

USEA Energy Partnerships

USAID and the U. S. Energy Association (USEA) have supported energy partnerships between U.S. utilities and regulators and their E&E counterparts to create a unique form of development assistance. Since their creation in the early 1990s, the partnerships have successfully built long-term institutional and personal relationships, which has resulted in lasting reform in the energy sector. The Partnership program utilizes internships, seminars, executive visits, advisory missions, workshops, and information exchanges to introduce executives, managers, and working level individuals to a new way of doing business.

Thirteen countries have participated in the partnerships, including: Armenia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Romania, and the Baltic countries.

The Partnerships most important and lasting contribution has been the ability of the U.S. utility industry leaders to change the former communist managers' approach to doing business. The energy sector has improved in efficiency, introduced modern management practices, created an impetus for competition and commercial operations, and increased the number of energy companies that have privatized. The partners have also addressed environment issues like emissions reduction, large power markets, and open transmission access, issues that are critical for European Union accession.

Some specific accomplishments are listed below.

- Hungarian and Kazakhstani regulators now routinely hold public hearings on tariff approval and customer complaints, and ensure service standards based on the knowledge gained from their relationships with the US State commissions.
- Kazakh officials are developing the basic rules for a working competitive power market, learning from the recent experience in California.
- Dnieperenergo, a Ukrainian utility, has issued American Depository Receipts to tap new sources of investments; a lesson learned from its relationship with Kentucky Utility.
- A number of program participants, like the Chairman of the Russian Federal Energy Commission and the recent Ukrainian Energy Minister were promoted from mid-level management to key leadership positions where they used the experience gained on the Partnership exchanges to effect policy and institutional reform.