

Promoting small and medium-sized suppliers through the ANTAD.biz platform and its environmental components

Triangular cooperation: Mexico – Guatemala/Honduras – Germany

Context

Environmentally friendly production methods are not yet widespread in Central America, yet economic development is key to poverty reduction in the region. A particularly large number of people depend on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for their income.

In its national development plan, Guatemala highlighted the green economy, technological innovation and greater competitiveness as strategic engines to drive growth and reduce poverty and inequality. Neighbouring Honduras is also looking to improve competitiveness and promote the productive sector, offering support in particular to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

The National Retail Association of Mexico (ANTAD) runs a virtual platform with a linked database for supermarkets, stores and suppliers. This internet platform – ANTAD.biz – also makes it easier for SMEs to market their products to buyers. In 2014, the Mexican Association and German cooperation together expanded ANTAD.biz to include an environmental component. This provides businesses with a tool to self-assess their knowledge and performance in the area of environmental protection and resource efficiency. When required, the component proposes improvement measures such as tailored advisory services or training courses. After business organisations in Honduras and Guatemala expressed great interest in this platform, the triangular cooperation was established.

Project

The objective of the triangular cooperation is to open up the ANTAD.biz virtual platform to SMEs in Guatemala and Honduras. This will provide easier access to the attractive Mexican market, help them develop their position in the value chain and improve overall competitiveness. Use of the environmental component encourages SMEs to adopt more environmentally friendly methods for producing goods and services, strengthening sustainable development in the region.

Within two years, ANTAD.biz and its environmental component will have been used by at least 450 businesses enterprises from Guatemala and Honduras. ANTAD and GIZ are working closely with the Honduran National Business Council (COHEP), the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tegucigalpa (CCIT) and the Guatemalan Chamber of Industry (CIG). Project partners are supporting businesses in the creation of homepages for the internet platform. They are also helping new participants to carry out an environmental diagnosis, which provides an estimate of their current environmental compatibility, for example in terms of energy consumption, water use and recycling. On the other hand, the component also recommends useful certification systems and training measures in the area of operational environmental management. The evaluation is aligned both with international standards and with the sustainability criteria of major buyers. Finally, firms are being made aware of the importance of sustainability factors for their corporate strategy and the marketing of their products.





This is the first triangular cooperation within the framework of the Regional Fund in which the Mexican private sector is engaged in international cooperation. The project is seeking to develop the capacities of chambers of commerce and associations in both countries so that they can not only create their own national web portals for ANTAD.biz but also provide autonomous site support to their member businesses. This enables these institutions to broaden their range of services, with a particular focus on environmentally sustainable business development.

The triangular cooperation makes use of existing cooperation and synergies as part of the regional Latin American Supermarket Association (ALAS) and the COPLAN project (Cooperation Platform for Northern Latin America).

Impact

The project seeks to provide a significant incentive for SMEs in the region to operate in an environmentally compatible manner and thereby contribute to sustainable economic development and poverty reduction. It is also expected to have a positive impact in promoting a regional network between companies involved in the platform. This will serve to support internationalisation processes for SMEs in the region and create new jobs in the formal sector.

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Countries	Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Germany	
Partners	<p>MEXICO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) ■ National Retail Association of Mexico (ANTAD) ■ Business Coordinating Council (CCE) <p>GUATEMALA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Secretariat for Planning and Programming (SEGEPLAN) ■ Chamber of Industry of Guatemala (CIG) 	<p>HONDURAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Department for International Cooperation of the Honduran Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) ■ Honduran National Business Council (COHEP), Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tegucigalpa (CCIT) <p>GERMANY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) ■ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
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‘Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean’

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5
65760 Eschborn
T +49 61 96 79-0
F +49 61 96 79-11 15
info@giz.de
www.giz.de

Contact Natalie Bartelt
E natalie.bartelt@giz.de
I www.giz.de/fondo-triangular

On behalf of Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Division Division 214 South America
referat214@bmz.bund.de

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