



Business without Borders (BWB)

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Annual Work Plan

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1.INTRODUCTION

Business without Borders responds to the broad USAID priorities, as well as it responds to the Microenterprise sector of the Development Grants Program RFA, and the USAID Macedonia economic strategy to “improve the overall business environment and investment policy, while assisting individual firms and agrobusinesses in increasing their competitiveness and productivity.” It will be led by the Foundation BSC-Bitola, and supported by three local Macedonian partners: Municipality of Bitola, Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the University St. Kliment Ohridski in Bitola. Its main goals are to: accelerate economic growth in southwestern Macedonia by facilitating the startup of new enterprises; the growth and competitiveness of existing micro, small and medium sized enterprise (MSME)s; job creation and employment opportunities for the young, vulnerable and unemployed; and improving the regional framework of MSME development through the activities of BSC-Bitola, its business incubator, and local & regional partners in public, private, civil-society and academic sectors.

The project will cover ten municipalities from southwestern Macedonia-nine municipalities from Pelagonia region plus the municipality of Ohrid. In this region according to the data from 2008, there were registered 7000 small enterprises, 131 medium and 29 large. Small enterprises contribute 55% of production in region and SMEs employ 86%. Therefore further support of the MSME sector is crucial in this region for enhancement of the economic growth. So the focus will be put on overcoming the obstacles such as the insufficient support structure for businesses and entrepreneurs in the region, financial and operational sustainability of BSC-Bitola, as well as to the key institutional resource of the region and low level of cooperation between local actors at local, regional and national levels.

Projections for every year of the project are given in the following table:

	# of New MSMEs registered	# of Existing MSMEs Strengthened	# of New jobs created	# of participants trained	# of Business plans complete	#of Technology transfer initiatives
1 st year	30	40	80	600	80	2+2
2 nd year	50	50	110	1000	80	7
3 rd year	20	30	60	492	40	4
Total	100	120	250	2092	200	15

Indicators that will be used for measuring the data mentioned above include:

- BSC records of attendance at trainings and records of submitted Business plans;
- Registration documents - copy of registration from the central register of R.M;
- Official employment documents – a copy of M1/M2 form for every employee; BSC records of support offered to MSMEs: registration, consultancy, credit, office space.
- Client feedback about changes in number of employees, in operational activities, in investment needs and % of growth in turnover
- BSC records about technology transfer initiative: number of tools (software) developed

It is also anticipated improvement of the financial and operational sustainability of the existing BSC-Bitola business incubator so that no further international support is necessary to continue operations at a sustainable level of product and service delivery. Furthermore, improvement and enhancement of the interaction between public, private, civil-society and academic sectors at municipal, regional and national levels is envisioned through cooperation and collaboration on economic development initiatives.

Over the past four years BSC-Bitola has grown from a modest initiative providing business startup training to an advanced provider of business development services in local conditions and the host and manager of a business incubator complex in cooperation with public and private partners. The mission of BSC Bitola is to contribute towards the economic development in Bitola and the Pelagonia region through promoting entrepreneurship and contributing to the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), supporting the potential and existent entrepreneurs for establishing or further developing their businesses. BSC-Bitola is a center of enthusiasts with focus on regional economic development, who by setting high standards leads micro and small enterprises toward success and fulfillment of their role in the community and world of business. BSC Bitola is strongly dedicated to accomplishment of the project goals with all proven capacity, expertise, strategy, focus, partners and clients.

2. COMPONENT DISCUSSION

The Pelagonia region of southwestern Macedonia is an underdeveloped and underserved region of the country, with below-average economic indicators. The Bitola Business Startup Center (BSC-Bitola), this year will work on providing opportunities for businesses and individuals through services targeting entrepreneurs, MSMEs, targeted vulnerable groups, women, students and job-seekers. The main challenges in the region are:

1. Insufficient support structure for businesses and entrepreneurs in the region.
2. Financial & operational sustainability of BSC-Bitola, a key institutional resource of the region.
3. Low level of cooperation between local actors at local, regional and national levels.

According to this in the next three years BSC Bitola will be focused on three components:

1. Business Startup & Support;
2. BSC Bitola Development & Sustainability;
3. Regional Cooperation Economic Development;

A. Component 1 – Business Startup & Support

BSC Bitola provides support to entrepreneurs, existing MSMEs, unemployed citizens, women and vulnerable groups through a portfolio of assistance aimed at starting and registering new and/or innovative microenterprises, supporting the growth of existing MSMEs, and bridging the gap between job-seekers and employers. MSME and human resource development activities include

1. Business plan writing seminars/trainings;
2. Business plan competition;
3. Training portfolio;
4. Human resource development services;
5. Credit facility loan guarantee fund;
6. Consulting services; and

7. Technology-Transfer Toolbox, a set of development tools specifically targeting technology development and transfer.

Activity 1.1 – Business Plan Writing Seminars/Trainings

The Business Plan writing seminars/trainings are usually held for 2 or 3 days. Target group will vary upon the location. The target group in the larger municipalities such as Bitola, Prilep and Ohrid is primarily young people, but not excluding other potential age groups who have a business idea and want to establish a new or innovative enterprise, or to develop their existing business. Special attention is targeted at women and vulnerable groups.

In the rural areas the target group is young people with a business idea special attention will be paid to women who want to start a business. Also individuals in the agro sector, but not excluding all other possible businesses that have potential in the respective area that is covered.

The seminars/trainings are planned to be realized in groups of 15-20 participants per training. A total of 10 Business Plan writing seminars/trainings are planned in 2011. It is anticipated that participants from the larger more established municipalities will pay a subsidized participation fee, whereas, if deemed necessary participants from smaller municipalities will only be promotional (subsidized).

The objectives of the trainings are to:

- Recognize, develop and improve the entrepreneurial skills of the target group
- Create a draft business plan
- Understand certain structures and principals in the entrepreneurial planning (“self-planning” especially in receiving plan above)
- Clarify basic principals in the functioning of the market economy
- Know how to do a market research
- Calculate the primary costs
- Prepare individually profit and loss statement
- Using important instruments for financial analysis and planning
- Establish a network of business contacts

Activity 1.2 – Business Plan Competition

The Business Plan Competition (BPC) is a business plan tool used to select future beneficiaries.

Promotional activities:

In order to attract relevant beneficiaries’ promotional activities will be customized depending on the size of the municipality and the general socio and economic environment of the targeted area. Promotional tools include but are not limited to BSC web site, contact database and network, posters, flyers, social networks, e-mail, and word of mouth, and/or alternative methods of dissemination. Promotion in rural areas includes but is not limited to informational sessions, word of mouth and direct communication with existing rural companies, posters and flyers placed in their local settings and rural community centers.

The promotion will be conducted by the BSC Bitola team and local volunteers per municipality.

Business Skills Trainings (BST):

As a pre-requirement of the BPC participants are required to partake in at least one business skills training. It is anticipated that participants from the larger more established municipalities will pay a subsidized participation fee, whereas participants from smaller municipalities will only be promotional (free of charge).

Note: More detailed information on actual training courses below.

Business Plan Competition (BPC):

Participants are able to submit their business plan to one of the three annual BPCs:

1. January – March: Note: BSC Bitola has already received business plans from the last quarter of 2010 which will participate in this competition, but will also receive new plans.
2. April – July: Regular BP submission
3. August – October: In addition to the regular BP submissions the special BPC will also be launched focused on technology transfer.

In the first year 80 business plans are expected from the region.

BPC Jury:

At the end of each submission period mentioned above the BPC jury will evaluate the BPs within two weeks after the submission deadline. The jury will consist of representatives of the public, civic and business sector as well as a representative(s) of the credit facility and donor. The evaluation process consists of two parts: 1) jury evaluation of BPs and 2) presentation of BPs in front of jury members. The results of the two evaluation components comprise the final score.

BPC benefits:

The selected and approved business plans will be eligible to receive the following benefits:

1. Reimbursed costs of business registration
2. Various credit loan products
3. Consulting services
4. Subsidized price for use of office space and business incubator facilities

Activity 1.3 Training Portfolio**1.3.1 Development & Expansion**

Over the past four years BSC Bitola has developed an extensive portfolio of 19 SME training modules which will be expanded with 6 new modules for the first year of the project based on the demand of MSMEs, job seekers and the labor market, business trends and innovation. Part of the new training modules developed in 2011 will be focused on human resource development (Quick Start Training Module) and technology transfer. Modules are delivered and developed in partnership with private sector, trainers and the BSC staff.

1.3.2 Training Curriculum Development Workshops

The workshops will review and analyze the existing practices in the design, implementation and evaluation of curriculum, particularly in the development of competency-based curriculum, in the field of entrepreneurship, business, management, marketing etc. The workshops will identify some common trends and successful practices, based on the participant feedback.

Representatives from the relevant institutions (agency for employment, labor inspection, tax authorities, business sector, etc.) and experienced trainers will contribute to the development of the new training modules that will be of positive impact on the market.

1.3.3 Training & Curricula Delivery

It is projected that 2 trainings per month will be held (not including the Business Plan Writing courses). In the first year the primary target group will be larger municipalities' cities such as Prilep, Bitola and Ohrid, because the majority of the companies are situated there, but will not exclude introducing this possibility in the smaller ones pending demand. This will also depend on the demand of a certain module. For example, the specified training in tourism would have greater demand and impact in Ohrid rather than Prilep.

The trainings will be realized by trainers, experts in specified field. The trainings in Bitola will be held in the training premises of the Business Incubator, adequately equipped with projectors, flip chart, and Wi-Fi internet. The training in other municipalities will be held in various locations pending local involvement and support, as well as availability appropriate working conditions. It is anticipated that participants from the larger more established municipalities will pay a subsidized participation fee, whereas, if deemed necessary, participants from smaller municipalities will only be promotional (subsidized).

This year BSC staff will take a more proactive role in training implementation.

The training methods that will be used:

- Exercises with simulations,
- Exercises with role playing,
- Group works,
- General discussions,
- Short lecturing,
- Case studies,
- Field work,
- Power point presentations.

Three different evaluation measurement tools we'll use for our trainings:

1. Daily evaluation form, where the participants can evaluate the training on daily basis on specific criteria.
2. Evaluation form at the end of the training prepared to measure participants satisfaction on overall criteria. BSC Bitola obtains information from these evaluations, using to deliver better quality trainings in future. The types of evaluations are the following:
 - Evaluation of the training content,
 - Evaluation of the trainers,
 - Organizational and logistic aspects

3. Satisfaction and recommendation survey where the form of the open and closed questions is both, 7 short questions where the participants can give additional comments and recommendations.

All participants who successfully participate and finish at least 80% of the training are eligible for certificate awarded by BSC Bitola.

In the past we have faced with equal gender balance at our trainings, which means that the balance between men and women participating at our trainings was 50% - 50%. We will strive to keep that percentage on that level.

Activity 1.4 - Human Resource Development Services

Due to the large skills-gap present in the region (and broader) the first half of the year will be focused on additional research to understand, develop/match and introduce a Quick Start Training Model which is widely used for skills development (computer skills, language skills, etc.). Possible pilot launch of this model in the second half of the year. Potential focus will be given to specific computer applications, administrative and human resource functions, communication and presentation, and foreign languages.

Activity 1.5 –Credit Facility Loan Guarantee Fund

1.5.1 Agreement Negotiation

New agreement will be negotiated with the bank and signed through 2016 (Loans under the existing fund is due to be repaid in full in 2014.) for the USAID funds, loans made in 2013, the final year of *Business without Borders*, due to be paid in 2016 (depending on the loan product). From the negotiations is expected to increase the leverage from the USAID funds (up to 60% coverage of the loans).3 new types of loan products have been offered by EuroStandard Bank which are being taken into consideration:

Loan Guarantee Products USAID & Netherlands Contributions			
Donor	Product	Capital	Terms
USAID Development Grants Program	Business Startup Guarantee Fund	\$100K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client terms similar/comparable to those in existing fund. • Guarantee Rate: 100%. • 7% credit interest rate with 4% deposit interest rate or 8% credit interest rate with 5% deposit interest rate. • Repayment: 30 months, 6 month grace period. • Note: This and all funds negotiated in the future will be revolving (repayments may be reissued).
	Existing Business Guarantee Fund	\$100K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client terms similar/comparable to those in existing fund. • Guarantee Rate: 60%. • 10% credit interest rate with 4% deposit interest rate or 10.5% credit interest rate with 5% deposit interest rate. • Repayment: 30 months, 6 month grace period
	Short-Term Guarantee Fund	\$100K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repayment: 3, 6, 9, 12 months • Guarantee Rate: 60%. • 11% maximum credit interest rate with 4% deposit interest rate. • Additional terms to be negotiated.
	Technology Transfer Guarantee Fund	\$70K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance technology transfer, application and innovation initiatives. • 5% maximum credit interest rate with 2.5% deposit interest rate • Fund resources can be applied through any of three guarantee funds above, depending on applicability.

Optionally conditions for therefore all negotiated agreements and deposits will remain in place through at least 2016, guaranteeing that the funds remain in use for their intended purpose during that time.

Additionally Moznosti and FULM (USAID beneficiaries) will also be contacted for potential cooperation.

1.5.2 Issue credit to competition winners

BSC Bitola will continue to manage a loan guarantee fund which will be used for companies' participants in the Business Plan competitions that have need for financial resources either for starting or developing their business. One of the conditions for receiving a loan will be passing the USAID environmental check list. For the first year approximately 20 loans will be disbursed to new and existing SME's, through one of the local commercial banks. The terms for the loans depend on negotiations with the chosen Bank. The loans planned for the first year will be disbursed in the period from May till December 2011.

Activity 1.6 - Provide consulting services to clients and competition winners

One of the most-valued benefits for BSC clients is the provision of consulting services to help the companies start, grow and improve their products and services. Several types of consultancy services will be offer to BSC clients and competition winners, not be limited to any specific area of expertise but demand driven.

Consultancy services will be given to the following:

- I. Competition winners who are rated with a higher score by the jury of the BPC and prove they have registered a company;
- II. Companies that are BSC clients who fulfill the following criteria: 1) is a member of BSC/BI; 2) participates in at least one training; 3) receives positive feedback from in-house assessment organized by the BSC.

Each company may receive a maximum of 5 consultancy assignments (not more than \$1250) to be carried out within in a period of one year. Assignments are approved by BSC management and the mentor. 250 consultancy assignments are targeted for the whole project period 2011-2013. The number of companies that will use consultancy services will vary on the number of received requests.

The consulting service is carried as follows:

- Clients/companies submit a written request for consultancy
- Create a consultancy plan with the help of a mentor (end product action plan)
- Select a consultant from the BSC Bitola consultant database or propose new consultant (approved by BSC)
- All consultancy to be documented according to BSC Bitola procedures

BSC past experience shows that most companies requested consultancy for the following: accounting, developing a web page, promotion, marketing, legal issues, financial management, and specific areas like agricultural and organic production, hair styling, cosmetic services etc. BSC Bitola has covered over 336 consultancy days or 2690 hours in the previous project. Companies that did not request consultancy services recieved other forms of support:

reimbursement for registration, microcredit, office space, network events, conferences and forums organized by BSC.

Activity 1.7 - Implementing Technology- Transfer Programming

Initial activities related to Technology transfer are planned for the second half of the year. They will start with promotional activities to gain a better understanding of the benefits of technology transfer through workshops and seminars. Target groups students, researchers, scientists and businesses with an innovation focus.

New training modules will be developed focusing on prototyping, technology auditing, financing technology and cost benefit analysis to attract business plans with a technology focus that will participate in the 3rd business plan competition. A special expert jury will be formed to evaluate these technology focused business plans. Competition winners (companies) may receive one grant in each of the following grant categories:

- 2 toolbox investments of capital equipment (example: enhancing a specific machine to facilitate processes)
- 2 toolbox investments of minor equipment (example: software, certification, human resource development, etc)

A minimum of two, a maximum of four companies may receive a grant.

All activities will be supported and coordinated with an expert representative of the University of Bitola, and or other experts in this field.

B. Component 2 –BSC-Bitola Development & Sustainability

Activity 2.1 – Develop BSC Business/Sustainability Plan

BSC Bitola started as a modest initiative for business start-up and MSMEs support. Today, BSC Bitola is a provider of business development services, host and manager of a Business Incubator, in cooperation with public and private partners. During this time, however, BSC-Bitola has provided many of its services free-of-charge, to the benefit of their clients.

BSC-Bitola examined practices that will allow the BSC and incubator to operate in a financially sustainable manner, and developed a sustainability plan. The aim is to improve the financial and operational sustainability of BSC-Bitola so as to reduce or eliminate the necessity for future international donor support by developing new revenue streams, expanding space and operations, implementing cost-share practices, reducing expenses, and increasing shareholder and partner inputs. The following practices are planned to contribute to BSC and Incubator sustainability during 2011:

1. Conference equipment

Conference equipment of such range is not available in Bitola and the region (usually rented from Skopje). There is high market potential and space for building up quality standards.

Target: Interested parties Municipality, Regional chamber, hotels, private sector, University.

Approximately 7 events are planned for the first year- Manaki film festival, Bit fest, Tourism conference, international trainings, cross border cooperation.

2. Data Center

The BSC Bitola is looking into establishing several new data oriented services aimed towards helping SOHO and SME companies in the region.

It is evident that the small companies in Macedonia cannot see in full the advantages of using the internet and data services in their day-to-day operations since they are out of their price range in order to implement them in their business processes. The new BSC Data center will enable the businesses to use such services and also will be a test bed for new and innovative software based services BSC will introduce in the market in near future.

The newly proposed BSC datacenter should be able to support several new services like:

- Web hosting platform (shared hosting and virtual private hosting)
- Application hosting
- Remote data backup services
- Collocated equipment hosting

All of the services will be offered by the BSC Bitola in their data center premises and connected to the internet via carrier grade connection. The end users will connect to the services via their own internet connection using any available internet service in Macedonia.

The designer of the system should propose initial hardware solution and service design for appropriate start of the services while assuring robustness a commercial solution has. The initial data center design should be able to scale up if such need arises.

These services will be offered in the second half of the first year of the project.

3. Trainings

Develop diverse portfolio of training programs based on demand of MSMEs, individuals, skill gaps, Labor Market Survey (existing) and other measurement and identification tools; portfolio will include at least 30 separate topics or modules.

Practical training and development activities targeting entrepreneurs, business owners and managers, and unemployed persons; particular evaluation, consideration and focus will target the technology sector.

4. Affiliate program

Companies supported by the Business Incubator, that are commercially active will pay membership fee, that will provide them with benefits and discounts in using BSC activities such as trainings, renting equipment, office space and etc. For the first year, is expected that approximately 50 companies, participants in previous and new Business plan competitions will be included in the Affiliate program.

5. Tenancy fees

Companies that BSC support's and other companies that are interested in renting office space, can rent an office in the Business Incubator building. Eight offices are already rented with an average of 14, 5 m² and a price of 5 Eur/m². Two more offices are planned to be adapted and rented during 2011 plus one more training facility.

6. Credit line deposits

The loan fund that BSC manages will be used for credit loans to companies' participants in Business Plan competitions, approximately 20 loans are planned to be placed in the first year. This fund is placed in one of the local commercial banks, as a deposit, and the interest from that deposit is paid to BSC.

7. Career development center

The career development center will offer opportunity to develop practical skills through trainings and practical work within institution or company.

Job placement – matching employers with the needed profile based on recruitment fee.

The BSC will develop trainings for additional skills and competences in order to increase employability. Through the career development center 20 jobs will be placed in the first year.

8. CV writing services

Writing CV's offered as a service for students, unemployed and people who don't have skills and knowledge for writing professional CV. About 30 CV's are planned to be written in the first year of the project.

9. Event management

Organizing events for other clients due to staff capacity and use of own equipment for promotional activities and making better events. BSC aims to develop an image as local but high quality marketing agency for promotional activities of SMEs. 5 events are planned to be organized in 2011.

Activity 2.2 Implement Business/Sustainability Plan

Within the first five months of Business without Borders BSC-Bitola will work with partners and clients to assess and revise the current plan with updated information; assess various revenue-generating activities and cost-saving measures; and outline a plan of action for the coming periods. An external consultant or facilitator will be engaged to help lead this effort. The plan will be implemented, updated and revised annually thereafter.

In accordance with the practices mentioned in the previous section, Implementation of the plan will begin in the second half of 2011, through the following activities:

1. Conference equipment

The promotion of the possibility for renting conference equipment, will be done through sending attractive offers, by e-mail or post, to companies from the region, but also to Hotels and to our partners.

2. Data Center

In first place the data center services will be offered to the companies in the BSC Bitola database mostly technology oriented startups that need this kind of services. Also the services are suitable for the bigger companies in the region that have need of keeping digital archive of documents. The BSC staff will visit companies and offer them the services that the data center has.

3. Trainings

For gathering effective number of participants for the training, first BSC will send a questionnaire to participants from the last few years in order to get information about what kinds of training they need now. Also some of the BSC staff members will visit companies and local faculties in order to offer group trainings for their staff. Other activities will include posters and flayers that will be spread across the town. Information about trainings will be posted on the BSC's website also.

4. Affiliate program

Companies that have already participated in one of the Business plan competitions will be contacted by phone or e-mail, in order to inform them that we have created special program that will allow them to use BSC services with discounts and with privileges, if they pay a membership fee for 2011. Also this program will be promoted during the 3 BPC's that will be organized this year and this option will be also put in the forms in which companies-participants give statement about the services they need and want to use.

5. Tenancy fees

The possibility for renting office space in the Business Incubator Building will be promoted in newspapers and also through some of the local real estate agencies.

6. Credit line deposits

The interest from the credit line deposit contributes to increase the possibility of 100% sustainable Business startup center.

7. Career development center

In the second half of 2011, BSC will start with promotion its role like intermediary on the labor market. The biggest part of the promotion will be done together with the University St. Kliment Ohridski- Bitola, but also through the web site and social network pages like Facebook and Twitter.

8. CV writing service

This service, mainly targets, students and unemployed. In order to increase the number of students who will ask help for writing CV's. BSC plans to visit local Faculties in order to get in touch with students and to inform them about this service. Another thing that is planned is to negotiate with the National Agency for employment, as a way to broaden the number of potential clients for this service.

9. Event management

According to the capacity of BSC staff for planning and organizing events, examples of some events organized in the past, in form of pictures or short videos will be part of promotional packages that will be sent to potential clients. This will be done mainly for informing people that BSC now offer this service. This will be also posted on our web site and social groups.

Activity 2.3 – Complete Final Design for Incubator (Cost Share)

Activity 2.4 – Approve & Permit Incubator Final Design

Activity 2.5 – Tender Incubator Expansion (2nd Floor)

Activity 2.6 – Construct Incubator Expansion(2nd Floor)

Activities 2.3 – 2.4 Design completed. Renewed request submitted to municipality pending receipt of building permit.

Activity 2.5 - 2.6 Partial renovations complete on first floor and basement – added four new offices and one training room with all necessary basic infrastructure (restrooms, etc.). Second floor pending receipt of permit and funding.

Activity 2.7 – Upgrade Incubator Assets (Cost Share)

All assets purchased from the project *From Idea to Business* project supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs are assets of and used by the Foundation BSC Bitola.

Component 3 - Regional Cooperation Economic Development

BSC Bitola thru this component will enhance interaction between actors in four sectors (public, private, civil-society and academic) at municipal, regional and national levels through cooperation and collaboration on economic development initiatives.

Activity 3.1 - Economic Development Forums Alternatives Report

BSC Bitola will work with USAID and local business service providers to identify and profile existing economic development forums implemented or managed by key actors in the four sectors (public, private, civil-society and academic). BSC Bitola will make a survey among these actors in the four sectors about what kind of projects they are implementing, what are the results from the previous implemented projects, future projects, and current problems in the implementing and possible partnership between these four sectors. The resulting report from this survey will present alternatives and entry points and opportunities for USAID and BSC Bitola to support local, regional, national cooperation and collaboration.

Activity 3.2 - Organize Economic Development Forum (Role)

Forums for cooperation in development require a clear strategic mission and action in implementation in order to attract and maintain the interest of the cooperation partners. BSC Bitola will establish a participatory and practical forum with realistic goals and clear plan of action, where the key actors from these four sectors (public, private, civil-society and academic) will

- Provide an effective mechanism for engagement between the social partners and government on matters relating to the local economy;
- Identify and provide advice on key issues inhibiting or likely to inhibit the competitiveness and productivity of the local economy;
- Provide advice on the evaluation of existing public policies, and development of future policies, relating to the development of the local economy in accordance with the direction set by the current Programme for Local Government;
- Provide advice on the actions/interventions required by the non-government sector to develop a more productive/competitive economy in line with the Programme for Local Government and monitor progress on the actions/intervention undertaken;
- Advise on ways to balance the objectives of improving competitiveness and productivity, maximising economic growth, achieving sustainable development and promoting social cohesion and inclusion through an equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth;
- Identify the need for, and commission where agreed by Plenary, economic research and policy advice in the priority areas identified within the current Programme for Local Government;
- Provide advice on economy-related public expenditure allocations and priorities.
- Cooperation on developing, applying and implementing projects.

Alternatives include an association of Business Development Service (BDS) providers, MSME advocacy group, public private joint initiative through Regional Chamber of Commerce, or other organizational form or initiative.

Activity 3.3 – Implement Economic Development Forum Plan & Activities

BSC Bitola will organize SME Conference, where the outcomes of the Economic Development Forum and future activities that will be implemented by the participants on this forum in the second half of 2011, will be presented. The SME Conference will be organized and financed by the Program income (income that “Business without Borders” project will collect from its services and activities).

C. USAID Reporting

- *Quarterly-Annual Reports* - Within one month of the end of each six-month period.
- *Quarterly Financial Reports* - (SF269, 269A and/or 272) within 45 days of the end of each FY quarter.
- *Interim (Mid-Term) Evaluation* - At such time as may be mutually agreed, but not later than 18 months after the project start.
- *Final Evaluation* - Within three months of end of award; not later than one year of the completion of the award.
- *Other: Assessments, Evaluations, Manuals, Training Plans & Materials* - As mutually agreed.
- *Results & Performance Against Indicators* - As requested by AOTR and consistent with USAID reporting requirements.
- *Accrual Reports* - Not later than ten days before the end of each financial quarter.

BSC-Bitola Reports & Products

- *BSC-Bitola Business/Sustainability Plan* - 5 months after inception of project. Contents outlined in Technical Approach & Planning Matrix.
- *Economic Development Forum Alternatives* - 4 months after inception of project. Contents outlined in Planning Matrix.
- *BSC-Bitola Briefings Semi-annual* - to coincide with semi-annual reporting.
- *BSC Annual Report* - Annually, to coincide with annual reporting.

3. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Foundation Business Startup Center Bitola will manage the project according to the Project Implementation Schedule (see Annex 1) for the first year of the project.

The Implementation Schedule uses a phased activity approach aligned under the three project Components and the activities are designed and planned for resource optimization over the three years. The schedule details the individual activities and sub-activities described in the Component Discussion, outputs and/or deliverables for each activity, responsible person(s), and timeline by month.

4. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Foundation Business Startup Center Bitola will incorporate a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) process as a fundamental tool for managing the performance of the project towards achieving its goals and objectives. The Performance Management Plan (see Annex 2) includes the following components: Foundation BSC Bitola Organization Chart, Economic Growth Results Framework; Goals, Objectives, and Indicators; Performance Management Task Schedule, Performance Indicator Table, and Annual Performance Data Table.

The Goals, Objectives, and Indicators are mapped to the Economic Growth (EG) Results Framework which is connected the Mission's EG Strategic Objectives, the development hypothesis, and the cause and effect linkages between the Goals, Objectives, and Indicators and the Mission's EG Intermediate Results and Strategic Objective. The Performance Management

Task Schedule outlines the timeline for the finalizing the PMP, developing M&E system and procedures, training staff on M&E process, collecting and reviewing performance data, and preparing and submitting quarterly reports.

The Performance Indicator Table details the performance indicators and definitions, baseline and target, data source, method of data collection, frequency and schedule of data collection, and responsible parties for acquiring the data.

Performance Management Plan (PMP) data will be collected and analyzed to ensure satisfactory progress.