
U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



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USTDA FUNDS PROJECTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA TO SUPPORT RENEWABLE ENERGY AND COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

Advancing Administration's Goals of Deploying Renewable Energy Sources

CASABLANCA, MOROCCO and RAMALLAH, WEST BANK (January 21, 2009) – This week, USTDA awarded grants to key partners in the Middle East and North Africa that support the Administration's strong commitment to better monitor the long-term effects of climate change and foster renewable energy development in the region. These USTDA projects will support local efforts to significantly reduce emissions and adapt to climate change.

In the West Bank, the grant will support a feasibility study that will evaluate the viability of using a geothermal heating and cooling system for a planned 500-unit affordable housing complex. The \$438,162 grant will also help to spur the development of new alternative energy sources in the West Bank, where high energy prices have made renewable energy systems more economically attractive.

"The U.S. Government is pleased to further efforts to develop a clean and renewable energy project in conjunction with affordable housing in the West Bank," said U.S. Consul General Daniel Rubinstein who presented the grant yesterday. "Support from USTDA will help to deploy efficient and environmentally friendly technology and promote mutually beneficial relationships between Palestinians and the United States."

The grant was conferred during a signing ceremony with Khaled Sabawi, General Manager of MENA Geothermal Ground Energy and Investment Company Ltd. (MENA), and Consul General Rubinstein. MENA Geothermal Ground Energy and Investment Company is a private Palestinian business that specializes in the design and installation of residential and commercial geothermal heating and cooling systems.

Separately in Morocco, a \$269,110 grant will provide the ability to track changing weather patterns, which will better enable the country to respond to the adverse effects of climate change on its economy. Specifically, the grant to the Moroccan Direction de la Météorologie Nationale (National Meteorology Agency) will assist with the design of a modern weather observation network that will provide accurate and timely weather forecasting and alerts, as well as a greater understanding of and preparation for the impacts of climatic changes.

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“The United States is pleased to partner with countries such as Morocco who are taking proactive steps to address the local and global effects of climate change,” said U.S. Ambassador to Morocco Samuel L. Kaplan who conferred the grant today during a signing ceremony. “The impact of this project will help better forecast weather patterns and will enable Morocco to make the necessary changes to adjust to severe drought and floods that have too often devastated Morocco’s agriculture sector, which is central to its economy.”

Mr. Abdalah Mokssit, Director of the Direction de la Météorologie Nationale, signed the grant. The grant agreement was witnessed by U.S. Consul General Elisabeth Millard and Secretariat of State for Water and Environment, Mr. Mustapha Geanah, on behalf of the U.S. and Moroccan governments, 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 Direction de la Météorologie Nationale and MENA Geothermal Ground Energy and Investment Company will select U.S. firms to provide the assistance associated with 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.