



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

SUCCESS STORY

Cutting the Red Tape

Residents are stunned by fast, efficient document processing



Photo: USAID/Kristina Stelanova

A typical day at the municipal “one stop shop” in Zenica where residents now obtain business permits and vital records.

“Before, to get a birth certificate you had to wait anywhere from two hours to a day,” said Alma Jeftic, manager of Zenica’s new document facility.

The residents of Zenica, an industrial city some 80 kilometers northwest of Sarajevo, had to see it for themselves: when the town opened a new, efficient “one-stop shop” for documents and permits, they could scarcely believe the endless wait times were over. At the new facility, it takes half as long as it once did to get a construction permit, and documents like birth certificates come in minutes.

“The system is much clearer for citizens,” said Alma Jeftic, who manages the facility. “The physical structure is nicer, and the working conditions are better for our employees. We have air conditioning, better working space, and we’re using modern equipment.”

Zenica’s one-stop shop is one of 25 built with USAID support. Forty more are being built in 2006 in partnership with Sweden’s International Development Cooperation Agency.

“Before, to get a birth certificate you had to wait anywhere from two hours to a day,” said Jeftic. “And especially at this time of year, when school is starting, it would be full of people here.” Now getting birth certificate copies takes no longer than 20 minutes.

In addition to improving the physical space, USAID equips the processing centers with modern technology to increase efficiency and identifies ways to streamline bureaucracy. Municipal staff undergo customer service training, making interactions professional and fast. Also, new technology allows managers to see how many cases each employee is working on and identify delays.

Business registrations and other documents are processed faster, and corruption is limited by modern, transparent approval systems. In July 2005, the Zenica municipality processed a record 9,000 documents — 3,000 more than usual.

“People who have been away are surprised when they come here how easy it is to get documents,” said Jeftic, with visible pride.