
U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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USTDA GRANTS SUPPORT CLEAN WATER INITIATIVES IN THE PHILIPPINES

MANILA, PHILIPPINES – (July 25, 2008) Providing technological solutions to address water treatment and water loss reduction challenges in the Philippines is the subject of two USTDA grants awarded today in a ceremony at the American Embassy in Manila. USTDA Director Larry W. Walther conferred grant agreements, totaling over \$660,000, for separate projects with the Manila Water Company, Inc. (MWCI) and with the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA), which together account for over 20 million water service customers in the Philippines. The grant awards were witnessed by U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie A. Kenney.

The first USTDA grant agreement was signed with MWCI, a private Philippine company, by USTDA Director Larry W. Walther and MWCI Group Director for Business Rene Almendras, and is valued at \$442,000. The grant will be used to assess the application of specialized onsite water treatment systems to help MWCI's commercial and industrial customers comply with new more stringent wastewater discharge requirements of the Philippines Clean Water Act. MWCI provides water and wastewater services in the Manila East Zone Service Area, which includes more than a million multi-person households and more than 300 commercial and industrial customers, and enjoys high customer satisfaction ratings. Nevertheless, the Philippine Government reports that untreated wastewater, primarily from small commercial and industrial facilities, continues to degrade rivers, streams, and groundwater in MWCI's large service district, and the Department of Natural Resources has begun to enforce the stricter standards.

In response, MWCI has requested USTDA support to identify onsite technology and facility upgrades that can strengthen the wastewater treatment services provided to their commercial and industrial customers. The USTDA-funded assessment will evaluate the technical, financial and economic viability of various onsite water treatment systems that have gained wide use in the United States to help improve both economic and environmental conditions for businesses and residents of the Manila metropolitan area. The opportunity to conduct the USTDA-funded study for MWCI will be competed on the Federal Business Opportunities website at www.fedbizopps.gov.

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The second USTDA grant awarded today, valued at \$219,729, was signed by USTDA Director Walther and LWUA Administrator Orlando Hondrade. The USTDA grant will fund early investment analysis and a pilot study on technology applications designed to reduce water losses, or non-revenue water. LWUA is a government institution responsible for supervising and financing over 600 water districts, serving over 14 million customers throughout the Philippines. LWUA's member districts produce, on average, over 30 percent more water than is billed, resulting in an average annual loss of \$1.9 million in revenue per water district.

The USTDA-funded study will focus on applications to reduce water losses in selected water districts, and includes a pilot study targeting one LWUA water district. If successful, the pilot will serve as a proof-of-concept for implementing appropriate technology packages for water efficiency in a range of similar water districts.

LWUA has selected Nobel Systems, Inc. (San Bernardino, CA), a firm that specializes in water resource management, to provide investment analysis and to implement the pilot project. In addition to the USTDA grant, Nobel Systems will contribute resources toward the study's completion.

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, 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.