



PROMOTING COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) 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.

Since the agency's creation in 1981, USTDA has provided more than \$67 million in funding for technical assistance, orientation visits, feasibility studies, training grants and conferences that support economic needs and priorities in the Middle East, and North Africa (MENA). Key USTDA activities in this region include the funding of project development and investment support studies related to projects in transportation and trade logistics, information and communication technology, energy supply, water resource management, and disaster preparedness and recovery. USTDA invested \$5 million in activities in the region in 2008, and has a strong project pipeline for 2009. USTDA's recent portfolio includes extensive work in a broad range of sectors, including transportation, energy, and information and communications technology.

Throughout the year, USTDA will continue its support for key sectors in the MENA region that represent both high economic development priorities for host country sponsors and strong opportunities for U.S. firms. The following is an illustrative list of recent projects in the MENA region:

ALGERIA

Oil Spill Response and Port Security - This orientation visit familiarized a delegation of Algerian and Moroccan officials with U.S. policy and practices in the area of oil spill response and port security, including the U.S. Container Security Initiative, oil spill prevention standards, rapid response procedures, and the implementation of a National Response Plan. The visit also exposed the delegation to U.S. technologies, including state-of-the-art containment and cleanup equipment and gamma-ray scanners. Delegates met U.S. suppliers, national associations, and federal agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Coast Guard.

EGYPT

Aromatics Complex Project - USTDA awarded this \$860,000 grant to the Egyptian Petrochemicals Holding Company to fund the cost of a Feasibility Study (FS) on the establishment of a world scale aromatics complex capable of producing petrochemical feedstock for downstream manufacturing activities in Egypt. The FS will analyze the technical, financial, and economic aspects of developing a greenfield petrochemical plant to produce Para Xylene and Benzene using Naphtha (light gasoline) feedstock from local Egyptian refineries. The project would leverage Egypt's favorable position in feedstock, energy, and geographical location, to establish a domestic aromatic chemicals industry to attract further investments from the private sector.

Railway Traffic Management – USTDA is funding a \$755,310 technical assistance grant to the Egyptian Ministry of Transport to improve safety standards in Egypt's railway sector in response to recent train accidents. The grant will be used to design a national traffic management master plan and assist with the creation of an independent railway safety oversight and enforcement authority to monitor Egyptian National Railways' compliance with safe operating practices.

IRAQ

Railway sector – USTDA has been active in three rail-related projects in Iraq since 2004. USTDA funded a \$600,000 Rail Development TA to assist the Iraq Republic Airways to achieve a Rail Development Plan in the areas of business, environmental management, and priority investment. In addition, the TA developed recommendations regarding the manner in which the rail sector should be organized and regulated as the sector evolves. USTDA also sponsored two Orientation Visits focusing on railway reconstruction, which introduced delegates to U.S. technology, capacity, and regulatory practices in the rail sector.

Oil Training Program – USTDA funded a \$2.5 million multifaceted training program for the Iraqi Ministry of Oil to support management, technical/engineering, and human resources development. The training was designed to respond to specific needs identified by the Ministry of Oil, and to provide critical knowledge transfer and establish long-term relationships between the U.S. and Iraqi oil and gas industry public and private sector representatives. Training took place in 2006 and 2007.

JORDAN

National Freight Information System and Transportation Hub - USTDA is providing a \$600,000 grant to the Jordanian Ministry of Transport to fund the cost of a National Freight Information and Transportation Hub (NAFITH) pilot and feasibility study. NAFITH is a country-wide freight information transportation system that supports Jordan's efforts to promote trade efficiency, security and global competitiveness through market-oriented reforms. It allows cargo to be catalogued and tracked across a supply chain via a web-based platform, providing system stakeholders with access to immediate information.

Zarqa River Wastewater Treatment - USTDA is providing a \$335,000 grant to the Jordanian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, acting through the Jordanian Ministry of Environment, to fund the cost of a feasibility study (FS) on an improved wastewater collection and treatment system to serve the communities of the Zarqa River Basin in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The FS will include a strategic examination of the existing wastewater treatment system in the project area, a thorough demand analysis and assessment of the treatment needs posed by increased infrastructure development in the Zarqa River Basin and will recommend the most appropriate technical solution required to meet the growing wastewater treatment demands in the project area.

MOROCCO

Cold Storage Needs for Palm Dates - USTDA is funding a \$531,810 grant to the Ministry of Agriculture to fund a Technical Assistance for cold storage infrastructure for palm dates. The proposed TA will include a comprehensive study to identify the specific needs for cold storage infrastructure and facilities that would help reduce losses in the date palm production in Morocco, and a training component on the importance of cold storage, that targets producers and producer associations.

Weather Radar Network - USTDA is providing a \$350,000 grant to the Moroccan National Meteorology Department to fund a feasibility study (FS) on the installation of an upgraded and expanded national weather radar network to increase weather coverage throughout the Kingdom of Morocco. The FS will analyze the benefits of improved radar coverage, including the ability to predict and respond to the occurrence of natural phenomena that could cause devastating loss of life and injury, severe damage to the environment, and destruction of the local economy. The FS will also recommend the most appropriate technical solution for upgrading and expanding the existing weather radar network in Morocco.

WEST BANK

WiMax Network - USTDA is providing a \$480,625 technical assistance grant to BCI Communication & Advanced Technologies to provide business advisory services, technical analysis, and human resources training related to the establishment of a WiMax broadband wireless network serving the West Bank. The network would target the 10 largest cities in the West Bank, which would provide approximately 45,000 users with broadband wireless services.

Internet Data Center - USTDA is providing a \$412,093 grant to Safad Engineering & Electronics Ltd., for a Feasibility Study designed to provide technical, business and financial advisory services related to the establishment of an Internet Data Center (IDC) in Ramallah, West Bank. The IDC would offer a secure data facility to provide web hosting, web services, managed services and other advanced applications for the local Internet and digital services marketplace.

Stone and Marble Orientation Visit - USTDA is funding an Orientation Visit in October 2008 to familiarize West Bank business representatives in the marble and stone industry with U.S. natural stone equipment, services, and technology. The delegation will visit the U.S. trade show StonExpo in Las Vegas, to showcase U.S. equipment and service technologies related to the extraction and processing of natural stone.

YEMEN

Taiz Wastewater System - USTDA funded a \$492,000 grant to the Governorate of the City of Taiz, represented by the Taiz Water and Sanitation Local Corporation, to fund a study on a wastewater collection, disposal, and treatment project for the city of Taiz, Yemen. The study analyzed the financial, economic, and technical viability of the project, including a preliminary environmental analysis.

National Rural Electrification Program - USTDA is funding a \$515,214 technical assistance (TA) grant to the Yemen Ministry of Electricity and Energy that will develop a comprehensive institutional framework for program implementation in the country. This will consist of designing the legal and regulatory framework to support national rural electrification policy throughout Yemen, in conjunction with a comprehensive legislative proposal to establish a new rural electrification agency, and support the formation of local electric cooperatives. The TA will culminate in the demonstration of a model electric cooperative to be formed in the Ibb Governorate of Yemen.

REGIONAL

Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Conference - USTDA, with the support of several U.S. government agencies, sponsored a conference in May 2006 to highlight issues and opportunities in the ICT sector in the MENA region. Project delegates participated from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen. Delegates from Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and UAE also attended due to their countries' regional location and importance. The conference promoted specific short- and medium-term commercial opportunities for U.S. businesses in the MENA information and communications sector market, based on U.S. competitiveness and developmental priorities in the respective countries.

Middle East and North Africa (MENA) e-Government Orientation Visit - As a follow-on to the 2006 MENA ICT conference, USTDA funded an orientation visit in October 2007 to the United States, introducing delegates from the Middle East & North Africa to expertise on establishing and maintaining e-Government systems. The OV introduced the delegates to suppliers of technology and equipment related to e-Government programs.