



U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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USTDA FORGES PARTNERSHIPS AT AGOA FORUM TO DIVERSIFY AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS FROM BURKINA FASO



During the AGOA Forum, Acting Director Zak (second from right) and Acting Regional Director for Sub-Saharan Africa Enoch Ebong (third from left) made a site visit to a USTDA grant recipient in Ghana to discuss a possible expansion of the Port of Tema.

ACCRA, GHANA – (July 18, 2007) Continuing the agency's overarching commitment to the framework of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and furthering U.S. efforts to bridge the concerns of West African countries on sustainable crop production in the Doha Development Round, USTDA today awarded two separate grants to promote the diversification of agricultural exports from Burkina Faso. The technical assistance and early investment analysis grants, totaling nearly \$500,000, were awarded in conjunction with the sixth U.S.-Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum (AGOA Forum) taking place in Accra, Ghana.

“Africa is a high priority for USTDA and our success is built on the leadership of the project sponsors with whom we have partnered in the region. It is their development priorities that we support and their goals that we strive to achieve,” said USTDA Acting Director Leocadia I. Zak, who is in Ghana as an official participant in this week's AGOA Forum sessions. “The grants we award today will help to develop the capacity and infrastructure in Burkina Faso for the country to benefit from trade agreements, and to utilize trade preferences under AGOA. We look forward to additional opportunities to work with African project sponsors in ways that will help to bring the Doha negotiations to a successful conclusion.”

The USTDA grants reflect the importance of capacity building and infrastructure to the ability of countries to attract investment and promote economic growth. Specifically, the grants support efforts by the Government of Burkina Faso to reduce the nation's dependence on cotton as a source of export earnings by prioritizing increases in exports of other agricultural products. In particular, the grants target sanitary and phytosanitary obstacles that agricultural exporters in Burkina Faso face in trying to diversify and expand their markets overseas. following the instructions in the Federal Business Opportunities announcement. The MHS will select the U.S. firm that will provide the assistance.

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The first grant, totaling \$320,000, will assist the Government of Burkina Faso in improving its sanitary and phytosanitary inspection regime, a shared responsibility of the Ministry of Commerce, Enterprise Development and Handicrafts and the Ministry of Agriculture. Officials from both ministries believe that they have a statutory and regulatory framework that meets current WTO requirements. However, staff members desire training to implement an effective inspection and compliance regime. To address this issue, the USTDA grant will fund a review of sanitary and phytosanitary regulations and the implementation of a comprehensive training program for inspection staff. The agreement conferring the USTDA grant was signed by USTDA Acting Director Zak and His Excellency Mamadou Sanou, Minister of Commerce, Enterprise Promotion and Handicrafts, on behalf of the U.S. and Burkinabé governments, respectively.

Under a separate grant, in the amount of \$151,521, USTDA is funding early investment analysis on new business operations for La Société Burkinabé de Fruits et Légumes S.A. (SOBFEL), a fruit and vegetable trading house in Burkina Faso. The study funded by this grant will assist SOBFEL in considering two possible alternatives for expanding its business. First, the study will analyze the risks and benefits of investing in a value-added fruit and vegetable processing facility. Second, the study will look at the process and technical investment SOBFEL would have to make in order for the company's produce to meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's sanitary and phytosanitary requirements. The agreement awarding the USTDA grant to SOBFEL was signed by USTDA Acting Director Zak and SOBFEL Directeur Général Sidiki Sanogo.

The contracting opportunities associated with the USTDA grants awarded today will be competed on the *Federal Business Opportunities* website at www.fbo.gov. U.S. firms should submit proposals according to the instructions contained in the *Federal Business Opportunities* announcement. Today's grant recipients will individually select U.S. firms to provide the assistance funded by the USTDA grants.

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency advances economic development and U.S. commercial interests in developing and middle-income countries. The agency funds various forms of technical assistance, early investment analysis, training, orientation visits and business workshops that support the development of a modern infrastructure and a fair and open trading environment. USTDA's strategic use of foreign assistance funds to support sound investment policy and decision-making in host countries creates an enabling environment for trade, investment and sustainable economic development. In carrying out its mission, USTDA gives emphasis to economic sectors that may benefit from U.S. exports of goods and services.