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Frontier Market Solutions

TCA: Advancing Global Trade, Competitiveness, and Private Sector Development

USAID

PROJECT NAME
Trade and Competitiveness Activity (TCA)

CLIENT
USAID Office of Trade and Regulatory Reform (TRR) in USAID's Bureau of Economic Growth, Education and Environment (E3)

PRIME CONTRACTOR
Resonance Global

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS
SEGURA Consulting LLC

COUNTRY
Global

TIME PERIOD
Sept. 2017 – Sept. 2022

Challenge

The best way to combat global poverty is through thriving and diversified economies, robust trade, and the creation of new businesses and new jobs. USAID's Office of Trade and Regulatory Reform (TRR) advances the Agency's work on trade, investment, and private sector development. TRR provides direct support and expertise to USAID teams and host country governments around the world, to design, implement, and evaluate solutions for economic prosperity.

To succeed in this work, TRR needs a deep bench of technical experts, who can be deployed quickly to advise, solve problems, and shape activities across a wide range of country contexts and complex business and trade issues.

Solution

Resonance heads the Trade and Competitiveness Activity (TCA) to support TRR in providing rapid response, technical expertise, and training to USAID teams around the world as they work to design and implement programming for trade and economic development.

TCA is TRR's main tool for piloting new solutions and promoting best practices within USAID to advance trade, private sector development, and competitiveness.

To lead TCA, Resonance draws on our network of experts in trade facilitation, business enabling environment, transport and logistics, investment promotion, regulatory reform, regional integration, market systems development, and multi-stakeholder alliance building.

TCA's work is divided into the following key areas:

- **Short-Term Technical Assistance & Activity Support:** TCA provides on-demand technical expertise and activity support to USAID Missions, Bureaus, and Independent Offices around the world on activities related to trade, competitiveness, private sector development, and regulatory reform.

- **Technical Analysis and Assessments:** TCA designs and leads research initiatives and shapes cutting-edge analysis in TRR focus areas, including small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development, domestic resource mobilization, customs reform, and Financing Self Reliance. We leverage a range of diagnostic tools, including Resonance's partnership, private sector engagement, and co-creation frameworks, to help USAID more effectively design and implement trade and competitiveness activities.

- **Communications and Knowledge Generation and Management:** We help TRR enhance the availability and visibility of trade and competitiveness tools, data, resources, and services. We also support event design and facilitation, co-creation workshops for new partnerships and activities, and online Communities of Practice and learning exchanges.

- **Training:** As requested, TCA develops and leads training on trade and competitiveness, for TRR and other USAID teams worldwide.

Key Results

TCA has supported nearly 100 different teams within USAID, local governments, and key stakeholder organizations on issues spanning tax reform, competitiveness, small business growth, and women's economic empowerment. We have engaged over 800 participants through 25 different learning events, dialogue platforms, and knowledge products.

Specific activities and results include:

- With the USAID/TRR team, TCA reviewed the latest research and interviewed leading SME development experts to create a taxonomy of interventions to spur small- and medium-sized enterprise growth worldwide. TCA's research is outlined in the full report Theories of Change: High-Growth Small and Medium Enterprise Development.

- We conducted research on domestic tax and customs reform, to help host country governments raise funds needed to alleviate poverty and deliver vital public services. The resulting white paper, Enhancing Domestic Resource Mobilization Through Customs and Trade Facilitation Reforms, draws on desk research and a global expert roundtable.

- In 2018, USAID's Africa Bureau issued a call – a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) – for new ideas and partnerships to enhance USAID's work on good governance and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa. TCA led a two-day co-creation workshop, guiding diverse stakeholders to narrow 14 submitted ideas down to four viable concepts, with complementary teams, clear roles, and actionable next steps.

- In Vietnam, TCA co-hosted two workshops on Women in the Economy to bring together policymakers and private sector representatives to discuss means of advancing women in the workforce and the digital economy.

- We built a multi-stakeholder Community of Practice with practitioners working across 14 projects under the White House Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative (W-GDP). The group brings together teams working across 22 countries, with more than 200 public and private sector partners. TCA developed and launched a platform for this diverse network to share best practices to advance women's entrepreneurship and economic development.

- TCA conducted research in Liberia and Georgia on USAID investments over the past decade in areas related to Financing Self Reliance, including public financial management, domestic accountability and fiscal transparency, the enabling environment for private investment, and financial markets.

- In Paraguay, recommendations from an in-country analysis by TCA helped to shape the design and implementation of an 18-month project focused on customs reform for trade facilitation, anti-corruption, tax policy, and domestic resource mobilization.

- TCA led a multi-agency team to assess donor activities related to customs reform in Ghana, as well as the Government of Ghana's ability to generate customs revenue and manage risk. The assessment will inform future USAID investments in Ghana.

- TCA has led trainings on e-commerce, trade facilitation, and customs for over 73 US Government staff.