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## SUCCESS STORY

### Tourism office promotes local business

#### **USAID, municipality target tourism sector to create jobs**



*Photo: Paul Cohn*  
*Mimoza Shuli, owner of "Perla" Hotel, has placed her hotel brochure in the new Tourism Information Office in Pogradec. The family-owned and operated hotel, with rooms overlooking tranquil Lake Ohrid in Pogradec, has seen a 65-percent increase in winter season clients this year.*

*A local tourism information office generates business for local hotels and tour operators. USAID is building public-private partnerships between local governments and businesses to create more business-friendly environments.*

#### **Telling Our Story**

U.S. Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523-1000  
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

The New Year's Eve celebration at the Perla Hotel in Pogradec actually drew a crowd this past winter, encapsulating a marked increase in winter tourism as a result of improved information services from a partnership with USAID.

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

For most domestic and foreign tourists, the city is more attractive during the summer season when they can enjoy the lake and fresh air. Although there are many businesses that offer special wintertime services, access to information related to these services is limited.

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

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

And local businesses are reaping the rewards.

Shuli quickly revised her hotel's leaflet to include the new services offered by her business and placed them in the information office.

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

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