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PRESS RELEASE

Processed Vegetables Industry Now Has a Web Portal

To help agribusiness companies increase their competitiveness and sales, the Macedonian Association of Processors (MAP) has developed an interactive web portal, www.map.org.mk, for participants of the processed vegetables value chain, with support from the USAID AgBiz Program. The portal offers easy access to market information, joint presentation and bidding, which will improve competitiveness and open new market opportunities.

"The idea emerged from the need for more efficient communication, cooperation and visibility of Macedonian vegetable processing companies," said USAID Economic Growth Office Director, Joseph Lessard. "The portal will foster horizontal and vertical linkages within the industry and help companies develop new sales opportunities."

The web portal incorporates a brokerage tool, enabling participants of the processed vegetable value chain to place their quantities for sale individually and jointly, exchange products on offer or demand, and automatically receive external enquiries for trade. The portal will help companies keep up with the latest industry trends and global networking, building on the strong relationships already established by the Macedonian vegetable processing companies and MAP with partner organizations and individual companies from the region and EU.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

USAID has supported MAP since 2003. The USAID AgBiz Program engaged the *Macedonian Consulting Group (MCG)* as a Lead Facilitator for the processed vegetables value chain. They work closely with MAP to implement the Integrated Supply Chain concept that will ultimately result in improved overall value chain productivity, competitiveness and incomes for the processed vegetables value chain participants.

The American people, through USAID, have invested over \$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>.