

## CASE STUDY:

# DRAGASH FARMERS EMBRACE RASPBERRY CULTIVATION



## Background

Dragash is a multi-ethnic municipality located in southern Kosovo with a population of 33,000. With few economic opportunities or urban centres, unemployment is high, resulting in considerable migration from the area. However, it is rich in natural resources, with mountainous areas, large forests and fertile agriculture land. Farmers of Dragash region are well known for dairy production, including many types of delicious cheeses. Collection of raspberries and other non-timber forest products is also common, and Dragash is home to the company Hit Flores, a large processor of these products.

## Intervention

In response to the untapped market opportunities for raspberries, on the 1st of October Skills for Rural Employment (S4RE) joined forces with Hit Flores to increase the area of raspberry cultivation, (S4RE) held two workshops and selected 20 farmers for support. Farmers were selected based on criteria such as age, willingness to contribute to cost sharing and lo-



cation. These farmers were offered both financial assistance and training to cultivate raspberries. The selected farmers, who will receive further support from experienced trainers provided by (S4RE) and Hit Flores, have established raspberry orchards in a surface of 10 Ari of each. All sides contributed to the total cost, with (S4RE) con-

tributing 26% of the total cost and farmers 36% to purchase the irrigation and the support system, and Hit Flores with 38% of the total cost in order to supply each farmer with 850 saplings. Hit Flores will also continue to provide technical support in growing and harvesting the products.

## Results of the collaboration

From this investment, each farmer is expected to create annual income of at least €3,000 selling the raspberries to Hit Flores.

In addition to the 20 farmers, the project will also benefit an estimated 74 female and 70 male relatives of the direct beneficiaries, through increased family income and additional employment for harvest. As a result of this cooperation, other farmers have expressed interest in also cultivating products for supply to Hit Flores and other processors, and further groups of farmers will be supported in 2014.