



U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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USTDA ASSISTS PALESTINIANS IN ADVANCING INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Promoting Administration's Efforts to Spur Economic Development in the West Bank

RAMALLAH, WEST BANK (March 15, 2010) – USTDA supports local efforts in the West Bank to develop information and communications technologies (ICT) and wastewater treatment infrastructure. The two grants awarded today will support the Rawabi Project, a private sector development that will create an affordable and environmentally sustainable residential community in the West Bank. The project is being developed on a 250-acre site in the West Bank, six miles north of Ramallah and is envisaged to eventually grow to accommodate 40,000 residents, plus a commercial center, schools, a clinic and a hotel.

The grants awarded during a visit by Acting Director Leocadia I. Zak demonstrate the Administration's strong commitment to promoting long-term economic development in the Palestinian territories while opening opportunities for greater U.S. private sector involvement.

“The Rawabi Project will play an important role in providing affordable housing in the West Bank and will be a driver for broader economic development,” said Acting Director Zak at the signing ceremony.

The first grant signed today for \$412,901 will support the development of an ICT master plan to ensure that Rawabi can provide residents with cost-effective and essential communications services. In particular, the plan will evaluate different ICT solutions including voice, Internet and media and provide a blueprint for a state-of-the-art flexible, cost-effective and scalable ICT infrastructure that will accommodate all of Rawabi's ICT-related needs for the foreseeable future. Ultimately, by defining the options to deploy a robust ICT system, the West Bank will be better positioned to attract start-up technology.

USTDA also signed a \$273,772 grant to fund a feasibility study to assess water treatment technologies for wastewater reclamation and re-use both within the Rawabi community and for irrigation of nearby agricultural land and industrial sites.

“The project offers an excellent opportunity for USTDA to promote sustainable economic growth and affordable housing in the West Bank while advancing the use of environmentally beneficial technologies for wastewater reuse in this water scarce region,” said Zak.

The grants were conferred during a signing ceremony with Bashar Masri, Managing Director of the Bayti Real Estate Investment Company and USTDA Acting Director Zak. The grant agreement was witnessed by U.S. Consul General Daniel Rubinstein and Deputy Managing Director Amir Dajani on behalf of the U.S. government and the Bayti Real Estate Investment Company, respectively.

The opportunity to provide the USTDA-funded assistance under the grants awarded today will be competed on the Federal Business Opportunities (FBO) website. A link to the FBO announcements 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. The Bayti Real Estate Investment Company will select U.S. firms to provide the assistance associated with its grants.

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.

-30-

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