



Central American Small Business Development Center Partnership Program:
Adapting and Replicating the Small Business Development (SBDC) Model
throughout Central America

Final Evaluation Report

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Acronyms

ACE	American Council on Education
AHIBA	Asociación Hondureña de Instituciones Financieras
AMCDPE	Asociación Mexicana de Centros para el Desarrollo de la Pequeña Empresa
ANMPIH	Asociación Nacional de la Mediana y Pequeña Industria de Honduras
ASBDC	Association of Small Business Development Centers
BDS	Business Development Services
C.A.	Central America
CAMTIC	Cámara de Tecnologías de Información y Comunicaciones
CENPROMYPE	Centro Regional de Promoción de la MIPYME
CDE	Centro de Desarrollo Empresarial
CDE-MIPYME	Centro de Desarrollo Empresarial MIPYME (Honduras)
CREAPYME	Centro Especializado de Apoyo a la MIPYME (Costa Rica)
DOS	U.S. Department of State
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
HED	Higher Education for Development
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
INA	Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje (Costa Rica)
INFOP	Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional (Honduras)
LAC	Latin America and The Caribbean
MEIC	Ministerio de Economía Industria y Comercio (Costa Rica)
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
PROCOMER	Promotora de Comercio Exterior de Costa Rica
RFP	Request for Proposal
SBA	U.S. Small Business Administration
SBDC	Small Business Development Center
SBNA	Small Business Network of the Americas
SIC	Secretaría de Industria y Comercio (Honduras)
SOW	Scope of Work
ULACIT	Universidad Latinoamericana de Ciencia y Tecnología (Costa Rica)
USAID	United States Development Agency
UTSA	Universidad de Texas at San Antonio

Executive Summary

This document reports the final evaluation of the Program: “Central American Small Business Development Center Partnership Program: “Adapting and Replicating the Small Business Development (SBDC) Model Throughout Central America” (hereinafter called The Program), funded by the United States Agency for International Development, USAID, led by the American Council on Education-Higher Education for Development, ACE-HED, and executed by the University of Texas at San Antonio, UTSA in collaboration with Centro Regional de Promoción de la MIPYME, CENPROMYPE.

Hired by HED, the evaluation was carried out by international Monitoring & Evaluation Specialists, Peter Appleton PhD, and Luis Bernal, during a twenty-two working-days period between November and December of 2013; it comprised visits to Washington DC, San Antonio TX, as well as San José and Región Brunca in Costa Rica, and Tegucigalpa and Región Golfo de Fonseca in Honduras. Field work was carried out between November 3rd and 17th, 2013.

The report presents a description of The Program, an interpretation thereof for evaluation purposes, the evaluation methodology used, the evaluation results under a number of criteria later explained, and it finishes with a set of conclusions, recommendations, and lessons, as well as the elements of a sustainability strategy. Although the vast majority of project activities were conducted in Spanish Language, this report was required to be written in the English language.

According to its terms of Reference, this evaluation purposes are: i) Evaluate the partnership’s design and implementation model, ii) Assess the partnership’s performance and contribution to output level results; iii) Document major management practices, challenges, and lessons learned; iv) Provide recommendations to partnership institutions, HED, USAID and DOS on strategies, possible adjustments to the design and specific actions to ensure sustainable achievement of long-term objectives.

The following evaluation criteria are adopted: i) Relevance, ii) Efficiency, iii) Effectiveness, and iv) Sustainability (economic, financial, institutional, political, technical and technological) additionally Cross-cutting issues, such as gender, are examined.

The evaluation argues that:

From the very municipal level, going up through national governments, and C.A. multilateral organizations for MSME support, up to the U.S. Government hemispheric policies, the HED-UTSA program addresses an actual need, and responds to policy considerations of major program stakeholders as it has established and is using an intervention methodology comprised of five stages: i) initiation, ii) transference, iii) implementation, iv) consolidation, and v) internationalization.

The Program showed high efficiency in carrying out its activities. UTSA with HED support, and CENPROMYPE collaboration, was an actively engaged, leading, and committed implementer that has kept building up experience not only as a professional economic development organization but, equally important, as an outstanding international promoter of the U.S. SBDC model. These features would certainly allow UTSA to keep this Program or something similar, going on in the years to come, even with funders other than HED, if necessary.

Program effectiveness varied through its different objectives: It was highest in obtaining stakeholders' support for the adaptation of the U.S. SBDC model in Central America; it was lower with regard to the objective of building Central American SBDC capacity and model integrity, and it significantly decreased regarding its third objective: Create international trade opportunities for Central American SBDCs clients. In other words, program effectiveness was highest for those activities depending solely of the implementer decision and action, and lower regarding those capacity building activities to be performed by the recipient country.

Since political sustainability at national level depends of the specific country, it might become fragile depending on local partisan, electoral, and public policy circumstances; likewise, Institutional sustainability is determined very much by the political and policy environment of the country, which in turn might condition availability of public funds for program activities. In Costa Rica and Honduras, however, at the time of this evaluation, existed a policy-wise favorable environment. On the other hand, the high reliance of the program on the central government in Costa Rica and Honduras, casts certain shadows over model integrity and program sustainability in the mid and long run.

Hence, this evaluation recommends:

- Based on current experience with the various phases of model transferring, The Program should seek a better balance, in terms of actual effectiveness, between the initial stages and the final ones. It is clear that The Program is successful in carrying out the initiation and transference phases, but a greater involvement is needed from it in the adoption process through the implementation, consolidation, and internationalization processes which require even more assistance than the initial stages.
- Particular attention should be granted to the adaptation process as it involves, country by country, some sort of quite specific political, legal, organizational, administrative, and cultural expertise. For UTSA having bilingual, cultural aware and expert SBDC counselors working on the SBDC expansion project is a must; but it is not enough when it must deal with more than thirty countries in the LAC Region. UTSA should develop a greater in-house, or acquire external expertise in such areas, to enrich its capacity building and institutional strengthening skills and, by doing so, the capacities of its own International Trade Center.

- Just as it is customary for the U.S. SBDCs to do with their clients, The Program, namely UTSA and HED, should establish and cultivate a long-term relationship with their clients: the countries, and their networks of Business Development Centers.
- The above purpose may be pursued by not only including new countries in every new grant to be implemented but also, at least, one country that was implemented in a previous grant to be followed up. That is to say that, from now on, new grants should include a fourth strategic objective: “Guarantee SBNA long-term sustainability, by following up countries already supported”.
- So far The Program is a supply-side heavily oriented one: It seeks to create and develop centers, associations, networks, collaborations, staff, information systems, and so on; but it lends little attention to the demand side of the business development services market. It does not work directly with MSMEs, nor does it include mechanisms to promote, qualify, articulate, and engage such demand. The assumption that by creating the offer, the demand will come is a flawed and costly one, because it implies assigning money, people, and work to provide services that either are not required by MSMEs, that they might not know how to use, or that might ending up being served at the place, in the kind, or aMOUnt that is not responding to actual businesses’ requirements. The only way to avoid that is by involving actual business owners/operators whose opinion, experiences, and needs are listened to. The Program must make sure that at each new country and from the very beginning, the “pre-consultas”, MSMEs and entrepreneurs are taking into active consideration, in a leading position, and that involves actively engaging individual business leaders, MSMEs associations, cooperatives, and all sorts of organizations (many belonging to the social sector) that are made out of, oriented, and/or led by actual small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- In the same direction the international trade component of the program should be given content and activities that go beyond getting SBDCGlobal.com ready to receive connection from this country or the next. International trade promotion indeed requires information, but it goes beyond information as the USTA International Trade Center well knows.
- The program should define its own sustainability strategy in the mid and long run in terms of program design, funding and implementation. That strategy must consider not only the process of creating more and more SBDCs, or networks thereof, but also counting with means to make sure that them will keep existing in beyond the two-year period of a USAID grant.

- “Model Integrity” should not be assumed or taken for granted. The program should decide, whether such integrity refers mainly to the Centers’ information systems, operational and administrative practices, counselor’s work scopes, etc.; if model integrity refers to the praised partnership university-government-private sector; or if the centrality of the universities in the model is the utmost feature to be pursued. Or, indeed, the extent in which these considerations are relatively important to each other. This is not a rhetorical question; answers to it (or lack thereof) should determine the very nature of “Pre-Consultas”, “consultas”, “diplomados” and, most importantly the identity of main stakeholders in each country.
- In assuring model integrity and a stronger role of universities in the U.S. and abroad, HED should play a more active role, beyond mere grant managing. As per its institutional mission HED has the possibility to attract universities’ interest to host Centers, just like in the U.S. It seems reasonable to think that active networks of universities through the three Americas, promoted by HED, would leverage possibilities for networks of SBDC in their respective countries.
- The program should ponder the extent in which expanding to new countries by having the government as main partner is the best strategy in the long run to achieving the ultimate goal of creating a network of small business assistance networks throughout the LAC region.
- UTSA should start formally and systematically reviewing, analyzing and documenting experiences of adaptation and adoption of the U.S. SBDC model in different countries, as a way to foster capacity building: Not only its own, but also the capacity of its current and future partners.

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Acronyms

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1. Introduction

This document reports the final evaluation of the: “Central American Small Business Development Center Partnership Program: Adapting and Replicating the Small Business Development (SBDC) Model Throughout Central America”, funded by the United States Agency for International Development, USAID, led by the American Council on Education-Higher Education for Development, ACE-HED, and executed by the University of Texas at San Antonio, UTSA, in collaboration with Centro Regional de Promoción de la MIPYME, CENPROMYPE.

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The report presents a description of The Program, an interpretation thereof for evaluation purposes, the evaluation methodology used, the evaluation results under a number of criteria later explained, and it finishes with a set of conclusions, recommendations, and lessons, as well as with a sustainability strategy.

Although the vast majority of project activities were conducted in Spanish Language, this report was required to be written in the English language.

2. The Program described

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) network is the largest and most successful network of assistance to small and medium-size enterprises (SME) in the United States.

Recognizing the importance of SMEs as key drivers of job creation and broad-based economic growth in the U.S., President Obama launched the Small Business Network of the Americas (SBNA) Initiative to support the SME sector, and encourage enhanced trade throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Expanding the SBDC model throughout the Americas is a core goal of the SBNA that contributes to reach the objectives of the U.S. Department of State's "Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas" Initiative, which is a policy-level action, meant to link Western Hemisphere countries committed to democracy and open markets in an effort to promote inclusive growth and prosperity. In such context, the "Central American Small Business Development Center Partnership Program: "Adapting and Replicating the Small Business Development (SBDC) Model throughout Central America" (alternatively called hereinafter: "The Program") had the goals of creating national SBDC networks in Central America, based on the proven U.S. SBDC model.

According to its project charter (a written agreement between ACE-HDE and UTSA), the "Central American Small Business Development Center Partnership Program: Adapting and Replicating the Small Business Development (SBDC) Model throughout Central America", was a program with the following characteristics:

Overall Objective:	To create a network of small business assistance networks throughout Central America based on the proven U.S. SBDC model
Implementers:	UTSA and CEMPROMYPE
Sponsor:	ACE-HDE
Funder:	USAID through a grant
Geographical scope	Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic,
Duration:	Two years: September 2011-2013
Budget	USD 639.307.00 (\$545,000 from USAID, \$94,307 from UTSA)

Specific Objectives:	Activities by Objective
1) Obtain Stakeholder Support for the Adaptation of the SBDC Model in Central America, by:	- Conducting four (4) SBDC "Pre-Consultas" and four "Consultas" for each of the CAFTA-DR countries to explain the Central American SBDC Partnership Program and train 900 Central American SBDC stakeholders.
- Generating awareness and gaining support for the adaptation of the SBDC model.	- Conduct four (4) SBDC Feasibility Surveys & Focus Groups, for feedback and buy-in from each "Consulta"
- Guiding policy development for Central American countries to adopt the SBDC model	- Creation of a Central American SBDC Partnership Program packet and materials.
	- Creation of a Central American SBDC Website section on the CENPROMYPE & SBDCGlobal.com websites.
	- Creation of RFP's with national governments/universities to launch SBDC networks in three C.A. countries.
	- Develop MOUs between CENPROMYPE and ASBDC and also with the Mexican Association of SBDCs
	- Three national networks signing agreements the Mexican Association of SBDCs
	- Fifty (50) C.A. stakeholders visiting UTSA to observe the SBDC model.
	- Twenty (20) C.A. stakeholders visiting Washington DC to learn about the SBA, and the role of U.S. Congress

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- Eight (8) Central American and CENPROMYPE SBDC professionals participating in two U.S. Association of SBDCs Annual Conferences.
 - Nine (9) C.A. small business agencies participating in two (2) "Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas" summits.
- 2) Build Central American SBDC Capacity and Model Integrity by:
- Transferring the U.S. SBDC model methodology for adaptation in Central American countries,
 - Creating pilot Central American Accreditation Standards that ensure quality micro and small business assistance services, and center management best practices on a regional basis.
 - Creating a Central American Association of SBDCs based on the U.S. ASBDC and the Mexican Association of SBDCs model.
- Updating and refining the SBDC Counselor and Director "Diplomado" Training program for the CAFTA-DR countries.
 - Conduct two (2) SBDC Counselor and Director "Diplomado" Training Programs for stakeholders from Higher-Ed, SME Ministries, NGOS and local governments.
 - Graduate 200 C.A. stakeholders from the SBDC Counselor and Director "Diplomado" Training Program.
 - Hosting two (2) "Estancias" observational training visits of UTSA SBDC program for twenty-four (24) SME ministry staff/university administrators from each country who will oversee country SBDC networks to learn administrative systems (12/trip).
 - Developing one (1) regional C.A. SBDC Accreditation Standards and Procedure model established with CENPROMYPE for quality assurance.
 - Creation of a Regional SBDC Accreditation Committee within CENPROMYPE
 - Creation of one (1) Economic Impact Assessment model for annual evaluations of the CENPROMYPE affiliated SBDC networks;
 - Acquiring and adapting one (1) Webcats software license for CENPROMYPE and Central American SBDCs
 - Training 100 WEBCATS operators
 - Creating a CENPROMYPE Committee to develop a governance model for it to function as the C.A. Association of SBDCs
 - Developing a governance model for CENPROMYPE to function as the C.A. Association of SBDCs
- 3) Create International Trade opportunities for Central American SBDC Small Business clients by
- Connecting Central American SBDC Counselors and clients to SBDCGlobal.com
- Activities
- Develop a mechanism and protocol to connect Central American SBDCs to SBDCGlobal.com
 - Train 390 Central American SBDC stakeholders on how to use SBDCGlobal.com to increase MSME exports
 - Conduct two (2) SBDCGlobal.com in-country conferences for 150 clients and counselors of the Central American SBDC network (75 per conference)

3. Interpretation of the Program for Evaluation Purposes

As said, the SBDC program is the U.S. federal government's largest and most successful management and technical assistance program for small businesses. It is comprised of more than 1,000 full time service centers which operated with an overall budget of roughly \$230,000,000 in 2011. Of that sum, \$107.5 million was from the federal government and the remainder was matching dollars, both cash and in kind, from The Program's many funding partners, including state and local governments, institutions of higher learning, private enterprises, and local nonprofit economic development organizations. (America's SBDC: http://asbdc-us.org/About_Us/aboutus_history.html)

SBDCs help small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs by providing:

- Free, confidential, one-on-one counseling, technical assistance, and market research.
- Educational seminars, workshops, and tradeshow.
- Assistance in relationship with lenders and financing opportunities. (SBDC at FGCU: <http://sbdc.fgcu.edu/about/>)

In the United States, SBDCs along with many other institutions, such as chambers of commerce, professional associations, and financial institutions, make up a constellation of providers of business development services -BDS-; among them, however, what makes SBDCs particular is that they are based on long standing partnerships between a local hosting university, the SBA, state government institutions, and private organizations that not only collaborate, but match the amount of money provided by the federal government, so that they serve local small business and entrepreneurs through staff business counselors, volunteers, and other partners.

UTSA has developed a process to support countries in establishing their own SBDCs (or however they are called in each particular country: CREAMYMES in Costa Rica, and CDEMIPYMES in Honduras), which is comprised of five phases and several steps within them as explained below:

Phase 1: Initiation

- Evaluation of the MSME sector in the country
- Conduct a national pre-consultation with the country's national government
- Create a national work team to head the transferring process
- Conduct a consultation with major national stakeholders (public, private, academy)
- Involve U.S. stakeholders (U.S. Embassy, USAID) to guarantee their support
- Design a national implementation plan including planning, legal, normative, organizational, institutional, financial, administrative, staffing considerations
- Training visits to UTSA and Washington DC

Phase 2: Transference

- Conduct a training (“Diplomado”) for future directors and counselors of country’s SBDCs (again, or however they name the Centers in each country)
- A result of the “Diplomados” will be a number of feasibility plans for potential Centers in the country.
- Launch RFPs to potential SBDC hosting institutions
- Develop Technical and Operational Manuals for the future SBDCs

Phase 3: Implementation

- Launching of the newly created SBDCs in the country
- Provide the news SBDCs with monitoring information systems prior to the centers inauguration.
- Review feasibility plans to adjust them to operational reality and national/local circumstances.

Phase 4: Consolidation

- Provide professional development opportunities to SBDCs staff members
- Maximize Center’s economic impact creation in terms of new jobs, more sales, and greater profits for small businesses
- Create an impact measurement culture through use of information systems such as WebCATS (Client Activity Tracking System),
- Create a national association of SBDCs
- Develop accreditation standards and procedures
- Establish specialized SBDCs (e.g. in international trade, agribusiness, government procurement) and develop specialized accordingly
- Provide a second round of “Diplomados”

Phase 5: Internationalization

- By adopting, using and promoting SBDCGlobal.com a web-based platform intended to connect SBDC country networks so as to provide them and their respective MSMEs with information and opportunities for international trade.

In sum, The Program comprises three key elements:

Transference → Adaptation → Adoption

These three elements comprise a process in which the leading role moves gradually from the UTSA to a foreign government; transfers to the UTSA’s SBDC in San Antonio to, hopefully, a group of BDCs at some localities of another country; goes to the U.S. SBDC model to a certain version thereof that a country may envision, implement, and adopt.

Having in mind The Program description as stated in its constitutive document, and knowing the strategy created by UTSA to achieve The Program's main objective, which is the creation of SBDC networks in several C.A. countries, it is now time to analyze some practical implications thereof for evaluation purposes. These considerations refer mostly to declarations of The Program's constitutive document; they act as a conceptual framework throughout the evaluation:

- The Partnership

The Program's name: "Central American Small Business Development Partnership Program:.....", suggests an existing partnership between, at least, two parties whose performance must be evaluated. However, from a legal standpoint, The Program is not an actual partnership¹ but a set of professional service contracts: one by which HED assigns its implementation to the UTSA, another by which the UTSA gets the support of CENPROMYPE, both working for HED which is a USAID grantee. Consequently, this evaluation cannot examine any partners' performance (HED or CEMPROMYPE); instead it focuses on the actual implementer of The Program, which is to say the UTSA. In short, "Partnership" in this case is more a programmatic name, rather than any operational reality to be evaluated.

- Geographical Scope

The Program's name implies it was going to be implemented in all C.A. countries, however, reality showed implementation in just two of them: Costa Rica and Honduras. It is true that at the time of project design the parties did include two other countries (Panama and the Dominican Republic) but they had a limited role within this project overall, as they had only their "Consultas" done.

Even though HED-UTSA had a previous contract to work in El Salvador, and they are actually thinking in covering the CAFTA-DR region entirely, from a project design-evaluation standpoint, it makes no sense to include two countries to be only partial beneficiaries thereof.

- Transferability of the SBDC Model

Business Development Centers or BDCs (CDEs for its acronym in Spanish language) is the generic name applied to institutions devoted to support startup, growth, and development of entrepreneurs and business. CDEs may lend a variety of (mostly) non-financial services, as well as financial ones. Within the large category of business development service institutions, the U.S. SBDCs have a long standing history that has made them a model to follow. They have three major characteristics that make them

¹ "An agreement between two or more persons, for joining together their money, goods, labor and skill, or either or all of them, for the purpose of advancing fair trade, and of dividing the profits and losses arising from it, proportionally or otherwise". <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/partnership>, retrieved on November 21st, 2013.

unique: i) their institutional nature, ii) their services and, iii) the way they relate to their customers.

The fact that traditionally U.S. SBDCs are hosted by a university who operates them acting as an axis for partnerships with government institutions (federal, state and/or local) as well as private sector organizations, has given them stability and continuity over the years. U.S. SBDCs provide free, confidential, individual counseling and/or technical assistance; they are funded mainly by taxes, and so their services are free of charge to customers and, finally, U.S. SBDCs are focused on building long-term relationships with their clients, entrepreneurs and MSMEs, so their services -that are thoroughly monitored and recorded- make their clients create economic impact (jobs, sales, profits). These elements constitute what makes U.S. SBDCs a “model”.

As the HED-USTA program is meant to transfer the U.S. SBDC model to other countries, it seems reasonable to ponder the extent in which such a model is actually transferable in its entirety, or whether some of those three elements are going to be more important than the others, or are not transferrable at all. In a specific country will it be universities' centrality an indispensable feature? Or providing free services to MSMEs? Or services monitoring and recording? Or creating economic impact? Answers to those questions would define the transferability of the U.S. SBDC model, and hence, the actual success of the HED-UTSA program.

- Objectives

The Program's main objective: “To create a network of small business assistance networks throughout Central America based on the proven U.S. SBDC model”, leaves some room to reflection: Indeed, An SBDC network is understood, as in the U.S., as a group of centers which are fully functional, operate in similar fashion, and are able to relate and cooperate to each other. As history shows, the U.S. SBDC network, constituted as an Association was founded in 1979, whereas the SBA was created in 1953, and SBDC-like programs can be traced back as early as the 1940's, which means that the SBDC network was created years later, only when the need for it arose as a bottom-up process (<http://asbdc-us.org>)

For a program such as the HED-UTSA, helping in the creation of a number of individual SBDC-like centers, whether it is the CDEs in Honduras or in reconverting pre-existing ones, CREAPYMES, as in Costa Rica, seems a reasonable objective for a two-year long program. But a “network” is more than the sum of its parts, it is a more complex reality that goes beyond having a number of centers opened -assuming they are fully functional as per the U.S. SBDC model-. In any case creating a network of networks through The Program, is certainly a top-down-conceived objective that seems exceedingly ambitious

for the time frame provided, and the actual powers of the USTA, the implementing institution.

- Stakeholders

Beyond what has been already said about the concept of “partnership” in this project, the role of major stakeholders is clear: USAID is the funder/grantor, HED the grantee, UTSA the implementer, and CEMPROMYPE is a collaborator in implementation. But who comes to be The Program’s beneficiary?

Are C.A. entrepreneurs/ MSMEs The Program beneficiaries? Or, rather, it is the Centers (existing or to be created) themselves?

The way The Program is structured, through the five-phase process already explained, necessarily leads to point out that its primary and direct beneficiaries are the central/national governments of the targeted countries which in this case were Costa Rica, Honduras and, partially, Panama and Dominican Republic. Nonetheless, as governments are abstract entities, the actual beneficiaries were those individuals who took the “Diplomado” in each country, as they are now better equipped to understand the U.S. SBDC model, to work at a local CDE, and are better able to support its adoption by their own countries.

Of course The Program is intended to benefit entrepreneurs and MSMEs, but as it did not work directly with them, they are mere indirect beneficiaries. Down the road when the centers are fully functional, focused on creating economic impact, accountable for their actions as they systematically use a client tracking system, and they are actively connected to SBDCglobal.com, it should be expected that entrepreneurs and MSMEs may become BDC’s actual and main beneficiaries.

The above considerations regarding program design, objectives, activities, stakeholders, and the transferability of the U.S. SBDC model are taken as conceptual references for evaluation purposes throughout this report, as previously asserted.

4. Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

According to its terms of Reference, this evaluation purposes are:

- Evaluate the partnership’s design and implementation model.
- Assess the partnership’s performance and contribution to output level results.
- Document major management practices, challenges, and lessons learned.
- Provide recommendations to partnership institutions, HED, USAID and DOS on strategies, possible adjustments to the design and specific actions to ensure sustainable achievement of long-term objectives.

The Scope of Work, provided by ACE-HED is included in this report as Annex No. 1

The methodological approach chosen is described as follows:

- This evaluation is designed to assess the performance and sustainability of the UTSA (with CENPROMYPE’s collaboration) in the development of a SBDCs network in Costa Rica and Honduras.
- As this is a performance evaluation, and there is no sampling involved, a non-experimental design is appropriate. It includes qualitative as well as quantitative evaluation methodologies.
- Methodological approach leaned towards the qualitative side as, as project activities were more of a building processes nature: initial and intermediate steps towards laying foundations for a new model of helping MSMEs by the beneficiary governments: Costa Rica and Honduras.
- While many of the questions to be answered and issues to be addressed did not have a solid baseline survey or data base, for many of these issues a post-project baseline was established through “memory recall” by stakeholders and complementing document review.
- Within a qualitative approach, information capture methods included documental review (Annex No. 2), interviews with over fifty people in three countries (Annex No. 3), a number of general questions that permeated the whole research process (Annex No. 4), as well as specific questions to those who were interviewed using a structured questionnaire (Annex No. 4), and a survey sent to more than 300 people who took the “Diplomados” in Costa Rica and Honduras, using SurveyMonkey.com, a web-based survey tool (questionnaire included in Annex No. 5).
- Data collection focused in the following categories of stakeholders:
 - National government

- Academia
 - Business Sector, including small business associations
 - Social Sector
 - Regions
- On the analytical side, the evaluation is also based on policy analysis, benchmarking, and evaluators' experience in international monitoring and evaluation.

As per the OECD guidelines (requested to be followed by HED), the evaluation adopts the following evaluation criteria:

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Sustainability
 - Economic
 - Financial
 - Institutional
 - Political
 - Technical
 - Technological
- Cross-cutting issues such as Gender

OECD defines the aforementioned evaluation criteria as follows:

i) Relevance: The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor; *ii) Effectiveness:* A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives; *iii) Efficiency:* Efficiency measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – in relation to the inputs. It assesses the extent to which aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results (or whether it achieved more results than expected with the same amount of resources); *iv) Sustainability:* Determines whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Sustainability can be assessed from financial, economic, institutional, political, technical and technological standpoints; likewise environmental sustainability, although usually highly regarded, is not directly related to this project, and thus it is not included in the evaluation.

Finally, cross-cutting issues such as environmental impact, diversity, or gender inclusiveness were not considered by The Program nor were they by the evaluation SOW. However, during evaluation work field, attention was paid to the extent and ways in which women were Program stakeholders.

Measuring the aforementioned evaluation criteria was done following these considerations: i) it is not always possible to use actual quantitative metrics, as Program objectives such as

“generating awareness” might be highly subjective; ii) some evaluation metrics are primarily defined by program design as it comes with clearly stated output indicators (such as number of stakeholders trained per year, etc.) and so they are a necessary reference for program evaluation; iii) A performance evaluation matrix -chapter seven- was developed to measure program effectiveness; it takes into consideration The Program own output indicators as previously stated; iv) consistency between the three Program strategic objectives and those activities defined to achieve each one of them was also examined and evaluated, as lack thereof makes metrics irrelevant.

Finally, evaluating The Program under each and all the criteria mentioned above, required evaluation questions to be responded through various data collection methods. Such questions, regarding each and all evaluation criteria, are presented in detail as Annex No. 4.

5. Program Relevance

Program relevance can be understood as the extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient, and donor. In this case the degree that the HED-UTSA program responds to the objectives of the U.S. Government, Costa Rica and Honduras Governments, and the Central American countries overall (through CEMPROMYPE) as explained below.

The Program is indeed highly relevant in terms of U.S. Government policies towards the Americas, as it was conceived and implemented in the framework of the Small Business Network of the Americas (SBNA), a President Obama initiative, headed to support the SME sector and encouraging enhanced trade throughout the Western Hemisphere which, in turn, contributes to reach the objectives of the U.S. Department of State's "Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas" a policy initiative also in favor of Western Hemisphere countries committed to democracy and open markets in an effort to promote an inclusive growth and prosperity.

Likewise, the HED-UTSA program serves objectives of public policy in Costa Rica, as stated in the policy piece: "SME and Entrepreneurship 2010-2014 of the Chinchilla Miranda Government 2010-2014" ("Política Pública de Fomento a las PYME y al Emprendedurismo de la Administración Chinchilla Miranda 2010-2014") which through the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce, MEIC, proposes a program of technical assistance, as well as a program of business training for SMEs, based on a "model" of a customized assistance responsive to their needs and life cycle stage; and that is precisely what the HED-UTSA program brings to Costa Rica's Government as determined during the "Consultas", the "Diplomados", the subsequent process of orientation of CREAPYMES to the U.S. SBDC model and by this evaluation.

A similar statement applies to the Honduran Government which, as a part of the "Presidential Strategy for MSMEs Support: Enterprise Development Centers" (Estrategia de Apoyo Presidencial a la MIPYME: Centros de Desarrollo Empresarial) sought, through its Secretaría de Industria y Comercio SIC, to establish six CDE-MIPYME in 2013, explicitly following the U.S. SBDC model, as an "opportunity to generate a systematic and articulated process of MSME support in Honduras", while having the EDCs as a regional implementer of programs and services for them with focus on training, technical assistance, and market intelligence. The Honduran approach, finds quite relevant not only to pursue an articulated support to MSMEs but to promote an active relationship between government, university, and the private sector at subnational level, unlike the Costa Rican model, through the so-called "Unión de Socios" (Partners Union) which by definition is built at municipal level.

Finally, the HDE-UTSA Program is also relevant for the C.A. region overall as it is demonstrated by the agreement signed between UTSA and CENPROMYPE, the Central American government-level body that groups national authorities for MSME development in the region, as part of the

Central American Integration System (SICA by its Spanish language acronym). The agreement itself, as well as an active participation of CENPROMYPE in program implementation both at regional and national level, is a testimony of program's relevance for the C.A. regional policies regarding MSME development.

In summary from the very subnational level, going up through national governments, and C.A. multilateral organizations for MSME support, up to the U.S. Government hemispheric policies, the HED-UTSA program addresses an actual need, and responds to policy considerations of major program stakeholders and therefore it is relevant.

6. Program Efficiency

Efficiency measures the outputs -qualitative and quantitative- in relation to the inputs. It assesses the extent to which aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results (or whether it achieved more results than expected with the same amount of resources). In other words, efficiency gauges how well program resources were used. Confronting resources assignment to their actual utilization allows for program efficiency evaluation.

The resources available for the project were time, money, people, knowledge, and technology and they were used as it is explained below:

The overall timeframe for the project was the two year period between September 15, 2011 and same date of 2013 during where all activities programmed were fully carried out (and some more), which showed a sensible use of time and scheduling practices.

UTSA had previous experience in developing the Mexican SBDC system in partnership with the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara, as well as in El Salvador, which became instrumental in implementing the experience both in Honduras and Costa Rica. Then, UTSA moved in a short period from “Consultas” to “Diplomados”. In Honduras the initial consulta was held on January 20, 2012 and the subsequent “Diplomado” in May-July 2012, resulting in 135 graduating participants. In Costa Rica the “consulta” was held on November 22, 2011 and the resulting “Diplomado” held between Feb 27 and April 26, 2013.

Subsequent events were offered in rapid succession, such as the installation of WebCATS tracking system, visits to SBA in Washington D.C (June 2012), attendance to ASBDC annual meeting (Sept. 2012), as well as the presentation of a second “Diplomado”(San Pedro Sula, July-Sept. 2013). These events contributed to reinforcing the enthusiasm for the SBDC project among government officials and all participating stakeholders.

The contractual budget for the SBDC Central America project was \$ 639,307 out of which \$545,000 came from HED grant, in addition to a contribution from UTSA of \$94,307 over the two-year plus implementation period. The major anticipated and expended funds were for a sub award of \$187,742 anticipated to CENPROMYPE. 98.48% of the budget was expended. The cost budgeted for CENPROMYPE Sub-award was not utilized in full as planned due to time constraints and scheduling conflicts for planned events and cost associated with such events.

The UTSA contractual budget was adhered to in spite of no provision in the budget for the additional “Diplomado” offered in San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

All records were kept following the financial management standards in accordance with UTSA established cost accounting policies and procedure. A separate account was established as

referenced on all HED Financial Expenditure Report under “Internal Reference 3” line (UTSA internal Acct: 26-3890-03).

All parties involved (UTSA & CYPROMYPE) complied with all applicable USAID financial regulations set forth on Sub-award Agreement Number HED065-9722-CAR-11-01 between American Council on Education & UTSA for the Higher Education for Development Program.

In summary, it can fairly be said that UTSA, with HED support, and CENPROMYPE collaboration, was an actively engaged, leading, and committed implementer that kept building up experience not only as a practitioner, but equally importantly as an outstanding promoter of the U.S. SBDC model. These features would certainly allow UTSA to keep going in the years to come, even with funders other than HED, if necessary.

As indicated in section three, attributing the good operational and managerial performance to a true “Partnership” becomes a more difficult task, as evidences found by this evaluation, showed the UTSA more as a good and experienced implementer -who was properly supported by HED- rather than a quotidian practice of co-management between the two of them as expected in a true partnership.

Key elements on UTSA’s agile performance, besides previous experience promoting the U.S. SBDC model abroad, were: i) the fact that it had developed a systematic, consistent, and proven methodology for transference, adaptation, and adoption of the SBDC model to other countries; ii) UTSA has a staff of experienced business counselors who not only are fully bilingual English-Spanish but, more importantly, are culturally understanding of C.A. countries’ particularities; iii) an appropriate gender balance in UTSA’s staff constitutes a subtle but significant advantage when addressing audiences with a noticeable high participation of women, professional women; iv) CENPROMYPE’s support, given its nature of a supra-national entity, helped The Program to gaining wider political acceptance in the region, and v) finally, although not least important, the existence of a favorable U.S. Government policy framework.

7. Program Effectiveness

Simply defined, effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives which, as per its constitutive document, were the following:

Overall Objective:

To create a network of small business assistance networks throughout Central America based on the proven U.S. SBDC model

Specific Objectives:

1. Obtain Stakeholder Support for the Adaptation of the SBDC Model in Central America.
2. Build Central American SBDC Capacity and Model Integrity
3. Create International Trade opportunities for Central American SBDCs Small Business clients.

A Review of the partnership's reported accomplishments against objectives was undertaken by means of the Project Performance Matrix shown below which takes into account a number of output indicators set forth by The Program constitutive document:

"Central American Small Business Development Center Partnership Program: Adapting and Replicating the Small Business Development (SBDC) Model throughout Central America" Project Performance Description (As of September 15, 2013)					
Strategic Objective 1 - Obtain Stakeholder Support for the Adaptation of the SBDC Model in Central America					
Activity	Country	Planned	Executed	Performance	Comments
Baseline Survey Report	Costa Rica, Honduras	1	yes	Basic survey	Undertaken by CENPROMYPE
Conduct training for 450 SBDC stakeholders during the "Pre-Consultas" and "Consultas" per year.	Costa Rica, Honduras	450 /year	125	Low on numbers, high on quality of attendees	High level stakeholders
Creation of a Central American SBDC Partnership Program packet	Costa Rica, Honduras	1	yes		
Central American SBDC Website section on the CENPROMYPE's website & SBDCGlobal.com websites;	Costa Rica, Honduras	1	yes		
Central American SBDC Website section on the SBDCGlobal.com websites;	Costa Rica, Honduras	1	yes		
Conducting one SBDC "Pre-Consultas" for each country to explain the Central American SBDC Partnership Program features and benefits and an overview of SBDC program costs and time lines	Costa Rica, Honduras	1 / country	yes		
Conducting 2 SBDC "Consultas" events held in-country	Costa Rica, Honduras	1/country	1/country		
Conduct two(2) SBDC Feasibility Surveys & Focus Groups, for feedback and buy-in from each "Consulta" with an average score of 85%;	Costa Rica, Honduras	2	2		
Development of one (1) MOU between CENPROMYPE and the U.S. ASBDC network		1	yes		
Development of one (1) MOU between CENPROMYPE Mexican Association of SBDCs		1	yes		
Development of three (3) national Central American SBDC networks signing MOU	Costa Rica, Honduras	3	0	Not undertaken	Modified by verbal agreement

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"Central American Small Business Development Center Partnership Program: Adapting and Replicating the Small Business Development (SBDC) Model throughout Central America" Project Performance Description (As of September 15, 2013)					
agreements with the U.S. Association of SBDCs with the goal of collaborating on small business assistance programs and services					
Two (2) Countries and CENPROMYPE SBDC professionals participating in the two U.S. Association of SBDCs Annual Conference	Costa Rica, Honduras	1/country	2	Good	
Creation of three (3) Pilot SBDC RFP packages prepared with host government/university administrators to launch country SBDC networks in three (3) Central American countries	Costa Rica Honduras	3	2		Modified by verbal agreement
Participation of fifty (50) Central American SBDC program stakeholders to visit the San Antonio SBDC to observe the U.S. SBDC model (25 per trip)	Costa Rica, Honduras	50	26		2 visits combined into 1 visit.
Participation of twenty (20) Central American SBDC program stakeholders to visit Washington DC to learn how SBA administers the SBDC program and how the U.S. Congress conducts oversight (10 per trip);	Costa Rica, Honduras	20	25		2 visits combined into 1 visit
Participating in two (2) annual Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas Summits with SME agency participants.	Costa Rica, Honduras	2	2		
Strategic Objective 2 - Build Central American SBDC Capacity and Model Integrity					
Activity	Country	Planned	Executed	Performance	Comments
Graduate 200 Central American SBDC stakeholders from the SBDC Counselor and Director "Diplomado" Training Program that includes the creation of SBDC Business Plans for each newly created pilot center (100/program);	Costa Rica Honduras	200	305		Additional diplomado held in San Pedro Sula
Updating and refining the SBDC Counselor and Director "Diplomado" Training Program curriculum for the CAFTA-DR countries;	Costa Rica, Honduras	1	yes		
Conduct two (2) SBDC Counselor and Director "Diplomado" Training Programs that each consist of five-modules and 120-hours of capacity building held in-region that have a participation of 300 personnel from institutions of higher-ed, SME ministries, NGOs and local government stakeholders (150/program);	Costa Rica, Honduras	2	Yes		Held additional diplomado in San Pedro Sula
Hosting of two (2) "Estancias" observational training visits of the UTSA SBDC program that each consist of one week by twenty-four (24) SME ministry staff/university administrators from each country who will oversee country SBDC networks to learn administrative systems (12/trip).	Costa Rica Honduras	2	No	Not conducted	Material included in diplomado in San Pedro Sula
Training 100 WebCATS operators on how to utilize the MIS database to optimize center performance and capture economic impact results;	Costa Rica, Honduras	100	88		Total of 2 training sessions
Acquiring and adapting one (1) Webcats software license for CENPROMYPE and Central American SBDC use that has tailored operating and economic impact report capabilities;	Costa Rica, Honduras	1	2		Acquired and updated for Honduras and Costa Rica
Creation of a Central American SBDC Economic Assessment model;	Costa Rica, Honduras	1	yes		Shared with both countries
Creation of one (1) Economic Impact Assessment model for annual evaluations of CENPROMYPE's affiliated SBDC networks;	Costa Rica, Honduras	1	yes		
Create pilot Central American SBDC	Costa Rica,	1	In process, not		

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"Central American Small Business Development Center Partnership Program: Adapting and Replicating the Small Business Development (SBDC) Model throughout Central America" Project Performance Description (As of September 15.2013)						
Accreditation Standards and procedures that ensures quality micro and small business assistance services and center management best practices on a regional basis	Honduras		yet completed			
Creation of a Regional SBDC Accreditation Committee within CENPROMYPE with the goal of developing Central American SBDC Accreditation Standards based on U.S., Mexican and regional best practices;	Costa Rica, Honduras	1	In process, not yet completed			
Creation of a Central American Association of SBDCs based on the U.S. ASBDC and Mexican Association of SBDCs model;	Costa Rica, Honduras	1	In process, not yet completed			
Creation of an Association Plan and governance model for CENPROMYPE to function as the association of SBDCs for a Central American regional basis	Costa Rica, Honduras	1	In process, not yet completed			
Strategic Objective 3 - Creating International Trade Opportunities for Central American SBDC Small Business Clients						
Train 390 Central American SBDC stakeholders on how to use SBDCGlobal.com to increase MSME exports	Costa Rica, Honduras	390	0	Training postponed		Clients are not ready for access
Develop a mechanism and protocol to connect Central American SBDCs to SBDCGlobal.com;	Costa Rica, Honduras	1	yes			Available when client ready
Conduct two (2) SBDCGlobal.com in-country conferences for 150 clients and counselors of the Central American SBDC network (75 per conference)	Costa Rica, Honduras	2	no			Postponed until clients are ready
Conduct twelve (12) webinars over 2 years for 240 SBDC counselors and clients on how to use of SBDCGlobal.com (20 per webinar).	Costa Rica, Honduras	12	6			Participation from Costa Rica, Honduras and 4 other countries

A detailed analysis of program performance under each strategic objective follows:

7.1. Objective 1: "Obtain Stakeholder Support for the Adaption of the SBDC Model in Central America"

This objective was comprised of 17 specific activities, most of which did were carry out as planned; among them, certainly, the key ones. Major considerations regarding program effectiveness in achieving the first specific objective are the following:

The number of countries to be fully implemented was decreased from the original contract, through a verbal agreement from 3 to 2; Honduras and Costa Rica. Paradoxically, whereas a third country was eliminated (Guatemala), "Consultas" were held in Panama and Dominican Republic. This change although timely agreed by the parties, constitutes a point of reflection, in terms of project design and implementation, as it makes no programmatic sense to eliminate one country from full implementation, whereas including two more to have only Phase 1: Initiation.

What happened is that during this project, UTSA got another grant in which the rest of program activities: transference, implementation, consolidation and internationalization for The Dominican Republic and Panama (along with the five phases in Guatemala) were included. That grant (Grant No. 2) is not included in this evaluation.

A better project management practice would have been one that comprises: one project, belonging to one grant, to develop the full set of activities needed to achieve the stated goal. To better make this point should be reminded that, due to U.S. Government fiscal difficulties during the second semester of 2013, there was a serious possibility for HED to get no funds at all from USAID to continue the transference of the U.S. SBDC model to other countries.

Consequently, developing three (3) national Central American SBDC networks signing MOU agreements with the U.S. Association of SBDCs was a curtailed activity not only because there were no three countries fully covered by The Program, but also, because program implementation of both Costa Rica and Honduras CDEs is at a too early stage to call them “national networks”, and as such, to undertake international cooperation agreements. In contrast, CENPROMYPE, with program support did sign its own MOU with both the Mexican and the American Associations of SBDCs.

Otherwise this program’s objective was overall well met by UTSA in every category excepting a small decrease in targeted attendees for the WebCATS webinars for 100 to 88. Likewise, the targeted trips to San Antonio and to Washington to visit the SBA were consolidated from 2 to 1 trip to each location. The number of participants remained close to target.

Program effectiveness in guiding development policy to support the creation of the SBDC model with key SME program stakeholders -government, private sector, and higher education- can be assessed by asserting that, by design, it impacted much more the government than the private sector or the academia. In fact, UTSA’s transferring methodology is focused in national governments as its major recipient, and it relied in governments as the leading policy maker.

The Program, at the C.A. level, as well as individually in Honduras, and in Costa Rica, succeeded in generating awareness regarding the SBDC model and its benefits to the MSMEs, and the overall economy, as it was influential in decisions made by Costa Rica’s MEIC and Honduras’ SIC to take the SBDC methodology as the model of choice by their respective governments for assisting the MSME sector. The Partnership assisted both countries in passing national legislation as an appropriate political framework in favor of SMEs, including Business Development Services.

Likewise it awoke interest in the academia, which participated in the “Consultas” as well in the works for adapting the U.S. SBDC model to local realities. The extent in which the private sector participated in the initial stage differs by country, and seems to be more significant in Honduras due the fact that there the fledging CDE-Mipyme have resulted from a local organizational

solution called “Unión de Socios” (a sort of private association) regulated by a Social Sector national law, which promotes social actors such as professional, civic associations, workers-owned enterprises, and cooperatives which within that framework are taking part on funding, decision-making, and Centers’ utilization, whereas in Costa Rica, they are more bureaucratic in nature as the CREAPYMES are made up by the MEIC, INA and PROCOMER, all central government institutions.

Overall, The Program performed very well with regards to its first specific objective: It generated interest, support, commitment, and decision-making within the C.A. governments it approached: at a multilateral level through CEMPROMYPE, and also Costa Rica, and Honduras. Moreover, with the caveat made elsewhere, it has positively reached Panama, and the Dominican Republic.

By generating awareness, interest, and support by major stakeholders, The Program created conditions to undertake its following major objective: Creating the Centers.

7.2. Objective 2: “Build Central American SBDC Capacity and Model Integrity”

This objective headed towards effectively having Centers for MSMEs services created in Costa Rica and Honduras, while generating local capacities for creating, managing, and operating such centers following the U.S. SBDC model.

Out of the thirteen activities of this objective, the most important ones were the three “Diplomados”, held in San José, Tegucigalpa, and San Pedro Sula. Formatted as instructional opportunities, these events comprising four three-day-long modules, within a period of three months went beyond a mere teaching-learning process to be an interactive work of visioning, strategizing, goal-setting, and work-planning for the future Centers guided by the USTA staff.

Furthermore, the “Diplomados” allowed for sharing experiences from other countries such as Mexico, El Salvador and, definitely, the U.S., while serving the purpose of training stakeholders as potential Centers’ administrators or future small business counselors; as “Diplomados” included instruction on managerial, technical, and operational matters, as well as the practical aspects of customer service, being wrapped up with a presentation of the operational plans for future Centers, before a graduation ceremony. Out of 305 participants in the “Diplomados”, a total of 242 participants obtained their SBDC Diplomado Training Certificate.

By the end of the project, in September 2013, it had helped the launching of three CDE-MIPYMES in Honduras: at the Golfo de Fonseca Region (May, 2013), at Valles de Olancho (Jun, 2013), and Valle de Sula Region (July, 2013).

In Costa Rica, however, the CREAPYMES were not created as a direct result of The Program; instead pre-existing regional offices of the MEIC, thanks to The Program started being steered

towards a sort of alignment to the U.S. SBDC model as most of their employees attended the “Diplomados”. Unlike in Honduras where all the Centers respond to the same institutional solution (Union de Socios), in Costa Rica, there are three categories of CREAPYMES: Inter-institutional (6), municipal (22), and hosted by private organizations (3); among them the inter-institutional ones that result from a collaboration among MEIC, INA and PROCOMER, seem to be the ones with a greater potential to actually follow the U.S. SBDC model, whereas the Municipal CREAPYMES are thought more as points of initial information and reference for MSMEs and entrepreneurs than anything else.

Besides the “Diplomados” other activities for the second objective of The Program were obtaining WebCATS/NeoCATS licenses for Costa Rica and Honduras to record and measure counseling activities, training activities, and capturing economic impact results generated by clients. Complementary two training sessions with 88 participants were conducted to teach them how to use the database.

However, The Program was not able to implement all of the ambitious project design due to shortcomings of both the implementing partnership and/or the receiving countries.

The two “Estancias” observational training visits hosted by the USTA’s SBDC were not conducted due to the austerity policies of the Program beneficiary countries which prevented their travel to San Antonio, Texas to participate on the observational training visits to be hosted by UTSA.

While the UTSA team developed the SBDC Accreditation Standards Guide based on the U.S., Mexican and regional best practices and shared the guide with Central American countries, the countries are not yet ready to implement them, and so have postponed their adoption. Similar reasons have postponed the creation of a national/regional SBDC Association which when implemented at the appropriate time will be beneficial for all countries in the C.A. region.

Program’s success regarding its second objective (Build Central American SBDC Capacity and Model Integrity) merits the following evaluative considerations that highlight differences between the U.S. SBDC model and the practical feasibility of its adoption in the countries.

- As mentioned in section three, The Program holds the U.S. SBDC model as the one to follow consequently preserving its characteristics, as explained there, makes up a key element of program effectiveness’ evaluation. Such elements are: i) centrality of universities as host institutions, ii) collaboration academia, government, private sector, iii) local origin and local orientation, iv) gratuity of services, v) emphasis in long-term relationship with clients in order to causing economic impact, and vi) economic impact being permanently recorded and quantified. Program effectiveness in achieving Model integrity is analyzed as follows:

- As it relied in CEMPROMYPE, a multilateral organization, by design The Program was meant to partnering mainly with national governments and so, even if the academia has been invited and taken into account, its role is rather secondary in terms of creation and operation of the Centers both in Costa Rica and Honduras. Furthermore, in both countries traditionally Universities have been away of roles related to entrepreneurship promotion and/or business services supply.
- Even though, by design, this project has relied in collaboration with central government ministries in charge of MSMEs policy, it is sensible to wonder whether, in terms of model integrity, the BDCs should not been better created and operated by the national entities for workforce development, INA in Costa Rica and INFOP in Honduras, which have more resources, regional presence throughout the countries, and higher technical and institutional suitability to provide business development services, than policy-making organizations such as MEIC and SIC. This kind of institutional solution would not necessarily prevent the Ministries from keeping their policy-making role, but would grant more operational possibilities to the Centers. This thinking is valid not only for these two countries, but for most of Central and South American countries, some of which have had long-lasting experiences that validate this option.
- In both Costa Rica and Honduras, at different extent, political uncertainty is a major burden to stable adoption of the Program and the long-term Centers viability.
- In Costa Rica the legal and institutional framework for small business development is quite complex and bureaucratized so, even if currently may exist a favorable political willingness towards MSMEs development, such framework is still a major obstacle for the government to be a provider of practical and functional business services, beyond an existing fiscal incentive to small businesses.
- In Costa Rica, the fact that only ten years after the adoption of the MSME framework law, the country embarks itself in a program of MSMEs Business Development Centers is a not-so-strong indicator of the country's public policy for MSMEs development.
- Although not a fact tested by this evaluation, it repeatedly heard during interviews that Costa Rica have cultural norms that make up a challenging entrepreneurship environment, as some analysts have also point out (De Salvo 2011). If so, that would make difficult operating schemes of public-private collaboration for small business development.
- Likewise, Costa Rican universities are not a source of new businesses; they are in general more focused in educating students to get a good job, instead of taking risks to be entrepreneurs. This is still true, although it has shown some positive change in recent years (entrepreneurship.org)

- U.S. SBDCs are known for having stable administrative and counseling staffs; which due political and financial reasons may not be the case in C.A. countries, and so, for them to achieve model integrity could be a challenge, particularly for the Municipal CREAPYMEs in Costa Rica.
- Likewise, in Costa Rica, the inter-institutional CREAPYMEs seem to be nothing more than a place for MEIC, INA and PROCOMER to be together in the same place, rather than organic units with some sort of autonomous existence. They do not have a Director or any kind of locally-generated board of Directors.
- One additional consideration is the different kind of government constitutional structure, organization, and functioning of the U.S. compared to most Latin American countries since whereas the former is a Federal government, the latter (with the exception of Mexico, Brazil and Argentina) all are Central governments. This difference explains why the idea of SBDC networks is more natural and necessary to the U.S. as it is comprised by fifty states with a great deal of autonomy.

Even though model integrity is an essential component of the program, and in many respects a key strategic objective thereof, its feasibility faces significant obstacles of legal and bureaucratic nature. According to the Doing Business 2013 report, Costa Rica occupied an overall 110 position in business facilitation. Costa Rica held the 128 rank for starting a business, taking 60 days and 12 procedures. Likewise it ranked 125 for paying taxes and 128 for dealing with construction permits and enforcing contracts (World Bank: Doing Business 2013). It ranked below regional neighbors such as Panama, Guatemala and Belize, and that is why Presidential Decree 36.024 of 2010, created a Presidential Council for Competitiveness and Innovation making one of its top priorities to work in regulatory reform and “red tape” streamlining (competitividad.go.cr)

7.3. Objective 3: “Creating International Trade Opportunities for Central American SBDC small business clients.”

Despite its name, this program’s component was more oriented to information systems and training thereof, rather than actual international trade activities. They were intended to boost utilization of an existing web-based platform called SBDCGlobal.com

The program did develop the capacity in SBDCGlobal.com to connect national SBDC networks in Central America that could include individual national pages and customizable international trade portals for each country; however, this will be a future development once the countries have successfully implemented the SBDC centers and they are ready to pursue international opportunities.

Likewise, The Program undertook online educational activities for graduates of the “Diplomados” where 444 individual participated in webinars on topics such as “Habits for Business Success”, “Marketing for Microenterprises”, “Business Counseling: Actions and Challenges” which although certainly appropriate as general training opportunities, have little to do with generating international trade opportunities for Central American small businesses. International best practices in trade promotion include outgoing trade missions, international trade shows, international market intelligence, trade-oriented diplomacy, export skills-developing programs specialized in MSMEs, specialized public financing for exports, among many others.

In summary, effectiveness for this component was particularly low due to lacking of immediate relevance of these activities to generate international trade, and also because they relied on the existence of SBDC networks in Honduras and Costa Rica, which still are not existent as such.

7.4. Program Effectiveness according to its beneficiaries

As stated in section three, the major beneficiaries of The Program were three hundred participants of the “Diplomados”, and especially those 242 who actually graduated from them. In order to further evaluate the short term Program’s impact and its potential sustainability the evaluation deployed an online survey through the web-based service: SurveyMonkey.com. It was presented to participants of all in the three “Diplomados” in Honduras and Costa Rica.

Survey characteristics were: i) deployed online through Surveymonkey.com, ii) survey questionnaire is shown in Annex 6, iii) available online for response between Nov 20 and 26. 2013, iv) invitation to participate in the survey sent by email, iv) after some cleaning of email addresses for redundancy and inconsistency, 278 emails were sent out of which 58 bounced back from the system, v) 51 responses were eventually received.

Demographic data for the respondents are: i) 18% was from Costa Rica and 82% from Honduras, which is proportional to the number of Costa Ricans who participated in the “Diplomados” (42/300). ii) 55% of the respondents were female and 45% male, which is consistent with female participation in the “Diplomados”, iii) Type of Organization: 34% of respondents were from Government, 36% from the private sector, 26 % from academia and 2 % from the financial sector. There were no responses from the NGO/social sector.

The survey was sent to “Diplomado” trainees since many of them are important decision-makers in their governmental agency, private sector company, or academic institution and would have considerable influence in the future evolution of the SBDC program in their country. The response rate and content would also be a measurement of the effectiveness of the “Diplomado” in promoting commitment of the participants to the implementation of the SBDC program.

The respondents think that The Program:

- It has contributed to increase the Government commitment to support MSMEs development. 87 % agreed or totally agreed with that statement, which means that the awareness created by the project has been effective in motivating government entities and dynamizing public policies and actions toward small businesses.
- In assessing whether The Program was an innovative undertaking that brought new elements to existing policies or programs in favor of SMEs, the answers were mixed as while 58% of the respondents agreed that the U.S. SBDC model transference made a positive contribution to the current status of policies and programs for small business, some 40% were not convinced that the SBDC model as presented in the “Diplomado” offered much to existing country programs. This response might be consistent with the fact that the creation of CDE-Mipymes in Honduras and transformation of CREAPYMES in Costa Rica is a process at very early stage and so, major characteristics of the U.S. SBDC model, such as client tracking, long-term relationship with clients, and economic impact monitoring are still to be implemented, as well as the very concept of national networks of BDCs.
- An element of The Program that generated a high level of appreciation was the opportunity it brought to Costa Rica and Honduras, to better know of other countries’ experiences with BDCs for small businesses. 85% of respondents agreed or totally agreed that the program has been instrumental in bringing benchmarking opportunities from which to learn for implementation purposes. Mainly from the U.S. model but also from, perhaps more applicable experiences, such as the ones in El Salvador, and Mexico.
- Regarding participation of business, and private sector in general, in the model’s transference to their countries, there is a positive impression as over 74% of respondents believe such participation has been substantial. This is an answer in which the difference between the transferring and adoption stages must be taken into account, as evidences from the field showed in Costa Rica that participation of private sector in creating or hosting a BDC (individual businesses or associations thereof) is rather scarce, as indicated by the very public institutional nature of CREAPYMES.
- In similar fashion, respondents’ perception about model integrity in terms of government-university-private sector partnership seems higher than reality as 63% of them believe the U.S. SBDC partnership model is closely followed by their countries, whereas in practice universities in Costa Rica and Honduras do not play the central role they have in operation and customer service that characterize the U.S. SBDCs. This in spite that they have actively supported The Program in its initial stages.

- Regarding The Program accomplishments in creating international trade opportunities for MSMEs in Costa Rica and Honduras, 62.5% of respondents do not believe such opportunities were created or just they know nothing about them. Nonetheless 16.6% of respondents believe the contrary. The evaluation for its part did not find evidences of actual international trade transactions attributable to The Program.
- An outstanding 93% of respondents agreed that The Program brought to them, to their countries, new techniques and methods of attention to MSMEs. This response, however, must be taken with some caution because, as a number of “Diplomado”-takers pointed out during this evaluation interviews, it lacked training on specific business consulting techniques such as various diagnosis methodologies, organizational, financial or operational analysis, sectorial analysis, market research, or training in intervention tools such as information technology, e-commerce, franchises, human resources management, standardization, entrepreneurship, family businesses, etc. The actual difference between being a truly small business counselor and working as mere distributor of resources information still need to be proven.
- The above consideration, regarding supply of business development services, becomes of greater significance when the survey asked whether the BDCs are effectively responding to MSMEs actual needs. Respondents’ opinions are sharply divided as about one half of them believe those needs are not been fulfilled (or they do not know), whereas the other half of respondent think MSMEs are being well served by BDS’ providers.

The survey included a couple of questions regarding the Centers’ sustainability (The Program’s sustainability is addressed in section eight of this report). The first one was whether the national government big role in the Centers’ creation, funding, and operation could be seen as a Centers’ weakness in the long run. The majority (2/3) in both countries responded that they do not know or they believe government big role is a Center’s weakness in the long run; only 4% thought exactly the opposite.

In parallel there is some optimism that the BDCs will mature over time; as 52% of respondents believe that there is a high probability (60% or more) than in the next five years the Centers will become a well-established, the most important, mechanism of assistance for MSMEs in their countries. Nonetheless the other 48% while supportive of the SBDC program, are taking a “wait and see” position.

7.5. CREAPYMEs and CDE MIPYMEs Effectiveness.

Effectiveness of CDE MIPYMEs might be boosted by the fact that they are managed by the “Union de Socios” a body that is more local, better attuned to subnational realities surrounding them, and better connected to local economic development priorities than CREAPYMEs. The

Centers have staff only recently been trained in the “Diplomado”, few staff members have advanced skills to assist small businesses. However, they are skilled enough to undertake counseling activities at this stage and have a strong personal interest in improving their abilities through training to assist small business clients.

CREAPYMES’ expansion in Costa Rica seems more driven by bureaucratic and political considerations (particularly with the 22 Municipal CREAPYMES) than by local development circumstances. In general, the fact that CREAPYMES are not a new solution, but a long-ago established one, guided by other priorities, makes them more difficult to adapt to “a new model”. As stated before, albeit the public policy framework in Costa Rica for the Centers seems solid, articulated, and functional, in practice IT is surrounded by a significant lack of experience in daily delivery of counseling (and related business development services) to small businesses as well in establishing a durable relationship with them, as opposed to mere delivery of information regarding resources available.

The overall framework to analyze both CDE MIPYMEs and CREAPYMES is the fact that they: i) are a fairly new experiment, ii) are in the process of organizing themselves under a model, the U.S. SBDC model, that they are just learning about, iii) during a critical year, 2013, they are surrounded by a framework of political uncertainty of some sort due to presidential elections, and they, iv) do not constitute a national network yet and, v) at the time of this evaluation it is too premature to ponder the Centers’ effectiveness, and that is why both in Honduras and Costa Rica, by the end of 2013 there will be an initial self-evaluation effort led by the central governments, to determine how they are doing.

8. Program Sustainability

Program sustainability determines whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Sustainability can be assessed from financial, economic, institutional, political, technical and technological standpoints; likewise environmental sustainability, although usually highly regarded, is not directly related to this project, and thus it is not included in the evaluation.

With regard to political sustainability there are several aspects to consider: This program is aligned to “Pathways to Prosperity” a policy initiative that include Belize, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, and the United States; that has Brazil and Trinidad and Tobago with observer status and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and that means that it has broad policy context that is favorable for the UTSA to keep working on adapting and replicating the U.S. SBDC model through Central America, the Caribbean and South America.

Within the U.S. there is also an auspicious policy-framework as this Program is essentially articulated to a U.S. Department of State initiative: The Small Business Network of the Americas SBNA and so, at least for the duration of the Obama Administration, it is quite possible that interest will remain in extending the U.S. SBDC model to more and more countries of the Western Hemisphere. For the immediate future HED-UTSA have achieved continuity through a second grant to continue activities in Panama and the Dominican Republic, and implement the whole cycle in Guatemala.

Nevertheless, as The Program is funded by USAID, it is vulnerable to the critical fiscal situation of the U.S. Government, which already has threatened to cut funds availability for HED projects.

Another aspect of political sustainability refers to Costa Rica and Honduras as recipients of The Program. As mentioned in chapter seven: Effectiveness, stakeholders pointed out that still there are some political vulnerabilities for The Program continued adoption in both countries due to electoral periods, potential bureaucratic changes, as well as potential fiscal complications. The high reliance of The Program on the central government in Costa Rica and Honduras, casts certain shadows over model integrity and program sustainability in the mid and long run.

Closely related is the institutional sustainability in aspects already mentioned: i) the large role of the national government in both countries, ii) the distance between the U.S. SBDC model and the adopted solutions in Costa Rica and Honduras regarding the small role of Universities (or the workforce development institutions) as axis of the Centers, and also the institutional nature of the Centers (CREAPYMEs y “Unión de Socios”) still needs to be proven.

On the technical aspect, sustainability seems promising since that is precisely the strongest part of the work done by UTSA. It has left a good number of trained professionals who understand the U.S. SBDC model, know its particularities, and applicability to their countries, while they are in positions where they might work in delivering support to MSMEs.

Technological sustainability, in this Program represented by the potential of WebCATS/NeoCATS, SBDCGlobal.com, and the so-called “Virtual Academy” brings an enormous potential, providing that they reach full deployment, daily utilization, permanent actualization, and their users are constantly trained to get out of them the more updated, comprehensive, and useful information for business decision-making, as well as for Center’s performance monitoring, and economic impact tracking. One caveat in this regard is that the aforementioned systems are licensed web-based software, and therefore, in both Costa Rica and Honduras, it must be decided a way to keep paying for them.

In summary it can be said that Political sustainability is significant at hemispheric level. At national level it depends of the specific country but might be little more fragile, although, both in Costa Rica and Honduras exists a policy wise favorable environment. Institutional sustainability, in turn, depends very much of the policy and political environment of the country, which likewise affects availability of public funds for program activities, including technical

9. Conclusions, Recommendations, Lessons Learned

9.1 Conclusions, lessons learned

Throughout this report the evaluation called this initiative “The Program”, rather than “The Partnership”. It is because when it comes to attract allies, promote collaboration, and raise funds the name “Partnership” is quite instrumental. On the contrary, when the job calls for gauging performance and effectiveness, it turns to be a quite indefinable concept. From a US Government policy (SBNA and “Pathways”) standpoint, the partnership seemed to be between DOS/USAID and HED; from a project design point of view, it appeared that it was between HED and the UTSA; and from an implementation aspect it seemed to be between the UTSA and CENPROMYPE. Eventually, the evaluation guided by its own Terms of Reference, opted to be focused on implementation by considering DOS/USAID-HED the funders, UTSA the implementer, and CENPROMYPE an implementation ally.

The “Central American Small Business Development Center Partnership Program: Adapting and Replicating the Small Business Development (SBDC) Model throughout Central America” is a quite pertinent initiative from whichever side it is seen: political, policy and/or programmatic. It is attuned to U.S. hemispheric strategic interests; it is aligned to a policy initiative adopted by a number of countries through the three Americas, as well as multilateral regional and subregional institutions; and hence it has been well received by the beneficiary countries (mostly Costa Rica and Honduras, Panama and the Dominican Republic), and a number of other countries to come. It is a relevant program because it is meant to support a couple of vital element of any economy: MSMEs and entrepreneurship; likewise, it seeks to head them toward international trade opportunities. It is a programmatically relevant initiative because it intends to share with other countries a proven resource for MSMEs development: the U.S. SBDC model.

At this point of The Program, its relevance is still considerable judging by the amount of time, effort, attention, policy-making, financial resources and institutional activity that the recipient C.A. governments have devoted to it. There are some caveats to be pondered regarding the actual transferability of the U.S. SBDC model with its U.S. standards (model integrity) to other countries, as well as concerning the application by the UTSA of the same methodology, in identical fashion country to country. Although these considerations exceed the scope of this evaluation, they must be given serious consideration.

From a program design point of view the five-phases (initiation, transference, implementation, consolidation, and internationalization) of the transferring methodology is a logic process, an experience-based, well-structured proposition that easily entices new beneficiary countries. However, for the number, nature, timeliness, and level of effort required, it seems a too ambitious, unrealistic endeavor for a two-year period, even more given that it is implemented in three or four countries at the same time; particularly when considering that many of those activities are not really in the hands of the UTSA, the implementing organization.

Usually Program effectiveness is highly dependent to its stakeholders' roles. In this case: U.S. DOS and USAID's perform as policy-maker and Program funder respectively; The UTSA's acts as know-how holder and Program implementer; CEMPROMYPE worked as a regional catalyzer; HED acted essentially as a grant-manager; and the countries' governments were the program recipients. In this context, the role of two major stakeholders (HED and the recipient countries' governments) leaves some room for discussion regarding model integrity, as follows:

HED Mission states: "Higher Education for Development diversifies and expands the engagement of higher education in international development, focusing on human capital development and institutional strengthening necessary for economic growth and social advancement" (<http://www.hedprogram.org/>), as such, this evaluation -although not hired to evaluate HED's performance in this Program- did not find any evidence (besides the obvious grant managing role) that HED was working in this program in a mission-driven way that leveraged the role of universities -U.S. and/or foreign ones- in assuring or reinforcing the U.S. SBDC model integrity. None of The Program strategic objectives or activities is specifically directed to that purpose.

Likewise, again in terms of model integrity, the central governments large role as main stakeholders in the recipient countries is debatable, to say the least: It is natural that a program like this, which policy wise is backed by the DOS, funded by USAID, and supported by CEMPROMYPE looks for governments as their natural counterparts; however, the universities' central role within the U.S. SBDC model happens for many reasons as opposed of a, hypothetically, Federal Government-ran program for small business services; and those reasons (politics, partisanship, bureaucracy, budgetary issues, etc.) are similarly present in foreign governments, and might impact negatively model transferring at its later stages (implementation, consolidation and internationalization). Both in the U.S and abroad, universities tend to have certain degree of autonomy, prestige, and independence from politics that potentially make them a better choice than regular government agencies to host a BDC. No wonder The Program is supported by the American Council of Education through its program called Higher Education for Development HED.

Pondering The Program effectiveness can be a very complex endeavor. The initial stages (initiation and transferring) are pretty straightforward; they are essentially awareness-raising and training activities: UTSA is clearly adroit at doing them. Nonetheless, in the way The Program currently operates, responsibilities start diffusing at later stages, as they might demand policy, law, and government organization changes, and so effectiveness in the mid and long-run may decline significantly. In other words, by program design, the further the stage the program is in at certain country, the less effective it becomes.

Additionally, it should be a concern that as the HED-UTSA (DOS-USAID) initiative expands to more and more countries, it risks to ending up being a string of "Consultas" and "Diplomados" throughout the three Americas, but the actual hemispheric network of networks of

internationalized SBDCs never will come to a full realization, and model integrity ends up in the “wish-thinking” room. Likewise, there is a risk that while the UTSA is jumping from one country to the next, model transferring might become a “cookie-cutter” process, insufficiently focused in the critical phases of implementation, consolidation and internationalization according to the specific conditions of each country.

As important as CEMPROMYPEs’ catalyzing role has been for the adoption of the U.S. SBDC model, it is circumscribed to Central America. An equivalent operational support might not exist elsewhere, and therefore, UTSA’s implementing abilities in other countries might become a critical factor for The Program effectiveness. This should be a crucial concern for program expansion to other countries such as Colombia, Brazil or Chile, that are larger, count with a stronger tradition of policy and programs (private, public and public-private) for small business development than C.A.; have created themselves “Models” of attention that have been adopted by other countries; where private sector organizations may have larger budgets than the government for business development services, and the role of the central government has been circumscribed, by historic experience, to policy-making and program funding. All these considerations must be taken into careful account for program design and implementation in countries to come.

Another key activity of The Program is the creation of national networks of BDCs in Costa Rica and Honduras following the U.S. model. The U.S. SBDC Association (America’s SBDC network: asbdc-us.org) resulted of many years of SBDC’s interaction nationwide and has become an advocacy institution whose mission is: “to represent the collective interest of our members by promoting, informing, supporting and continuously improving the SBDCs”. In order to materialize said purpose, The Program proposed agreements (MOU) between individual BDCs to create national associations of Centers which in Costa Rica’s case makes not much sense as the most important CREAPYMEs were created and are hosted by one entity: the national government, a fact that would made such association redundant and unnecessary. In other words, organizations and national associations thereof are not usually created simultaneously. It is a clear and identified need, over the years, what drives organizations to group themselves around an association. In this case, then, having MOU to create national associations of CREAPYMEs or CDE-Mipymes might not be more that a great statement of intention without major practical implications in the short term.

“Create International Trade opportunities for Central American SBDC Small Business clients” is a great statement as a Program Strategic Objective, and a laudable ultimate purpose. However, The Program, in this area, circumscribed itself to training activities related to SBDCGlobal.com steered mostly toward diplomado-takers, rather than actual small business owners or entrepreneurs. This Program component lacked classic international trade promotional activities such as market research, opportunities identification, business roundtables, trade fair or shows, etc., which are the actual sales-generating ones. As designed by The Program, activities related to SBDCGlobal.com could have been included as part of the second objective

titled: “Build Central American SBDC capacity and model integrity” without affecting The Program structure.

The foregoing consideration highlights one of the major program design weaknesses: it shows a noticeable lack of involvement of the MSMEs themselves throughout all program stages; they were very indirect beneficiaries of the Program but not an active stakeholder thereof.

Finally, although Cross-cutting considerations were not part of this evaluation SOW, there is one positively outstanding in this Program: Gender integration. Laudably, it has counted with a very active participation, often majoritarian, of women throughout. Women of all sorts of life: from humble -but committed- participants in “Unión de Socios”, all the way up through high level officials, even Ministers. And that is true also for both countries and the UTSA team.

9.1 Recommendations

Based on the evaluation Terms of Reference, documentation consulted, field trips, interviews and survey, as well as the long experience of the evaluation team, and having a forward-thinking perspective, the following recommendations are presented with the assumption that the ultimate goal, major stakeholders, and program components will remain essentially unchanged:

The Program:

- Based on current experience with the various phases of model transferring, the program should seek a better balance between the initial stages and the final ones. It is clear that The Program is successful in carrying on the initiation and transference phases, but a greater involvement is needed in the adoption process through the implementation, consolidation and internationalization process whose effectiveness needs to be greatly improved.
- Particular attention should be granted to the adaptation process as it involves, country by country, some sort of political, legal, organizational, administrative, and cultural expertise. For UTSA having bilingual, cultural aware and expert SBDC counselors working on the SBDC expansion project is a must; but it is not enough when it has to deal with more than thirty countries in the LAC Region. The UTSA should develop some sort of in-house expertise in such areas, to enrich its capacity building skills and, by the way, its own International Trade Center.
- Just as it is customary for the U.S. SBDCs to do with their clients, The Program, namely UTSA and HED, should establish and cultivate a long-term relationship with their clients: the countries, and their networks of Business Development Centers.

- The above purpose may be pursued by not only including new countries in every new grant to be implemented, but also at least one country that was implemented in a previous grant to be followed up. That is to say that from now on new grants should include a fourth strategic objective: “Guarantee SBNA long-term sustainability, by following up countries already supported”.
- So far the Program is a supply-side heavily oriented one: It seeks to create and develop centers, associations, networks, collaborations, staff, information systems, and so on; but it lends little attention to the demand side of the business development services market. It does not work directly with MSMEs, nor does it include mechanisms to promote, qualify, articulate, and engage such demand. The assumption that by creating the offer, the demand will come is a flawed and costly one, and so, The Program must make sure that at each new country from the very beginning, the “pre-consultas”, MSMEs and entrepreneurs are taking into active consideration and that involves to engage individual business leaders, MSMEs associations, cooperatives, and all sorts of organizations (many belonging to the social sector) that serve small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- In the same direction the international trade component of the program should be given content and activities that go beyond getting SBDCGlobal.com readiness to receive connection from this country or the next.
- The program should define its own sustainability strategy in the mid and long run in terms of program design, funding and implementation. That strategy must consider not only the process of creating more and more SBDCs, or networks thereof, but also counting with means to make sure that them will keep existing in beyond the two-year period of a USAID grant.

The Stakeholders

- “Model Integrity” should not be assumed or taken for granted. The program should decide, whether such integrity refers mainly to Centers’ information systems, operational and administrative practices, counselor’s work scopes, etc.; if model integrity refers to the praised partnership university-government-private sector; or if the centrality of the universities in the model is the utmost feature to be pursued. Or, indeed, the extent in which these considerations are relatively important to each other. This is not a rhetorical question; answers to it (or lack thereof) should determine the very nature of “Pre-Consultas”, “consultas”, “diplomados” and, most importantly the identity of main stakeholders in each country.
- In assuring model integrity and a stronger role of universities in the U.S. and abroad, HED should play a more active role, beyond mere grant managing. As per its

institutional mission HED has the possibility to attract universities' interest to host Centers, just like in the U.S. It seems reasonable to think that active networks of universities through the three Americas, promoted by HED, would leverage possibilities for networks of SBDC in the respective countries.

- The program should ponder the extent in which expanding to new countries by having the government as main partner is favorable in the long run to achieving the ultimate goal of creating a network of small business assistance networks throughout the LAC region.
- The UTSA should start formally and systematically documenting experiences of adaptation and adoption of the U.S. SBDC model as a way to foster capacity building: Not only its own, but also the capacity of its current and future partners.

9.3 Dissemination Recommendation

It is recommended that besides major program stakeholders (DOS, USAID, HED, UTSA, CENPROMYPE, MEIC and SIC), in particular those persons listed in Annex 3, this report somehow should be discussed with Universities both in Honduras and Costa Rica, as well with the respective institutions of workforce development: INA and INFOP in those countries. Likewise it is suggested an effort of internal discussion at HED and the ACE to define a comprehensive U.S. Universities' strategy towards The Program, beyond USAID grants.

Annex No. 1: Evaluation Scope of Work

The purpose of this evaluation is to:

- 1) Evaluate the partnership's design and implementation model.
- 2) Assess the partnership's performance and contribution to output level results.
- 3) Document major management practices, challenges, and lessons learned.
- 4) Provide recommendations to partnership institutions, HED, USAID and DOS on strategies, possible adjustments to the design and specific actions to ensure sustainable achievement of long-term objectives

To meet the objectives of this assignment, the Consultants will undertake the following activities:

Activities related to objective 1: Evaluation of Implementation Model

- 1) Review and document the SBDC model used in this partnership and its contextualization for implementation in each country.
- 2) Articulate the evolved model as implemented, including partnership arrangements and designation of roles related to implementation.

Activities related to objective 2: Performance

- 1) Review the partnership's reported accomplishments against objectives as stated in sub award agreement, work plans, targets, progress reports, and stakeholder interviews and evaluate, quantitatively and qualitatively, their relevance, to the U.S. government development strategy.
- 2) Assess the effectiveness of partnership management practices, implementation strategy, and implementation in achieving the following:
 - a. Effectiveness of guiding policy development to support the creation of the SBDC model with key
 - b. SME program stakeholders – government, private sector and higher education;
 - c. Quality and adequacy program services, particularly the quality of SBDC courses and training programs, and their alignment with local economic development needs, including creating international trade opportunities for host country SBDC small business clients;
 - d. SBDC staff capacity to provide technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs in light of changes in host country government policy;
 - e. Effectiveness of client-activity tracking systems to monitor and measure SBDC center performance; and
 - f. Effectiveness of the partnership in jointly managing and coordinating The Programmatic and administrative aspects of training logistics, monitoring activities, and financial responsibilities.

Activities related to objective 3: Issues, lessons learned and follow up Actions

- 1) Identify lessons learned.
- 2) Provide general conclusions arising from the review of the entire partnership cycle.
- 3) Summarize challenges that remained unresolved or require further action by the partnership.

Activities related to objective 4: Strategy and sustainability

- 1) Assess the extent to which partnership achievements and outcomes are sustainable and appraise the potential for partnership sustainability after the cessation of HED funding.
- 2) Recommend strategies and potential steps to effectively strengthen systems and policies to continue and expand the capacity of the Honduran and Costa Rican governments in SBDC model development.

Expected Outputs and Deliverables

- 1) An evaluation methodology that includes:
 - a. Work plan and timeline.
 - b. Methodology and data collection plan.
 - c. Draft data collection tools (questionnaires, interview guides, list of documents, etc.).
 - d. Plan for structured data analysis and interpretation of findings.
- 2) Evaluation report that will include the following specific deliverables to be submitted and reviewed by HED at different time intervals:
 - a. Report's outline specifying structure of the report to include, at a minimum:
 - Methodology and data collection process
 - Design and implementation model (objective 1)
 - Partnership performance assessment (objective 2)
 - Issues, lessons learned and follow up actions (objective 3)
 - Long term sustainability prospects and strategies (objective 4)
 - Recommendations for continued capacity building (objective 4)
 - Conclusions
 - b. Complete draft of the assessment report.
 - c. Final assessment report in MS Word format.
 - d. Three hard copies and one electronic copy including all materials used in the assessment process.
- 3) A dissemination plan with a recommended list of individuals, organizations and mailing lists through which the report can be disseminated by HED.

Annex No. 2: Documental sources

- 1) “Branding Strategy and Marking Plan” by HED
- 2) America’s SBDC: http://asbdc-us.org/About_Us/aboutus_history.html,
- 3) OECD. “Evaluating Development Co-Operation”: Summary of Key Norms and Standards.
- 4) “Recommended Plan for the Adaptation and “Central American Small Business Development Center Partnership Program” by USTA
- 5) Fostering Entrepreneurship in Costa Rica. DeSalvo, J, Java N, Tveteraas A. Columbia Business School: <http://goo.gl/9Bkcw0>, retrieved on Nov 26th, 2013.
- 6) HED– USTA agreement and its amendments
- 7) <http://www.entrepreneurship.org/resource-center/can-costa-rica-catch-up-with-chile.aspx>, retrieved on Nov 26th, 2013.
- 8) www.competitividad.go.cr, retrieved on Nov 27th, 2013
- 9) <http://www.pathways-caminos.org/en/Home.html>
- 10) http://www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba_initiatives/startup_america/about_startup_america
- 11) <http://www.sbdcglobal.com/index.php/us/>
- 12) <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/partnership>
- 13) USTA-CENPROMYPE agreement.
- 14) DOS. “Theory of Change: SBDCs assisted Micro and Small Enterprises in Mexico and El Salvador”, by Weidemann Associates Inc.
- 15) Memorandum of Understanding between CNPROMYPE and Mexican Association of SBDCs (AMCDPE)
- 16) “Process to Establish a National SBDC Network: Reference Manual”
- 17) Reports of “Pre-Consultas” and “Consultas” in Costa Rica and Honduras, including results of the feasibility surveys and focus groups conducted as part of such events
- 18) Training materials developed by USTA for the Diplomados in Costa Rica and Honduras
- 19) Samples of Operational Plans developed in Costa Rica and Honduras for creating their SBDCs
- 20) “SBDC Accreditation Guide”
- 21) SBDC at FGCU: <http://sbdc.fgcu.edu/about/>
- 22) “Guide to help creating National Associations of SBDCs in Central America”
- 23) Report on the creation and activities of the “Virtual Academy” and other features created by The Program at SBDCglobal.com
- 24) Program Semi-annual Progress Reports
- 25) Program Final Report.
- 26) World Bank, IFC Doing Business 2013: Smarter Regulation for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises. 10th edition, Washington DC: World Bank Group.

Annex No. 3: Persons contacted

Name	Institution / Role
Washington DC	
1. Manny Sanchez	HED, Senior Program Specialist, Evaluation Supervisor
2. Omri Malul	HED, Senior Specialist, Program Quality and Strategy
San Antonio TX	
3. Robert McKinley	USTA-Institute for Economic Development, Associate VP
4. Al Salgado	USTA-SW Texas Border SBDC Network, Network Director
5. Cliff Paredes	USTA- SBDC International Trade Center, Director
6. Minerva García	USTA-SW Texas Border SBDC Network, Intl Business Consultant
7. Julio García de las Mestas	USTA-SW Texas Border SBDC Network, Senior Business Consultant
8. Mónica Alcoz	USTA-SW Texas Border SBDC Network, Intl Business Consultant
9. Barbara Mooney	USTA-SW Texas Border SBDC Network, Intl Business Consultant
10. Janette M. Torres	USTA-SW Texas Border SBDC Network, Client Management Specialist
11. Carla González	USTA- SBDCGlobal.com, Site Specialist
Honduras	
12. Carlos Gunther Laínez	SIC, Viceministro MIPYME-SSE
13. Oscar Narvaez	SIC, Director Fomento de la MIPYME
14. Ana Paola Pizzati	SIC, Ex-Directora Fomento de la MIPYME
15. Noe Fernando Escalante	SIC, Coordinador Proyecto CDE MIPYME
16. Oscar Zelaya	SIC, CDE MIPYMES
17. Wendy Ventura	SIC, Asistente Director Fomento a la MIPYME
18. Ricardo Espinosa	CDE Mipyme Región Golfo de Fonseca, Director
19.	CDE Mipyme Región Golfo de Fonseca, Consultora
20.	CDE Mipyme Región Golfo de Fonseca, Consultora
21. Ricardo Rafael Ochoa	ADETRIUNF, Asociación de Desarrollo Triunfeña, Choluteca, Director Ejecutivo
22. Karen Judith Euceda	AMUSISA,
23. Juan Carlos Valerio	ANMPIH, Asoc. Nal de la Pequeña y Mediana Industria de Honduras, Director
24. Yuliana Valladares	AHIBA, Asociación Hondureña de Instituciones Financieras, Dir Communication
25. Rigoberto Osorto	CNBS, Comisión Nacional de Bancos
26. Lourdes Fortin de Alvarenga	Universidad Católica de Honduras
27. Karla Salgado	INFOP, Asesoría a Empresas
28. Marisela Ordoñez	INFOP, Asesoría a Empresas
29. Arturo Rivera	CDE Mipyme Región de Olancho, Director Ejecutivo
30. Juan Pablo Aguilera	CDE Mipyme Región de Olancho, Presidente
31. Eleazar Turcios Rivera	CDE Mipyme Región de Olancho, Vicepresidente
32. José Antoni Padilla	CDE Mipyme Región de Olancho, Coordinador Asistencia Técnica
Costa Rica	
33. Luis Alvarez Soto	MEIC, Viceministro de Economía, Industria y Comercio
34. Andrea Arias Gómez	MEIC, Dirección General de la Pequeña y Mediana Empresa DIGEPYME, Directora
35. Rolando Marín Alvarado	MEIC, DIGEPY vME Departamento CREAPYMES, Jefe
36. Jonathan Sequeira	MEIC, CREAPYME Región Brunca, Funcionario
37. Sandra Rojas	MEIC, CREAPYME Región Brunca, Funcionaria
38. Jonathan Zuñiga	MEIC, CREAPYME Región Brunca, Funcionario
39. Jeanette Fonseca	Sistema Banca para el Desarrollo
40. Adriana Aguilar Escalante	INA, Unidad PYME, Encargada Prestación de Servicios
41. Rodolfo Protti Chaves	INA, Unidad PYME, Proyectos de Desarrollo Empresarial.
42. Paul Fervoy	CAMTIC, Cámara de Tecnologías Información y Comunicación, Vicepresidente
43. Luis Diego Segura	CAMTIC, Cámara de Tecnologías Información y Comunicación, Unidad de Proyectos
44. Frank Ulloa	CREAPYME, Colegio Universitario Boston
45. Alejandra Quirós Rodríguez	ULACIT, Vicepresidenta de Unidades de Negocio

Annex No. 4: Evaluation Questions

Questions on Relevance

- 1) What was partnership design and implementation model?
- 2) What SBDC model was used in the partnership?
- 3) Was the SBDC model used in the partnership contextualized for implementation in each country?
- 4) Is the SBDC model U.S. and implemented, relevant for the key program stakeholders
- 5) Is The Program relevant to beneficiary countries institutions and policies? How? Why?
- 6) Does the SBDC model eventually adopted in Central American countries correspond to the U.S. SBDC model?
- 7) If there is a difference between the U.S. SBDC model and the one adopted in Central American countries, what the implemented model tells us about:
 - 8) the partnership,
 - 9) about the partners,
 - 10) partnership's objectives
 - 11) U.S. SBDC model?
 - 12) Beneficiary countries/institutions?
 - 13) Lessons learned and to be learned

Questions on Effectiveness

- 14) What were the partnership accomplishments? Quantitative? Qualitative?
- 15) Did the partnership accomplishments met the objectives stated in the sub-award agreement?
- 16) Was the partnership able to obtain stakeholder support for the adaptation of the SBDC model in Central America?
- 17) How many "Pre-Consultas" and "Consultas" were made during The Program? Where? (At least 4 "Pre-Consultas" for each of CAFTA-DR countries, and 4 "Consultas"?). Please provide memories thereof.
- 18) Were, at least, 900 Central American SBDC stakeholders trained during the "Pre-Consultas" and "Consultas" per year? Please provide reports thereof.
- 19) Was a Central American SBDC Partnership Program packet and Materials created? Please provide samples of them.
- 20) Was a Central American SBDC Website section created in both CEMPROMYPE and SBDCGlocal.com websites?
- 21) Were (sic) "(4) SBDC Feasibility Surveys & Focus Groups conducted during each Consulta"? Did them get and average score of 85%? Please provide reports thereof.
- 22) To what extent, and how, was the partnership effective in guiding policy development to support implementation of the SBDC model with The Program stakeholders?
- 23) Were one MOU' CEMPROMYPE-U.S. ASBDC, and one CEMPROMYPE-Mexican Association of SBDC developed? Please provide copies thereof.
- 24) Did three (3) national Central American SBDC networks sign MOU's with U.S. ASBDC, as well as with the Mexican Association of SBDC? Please provide copies thereof.
- 25) Did eight (8) Central American and CENPROMYPE SBDC professionals participate in the two U.S. Association of SBDCs annual conferences? Please provide a report thereof.
- 26) Were three (3) Pilot SBDC RFP packages prepared with host government/university administrators to launch country SBDC networks in same number of Central American countries? Please provide a report thereof.
- 27) Did fifty (50) Central American SBDC program stakeholders visit San Antonio SBDC to observe the SBDC model? Please provide a report thereof.
- 28) Did twenty (20) Central American SBDC program stakeholders visit Washington DC to learn how SBA administers the SBDC program and how the U.S. Congress conduct oversight? Please provide a report thereof.

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- 29) Did nine (9) Central American SME agencies participate in two (2) annual “Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas” summits? Please provide a report thereof.
- 30) Did The Program meet its objective to build Central American SBDC Capacity and Model Integrity? Where? How?
- 31) Did The Program transfer the US SBDC methodology for adaptation in three (3) Central American countries? Please comment on the “transfer” part as well on the “adaptation” part. Please provide a report thereof.
- 32) Did 200 Central American SBDC stakeholders graduate from the SBDC Counselor and Director “Diplomado” training program? Did that include the creation of SBDC Business plans for each newly created pilot center (sic) (100/program)? Please provide a report thereof.
- 33) Were SBDC Counselor and Director “Diplomado” Training programs updated, refined and adapted for each CAFTA-DR country? Please provide a report thereof.
- 34) Were two (2) SBDC Counselor and Director “Diplomado” Training programs conducted? When? Where? Did they consist of five modules and 120 hours with at least 150 personnel of higher-ed, SME ministries, NGOs, and local governments?
- 35) Were two (2) “Estancias” observational training visits hosted by USTA SBDC? Did they consist of one week? How many people participate? Who they were? Please provide a report thereof.
- 36) Was a pilot Central American SBDC Accreditation Standard System created to ensure quality if micro and small business assistance services, as well as Center’s management best practices? Does it encompass standards, procedures, accreditation committee in CENPROMYPE?
- 37) Were 100 webcats operators trained on how utilize the MIS database to optimize Centers’ performance and capture economic impact results? Please provide a report thereof.
- 38) Was one (1) Webcats softare license acquired and updated for CENPROMYPE and Central American SBDC use? Does it have tailored operating and economic impact report capabilities? Please provide a report thereof.
- 39) Was a Central American SBDC Economic Assessment Model created? Is it currently supporting annual evaluations of the CENPROMYPE affiliated SBDC networks? Please provide a report thereof.
- 40) Was created a CENPROMYPE Committee, Association Plan and Governance Model for it to function as the association of SBDCs for Central America? Please provide a report thereof.
- 41) What international trade opportunities has The Program created for Central American SBDC small business clients? Please provide a report thereof.
- 42) Did The Program train 390 Central American stakeholders on how to use SBDCGlobal.com to increase MSME exports?
- 43) Was a mechanism and protocol to connect Central American SBDC to SBDCGlobal.com created? Is it currently functional? Please provide a report thereof.
- 44) Were two (2) SBDCGlobal.com in country conferences for 150 clients and counselors of the Central American SBDC network conducted? Please provide a report thereof.
- 45) Were twelve (12) webinars for 240 SBDC counselors and clients on how to use SBDCGlobal.com conducted? Please provide a report thereof.
- 46) Lessons learned and to be learned

Questions on Efficiency

- 47) Did ACE/HDE-UTSA, as well as UTSA-CENPROMYPE, (the parties hereinafter) manage jointly and competently the whole program?
- 48) Did planned program deliverables occur? Timely? Adequately?
- 49) Did the training events have the quality expected?
- 50) Are the newly established SBDCs furnished with proper systems to monitor their own performance?
- 51) Are established SBDCs able to properly track client activities?
- 52) Was the amount budgeted spent in its entirety? Partially? Explain.
- 53) Did the planned cost sharing between the partners happen? (USTA not less than 17%)

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- 54) Did the parties keep systematic and complete records of the funds it managed, according to legal requirements?
- 55) Did the parties comply with all applicable USAID financial regulations?
- 56) Did the parties comply with auditing practices set forth in their agreements and applicable regulations?
- 57) Did UTSA obtain proper cooperation from ACE/HDE to adequately manage the project?
- 58) Were problems, delays, hindrances, or other constraints in program execution promptly and adequately managed by the parties?
- 59) Was intellectual property created, developed, or conceived by the parties under their agreements managed according to such agreements?
- 60) Were USAID intellectual property rights complied by all parties and their agreements?
- 61) Were publications and publishing materials handled by the parties according to agreements and applicable regulations?
- 62) Were the parties' reporting obligations properly and timely complied? Including:
 - 63) USTA Baseline Survey Report
 - 64) Annual implementation plans and annual budget projections
 - 65) Quarterly financial reports
 - 66) Semi-annual progress reports
 - 67) Final operational and financial report
 - 68) Lessons learned and to be learned

Questions on Sustainability

- 69) Economic sustainability. Will countries' economic conditions be favorable to a sustained demand of SBDC' services by entrepreneurs and MSMEs? Are the latter willing and prepared to be clients of the newly created SBDCs?
- 70) Financial Sustainability. Is the planned cost and revenue structure of the SBDCs sustainable for the future? Self-sustainable?
- 71) Institutional Sustainability. Are the institutional arrangements supporting the newly created SBDC able to survive in the future without The Program?
- 72) Political Sustainability. Will the SBDCs endure changes in national and local governments, as well as in Universities' leadership?
- 73) Technical Sustainability. Will the knowledge, methodologies and capacities transferred by The Program remain in practices by the SBDCs after The Program concludes?
- 74) Technological Sustainability. Will the SBDCGlobal.com arrangement, usage and usefulness remain after The Program?
- 75) Lesson learned and to be learned.

Annex No. 5: Interviews questionnaires

For Government Officials, Academia and NGO representatives

Cuestionario Estructurado para Funcionarios Gubernamentales

Nombre de la persona _____ Nombre de la Consejería _____

Ubicación _____ Fecha _____

- 1) ¿Qué sabe usted acerca del programa SBDC en su país?
- 2) ¿Ha participado en la introducción del programa de SBDC en su país ?
- 3) ¿Por qué ha sido invitado al programa SBDC para desarrollar en su país?
- 4) ¿Qué tan importante es la pequeña empresa para el desarrollo de su economía?
- 5) ¿Cómo cree que los centros SBDC pueden ayudar a las pequeñas empresas
- 6) ¿Se le ha invitado a participar en una "consulta " o " diplomado "?
- 7) Si usted asistió a un " diplomado " o "consulta " ¿Cuáles fueron sus impresiones sobre :
 - El concepto de SBDC que se aplica a su país
 - La presentación de la "consulta " o " diplomado "?
 - La información proporcionada
- 8) ¿Ha recibido alguna información de seguimiento sobre el programa SBDC de los organizadores de la "consulta " o " diplomado "?
- 9) ¿Qué sabe usted acerca del desarrollo actual del programa en cuanto a:
 - La apertura de centros de SBC
 - Las operaciones y los programas de los centros SBDC
- 10) ¿Conoce los establecimientos que se han acercado a un centro SBDC ayuda? ¿Cuál fue su experiencia?
- 11) ¿Cuáles son las principales formas en las que cree que un centro SBDC puede ayudar a una pequeña empresa?
 - Preparación de un plan de negocios
 - Ayudar a la obtención de las finanzas
 - Búsqueda de nuevas oportunidades de mercado interno y la exportación
 - Gestión de la formación
 - Capacitación del personal
- 12) ¿Cree usted que los servicios SBDC deben ser gratuitos o deben pagar la empresa por los servicios?
- 13) ¿Cómo debería el SBDC determinar qué empresas para ayudar?
 - Ayudar a todas las empresas que solicitan ayuda
 - Ayudar a las empresas con la mejor oportunidad de crecer
 - Ayudar a las empresas que necesitan más ayuda.

Annex No. 6: Survey Questionnaire

Survey questionnaire through Survey Monkey.com (To participants in “Diplomados” in Costa Rica and Honduras)

Encuesta de Evaluación del Programa de Transferencia del Modelo de

Información Demográfica

Le agradecemos proveer la siguiente información demográfica básica que nos permitirá procesar su respuesta de modo que sea consistente y significativa. Tenga la seguridad de que su nombre será tratado con absoluta confidencialidad y no será incluido en ningún reporte o publicación.

1. Nombre
Su Nombre

2. Su Género
Género Femenino Masculino

3. Nombre de su Institución/Empresa

4. Sector de Actividad
Su empresa / institución es del sector:
 Gobierno Empresarial / Gremial Universitario Social Financiero
Otro (especifique)

5. País
Soy residente de: Costa Rica Honduras

Sus opiniones sobre la transferencia del modelo SBDC de los Estados Unidos ...

Con el soporte de HED, la actividad de la Universidad de Texas en San Antonio UTSA y la colaboración de CENPROMYPE, se llevó a cabo el programa de Transferencia del Modelo SBDC de los Estados Unidos tanto a Costa Rica (CREAPYMES), como a Honduras (CDE-MIPYMES), el cual es objeto de la presente evaluación.

Sus opiniones sobre el programa son de la mayor importancia no solo para consolidar el proceso en su país, sino también para futuras transferencias a otros países de América Latina. Gracias por compartir su pensamiento.

A continuación encontrará un conjunto de afirmaciones respecto de las que se pide expresar el grado en que está en desacuerdo o de acuerdo con dichas afirmaciones. Por favor, recuerde que las mismas se refieren a CDE-MIPYMES en Honduras y a CREAPYMES en Costa Rica.

Survey questionnaire through Survey Monkey.com (To participants in “Diplomados” in Costa Rica and Honduras), page 2

Encuesta de Evaluación del Programa de Transferencia del Modelo de

6. El Programa de transferencia del modelo SBDC a mi país contribuyó a aumentar el compromiso del Gobierno en apoyar a las MIPYMEs

Estoy: Totalmente en desacuerdo En desacuerdo No lo sé De acuerdo Totalmente de acuerdo

7. La transferencia del modelo SBDC a mi país no agregó gran cosa a las políticas/programas de apoyo a la MIPYME que existían previamente

Estoy: Totalmente en desacuerdo En desacuerdo No lo sé De acuerdo Totalmente de acuerdo

8. El Programa de transferencia del modelo SBDC le permitió a mi país conocer mejor las experiencias de Centros de Desarrollo Empresarial en otros países de Centro América.

Estoy: Totalmente en desacuerdo En desacuerdo No lo sé De acuerdo Totalmente de acuerdo

9. El Programa de transferencia del modelo SBDC a mi país contó con amplia participación de los empresarios y el sector privado en general.

Estoy: Totalmente en desacuerdo En desacuerdo No lo sé De acuerdo Totalmente de acuerdo

10. En mi país, los Centros de Desarrollo Empresarial para la MIPYME, siguen de cerca el modelo de cooperación Gobierno-Universidad-Sector privado que existe en los SBDC de los Estados Unidos.

Estoy: Totalmente en desacuerdo En desacuerdo No lo sé De acuerdo Totalmente de acuerdo

11. El Programa de transferencia del modelo SBDC creó nuevas oportunidades de comercio internacional a las MIPYMEs de mi país.

Estoy: Totalmente en desacuerdo En desacuerdo No lo sé De acuerdo Totalmente de acuerdo

12. El Programa de transferencia del modelo SBDC a mi país, proporcionó a un grupo de nuestros profesionales, nuevas técnicas y métodos de asesoría a las MIPYMEs.

Estoy: Totalmente en desacuerdo En desacuerdo No lo sé De acuerdo Totalmente de acuerdo

Survey questionnaire through Survey Monkey.com (To participants in “Diplomados” in Costa Rica and Honduras), page 3

Encuesta de Evaluación del Programa de Transferencia del Modelo de

13. Gracias a la transferencia del modelo SBDC, mi país cuenta ahora con mejores sistemas de información sobre las MIPYMES

	Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	No lo sé	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
Estoy:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Los Centros de Desarrollo Empresarial CDE están respondiendo efectivamente a las necesidades de las MIPYMES de mi país.

	Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	No lo sé	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
Estoy:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. El rol principal del gobierno nacional en la creación y existencia de los CDE constituye una debilidad de los mismos en el mediano y largo plazo.

	Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	No lo sé	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
Estoy:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. El sector universitario está jugando un rol muy importante en la creación y funcionamiento de los Centros de Desarrollo Empresarial para la MIPYME en mi país.

	Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	No lo sé	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
Estoy:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Creo que la probabilidad de que dentro de cinco años los Centros se consoliden como el medio más importante de asistencia a las MIPYMES de mi país, es:

	0% - 20%	21% - 40%	41% - 60%	61% - 80%	81% - 100%
Porcentaje	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>