



USAID | MACEDONIA
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 18th, 2012

Press office: +389 (0)2 3102000

Email: bvelickovska@usaid.gov

PRESS RELEASE

USAID SMALL BUSINESS EXPANSION PROJECT LAUNCHES IN POLOG REGION

On October 18th in Tetovo, USAID launched its Small Business Expansion Project (SBEP) in the Polog Region. The project's goal is to work in collaboration with the private sector and local government institutions to drive regional and local economic development, and In Polog, it will initially focus on agriculture, rural tourism and construction.

"A big part of this project's approach to local economic development is identifying and supporting initiatives that stimulate large and small enterprises to work together," said USAID Mission Director Robert Wuertz. "New market opportunities for local firms are created when the larger company purchases components, materials or services locally. These linkages can also create channels that allow small, local businesses to learn from their business partners."

At the event, USAID announced strategic partnerships with key stakeholders from the region, including the Economic Chamber of Northwest Macedonia, the Regional Development Center of Polog, mayors, Local Economic Development offices, private sector firms, financial institutions, and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), to coordinate activities to identify economic opportunities and leverage resources for the benefit of small and micro enterprises. Together, they plan to establish a sustainable workforce development model for the construction industry, a supply chain program geared towards strengthening local production, and a forum for public-private dialogue.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The USAID Small Business Expansion Project will initially focus on the Pelagonija and Polog regions, engaging business leaders, local government and other institutions to identify market opportunities for growth and job creation, upgrading the capacity of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to respond to new market opportunities and grow, and strengthening the capacity of business service providers to better identify and serve the needs of MSMEs.

The American people, through USAID, have invested over \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993. USAID is working with the people of Macedonia to create jobs, strengthen democratic institutions and practices, enhance integrated education, and prepare 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> and the USAID FB page <http://www.facebook.com/USAIDMacedonia>