



U.S. Trade and Development Agency  
Strategic Plan  
Fiscal Years 2019-2022



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## MISSION STATEMENT

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency helps companies create American jobs and expand the export of U.S. goods and services for priority development projects in emerging economies. USTDA links U.S. businesses with export opportunities by funding project preparation and investing in relationship-building activities that develop sustainable infrastructure and foster economic growth in partner countries.

## AGENCY OVERVIEW

USTDA was created with a specific mission *“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 accomplish the twin tasks of providing foreign assistance for trade and economic development and placing Americans in the skilled jobs that result from the expansion of exports.

USTDA has emerged as a leading U.S. government agency for early and targeted project development and preparation activities in developing economies. The Agency accomplishes its mission by providing grant assistance to overseas sponsors for project preparation support 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 specifically tailored to bring top foreign decisionmakers to observe the unique design, manufacture and operation of U.S. products and services, thereby informing and impacting future procurement decisions.

These activities have produced dramatic results and tangible benefits 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 advanced and most applicable U.S. technologies and services to meet development needs. As a result, the Agency consistently and reliably achieves a unique portfolio of targeted foreign

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<sup>1</sup> 22 U.S.C. § 2421(a).

## THE AGENCY

assistance, support of U.S. trade, advancement of economic development priorities and expanded U.S. job creation.

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

USTDA's unique 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 American goods and services for priority development projects in emerging economies.

The creation of American jobs is a longstanding policy priority for our government, and a continuing critical imperative as U.S. companies face increasing competition for the export of U.S.-manufactured goods, technologies and services. In response to this challenge and recognizing that supporting American jobs remains a paramount priority now and into the future, USTDA has strategically expanded its export promotion activities. This will level the playing field for U.S. industry in overseas markets, increasing opportunities for exports and creating jobs at home.

In executing this goal, USTDA employs a detailed, data-driven approach to identify markets and sectors with the strongest likelihood of export success. This ongoing, rigorous analysis and evaluation process ensures that the Agency remains responsive to timely and emerging opportunities, the unique expertise of U.S. industry and the economic development needs of overseas partners. The Agency will continue to conduct comprehensive evaluations of all programs on an annual basis.

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

Throughout 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 agency for project preparation within emerging economies. With over 35 years of experience serving as the U.S. government's premier infrastructure project preparation facility, USTDA's methodology for developing projects and its overall success rate has proven the agency to be unique in a growing

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<sup>2</sup> 22 U.S.C. § 2421(b)(2).

## SG 1 | CREATE U.S. JOBS THROUGH INCREASED EXPORTS

field of competitors. As of 2015, there were over 60 global infrastructure project preparation facilities (IPPFs) operating in emerging economies around the world leveraging over \$180 billion conservatively in public-private financing, and most of those facilities were established after 2010. The efficacy of the investments made by many of these IPPFs is still yet to be seen, but as USTDA's multiplier demonstrates, the agency has been able to effectively use its experience and performance data to guide investments into areas of greatest mutual return both for the American tax payers as well as the agency's overseas partner countries. USTDA can also lead and assist with front-end engineering design (FEED) studies, environmental and social impact assessments, and other tools to bridge the gaps in the project development cycle that are often vital to move large infrastructure projects to the critical stages of financing and implementation.

The Agency has also prioritized the leveraging of its unique relationships with technical experts and trusted financiers from the U.S. government, multilateral development banks and the private sector to mobilize and streamline resources for development projects. USTDA will continue to implement initiatives that catalyze projects into the existing and future pipelines of its technical and financial partners.

The Agency will continue to support effective and proven programs that match overseas development opportunities with U.S. commercial capabilities and solutions.

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

USTDA has long recognized that an evidence-based approach enables the Agency to efficiently budget for activities that provide the highest return on investment for U.S. taxpayers. USTDA continuously evaluates its program tools to determine the Agency's overall effectiveness on behalf of U.S. industry, 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 for, "*the systematic collection and analysis of information about the characteristics and outcomes of the program, including projects conducted under such program, as a basis for making judgments and evaluations regarding the program; improving program effectiveness; and informing decisions about current and future programming, "continually improve program performance by applying existing evidence about what works, generating new knowledge,*

## SG 1 | CREATE U.S. JOBS THROUGH INCREASED EXPORTS

*and using experimentation and innovation to test new approaches to program delivery.”<sup>3</sup>*

On an annual basis, USTDA will analyze past performance by country and sector, review the proven success and ongoing challenges of its program, and identify the most effective and innovative tools to leverage funding. In addition to USTDA’s record of 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, targeting resources for activities with a higher 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 to identify priority countries and key infrastructure sectors most likely to support increased U.S. exports and development around the world. This process outlines with evidence the Agency’s success allocating its resources and provides clearer direction to make future adjustments. This outcome-based 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 the importance of studying the sectors where it has achieved past success, as well as clearly evaluating future markets to best plan 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 U.S. export growth.

### **Objective 1.3: Level the playing field for U.S. industry in overseas markets by developing strategies and programs to align with the needs and priorities of the U.S. private sector.**

USTDA continually seeks ways to enhance its cooperation with U.S. companies and to level the playing field and ensure market access for U.S. industry in overseas markets.

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<sup>3</sup> OMB Memorandum M-18-04, “Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines for Federal Departments and Agencies that Administer United States Foreign Assistance,” January 11, 2018, p. 2.

## SG 1 | CREATE U.S. JOBS THROUGH INCREASED EXPORTS

One of USTDA's most defining characteristic is its robust partnership with the U.S. private sector. Every project proposal the Agency receives undergoes careful review and analysis, thoroughly evaluating export opportunities for American companies.

The Agency has also enhanced its programmatic tools and has pioneered select activities to open markets to U.S. industry and break down barriers to free and fair competition.

***Global Procurement Initiative: Understanding Best Value:*** Launched in 2013, this initiative educates officials in emerging markets about the benefits of structuring public procurements that integrate life-cycle cost analyses and best-value determinations. Adopting these practices are an essential USTDA strategy to improve foreign governments' capacity to make more transparent qualitative procurement decisions and dramatically leveling the playing field for U.S. companies. The Agency also maintains 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.

**U.S. government and multilateral financier relations:** 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 – including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Development Bank of South Africa – to educate institutions about the benefits of U.S. technological solutions. This better positions U.S. companies to benefit from a broader spectrum of financing options, and USTDA will continue to work closely with multilateral financiers and local and regional development banks to increase U.S. company engagement in the projects financed in USTDA's priority countries and sectors.

**USTDA's *Making Global Local* initiative:** *Making Global Local* connects towns and cities across the country with USTDA's export promotion program. This initiative will continue to develop new essential relationships and strengthen existing partnerships 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.

## SG 1 | CREATE U.S. JOBS THROUGH INCREASED EXPORTS

### KEY EXTERNAL FACTORS

USTDA's ability to achieve its goals may be impacted by political and economic events in the countries where it operates and economic factors that may impact the domestic economy. This includes economic downturns and the graduation of countries eligible for USTDA assistance. USTDA will monitor these events and do its best to mitigate the resulting impacts by directing funding towards activities in the markets and sectors with the greatest potential for return.

### PERFORMANCE TARGETS

- In each fiscal year from 2019 through 2022, the Agency will strive to generate an average of \$95 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

Historically, small businesses play a leading role in driving U.S. economic growth and job creation. Specifically, small businesses are the primary source of American jobs. Since the Agency's inception, USTDA has been a catalyst for engaging U.S. small businesses in targeted international arenas.

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 overseas. The Agency remains 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 for activities that inform the Agency's programming decisions. By providing opportunities for these companies to apply their expertise in an international context, USTDA gives small businesses valuable international experience that is often difficult to obtain. As a result, numerous small businesses with successful international portfolios first gained international reach working with USTDA.

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

USTDA's signature domestic outreach program – *Making Global Local* – was launched in 2012 and has helped small businesses across the country 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 organizations, which, in turn, educate partner businesses about USTDA and host Agency-funded reverse trade missions in cities across the country. *Making Global Local* is a proven and effective tool for engaging with SMEs, who frequently learn about USTDA's program through its *Making Global Local* partners and then register to participate in 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

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

increase awareness of the Agency's export-promotion program. USTDA staff frequently participates in interagency domestic outreach panels and conferences, including the U.S. Department of Commerce's *Access Asia* series and Ex-Im's Annual Conference. The Agency will continue 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 their goods and services 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 carefully evaluated 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.

The objective of USTDA is to exceed the requirement for U.S. government agencies to award 23 percent of procurements to U.S. small businesses<sup>4</sup> – a requirement consistently surpassed by the Agency. USTDA is committed to exceeding this benchmark by maintaining its ambitious outreach efforts to U.S. small businesses.

#### PERFORMANCE TARGETS

- Exceed the Small Business Administration's target for U.S. government agencies to award 23 percent of procurements to U.S. small businesses

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<sup>4</sup> 15 USC 644(g)(1)(A)(i)

### 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 service and increased operational efficiency to fulfill the Agency's mission and support U.S. government priorities.

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

USTDA has long been an agile, responsive partner to U.S. companies seeking export opportunities and to valuable project sponsors in emerging economies. To that end, the Agency is committed to producing 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 customer demand. Increased social media outreach and amplified media identification will continue to educate companies on USTDA services and help disseminate useful business development information. USTDA also frequently hosts sector-focused webinars and online workshops, often in collaboration with its *Making Global Local* partners, to provide a "how-to" guidance for companies interested in working directly with the Agency.

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

As part of its ongoing efforts to maintain its standard of internal efficiency and external response, USTDA continuously initiates 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, USTDA's Project Management Database System has standardized the management of current open obligations across the Agency. The consistent recording and monitoring of these open obligations enable standardized reports to enhance decision-making. USTDA also developed a platform to track each step in its project life cycle, from receipt of a proposal to project closeout, which is allowing the Agency to identify bottlenecks in the system and design process changes to

## MANAGEMENT FOUNDATIONS

alleviate slowdowns. These internal improvements have increased internal efficiency and improved 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 guidance to increase the utilization of SSPs.<sup>5</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, USTDA has utilized a successful remote telework program that not only retained highly effective regional program staff, but also expanded the Agency's domestic reach. 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>5</sup> OMB Memorandum M-17-22, Comprehensive Plan for Reforming the Federal Government and Reducing the Federal Civilian Workforce

# 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 evaluation and monitoring 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

The Agency has experienced great success building its relationship with USG trade promotion partners. Many of the Agency's export successes would not be possible without implementation financing from agencies including Ex-Im and OPIC. Working with the SBA and the Minority Business Development Agency, USTDA has increased private sector outreach for its feasibility studies, technical assistance, reverse trade missions and other business matchmaking initiatives. USTDA collaborates with its TPCC colleagues on numerous projects and committees. The Agency plans to enhance its cooperation with the Department of Commerce's Advocacy Center, as well as continue its support and participation 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 America's 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, and the White House's National Security Council, to facilitate strategic dialogues between the United States and its key

## CONGRESSIONAL & INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

trading partners. 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 U.S. industry-led initiatives in priority overseas markets, including 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 resulting in great dividends for each of the founding agencies, as well as for U.S. businesses and host country partners.

A large, light gray world map composed of a grid 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)