



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

July 17, 2008

Dear Airport Sponsor:

As you may already know, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) staff has been working diligently with colleagues in other parts of the Department of Transportation (DOT) to develop guidance for airport sponsors regarding the difficult issue of how to credit the participation of Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) joint venture participants.

49 CFR Part 23, the DOT's ACDBE rule, requires FAA-assisted airports to set goals for the use of ACDBEs. As a result, airports frequently receive proposals from large national concessions companies to meet ACDBE goals by establishing a joint venture with a small local ACDBE. These arrangements are often complex and it can be difficult for airports to determine how much credit toward a goal should be counted for the ACDBE firm's participation.

Ever since Part 23 was revised in March 2005, airports and other stakeholders have been asking for guidance in this area. FAA has remained determined to develop a product that is practical and balanced in terms of ACDBE program requirements, legal necessities, and business realities. In developing this guidance we held two national level stakeholder meetings where we solicited comments on a draft of the guidance document. We received valuable input from airports, trade associations, attorneys, national concessionaires, ACDBEs, and consultants.

We heard you, we have worked with you, and we are now proud to issue the final guidance. The final guidance reflects the best thinking of FAA and DOT civil rights and legal professionals, our expert ACDBE program consultants, as well as input from our stakeholders. This product consists of the main guidance document and three attachments: (1) a model ACDBE joint venture information form (to be submitted to airports for review with the joint venture agreement), (2) samples (how to calculate the ACDBE joint venture participant's portion of the work), and (3) a flowchart (outlining the ACDBE joint venture review process).

I hope that the attached guidance will assist you in enhanced oversight and effectiveness of your ACDBE program. This guidance is posted on our web site ([http://www.faa.gov/about/office\\_org/headquarters\\_offices/acr/bus\\_ent\\_program/](http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/acr/bus_ent_program/)), where we have also posted the model ACDBE joint venture information form in Microsoft Word format.

If you have any questions, please contact your regional FAA DBE Program Manager (see [http://www.faa.gov/about/office\\_org/headquarters\\_offices/acr/about/field/](http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/acr/about/field/)).

Sincerely,

Fanny Rivera  
Assistant Administrator for Civil Rights  
and FAA Diversity Advocate

Enclosure

**AIRPORT CONCESSIONS  
DISADVANTAGED  
BUSINESS ENTERPRISE**

**JOINT  
VENTURE  
GUIDANCE**

**U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Aviation Administration**

*As guidance, this document sets forth the interpretations of the Department of Transportation of its existing legal authorities and the Department's recommendations for carrying out the airport concessions disadvantaged business enterprise (ACDBE) program. This guidance does not create new legal mandates independent of the Department's statutory and regulatory authorities, but is intended to inform interested parties and the public of the way in which the Department understands and will implement those authorities. Regulated parties may consult the Federal Aviation Administration with respect to alternative means of compliance with ACDBE joint venture requirements.*

*The General Counsel of the Department of Transportation has reviewed this document and has approved it as consistent with the language and intent of 49 CFR Part 23.*

**AIRPORT CONCESSIONS DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE  
JOINT VENTURE GUIDANCE  
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# ACDBE JOINT VENTURE GUIDANCE

## **Section 1 – General**

### **1.0 What is the purpose of this Joint Venture Guidance?**

The purpose of this joint venture (JV) guidance is to provide information and direction to airports, Airport Concessionaire Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) program staff, ACDBEs and various stakeholders on the structure, implementation, and counting of joint venture arrangements in the ACDBE Program.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is responsible for overseeing airport compliance with the ACDBE program found in 49 CFR Part 23. Airports have a vested interest in ensuring that the appropriate ACDBE participation is counted and that there is effective structuring and monitoring of joint ventures and joint venture participation by ACDBEs in the concession activities of airports. FAA and the Department of Transportation (the Department) support and provide guidance to airports, ACDBEs, and various stakeholders to effectively administer their overall ACDBE program.

In developing this guidance, the views of various stakeholders were solicited and considered. Whenever possible, FAA considered the representations made by stakeholders regarding “usual practices” or “standard practices.” However, it should be noted that accommodation for certain practices was not possible where the practice conflicted with requirements of the regulation and/or objectives of the program. Some business, accounting, and tax practices that may be completely legitimate in the business world between two or more firms may not be appropriate under the Department’s ACDBE regulation, 49 CFR Part 23, which was revised and updated in the Federal Register on March 22, 2005.

## **1.1 Why is Joint Venture Guidance necessary?**

The preamble to 49 CFR Part 23 states “We have become aware that some concessions joint ventures indeed do not involve an ACDBE performing an independent part of the work; some of these have been the focus of fraud investigations by the Department’s Office of Inspector General and other law enforcement organizations. If the ACDBE participant is not required to perform independently a distinct portion of the joint venture’s work, it becomes very easy for a prime concessionaire seeking to circumvent ACDBE requirements by having an ACDBE silent partner on its payroll. We believe that changing this provision would adversely affect the integrity of the program. Because joint ventures have become a problematic part of the ACDBE program, the Department is drafting additional guidance on the subject.”

Airports, ACDBEs, consultants and other stakeholders are obligated to develop, approve, monitor, and count ACDBE participation in joint venture agreements in accordance with current rules and guidelines. However, as noted above, joint ventures present unique challenges in the Part 23 concessions program. The Department is concerned that airport owners/operators, ACDBEs, non-ACDBEs, and consultants may be interpreting and applying the current regulations in an inconsistent as well as an incorrect manner. Many have requested guidance to assist them in implementing the ACDBE program. This guidance is designed to assist in the effective structuring, monitoring and counting of joint ventures and joint venture participation by ACDBEs in the concessions activities of airports receiving Federal financial assistance from the Airport Improvement Program of the FAA. This guidance does not implement new regulations or requirements but merely clarifies existing requirements.

## **1.2 What does 49 CFR Part 23 say about joint ventures as an option for ACDBE participation?**

The Department’s revised final rule for 49 CFR Part 23 (Participation of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in Airport Concessions) was issued on March 22, 2005, making the rule parallel in many respects to the Department’s DBE regulation for federally-assisted contracts. The preamble states, in part, that the “objectives of this program are very similar to those stated for Part 26. Extensive information has been developed over the years . . . that supports the proposition that there is not a level playing field for small disadvantaged businesses in the U.S. The legislative history of the original ACDBE statute itself shows that Congress was very

concerned that DBE firms had fair (i.e., nondiscriminatory) access to concession opportunities.” The program requires goal-setting by airports to obtain ACDBE participation. These goals can be met in a variety of ways, including direct ownership arrangements by ACDBE firms in airport concessions as well as through the purchase of goods and services by concessionaires from ACDBE vendors. The airport owner or operator must require businesses subject to ACDBE goals at the airport (except car rental companies) to make good faith efforts to explore all available options to meet goals, to the maximum extent practicable, through direct ownership arrangements with ACDBEs, including joint ventures and franchises.

Some stakeholders may have interpreted this to mean that all direct ownership arrangements, including joint ventures, are equally effective in achieving meaningful ACDBE participation and that one method should not be preferred over another. In fact, each opportunity represents unique challenges and one method may be better suited for a particular structure than another.

It should be noted that, prior to considering the best structure for participation, airports are encouraged to carefully evaluate (on a case-by-case basis) proposed bid requests, requests for proposals, and other types of solicitations to ensure that it is practical for ACDBE participation to be met in a reasonable manner.

49 CFR § 23.25(e)(1)(iv) states as follows:

*The administrative procedures applicable to contract goals in part 26, § 26.51–53, apply with respect to concession-specific goals.*

49 CFR § 26.51(e)(2) states as follows:

*You are not required to set a contract goal on every DOT-assisted contract. You are not required to set each contract goal at the same percentage level as the overall goal. The goal for a specific contract may be higher or lower than that percentage level of the overall goal, depending on such factors as the type of work involved, the location of the work, and the availability of DBEs for the work of the particular contract. However, over the period covered by your overall goal, you must set contract goals so that they will cumulatively result in meeting any portion of your overall goal you do not project being able to meet through the use of race-neutral means.*



Airports are encouraged to consider, in the development and implementation of their ACDBE plan, the best method of ACDBE participation, including the potential for “unbundling” contracts to create separate and smaller opportunities for direct contracting, thus creating an environment where small and disadvantaged firms could be more competitive. In some instances, a joint venture scenario may be difficult to implement while a subcontract or other arrangement may be a better vehicle to achieve ACDBE participation. In other cases, a joint venture may represent the best opportunity for implementing a workable arrangement. We encourage airports to promote joint venture opportunities whereby ACDBEs would partner with former ACDBEs (e.g., those which have exceeded PNW and/or size standards). This may create a more even bargaining position and may also provide a much needed transitional role for the former ACDBE. Of course, there would be no ACDBE credit given for the former ACDBE, only for the currently certified ACDBE participant in the joint venture. The former ACDBE might serve as a mentor to a less experienced ACDBE. The initial determination by the airport as to the best form of business structure (i.e., JV, subcontract, management contract, etc.) identified in its solicitation for requests and/or proposals from interested parties may reduce difficulties in counting ACDBE participation for accomplishment reporting purposes.

## **Section 2 – Definitions**

### **2.1 What is a joint venture?**

For purposes of the ACDBE program, a joint venture is defined as an “association of an ACDBE firm and one or more other firms to carry out a single, for-profit business enterprise, for which the parties combine their property, capital, efforts, skills and knowledge, and in which the ACDBE is responsible for a distinct, clearly defined portion of the work of the contract and whose shares in the capital contribution, control, management, risks, and profits of the joint venture are commensurate with its ownership interest.” Much of the remainder of this document will be directed toward further explaining many of the components of this “joint venture” definition.

## **2.2 What does an “association” of an ACDBE firm and one or more other firms mean?**

In accordance with the objectives of the ACDBE regulations, joint ventures are intended to have **a business structure set forth in a signed written agreement** that **clearly and specifically** defines the participation of each party in the contribution of property, capital, efforts, skills and knowledge.

Any legal structure that meets federal and state legal requirements may be used to form a joint venture provided that, for purposes of counting ACDBE participation, the requirements of 49 CFR Part 23 are met. The joint venture should operate in accordance with a written agreement. Please note that any business structure that meets the Part 23 definition of “joint venture” will be considered a joint venture for purposes of counting ACDBE participation, regardless of the name attributed to the business structure in the written agreement.

Some of the important components that should be included in the written agreement are noted below:

- **Identification of the participants in the Joint Venture.** The JV participants must be firms, including sole proprietorships, not individuals. In addition, the ACDBE participant must be certified as an ACDBE in the type of business operated by the joint venture, and in the State where the airport is located, in order for the participation to count towards ACDBE goals.
- **Identification of the single, for-profit business enterprise to be undertaken by the joint venture.** See Section 2.3 for further explanation.
- **Term of the joint venture agreement and factors effecting the term** (e.g., concession contract extensions or termination, sale of interest, etc.).
- **Capital to be contributed by each party** (initial contributions and future needs should be addressed).
- **Accounting methods and distribution of profits/losses.**
- **Management of the joint venture’s business**, including overall management (e.g., participation on a management committee or management board) and day-to-day management responsibilities.

- **Administrative matters**, including joint venture office locations, recordkeeping requirements, identification of an auditor, fiscal year, addresses for notices, transfer of interests, etc.
- **Dissolution**, including events/conditions upon which the joint venture may be dissolved and terminated, and assets distributed.

### **2.3 May a “single, for-profit business enterprise” have more than one contract or business location at an airport.**

While a joint venture must be a single business entity, it may have more than one contract with a given airport or more than one business location at the airport. It is the joint venture as an entity, and not the individual participants in the joint venture, that should have the contractual relationship(s) with the airport. The specifics of the participation in each contract should be clearly stated in the joint venture agreement to enable the airport to separately monitor all of the elements of the joint venture entity’s participation in each. The participants in the joint venture which are requesting ACDBE credit should be required to disclose any other business relationships currently in existence between or among the parties (e.g., joint ventures at other airports). In the event that other relationships exist, the airport and/or Unified Certification Program (UCP) should review the ACDBE participants’ eligibility for certification, to ensure continuing independence and control of the ACDBE firm in the operation of its business.

### **2.4 What does “the parties combine their property, capital, efforts, skills and knowledge” mean?**

Each party in a joint venture should bring real and substantial value to the joint venture enterprise. The parties should each contribute both tangible and intangible assets. If property is contributed, the joint venture agreement should clearly state at the outset its value; which is usually assessed based on liquidation value, replacement cost, or “value in use” methods. The parties should contribute capital commensurate with their ownership interest, knowledge and skills relative to the portion of the joint venture’s business for which they are responsible, and efforts to the success of the venture. The skill set (a combination of experience, core competencies, unique talent, etc.) provided by each party should add value to the joint venture relationship that is objectively apparent. This skill set should be specifically addressed in the

joint venture agreement, and verified by the airport during its initial review and periodically thereafter.

## **2.5 What does “the ACDBE is responsible for a distinct, clearly defined portion of the work of the contract” mean?**

In this context, “distinct” means separate and distinguishable from the work of the non-ACDBE. “Clearly defined” means that there is no guesswork involved in determining the nature of the work assigned to the ACDBE. In order to be considered a distinct, clearly defined portion of the work, it is necessary to fully understand exactly what the work will entail, including an estimate of the time and resource requirements for each major task. For example, if the ACDBE’s portion of the work is only described as “advise about ” or “participate in” a portion of the work, the work would likely not be considered distinct or clearly defined because it is not clear what work the ACDBE will accomplish. Much more detail would be necessary in order to determine the portion of the work to be attributed to the ACDBE. Of course, the work of the contract also includes the role of the ACDBE in the overall management of the business (e.g., as a participant on a management committee or some other governing board) as well as participation in the day-to-day management of the business.

## **2.6 What does “whose shares in the capital contribution, control, management, risks, and profits of the joint venture are commensurate with its ownership interest” mean?**

The ACDBE’s participation in each of these five areas should be proportionate to the claimed ownership. This is further discussed in Section 3.2.

## **Section 3 – Joint Venture Review**

### **3.1 What reviews should the airport make?**

The airport should review the joint venture agreement and supporting documents submitted by a joint venture entity to determine whether, in fact, the arrangement meets all the requirements of the regulation (49 CFR Parts 23 and 26) and what portion(s), if any, is eligible to be counted towards ACDBE participation. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 26.109, all participants in the DBE program, including, but not limited to, DBE firms and applicants for DBE certification, are required to cooperate fully and promptly with recipient certification reviews, investigations, and

other requests for information. Based on the review, the airport will assign a value to the ACDBE participation which may be counted towards the ACDBE goal provided that the joint venture operates in accordance with the submitted agreement. (See Attachment 3 – JV Review Process for a flowchart describing the recommended process for the review.) The airport should provide a written letter outlining any areas of concern and allow a reasonable amount of time for the applicant to respond and/or make reasonable adjustments where applicable. In accordance with 49 CFR § 23.29, airports must implement appropriate mechanisms to ensure compliance with the requirements of this part by all participants in the program. An airport must include in its concession program the specific provisions to be inserted into concession agreements and management contracts, the enforcement mechanisms, and other means to be used to ensure continued compliance. These provisions must include a monitoring and enforcement mechanism to verify that the work committed to ACDBEs is actually performed by the ACDBEs. In order to make this evaluation, the airport should review the entire set of circumstances involved in performing the contract and not rely on a single factor for making a compliance determination. The airport’s ACDBE program should describe in detail the level of effort and resources devoted to consistent monitoring and enforcement.

### **3.2 How does the airport determine if the ACDBE’s capital contribution, control, management, risks, and profits are commensurate with its ownership interest in the joint venture?**

An airport is responsible for reviewing joint venture agreements to ensure that capital contribution, control, management, risks, profits, ownership, and work to be performed by the ACDBE are clearly addressed. The parties involved in the joint venture and seeking to count ACDBE participation towards the ACDBE goal for the contract have the obligation to demonstrate to the airport that the ACDBE capital contribution, control, management, risks, and profits are commensurate with its ownership interest. (We recommend that, as with respect to other certification and counting matters, airports apply a “preponderance of the evidence” standard in evaluating whether the joint venture has made this demonstration.) The airport may follow up with questions and request written explanations. The airport may require the joint venture to submit information, including a summary of the agreement and supporting documentation, for review. (A sample form that may be used to accomplish this is included as Attachment 1.) The firm seeking to count ACDBE participation in a joint venture has the burden of demonstrating to the airport, by a preponderance of the evidence, that it meets the

requirements of the regulation with respect to being an eligible joint venture for counting purposes.

The following are tips for reviewing the various required areas for participation:

- **Capital contribution** – The capital to be contributed by each party should be clearly specified in the joint venture agreement. The agreement should specify the initial capital contributions to be made by each party and how future capital contributions will be allocated. The ACDBE’s portion of the initial and future capital contributions should be equal to its ownership percentage. A subsequent section of this guidance will discuss issues relating to **how** the capital is contributed (i.e., cash contributions or financing provided by the non-ACDBE joint venture participant).
- **Control** – The ACDBE participant(s) in the joint venture should have control in proportion to their ownership interest and proportionate control of the governance of the joint venture. Each joint venture partner should assume full responsibility for executing each element of the work assigned to it. Usually, a joint venture will have a management committee (referred to by various names, including “Executive Committee” or “Board”) that controls the overall business. The ACDBE participant(s) is usually a minority participant, owning less than 50% of the business. In this case, the ACDBE(s) can be out-voted on most of the business decisions made by the committee. This really means that for the most part, the joint venture is controlled by the party owning 51% or more of the business, usually not the ACDBE. However, the agreement should provide for control by the ACDBE of the activities for which it is responsible. This can be accomplished through direct control of their assigned role or establishment of a separate management committee or subcommittee in which the ACDBE has majority vote for issues involving facilities or responsibilities which it controls. In addition, there should be some major decisions requiring a unanimous vote to substantiate some level of control attributable to the ACDBE (e.g., items related to expansion, borrowing, lending money, etc.).
- **Management** – The ACDBE participant must share in the management of the joint venture. The agreement should address the issue of the overall management, or governance, of the business of the joint venture and the day-to-day management of the joint venture’s operation. The ACDBE participant should participate in the overall management, decision making, and day-to-day operations, including decisions

on the hiring and firing of management personnel (and if appropriate non-management personnel) for the joint venture to be eligible for ACDBE credit. This can be accomplished through a “Management Committee,” as described under “control,” though this is not the only acceptable mechanism. Under a management committee structure, the committee is responsible for managing and directing the business of the joint venture. Each participant is represented on the management committee and votes according to its ownership interest in the venture. Each participant on the management committee not only has a right, but an obligation to receive and consider the views of the ACDBE participant. The agreement should specify the frequency of the management committee meetings, and formal agendas and meeting minutes should be prepared. In addition, the agreement should provide for the day-to-day management of the joint venture and specify the roles and responsibilities of each participant. The issue of day-to-day roles and responsibilities assigned to the ACDBE participant is further discussed in Section 4.

- **Risks** – Each of the participants in the joint venture must share in the risks of the business in proportion to their ownership interest. These risks include financial, legal, operational, etc. The agreement should include provisions for proportional sharing in profits as well as losses (see section 3.4). However, a monthly distribution of actual profits or monthly payment of a management fee, as defined in the agreement, consistent with industry standards, is permissible.
- **Profits** – Each of the participants must also share in the profits and losses in proportion to the ownership interest. Accounting methods and the timing of distribution should be included in the agreement and reviewed for reasonableness by the airport. There should be no provisions in the agreement which have the effect of creating separate profit centers to siphon profits before each participant’s share is calculated. For example, requirements to purchase goods and/or services from one of the participants that results in controlling profits remaining for distribution to the joint venture participants are not acceptable. However, purchasing goods and/or services from one of the participants may be acceptable if the terms are spelled out and the cost of the goods reflects the actual cost of the product plus any processing/handling costs and reasonable overhead expenses. Airports should carefully examine all accounting mechanisms to ensure that the distribution process is reasonable.

### **3.3 Can the non-ACDBE joint venture participant loan capital to the ACDBE joint venture participant?**

Yes, with some restrictions and adequate documentation of the loan agreement. The airport should review the loan agreement (and related financial documents) to ensure that the arrangement does not limit the ACDBEs participation in the venture (e.g., by limiting risk, control, etc.).

The agreement should specify the amount of capital to be contributed by each joint venture participant. Capital contributions may include, for example, capital investment in facilities, inventory, security deposit, assets, working capital and first month's rent. It is preferable that each participant provides its own capital contributions or obtains a loan from an independent third-party source. To assist the ACDBE with third-party sourcing for capital, the non-ACDBE participant may provide and is encouraged to support the ACDBE participant with technical assistance in preparing financial reports and presentations to commercial banks and financial institutions for the purpose of obtaining financing. We realize that it may not be possible in some cases for small ACDBE firms to obtain independent financing given the unique nature of the airport environment. In this case, the non-ACDBE participant may provide financing to the ACDBE participant upon the following conditions:

- The terms and conditions of such a loan should be comparable to prevailing market conditions offered by commercial lenders for similar type projects (e.g., in terms of such factors as duration, rate, fees, etc.).
- The loan should be evidenced by a promissory note or loan agreement clearly stating the terms and conditions of the loan, including: due date and payment method, interest rate, prepayment, defaults, and collateral.
- The note should be a full recourse note. The note should be personally guaranteed by the ACDBE and/or secured by assets outside of the ownership interest or future profits of the joint venture. Otherwise the business risk is reduced or eliminated for the ACDBE.
- The loan should not be for 100% of the capital requirement. The ACDBE should invest capital from its own resources or through a third-party arms-length loan at market conditions. Generally, 10%–20% of the capital required (including all



capital contributions made to the joint venture, e.g., start-up capital, pre-opening expenses, facility construction, operating capital, reinvestment, etc.) is recommended as a benchmark to be provided by the ACDBE from its own resources or through a third-party as previously referenced.

- The term of the loan should not be longer than the term of the contract under which the joint venture operates (excluding options or extensions).
- There must not be provisions in the loan agreement which have the effect of limiting the ACDBEs ability to control its business or independently perform its designated role in the joint venture's business. Of course, this does not preclude a lender from including provisions in a loan agreement designed to preserve property that may have been pledged as collateral.

Some hold the view that the ACDBE participant should never borrow from the non-ACDBE participant as it leads to questions of independence and control by the ACDBE. However, we realize that the lack of access to capital is a real and substantial barrier to ACDBE participation in airport concessions. It may be difficult to obtain a loan for a joint venture business where the loan applicant has limited control over the business. Prohibiting such loans may limit the ability of ACDBEs to participate in joint venture businesses. However, in the event that it is necessary for the ACDBE to obtain a loan from the non-ACDBE joint venture participant, airports should ensure that the overall loan arrangement is consistent with the principle that the ACDBE participant brings his or her own property, capital, efforts, skills, and knowledge to the firm. Specifically, the financial arrangement should not be structured in a way that negatively affects the ACDBE's ownership and control under the DBE regulations. In addition, there should be safeguards that explicitly state that disagreements over operating the business should not be a basis for adverse action or penalties under the loan agreement.

### **3.4 How should profits and losses be calculated and divided?**

The joint venture agreement should provide details on how profits and losses will be calculated and divided between the participants. The profit or loss of the joint venture should be distributed between the participants in proportion to their interest in the joint venture. Any funds or other forms of payment (including draws) that are taken from the joint venture assets, profits, distributions, etc., should be documented and accounted for in order for the airport to determine the amount of benefit each participant has received from the business during the year. The joint venture agreement should specify the timing of the distributions. We do not view as consistent with the regulatory requirement for commensurate sharing of risks and profits any provision in an agreement that calls for a party: (1) to be entitled to a distribution of money regardless of the profitability of the joint venture, or (2) to have a debt that is a portion of a joint venture participant's risk in the joint venture forgiven by another party.

### **3.5 Are service and management fees acceptable?**

Yes, subject to some restrictions. The joint venture agreement should state, if applicable, "management fees" or "service/administrative fees" to be paid to the various participants, dependent upon a participant's contribution to the "indirect" management of the operation (i.e., corporate overhead or corporate support services). The fees charged should be reasonable, and not used as a method of draining profits of the joint venture to the benefit of a particular participant. In addition, management fees are not to be used in place of a "draw" arrangement. Service and management fees should represent a recovery of costs and not profit to the non-ACDBE if it is the provider of the service. The agreement should specifically address how the costs for such services are derived, the ability of the ACDBE to participate in the selection of the service provider, and a vehicle for monitoring and/or auditing such costs.

### **3.6 Can the ACDBE or joint venture purchase inventory, supplies, services, etc., from the non-ACDBE?**

The agreement should not mandate that the ACDBE participant or joint venture purchase inventory, supplies, or services from the non-ACDBE participant. The ACDBE should always have the option of obtaining goods and services on an arms-length, market price basis from any

source. However, a joint venture agreement may allow such purchases from a non-ACDBE participant. This may be advantageous when, for example, the non-ACDBE participant can obtain the goods or services at a lower rate/price than the ACDBE participant. In such a case, however, we believe it would be inconsistent with the nature of a joint venture as defined in Part 23 for the non-ACDBE to charge a markup for these goods and services. The joint venture agreement should specifically address how the costs for such products and services are derived and provide a vehicle for monitoring and/or auditing such costs.

Unless the operation is a franchise, the ACDBE participant or joint venture should have the option to purchase products and services from an unrelated third party on a market price/arms-length basis. In the case of a franchise, the joint venture should have the same option providing it does not conflict with the franchise agreement requirements.

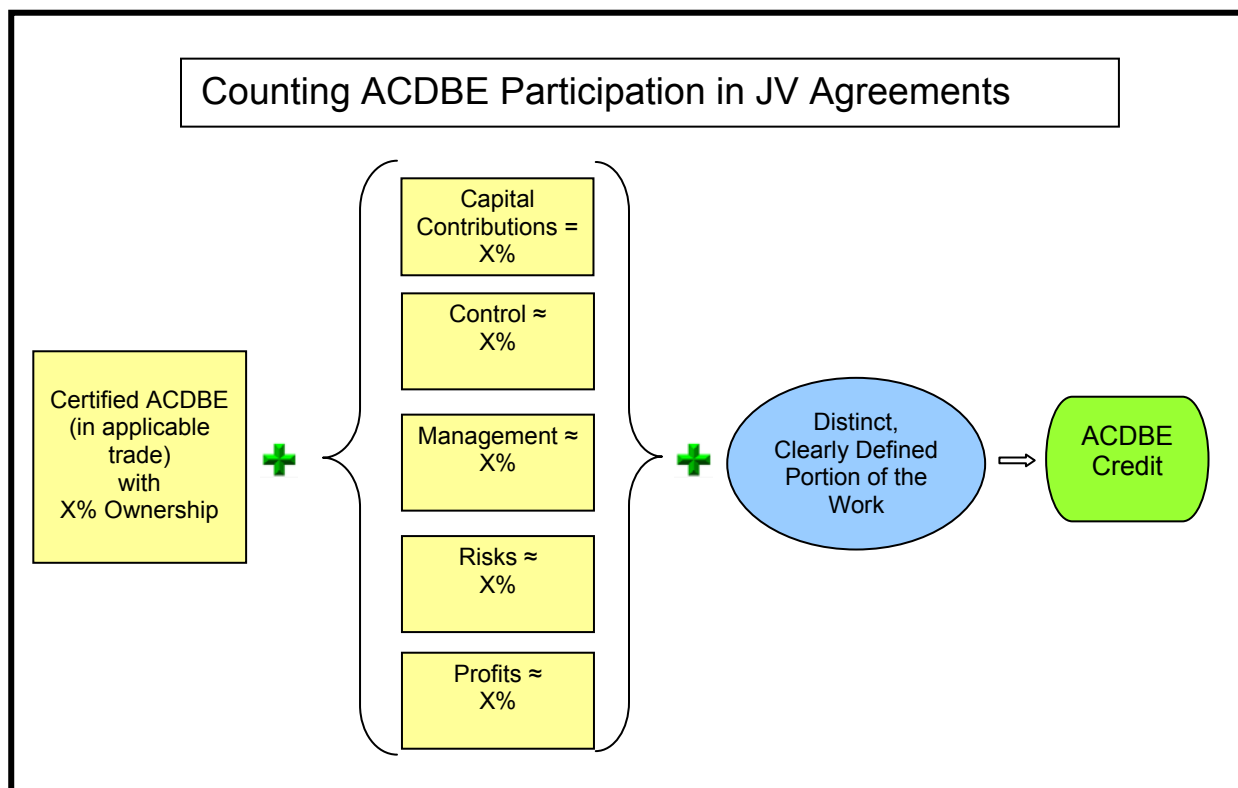
#### **Section 4 – Counting ACDBE joint venture participation towards ACDBE goals**

##### **4.1 How is ACDBE participation in a joint venture counted towards ACDBE goals?**

49 CFR § 23.55(d) states as follows:

*When an ACDBE performs as a participant in a joint venture, count a portion of the gross receipts equal to the distinct, clearly defined portion of the work of the concession that the ACDBE performs with its own forces toward ACDBE goals.*

The definition of a joint venture states that the ACDBEs share in the capital contribution, control, management, risks, and profits of the joint venture is commensurate with its ownership interest. Therefore, before the airport considers the ACDBE credit to be given, the airport will have a good idea of the credit that is desired, since it should be commensurate with ownership percentage. For example, if the ACDBE ownership in a joint venture is stated as 25%, it is likely that the joint venture participants are seeking to count the ACDBE participation at 25%. The airport should look at the roles and responsibilities of the ACDBE and determine if the claimed ownership appears reasonably proportionate to the “distinct, clearly defined portion of the work performed by the ACDBE.” (Note: The phrase “with its own forces” is addressed in the following section.) Some slight variations may occur due to the fact that the measurement is somewhat subjective in certain categories (e.g., overall management and portion of the work). The key factor is the reasonableness of the claimed participation after reviewing all of the elements of the joint venture.



As illustrated in the chart above, the review of joint venture agreements is comprised of: (1) confirming that the ACDBE participant is a certified ACDBE in the applicable trade; (2) making a determination that the agreement meets the definition of a joint venture under the regulation, and; (3) determining the appropriate credit based on the “distinct, clearly defined portion of the work performed by the ACDBE.” Once the airport has reviewed the joint venture agreement to ensure that it meets the definition of a joint venture in accordance with the regulation (i.e., in terms of the various areas being commensurate with ownership interest) the airport should proceed to a review of the distinct, clearly defined portion of the work assigned to the ACDBE in order to determine how to count ACDBE participation towards the ACDBE goal.

The following are tips for accomplishing this review:

1. The assigned role of the ACDBE should be distinct and clearly defined. Analyze the written description of the roles and responsibilities of each participant. The description of the work to be performed by the ACDBE should be clear. Descriptions that are vague are not acceptable. For example, phrases such as “participate in the budgeting process,” “assist with

hiring,” “work with managers to improve customer service” do not alone provide any basis for awarding credit since none of these represent a “distinct, clearly defined” portion of the work. ACDBE credit should not be given for tasks which are vaguely worded and cannot be monitored.

2. A comprehensive role in the complete operation of a separate location under the contract is easier to count.

The preamble to 49 CFR Part 23, revised in 2005, states as follows:

*“As a policy matter, we believe it is preferable for ACDBE joint venture participants to actually have a defined role in the revenue-generating activities of the business (e.g., the joint venture runs four food service locations in the airport, and the ACDBE is directly responsible for one of them). There is a greater likelihood of confusion, counting, and other administrative difficulties, as well as of abuse, when ACDBE participation is claimed for joint ventures in which the ACDBE participant has only a vaguely defined role in the entity as a whole.”*

Clearly, joint ventures structured so that the ACDBE actually has a role in the operation of the business are preferable for counting purposes to those in which the ACDBE is assigned a vague role in the overall operation. The determination of credit is much simpler and easier to document in such a case. In addition, monitoring the participation also becomes less cumbersome. In the event that an operating role is assigned, credit can be counted at the level of gross receipts earned by the operations managed by the ACDBE. This is not to say that managerial or “back office” functions cannot be credited. However, if the role of the ACDBE participant can’t be quantified or qualified, it can’t be counted.

3. Roles, especially minor roles, relating to the performance of an activity in support of the overall operation may present challenges. In the event that the ACDBE is assigned a distinct, clearly defined role that does not involve managing a revenue-generating activity, but is rather a task for which gross revenues cannot be directly correlated, it is difficult to determine the credit to be assigned. If the role assigned involves activities that occur on an ongoing basis, and with regard to a core function, crediting participation is easier. However, if the role of the ACDBE occurs on an “as-needed” basis and is a minor function, it is very difficult to predict, in advance, the level of the ACDBE participation and therefore difficult

to determine credit for ACDBE participation at time of review. The ACDBE must perform a commercially useful function. Assuming that the role assigned is one that is required on an ongoing, predictable basis, it will be necessary to determine how much credit, if any, should be assigned to the role. In order to make a determination, the airport should have an understanding of the tasks involved in managing and operating the business as well as the level of difficulty and relative importance of each task. The airport should break down the business into major components and determine if the claimed ownership percentage would reasonably appear to correspond with the assigned task(s). It is the obligation of the firm seeking ACDBE credit to clearly present the information necessary and provide additional information and/or documentation as requested for a determination to be made. If the airport cannot make a reasonable judgment that the ACDBE performs a distinct, clearly defined portion of the work proportionate to its ownership interest, it may reject the joint venture for ACDBE credit or count a smaller percentage than claimed toward ACDBE participation. Please note once again that if the role of the ACDBE participant in the joint venture operation can't be quantified, it can't be counted.

#### **4.2 How can the value of the ACDBE role be determined?**

There are a number of steps that should be taken to assist in determining the value of ACDBE participation.

First, the airport may examine the typical business practice of each of the firms participating in the joint venture to determine if their assigned roles appear logical. For example, if the non-ACDBE firm is a retail firm with operations at 50 other airports and the ACDBE firm has 5 years of experience operating a candy store in the local mall, it would seem unreasonable to assign the buying of merchandise to the ACDBE participant since the larger firm would almost certainly have greater skills, knowledge and purchasing power than the ACDBE.

The airport may also look at how the non-ACDBE participant performs the role(s) assigned to the ACDBE operator at its other operations. For example, if the ACDBE is assigned to recruit minority employees, the airport should request information regarding how this is performed at other locations in which the non-ACDBE operates without an ACDBE

participant and request documentation regarding the cost (and the value) of performing that task without the ACDBE participant. Further, the airport could develop a chart of tasks to provide a framework for assigning credit. Attachment 2 will provide examples of how this may be accomplished. Since each business operation is unique and often complex, the value of specific tasks may vary from operation to operation. The role of each participant should be evaluated in the light of the specific business opportunity being performed. Ultimately, it is the joint venture participants who should provide information which would lead a reasonable person to conclude that the roles of each party justify the claimed ACDBE participation credit.

### **4.3 What does “performs with its own forces” mean?**

If persons employed directly by the ACDBE perform the tasks associated with its participation in the joint venture, then the ACDBE is clearly performing that work with its own forces. For purposes of counting ACDBE joint venture participation, however, we view work performed by employees of the joint venture entity or a non-ACDBE participant in the joint venture as performed by the ACDBE’s “own forces” IF the ACDBE has the power to control those employees with respect to the performance of the ACDBE’s role.

Ideally, the “distinct clearly defined” portion of the work performed by the ACDBE participant in a joint venture would be performed by the ACDBE’s own employees. This provides a clearer view of the management and control over the element of work attributed to the ACDBE.

However, in some circumstances it may be advantageous for the joint venture or the non-ACDBE to employ the staff in order to provide comparable compensation and benefits to all employees. In the event that some employees are employees of the joint venture or the non-ACDBE, the ACDBE portion of the work can be considered as being performed “with its own forces” if the ACDBE has the power to control staff with regard to the performance of the work for which the ACDBE is responsible, analogous to the utilization of contract employees.

There should be a higher burden of proof that the ACDBE controls the employees performing its designated portion of the work in instances when the employees are employees of the joint venture and an even higher burden of proof when the employees are employees of the non-ACDBE. Conversely, simply having the employees on the payroll of the ACDBE firm does not

remove the burden of proving that the ACDBE actually controls those employees. There should exist a reporting relationship between the staff responsible for the ACDBE portion of the work and the ACDBE. The ACDBE should have the power to hire and fire staff responsible for performing its share of the work without the approval of the non-ACDBE participant. One factor to be considered in evaluating the amount of participation to be counted is the evaluation of resources necessary to perform the ACDBE's assigned role. For example, if the joint venture employs 5 managers, 2 administrative/support staff members and 100 hourly employees, and the ACDBE has no employees reporting to it in the performance of its assigned role, then it would be very difficult to show that the role is a substantial one and, therefore, little, if any, credit might be counted towards ACDBE participation.

#### **4.4 What if the level of participation by the ACDBE changes?**

If it is determined that the ACDBE has not performed its role in accordance with the joint venture agreement in a given year, and has in fact participated less than expected, participation may be counted at less than originally approved for that year. In the event that the reduced level of participation is planned to continue, the airport should request that the joint venture participants amend their agreement to reflect the new level of participation.

If it is determined that the ACDBE has not performed its role in accordance with the joint venture agreement in a given year, and has in fact participated more than expected, participation may be counted at the originally approved level, but not higher. In the event that the increased level of participation is planned to continue, the airport should request that the joint venture participants amend their agreement to reflect the new, ongoing level of participation.

### **Section 5 – Monitoring ACDBE participation in joint ventures**

#### **5.1 What is needed in terms of monitoring the joint venture?**

It is the responsibility of the airport to monitor the operation of the joint venture to ensure that the joint venture is operating as intended and approved, and that the ACDBE participant's participation is real and meaningful. Should the airport find that this is not the case, the airport could find the joint venture in default of its contract. In addition, if the ACDBE is found to have



relinquished an element of control in the joint venture, the airport should immediately review the firm's certification eligibility or refer the matter to the certifying authority, and where appropriate, initiate decertification of the firm in accordance with § 26.87. The airport should develop a formal monitoring program that includes, at a minimum, the following elements:

- Annual verification of the status of the ACDBEs certification eligibility
- Periodic (not less than annual) review of the managing entity's meeting minutes and reports
- On-site visits to the operation
- Periodic interviews with the joint venture participants, managers, and employees
- Review of any documentation, including financial reports and agreements, necessary to ensure compliance with the agreement

### **5.2 What is included in the airport's agreement with the joint venture?**

In addition to the items specifically stated in 49 CFR § 23.9, the airport should include in its agreement with the joint venture firm a requirement for regular or periodic submission of reports and other forms of communications between the non-ACDBE participant and the ACDBE participant. The agreement should require the joint venture to submit agendas, minutes, and attendance rosters from the managing entity's meetings; financial reports; and other information deemed appropriate by the airport. The agreement with the joint venture should also provide for sanctions for failing to operate in accordance with the joint venture agreement. The sanctions should be similar to those imposed for other defaults under the contract.

### **5.3 What annual updates and changes are required?**

There are no annual updates required for joint venture agreements. However, changes to the agreement should be submitted for review prior to implementation. Also, once certified, the ACDBE participant in the joint venture must comply with 49 CFR Part 23, including but not limited to § 23.31. These requirements include annually submitting an affidavit or declaration that there have been no changes in the ACDBE participant's circumstances affecting its certification eligibility. At any time there is a change in circumstances affecting the ACDBE participant's ability to meet size, disadvantaged status, ownership or control requirements, or a

material change in the information provided in the application, the ACDBE participant must submit this information to the airport. Similarly, proposed material changes in the joint venture agreement, including management responsibilities among the participants, ownership, or control, should be submitted to the airport. In such cases, the airport should review and respond to the proposed changes within a reasonable period of time.

## **Section 6 – Additional information**

### **6.1 Can a joint venture be certified as an ACDBE?**

No. Joint venture entities, themselves, are not certified as ACDBEs. In order to count towards ACDBE participation, one or more of the **joint venture participants** must be a certified ACDBE. Even if the joint venture is more than 51% owned by an ACDBE firm, it is not certified as an ACDBE because, by definition, a joint venture is an association of firms, not individuals. The regulation states as follows:

*§ 26.73(e) An eligible DBE firm must be owned by individuals who are socially and economically disadvantaged. Except as provided in this paragraph, a firm that is not owned by such individuals, but instead is owned by another firm -- even a DBE firm -- cannot be an eligible DBE.*

Therefore, a joint venture cannot be certified as an ACDBE.

With regard to certification, the regulation provides for an exception to the above as follows:

*§ 26.73(e)(1) If socially and economically disadvantaged individuals own and control a firm through a parent or holding company, established for tax, capitalization or other purposes consistent with industry practice, and the parent or holding company in turn owns and controls an operating subsidiary, you may certify the subsidiary if it otherwise meets all requirements of this subpart. In this situation, the individual owners and controllers of the parent or holding company are deemed to control the subsidiary through the parent or holding company.*

However, this would not apply to joint ventures since the ACDBE participant in a joint venture must be certified in order to count towards ACDBE participation in a joint venture and holding companies are not certified; only the subsidiary can be certified. Therefore, a holding company cannot be an ACDBE participant in a joint venture.

## **6.2 Does the ACDBE participant in a joint venture have to be certified in a specific type of work?**

Yes. ACDBE firms must be certified in the type of work to be undertaken by the joint venture (e.g., an ACDBE participant in a retail joint venture must be certified as an ACDBE retail operator). An ACDBE firm is required to share in the management and control of the operation. In order to do so, the ACDBE should be capable of participating at this level. In addition, the ACDBE should have involvement in the broader areas of the operation which would enable them to gain operating experience for the purpose of competing independently for operations in the future. The implementation of joint ventures which promote participation in the provision of services not related to the overall management of the operation does not support the objectives of the program. Certified firms may request that a trade be added to their certification.

49 CFR Part 23 states as follows:

*§ 23.31(a) As a recipient, you must use, except as provided in this subpart, the procedures and standards of part 26, §§ 26.61–91 for certification of ACDBEs to participate in your concessions program. Your ACDBE program must incorporate the use of these standards and procedures and must provide that certification decisions for ACDBEs will be made by the Unified Certification Program (UCP) in your state (see part 26, § 26.81).*

49 CFR Part 26 states as follows:

*§ 26.71(n) You must grant certification to a firm only for specific types of work in which the socially and economically disadvantaged owners have the ability to control the firm. To become certified in an additional type of work, the firm need demonstrate to you only that its socially and economically disadvantaged owners are able to control the firm with respect to that type of work. You may not, in this situation, require that the firm be recertified or submit a new application for certification, but you must verify the disadvantaged owner's control of the firm in the additional type of work.*

In an effort to ensure that appropriate time is allowed for firms to be certified as ACDBEs, airports should set their deadlines and requirements keeping this in mind. Non-ACDBE joint venture participants and potential ACDBE joint venture participants should be cautious about investing capital in a project before the appropriate certification is issued by the certifying agency and the joint venture agreement is approved for counting by the airport. In the event that the potential ACDBE participant is not certified or the joint venture is not approved for counting,

and as a result, the joint venture is not executed, the return of capital is a business/contract issue between the parties and not subject to reimbursement by or assistance from the airport.

A stated overarching objective of the DBE and ACDBE programs is to ensure that only firms that fully meet the eligibility standards are permitted to participate in the program (see § 23.1 and § 26.1). Airports should be cautious when reviewing joint venture agreements to ensure that the ACDBE's participation in the joint venture does not result in the sacrifice of independence or loss of control of the ACDBE. If the ACDBE loses its independence or control over its business as a result of the joint venture, the ACDBE's certification eligibility is compromised. Any suspected loss of control or independence should be referred to the certifying agency, which shall institute decertification proceedings, if appropriate, consistent with § 26.87.

### **6.3 Should the joint venture agreement provide for the dissolution of the joint venture in the event that the ACDBE participant ceases to be an eligible ACDBE?**

No. 49 CFR Part 23 states as follows:

*§ 23.39 (e) When you remove a concessionaire's eligibility after the concessionaire has entered a concession agreement, because the firm exceeded the small business size standard or because an owner has exceeded the personal net worth standard, and the firm in all other respects remains an eligible ACDBE, you may continue to count the concessionaire's participation toward ACDBE goals during the remainder of the current concession agreement. However, you must not count the concessionaire's participation toward ACDBE goals beyond the termination date for the concession agreement in effect at the time of the decertification ( e.g. , in a case where the agreement is renewed or extended, or an option for continued participation beyond the current term of the agreement is exercised).*

Given the fact that the participation of the ACDBE would continue to count in the above circumstance, the agreement should not permit the dissolution of the joint venture agreement in this event. However, if the ACDBE is decertified for reasons which prevent the counting of participation in the joint venture, such as sale of the majority interest in the company or fraud, it is reasonable to allow a provision for dissolution or the buyout of the ACDBE participant.

Resolution of this issue would be handled between the parties.

#### **6.4 Is the airport subject to enforcement of interpretations presented in this guidance for existing joint ventures? Is the guidance retroactive?**

Yes, the airport is subject to enforcement of interpretations presented in this guidance. This guidance seeks to clarify many of the issues surrounding ACDBE participation in airport concession joint venture agreements. Airports are instructed to review existing concession joint ventures for which ACDBE participation is counted towards goals to ensure compliance with this guidance. With regard to credit for ACDBE participation, the FAA will not penalize airports for past misinterpretations, nor will adjustments to past accomplishment reports be required. However, future counting of ACDBE participation in existing joint venture agreements should be determined in light of this guidance. Future annual concession accomplishment reports should reflect the appropriate credit. This will require a re-evaluation of joint venture agreements currently operating to determine the appropriate level of ACDBE participation which should be counted. If there is a small difference, airports are encouraged to pursue an increase in the ACDBE role. If there is a significant difference as a result of this re-evaluation, airports are encouraged to look for other sources or methods for increasing participation (e.g., new opportunities and/or ACDBE goods and services). Airports are advised to evaluate their entire program and find avenues and opportunities for achieving their overall goal. This may or may not include the renegotiation of the ACDBE role in joint venture agreements already in place. Past mis-counting of ACDBE participation in joint venture agreements, except in cases of intentional misrepresentation, should not be a reason for an airport to find the joint venture in default of the concessions agreement or lease, nor should it be a reason for the non-ACDBE to find the ACDBE in default of the joint venture agreement.

## **6.5 What enforcement mechanisms are available to the Department in the event of noncompliance or misconduct?**

The same compliance and enforcement and compliance mechanisms apply under Part 23 as under Part 26. Under 49 CFR § 26.105, airports are subject to sanctions under FAA statutes and regulations if they fail to comply with DBE regulations. Under 49 CFR § 26.107, businesses working in the DBE or ACDBE program who engage in misconduct may be subject to suspension or debarment, enforcement action under 49 CFR Part 31, Program Fraud and Civil Remedies, or criminal prosecution. The Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General (OIG) makes investigating and prosecuting DBE fraud a priority. The OIG, working with U.S. attorneys' offices, has helped to create successful criminal prosecutions for fraudulent conduct in the DBE and ACDBE programs. Anyone who becomes aware of fraud, waste, or abuse in these programs should inform OIG as well as FAA officials.

**Attachment 1**

**Model ACDBE Joint Venture Information  
(to be submitted with joint venture agreement for review)**

**The Department recommends that airport sponsors request the following information from participants in prospective ACDBE joint ventures. The Department believes that this information will assist sponsors in evaluating joint venture proposals. The following form is a model that sponsors may wish to use in obtaining this information, but use of the model form is not mandatory.**

\*\*\*\*\*

1. Name of Joint Venture:
2. Name, address and phone number of joint venture contact person:
3. Firms participating in joint venture (use additional pages if necessary):

Name of firm:  
Address:  
Phone Number:  
Contact name/phone number:  
% ownership:                 %  
ACDBE:  yes  no                 Certifying agency:  
Date of Certification:  
Type of work for which certification was granted:

Name of firm:  
Address:  
Phone Number:  
Contact name/phone number:  
% ownership:                 %  
ACDBE:  yes  no                 Certifying agency:  
Date of Certification:  
Type of work for which certification was granted:

4. ACDBE initial capital contribution: \$   %
5. Future capital contributions (explain requirements):
6. Source of funds for the ACDBE capital contribution:
7. Describe the portion of the work or elements of the business controlled by the ACDBE:
8. Describe the portion of the work or elements of the business controlled by the non-ACDBE:

9. Describe the ACDBE's involvement in the overall management of the joint venture (e.g., participation on a management committee or managing board, voting rights, etc.)
10. Describe the ACDBE's share in the profits of the joint venture:
11. Describe the ACDBE's share in the risks of the joint venture:
12. Describe the roles and responsibilities of each joint venture participant with respect to managing the joint venture (use additional sheets if necessary):
  - a. ACDBE joint venture participant:
  - b. Non- ACDBE joint venture participant:
13. Describe the roles and responsibilities of each joint venture participant with respect to operation of the joint venture (use additional sheets if necessary):
  - a. ACDBE joint venture participant:
  - b. Non- ACDBE joint venture participant:
14. Which firm will be responsible for accounting functions relative to the joint venture's business?
15. Explain what authority each party will have to commit or obligate the other to insurance and bonding companies, financing institutions, suppliers, subcontractors, and/or other parties?
16. Please provide information relating to the approximate **number** of management, administrative, support and non-management employees that will be required to operate the business and indicate whether they will be employees of the ACDBE, non-ACDBE or joint venture.

	Non-ACDBE Firm	ACDBE Firm	Joint Venture
Management			
Administrative			
Support			
Hourly Employees			

17. Please provide the name of the person who will be responsible for hiring employees for the joint venture.                      Who will they be employed by?
18. Are any of the proposed joint venture employees currently employees of any of the joint venture partners?  yes  no  
If yes, please list the number and positions and indicate which firm currently employs the individual(s).



19. Attach a copy of the proposed joint venture agreement, promissory note or loan agreement (if applicable), and any and all written agreements between the joint venture partners.
20. List all other business relationships between the joint venture participants, including other joint venture agreements in which the parties are jointly involved.

## Attachment 2

### **Samples Joint Venture – ACDBE Portion of the Work**

Each joint venture agreement submitted for ACDBE credit must be reviewed and analyzed in order to determine the amount of ACDBE credit to be given, if any, for the ACDBE participation in the business. It is critical that the reviewer gain a clear understanding of the ACDBE role in relation to the entire operation of the total business. Once that is accomplished and it has been determined that ACDBE participation will be counted toward the ACDBE goal, the business must be monitored to ensure that it is operating as represented in the joint venture agreement and as approved for counting. The following will provide some examples of possible ways to analyze the value of the portion of the work assigned to the ACDBE. These examples are not meant to provide a comprehensive guide for establishing values since each business and each agreement may have unique characteristics. Rather, these examples are provided to establish potential thought processes for analyzing participation.

#### **Example 1**

The ACDBE ownership of a retail joint venture is stated as 20%. The ACDBE shares in the capital contribution, control, overall management (through participation on the management committee), risks, and profits of the joint venture commensurate with its stated ownership interest. The ACDBE assigned role in the business includes “participation in” and “assistance with” various activities which routinely occur in the day-to-day operation of the business. These roles may be valued as part of the overall management of the business, but should not be valued in terms of performing a **distinct, clearly defined portion of the work**, since the extent of this participation is unknown and is neither distinct nor clearly-defined.

Now, let us assume that the ACDBE partner is also assigned the role of finding DBE vendors to be utilized by the business and recruiting minority employees for the business.

The major day-to-day activities performed by the business are determined to be approximately:

Operations (1/3 of the business effort)	Product (1/3 of the business effort)	Administration/ Corp Support (1/3 of the business effort)
Human Resources (Supervise on-site operations staff, hire/fire staff, scheduling, training, etc.)	Purchasing	Accounting/Payroll/ Taxes
Loss Prevention	Inventory Management	Legal Services
Safety/Security	Pricing	Business Development/ Landlord Relations
Cash Management (check-out, banking)	Décor/Display	Human Resources/ Training Programs
Day-to-Day Landlord Relations	Product Assortment (retail)/Menu Development (food)	Policies/Procedures
Maintenance/Cleaning	Negotiation of Special Programs, Rebates, Display Allowances, etc.	Other Corporate Support
Budgeting/Monitoring Performance	Budgeting/Monitoring Performance	Budgeting/Monitoring Performance

The ACDBE roles of recruiting minority employees and finding DBE vendors are activities included under broader categories - Human Resources (under the "Operations" category of the business) and Purchasing (under the "Product" category of the business). There are numerous daily activities involved in the subcategories of "Human Resources" and "Purchasing." All of "Operations" is about 1/3 of the business effort in this example and all of "Product" is also about 1/3 of the business effort. Human Resources is only one task within the "Operations" category and purchasing is only one task within the "Product"

category. Recruiting minority employees and finding minority vendors are small tasks within the broader subcategories. In addition, it is difficult, if not impossible, to quantify the value of these tasks in terms of their impact on gross receipts. In fact, it is likely that this portion of the work is negligible since neither of these activities actually involves management of a function or control of a result (i.e., DBE vendors may be located, however the level of purchasing to be accomplished from these vendors, their product placement within the facility, prices to be paid for merchandise, etc. are outside of the control of the ACDBE; minority employees may be recruited, however their hiring, training, management and retention are outside of the ACDBE's control). In this instance, an airport would not have sufficient data to approve the joint venture for counting towards ACDBE participation because the portion of the work to be performed by the ACDBE is very difficult to quantify. In this instance, the airport should request that the joint venture participants clarify the role of the ACDBE in order to understand the nature and extent of the ACDBE's role.

Conversely, assume that all other factors are the same as described above (i.e., the ownership is stated as 20% and capital contributions, management, etc. are commensurate), except that the ACDBE independently performs all functions in the "Operations" category. In this case, it could reasonably be determined that the ACDBE performs at least 33% of the work for its 20% ownership share. However, because the definition states that the ACDBE shares in the capital contribution, control, management, risks, and profits of the joint venture commensurate with its ownership interest, a joint venture where the ACDBE's contributions are not proportionate do not meet the definition of a joint venture under the regulation. In this instance, the participation could be counted at 20%, not a greater percentage which might be indicated by the portion of the work performed by the ACDBE.

## Example 2

In this example, a joint venture between a non-ACDBE and an ACDBE operates a news/gift concession at an airport. The ACDBE is reported to have a 15% share in the ownership of the joint venture. The ACDBE has contributed capital from its own funds in proportion to its stated ownership. The ACDBE participates on a management committee and there are a number of business decisions requiring unanimous consent. The ACDBE's share of the profits and risks of the joint venture are proportionate to its stated ownership interest. There are management fees paid to the non-ACDBE partner, however, they are calculated as a reimbursement of costs incurred to perform support functions and are not a profit center. Up to this point, the joint venture agreement appears to comply with the regulation and this guidance. The ACDBE is assigned the following activities:

- 1) Supervise the Manager in developing the annual budget of the Joint Venture
- 2) Evaluate day-to-day operations and make recommendations to improve efficiencies
- 3) Sourcing and recruitment of personnel
- 4) Supervise employee training and development
- 5) Develop marketing and promotional concepts
- 6) Assist and advise regarding the needs of the local community
- 7) Identify potential DBE vendors
- 8) Monitor store compliance with other income programs

Given the description of the various activities above, it is not possible to ascertain exactly what portion of the work will be performed by the ACDBE. In order to assign any credit for the ACDBE role, additional information is needed for each of the assigned roles as follows:

- 1) Supervise the Manager in developing the annual budget of the Joint Venture

*Who does the Manager report to for other functions? What control does the ACDBE have over the budget? While budgeting is important, it is only an annual budget and the description does not really indicate a very active role. How much time will be spent on this? Exactly what will the ACDBE do?*

- 2) Evaluate day-to-day operations and make recommendations to improve efficiencies

*Without further explanation this appears to be is a relatively meaningless role. What happens to the evaluations and recommendations once they are made? How often does this occur? Who actually does it? This seems to apply more to the overall management of the business. There is no supporting evidence to indicate that it is a distinct, clearly defined role.*

- 3) Sourcing and recruitment of personnel

*What exactly does this activity entail? Is the ACDBE actually responsible for hiring? How often does this occur and what is the level of effort expended to accomplish this? Does on-site staff participate? If so, to what extent?*

- 4) Supervise employee training and development

*Who will the ACDBE supervise? What level of effort is required for this activity? How much time is involved? Describe the nature of the training and development to be supervised.*

- 5) Develop marketing and promotional concepts

*Is the ACDBE solely responsible for marketing? What level of effort is required? How much time is involved? What is the budget for this? Are employees involved? If so, to whom do they report?*

- 6) Assist and advise regarding the needs of the local community

*An "assist" role does not appear to represent a "distinct, clearly defined" portion of the work. What is meant by the "needs of the local community?" Describe what the needs of the community might be. This seems to be a minor role in the overall scope of the operations.*

- 7) Identify potential DBE vendors

*What happens after the vendors are identified? Who has control over determining if they are used? Who negotiates with them and determines if goods or services will be purchased? What does this represent in dollars compared to the total purchases made?*

- 8) Monitor store compliance with other income programs

*This is, again, very unclear. What happens after monitoring? Who determines what compliance is necessary? What happens in the event of non-compliance? How often*

*is this monitoring done? How long does it take? How is it accomplished in other operations? How important is this in the scope of the operation?*

As you can see, before any credit is assigned for ACDBE participation, there are a number of questions to be answered and issues to be resolved. Until the ACDBE is assigned a “distinct, clearly defined” portion of the work to perform, no credit can be given.

### **Example 3**

A joint venture between a non-ACDBE and an ACDBE operates a food/beverage concession consisting of 8 locations at an airport. The ACDBE is reported to have a 35% share in the ownership of the joint venture. The ACDBE has contributed its proportionate share of the capital obtained through a combination of its own funds (15% of the required investment) and a loan from the non-ACDBE (85% of the required investment). A loan agreement has not been supplied. The ACDBE participates on a management committee and certain business decisions require unanimous consent. The ACDBE shares in the profits and risks of the joint venture in proportion to its stated ownership interest. There are no management fees paid to either party. The following is the description of the ACDBE role in the operation of the business as supplied in the joint venture agreement:

- 1) [ACDBE] company will have primary responsibility for the operation of gourmet coffee locations in Terminals 1, 2 and 3
- 2) [ACDBE] company will employ staff to manage and operate said locations in accordance with the lease agreement and direction provided by the Management Committee
- 3) [ACDBE] company will attend and participate in weekly manager’s meetings
- 4) [ACDBE] company will attend and participate in monthly meetings of the Management Committee

Given the above situation, the airport should request the following information in order to assess the credit to be counted towards ACDBE participation for this joint venture:

- 1) A copy of the proposed loan agreement in order to ensure that the loan provides information detailed in Section 3.3 of the joint venture guidance

- 2) A clear explanation of what “primary responsibility” actually means
- 3) An estimate of gross receipts to be earned by the ACDBE operated locations compared to total gross receipts

While there are questions to be answered in order to determine the credit to be counted for this joint venture, the fact that the ACDBE firm will be assigned specific units to operate will provide a more objective basis for establishing credit.



# JV REVIEW PROCESS

