
U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



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USTDA SUPPORTS DESIGN OF SICHUAN REGIONAL HEALTH NETWORK

Advancing U.S. Technology Solutions to Address China's Development Goals

CHENGDU, CHINA (August 28, 2009) – Today, USTDA continued its commitment to advancing Sichuan Province's ability to address disasters following the devastating earthquakes of 2008. Working in cooperation with the Sichuan Health Information Center (SHIC), USTDA awarded a grant to design a province-wide universal healthcare system based on an e-healthcare technology platform. The project is expected to lower healthcare costs, allow individuals greater control over health records and services, and provide higher quality healthcare services to rural regions, while opening commercial opportunities for the export of U.S. goods and services in conjunction with the project's implementation.

U.S. Ambassador to China Jon M. Huntsman, Jr. witnessed the signing of the \$570,642 grant on behalf of the U.S. government at a grant signing ceremony in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province. Mr. Gan Huaping, Information Center Director for the Sichuan Health Bureau signed on behalf of SHIC.

"In my inaugural trip to Chengdu as the newly-appointed U.S. Ambassador to China, I am pleased to commit U.S. support to establishing the foundation for sustainable growth and improved public health systems in China," Ambassador Huntsman remarked during the ceremony. "Continuing cooperation with China on public health and sustainable development projects will help to support job creation and positive growth in our two countries."

China's healthcare sector is entering a stage of significant growth. In January 2009, China announced a three-year, \$124 billion stimulus package to fundamentally improve the nation's healthcare sector. In addition, provincial and municipal governments are expected to invest up to an additional \$74.6 billion to develop local implementation plans.

After the devastating earthquakes in 2008, Sichuan Province is eager to improve its healthcare infrastructure and emergency capabilities to better respond to future crises. The USTDA grant will support these efforts by funding a technical consultant to formulate a development and service strategy on how to build a province-wide Electronic Health Record filing system by 2020 that will parallel the construction of a Regional Health Information Network.

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SHIC is working particularly closely with Cisco, which has made a corporate social responsibility grant of \$20 million for network and data center infrastructure in the province. USTDA's program is designed to complement Cisco's efforts by facilitating the development of a strategic framework necessary to move forward to the implementation and procurement stage.

At today's ceremony, Ambassador Huntsman also announced USTDA's intention to award a separate grant to the Sichuan Provincial Department of Health to expand the province's emergency medical services capabilities. The \$294,119 grant will fund a program to familiarize emergency medical technicians across the province with effective methods for responding to emergencies.

The opportunity to provide the USTDA-funded assistance under the grant awarded today will be competed on the Federal Business Opportunities (FBO) website. A link to the FBO announcement will be posted on USTDA's website at www.ustda.gov. Interested U.S. firms should submit proposals according to the instructions in the FBO announcement. SHIC will select the U.S. firm that will provide the 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, feasibility studies, 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.

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