



U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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USTDA SUPPORTS BROADBAND PROJECT IN BRAZIL'S ACRE REGION
Grant is the First of Three Totaling Over \$1.2 Million to be Awarded This Week in Brazil

BRASILIA, BRAZIL (September 18, 2008) – Promoting the development of a statewide broadband project to further economic growth is the goal of a USTDA grant awarded today to the Secretariat of Administrative Management in the State of Acre (Secretariat). The USTDA grant will determine the feasibility of the proposed project in expanding Internet access in the remote Acre region.

“We are pleased to support this project because information and communications technology infrastructure is an essential catalyst for growth in the global economy,” said USTDA Director Larry W. Walther. “This project will further connect the Acre region with the world.”

The \$573,853 grant agreement was conferred at a signing ceremony held in Brasilia. Director Walther and State Secretary for Administrative Management Mâncio Cordeiro Lima signed the grant agreement on behalf of the U.S. Government and the State of Acre, respectively. U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Clifford M. Sobel and Technical Advisor to the Secretariat Sérgio A. Francalino Rocha signed as witnesses to the grant agreement.

The State of Acre is located in the northwest Amazon region of Brazil. It is estimated that less than ten percent of homes located there have a computer with access to the Internet. The State of Acre is committed to the development of a statewide broadband project that includes a hybrid voice, data and video Internet Protocol-based network to reduce the region's interconnectivity and broaden its access to the global economy.

The foremost objective of the project is to build a network linking all government offices via high-speed Internet in Rio Branco and in Cruzeiro do Sul helping to eliminate redundancies and reduce overall operating costs for government communications. The second objective is to provide high speed connections to public Internet access points, such as schools and health posts. The third objective is to provide medium-band connections to the general public as a public service. An optional fourth objective is to provide commercial high-speed internet access for businesses and homes seeking higher bandwidth.

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The USTDA grant will fund the analysis of the feasibility of the project and develop its organizational structure, functional specifications, and architecture. The study will also include a review of legal and regulatory issues related to public-private partnerships and assess the environmental impact.

The grant is the first of three that USTDA intends to award this week to advance priority infrastructure projects in Brazil. Tomorrow, USTDA intends to award two grants in the State of Minas Gerais. Under the first grant, USTDA will help to integrate and upgrade of existing datacenters that support the state's e-government program. The other grant will fund technical assistance in the expansion of the State's PROAERO Small Airports Network Program, which promotes safety standards and economic development through an integrated network of airports.

The opportunity to provide the USTDA-funded assistance to the Secretariat under the grant awarded today will be competed on the Federal Business Opportunities website at www.fbo.gov. Interested U.S. firms should submit proposals according to the instructions in the Federal Business Opportunities announcement. The Secretariat will select the U.S. contractor that will carry out 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, early investment analysis, 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.