



U.S. Trade and Development Agency  
Amended Strategic Plan  
Fiscal Years 2016-2018



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## MISSION STATEMENT

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.

## AGENCY OVERVIEW

USTDA was created to “promote United States private sector participation in development projects in developing and middle-income countries, with special emphasis on economic sectors with significant United States export potential.”<sup>1</sup> USTDA’s dual Congressional mandate is unique among federal agencies in requiring that the Agency both (a) provide foreign assistance for trade and economic development and (b) help put Americans to work in the jobs that result from exports.

USTDA has emerged as the leading U.S. government agency for early project development and preparation activities in developing economies. The Agency accomplishes its mission by providing grant assistance to overseas sponsors for priority infrastructure projects in their countries. The funding may be used to perform a feasibility study, provide technical assistance or launch a pilot project. USTDA also connects project developers with U.S. businesses by sponsoring conferences and technical workshops, as well as reverse trade missions that are specially tailored to bring foreign decision makers to the United States to inform their procurement decisions by observing the design, manufacture and operation of U.S. products and services.

These activities have produced results for both U.S. industry and USTDA’s partners in emerging markets: U.S. companies are provided access to the lead infrastructure project developers around the world, while foreign partners gain insight into the latest, most appropriate U.S. technologies and services to meet their development needs. As a result, the Agency is able to provide targeted foreign assistance, support U.S. trade and economic development priorities, and promote U.S. job creation.

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<sup>1</sup> 22 U.S.C. § 2421(a).

### Strategic Goal 1: Create U.S. Jobs by Supporting Exports of U.S. Goods and Services for Priority Development Projects in Emerging Economies

USTDA's Congressional mandate requires the Agency to engage the U.S. private sector in development projects at the critical early stages when technology options and project requirements are being defined.<sup>2</sup> Consistent with that mandate, USTDA's primary strategic goal is to create U.S. jobs by supporting exports of U.S. goods and services for priority development projects in emerging economies.

The creation of U.S. jobs, a longstanding policy priority for the U.S. government, has become an even more critical imperative in the wake of the 2008 recession. In response to this challenge, and recognizing that support of American jobs will remain of paramount importance in the years to come, USTDA has expanded its export promotion activities accordingly. These activities help to level the playing field for U.S. industry in overseas markets, increasing opportunities for exports and consequently creating jobs at home.

In executing this goal, USTDA employs a data-driven approach to identify markets and sectors that have a strong probability of export success. This ongoing, rigorous evaluations process ensures that the Agency remains responsive to emerging opportunities, as well as to the expertise of U.S. industry and the economic development needs of its overseas partners. The Agency will continue to conduct comprehensive evaluations of its program on an annual basis in order to achieve this goal.

#### Objective 1.1: Support the U.S. government's infrastructure project development and preparation activities in emerging economies.

In the Agency's history of linking U.S. businesses to export opportunities, USTDA has generated tens of billions of dollars in U.S. exports and emerged as the leading U.S. government agency for project development and preparation activities in emerging economies. The Agency will continue to support effective programs that match overseas development opportunities with U.S. commercial capabilities. USTDA can also offer assistance with front-end engineering design

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<sup>2</sup> 22 U.S.C. § 2421(b)(2).

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(FEED) studies, environmental and social impact assessments, and other gap tools that are often necessary to move large infrastructure projects to financing and implementation.

The Agency frequently leverages its relationships with technical experts and financiers from the U.S. government, as well as multilateral development banks and the private sector, to mobilize and streamline resources for development projects. To that end, USTDA will continue to implement initiatives that catalyze projects into the existing and future pipelines of its technical and financial partners.

### Objective 1.2: Prioritize funding for activities in markets and sectors that have strong opportunities for U.S. exports, where U.S. industry expertise can address the development priorities of partner countries.

USTDA has long recognized that an evidence-based approach will enable the Agency to efficiently allocate its budget for activities that provide the highest return on investment for U.S. taxpayers. USTDA evaluates its program tools on a continuous basis to determine the Agency's overall effectiveness and responsiveness to U.S. industry, U.S. government policy priorities and emerging market needs. The Agency will maintain its use of evaluation and research data to, as described in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) guidance, "continually improve program performance by applying existing evidence about what works, generating new knowledge, and using experimentation and innovation to test new approaches to program delivery."<sup>3</sup>

USTDA will annually analyze its past performance by country and sector, review its program successes as well as failures, and identify the most effective and innovative tools to leverage funding. In addition to USTDA's historical results, the Agency will continue to monitor U.S. export growth and forecasted trends in its key markets. This comprehensive methodology allows the Agency to prioritize the number of markets and sectors in which it operates, targeting resources for activities with a strong probability of success. USTDA's ongoing use of evaluation and performance data will inform each of its programmatic funding decisions.

Before each new fiscal year, the Agency develops a strategic plan that identifies the priority countries and key infrastructure sectors that are most likely to support increased U.S. exports and development abroad. This process helps the Agency determine how successful it has been in

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<sup>3</sup> OMB Memorandum M-13-17, "Next Steps in the Evidence and Innovation Agenda," July 26, 2013, p. 1.

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allocating its resources and make adjustments, as necessary. The outcomes of the Agency's strategic planning process will continue to inform USTDA's annual performance plan as well as the development of its long-term strategic goals.

In addition to analyzing the overall effectiveness of USTDA's ongoing programs, the Agency will also maintain its data-driven approach by identifying and analyzing U.S. export growth and general market trends in its key industry sectors. The Agency realizes it is important not only to study the sectors where it has been successful in the past, but also to know where the markets are going in order to plan for future opportunities. USTDA's sector teams will continue to strengthen their expertise in key industries to understand global demand and to identify the sectors that represent the greatest opportunity for growth in U.S. exports.

### Objective 1.3: Level the playing field for U.S. industry in overseas markets by remaining responsive to the needs and priorities of the U.S. private sector.

USTDA's robust partnership with the U.S. private sector is one of its defining characteristics. The Agency reviews every project proposal it receives with its private sector partners in mind, carefully evaluating the potential for export opportunities. USTDA continually seeks ways to enhance its cooperation with U.S. companies and to level the playing field for U.S. industry in overseas markets.

The Agency continuously works to enhance its programmatic tools and has pioneered select activities to open markets to U.S. industry and break down barriers to free and fair competition. The *Global Procurement Initiative: Understanding Best Value*, for example, was launched in 2013 with the goal of educating procurement officials in emerging markets about the benefits of structuring public procurements that integrate life-cycle cost analyses and best-value determinations. Adopting these practices and standards will improve foreign governments' capacity to make more transparent qualitative procurement decisions, while leveling the playing field for U.S. companies competing in these tenders. Additionally, the Agency has the capability to deliver tailored assistance, often in collaboration with other U.S. government agencies, to enhance the trade environment of foreign markets and increase U.S. industry competitiveness abroad.

USTDA has also established strong relationships with U.S. government and multilateral financiers to unlock capital for development projects that offer opportunities for U.S. industry participation. USTDA leverages its partnerships with multilateral and regional finance institutions, such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and Development Bank of South Africa, to foster U.S. company participation in their activities and to educate stakeholders about U.S. technological solutions that could be considered for financing under potential loans. USTDA will continue to work closely with multilateral financiers, as well as with local and regional

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development banks, to increase U.S. company engagement in the projects financed in USTDA's priority countries and sectors.

Finally, USTDA will continue to seek new and strengthen existing partnerships under its *Making Global Local* program, which was designed to increase the number of U.S. companies that benefit from USTDA's activities with the ultimate goal of creating U.S. jobs through increased exports. Through its robust network of *Making Global Local* partners, USTDA gathers business intelligence on key industry clusters, cutting-edge manufacturers and innovative service providers—the majority of which are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)—that provides the Agency with key insight into the needs and priorities of U.S. industry, and that helps USTDA better connect U.S. businesses from around the country with foreign buyers.

### KEY EXTERNAL FACTORS

USTDA's ability to achieve its goals may be impacted by political and economic events in the countries where it works. USTDA will monitor those events and, as it has in the past, do its best to mitigate those impacts by directing funding towards activities in the markets and sectors with the greatest potential for return.

### PERFORMANCE TARGETS

- In each fiscal year from 2016 through 2018, the Agency will strive to generate an average of \$74 in U.S. exports for every dollar it programs

### Strategic Goal 2: Foster Opportunities for U.S. Small Businesses through Significant Involvement in USTDA's Programs

Small businesses have historically played a leading role in driving U.S. economic growth and job creation. In fact, small businesses serve as the primary source of American jobs, comprising 99.7 percent of U.S. employer firms.<sup>4</sup> Since the Agency's inception, USTDA has been a catalyst for engaging U.S. small businesses in the international arena.

USTDA remains committed to executing a significant domestic outreach program to inform the U.S. private sector about USTDA's mission and resources, and to help identify and encourage U.S. firms, particularly SMEs, seeking to expand their business overseas. The Agency is an active partner in the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee (TPCC), an interagency effort that includes the Department of Commerce, the Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im), the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of International Trade, among others, to educate U.S. businesses on the U.S. government's various export assistance programs. Moreover, USTDA is committed to awarding direct contracts to small businesses that can perform activities that inform the Agency's programming decisions. By providing opportunities for these companies to apply their expertise in an international context, USTDA gives them valuable international experience they otherwise may not obtain. As a result, many small businesses that first expanded their international reach by working with USTDA go on to work on other international activities without the Agency's support.

#### Objective 2.1: Engage in significant, direct outreach to educate small and medium-sized enterprises on USTDA's export-promotion program.

USTDA's *Making Global Local* campaign—the Agency's signature domestic outreach program, launched in 2012—has engaged small businesses across the country to help them realize the benefits of USTDA's export-promotion program. Under the *Making Global Local* banner, USTDA has formed strategic partnerships with numerous regional, state and local trade-promotion

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, Frequently Asked Questions. [https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/FAQ\\_March\\_2014\\_0.pdf](https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/FAQ_March_2014_0.pdf), p. 1, last accessed August 2016.

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organizations, which, in turn, educate their partner businesses about USTDA and have hosted Agency-funded reverse trade missions in cities across the country. *Making Global Local* has proven to be an effective tool for engaging with SMEs, who frequently learn about USTDA's program through its *Making Global Local* partners and then register to perform Agency-funded activities.

USTDA also regularly collaborates with the regional and district offices of the SBA, as well as the Department of Commerce's U.S. Export Assistance Centers and District Export Councils, to increase awareness of the Agency's export-promotion program. USTDA staff frequently participates in interagency domestic outreach panels and conferences, such as OPIC's *Expanding Horizons* series and Ex-Im's Annual Conference. The Agency will continue to seek ways to educate small businesses on the U.S. government's trade and export-promotion tools, and to collaborate with public and private sector partners to open foreign markets and create opportunities for U.S. businesses to export overseas.

### Objective 2.2: Rely on small businesses to provide technical expertise and guidance on USTDA investments.

Direct contract awards under the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) also provide a critical avenue to support U.S. small businesses. In this context, USTDA will maintain its reliance on small businesses, as defined by the SBA, to provide technical guidance and recommendations that inform the Agency's investments. USTDA draws extensively on the expertise of small consulting and engineering firms to provide independent technical and financial analysis during the critical early stages of a project's definition. These direct contracting opportunities position small businesses to succeed by showcasing their technical expertise in the global marketplace.

USTDA aims to exceed the requirement for U.S. government agencies to award 23% of their procurements to small U.S. businesses<sup>5</sup> – a requirement it has surpassed for several years. The Agency remains committed to exceeding this benchmark, and will do so by maintaining its ambitious outreach efforts to U.S. small businesses.

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<sup>5</sup> 15 USC 644(g)(1)(A)(i)

## SG 2 | SUPPORT SMALL U.S. BUSINESSES

### PERFORMANCE TARGETS

- Exceed the requirement for U.S. government agencies to award 23% of their procurements to small U.S. businesses

## MANAGEMENT FOUNDATIONS

### Management Foundations: Provide Innovative Customer Solutions and Increase Internal Efficiency

USTDA is committed to remaining a lean, highly effective agency. The Agency's structure promotes an environment that fosters innovation and efficiency, both in external engagement with stakeholders and in its internal operations. USTDA's highest management imperative is to foster a staff and environment that encourages exceptional customer service and increased operational efficiency in order to fulfill the Agency's mission and support U.S. government priorities.

#### Foundation 1: Utilize innovative solutions to deliver timely, quality customer service.

USTDA has long been recognized as an agile, responsive partner to U.S. companies seeking export opportunities and to project sponsors in emerging economies. To that end, the Agency will continuously look for innovative, creative methods to streamline the delivery of its assistance and to improve its ability to respond to U.S. industry and host country needs.

The Agency will also look to expand its use of online platforms to meet the demands of its customers. Increased social media outreach will continue to educate companies on USTDA services and help disseminate useful business development information. USTDA is also frequently hosting sector-focused webinars and online workshops, often in collaboration with its *Making Global Local* partners, to provide a "how-to" for companies that are interested in working directly with the Agency.

#### Foundation 2: Improve efficiency of internal processes while maintaining high standards of diligence.

As part of its on-going efforts to become more efficient internally in order to be more responsive externally, USTDA continuously initiates both short- and long-term internal process improvements. The Agency is committed to "managing through data" and continually strives to refine its business processes in an effort to gain efficiencies in operations, improve customer service and reduce unnecessary labor costs.

For example, in FY 2014, the Agency deployed a new Project Management Database System, which standardized the management of current open obligations across the Agency. The consistent recording and monitoring of program data produces standardized reports that can be utilized for decision making. USTDA also developed a new platform to track each step in its project life cycle,

## MANAGEMENT FOUNDATIONS

from receipt of a proposal to project closeout, which will allow the Agency to identify bottlenecks in the system and design process changes to alleviate slowdowns. These internal improvements are not only increasing internal efficiency, but are also improving the speed with which USTDA responds to and collaborates with the private sector.

USTDA has also long sought arrangements with Shared Service Providers (SSPs) to take advantage of the specialized expertise and technical capability of the SSPs, while reducing the Agency's budgetary and staffing needs and minimizing redundancies across the federal government. This approach has benefitted USTDA and is responsive to OMB's "guiding principle" to support plans that provide the best value for the federal government.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, the Agency will continue to innovate in the human capital development arena, in order to recruit and retain the best and brightest talent to USTDA. For example, in FY 2014, USTDA launched a successful remote telework pilot program that not only retained highly effective regional program staff, but also expanded the Agency's reach in two critical domestic markets. Moving forward, the Agency will also ensure that it continues to provide a robust training program to augment the staff's programmatic expertise.

The above efforts contribute to the Federal Government priority goals of financial, IT and human capital management as required by section 1120(a) of title 31.

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<sup>6</sup> OMB Memorandum M-13-08, "Improving Financial Systems Through Shared Services," March 25, 2013, p. 3.

# CONGRESSIONAL & INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

## Congressional & Interagency Coordination

### Congressional Consultations

USTDA actively engages its Congressional Appropriations and Authorizing Committees on the full breadth of the Agency's programs and activities, including its overall budget, strategic plan and signature initiatives. This consultation includes regular meetings on Capitol Hill, as well as at USTDA's headquarters, in order to foster a broad discussion with a wide range of USTDA staff on the Agency's priorities. In addition, USTDA frequently engages Members of Congress when the Agency hosts events in their states or districts. This engagement includes inviting the Member and his or her staff to attend the event and meet with representatives from USTDA, the local business community and the foreign delegation. These direct interactions provide firsthand engagement with USTDA's program and demonstrate how the Agency's activities are impacting the local economy.

Through direct consultation on activities managed by the Office of Program Monitoring and Evaluation, USTDA has shared its current evaluations practices, as well as the Agency's ongoing efforts to strengthen them, with Congressional stakeholders. This consultation has helped to provide USTDA's Authorizers with a better understanding of the ways the Agency collects the information that enables Congress and U.S. taxpayers to measure its success.

### Interagency Coordination

Many of the Agency's export successes would not be possible without implementation financing from agencies like Ex-Im and OPIC. USTDA will continue to coordinate with Ex-Im and OPIC early in the life cycle of priority projects to improve the likelihood that the projects are strong enough to receive implementation financing. USTDA's Office of Program Monitoring and Evaluation is also increasingly cooperating with Ex-Im and OPIC to better track USTDA-funded projects that receive financing from either institution.

The Agency has experienced great success building its relationship with USG trade promotion partners in the last few years. Working with the SBA and the Minority Business Development Agency, USTDA has been able to increase private sector outreach for its feasibility studies, technical assistance, reverse trade missions and other business matchmaking activities. USTDA collaborates with its TPCC colleagues on a number of initiatives and committees, including the President's Export Cabinet (PEC). By implementing the PEC's applicable recommendations and by cultivating strong relationships with the PEC's private sector members, USTDA has demonstrated that it responds directly to the needs of U.S. industry. In addition, the Agency plans to increase its

## CONGRESSIONAL & INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

cooperation with the Department of Commerce's Advocacy Center by participating in the interagency Commercial Advocacy Task Force. The Agency also supports and often participates in overseas trade missions led by the Departments of State, Commerce and Energy.

Additionally, USTDA uses the full array of its assistance tools to support United States foreign policy objectives. The Agency coordinates with the Departments of State, Commerce, Energy and Treasury, as well as with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, to facilitate strategic dialogues between the U.S. and its key partners, such as China and India. In fact, USTDA activities are often employed and highlighted as examples of on-the-ground, practical implementation of broader policy objectives.

USTDA has also worked closely with key government technical agencies to launch cooperation programs in priority overseas markets, including China, India, Brazil and South Africa. Working with the Federal Aviation Administration, the Department of Energy and the Department of Health and Human Services, for example, USTDA has implemented cooperation programs that have paid great dividends for each of the founding agencies, as well as for the U.S. businesses and host country partners involved.

A large, light gray world map composed of small dots, serving as a background for the central text.

LINKING U.S. BUSINESSES TO  
GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES

U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

[WWW.USTDA.GOV](http://WWW.USTDA.GOV)