



U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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MEDIA INQUIRIES:

Donna Thiessen
(703) 875-4357

USTDA SUPPORTS CUSTOMS MODERNIZATION IN GUATEMALA

GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA – USTDA is pleased to support the development of Guatemala’s information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure through a grant awarded yesterday as part of the agency’s overall DR-CAFTA Trade Integration Initiative. The grant to the Guatemalan Superintendent of Tax Administration (Superintendencia de Administración Tributaria, SAT) will support technical assistance in the improvement of the Customs Transit Control System.

The \$387,500 grant was conferred in a signing ceremony held at SAT headquarters. U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala James M. Derham and SAT Superintendent Carolina Roca signed the grant agreement on behalf of the U.S. and Guatemalan governments, respectively.

Due to its geographic location, Guatemala’s customs facilities process a large volume of commercial traffic that either originates within or is directed from other Central American countries. As the SAT seeks to adopt and fully implement the World Customs Organization Framework of Standards, the technical assistance supported by the USTDA grant will enable the SAT to develop a more efficient and secure system to closely monitor commercial activity, capture commercial transactions and reduce losses. The project will not only help the SAT to develop a world class customs transit system, but will also support Guatemala’s national competitiveness goals by improving trade facilitation.

The USTDA grant is the first to be awarded under the ICT umbrella of the DR-CAFTA Trade Integration Initiative. The agency launched the Initiative in 2005 to support priority projects in Central America that further the benefits of increased trade, regional connectivity and economic growth under DR-CAFTA. To date, USTDA has invested approximately \$6.2 million under the Initiative and in support of Central American countries’ National Trade Capacity Building Strategies, with more than \$1.2 million of the total being awarded to priority projects in Guatemala.

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The grant to the SAT is also consistent with the objectives of USTDA's Global Customs Initiative, which was announced at the APEC Joint Ministers Meeting in Vietnam in 2006. The Initiative seeks to address critical customs training requirements in developing and middle-income economies and incorporate proactive private sector-driven approaches to customs-related technical assistance.

The opportunity to provide technical assistance to SAT under the grant awarded yesterday will be competed on the Federal Business Opportunities website at www.fbo.gov. Interested U.S. firms should submit proposals according to the instructions contained in the Federal Business Opportunities announcement. SAT will select the U.S. firm that will provide the USTDA-funded assistance.

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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