

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

e-BIZ project:

### **CIRKO MECHANICAL ENGINEERING SYSTEMS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE CIRKO MES CENTER OF EXCELLENCE**

Dr. Clarisse Molad, a US Fulbright scholar and advisor to USAID's e-BIZ Project, has worked with Dr. Atanas Kocov, a Macedonian Fulbright Alumni, from the first day they met in Skopje. Their immediate objective was to uncover a project they could work on together that would demonstrate the collaborating spirit of the Fulbright program. With the help of the USAID's e-BIZ Project, they were able to establish a new Sun Microsystems laboratory in Skopje that is first of its kind in the region.

CIRKO, an independent institute of the College of Mechanical Engineering, and the e-BIZ Project ended up creating the Mechanical Engineering Systems (MES) Center of Excellence at its new facilities at the College of Mechanical Engineering in Skopje.

CIRKO will house the SUN equipment that was made available as an educational matching grant by SUN and USAID for the Center's use. The equipment will be located in a separate floor of the Institute's building in two classrooms. The MES Center of Excellence will also include 2 offices.

The goal of the e-BIZ Project is to create an entity that will contribute to job creation in Macedonia while utilizing ICT and achieving financial self-sustainability. In order to accomplish that, the Center will engage in the following activities:

- 1) Train graduating engineers in Java development for the purpose of outsourcing their application development services outside of Macedonia
- 2) Train graduating engineers in advanced engineering design for the purpose of enhancing their job skills for 3D modeling, simulation and visualization
- 3) Develop a virtual engineering design network in the Macedonia in industrial sector for the purpose of sharing and leveraging the sector's design capabilities
- 4) Develop an incubator for new Macedonian engineering companies that will utilize advanced ICT technology as a competitive advantage

- 5) Develop an engineering R&D capacity for outsourcing to European and/or overseas companies

The ES Center of Excellence will generate income to ensure its financial sustainability through the sale of:

- Engineering services
- Training courses
- R&D services
- IT Development services
- National Engineering Network Members

The overhead costs for running the Center will be covered by the College of Mechanical Engineering, including the Center Director's salary (who is on the faculty staff at the college). Engineering students will support the Center's everyday operations as part of an Engineering internship program to be developed as part of the Center. The income generated by the Center will be utilized to cover its expansion and outreach to the community at large.

This project is a clear example of successful State Department programs working in tandem to accelerate advanced ICT implementation in the region for the purpose of creating new jobs.