



U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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USTDA PROMOTES COMPETITIVENESS IN NICARAGUA'S PORT SECTOR



EPN Executive President Virgilio Silva (left), U.S. Ambassador Paul Trivelli (center), and Vice Foreign Minister and Cooperation Secretary Valdrack Jaentschke (right) participated in the signing ceremony where a USTDA grant was awarded on the development of a national port law in Nicaragua.

MANAGUA, NICARAGUA – USTDA renewed its commitment to Nicaragua's port infrastructure under the agency's DR-CAFTA Trade Integration Initiative through a grant awarded yesterday to the National Port Authority (Empresa Portuaria Nacional, EPN). This technical assistance grant builds on prior USTDA support to the EPN for the modernization of the Port of Corinto by assisting with the development of the necessary legal framework to encourage private sector investment in Nicaragua's port sector.

The \$510,000 grant was conferred in a signing ceremony held at the Best Western Las Mercedes Hotel in Managua. U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua Paul Trivelli and EPN Executive President Virgilio Silva signed the grant agreement on behalf of the U.S. and Nicaraguan governments, respectively.

The technical assistance will further EPN's goal of attracting private investment to the Port of Corinto and new port facilities in Nicaragua by recommending the establishment of an open, competitive and transparent vehicle for private investment in the Port of Corinto, as well as new port facilities and terminals within Nicaragua. The competitiveness of Nicaragua's port sector is essential to the promotion of economic growth and to the establishment of the mutually beneficial trade relationship envisioned by the U.S.-Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA). To support these objectives, USTDA awarded a grant to EPN in 2006 to fund technical assistance on upgrading cargo handling capacity, expanding operating areas, introducing modern information technology management and maintenance systems, improving security and review operational procedures at the Port of Corinto.

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USTDA's grants to EPN exemplify the goals of the agency's DR-CAFTA Trade Integration Initiative, which aims to further DR-CAFTA implementation by building strong public-private partnerships within Central America and by fostering continued momentum for increased trade and economic development in the region. To date, USTDA has invested approximately \$6.2 million under the Initiative and in support of Central American countries' National Trade Capacity Building Strategies, and over \$1.0 million in transportation sector grants to priority projects in Nicaragua.

The opportunity to provide technical assistance to EPN under the USTDA grant 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. EPN 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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