



Regional Newsflash September 2010 Edition 32

Embassies of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Dominican Republic

The regional newsflash is a publication composed by the Embassies of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Dominican Republic. The newsflash provides an update in terms of imperative economical developments, the most important tenders and a selection of other relevant business news that have to do with the region. This newsflash is shared with a distinctive group of Dutch businesses with special interests in the region or in a specific country. It consists of publicly available information from various sources such as news articles, press releases, and third party information. The Embassies of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in San José, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Dominican Republic are not responsible for the accuracy of the published information. If you do not want to receive the regional newsflash, or wish to add a person to the distribution list, or would like to send a response, please feel free to send an email to sanjose@trade-minbuza.nl. For Panama a separate newsletter is published.

Central American region



Global Competitiveness Index In The Global Competitiveness Report 2010-2011, released by the World Economic Forum, the DR ranked 101st of 139 countries. Last year the DR was ranked 97th out of a list of 133 countries. Switzerland is the most competitive country, followed by Sweden, Singapore and the United States. China is ranked 27th.

In Latin America, Chile ranked the highest at (30th), followed by Puerto Rico (41st), Barbados (43rd), Panama (53rd), Costa Rica (56th), Brazil (58th), Mexico (66th), Colombia (68th), Peru (73rd), Guatemala (78th), El Salvador (82nd), Trinidad & Tobago (84th), Argentina (87th), Honduras (91st), Jamaica (95th) and Dominican Republic (101st). The DR placed in the bottom third of the rankings. Only Ecuador (105th), Bolivia (108th), Guyana (110th), Nicaragua (112th), Paraguay (120th), Venezuela (122nd) ranked worse than the DR in the Americas.

The Report contributes to the understanding of the key factors determining economic growth, helps to explain why some countries are more successful than others in raising income levels and opportunities for their respective populations, and offers policymakers and business leaders an important tool in the formulation of improved economic policies and institutional reforms.

www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Global%20Competitiveness%20Report/index.htm

Hidalgo Bancorp to launch \$40 million fund for projects in clean technology (Source: i-Newswire) Hidalgo Bancorp has announced launch of a \$40 million fund to aid cleantech companies in Central America. The funding program will develop jobs and reduce carbon emissions within developing countries as Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Belize. Cary Lee Peterson, president of Hidalgo Bancorp comments, "The need for positive financial aid to this part of the world can produce tremendous results for the community, economy, and the environment." The cleantech fund consists of grant and loan programs to small businesses operating in Central America that offset carbon emissions through renewable and alternative energy solutions



Costa Rica and Panama first to take advantage of new accord with Europe (Source: Tico Times) A joint project between Panama and Costa Rica marks the first product of the European Union-Central America association agreement, an aid and trade accord between the regions signed in May. Announced at a meeting of the Central American Integration System in Guatemala last week, the project aims to strengthen border security, promote greater connectivity and facilitate integrated management and information sharing in border areas. The \$7 million initiative will be funded primarily by the European Union.

Central America is focus for Canada trade offensive (Source: Globe and Mail) Canada will continue to bolster relationships in Latin America through more free-trade agreements and the support of Canadian companies doing business there, Canada's trade minister said. The Canadian government is in free-trade talks with many countries in the region, including Guatemala and Honduras, and will table a bill this fall for a free trade agreement with Panama, Peter Van Loan said. Canada has strengthened ties with the region in recent years, and more Canadian companies are expanding there because of its high growth potential and geographic proximity.

Heavy rains bring death and destruction throughout Central America (Source: ACT Alliance) Since September 4, continuous heavy rains have fallen in Central America, exacerbating heavy damage caused by tropical storms, causing hundreds of deaths and an estimated \$ 1,2 billion of damage. The rains have been reported as higher than the last 40 years' average and are expected to continue into October. They have caused rivers to overflow, resulting in floods and landslides. Roads and bridges have been buried or collapsed and communications with some communities have been lost.

Fall brings higher tropical fruit movement and interest in the United States (Source: The Packer) Tropical fruit demand and volume remains on the upswing in the United States. The fall mango season is opening with higher-than-normal volume, and Central American papaya production is rebounding after winter and spring shortages caused by freezes. Michael Warren, president of Central American Produce in Florida, said fruit demand has been stronger than vegetable demand.

Wal-Mart steps on the gas with double-digit growth (Source: Dow Jones) Mexico's largest retailer, Wal-Mart de Mexico, or Walmex, plans to ramp up investment in its Central American operations to speed up growth in store count next year, the company's top executive said. "In Central America, we inherited a growth plan of 3.5 percent," Walmex chief executive Scot Rank said, referring to floor space at company stores. "Next year we'll be taking Central America to double-digit growth rates," he added.

Calvo obliged to negotiate with other firms over tuna quota with Europe (Source: La Prensa Gráfica) Central American tuna companies this month will be sharing the tuna export quota under the association agreement with Europe. Calvo, the Salvadoran company of Spanish ownership, will have to negotiate with Costa Rican and Guatemalan rivals. The region exports some 16,000 metric tons of tuna a year to Europe and Calvo sells between 75 and 80 percent of it.



Costa Rica fishes for investment with Moody's grade as bait (Source: Efe) Costa Rica's government will boost efforts to promote foreign investment with a mission to the United States led by the president, Laura Chinchilla. Chinchilla said Costa Rica has received "excellent" economic news recently. Ratings agency Moody's raised Costa Rica to investment grade. At the same time, two leading manufacturers of medical equipment, St. Jude and Abbott, announced major investments.

Medical industry repeats dose of investment in Costa Rica (Source: La República) St. Jude Medical to invest \$670 million in Costa Rica. The Minnesota-based medical supply company St. Jude Medical inaugurated a new plant in a free zone in Costa Rica northwest of San José. The company plans to invest an estimated \$670 million in the country and employ 2,000 Costa Ricans over the next



five years. The St. Jude plant will specialize in producing valves for damaged or weakened aortas. The aortic valve is essential in controlling blood flow from the heart through the body. In 2009, export of medical products generated more than \$1.34 billion for the Costa Rican economy and accounted for 15.5 percent of the nation's total exports. In 2000 medical exports generated a little over \$100 million. Abbott Vascular, which has announced that it will open a plant in 2012 at Alajuela. The new production unit will make and export specialized catheters for cardiovascular use. The investment amounts to some \$50 million.

Dollar volatility raises fears among potential buyers of homes in Costa Rica (Source: La República) House sales have dropped in recent months in Costa Rica because potential buyers are postponing decisions as a result of the volatility of the dollar and its knock-on effect on interest rates. The trend is confirmed by brokers and developers that are trying to implement strategies to boost the business. In pre-crisis years, the residential real-estate sector in Costa Rica was bounding along at some 24 per cent. Currently sales have dropped by 40 percent.

Costa Rica plans to fix its bridges for \$250 million (Source: La República) Regional banks are negotiating \$150 million while the government picking up the rest of the \$100 million tab for a plan to repair all the bridges in Costa Rica that urgently need to be fixed. Some 300 bridges are going to need thorough repairs or total renewal in order to avoid risks to people who use them. The Bank of Central American Economic Integration and the Inter-American Development Bank have agreed on the viability of the project. The government is working on an action plan.

Boston Scientific manufacturing plant is Costa Rica's first sustainable building (Source: Tico Times) The Costa Rican headquarters of Boston Scientific, a medical equipment manufacturing company, in Alajuela's El Coyoil Free Zone, has been awarded the US Building Council's prestigious Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEEDs) designation. The plant is the first building in Costa Rica to be so recognized. At the Boston Scientific plant, which produces medical devices for export, the floors are made of cork, the paint on the walls is free of harmful chemicals and a majority of the building's framework is made from recycled materials.

Scientists recognize Dole's water conservation at Costa Rican banana plant (Source: The Packer) A Dole Food packing plant in Costa Rica earned praise during World Water Week in Stockholm. A panel of water scientists gave the New Millennium packing system, which US-based Dole installed at the plant earlier this year, an honorable mention. The facility reduces water use and cuts energy use by 50 percent.

Chiquita launches Costa Rican plant to convert fruit pulp into energy and fertilizer (Source: Cincinnati Business Courier) Chiquita Brands International says a new "biogas" system installed in Costa Rica will turn organic material from banana farming into sustainable energy for its plant and fertilizer for local farmers. The technology is now in place at Chiquita's Mundimar facility in Guápiles, Costa Rica. The biogas system will convert fruit waste and processing water from banana operations into electrical and heat energy, and produce nutrient rich fertilizer material for local palm farmers.

Costa Rica offers potential investors a step-by-step guide for procedures (Source: Inside Costa Rica) A new government website aims to become a step-by-step guide of procedures for investment in Costa Rica. The website, www.costarica.e-regulations.org, although only in Spanish at the moment, provides detailed procedures. The website allows Costa Rica to join a group of several other countries that have decided to show transparency in their administrative purposes.

Sylvania sees light at end of tunnel with new contracts and products (Source: La República) Sylvania, the Indian lighting company, is overcoming a difficult period. In Costa Rica, Sylvania is expected to record sales of \$45 million sales this year. The company won contracts for them lighting of the Costa Rican Social Security hospitals in Alajuela and Heredia. By the end of this year, the company is launching two new lines of products for the regional market.

Best Meridian Insurance Company is latest to join market in Costa Rica (Source: La República) Competition continues in Costa Rica's recently opened insurance market. Best Meridian Insurance Company (BMI) will be the 10th company to be given approval for sales in the country. BMI is a US-



based company that specializes in personal policies. It will offer life and health policies, both individual and in group form. It will also include specialized policies for companies.

Telefonica confirms it will bid to enter Costa Rica's cellular market (Source: Inside Costa Rica)

Telefonica, Spain's largest telephone company, says it will not let the opportunity to expand into Costa Rica's cellular market pass by, confirming it will be one of the companies bidding for one of the three available licenses. Also expected to tender their bid are America Movil, Millicom (Amnet), Cable & Wireless and Digicel. Each of three winners will be required to ante up \$70 million to Costa Rica and compete with the state telecom, the Costa Rican Electricity Institute (ICE).

Nyesa gets \$330 million loan for project in Costa Rica (Source: Europa Press)

Spain's Nyesa Valores has received a \$330 million loan for a tourism project in Costa Rica from a US investment fund, the company said in a filing with the Madrid stock exchange. The complex "La Roca" will be constructed in the Costa Rican Pacific port town of Puntarenas and will feature several top-level hotels, a world class golf course designed by champion golfer Greg Norman, beach club, sports center and 1,400 residential units including 92 villas, 289 condos and vacant lots. The project is reported to envisage construction of the largest resort on the Pacific Coast of Central America, with projected sales of \$1.6 billion and profits of \$485 million. The loan will be for the first stage of the project. Permits are all in order and project will be carried out in several phases, the first being general infrastructure development including the first SETAI branded hotel. This phase is predicted to cost \$632 million, of which \$330 million will be provided by the investment fund with a 10 year repayment term. **Plenty of opportunities for dutch providers in the following areas:** finance, construction, architecture and design, materials and furniture, maintenance and administrative and operational jobs.

Costa Rica buys \$50 million a month to curb rally (Source: Bloomberg)

Costa Rica's central bank plans to buy as much as \$50 million a month in the foreign-exchange market in a move that analysts say is a bid to stem a rally that's sent the colon to a two-year high. The colon has surged 7 percent in the past three months and touched 504.75 per dollar on Aug. 31, leaving it within 1 percent of the stronger end of the 500-to-645 band that the central bank seeks to keep the exchange rate. The colon weakened 0.4 percent to 508.27 today, its biggest slide in six weeks, after the bank said in the statement that it will buy up to \$600 million in the market by December 2011.



Guatemala ready for tender of six oil exploration blocks (Source: El Periódico)

Almost a year later than planned, Guatemala's Ministry of Mines and Energy is ready to prepare six out of 12 areas identified for oil exploration. The delay in the process has been caused because the government was obliged to make changes in the exploration blocks because some of them infringed on areas of environmental protection. The tender process for the six areas is due to be ready by January at the latest.

Guatemala slashes dollar limit on cash transactions (Source: Efe)

The Guatemalan government reduced from \$10,000 to \$3,000 the permitted value of transactions in US dollars, as a measure to control money laundering. The measure follows a similar one in Mexico, where the limit on dollar transactions has been set at \$4,000. The limit in Guatemala will be applied only to cash transactions, not for electronic transactions.

Guatemala's Grupo Pharma aims to cure ailments of consumers in El Salvador (Source: El Periódico)

Guatemala's Grupo Pharma opened the first 15 of its 200 Farmacias de la Comunidad planned for El Salvador. Pharma's growth plans are heavily concentrated, however, on North America. Its Industrias Bioquímicas unit aims to export 14 new pharmaceutical products at the United States and Mexico from Next month. Grupo Pharma currently controls some 28 percent of



Guatemala's Pharmaceutical market. In May it announced the opening of 400 pharmacies and a \$25 million investment in a generics factory in southern Mexico.

Nicaragua



Nicaragua keeps pace with \$552 million in seven months of textile exports (Source: La Prensa) Nicaragua's textile and garment exports reached \$552 million in the first seven months of the year, a 14.2 percent increase in the same period a year later. Nicaragua is second only to El Salvador for growth in textile exports from Central America to the United States. El Salvador's textile and garment exports to the United States have grown by 21 percent year-on-year in 2010.

Korean textile company creates plant with 2,500 new jobs in Nicaragua (Source: La Prensa) Istmo Textil Nicaragua, a Korean-owned company, has shrugged off the aftermath of the world economic crisis by opening 2,500 new jobs for textile workers with a \$3 million investment. The investment was made as an extension to the company's original plant. The extension was inaugurated by President Daniel Ortega. The new jobs will double the company's workforce.

Japan reports \$100 million in aid projects for Nicaragua, envoy says (Source: Efe) In the last three years, Japan has financed some 140 public works, education and health projects in Nicaragua. The aid has come to \$100 million said the ambassador, Shinchi Saito. Among other projects, donation accords have backed the construction of the Santa Fe bridge on the San Juan river that bounds Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Japan also financed a clean-energy project in the Nicaraguan pacific that includes a two-megawatt solar facility.

Nicaragua turns on the light with \$75.9 million in loans (Source: Efe) Nicaragua's parliament authorized the government to contract a total of \$75.9 million in loans for sustainable electrification and renewable energy, as well as a technical program. The three loans are to come from the Inter-American Development Bank, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration and the Korean Eximbank. The loan from the Interamerican Bank is for \$30.5 million for a program of sustainable electrification.



TRANSACTEL begins operations in León TRANSACTEL, an outsourcing company of Guatemalan-Salvadoran origin, recently began its operations in the city of Leon, providing services such as technical support, information and customer care. TRANSACTEL represents an important investment in Northwest Nicaragua as it is the first company of this industry to establish in the region, benefitting from the wide availability of highly qualified human resources in this city, known for its university tradition. The company will begin operations with 150 employees and is currently in the process of training 110 agents. Mr. Mario Lopez, vice president of human resources and marketing, said that the results obtained from the first experiences are very promising; therefore, we hope to grow our operation above 150 employees in the upcoming months". PRONicaragua has supported TRANSACTEL during the process of establishment in the country and will continue working to promote the development of this important and innovative sector.

Forestry Investment Opportunity in Nicaragua Timber Plantation investment in Nicaragua is a green long term safe investment that will surely outperform the stock market and capture 35,000 tons of carbon. Maderas Sostenibles is offering an environmentally and socially sustainable investment opportunity in the southern Pacific coastal region of Nicaragua. Maderas Sostenibles, a multi-dimensional Nicaraguan forestry company with American founders, has observed both the value and demand for certified tropical timber and recent opportunities for sustainable investment in the Nicaraguan forestry sector. With today's market prices and the rapid growth rates of tropical plantation species, well-managed precious timber holdings are a sensible and attractive investment. As world



forests continue to disappear and demand increases for sustainably sourced exotic timber the prices for this renewable natural resource will undoubtedly continue to increase.

Nicaragua will be one of the few countries to comply with the Millennium Development Goals

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations estimates that Nicaragua will be one of the first countries in the region to meet all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) due to the efforts of the Nicaraguan Government. According to Gero Vaagt, representative of FAO, the administration of President Ortega has taken the task of reducing hunger and poverty in the country very seriously. Vaagt pointed out that the official report will be released on Oct. 16 and that so far hunger has decreased 25 percent in Nicaragua, and 10 percent worldwide. The reduction of hunger is one of the main objectives for 2015, which indicates that the country has steadily advanced in its efforts of reducing food insecurity.

El Salvador



El Salvador earns 2.7 percent more in remittances from emigrants (Source: Efe) Remittances sent by El Salvador's emigrants to their families at home grew by 2.7 percent year-on-year from January through August. Over the period, remittances amounted to \$2.37 billion. Remittances in recent years have amounted to some 18 percent of the gross domestic product of El Salvador.

El Salvador government orders \$100 million increase for public health (Source: El Mundo) The Health Ministry of El Salvador is to receive a \$100 million budget increase next year, said Mauricio Funes, the president. The president said that a service for health emergencies "will be like none other this country has ever had". And health services "will reach the poorest homes in the country", he added. "We aim to begin by providing full medical services to the remotest corners of the nation," he added.

Honduras



China's Sinohydro builds three power plants in Honduras (Source: Efe) The government of Honduras signed an agreement with China's Sinohydro for the construction of three hydroelectric plants in the patuca river, one of the largest in the country. Sinohydro aims to raise funds from China's Eximbank and other Chinese institutions, but the amount of the investment has not been announced. Work on the three plants is due next year. The total installation capacity of the plants will be 524 megawatts.

Puerto Cortés in Honduras aims for \$225 million plan to make top port (Source: La Tribuna)

A program for the projection of Puerto Cortés in Honduras aims to make the port the most competitive in Central America. The plan include a new terminal for the reception and delivery of bulk goods. So far the project is attracting \$225 million investment, being managed by the Inter-American Development Bank and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration.

Honduran business leaders promote investment and tourism in New Orleans Honduras is open for business. That's the message from Honduran leaders who are here in New Orleans this week. Aline Flores is telling dozens attending an international seminar about the riches of Honduras. She is president of the Tegulcigalpa Chamber of Commerce. Flores says the recent visits of the president of Honduras, Porfirio Lobo, have opened doors to new business ventures in the United States.

Garment industry workers earn \$440 a month in Honduras, says top boss (Source: La Tribuna)

Workers in the garment industry in Honduras earn the best wages in the country, about \$440 a month,



said the employers' leader, Daniel Facussé. Facussé was responding to worker demands for a 15 percent increase in their wages. The minimum wage in Honduras is \$290 a month in towns and \$215 a month in the countryside.

Honduras looks to achieve \$600 million record this year for coffee exports (Source: El Heraldo)

The coffee industry of Honduras aims to close the 2009-2010 crop year with record returns. In the 2007-2008 coffee year, Honduras reported the highest levels of exports in its history, with earnings of \$464 million. For this crop year, the Honduran Coffee Institute projects export earnings of some \$500 to \$600 million, now that the price per bag has gone up to \$100.



US\$500 million more in bonds (source: el dia) Economy and Planning Minister Temistocles Montas says the government plans to issue US\$500 million in sovereign bonds to finance the expected 2011 budget deficit. "As long as the government maintains its commitment with stability and this is supported by an agreement with the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the government will not have problems taking on international financing," according to the Minister. The government estimates that the budget deficit for next year will be around 1.6% of the Gross Domestic Product, which is lower than that of this year, which stands at 2.4%, or around RD\$47 billion. This year the government placed US\$750 on the foreign bond market.

IDB and IMF positive on Dominican economy The representative of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in the DR said that the local economy "is going pretty well". He agreed with Central Bank projections that 2010 would show a GDP growth of at least 7.5%. He described this as very good given the global economic situation. Also the IMF highlights that GDP is estimated to have grown by 7.5% in the first half of 2010 and that annual inflation is below the Central Bank target of 6-7%. In its second and third reviews of the Stand-by Arrangement of November 2009, the International Monetary Fund says that the government ended the first phase of the economic program in June with "very positive results." The IMF predicts "a gradual process of fiscal consolidation and a tightening of policies to maintain domestic demand growth on a sustainable path" in the second half of the year. www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2010/pr10315.htm

Foreign debt increases by 10% (source: Diario Libre) The foreign debt increased by 23.9% in the first half of the year compared to the same period of the year before including US\$750 million in sovereign bonds issued by the government last May. According to the Central Bank report on the economy, as of 30 June 2010, the foreign debt is at US\$9.98 billion. The greater part of these resources came from a bond issue, short-term loans and the Petrocaribe agreement. More information on the website of the Central Bank: <http://www.bancentral.gov.do>

Organic farming still strong (source: El Caribe) Organic farming exports are up this year. In the DR there are 98,110.23 hectares dedicated to organic production, and 13,660 farmers, according to the Ministry of Agriculture. Stats from the Center for Export and Investment of the DR (CEI-RD) indicates that in the first seven months of the year, organic exports were US\$77.9 million, for 97.2 million kilograms. This is US\$32.3 million (70.8%) more than these exports for the same period in 2009. The main organic exports are: bananas, cacao, coffee, coconuts, mangos, Persian limes, avocados, ginger. On a smaller scale, eggplant, peppers, tobacco and pineapple. In the DR, there are three agencies that certify organic production: BCS Dominicana, IMO Caribe, Suelo y Salud Dominicana.

Central Bank report on economy (source: Diario Libre) The Central Bank says the Dominican economy grew 7.5% in the first half of the year. This compares to 1.4% GDP growth for the first half of 2009. The Central Bank attributes the growth to injections of capital that helped maintain the stability of the exchange rate and curb inflation. Sectors growing the most in 2010 were construction 15.2%, commerce 14.3%, energy and water 10.6%, manufacturing 9.3%, finances and insurance 9.7%, farming and communications 7.8%. The construction sector benefitted from RD\$24.4 billion in loans.



Public sector investment was RD\$31.0 billion. Manufacturing at industrial free zone parks reportedly was down 11.1%, with apparel down 17.4%. Tourism showed a 2.2% increase in spending of visitors, compared to a 7.3% decline for the same period last year. Inflation was 2.87%, compared to 3.19% for the same period last year. The balance of payments shows a deficit of US\$410.1 million, financed by international reserves of the Central Bank. Imports were up 28% from US\$5.68 billion in the first half of 2009 to US\$7.27 billion for 2010. Non-petroleum imports increased 25.5%, going from US\$3.44 billion to US\$4.32 billion. Net liquid international reserves declined to US\$1.21 billion, down US\$568.7 million. The Central Bank says that government spending was up 24.5% for the first half of the year, compared to January-June in 2009.

Seaboard announces switch to natural gas (source: Listin Diario) Transcontinental Capital Corporation (Seaboard) that operates the Estrella del Mar and Estrella del Norte power generation plants on the Ozama River has announced that these units will be replaced by a single one operating on natural gas. They will source the natural gas using the same pipeline that supplies the Los Mina generators. Seaboard says that this will cut generation costs by 50%. The plant, which will cost US\$135 million, will enter into operation in the third quarter of 2011.

Trade Events



Feria Internacional de Bogotá - Exposición Industrial, October 4-8, 2010, Carrera 37 No. 24-67, Bogotá, Colombia The Bogota International Fair is the specialized highlight of the most representative Industrial Macro sector in the Andean Region, Central America and the Caribbean. The event brings together the most varied and complete exhibit of industrial machinery, equipment, new technologies, technological advances, supplies, intermediate goods, raw materials and services related to the ,metallurgy, energy, packaging, plastics, air conditioning safety and related services industries, represented by national and international exhibitors.



Conference on carbon markets and climate finance to feature Mexico and Central America (Source: Ecosystem Marketplace) Following the success of last year's event, Green Power Conferences announce that the second international Carbon Markets Mexico & Central America networking conference will take place in Mexico City. In 2009 this event was attended by over 100 participants from 14 countries. The event will create a networking platform for the Mexican and Central American carbon market industry, policy makers and potential investors to examine growth strategies for the market as well as investment options and regional policy movements.

More information



TRADEPLATFORM:

In 2009 the Departments of Commerce of the Dutch Embassies Guatemala-City, Managua and San José developed a trade platform. This Business to Business (B2B) tool helps Central American and



Dutch companies to get in touch with the aim of exchanging information and doing business. The website www.doingtradeincentralamerica.com provides information sources for Dutch companies interested in doing trade with Central American companies, and groups them together on this website. On the 1st of November 2009 the Embassy of the Netherlands has launched a trade platform, which can be found at www.centralamericab2b.com. This service is provided free of charge. The services of this trade platform include the possibility to promote your company, to publish your trade leads, to search for potential contacts or partners in the different countries and sectors, and to contact the companies that you are interested in. In addition, notifications of events that could be of interest to Dutch or Central American companies will be published on this platform. To maximize the accessibility for all parties, the website is in English. Furthermore, a short manual is provided to make the usage of the website as easy as possible.

To benefit from all these services, please register your company at http://www.centralamericab2b.com/index.php?option=com_comprofiler&task=registers.



EVD country webpage

The NL EVD Internationaal provides Central American country web pages where you can find up-to-date information, such as: business news, economical developments, tenders, country information (incl. fact sheet and laws), interesting sectors, activities, important documents and the business country guide from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. For more information visit the website: www.evd.nl/landen. More information can also be obtained from Judith Brussee, e-mail: centraal-amerika@info.agentschapnl.nl telephone: +0031 (088) - 602 80 97.



Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands as information source

On the website of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in San José (for the countries Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras and El Salvador) you can not only find general information about these countries in our resort, but also specific commercial information. Our 'handelswijzers' business trade guides entail broad and up-to-date information on how to do business in each of the four countries, they are meant as a tool/guide for Dutch exporters and investors. For more information visit: www.holanda.cr, www.handelswijzer.com, www.doingtradeincentralamerica.com or www.centralamericab2b.com.

For more information you can contact our commercial department at the Dutch Embassy in San José thru email sanjose@trade-minbuza.nl or by phone (00506) 2296 1490 (Carel Richter or Hans Buhrs).

You can also contact our Consulaat-Generaal in Panama (Debby van der Schuit), Phone: (00507) 263 6494 or (00507) 264 7257. Email: consuladonl@cwpanama.net

For more information about Guatemala you can contact the commercial department of the Dutch Embassy in Guatemala City by email; gua-ez@minbuza.nl or by telephone (00502) 2381 4300 (Susana Azurdia). More information can be found on the website: www.mfa.nl/gua

For more information about Nicaragua you can contact the commercial department of the Dutch Embassy in Managua by email mng@minbuza.nl or by telephone (00505) 2276 8630 (Jan Bauer, Luis Bravo) For more information visit the following website: www.embajadaholanda-nic.com .

For more information about the Dominican Republic contact the commercial department of the Dutch Embassy in Santo Domingo by email std-ea@minbuza.nl or by telephone (00 1 809) 262 0320 (Reinier Davina) More information is available on the following website: www.holanda.org.do