



COUNTRY PROFILE



USAID focuses its assistance on achieving increased trade and investment, the development of a competitive, market-oriented economy and improved environmental management to help Nicaragua take advantage of the opportunities of the Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade (CAFTA-DR) and other trade agreements. In 2007, USAID-assisted producers had sales in local, regional, and international markets totaling \$22 million.

NICARAGUA SNAPSHOT

Independence from Spain: 1821
Population: 5.7 million (2007 est)
Area: 129,494 Km²

USAID IN NICARAGUA

<http://nicaragua.usaid.gov/>

OVERVIEW

From 1990-2008, USAID assistance to Nicaragua totaled \$1.37 billion. USAID's current development program promotes responsible, transparent governance and provides assistance to expand economic growth and trade opportunities, and to increase access to quality health and education services.



PROGRAMS

Governing Justly & Democratically

USAID helps strengthen democracy by supporting justice and electoral reforms, increased government transparency, improved municipal governance, free and fair elections, and civil society participation and oversight.

USAID's election support program supports voter education, citizen participation and get-out-the-vote campaigns. With USAID support for a voter call center and webpage, Nicaraguan voters could check their registration and find out where their polling center was located. A small grants program provided funding to 33 civil society organizations and media outlets for 35 projects that promoted democratic citizen participation in the November 2008 municipal elections.

Under rule of law, a modern Criminal Code that incorporates international standards for terrorism, money laundering, drug-trafficking, and trafficking in persons crimes was enacted and USAID provided training to 3,281 justice sector officials, lawyers, and civil society leaders in the new code's application.

Access to justice was expanded with USAID support to 11 civil society organizations for a justice facilitator program that established 20 community-based mediation centers and the training of justice facilitators that provide free legal services. More than 13,000 Nicaraguans have used the centers and 7,500 property disputes, family problems and other legal matters have been resolved.

Economic Growth

USAID is helping Nicaragua take advantage of the opportunities offered through the Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) through the development of a competitive, market-oriented economy.

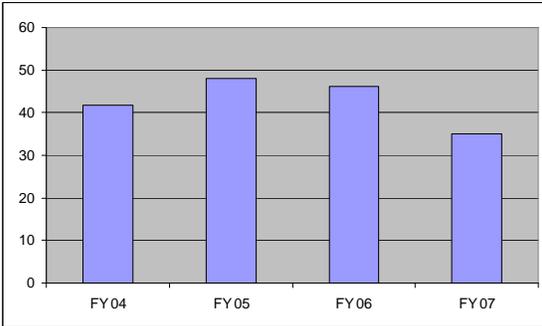
The program provides technical assistance for better management and production methods, access to new technology and infrastructure, and training in marketing skills. USAID assistance during the last year helped

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COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

**USAID ASSISTANCE TO NICARAGUA
(\$ In Millions)**



over 18,400 Nicaraguan producers to increase their sales in local, regional, and international markets. In 2008, USAID-assisted producers had sales totaling \$34.4 million and over 15,400 new jobs were generated.

A USAID Public-Private Alliance for sustainable forestry, agriculture and tourism is providing assistance for income-generating activities through green market links and ecotourism, which offer new economic opportunities under CAFTA-DR. In 2008, over 1,500 coffee farms and 2,308 hectares of cocoa farms were certified. In addition, 3,500 hectares of forest land affected by Hurricane Felix were certified under the Forest Stewardship Council's Controlled Wood Standard. Environmental programs trained 1,577 people in natural resources management and conservation.

Investing in People – Health & Education

As a major international donor in health, USAID has contributed to reducing maternal and infant mortality rates, a drop in fertility rates and increased HIV/AIDS counseling and testing. In 2008, HIV/AIDS prevention activities reached over 121,800 individuals. USAID trained 1,089 professional staff in family planning management and nearly 11,900 people received information on family planning. A community health program provides 410,000 people in 70 of the poorest municipalities with maternity care, child growth monitoring, vaccinations, family planning, and nutrition and hygiene activities. USAID programs provide support to 16 of 17 departmental public hospitals through training for medical personnel in standard procedures, clinical guidelines, and quality control.

Under USAID's primary education program, a child-centered model school network has been established in 2,747 schools, almost 1/3 of the primary school system, benefiting nearly 486,000 students. USAID also developed multi-grade materials for indigenous schools in the two autonomous Caribbean regions. The program is contributing to higher academic achievement and enrollment and completion rates.

From 1991-2008, USAID's Cooperative Association of States for Scholarships (CASS) Program has provided 927 scholarships for Nicaraguan professionals to study in U.S. higher education institutions.

Humanitarian Assistance

In 2008, USAID disaster relief totaled \$7.9 million. The assistance helped families in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region recover from Hurricane Felix, helped farmers affected by floods in the north to replant, and provided new roofs for families affected by Tropical Storm Alma.

USAID's \$75 million Food Security Program has helped improve the standard of living of 347,000 people. The P.L. 480 Title II program promotes production and marketing of high-value crops to increase incomes and improve health and nutrition of poor rural households. The program has also built potable water systems and latrines, upgraded roads in remote areas, and sponsored complementary feeding, maternal health and child survival activities in selected high-risk communities.

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