



**P**athways to Prosperity in the Americas is a policy-level dialogue that links Western Hemisphere countries committed to democracy, open markets and social inclusion. Through this initiative, countries share best practices and collaborate to spread the benefits of economic growth more broadly to all of our citizens.

Pathways was launched by the leaders of twelve Western Hemisphere countries in New York in September 2008. Since then, annual ministerial meetings have been held in Panama, El Salvador, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia. The government of Panama will host the 2013 Ministerial in conjunction with the Americas Competitiveness Forum.

Through shared leadership, Pathways partner countries are committed to deepening cooperation on the following four pillars:

- **Empowering small businesses** by building an enabling environment for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises.
- **Facilitating trade** by improving the systems, regulation, and infrastructure that small firms need to trade more competitively across borders.
- **Building a modern workforce** by supporting worker rights and fair labor standards as well as promoting the education and training, jobs and entrepreneurship that will prepare our citizens to achieve their full potential.
- **Promoting sustainable business practices and environmental cooperation.**

## Pathways Partners

Pathways countries now total fifteen and include Belize, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, and the United States. Brazil and Trinidad and Tobago have observer status. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) are strategic Pathways partners. Two countries co-chair each Pathways pillar and organize activities throughout the year that advance the Ministerial Action Plan.

## Pathways Activities

To make real progress toward Pathway's goals, U.S. government agencies provide technical assistance in priority areas such as small business development, financial inclusion, infrastructure financing, women's entrepreneurship, greening the supply chain, improving environmental practices, and promoting internationally-recognized labor rights. Pathways achievements include:

- Expanding the small business development center (SBDC) model in several countries in the Americas in direct support of the Small Business Network of the Americas.
- Strengthening public-private partnerships for border management reform and increasing customs technical expertise in Pathways countries through the Central American Border Management Reform Project.
- Increasing market access and technical training for women entrepreneurs through the Pathways Access Initiative in Peru and the Pathways Women's Entrepreneurship Mentoring Network in Colombia as well as through Women's Entrepreneurship in the Americas (WEAmericas).
- Promoting environmentally-sound production processes by a network of universities, governments, and industries in Pathways countries through training for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as part of the Pathways to Cleaner Production in the Americas Initiative.

## Looking Forward

To broaden the Pathways network and increase its impact in the Hemisphere a new Pathways Clearinghouse was introduced at the 2012 Ministerial. The Clearinghouse, a collaborative effort between the OAS, IDB and ECLAC, has three different functions: to share and disseminate best practices through websites, outreach materials, online forums and social media; to provide a space where diverse stakeholders can come together to discuss challenges Pathways partner countries face; and to launch a competition that will engage co-chairs in a participatory planning process to explore the most promising solutions to challenges identified.