



U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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USTDA GRANT SUPPORTS INCREASED REGIONAL TRADE IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

SKOPJE, MACEDONIA – Increasing trade capacity in South East Europe along Corridor X, which has been identified by the European Union (EU) as one of the five most important strategic transport routes in Europe, is the objective of a USTDA grant awarded today to the Macedonian Customs Administration (MCA). The grant will be used to partially fund a technical assistance program and pilot project that will facilitate trade by simplifying transit documentation requirements through a regional “single window” entry system for the Customs Administrations of Macedonia, Serbia and Bulgaria.

The \$549,090 grant was conferred during a signing ceremony held at the Customs Administration Office in Skopje. The Honorable Gillian A. Milovanovic, U.S. Ambassador to Macedonia, and Mr. Vanco Kargov, MCA Director General, signed the agreement on behalf of the U.S. and Macedonian governments.

The regional “single window” system supported by today’s grant seeks to relieve bottlenecks caused by increased cargo traffic along Corridor X, which includes the following countries: Norway, Finland, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, and Greece. As this volume has increased, the need to improve customs operations and capabilities at border crossings has become evident. Specifically, the regional system will allow businesses to submit all import and export documentation in electronic format to one address that can be accessed by all authorized customs and border agents in Macedonia, Serbia and Bulgaria in advance of a shipment’s arrival at the border. The system will enable customs officials to process information faster and share documentation across the border to avoid duplication.

MCA was chosen as the grantee for this regional pilot project because Macedonia currently has the necessary ICT infrastructure to support the pilot. Under a previously completed rural education project in Macedonia, Motorola developed and installed a fixed wireless broadband solution, the Motorola Canopy System™, which allows community service providers to deliver always-on, high-speed Internet access to municipalities, schools, hospitals and residences in rural areas and underserved markets.

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The pilot project will utilize this system to coordinate communications, as well as Sun Microsystems hardware and servers, and Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFID) and RFID technology from Neology Incorporated for the pilot project. MCA has selected Inner Circle Logistics (ICLogistics) of St. Louis, Missouri, as the contractor to provide the technical assistance program and manage the pilot project. In addition to the USTDA grant awarded today, ICLogistics will contribute additional resources toward the completion of the technical assistance program and pilot project.

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.

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