



**USAID | MACEDONIA**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **New possibilities for the informal collectors of plastic waste**

For the first time in Macedonia, informal plastic waste collectors have been officially recognized as making significant contributions to modern waste management. Collecting plastic waste is the only source of income for most informal collectors, comprised mainly of the most vulnerable members of society - predominately Roma. Now, USAID will work with partners to help them legally register their activities and become a legal part of the formal waste management system.

The USAID Plastic Recycling Project has established a new partnership with all parties working to include informal collectors in the existing recycling and waste management system. Today, they signed an agreement to cooperate in resolving social, health, employment and waste management issues. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner, including the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Employment State Agency, the City of Skopje, Public Utility Company "Komunalna Higijena" and PAKOMAK (the first authorized entity for management of packaging waste).

"The commitment we are making here today will not only help improve the lives of those who have been informal waste collectors, it will also improve the recycling industry in Macedonia, thereby benefiting all who live here by reducing the accumulation of waste," said USAID Mission Director, Micheal Fritz. "Today I urge the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Government of Macedonia to continue to provide financial support for the integration of marginalized groups in society and allow them to take an active role in their development with human dignity."

The USAID Plastic Recycling Project will target 500 informal collectors, 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. Informal collectors interested in starting up their own businesses will be supported through the Project's self-employment initiatives and grant schemes.

#### 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. The Project provided Municipalities with metal net containers for deposit of plastic PET waste and households with yellow bags for separation of plastic waste. Collectors, businesses and public-private companies were given grants for start-up and to further develop their recycling businesses. Several NGOs and primary school students were introduced to the importance of recycling and have participated actively in awareness-raising campaigns.

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>.