USAID | MACEDONIA
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PRESS RELEASE

USAID's second round of grants to Macedonian agribusinesses

On October 3rd USAID's AgBiz Program signed ten grant agreements with Macedonian agribusinesses with a total value of $220,000. The grants will help initiate export development in the wine, fresh vegetables, table grape and wild gathered food products value chains. Attendees at the ceremony included representatives from USAID, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, the Ministry of Economy, and the Macedonian consulting companies that helped assess the grantees' projects.

"Assisting individual agribusinesses to increase their competitiveness and productivity is an important way to open new markets, expand market share and create new jobs for Macedonian citizens," said USAID Mission Director Michael Fritz.

USAID's AgBiz Program provides a range of support to firms like those that signed project implementation agreements at the ceremony. These projects will enhance the export competitiveness of the agribusinesses by supporting training, marketing activities, technical assistance, physical facilities expansion and advanced equipment acquisition. Most of the projects will support the business's efforts to move into value-added products, develop or expand their share in new export markets, expand processing or packing capacity and improve productivity as well to implement standards such as HACCP and ISO.

The companies that signed grant agreements with USAID's AgBiz Program to support their competitiveness improvement and business expansion projects are "Intermak", "Vigan", "Flores", "Koro" for wild gathered projects; "GD Tikves", "Ledra Agro", "Peca Komerc" for table grape projects, "Valandovo" and "Bovin" for bottled wine projects; and "Agrohemija" for a fresh vegetables project. The export-focused projects that will be implemented by these companies will require a total investment of over US$4.6 million and are projected to result in increased export sales of over US$58 million by the end of 2010. In July 2008 USAID's AgBiz Program signed nine other grants for export business expansion projects that are currently under implementation. To date, the Program has provided technical support to 241 agribusiness firms; made at least 35 improved technologies available to customers; identified nearly US$3 million in financing for customers, delivered short-term training to 394 individuals; and organized seven trade fairs and five study tours resulting in US$1.1 million of export orders being signed. For more information please visit www.agbiz.com.mk.

NOTE TO EDITORS:
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.