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MACEDONIA

SUCCESS STORY

Industry Clusters Bring Infinite Solutions

Shared marketing, joint bids, and teamwork are bringing high returns

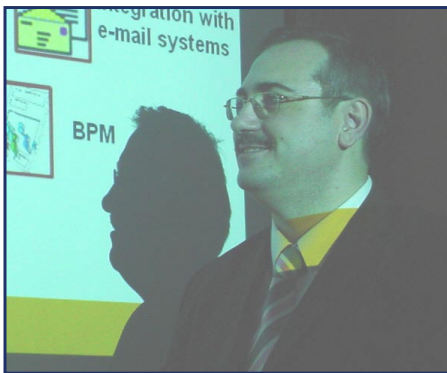


Photo: USAID/Teresa Albor

Slagjan Mihajlovski, CEO and co-owner of Infinite Solutions at a presentation to his team at the company's head office in Skopje, Macedonia.

“We developed confidence working with the USAID-supported IT cluster,” says Slagjan Mihajlovski, CEO and co-owner of Infinite Solutions. “The kind of confidence needed to compete.”

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It was a daring move. In September 2005, a young Macedonian information technology company teamed up with another young firm to compete for a contract with one of Europe's largest banks. The team found itself going head to head with an experienced and substantially larger Indian firm. Their bold challenge paid off. Infinite Solutions and its partner won the contact — not a bad result for a two-year-old company.

This success was the result of teamwork. Infinite Solutions is part of a consortium brought together through a USAID initiative to identify industry “clusters” and help them sharpen their competitive edge. The project is helping companies take initiatives to boost their industry's competitiveness in domestic, regional, and international markets. Working with businesses of all sizes, USAID helps them develop and market high-quality products and services that command higher prices from customers around the world. Through shared marketing efforts and joint applications for contracts, companies collaborate to strengthen their industry's position in the global market.

After hearing about USAID's work with industry clusters, the CEO and co-founder of Infinite Solutions, Slagjan Mihajlovski, joined a consortium with three other information technology companies. “One of the most valuable aspects of this USAID initiative is that it made Macedonian IT companies start working together,” says Mihajlovski. “While at home we were competitors, when it comes to the global market there are many areas where it makes sense to combine resources.”

Infinite Solutions has reaped enormous benefits from this approach. Today the company has 17 employees and its clients include foreign entities like Lufthansa, Macedonian blue chip companies like Siemens Macedonia, and government institutions. Infinite Solutions has completed over 40 projects, including developing an e-procurement system for Macedonia's government.

USAID is helping Macedonian companies capitalize on their skills and abilities by combining resources. “We developed confidence working with the USAID-supported IT cluster,” says Mihajlovski. “The kind of confidence needed to compete.”