



U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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USTDA AWARDS THREE GRANTS TO MODERNIZE COLOMBIA'S PORT INFRASTRUCTURE

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA (March 25, 2009) – Today, USTDA awarded three grants totaling more than \$1.2 million that continue the agency's ongoing support for the expansion of the port sector in Colombia. The grants will be used to fund feasibility studies associated with terminal rehabilitation at the Port of Salgar, operational and security enhancement at the Port of Buenaventura and centralized security and customs operations between the Ports of Cartagena and Contecar. The grants were conferred in a signing ceremony at the Corporacion Club El Nogal in Bogota. U.S. Ambassador to Colombia William R. Brownfield signed the grant agreements on behalf of the U.S. government. Together, the grants reflect USTDA's strategy of focusing on projects in Colombia that will create export opportunities for U.S. manufactured goods and services.

The first grant, in the amount of \$415,000, was awarded to Sociedad Portuaria Multimodal del Rio Magdalena S.A. (Multipuerto), the operator of the Port of Salgar. The port is located along the Magdalena River near the town of La Dorada in central Colombia. The Colombian government is implementing an initiative to revitalize the country's main waterways as an efficient mode of commercial navigation. Consistent with these objectives, Multipuerto plans to rehabilitate the Port of Salgar. The USTDA grant will be used to evaluate the existing conditions and equipment at the port and determine the feasibility of the proposed rehabilitation. Cundinamarca Governor Andrez Gonzalez signed the grant agreement. Multipuerto General Manager Julian Palacio Salcedo signed as a witness to the grant agreement.

The Sociedad Portuaria Regional de Buenaventura, the operator of the Port of Buenaventura, was the recipient of a separate \$400,000 grant awarded today. The Port of Buenaventura is a multipurpose facility, located on Colombia's Pacific Coast, which handles containers, bulk cargo, break bulk, vehicles and general cargo. Currently, a number of upgrades are planned to increase the port's safety, cargo handling and efficiency. The USTDA grant will be used to evaluate the current conditions at the port and determine the feasibility of the proposed improvements. Deputy General Manager Ana Mercedes Cano signed the grant agreement on behalf of the Sociedad Portuaria Regional de Buenaventura. Executive Director Ana Lucio Jaramillo, from the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) in Cali, signed as a witness to the grant agreement.

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A \$400,000 grant was awarded today to the Sociedad Portuaria Regional de Cartagena, S.A., the operator of the Ports of Cartagena and Contecar on Colombia's Caribbean Sea coast. In 2005, USTDA awarded a grant to the Sociedad Portuaria Regional de Cartagena for a chain-of-custody security study. Due, in part, to the implementation of the results of this study, the Port of Cartagena received compliance certification in 2007 by U.S. Customs and Border Protection under the Container Security Initiative, and also procured over \$5 million in U.S. exports for project implementation. Today's grant will be used to determine the feasibility of developing a central customs and security facility to integrate the Ports of Cartagena and Contecar, which are located about 15 kilometers apart. Mr. Juan Carlos Acosta, General Manager of the Port of Contecar, signed the USTDA grant agreement. AmCham Cartagena Director Diana Lequerica signed as a witness to the grant agreement.

Together, the three grants awarded today illustrate USTDA's ongoing commitment and partnership with Colombia. In 2007, this long-standing relationship was recognized with the selection of Colombia as USTDA's Country of the Year award. The award reflected the success of the agency's program in Colombia in advancing mutual economic benefits and U.S. policy priorities. USTDA has been particularly active over the years in key infrastructure sectors such as energy, aviation, information and communications technology and ports.

The opportunities to conduct the USTDA-funded studies under the grants awarded today will be competed separately on the Federal Business Opportunities (FBO) website. Links 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 announcements. Multipuerto, the Sociedad Portuaria Regional de Buenaventura and the Sociedad Portuaria Regional de Cartagena will each select a U.S. firm to perform the study funded by their respective 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.