



USAID | MACEDONIA
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PRESS RELEASE

USAID Plastic Recycling Project – Celebrating Achievements and Promoting Local Ownership

Today, USAID and its partners celebrated the many achievements of the plastic recycling industry in Macedonia, as the USAID Plastic Recycling Project approaches its end. The Project helped establish and supported the growth of the plastic recycling industry since 2005.

The American people, through USAID, provided small grants and technical assistance for the collection of plastic waste and also established the infrastructure for primary separation of plastic waste by promoting public-private partnerships. The Project helped establish PETRA, the Association of Plastic Collectors and Recyclers, and contributed to the drafting and adoption of the Law on Packaging and Packaging Waste.

"Today we are here to celebrate the many achievements of the USAID Plastic Recycling Project, which will end soon," said USAID Economic Growth Office Director, Joseph Lessard. "But we're celebrating not only because of results achieved, but also because of the committed local partners who are willing and able to take ownership of these activities, and will continue to work toward bigger successes. That is the path to sustainability and we see it today."

A very tangible result is the inclusion of the informal waste collectors in the formal waste management system. Now, 38 have contracts with public utility companies and have increased their income by an average of more than 20% in the first five months. This formal recognition has eliminated incidents with the police due and increased their acceptance by the local population. In addition, Public Utility Company (PUC) Komunalna Higijena is collecting two and a half times the quantity of packaging waste they did previously. The Project's partners, including the PUC as well as the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the City of Skopje, and Pakomak, will continue to focus on resolving social, health, employment and waste management issues.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

Since 2005, the USAID has invested nearly \$1.3 million to develop the recycling industry in Macedonia. In its third phase, the USAID Plastic Recycling Project is targeting 500 informal collectors from five municipalities, focusing on increasing their knowledge and abilities related to basic business skills, negotiations with buyer companies, health and safety measures while dealing with waste, registration procedures and legislation. Project partners include the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the City of Skopje, PUC Komunalna Higijena, Pakomak (the first authorized company for management of

packaging waste), the municipalities of Skopje, Tetovo, Kumanovo, Strumica and Bitola, and Roma NGOs from these municipalities.

The American people, through USAID, have invested nearly \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993. USAID is implementing projects that create jobs, reduce corruption, and prepare Macedonian students for the workforce. These initiatives improve the quality of life and support Macedonia's transition to a stable and prosperous democracy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.