

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**International Trade Administration**

[Docket No. 970424097-5061-08]

Market Development Cooperator Program (MDCP)

AGENCY: International Trade Administration (ITA), Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice and request for applications.

SUMMARY: ITA is soliciting U.S. export promotion projects to be conducted by eligible entities for periods of up to three years. Project award periods normally begin between October 1, 2005 and January 1, 2006, but may begin as late as April 1, 2006. MDCP awards help to underwrite the start-up costs of new export ventures that export multipliers are often reluctant to undertake without Federal Government support. MDCP aims to develop, maintain and expand foreign markets for non-agricultural goods and services produced in the United States.

DATES: Proposals must be received by ITA no later than 5 p.m. EST, April 25, 2005. A public meeting to discuss the competition will be held on March 18, 2005, at 2 p.m. in Room 6059 at the address indicated below.

ADDRESSES: Proposals must be submitted to ITA, U.S. Department of Commerce, HCHB 3215; Washington, DC 20230, or via e-mail to MDCPMail@ita.doc.gov. The full funding opportunity announcement and the application kit for this request for applications are available at <http://www.export.gov/mdcp>, or by contacting Brad Hess at 202-482-2969.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Interested parties who are unable to access information via Internet or who have questions may contact Mr. Brad Hess by mail (see **ADDRESSES**), by phone at 202-482-2969, by fax at 202-482-

4462, or via Internet at Brad_Hess@ita.doc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Electronic Access: The full funding opportunity announcement for MDCP is available at <http://www.export.gov/mdcp>.

Funding Availability: Approximately \$2,000,000 will be available through this announcement for fiscal year 2005. Awards are limited to \$400,000 each. ITA anticipates making five to nine awards, depending on the amounts requested and the availability of funds.

Statutory Authority: 15 U.S.C. 4723.

CFDA: 11.112, Market Development Cooperator Program.

Eligibility: Trade associations, state departments of trade and their regional associations, and non-profit industry organizations, including export multiplier organizations such as World Trade Centers, centers for international trade development and small business development centers are eligible to apply for an MDCP award.

Cost Sharing Requirements: Two dollars for every federal dollar. The first dollar must be cash. The rest of the match may be cash or in kind.

Intergovernmental Review: Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of federal programs."

Evaluation and Selection Procedures: After receiving the applications, ITA will screen each one to determine the applicant's eligibility to receive an award. After receiving all applications, a selection panel composed of ITA managers will review the applications using the evaluation criteria below, score them, and forward a ranked funding recommendation to the Assistant Secretary for Manufacturing and Services. The Assistant Secretary makes the final selection of award winners, justifying any deviation from the selection panel's ranked recommendation.

Evaluation Criteria: The selection panel reviews each eligible application based on five evaluation criteria. The evaluation criteria scores assigned by the panel determine which applications are recommended for funding. The evaluation criteria are listed below.

(1) Export Success Potential (20%). This is the potential of the project to generate export success stories and/or export initiatives in both the short-term and medium-term.

(2) Performance Measures (20%). Applicants must provide quantifiable estimates of how the project will increase or enhance the U.S. industry's export presence in the foreign market(s).

(3) Partnership and Priorities (20%). This criterion indicates the degree to which the project initiates or enhances partnership with ITA and the degree to which the proposal furthers or is compatible with ITA's priorities.

(4) Creativity and Capacity (20%). Applicants demonstrate creativity, innovation, and realism in the project work plan as well as their institutional capacity to carry out the work plan.

(5) Budget and Sustainability (20%). This criterion indicates the reasonableness and effectiveness of the itemized budget for project activities, the amount of the cash match that is readily available, and the probability that the project can be continued on a self-sustained basis after the completion of the award.

The five criteria together constitute the application score. At 20 points per criterion, the total possible score is 100.

Selection Factors: The Assistant Secretary may deviate from the selection panel's ranked recommendation only based on the following factors: (1) Scores of individual selection panel members and the selection panel's written assessments, (2) Degree to which applications satisfy ITA priorities, (3) Geographic distribution of the proposed awards, (4) Diversity of industry sectors and overseas markets covered by the proposed awards, (5) Diversity of project activities represented by the proposed awards, (6) Avoidance of redundancy and conflicts with the initiatives of other federal agencies, and (7) Availability of funds.

The ITA priorities referred to under Evaluation Criteria (3) and Selection Factor (2) are listed below. ITA is interested in receiving proposals to promote U.S. exports that include, but are not limited to, projects that: (1) Improve the competitiveness of U.S. manufacturing and service industries by addressing impediments to innovation and cost reduction; (2) Increase competitiveness of U.S. industries by addressing non-tariff barriers, especially those related to standards; (3) Capitalize on trade opportunities resulting from trade agreements; (4) Increase overall export awareness and awareness of ITA programs and services among U.S. companies, by making SMEs export-ready or by facilitating deal-making; (5) Ensure compliance with trade agreements; (6) Increase the competitiveness of U.S. industries by developing commercial infrastructure in emerging economies; (7) Develop non-traditional approaches to creating demand for the products/services developed from new U.S. technologies; and (8) Support the Administration's

broader foreign policy objectives through trade-related initiatives.

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the **Federal Register** notice of December 30, 2004 (69 FR 78389) are applicable to this solicitation.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This document contains collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). The use of Standard Forms 424 and 424A, 424B, SF-LLL, and CD-346 has been approved by OMB under the respective control numbers 0348-0043, 0348-0044, 0348-0040, 0348-0046, and 0605-0001. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Executive Order 12866

This notice has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

Executive Order 13132 (Federalism)

It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

Administrative Procedure Act/Regulatory Flexibility Act

Prior notice and an opportunity for public comments are not required by the Administrative Procedure Act or any other law for this notice concerning grants, benefits, and contracts (5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2)). Because notice and opportunity for comment are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) are inapplicable. Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis has not been prepared.

Dated: March 7, 2005.

Robert W. Pearson,

Director, Office of Planning, Coordination and Management, Manufacturing and Services, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

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