

USAID
 Third Regional Conference on Competitiveness
 June 8-10th, 2005
 Sofia, Bulgaria

Final Report
 06/17/05

For BC Serdon – Christophe Geurts, Director Business Development

Project Description: The Regional Competitiveness Initiative (RCI) was convening the Third Regional Conference on Competitiveness, held in Sofia, Bulgaria, on June 8 – 10, 2005, at the Radisson Hotel.

There are now many projects in the Europe and Eurasia (E&E) Region which focus on competitiveness programs. The first objective was to launch a process by which representatives of various missions and projects, as well as businesses in the region can, with the conference, learn from each other how competitiveness activities can best achieve favorable results.

The second objective was to identify an initial group of product sectors and programmatic themes that are of interest to at least a few of the projects in the region, and to launch collaborative efforts among the projects on those themes. The four sectors and themes highlighted in this conference were: agricultural marketing, information technology, regional tourism, and cross-border trade facilitation.

Yes	No	Overall Status — At a Glance
X		Was the project completed on time?
X		Was the project completed within budget?
X		Were the project deliverables completed within acceptable quality levels?
X		Were scope change requests being managed successfully?
X		Were project issues being addressed successfully?
X		Are the parties satisfied with the organization and logistical support of the event?

Please find in attachment the following documents:

- Final schedule of events
- Final list of participants
- Presentations
- Photos

Accomplishments during This Period:

This conference demonstrated the continuity in the Regional Competitiveness Initiative and the dedication it brings to the Europe and Eurasia (E&E) region. There was a good turnout of participants from most countries in the region. There were, in particular, many USAID representatives from many E&E countries were able to share experiences and exchange ideas. Each participant gained particular information pertaining to competitiveness in their countries and have shown their support towards the next steps of the development the regional competitiveness initiative.

Participants seem to be pleased with the outcome of the conference as BC Serdon has already received many messages with positive impressions and comments. They also have expressed their wish for a (fourth) conference next year.

Outside of the context of the conference, participants had the opportunity to socialize with each other and with the organizers, creating bonds of friendship and opportunities for further cooperation in the future.

Issues during the preparation of the event and action taken henceforth:

There were a lot of changes in participant reservations and registrations even when the participants were arriving at the hotel from the airport. In addition, the hotel did not have the required amount rooms at the right time. BC Serdon summoned the General Manager of the hotel to find a solution to the problem. Through perseverance and creativity, BC Serdon overcame these obstacles in time. Some people, though having requested to stay at the hotel where the conference was being held, had to be relocated to other hotels in close vicinity to the conference premises. Certain presentations were handed in quite late, but BC Serdon managed to have them on screen and in print on time.

Most of the conference preparation was done during the month of May, which, in Bulgaria, is infamous for its frequent public holidays. Many local officials and participants were hard to reach, making it hard to secure their attendance at the conference. BC Serdon staff members spent time outside of normal work hours in order to reach the elusive participants.

Issues during the event and action taken henceforth:

At all times there was at least one BC Serdon staff member working with the hotel staff to ensure the smooth running of events. There were, however, no majors issues to report.