

## The USAID Southern Africa Trade Hub: Enhancing Economic Growth and Food Security through Trade

# Swaziland



### Duration

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## The USAID Southern Africa Trade Hub: Working in Swaziland

The goal of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Southern Africa Trade Hub is to increase international competitiveness, intra-regional trade, and food security in Southern Africa. While the majority of the Trade Hub's activities are regional in nature, certain activities target Swaziland as a direct beneficiary:

**Customs Modernization:** The Trade Hub assisted the Swaziland Revenue Authority (SRA) to audit and identify areas for improvement in the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA), and to facilitate interconnectivity and electronic data interchange with the South African Revenue Service (SARS) and Mozambican customs. This included training for SRA staff.

**Regional Seed System Harmonization:** The Trade Hub is supporting the private sector in Swaziland to take advantage of the SADC Harmonized Seed Regulations (HSR) system by implementing three technical agreements approved by SADC: seed variety release, seed certification and quality assurance, and quarantine and phytosanitary measures for seed. Under HSR, once a seed variety is approved in two SADC countries, it can be imported/released in all SADC countries, encouraging investment and boosting interregional trade. In September 2015, an early-maturing, drought-tolerant new hybrid seed, MRI 514, was released into Swaziland during a ceremony addressed by USAID Southern Africa's Deputy Mission Director. The launch of the seed into the Swazi market is evidence of the progress Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Member States have made harmonizing and modernizing their seed sectors.

**Textiles and Apparel:** The Trade Hub worked with the Swaziland Investment Promotion Authority (SIPA) and the Swaziland Textile and Apparel Traders Association (STATA) to coordinate the country's participation at Source Africa, the Trade Hub-supported African textile, apparel and footwear trade show that takes place annually in Cape Town, South Africa in June.

**Support to the Swaziland Government on Clean Energy:** The Trade Hub is working with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy (MNRE) to develop a Renewable Energy and Independent Power Producer (RE-IPP) Policy as well as the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment of the policy. In 2014, the Trade Hub assisted the Swaziland Energy Regulatory Authority (SERA) to review the Cost of Supply Study of the Electricity Supply Industry (ESI) of Swaziland. On January 21, 2015, the National Electricity Grid Code developed by the Trade Hub was handed over to Swaziland. The Southern Africa Trade Hub also prepared and finalized a chapter on gender mainstreaming for the RE-IPP based on research it conducted on the role of women in renewable energy in Swaziland.

**Swaziland Investor Roadmap:** The Trade Hub supported Swaziland in developing an investor roadmap to support government with critical reforms that will spur investment. As a result of the interventions, a number of reforms have been achieved including the introduction of Value Added Tax to replace the General Sales Tax; the amendment of the Trade Licensing Act of 2011; and the Shop Trading Hours Act of 2011, which makes it easier to operate a business through rapid issuance of trading licenses. The Trade Hub continues to work with the Swaziland Investment Promotion Agency (SIPA) and key stakeholders on implementation that includes regular audits of improvements.

**Effective Implementation of Regional Trade Agreements:** As a member of SACU, Swaziland benefitted from a study undertaken by the Trade Hub to identify constraints and potential solutions to expanded SACU exports to the US under TIDCA.

**Assistance on Standards and Launch of National Enquiry Point:** The Trade Hub is implementing a technical assistance and capacity building program for the Swaziland Standards Authority (SWASA) to establish an effective World Trade Organization (WTO) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) National Enquiry Point (NEP) and Notification Authority, improve the standards development process, strengthen the legal and regulatory framework, and enhance outreach and communication efforts to ensure that private sector is more aware and involved in standardization activities. National Enquiry Points (NEPs) provide information portals where domestic and foreign producers, consumers or government entities can obtain information on a WTO member's technical regulations, standards, and certification procedures. The Trade Hub launched the National Enquiry Point in Matsapha, Swaziland, on June 23, 2015 in collaboration with SWASA.



The launch was followed by awareness seminars in Mbabane, Siteki and Nhlanguano aimed at making the business community in these regions aware of the existence of the enquiry point and how they can utilize the service.

*(November 2015)*

*Commercial Specialist at the US Embassy in Swaziland Dorothy Mlambo cuts the ribbon to open Swaziland's National Enquiry Point officially*