

Renova Invests in Biodegradable Plastics

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Viktor Vekselberg's Renova group may build a \$400 million biodegradable polymer plant in the Moscow region.

Vekselberg announced the plans after signing a cooperation agreement with Moscow region Governor Sergei Shoigu at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum on Thursday, Interfax reported.

But he refused to discuss timeframes until technological studies for the project have been completed.

Biodegradable plastics work by using an additive that in the presence of oxygen weakens the bonds between polymers, causing items like plastic shopping bags to break down more quickly.

Luxury supermarket chain Azbuka Vkusa announced the switch to biodegradable bags as part of a move to position itself as a "green" business in November.

Azbuka's bags, which come from a plant in St. Petersburg, use technology developed by British company Symphony Environmental Technologies.

But the technology is controversial. Some environmentalists argue that they are not truly biodegradable because while the plastics break down they do not return to organic matter.

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