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## **San Diego market assessment finds region well-positioned to expand exports**

*Public-private coalition releases framework for regional export strategy;  
350 area companies participate to help form Brookings-backed plan*

**SAN DIEGO** – An analysis released today reveals San Diego’s competitive strengths and opportunities to increase global competitiveness through exports of goods and services. The analysis will serve as the foundation for a Regional Export Plan to drive economic growth and job creation.

The Washington-based Brookings Institution selected San Diego as one of only eight U.S. cities to participate in a national initiative to pioneer new strategies that boost exports and global economic competitiveness. San Diego is part of a select group of cities nationwide to lead this effort.

With Brookings support, a coalition of business, government and civic leaders developed the initial phase of a customized export plan based on the region’s unique assets. A market assessment was completed and goals were established to help more local businesses connect with international customers.

“San Diego’s economy is driven by innovative businesses and industry sectors with enormous untapped potential in the global marketplace,” said Marek Gootman, director of strategic partnerships at Brookings. “We chose to work with San Diego because of our confidence in its economic development approach and strong leadership. The analysis that San Diego did is a national model for how to undertake export self-assessments, and clearly defines where regional partners need to take action.”

San Diego Mayor Bob Filner said: “Exports mean jobs, good jobs and liveable-wage jobs. San Diego is a port city blessed with a naturally deep-water harbor that can support and grow what I call the ‘aqua economy’ – a combination of the blue maritime economy and the green environmental economy. And to make this export initiative work, we’ve got to get everyone involved, from the chambers of commerce, the service organizations, the planning groups, the big and small businesses, to the port and the region’s universities and municipalities. It’s in everyone’s best interests.”

The market assessment was built from responses from more than 350 local companies – the highest number of companies to participate of all cities selected by Brookings – including some that export and some that do not export. The in-depth survey was designed by graduate students at UC San Diego’s School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (IR/PS). It gauged current export activity, export-related challenges and the infrastructure and policy measures needed to increase the region’s international business interests.

IR/PS Dean Peter Cowhey said: “It is alarming that San Diego punches so far below its weight in exporting. San Diego is the 17th largest metropolitan economy in the U.S., but we rank 55th when examining exports as a share of our regional economic output,” Cowhey said. “While other metropolitan

regions have stepped up their export game, San Diego's economy has become less export oriented since 2001. Now we have a real opportunity to reverse that trend."

UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla said: "I am pleased that our graduate students played a critical role in this market assessment research for our region. Their work exemplifies the myriad ways our university has a positive impact on our community and demonstrates our dedication to applying our knowledge and experience to address real-world issues."

Regional infrastructure is one area that needs to be improved, according to the analysis. The survey found the three areas that need the most improvement are the airport, port and cyber infrastructure.

"The Brookings data validates that the Port's two marine terminals are essential to San Diego's export capability. We're working to provide competitive facilities for local exporters. This initiative enlists all of our region's leaders in making export activity a priority as part of our job-generating 'Aqua Economy,'" said Bob Nelson, Board of Port Commissioners vice chair.

Small and Mid-Size Enterprises (SMEs) –which included 85 percent of respondents— served as a cornerstone of the report. Analysis revealed that they offer enormous untapped growth potential for the regional economy, which is on par with national data received from Brookings.

"Small and Mid-Size Enterprises (SMEs) are critical to our region," said Duane Roth, CEO of CONNECT. "Fortunately we have a diverse number of SMEs that are models of global competitiveness. These success stories provide best practices and peer knowledge that are necessary to propel the SME community towards global markets."

The analysis also found there is a need for San Diego to establish a presence in new countries around the world. According to the more than 350 companies involved, Asia represented the largest future market for San Diego (41 percent of respondents indicated the region as a priority), with Latin America (22 percent), and Europe (20 percent) trailing as the second and third priority regions respectively.

"Clearly San Diego has the opportunity to enhance its global footprint by capitalizing on our existing strengths," said Steve Weathers, president and CEO of World Trade Center San Diego. "This analysis shows us where we can expand our trade reach to grow the local economy by focusing on exports."

Using this market assessment and strategic framework, regional partners will complete the final plan, including specific performance measures and resource commitments. These partners include: the City of San Diego; U.S. Commercial Service; San Diego County Regional Airport Authority; Port of San Diego; UC San Diego; San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation; San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce; Tijuana EDC; BIOCOM; CONNECT; World Trade Center San Diego; and JPMorgan Chase Bank.

View the complete market assessment (<http://www.sandiegobusiness.org/news/press/san-diego-metropolitan-export-initiative> ) and fast facts (<http://www.sandiegobusiness.org/sites/default/files/BROOKINGS-FASTFACTS-F-0513.pdf> )

Expert statement sheet:

[http://www.sandiegobusiness.org/sites/default/files/Statement%20Sheet%20for%20Brookings\\_0.pdf](http://www.sandiegobusiness.org/sites/default/files/Statement%20Sheet%20for%20Brookings_0.pdf)

B-Roll: [https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/94162659/media\\_ucsd.zip](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/94162659/media_ucsd.zip)

Photos from the event are available upon request.

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