



U.S. Trade and Development Agency

Linking U.S. businesses to global infrastructure opportunities

Trade Talk: Smart Grid

February 28, 2014

Arlington, VA

Summary of Event

On February 28, 2014, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency hosted “[Trade Talk: Smart Grid](#),” the first in a series of sector-specific Trade Talks at USTDA’s headquarters in Arlington, VA. Over 150 participants attended in person or via webinar to learn more about USTDA’s efforts to support grid modernization efforts in developing and middle-income countries. U.S. industry representatives shared firsthand experience of working with USTDA and other government agencies to secure sales in emerging markets, including China, India, Turkey, Mexico and Colombia. The following is a list of key issues and recommendations given during the final panel of the event, “Next Steps & Ideas on Further U.S. Government Support for the U.S. Smart Grid Industry.”

Key Industry Issues and Recommendations

1) Improve Global Market Intelligence: U.S. smart grid vendors need better international market intelligence, including information on a country’s regulatory environment, a summary of the current state of smart grid implementation and market maturity, key economic drivers for smart grid implementation, and specific procurement opportunities for U.S. vendors.

Recommendations:

- USTDA is making infrastructure procurement opportunities available through “Trade Leads,” which appear in USTDA’s [newsletters](#). Trade Leads provide details on specific smart grid procurement opportunities resulting from USTDA-funded feasibility studies and technical assistance.*
- This spring, the U.S. Department of Commerce will issue a “Top Markets for U.S. Smart Grid Exporters, 2014-2015” report that will include market intelligence and country checklists for both U.S. Government and industry reference.*
- U.S. industry should identify, catalog and prioritize barriers to the export and use of U.S. smart grid goods and services in overseas markets, in order to improve the U.S. government’s ability to provide support, e.g. gap funding and better analyses. The U.S. Government trade agencies will work closely with industry to ensure that this information is integrated with trade policy and trade promotion.*
- Additional Trade Talks should be organized for other sectors, such as renewable energy or energy efficiency.*
- Proposed Request For Proposals (RFP) language should be added to each study or pilot project that USTDA undertakes.*

2) Collaborate on Smart Grid Standards with Multiple Stakeholders: Because the regulatory environment and technical issues like standards and interoperability are key drivers of the overall profitability of a smart grid project and a country’s openness to U.S. solutions, it is important to work with international partners to support the development of regulatory frameworks that support the robust development, deployment, and operations of smart grid technologies. Standards start with good policy and implementation.

Recommendations:

- Standards, interoperability, and regulations are key—USTDA should continue to pursue studies and technical assistance that address these issues. In addition, successful grid modernization projects bring in all stakeholders from the start, including regulators, standard-setting agencies, policymakers, utilities and customers.*

- The U.S. government should coordinate with multilateral development banks on smart grid standards, regulatory issues and financing. USTDA recently launched the [*Global Procurement Initiative: Understanding Best Value*](#), which is working with all the multilateral development banks to educate public procurement officials in emerging economies on ways to establish procurement practices and policies that integrate life-cycle cost analysis and best-value determination in a fair, transparent manner. USTDA will utilize these relationships to determine whether the Agency can collaborate with its MDB partners on smart grid projects that address standards.*

3) Showcase U.S. Solutions on a Larger Scale: Additional assistance is needed to match smaller U.S. companies with overseas opportunities. The U.S. Government should consider promoting or sponsoring the development of tools that empower policymakers and planners to more effectively develop regional energy and grid projects. For example, regional renewable energy and energy efficiency Integrated Resource Plans could further the development of clean energy networks that cross borders and maximize opportunities for renewable energy and smart grid exporters.

Recommendations:

- USTDA is open to going “bigger” by supporting regional projects—specific project ideas from industry are welcome!*
- The U.S. government should consider sponsoring a pavilion for U.S. firms at key smart grid conferences, as other countries often do. If there is a specific smart grid conference where this would be beneficial, please inform the U.S. Department of Commerce and USTDA.
- The U.S. government should continue to introduce overseas project sponsors to U.S. industry through Reverse Trade Missions and workshops.*
- The International Trade Administration (ITA) under the U.S. Department of Commerce has over 100 domestic offices in the U.S., working with local companies to facilitate exports overseas. U.S. companies have local ITA contacts in their cities, as well as Commercial Specialists available at U.S. embassies all over the world, to assist with commercial matchmaking.* For domestic points of contact in the energy sector, please visit: http://export.gov/industry/energy/eg_main_021875.asp.
- The U.S. government should consider working with U.S. industry to streamline trade promotion activities in the smart grid sector, in order to have one voice in promoting U.S. exports, as well as to more easily interface with policy and regulatory bodies. Suggestions on existing entities or a new entity that should be created are welcome.
- USTDA should consider funding follow-on activities that the Agency has supported in the past. USTDA is open to supporting additional gap funding activities that may be needed to move a USTDA-funded project forward to implementation.*

* *Denotes action is already being undertaken or is in the planning phase.*

For more information, please contact USTDA’s Electricity Transmission & Distribution Team at: ETD@ustda.gov

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The U.S. Trade and Development Agency helps companies create U.S. jobs through the export of U.S. goods and services for priority development projects in emerging economies. USTDA links U.S. businesses to export opportunities by funding project planning activities, pilot projects, and reverse trade missions while creating sustainable infrastructure and economic growth in partner countries.