



USAID | MACEDONIA
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Press office: +389 2 310 2314

Email: bvelickovska@usaid.gov

PRESS RELEASE

USAID helps 500 companies access finance, increase exports and hire a qualified workforce

After five years, the USAID Competitiveness Project has completed its activities after successfully helping over 500 local companies to enhance their competitiveness on global markets by accessing external finance, identifying new buyers and export orders, expanding operations, and training and hiring new qualified employees.

With project support, Macedonian companies created over 3,300 new jobs and over \$88 million of new exports. USAID assisted 160 companies to successfully access over \$80 million in external financing, leveraging a total of over \$145 million of new investments in new technology and business expansions. Through extensive market linkage activities, 55 Macedonian automotive components, tools manufacturers, and apparel producers exhibited at leading European Fairs, helping Macedonia to become known as a sourcing destination.

“The ultimate aim of development programs is to leave behind locally-managed organizations that will carry on their missions and continue to service the needs of the market,” said U.S. Ambassador Paul D. Wohlers. “The Competitiveness Project has done exactly that, and it is just one example of our overall strategic partnership with Macedonia.”

My Career is one program developed as part of the USAID Competitiveness Project that will live on. The My Career Internship and Job Placement Program already helped over 2,600 students and graduates to receive structured internships, many of whom were then retrained as full-time employees. The Innovation Center, the other project legacy, will continue to help Macedonia's entrepreneurs with a variety of services to implement their innovative ideas.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

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>. To learn more about My Career and the Innovation Center, visit: www.mycareer.com.mk, and www.i2b.org.mk.