

# US tea and tech firms in Rwanda, Vietnam win awards

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Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Wednesday presented one of America's top technology giants and a small tea importer with awards for their work in Vietnam and Rwanda.

Technology giant Intel was honored with the 2012 Award for Corporate Excellence for its work in Vietnam, while family-owned [Tea](#) Importers Inc based in Connecticut was rewarded in the small company category for its decades of doing business in Rwanda.

"In today's [global economy](#) corporations of all sizes have more influence than ever on global affairs especially on growth in developing and [emerging economies](#)," Clinton said at a State Department ceremony.

The conduct of companies working abroad is important to America's foreign policy, Clinton stressed, because "most people's impressions of our country will be shaped by our businesses."

"It's how millions and millions of people find out about our values, what we really stand for, what kind of people we are," she said.

"So it's critically important for the interests of our foreign policy for our American companies to operate responsibly and well."

Tea Importers was established in 1953 and began marketing tea from Rwanda.

It was later asked by the government to open a factory in a remote area, leading to a joint-venture, known as Sorwathe, which is now the country's top tea producer.

It works with 4,573 farmers, grows organic tea, and has been a pioneer on workers' rights, campaigning against child labor and becoming the first firm to sign a collective bargaining agreement with its workers.

Intel has worked with USAID and Arizona University to help train the next generation of Vietnamese engineers by supporting eight Vietnamese universities, and providing scholarships—mostly for women—to study in

the US.

Clinton said the technology giant had become a leader in promoting "education, sustainable development and empowering women" and highlighted how all its plants in Vietnam recycle and re-treat [waste water](#).

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