



## **Completion Report**

### ***Europe and Eurasia Regional Family Planning Activity***

*Submitted by:  
PSP-One project*

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## Acronyms

<b>ACPD</b>	Albanian Center for Population and Development
<b>AOGN</b>	Armenian Association of Obstetricians/Gynecologists and Neonatologists
<b>BSP</b>	Bayer Schering Pharma
<b>CATs</b>	Critically Appraised Topics
<b>COCs</b>	Combined Oral Contraceptives
<b>EBM</b>	Evidence-based medicine
<b>E&amp;E</b>	Europe and Eurasia
<b>E&amp;E RFPA</b>	Europe and Eurasia Regional Family Planning Activity
<b>FP</b>	Family Planning
<b>GR</b>	Gedeon Richter
<b>HRF</b>	Healthy Russia Foundation
<b>JSI</b>	John Snow Inc.
<b>NGO</b>	Nongovernmental organization
<b>PSP-One</b>	Private Sector Partnerships-One project
<b>RH</b>	Reproductive Health

This completion report includes a summary of activities and results achieved by the Private Sector Partnerships-One (PSP-One) project under Europe and Eurasia (E&E) Regional Family Planning Activity (RFPA) funded by the USAID Bureau for Europe and Eurasia during the period of October 2006 - November 2009.

## **Background**

The E&E Regional Family Planning Activity, a three-year regional effort designed to assist in the achievement of E&E Bureau Strategic Objective (SO) 3.2: "Increased Health Promotion and Access to Quality Health Care" focuses on improving the quality of and access to family planning and reproductive health (RH/FP) services and products. The purpose of this activity is to leverage best practices in family planning to ultimately increase modern contraceptive use and decrease abortion rates in the region by achieving the following goals:

1. Create a policy environment more favorable to family planning
2. Replicate already proven best practices in family planning in the region to scale up activities and impact
3. Invest in the private sector for improved delivery of family planning services and products

The activity is implemented by the Abt Associates led PSP-One project and John Snow Inc. (JSI). The purpose of the PSP-One work is to examine market opportunities and consumer trends that influence private sector presence and investment, and provide technical assistance to USAID missions and bilateral programs in increasing private sector involvement in RH/FP programs.

## **Implementation**

In the three years of the RFPA program, PSP-One applied various methodological tools and practical approaches, and engaged technical experts to accomplish the given scope of work. The activities under the RFPA program included collaborative efforts with JSI as well as regional and country-specific work implemented solely by PSP-One. Summarized below are a brief description, achievements, and recommendations/lessons learned (where applicable) for activities that were approved and completed under the RFPA mandate.

### ***ACTIVITY I: Desk review of the private sector role in the RH/FP market in the E&E region.***

As included in the Year One workplan, PSP-One conducted a desk review of the 11 countries in the region using the project information collected from six assessment visits conducted in the region. In addition to analysis of key findings and country positions on a continuum of private sector expansion in RH/FP, the desk review included a private sector engagement framework comprised of the following: definitions of private sector, a concept of the Whole Market Approach, a description of methodologies used to assess market conditions for providing RH/FP services and products and guiding principles for the USAID missions and bilateral programs in designing and implementing an applicable private sector strategy.

The multi-country review of private sector contributions to family planning in the E&E region demonstrated that most of the countries share the same characteristics with respect to reproductive behavior, private sector growth, and public sector reforms. The review specifically selected following common traits:

- Relatively high level of modern contraceptive use although it varies from country to country.
- Despite a high contraceptive prevalence rate, there is still a high rate of abortion. Main reasons include under-the-table payments for this service are much higher than for a FP counseling session, and myths about hormonal contraceptives among providers and consumers.
- Service provision is predominantly through the public sector.
- Contraceptive products and services are also available through the private sector. The level of market development and method mix vary by country.
- Pharmacies included in both private and public sectors
- Distribution chains developed

### Achievements

This analytical review entitled *Maximizing Private Sector Contribution to Family Planning in the Europe & Eurasia Region: Context Analysis and Review of Strategies* significantly contributed to the body of evidence on private sector practices in RH/FP.

In addition, the review was instrumental in promoting and marketing the E&E RFPA to the regional missions and bilateral projects. According to the marketing plan developed by the PSP-One team in agreement with the E&E Bureau, a summary of the paper was presented to USAID's E&E Bureau and other USAID colleagues; two on-line one hour conversations were conducted with the authors of the paper and mission health officers; and finally, the PSP-One team attended a regional workshop organized by JSI in Romania where the findings of the paper were presented as well.

As a result of the marketing efforts, E&E missions greatly increased awareness on private sector opportunities in their countries and improved knowledge of public/private partnership projects in the region. A PSP-One web statistics report showed about 400 hits of the E&E RFPA webpage on the PSP-One website at the time of the dissemination events.

### Recommendations/Lessons Learned

The report confirmed the growing importance of the private sector in the region and its potential contribution to family planning and reproductive health objectives. Based on an analysis of the regulatory environment, market maturity, and opportunities for private sector, most of the E&E countries were designated as within the "private sector friendliness" continuum. As a result, the report provided a set of customized guidelines for maximizing the private sector role under each category of "friendliness" in the specific FP markets in the E&E region.

### **ACTIVITY 2: A synthesis brief on public and private sector best practices in FP.**

This activity was implemented in close collaboration with the JSI team as a follow on to the comprehensive desk reviews completed by both RFPA partners. The synthesis brief identified best RH/FP practices and the roles of public and private sector in each. The brief was based on the seminal assessment of USAID FP and RH activities in the Eastern Europe and Eurasia Region produced by Senlet and Kantner in 2005 and incorporated specific findings from the PSP-One and JSI reports.

### Achievements

This brief entitled *Ten Best Public and Private Sector Practices in Reproductive Health and Family Planning in the Europe and Eurasia Region* serves as a quick guide of how to develop better public/private collaboration in FP and RH areas of health sector for the regional missions and bilateral programs. It is also available in Russian language and has been widely disseminated through the online vehicles and public events in the region and in the US.

### Recommendations/Lessons Learned

Marketing of the two analytical reports was a first step in engaging country missions into RFPA activities, but additional educational and advocacy efforts were required. Further work is needed to build understanding about the private sector's value in FP among regional missions and bilateral programs.

### ***ACTIVITY 3: Assessment of the viability of Cycle Beads in the private sector of Albania.***

This task was implemented under the Year Two plan. The objective of the activity was to assess the potential for increasing private sector contribution to RH/FP goals by introducing a new contraceptive product, Cycle Beads, through the commercial market.

### Achievements

The recommendation provided to the Albanian mission as a result of the assessment indicated that introduction of the Cycle Beads tool would require a large financial investment and the results do not guarantee a favorable return on this investment. Two local distributors expressed interested in working with Cycle Beads, but only with advertising support.

### Recommendations/Lessons Learned

The assessment confirmed that the country has a very small private sector. Interviews with all stakeholders including distributors, pharmacists, health providers, decision makers, and consumers did not show significant demand. Demand was assessed to be low due to an increase in the use of hormonal and long-acting contraceptive methods observed among all groups of population including rural women who are the majority among current traditional methods users. Younger urban generations prefer oral contraceptives and rural married women prefer contraceptive methods such as injectables and IUDs.

### ***ACTIVITY 4: Assessment of opportunities for expanding the contribution of the private sector to Albania's current and future contraceptive supply.***

During Year Two, PSP-One also conducted a rapid assessment of private sector contraceptive market in Albania and specifically evaluated sustainability of the only social marketing organization, NESMARK, funded by the KfW. The assessment team identified three scenarios for NESMARK's future and steps required to increase the overall private sector's role in the expansion of the modern contraception market in Albania.

### Achievements

The assessment provided a clear set of national-level recommendations to the USAID Albania on how to better ensure the Whole Market Approach to family planning in Albania.

### Recommendations/Lessons

The recommendations suggested further market research on market segmentation and contraceptive use to increase coordination among existing product providers. It was also recommended to the mission that the assessment findings will be taken into consideration as part of JSI's financial forecasting of contraceptive security conducted for the Ministry of Health with the purpose to minimize overinvestment in one sector to the exclusion of the other.

**ACTIVITY 5: Development of a regulatory strategy to increase availability of RH/FP products in Albania.**

In Year Three, PSP-One conducted a review of the regulatory environment as a follow-up activity to its 2008 *Assessment of the Private Sector Contraceptive Market in Albania*. The purpose of the review was to provide strategic recommendations to the mission's successful contribution to the Albanian policy reform in FP. There were two objectives for the review. The first was to catalogue existing laws, sub-laws, regulations, decisions and amendments which affect availability and affordability of contraceptives in Albania. The second was to identify local NGOs who might serve as champions for policy changes recommended by the regulatory assessment, and to guide activities in support of a sustainable platform to promote policy change.

**Achievements**

PSP-One located more than 24 laws and decisions relevant to the private sector supply of contraceptives. Topics areas included: social marketing policy, customs and import, registration, taxation, pricing, reimbursement, promotion, and prescribing. For each topic, gaps and recommendations for policy changes were provided. PSP-One has also identified a local champion, the Albanian Center for Population and Development (ACPD), which could lead FP Advocacy Alliance. This NGO, an affiliate of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, currently implementing a five-year strategic plan funded by the U.K. Department for International Development, agreed to review and consider incorporating the key recommendations of the regulatory review as part of their advocacy activities to improve sexual and reproductive health in Albania.

**Recommendations/Lessons Learned**

As one of the leading donors in the country, it was recommended that the USAID mission should facilitate dissemination of the results through the ACPD as a first step toward a holistic approach to the FP policy reform. It was suggested that a series of individual consultative meetings with existing public, private, and donor stakeholders be held in conjunction with dissemination, to reinforce USAID's support for the ACPD-led Advocacy Alliance. Successful regulatory change in Albania will depend upon the progress of civil society organizations to advance the RH agenda through more coordinated and effective advocacy.

**ACTIVITY 6: Introducing an Evidence-based Medicine approach to FP counseling in two countries; Armenia and Russia.**

In Year Three, PSP-One collaborated with the Armenian and Russian USAID missions to introduce the Evidence-based Medicine (EBM) approach to FP counseling among the obstetrician/gynecologists and pharmacists through bilateral programs NOVA in Armenia and Healthy Russia 2020 in Russia. These new initiatives were launched in partnership with local nongovernmental organizations Healthy Russia Foundation (HRF) and Armenian Association of Obstetricians/Gynecologists and Neonatologists (AOGN). In Armenia, the PSP-One team has also leveraged interests of Gedeon Richter (GR) and Bayer Schering Pharma (BSP) pharmaceutical companies towards collaboration on this initiative.

This model was an adaptation of a public/private partnership implemented by the Together for Health project implemented by JSI/AED in Ukraine. The approach includes EBM-based training with a focus on issues related to safety and use of modern contraceptives. The training provides a consistent message based on the best available research and makes the message less vulnerable to biases of a particular group of physicians. To aid in the training program, a series of research-based fact sheets called Critically Appraised Topics (CATs) were developed to address provider questions and concerns about specific clinical topics, such as perceived links to cancer or infertility. To ensure ongoing informational update

among physicians on EBM in FP, a communication component of the initiative was developed jointly with pharmaceutical partners.

### Achievements

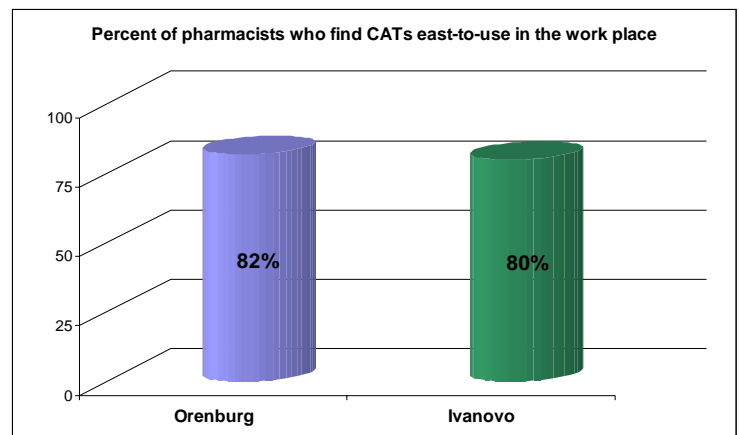
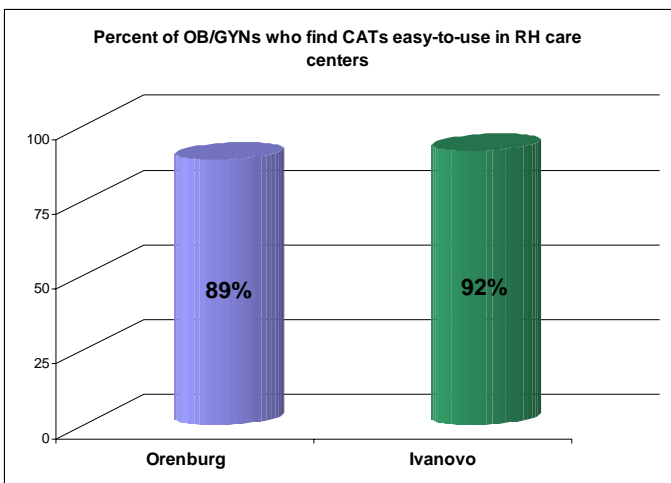
Speaker Trainings (also known as Trainings of Trainers) were conducted for 14 physicians in Russia and 13 in Armenia. Following that, newly-trained speakers conducted a series of roundtables in two pilot cities of Ivanovo and Orenburg in Russia and a number of districts and Yerevan city in Armenia, introducing the EBM in FP counseling to 104 and 200 practitioners, respectively.

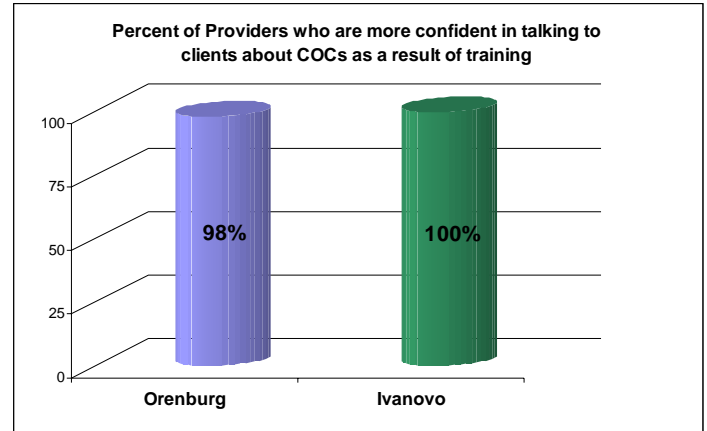
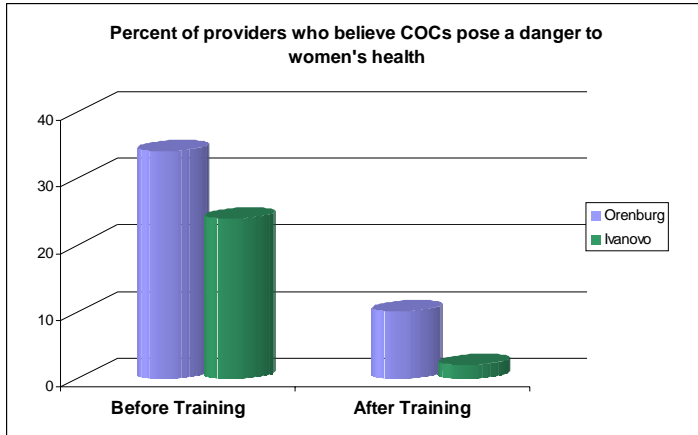


GR and BSP sent in their representatives for the Speaker Training program and the refresher training. Both pharmaceutical partners actively participated in the review of the CATs. GR organized one roundtable in Artashat district attended by 20 physicians from that area and was co-led by the team of trainers including a trainer from the NOVA project. In addition, GR organized a symposium in Yerevan city with approximately 100 attending physicians. A PSP-One expert spoke on “Combined Oral Contraceptives”, to prompt the audience about the EBM approach being introduced in the country for FP counseling.

As part of the communication component, GR and SBP agreed to establish a follow up program for reinforcing CAT messages through their detailing systems. Moreover, PSP-One is supporting the AOGN in developing an online resource with CATs and other types of EBM information to be available for Armenian physicians. Preliminary design of the website is complete and a first batch of CATs is uploaded for public access. This informational resource was actively promoted during the roundtables.

In Russia, analysis of the pre and post roundtable questionnaires demonstrated that the new, succinct, and topic-specific format of evidence-based materials has the potential to significantly impact the use of modern contraceptives if regularly used during the FP counseling sessions. Rapid evaluation in Armenia demonstrated similar findings.





### Recommendations/Lessons Learned

In both countries, the pilot introduction of the EBM approach to FP counseling generated very positive feedback and a lot of interest among participating public and private sector partners. Further expansion of the pilot to the broader medical community is recommended in order to move along the continuum from improved knowledge to actual behavior change of providers to support an increasing demand for the modern contraceptives. PSP-One developed concept notes for Armenia and Russia missions to expand the EBM in FP pilots. Specifically, the expansion programs evolve around the following three major components: 1) building capacity of local speakers synchronized with 2) customer-oriented communication efforts and 3) leveraging pharmaceutical partners to reinforce the FP EBM messages among providers to sustain the effort.

Specific country recommendations include:

In Armenia, local partners supported the idea of developing a sustainable network of speakers and expanding the EBM roundtable concept to different physician networks, such as family doctors, including the ones developed by other USAID projects.

In Russia, national and regional experts identified specific topics for new CATs including COCs and hypertension; and data related to risk evaluation of cervical cancer in women using COCs for more than 5 years, specifying the role of infection in the development of the disease, as well as the necessity of cervical cancer vaccination and barrier contraceptive methods.

NGO partners in both countries recommended development of public-tailored educational materials on COCs' safety and efficacy (using the CATs information as much as possible) for wide distribution to women of reproductive age. Further engagement of web-based technologies was recommended as well.

## **Documents produced for the RFPA:**

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Riley, Pamela. May 2009. *Regulatory Analysis to Strengthen Private Sector Supply of Modern Contraceptives, Albania*. Trip Report. PSP-One project for EE RFPA, Abt Associates Inc.

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Thomas, Michael. January 2009. *PSP-One and ZdravPlus II Projects Collaboration Strategies to Expand the Contribution of the Private Sector to Improve Post-Abortion and Post-Partum Care in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Nov 6-17, 2008*. Trip Report. PSP-One project for EE RFPA, Abt Associates Inc.

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