



Faculty of Technology and
Technical Sciences Veles



"St. Kliment Ohridski" University - Bitola



1st international Meeting in Athens for the BAS Project

USAID in Macedonia

The USAID International Agency for International Development this year marks the 25th anniversary of its work in Macedonia. Within the last quarter of the century, USAID, in partnership with Macedonian citizens, institutions, associations and organizations, paid considerable attention and provided support to improve the quality of life in our country through various projects, reaching almost all segments of social life.

Through one of the projects that started from a simple idea - to clean the waste from plastic packaging, which, because of widespread use, was polluted and polluted by nature - the foundations of a completely, non-existent industry were set up: selection and recycling of plastic waste.

By early 2005, only small-scale metal and paper wastes were recycled, and the main reason that plastic was not recycled was the fact that in fact there is no one to buy it. In 2006, USAID, in cooperation with its partners, introduced the plastic recycling concept in Macedonia, which consecutively encouraged the collection and sorting of plastic waste at multiple collection points across the country. This has fueled the perception that plastic is not just waste, but also a raw material that can be exported and used in different industries

Thus, the foundations of an entirely new industry were laid, and a new era emerged in terms of raising social awareness of environmental protection by systematically addressing the problem.

The process started with the support of several foreign and domestic companies that started working with the recycling of plastic waste in order to create a stable system for delivery of raw materials, i.e. plastic waste.

These companies have introduced a technology that recycled plastic waste into plastic granules, which were further exported as raw material from which various new products were made. At the same time, USAID has implemented activities to raise the awareness of the population for recycling since the earliest age, through educational caravans in primary schools throughout the country.

Through the program for inclusion of street collectors in the formal waste collection system, trainings were organized for correct sorting of plastic, and for collectors were provided specially made tricycles for collecting plastic bottles. Thus, the project contributed to the creation of additional income for three to five thousand people from the socially vulnerable categories, and an increase in the collected PET bottles from 350 tonnes in 2005 to 6,000 tonnes in 2009.

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Trough this project USAID helped prepare the Law on Packaging and Treatment of Packaging Waste as an obligation of the manufacturer, and the Association for Plastic Recycling – PETRA was created.

In the later phase, USAID, in partnership with the local government in several municipalities, helped create the entire infrastructure and logistics for recycling plastic waste by purchasing blue metal street containers for plastic packaging, assigning collection points and working with public utilities, which they will continue to communicate directly and continuously with the population in order to maintain the practice of separating plastics from the rest of the waste.

The Plastic Recycling Project is just one part of the USAID project chain within the Economic Development Sector of Macedonia, which aims to promote the Macedonian economy through projects to promote the business environment and access finance and support for small and medium enterprises. As one of the basics of USAID projects are their long-term effects for the entire society, and as an example it is one of the projects with a local company from Kavadarci.

Namely, the company works in the field of recycling of PET packaging, which is then used as raw materials for making fibers of polyester, which are then used for the production of packaging for food and beverage, cosmetics, detergents, etc. Through USAID's support in the initial phase, the company has seen steady growth and development, increasing sales, revenue and employment, due to the availability of new sources of raw materials from neighboring markets that increase the capacity for the production of recycled PET packaging, constant increase of efficiency through improvement of production processes, as well as optimization of bank financing thanks to the excellent financial performance.

USAID, in cooperation with the government, municipalities, schools, companies and other relevant stakeholders in this sector, helped establish plastic recycling logistics. Through various educational and promotional activities, it continuously worked on creating perception and awareness of plastics as raw material, from which further useful products with higher usage value were made. Also, this sector has enabled the creation of new jobs. Through the various activities of this project, citizens were able to learn how to collect, sort and recycle plastic waste and how to keep the immediate environment.