



USAID | MACEDONIA
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 09, 2011

Press office: +389 2 310 2314

Cell phone: +389 (0)70 367 547

Email: bvelickovska@usaid.gov

PRESS RELEASE

First Informal Waste Collectors Gain Legal Recognition in Macedonia

On June 9, 2011, 19 informal waste collectors signed contracts with the Public Utility Company (PUC) Komunalna Higiena and received identification cards, giving them legal recognition for their activities. The USAID Plastic Recycling Project, together with the PUC and PAKOMAK (the first authorized company for management of packaging waste) held a signing ceremony to mark this new development in Macedonia's recycling industry.

"For the first time, activities of informal waste collectors are being recognized as an official business," said USAID Economic Growth Director, Joseph Lessard. "The recycling industry in Macedonia has huge potential not only to generate more income for the collectors, but also for adding value and producing goods made from recycled materials. By participating in training programs, collectors will gain broader knowledge of the recycling industry and improve their business skills."

Thousands of people in Macedonia depend on informal collection of recyclable materials for their livelihoods. A major challenge when adopting the law on packaging and packaging waste was how to incorporate informal collectors into the formal waste management system. Until now, these collectors were considered incompatible with a modern waste management system. As a result of USAID Plastic Recycling Project efforts, for the first time, all relevant partners realized that informal collectors can be an integral part of the formal waste management system, and have agreed to cooperate in resolving social, health, employment and waste management issues.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

Since 2005, the USAID Plastic Recycling Project has invested nearly U.S. \$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 Higiena, PAKOMAK, 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>.