of 2013/14 and delivered to students of Year III of Bachelor program at Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Law. The staff of the Career Offices will be registered as external lecturers and will deliver this course to students that will allow keeping in touch with students on a daily basis.</p> <p>The Career Center coordinator based at Rector's Office started supervising the activities of the four Career Offices staff located in the Faculties spread around Tirana. The monitoring and evaluation tool enables monitoring the performance of the individual Career Offices on a regular basis.</p> <p>UT Vice rector started planning financial sustainability of the career offices structure by including career development program as a separate line item in the next year's budget of the university. In addition, vice rector managed to raise a grant in the amount of 40,000 Euros from the Embassy of France for Career Center operations in the next five years.</p>
<p>University Fan Noli (UFN) in Korça</p>	<p>STTA reviewed short and long terms plans of CC activities for 2013. Discussion focuses on development of an interactive portal linking students, alumni and employers, and organization of a university job fair during the second half of 2013.</p> <p>STTA workforce development expert provided recommendations for improving CC marketing material and promotional brochures.</p>	<p>The UFN Korça will allocate office space for a CC at a new university building that will be ready in September 2013.</p> <p>University of Korca has already hired one full time and one part time staff to work at the CC.</p> <p>University is implementing STTA recommendations for implementing activities at its existing CO that is run and managed by one dedicated staff, assisted by another administration staff and one lecturer.</p> <p>University began setting up a basic database of alumni and</p>

Name of University	Assistance offered	Steps taken towards establishing functioning COs
	<p>The UFN's COs staff completed ToT in <i>Career Center Management</i> in 5-8 March 2013.</p> <p>The UFN's COs staff completed ToT on <i>Career Counseling Topics</i> during 11-13 March 2013.</p> <p>STTA workforce development expert advises on options of introducing career counseling subjects as separate courses, namely a Professional Career Course and a Job Search Strategies course.</p> <p>WFD STTA provided feedback on the latest CC plan of activities and advice on how to ensure successful implementation.</p> <p>WFD STTA Visar Ademi organized study tour to South East European University in Tetovo on May 8-10 2013.</p> <p>WFD STTA delivered guest lectures on "<i>How to Prepare Your CV</i>", "<i>Cover Letter creation</i>" and "<i>Interviewing techniques</i>" for more than 100 students.</p> <p>Rritje Business advisor facilitated establishing working relationship between TABITA and UFN.</p>	<p>collecting contact information.</p> <p>The UFN is reviewing recommendations for integrating career counseling topics/course in its existing curricula. Its current plans are to integrate career counseling modules as part of two existing courses on Academic Writing which are taught at the Faculty of Education and Philosophy and at Faculty of Sciences, as well as two Human Resources courses taught at Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Agriculture.</p> <p>The UFN will take part with its own CC stand at a Korça job fair scheduled to take place in June 2013. In anticipation of this fair, the CC is planning to deliver a series of workshops on how to write a CV and motivation letter, conduct a job interview other soft skills based on training materials and resources materials provided by Rritje Albania.</p> <p>A team of four UFN lecturers and CC staff participated in a study tour to South East European University in Tetovo.</p> <p>UFN rector has allocated the career centre space of around 20 m² at the new premises of the University in the main boulevard of Korca bringing the centre closer not only to university students but also to business community. The new Career Center has been equipped with a laptop and LCD projector for the workshops, seminars, and lectures organized by the Career Centre.</p> <p>After consultation with WFD STTA, UFN CC finalized its plan of activities for the academic year 2013/14. Activities include organizing the new office, taking part in the job fair, developing promotional materials of the Center, providing career counseling to students, developing partnerships agreements with companies, delivering workshops on CV and cover letter writing and conducting job interviews, organizing guest speaker events, organizing a career</p>

Name of University	Assistance offered	Steps taken towards establishing functioning COs
	<p>WFD STTA provided guidance on the potential areas of cooperation between TABITA and UFN that could include joint activities such as trainings, seminars, career fairs, guest speaker presentations etc.</p> <p>WFD STTA provided coaching and training for TABITA for organization of career fairs, sharing all documents necessary to organize such event.</p> <p>WFD STTA drafted a detailed SoW for an expert tasked to develop software requirement specifications (SRS) that could be used as a guide for web portal development.</p>	<p>fair, and others.</p> <p>During the period April-June 2013, the newly appointed staff of the Career Centre promoted its services to all of the faculties in open meetings chaired by the university rector.</p> <p>UFN Career Office staff has proposed to the Rector to integrate the career counseling modules in the existing courses on Academic Writing and Management of Human Resources taught at Faculty of Philology and Education and Faculty of Economics respectively.</p> <p>UFN CC established successful collaboration with TABITA, local organization facilitating employment. This allowed CC to get access to a number of local companies.</p> <p>UFN CC attended with a stand the Korca job fair in July 2013. The Career Office staff manning the stand assisted students in improving CVs and motivation letters, using the know-how obtained during the Rritje STTA training on career counseling. The job fair has been very successful with 22 companies and 114 students participating. As a result, 22 graduating students have been hired by the local companies, while 50 students have been hired by the municipality on a temporary basis. In addition, seven students expressed their interest to be engaged as interns with the Career Center.</p>
<p>University Marin Barleti (UMB)</p>	<p>STTA workforce development expert reviewed short and long terms plans of CC activities for 2013. STTA reviewed short and long terms plans of CC activities for 2013.</p> <p>Discussion focused on development of an interactive CC web-portal, ideas for generating university links to the private sector, organization of</p>	<p>UMB has established a CC by appointing two newly hired staff and is working on allocating them a separate CC office space at their campus near Tirana Lake Park.</p> <p>UMB has a written and finalized a plan of career center activities covering the 2013/14 academic year. The plan includes: publications of a career manual, workshops on career counseling with students, establishing links and networking with private sector companies by inviting Guest Speakers on campus, developing a CC web-portal based on software requirement specifications (SRS), preparing for a</p>

Name of University	Assistance offered	Steps taken towards establishing functioning COs
	<p>a job fair during the second half of 2013, and so forth.</p> <p>STTA workforce development expert provided recommendations for improving CC marketing material and promotional brochures.</p> <p>UMB's COs staff completed ToT in <i>Career Center Management</i> in 5-8 March 2013.</p> <p>UMB's COs staff completed ToT on <i>Career Counseling Topics</i> during 11-13 March 2013.</p> <p>WFD STTA Visar Ademi organized study tour to South East European University in Tetovo on May 8-10 2013.</p>	<p>job fair, and so forth.</p> <p>UMB is reviewing recommendations for integrating career counseling topics/course in its existing curricula. Its current plans are to integrate career counseling modules as part of its two existing courses on Academic Writing and Research Methods, taught in Years I and III of the BA program.</p> <p>A team of three UMB lecturers and CC staff participated in a study tour to South East European University in Tetovo. UMB representatives suggested that UMB and SEEU Tetovo could establish long term co-operation between the two universities and to apply jointly as partners in regional projects.</p> <p>After discussions with Rritje STTA, UMB Career Center staff finalized its plan of activities including: developing a data base of active students and companies, designing promotion materials such as leaflets and brochures to promote the career centre and its services, conducting needs assessment of business community and students in order to have a real grasp on what is needed, organizing and delivering workshops on CV and cover letter writings, interview simulation, guest visits, career panels as well as internship placement for its students, and organizing a Career Fair around the Christmas period.</p> <p>UMB Career Center had its own booth at the AMCHAM job fair organized on May 31, 2013 at Hotel Tirana. The Career Center staff assisted students to improve CVs and motivation letters prior to conducting job interviews.</p> <p>The UMB has now two full time professionals working for the Career Center. The individuals selected are well-educated and bring high level of professionalism and dedication to success of career centre. One of them used to work in the University of Southern California.</p>

Name of University	Assistance offered	Steps taken towards establishing functioning COs
		<p>UMB made a decision to introduce career management topics within existing courses such as Communication skills and Human Resources in all faculties given the length of accreditation procedure for new courses.</p> <p>UMB Career Center has set up a database of companies and a database of students that are updated on a daily basis.</p> <p>UMB CC finalized and printed marketing materials and promotional brochures.</p> <p>UMB CC started developing relationships with private sector companies in terms of arranging internships, facilitating jobs for its graduates and offering other services to firms.</p> <p>UMB CC started delivering individual career counseling services to interested students.</p>
<p>Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT)</p>	<p>STTA workforce development expert reviewed short and long terms plans of CC activities for 2013.</p> <p>STTA workforce development expert provided recommendations for improving CC marketing material and promotional brochures.</p> <p>AUT's COs staff completed ToT in <i>Career Center Management</i> in 5-8 March 2013.</p> <p>AUT's COs staff completed ToT on <i>Career Counseling Topics</i> during 11-13 March 2013.</p> <p>WFD STTA Visar Ademi organized study tour to South East European</p>	<p>AUT has decided to expand its existing Student Orientation Office to take on the functions of a CC. A central CC at university level will coordinate activities with 5 other COs to be opened at each AUT Faculty. The CC will be run by 2 dedicated staff members, while each CO will have 1 staff member to manage its activities.</p> <p>AUT's Faculty of Economic is currently working on developing a new elective course on career counseling to be included in the 2013/2014 academic year targeting third year BA students.</p> <p>A team of six AUT lecturers and CC staff participated in a study tour to South East European University in Tetovo.</p> <p>Agricultural University of Tirana completed all legal requirements necessary to introduce and integrate the career centre functions into the University structure. University Senate in its meeting held in April, 2013, decided that Student Orientation offices located in each of the five Faculties will be transformed into the career offices that will provide career counselling and career placement services to all</p>

Name of University	Assistance offered	Steps taken towards establishing functioning COs
	<p>University in Tetovo on May 8-10 2013.</p> <p>WFD STTA provided feedback on the latest CC plan of activities.</p> <p>WFD STTA Visar Ademi provided in-depth assistance and coaching to AUT on implementation of the Career Center plan, creating linkages with the private sector companies, selecting market leaders to support the program etc.</p> <p>WFD STTA drafted a detailed SoW for an expert tasked to develop software requirement specifications (SRS) that could be used as a guide for web portal development.</p>	<p>students of the University in addition to information on educational programs. In line with the decision to create new structure, Mr. Remzi Keco, has been nominated as a coordinator of career centre at the rector's office responsible to manage the activities of career offices.</p> <p>After discussions with Rritje STTA, AUT Career Center has finalized its plan of activities focusing on office start up, developing business contacts, developing a web portal, etc.</p> <p>AUT paid particular attention to staffing the career offices structure with dedicated and committed individuals that will see the career center as a window for personal career development and progress. This is as an important milestone for success of career centers. There are now two professionals engaged at university level, five staff at faculty level, and five lecturers, one for each faculty.</p> <p>AUT made a decision to teach a new career counseling course as elective course that will be included in the academic year of 2013/14 and will be delivered in the second semester of Year III of Bachelor programs of all five AUT faculties. The course called <i>Career Management</i>, has been fully developed and it has half of workload of a normal course, incorporating 15 seminars and 30 lectures. The approximate number of students who could take this course exceeds 1,000 students.</p>

Name of University	Assistance offered	Steps taken towards establishing functioning COs
<p>Polytechnic University of Tirana</p>	<p>STTA met with the relevant university's staff to help them clarify their vision of the CC and its future role and activities.</p> <p>PUT's lecturers completed ToT in <i>Career Center Management</i> in 5-8 March 2013.</p> <p>PUT's lecturers completed ToT on <i>Career Counseling Topics</i> during 11-13 March 2013.</p> <p>Rritje has assisted PUT Textile and Fashion Department to develop and print 1,000 copies of new internship leaflet.</p> <p>Rritje has assisted PUT to develop and implement a graduate tracking system to record contact information of graduates and their career development.</p> <p>WFD STTA drafted a detailed SoW for an expert tasked to develop software requirement specifications (SRS) that could be used as a guide for web portal development.</p> <p>Rritje has assisted PUT to develop a questionnaire and conduct a survey on job expectations of their graduate students.</p>	<p>Although the PUT has a clear intention for wanting to establish and open a CC, the challenge they are facing is the identification of an appropriate office space for the CC.</p> <p>PUT's engagement in the implementation of other Rritje Albanian initiative such as the BYOB and PEP programs, have enhanced the capacities of the PUT Textile and Fashion Department to network with and provide better services to the garment and footwear sectors .</p> <p>A new career counseling module is being integrated into an existing PUT course on Project Management taught in Year 2 of its BA program.</p> <p>A team of two PUT lecturers and CC staff participated in a study tour to South East European University in Tetovo.</p> <p>PUT developed a graduate tracking system to record contact information of graduates and their career development.</p> <p>PUT has conducted a survey on job expectations of their graduate students with 60 students.</p> <p>PUT has yet to allocate office space and appoint full time staff for the Career Center. PUT faces a shortage of office space in its main headquarters, but it has started to expand the building with a new facility. Two lecturers who attended the study tour will introduce career counseling module in existing course related to enterprise management.</p>