



Media & Events

OPIC 2015 Impact Awards Recognize Excellence in International Development

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- *U.S. Government's Development Finance Institution celebrates accomplishments of successful partners for their work in developing countries*
- *Winners exemplify central role of private sector investment in carrying out lasting international development*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), the U.S. Government's Development Finance Institution, today presented awards recognizing exceptional achievement in international private-sector development in a ceremony at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

OPIC awarded seven of the Agency's partner businesses that exemplify the breadth of geography, size, sector, and positive development impact that can result from OPIC finance and insurance support.

"The awardees we're honoring today exemplify the broad scope of development impact that the private sector can achieve when offered the right kind of support," said Elizabeth Littlefield, OPIC's President and CEO. "Spanning Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and Eastern Europe, and advancing vital sectors like healthcare, power, water, education, and new access to finance, the global impact these companies are having is incredible. OPIC believed in the bold ideas from this select group of exceptional innovators, and now hundreds of thousands across the developing world will have a higher quality of life and achieve greater opportunity."

"The Chamber recognizes OPIC's unique role in helping mobilize private sector investment in the service of development. With more than half of U.S. exports bound for developing countries, OPIC provides valuable support for American businesses to remain competitive in those markets. OPIC helps U.S. business serve as a force for good in the world, as today's winners demonstrate," said Myron Brilliant, Executive Vice President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce during remarks at the ceremony.

The 2015 OPIC Impact Award Recipients:

- **Innovation:** Belstar Development, LLC, for large-scale efforts to modernize Ghana's healthcare system through provision of medical equipment, services and training for 100 hospitals throughout the country. OPIC political risk insurance coverage of \$250 million allowed Florida-based Belstar to help close the \$1 billion gap in medical infrastructure that prevents ready access to quality healthcare for many Ghanaians.
- **Development Impact:** Bridge International Academies, for creating a network of hundreds of low-cost, high-quality, technology-enabled schools across Africa that are democratizing the right for all children to succeed. Bolstered by \$10 million in OPIC financing, Bridge's founders have been able to scale up their proven model from just a few schools to hundreds, and are on track to educate 10 million pupils in the next decade.
- **American Small Business:** CSI Latina, a Miami-based business that provides crucial growth equipment and tools to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in developing Latin American countries. Empowered by multiple OPIC loans, CSI Latina offers SMEs leases on items ranging from communications technology to furniture. This vital support allows growing SMEs to overcome budget constraints and achieve greater financial flexibility.
- **Access to Finance:** Global Communities' Vitas Lebanon, for wide-ranging microfinance lending efforts across Lebanon that issued over 36,000 loans totaling nearly \$70 million and supporting tens of thousands of jobs. Catalyzed by a \$20 million OPIC financing commitment, Maryland-based Global Communities helped lay the groundwork for stabilizing entrepreneurial growth in Lebanon, a key regional economy.

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- Press Releases 2014
- Press Releases 2013
- Press Releases 2012
- Press Releases 2011
- Press Releases 2010
- Press Releases 2009

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- **Renewable Resources – Agriculture:** Root Capital, for providing access to capital that is growing rural prosperity for small farmers throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Helped by \$20 million of OPIC financing, Massachusetts-based Root Capital has provided more than \$800 million in credit to over 550 agricultural businesses, representing 1.2 million smallholder farmers. Root Capital’s clients produce dozens of different agricultural products, from coffee, cocoa, and cashews, to fresh fruits and vegetables, to wild-harvested products like natural gums and shea butter.
- **Development Impact:** Sante GMT, for increasing the standards of food production and distribution in Georgia, where they have expanded their dairy operations to establish new milk collection centers that benefit farmers and modernized production centers for milk, yogurt, butter and cheese. Growing through the support of \$17.6 million in OPIC loans, Sante has helped Georgia take an important step forward in agriculture and economic growth.
- **Renewable Resources – Energy:** Simpa Networks, for bringing scalable and affordable home solar systems to villages across rural India not connected to a central power grid. OPIC financing of \$3 million helped Simpa, co-founded by U.S. entrepreneurs, to expand the availability of their innovative pay-as-you-go systems, spreading electricity access – a key driver of economic growth – for tens of thousands of rural Indians.

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OPIC is the U.S. Government’s development finance institution. It mobilizes private capital to help address critical development challenges and in doing so, advances U.S. foreign policy and national security priorities. Because OPIC works with the U.S. private sector, it helps U.S. businesses gain footholds in emerging markets, catalyzing revenues, jobs and growth opportunities both at home and abroad. OPIC achieves its mission by providing investors with financing, political risk insurance, and support for private equity investment funds, when funding cannot be obtained elsewhere. Established as an agency of the U.S. Government in 1971, OPIC operates on a self-sustaining basis at no net cost to American taxpayers.

All OPIC projects adhere to high environmental and social standards and respect human rights, including worker’s rights. By mandating high standards, OPIC helps raise the industry and regional standards of the countries in which its projects operate. OPIC services are available for new and expanding business enterprises in more than 160 countries worldwide.

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