



ICLogistics

Completing the last mile of supply chain integration™

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michelle Garcia
Inner Circle Logistics, Inc.

Phone: 786-207-2592
Email: mgarcia@iclogistics.com

Building Capacity and Sustainability for Balkan Trade Facilitation: The SCcORE Model

Belgrade, Serbia (October 3, 2008) – Inner Circle Logistics (ICLogistics), a supply chain focused net-centric data and document management solutions firm, the Customs Administrations of Macedonia and Serbia, and the University of Belgrade’s Faculty of Traffic and Transport Engineering organized and held a successful conference on Supply Chain Operational Management and International Logistics this week. This was the final of three conferences in the suite entitled “The Silk Road – Information Highway of the 21st Century.” These conferences were developed and implemented to further results of a United States Trade Development Agency (USTDA) funded Pilot project in the Balkans. In 2007, Customs Administration Republic of Macedonia (CARM) was conferred a grant to fund a technical assistance program and pilot project that will facilitate trade by simplifying transit documentation requirements through a regional “single window” entry system for the Customs Administrations of Macedonia, Serbia and Bulgaria. ICLogistics was selected as the contractor to provide technical assistance and manage the pilot project that successfully demonstrated a solution that will increase trade capacity in South East Europe (SEE) along Corridor X, one of the five most important strategic transport routes in Europe.

As a method to disseminate Project information and bring together key stakeholders, three conferences were organized throughout the project lifecycle. These conferences were underpinned by the Supply Chain Centers of Regional Excellence (SCcORE) Model. The SCcORE Model was developed, in conjunction with the TDA Project, to institutionalize the concepts of supply chain management (SCM) and technical innovation as drivers to improved trade facilitation and will play a central role in fostering the competitiveness of SMEs in Macedonia, Bulgaria and Serbia. The Centers will provide the Balkans, key partnerships and the necessary infrastructure to compete across borders and utilize competitive advantages to create a Regional “Inter-modal Hub” of trade along Balkan Trade Corridors. The Centers will provide the capability to build SCM and logistics competencies across the academic and commercial training spectrum, training SMEs and their trading partners on contemporary business process management (BPM) techniques and supply chain processes.

The Center will provide support in the areas of supply chain strategy, process management, competitive benchmarking, e-Commerce, trade facilitation, and education that targets both the public and private sector. This facility will directly support regional efforts to attract FDI by enabling directed response from specific market segments of SMEs with the required infrastructure and implementation support to enable rapid development of capabilities, strategies, business process requirements, and operational planning. This initiative enables established governmental and international donor funding in the region and will be based on established principles for supply chain optimization. Regional businesses and SME firms have the optimal supply and demand conditions to take advantage of Centers that offers electronic supply chain, logistics and trade facilitation tools. The SCcORE Model of public-private partnership must be self-sustaining in the long term and the Project strongly believes that the Center must ultimately remain in private sector hands to achieve success.

The Belgrade Conference built on the opportunities created by the successful demonstration of the ICT-based trade facilitation solution, as well as previous conferences held in Bulgaria and Macedonia during the life of the Project. A key thread throughout the conference was developing the “21st Century Silk Road” using the key concepts of supply chain management and ICT infrastructure. “If not us, then who and if not now, then when” was a point often made during the conference by John Clendenin, Chief Executive Officer of ICLogistics. The conference’s opening ceremonies were well attended with representatives of the United

States Embassy in Belgrade, Director of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, Dean of the Faculty of Traffic and Transport Engineering, and the Deputy Director General of Serbian Customs. A key supporter throughout conference development was the Serbian Ambassador to the United States, Mr. Vujacic. The remainder of the conference proceedings allowed attendees the opportunity to take part in Panel Sessions that discussed issues pertinent to moving from a demonstrated solution to wider regional implementation, the significant opportunities created, and obstacles to be overcome. These Panel Sessions covered a diverse area of topics that included Funding Sources, Technical Aspects, Public & Private Sector, Policy Issues, and Cross-Cutting Strategies. A key component of this conference was the active involvement of the academic community, a key to long-term sustainability.

The Belgrade Conference was preceded by the “Conference on Technology and Innovation” during May, 2008 in Skopje and Ohrid, Macedonia. The purpose of this conference was twofold, (1) to measure progress in introducing improved trade technology and processes and (2) to examine the plan for the demonstration of the improved technology under consideration to increase the efficiency and volume of trading activity among Bulgaria, Macedonia and Serbia. The conference began at the University of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Skopje with sessions supporting the introduction of university-based centers of excellence in each country to support strengthened education to sustain growth in trading activities. The following day a review of the project began in Skopje with reports on main elements of the project tasks and presentations on related projects offering insights into the aims and approach for this trade project. The conference continued in Ohrid, Macedonia on the campus of The Faculty of Tourism and Customs Administration with an examination of the plan for the demonstration of proposed technologies and a presentation and description of those technologies. It was a particular privilege for the participants of this project to conduct this conference as a part of the “International Conference for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Regional Development” held in Macedonia on May 8 -11th.

The first of this suite of “21st Century Silk Road” conferences was held in March, 2008 in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria on the campus of the American University Bulgaria. The “Trade Policy and Strategy Conference” gathered decision makers (government agencies, ministries, & embassies), the academic community & students (universities), and the business sector (SMEs). Participants focused on the policy environment and the framework it provides for trade facilitation, particularly the need for trade policies that foster transparency and advocate the use of innovative technologies as a driver for long term economic growth. During the conference significant time was devoted to the issues, both policy and technical, surrounding the implementation of the ‘single window’ software solution facilitating cross-border trade. This included updates in stakeholder progress and outlook, addressing and vetting issues of security and data clarity, and planning and presentation of the upcoming pilot implementation phase and the technical components that will comprise the overall solution. The conference was comprised of two sections, the first two days were devoted to the presentation and discussion of academic research in fields related to trade facilitation and the last two days were devoted to the business and regulatory environment needed to carry out this trade facilitation.

About ICLogistics

ICLogistics provides the connectivity required to complete the "last mile" of supply chain integration in an inexpensive and easy-to-use format. It delivers significant cost savings, international reach and an unprecedented level of access to supply chain information to large corporations and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by combining a business-to-business (B2B) technology model with a patent-pending process for exchanging inventory and supply chain data. ICLogistics combines Web-enabled data and document management with the integration and information management capabilities of enterprise resources planning (ERP) to power full supply chain integration. www.iclogistics.com.

###