

- Staff members will identify potential high-growth businesses like developers and automobile dealers who would benefit from the data generated by the Business Analyst GIS. Consultants will work with these firms in order to strategically chart out long-term growth.

3.3.5.8 Business Finance Programs

The MBDA continues to add value by maximizing the time spent at National MED Week. DESA, Inc. is excited about the MBDA's plan to use MED Week to broaden the skills of the consultants through business and finance training, certifications, and information dissemination. This will not only add to the knowledge base of the MBDA system but also benefit the clients who rely on consultants to be at the forefront of the latest business practices and philosophies.

3.3.6 Client Services

The MBEC shall offer a *systems-integrated approach* (as described below) to assist in business growth and development, improving and/or successfully maintaining their businesses, primarily through one-on-one assistance. In order to meet the goals of the MBDA, DESA will focus its efforts on those firms with \$500,000 in annual sales or more, and/or "rapid growth-potential" minority businesses capable of generating significant employment and long-term economic growth. Business consulting to these types of businesses requires a much more sophisticated management and technical assistance approach based on the client size.

In all initial meetings with the MBEC Consultant, basic background and contact information (including email addresses and cell phone numbers) will be gathered. This data will be added to the resource database. Even if later during the assessment stage the business is referred, the MBEC will be able to contact the firm via email to advise them of pertinent business information, announcements of special events, etc.

3.3.6.1 Systems-Integrated Approach

The MBEC will operate a systems-intergraded approach to assist in minority business growth and development. This approach will govern business consulting services for each of the following MBE annual sales range categories:

- Less than \$500,000
- \$500,000 - \$999,999
- \$1,000,000 - \$5,000,000
- Other "rapid growth-potential" minority firms

Understanding the South Carolina market, DESA recognizes that the approach must fit the business, and yet have the flexibility to assist the client with maximizing his/her

returns. The proposed approach takes in consideration a holistic strategy to servicing clients.

3.3.6.1.1 Annual Sales of Less than \$500,000

1. Initial Contact

Potential clients at this sales level stem from referrals, current and former clients, strategic partners, the MBDA, “word of mouth” sources, the internet, walk-in, and marketing efforts. Businesses in this category may be start-up firms (up to three years old) and are primarily seeking additional business (i.e., sales or contracts) and/or financing. The administrator is usually the first point of contact at the MBEC, and assistance may be provided in the following ways:

- Introducing them to the MBDA portal and directing them to take advantage of various MBDA tools such as the Business Plan Writer, Capitol & Resource Locator, Phoenix, and other business application tools and articles.
- Inviting them to attend upcoming training events, including registering for the Kaufman Foundation’s Fast Track Program operated by Charleston Chamber of Commerce, Midlands Technical College and in Florence, SC.
- Referring them to other business assistance resources like the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), EDTAC and other City and County programs.
- Informing them of other internet websites and tools that may be able help them access new contract opportunities and/or address their financial needs.
- Scheduling them an appointment to meet with an MBEC consultant.

2. Initial Assessment

The business and the MBEC consultant will conduct an evaluation of the company using the Business Needs Analyzer. This self analysis tool will help the company owner(s) assess and think about the growth of their company. Six key aspects of the business will be evaluated - Strategy, Processes, Architecture, Resources, Systems, and Empowerment (SPARSE). Based on the feedback provided from the client after completing all or parts of Business Needs Analyzer, the MBEC Consultant will develop a structured plan for the MBE. The plan will serve as a roadmap that will assist the MBE in navigating to the next stage of business.

3. Work Methodology Development

The MBEC consultant along with the MBE firm will develop a specific work plan to achieve the desired results of the MBE. The following will occur:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

(b)(4)

A Work Methodology Agreement will be completed by the consultant and signed by the client. The agreement summarizes:

- The tasks that will be done for the clients (based on SPARSE);
- Information needed from the client in order to complete the work;
- The implementation process;
- Approximate number of hours to complete assignment; and
- Agree upon deliverables.

Once the client has approved to the agreement, he or she will be required to sign the form and pay a deposit for the work that is to be done.

4. Implementation Process

The MBEC consultant will complete the tasks outlined in the Work Methodology Agreement. In addition, the consultant will focus on developing a relationship with the client. Services may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

(b)(4)

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

(b)(4)

5. Communication and Feedback

The MBEC consultants will provide its clients with the following to ensure timely communication and effective feedback:

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

(b)(4)

Once the tasks on the Work Methodology Agreement are completed and the deliverables are discussed with and reviewed by the client, he or she will be asked to complete a Verification/Satisfaction form. This written document verifies the client's acceptance, receipt and satisfaction of services rendered. It also acknowledges that the client agrees to pay the balance upon receipt of services. The middle section of the form allows the client to rate and comment on the services and products given by the MBEC. Lastly, there is a space for the client to recommend other MBE's who might be in need of management and technical assistance from the Center.

6. Service Tools and Work Products

Illustrated below are some of the work products and services MBEC is proposing to offer its MBE clients who generate sales between \$1 and \$500,000.

Introduction to Tools: The MBEC Administrator will introduce clients and potential clients to the MBDA portal and directing them to take advantage of various MBDA tools such as the Business Plan Writer, Capitol & Resource Locator, Phoenix, and other business application tools and articles.

Tactical Plan (Task List): The consultant can assist the MBE in preparing strategic short term plan with clearly defined tasks. This plan is focused on generating contracts and work opportunities as well as increasing financial standings.

Marketing & Sales Introduction: The consultant can assist the MBE preparing flyers, pricelists, capability statements and brochures to be used as marketing tools.

Access to Markets & Relationship Development: The consultant may assist MBEs in forming new relationships with the goal of establishing new customers, thus generating increase revenues. This will be accomplished by MBDA, DESA as operator and MBEC leveraging its network of relationships to overcome barriers often experienced by companies of this size.

Teaming & Partnership Development: The consultant will research and identify growth and business opportunities for potential subcontracting and team arrangements for MBEs. The goal is to foster agreements that generate synergy among each and prepare the smaller firm to successfully compete as he or she builds capacity.

Workshop & Seminars: This MBEC will routinely sponsor or co-sponsor informational workshops and seminars that benefit the development of minority businesses. At least one informational session will be held in conjunction with the local MED Week activities.

3.3.6.1.2 Annual Sales of \$500,000 - \$999,999

1. Initial Contact

Initial contacts are currently generated from many sources, by referral from community organizations, via our website, strategic alliances, partners and our community presence. We envision that clients will be generated from, but not limited to, the following:

- Federal, State, County and City Government
- Private Sector

- School Districts across the state
- Membership Organizations (i.e. Carolina Minority Supplier Development Council, Chamber of Commerce, etc.)
- The marketing efforts of our current and former clients
- Strategic Partnerships
- Small Business Administration (SBA)
- Small Business Development Centers (SBDC); South Carolina Economic Development Agency (SCEDA); South Carolina Department of Commerce; Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) and its network; and Other MBECs in the MBDA network.

The initial contact can be in the form of a phone call, email, or letter sent or received. From that initial contact, a meeting is usually scheduled and the following areas are discussed:

- Discuss the potential client's status, needs and future goals and objectives;
- Introduce the MBEC, the service offered and benefits and value to the client for contracting with us;
- Discuss the MBEC's local and national network;
- Provide information, some strategies and recommendations to the MBE pertaining to the plan of action for MBEC and the MBE;
- Provide information, materials, tools and other resources that may be able to assist the MBEs in achieving its goals (i.e. access to websites, databases such as Phoenix, etc.)
- Demonstrate our personal commitment in assisting MBEs;
- Seek to understand the MBE perspectives and interests, successfully select and employ a variety of methods, tools, and resources to identify, reach, and educate potential partners and supporters of the MBE to assist in his/her business growth and development.

2. Initial Assessment

The MBEC consultants will conduct an assessment along with the MBE covering the following areas:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

(b)(4)

[Redacted text block with a handwritten bracket on the right side containing the text "(b)(4)"]

The goal of the initial assessment is the development of a structured proposal for the MBE based on the business needs identified through the SPARSE and verbal conversations. The area will serve as lead into developing the work methodology and plan of action and the MBE signing up as a client.

3. Work Methodology Development

The goals of the methodology is to, along with the MBE firm, develop a specific work plan to assist the MBE in achieving its next level of successful business growth. With firms this size, one of the main strategies is to have the owner moving towards identifying his or her niche. While becoming less general in scope, the owner should look at fine-tuning his product or service, developing his product image (including logo), and maximizing pricing strategy. Efforts should also be made to facilitate the progression from a cash-based accounting system to an accrued system. In determining this plan the following process will occur.

The MBEC Consultants and MBE will:

- [Redacted list item]
 - [Redacted list item]
 - [Redacted list item]
 - [Redacted list item]
 - [Redacted list item]
 - [Redacted list item]
- [Redacted text block with a handwritten bracket on the right side containing the text "(b)(4)"]

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

(b)(4)

The Work Methodology Agreement will contain the following information agreed upon by both the MBE owner or representative and the MBEC staff member:

[Redacted]

After the MBE is in agreement with, have read and fully understand all the documents (i.e. client information, consent agreement, verification/satisfaction form, waiver of claims, work methodology agreement and work plan agreement), a contract is executed/signed by the client, MBEC staff, and a witness.

4. Implementation Process

The MBEC Consultants will provide its MBE with the following services that will generate an added value for the MBE using the process below.

With the aid of the MBE firm, the MBEC Consultants will:

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

(b)(4)

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

(b)(4)

5. Communication and Feedback

The MBEC Consultants will provide its MBE with the following services that will generate value for the MBE using the process below.

The MBEC Consultants will:

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

(b)(4)

3.3.6.1.3 Annual Sales of \$1,000,000 - \$5,000,000

1. Initial Contact

The MBEC consultant will identify prospects from our current relationships and solicit referrals from other MBE leads. The prospects include our current list of high growth MBE's; strategic partnerships; Small Business Administration (SBA); South Carolina Economic Development Agency (SCEDA); South Carolina Department of Commerce; Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA); and Other MBEC in the MBDA network. MBEC Consultant will request assistance from past customers to assist in engaging new clients by

providing the benefit to them, showing the business case for utilizing the services of the MBEC.

Prior to the initial contact with a potential high growth MBE client, the MBEC consultant will conduct research on potential target MBE firm and its owner(s).

The research will include:

- [REDACTED]
- } (b)(4)

The MBEC consultant will make initial contact via phone calls and emails to initiate dialog, information section will consist of:

- Information about MBDA and MBEC
- The MBEC role and goal of assisting in the MBE growth and development
- Explain about the business tools of Strategy, Processes, Architecture, Resources, Systems, and Empowerment (SPARSE) and Business Analysis, GIS mapping software and how these tools can assist in business growth and development.
- Explain how the MBEC and MBDA network can assist the MBE in building relationships.
- Listen to MBE's concerns and issues.
- Attempt to build credibility as a MBEC consultant by demonstrating personal commitment and sharing information.

2. Initial Contact

The MBEC Consultants will conduct the following assessment along with the MBE by verbal conversations and emails in attempt to assess the current and future business needs of the MBE.

With the aid of the client's customer service model components of; Strategy, Processes, Architecture, Resources, Systems, and Empowerment (SPARSE) the consultants will use this tool to assist the MBE in identify needs for his business. The MBDA consultant will schedule meeting, which will consist of:

- [REDACTED]
- } (b)(4)

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

(b)(4)

The goal of the initial assessment is the development of a structured proposal to address the current and future MBE business needs to foster growth and development.

3. Work Methodology Development

The MBEC Consultants along with the MBE firm will develop a specific work plan to achieve the desired results of the MBE. In determining this plan the following process will occur:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

(b)(4)

The Work Methodology Agreement will contain the following information: (1) Client request (including the SPARSE); (2) Information request from MBDA needed to complete assignment of work product; (3) Work plan to accomplish

assigned work; (4) Estimated hours to complete assignment; (5) Client approval of assignment/work product progress upon completion; and (6) Agree upon deliverable.

4. Implementation Process

The MBEC Consultants will provide its MBE with the following services that will generate an added value for the MBE using the following process:

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

(b)(4)

5. Communication and Feedback

The MBEC Consultants will provide its MBE with the following services that will generate value for the MBE using the process below.

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

(b)(4)

3.3.6.1.4 Other Rapid Growth-Potential Minority Firms

1. Initial Contact

Potential clients and MBE's who's projects has a high likely hood of success to create jobs and or generate high sales volume or both, these clients will be identified through our referrals, strategic partners, venture capital networks, business incubators that are located through out the state, the MBDA and other "word of mouth" sources, the internet, walk-in, as well as marketing efforts. From that initial contact, a meeting is usually scheduled and the following areas are discussed:

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

(b)(4)

2. Initial Assessment

The MBEC consultants will conduct an assessment along with the MBE covering the following areas:

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

(b)(4)

[REDACTED]

(b)(4)

The goal of the initial assessment is the development of a structured proposal for the MBE based on the business needs identified through the SPARSE and verbal conversations. The area will serves as lead into developing the work methodology and plan of action and the MBE signing up as a client.

3. Work Methodology Development

The MBEC Consultants along with the MBE firm will develop a specific work plan to achieve the desired results of the MBE. In determining this plan the following process will occur:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

(b)(4)

The Work Methodology Agreement will contain the following information: (1) Client request (including the SPARSE); (2) Information request from MBDA needed to complete assignment of work product; (3) Work plan to accomplish assigned work; (4) Estimated hours to complete assignment; (5) Client approval of assignment/work product progress upon completion; and (6) Agree upon deliverable.

4. Implementation Process

The MBEC Consultants will provide its MBE with the following services that will generate an added value for the MBE using the following process:

- [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
- (b)(4)

MBEC Consultants with the aid of the MBE will conduct research in effort to obtain more knowledge to address the MBE issues.

- [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
- (b)(4)

5. Communication and Feedback

The MBEC Consultants will provide its MBE with the following services that will generate value for the MBE using the following process:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

(b)(4)



The chart below illustrates the systems-integrated approach to assist in MBE growth and development. A systems-integrated approach is defined as a customer-based service model supported by the following functions:

- Strategy—e.g., plans for achieving sustainable competitive advantage and creating customer value
- Processes—e.g., efficient, effective ways of manufacturing products or delivering services
- Architecture—e.g., organizational and value chain (outsourcing) structure to implement the strategy and key processes
- Resources—e.g., the acquisition and management of financial, human, and technical assets
- Systems—e.g., mechanisms for control and communication, including but not limited to management information systems (MIS)
- Empowerment—e.g., delegation in a way that encourages staff to pursue strategic initiatives and continuous improvement.

STRATEGY	MBE's \$0 - 500K	MBE's \$500 - 999K	MBE's \$1M - 5M	MBE's Rapid Growth
<p>(b)(6)</p>	<p>[Redacted]</p>	<p>[Redacted]</p>	<p>[Redacted]</p>	<p>[Redacted]</p>



Part III. Program Narrative
Competitive Application Package

	MBE's \$0 - 500K	MBE's \$500 - 999K	MBE's \$1M - 5M	MBE's Rapid Growth
<p>(b)(9)</p>	<p>framing</p>			

Part III - 101

Operation of the South Carolina MBEC
Competition ID: 072620061180

Use or disclosure of proposal data is subject to
the restriction on the title page of this proposal.



Part III. Program Narrative
Competitive Application Package

	MBE's \$0 - 500K	MBE's \$500 - 999K	MBE's \$1M - 5M	MBE's Rapid Growth
	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]

(b)(4) (g)

Use or disclosure of proposal data is subject to the restriction on the title page of this proposal.



Part III. Program Narrative
Competitive Application Package

	MBE's \$0 - 500K	MBE's \$500 - 999K	MBE's \$1M - 5M	MBE's Rapid Growth
	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted] relationships

(b)(6)
1

3.3.6.2 Business Consulting Services

3.3.6.2.2 Functional Assistance

These steps in the development and enhancement of minority business enterprises will implement and maintain an effective program in South Carolina. Due to the rapid change of environment, technology, and needs of clients, the MBEC will institute continuing education orientations for all staff. The skill levels of all staff must continue to be re-engineered to provide quality and relevant customer service.

3.3.6.2.2.1 Marketing

Marketing includes all business activities included in moving the goods or services from the producer to the consumer. This is one of the major activities of any business. The success of a company's marketing efforts assures demand for its product and services, which results in sales and generates revenue for the business. Major areas of marketing to be provided by the MBEC to its clients include:

- Market Research
- Advertising and Sales
- Procurement Assistance
- Brochure Design
- Feasibility Studies
- Public Relations
- Product/Customer Service
- Media Selection/ Advertising
- Market Promotion
- Sales Forecasting
- Pricing
- Marketing Plans
- Promotional Activities
- General Counseling
- Site Selection

Proper marketing is essential for minority businesses to survive and to realize growth, success and profitability. The development of effective marketing strategies and tools are critical. Marketing allows a business to stimulate product demand, versus waiting passively for consumers to respond to the business. The MBEC staff will be able to use automation (i.e., digitization, data management and application software packages) to develop brochures and other marketing tools. These tools, in conjunction with the marketing skill of the staff, will assist the businesses in penetrating markets.

3.3.6.2.2.2 Financial Management

Assisting the clients in understanding and applying the complexities of bookkeeping, accounting, financial management, operating capital and cash flow will be the major goals in this area. Each client's previous accounting and tax records will be requested for review in conjunction with current and planned financing requirements. Financial management services include:

- Capital Budgeting
- Cost Accounting
- Operating Controls
- Marginal Income Analysis
- Tax Planning
- Mergers and Acquisitions
- Accounting Software Applications
- General Budgeting
- Analysis Budgeting
- Operating Cycle Analysis
- Financial Planning

3.3.6.2.2.3 Financial Assistance

The MBEC will assist clients in the identification, preparation and packaging of standard commercial and alternative debt, equity, and mezzanine financing and trade credit opportunities. Each client's credit history will be reviewed. This analysis will assist in providing the information necessary to facilitate management decisions concerning finance. Current and proposed financing requirements will be analyzed to determine the appropriate method and source of financing. Financial analytical processes include:

- Financial Packaging
- Ratio Analysis
- Financing
- IRR, NPV, and ROI Analysis
- Break-even Analysis
- Equity Capital Financing

3.3.6.2.2.4 Procurement Assistance

Through one-on-one assessments, the MBEC will be aware of the capabilities of all clients. This information will be put into the database to be used in matching opportunities or resources, which will be identified. Through market research, online tools, relationships with larger entities offering contract opportunities, the MBEC Consultant will match the opportunities discovered with the minority firms that best meet the criteria and qualification for the opportunity.

3.3.6.2.2.5 Operations & Quality Management

3.3.6.2.2.5.1 Manufacturing

South Carolina has developed a wealth of knowledge for the attraction and development of manufacturing firms throughout the state. The Statewide MBEC will advise manufacturing clients of the opportunities and assistance they can receive from well-established programs in our state. The South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership is the premier provider of these types of services. Major service areas will include:

- Plant Location
- Site Selection
- Plant Management
- Materials Handling
- Distribution
- General Counseling

The MBEC has developed a working relationship with the South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (SCMEP). Their vision is to become the primary resource for South Carolina manufacturers, providing them with valuable technological, workplace and business solutions that improve their industrial competitiveness. SCMEP's mission is to strengthen the global competitiveness of South Carolina manufacturers, focusing on smaller firms that would otherwise not have access to modernization resources and solutions.

The SCMEP has adopted the following principles to guide the organization in accomplishing their mission:

- Focus on firms that otherwise would not have access to needed technology and business solutions.
- Leverage existing public and private service providers, using these resources to deliver the needed solutions to the client.
- Focus on firms committed to investing in their own growth and development.
- Commit SCMEP to performance measurements that focus on long-term, bottom-line economic impacts to client firms.
- Focus internal staff delivery on highly-valued services that are either not available to or are not reasonably accessible to the small and medium-sized manufacturers of South Carolina.

The SCMEP is a valuable resource for manufacturing clients. South Carolina has a limited number of minority firms, especially in rural areas.

3.3.6.2.2.5.2 Construction

Construction Assistance is a major service area of the DESA, Inc. We can refer clients to professionals who can offer assistance in the area of estimating and bid preparation. Major service areas include:

- Estimating
- Bonding
- General Counseling
- Mobilization /Demobilization
- Bid Preparations
- Take-Offs
- Scheduling

The number of licensed and bonded minority contractors in South Carolina needs to increase. The MBEC Project Coordinator is now in talks with the construction licensing authority in the State of South Carolina in regards to increasing the number of licensed contractors. They are currently working together to devise a method for testing contractors with poor reading skills.

One goal will be to increase the number of trained, licensed, bonded contractors who are able to estimate and bid their work. This increase must be achieved in realistic phases and will rely on the opening of financing markets, development of client relationships, and cooperation of sureties.

One method will be to use Joint Venturing of MBEs based on comparable financial strengths and weaknesses. We will also encourage Joint Venture partnerships between majority and minority construction firms. DESA was instrumental in getting a mandatory majority-minority Joint Venture program set-up for Richland County School District One during its latest construction referendum.

DESA, Inc. has always been an advocate of construction firms in our state. With our advocacy, we have helped create and maintain a minority set-aside program from the South Carolina Department of Transportation.

3.3.6.2.2.5.3 International Trade Assistance

International trade is an area that needs considerable development throughout the entire State of South Carolina. Exporting is a field of great importance to this state. We have access to a large port at Charleston and manufacturing in the state has grown in the last few years, especially in rural areas. To keep the demand high for manufactured products in our state, exporting must be examined as part of the total market plan.

Since the project director is on the Board of Directors for the South Carolina Export Consortium, the Center will use that connection to refer viable clients for free or reduced rate assistance. The MBEC one-on-one client assistance will be designed to increase minority business awareness of the overseas markets available. DESA will provide service in the following areas:

- Exporting
- Importing
- Letters of Credit
- Bank Draft
- Dealership
- General Counseling
- Agencies
- Distributorship
- Exporting Trading Companies
- Joint Ventures
- Freight Forwarding
- Handling

The MBEC will also take advantage of the MBIP, the Internet and the following programs to help MBEs participate in the global economy:

- E-EXPO USA at <http://e-expousa.doc.gov>
- The Commercial Service - US Department of Commerce
- The MBDA's Trade Mission
- South Carolina District Export Council
- Midlands International Trade Association (MITA)
- My-export.com

Knowledge gained about exporting opportunities will foster increased participation in the flourishing international markets currently not taken advantage of by many firms in the South Carolina service area.

3.3.6.2.2.5.4 Specialized Certifications

ISO 9000 Quality System Certification

ISO 9000 is a series of International Quality Management System Standards that can be applied to any type of business including servicing, design, production, and installation. The series includes ISO 9001, ISO 9002, ISO 9000-1, ISO 9000-2 and ISO 9000-3. This series of standards is directly applicable to any portion of business functions. The success of a quality management system depends greatly on the support and commitment of company management.

DESA realizes that in order to be competitive in today's global market, a certification in ISO 9000 or other quality control system is imperative. We

will discuss the importance of quality to our clients during consultations. Although our staff has knowledge of ISO 9000 and its principles, we will be able to recommend how our clients will be able to obtain ISO 9000 certification. The South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership will supply a list of recommended providers of ISO 9000 Certification. We will look to the MEP for their expert assistance in this area.

3.3.6.2.2.6 Organization & Administration

All businesses have administrative functions that must be performed. Existing operations and procedures will be analyzed to ensure that they are being performed in the most efficient manner. Major service areas include:

- Office Management
- Inventory Control
- Total Quality Management
- Awareness of Metric System
- Document Management
- Procedures and Systems
- Purchasing
- General Counseling

The MBEC is staffed with persons skilled in an automated office environment. DESA is continually striving to reduce administrative time through automation. This service will be an integral part of the MBEC. DESA will ensure that the staff is trained and will equip them to suggest similar measures of automation to clients. The Internet and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) will be integral parts of the MBEC's automation.

Constant changes in State and Federal laws and regulations require firms to be aware of the changes that effect its operation. This also means there must be flexible personnel policies and procedures to incorporate any mandated changes. Emphasis will be devoted on employee retention, alternate staffing methods and benefits administration. Family-owned businesses and their unique circumstances must be addressed since South Carolina has a large number of family-owned businesses. Major areas include:

- Human Resource Management
- Job Evaluation and rating System
- Training
- General Counseling

The quality of work force each firm is able to maintain correlates highly with the success of the firm. As we are now in a cycle where unemployment is low, it is

imperative that each firm must attract and keep a skilled workforce to meet their manpower needs.

3.3.6.2.2.7 General Management

The management skills of a business are critical factors for the success of the firm. Major areas of service offered by the MBEC in the general management area will include:

- 1 Organization & Structure
- 2 Public Relations
- 3 Business Planning
- 4 Formulating Corporate Policy
- 5 Reports and Controls
- 6 Strategic Planning
- 7 Staff Scheduling
- 8 Bid Preparation
- 9 Feasibility Studies
- 10 Legal Services

It is imperative that our MBEC Consultants are proficient in management topics. Many small business owners draw upon the MBEC for their expertise on these topics.

3.3.7 Operational Quality

To be able to meet the performance measures established for this program, each MBEC Consultant must perform quality work. The MBEC will have procedures in place to ensure that all work is completed efficiently and effectively.

3.3.7.1 Work Plan Agreement & Engagement Letter

After accessing the client's needs, the MBEC and the client will develop a Work Plan Agreement. The Work Plan Agreement describes all the areas that the client wishes assistance from the MBEC. By having this agreement drawn up both the client and the MBEC Consultant, will know what they are expected to do. The client and the MBEC must sign the agreement and remain in the client's file. The Project Director will audit the client's files on a monthly basis. Work Plan Agreements will be randomly verified for appropriate signatures and to monitor progress. The work plan will include:

- A description of the client's needs.
- The services to be provided by the consultant.
- The name of the MBEC staff member who is to provide the services.
- The information to be provided by the client.
- The estimated date by which the client is to supply the required information.
- The estimated completion date of the project.

If the work plan cannot be developed during the initial visit due to its complexity, it will be developed and then signed on the following visit. After developing a Work Plan, the client will sign a Consent Agreement. The Consent Agreement will include:

- The date of agreement.
- Services to be provided by the MBEC.
- Special responsibilities of the client.
- Time agreements, i.e., when each party will complete their obligations
- Fees, i.e., the amount of payment (including retainer fee) and payment schedule.

The Work Plan is an integral part of the Consent Agreement. Both the consultant and the client must agree upon any deviation from the written plan and payment schedule. This agreement must be provided in writing and signed by both parties.

An engagement letter will be written, signed by the project director and mailed to the client memorializing the key information listed in the Work Plan. A copy will be placed in the client's file.

3.3.7.2 Client/Consultant Work Plan Objectives

The Work Plan must be written so it is understandable, descriptive of all work assignments to be completed, and formally describes the methodology that will be used in achieving the work plan objectives for each client. It is imperative that this plan is followed as written. If changes in the work are made, then the Work Plan must be amended to reflect these changes. The Work Plan Agreement will remain in the client's file. The Project Director will audit the client's files on a monthly basis. Work Plan Agreements will be read to verify the clarity and thoroughness of the project description.

3.3.7.3 Performance Database

The Performance Database must be updated in a timely manner. Progress and results will input into the system within seventy-two (72) hours from the time of service. The Project Director will audit this database on a weekly basis to ascertain the timeliness and thoroughness of each MBEC Consultant's input. Each MBEC Consultant must input information on a daily basis. By inputting the information into the database as it happens, or soon after it happens, the data will be more accurate and readily accessible for analysis.

3.3.7.4 Procedures for Client Fees/Collections

After a contract is established between the MBEC and the MBE, the following procedures are followed for client fees and collections:

For New Clients:

- An initial deposit is required.
- They are invoiced and pay monthly for services rendered (see narrative below).
- Final payment is due upon completion of services and/or work product.

For Returning Clients:

- They are invoiced and pay monthly for services rendered (see narrative below).
- Final payment is due upon completion of services and/or work product.

Each MBEC Consultant logs his time into a DESA, Inc. Access database according to the hours worked for that client. As the MBEC Consultant inputs client service hours into the database, it is tracked. This database is in addition to the MBDA's Performance database. The Access database will generate an invoice for each client at the end of each month.

The client is then sent a monthly invoice for the hours worked on his project. A copy of the invoice is placed in the client's file. When the client makes a payment, a copy of the check or of the receipt (for cash) is also put into the file. All funds received are input into the Access database and credited to the client's account. The funds accounted for in the database are reconciled with deposits on a monthly basis. The client's payment status is reviewed during the monthly audit of client files made by the Project Director.

DESA, Inc. notes that this is an inefficient method of collecting client's funds. It would be most helpful if Performance could generate invoices and reports that would reflect a client's payment status. We will not be able to discontinue the use of our Access database until Performance is upgraded to complete this task.

Fees:

Fees for business and technical assistance serviced by the MBEC consultants are based on nominal hourly rates tied to the annual gross receipts of the client's business. See table below.

Gross Receipts of Clients	Client Fee per Hour
\$ 0 - \$ 99,999	\$10.00
\$ 100,000 - \$ 299,999	\$20.00
\$ 300,000 - \$ 999,999	\$30.00
\$ 1 M - \$ 2,999,999	\$40.00
\$ 3 M - \$ 4,999,999	\$50.00
\$ 5 M & Above	\$60.00

VERY IMPORTANT: estimate the fees for a new client or new task, and collect before the work begins.

Invoicing:

- **Accuracy** - You cannot expect clients to pay against incorrect invoices - make sure yours are accurate.
- **Consistency** – The language on the invoice should match the language on the contract the client signed so that there will be no room for the client to claim confusion concerning the billing.
- **Invoice monthly** - Invoices should show fees for hours worked less deposit received. Ideally, the money is all collected up front and the fees are paid from the deposit. However, inevitably, there will be invoices with balances due. Put the due date on the invoice; all invoices are due by the 5th of every month. No stagger billing! If clients haven't paid by the 15th of the month, send a second notice; if still no response, call at the end of the month.

Collections:

- **Call before due date** – Confirm receipt of invoice as well as ensure that the client's accounts payable department has all the supporting documentation it needs to cut the check. Review the due date with the client.
- **Get a commitment** – Try to get a specific date by which we'll get paid, both during an initial call for a missed payment and in response to a previously broken client commitment.
- **Keep a journal** – Take detailed notes of every collection conversation you have. Record the date of the conversation and to whom you spoke, as well as the specific commitment the person made to you. E-mail your notes of the conversation to the client contact. This will serve as yet another reminder that we are determined to get paid.
- **Follow up wisely** – If a client reneges on a commitment to pay, consider that there could be mitigating circumstances. Keep in mind that our goal is to get paid as soon as possible.
 - **Never give up** – In some cases there is no other choice in collecting, but to deal with the **owner**. If that is what it takes, do not hesitate to go that route.

3.3.7.5 Maintaining Records/Files

A file is maintained for each client in a central location in the Center. The client file shall contain the following:

- Intake Form – information collected on client during initial consultation
- Performance information – copy of set-up sheet information
- Work Plan Agreement – action plan agreed upon by client
- Work Performed – Work Projects generated for client and their signature for work provided.
- Invoices – client billing status
- Receipts – client payments

A roster is maintained at the file location to track files. Any MBEC Consultant needing a file must write his name, the client's name, date and time removed on the file roster. Files are maintained at the Center for two years. (For example, client files for 2004 and 2005 would be currently available). Files from previous years are stored offsite and are easily retrievable, if required by the Center staff.

3.3.7.6 Acceptance Of Services

Written acceptance of the client is required for all Work Projects. When the MBEC Consultant reviews the Work Project with the client, they should have a form signed as to their acceptance of the Project. This form must be placed into the client's file within 30 days after each business quarter in which a client receives services. The client's acceptance is reviewed during the monthly audit of client's files made by the Project Director.

3.3.7.7 Reporting Requirements

All required performance reporting would be done via the Internet using the Performance system. Each MBEC Consultant, and/or anyone providing service to the eligible public under this award, will provide the information required in the Performance system. Each person will be trained, using the on-line tutorial provided, to use the Performance system.

The Project Director will report our program performance measures in a Performance report 30 days after the end of the second quarter and provide an end of the year assessment, using these measures, within 30 days after the end of the fourth quarter. We understand program performance measures to include:

- Dollar value of transactions
- Number of jobs created
- Number of new clients
- Administrative Management & Operational Quality
- Client satisfaction
- Management assessment
- Market promotion
- Resource entities
- Establish strategic partners
- Facilitated matches

The MBEC will take the necessary steps to assure the integrity and timeliness of all data provided.

3.3.7.8 Online Tools

DESA, Inc. is very pleased to see the on-line tools developed by the MBDA. We will cooperate with the MBDA in maintaining content for the Phoenix/Opportunity system, Resource locator and the on-line tools located at www.mbda.gov. We will share our opportunities and resources with the MBDA for the benefit of other MBECs and their clients.

3.3.7.9 Promotion & Utilization Of Services & Programs

DESA, Inc. will promote the services and resources of other MBDA programs, sponsored efforts and/or volunteer activities. The MBEC will identify the MBDA as the funding sponsor and we will provide signs worded per the Federal Register.

3.3.7.10 Trademarks & Licensing

The MBEC will abide by the MBDA's trademark and licensing requirements on all forms of communication including but not limited to signage, stationary and other MBEC-related publications. DESA, Inc. will also adhere to the specific size, location and font of the MBDA logo.

3.3.7.10.1 Signage

The MBEC currently has a highly visible sign post to display a newly developed sign at its entrance that can be seen from all directions of traffic flow. This new sign will meet all the criteria set forth the by MBDA and will welcome clients and the general public.

3.3.7.10.2 Printed Materials

All stationary, letterhead, brochures and other handout materials will have the MBDA prominently identified as the funding source. We currently have price quotes for all printed material.

3.3.4.10.3 Internet Presence & Information

The standardized byline established by the MBDA will be publicized on the Center's website. The verbiage identifies that the Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency. There will also be a link to the MBDA website.

3.3.4.10.4 Telephonic Communication


Immediately upon answering the telephone, the employee will identify to the caller that he or she has reached the MBEC. The MBDA will be referred to in all outreach and advocacy efforts in order to promote the efforts of the agency.

3.2.8 Computer Requirements

DESA, Inc. understands, in the current application for operation of the MBEC, that all award recipients must meet requirements related to the acquisition, installation, configuration, maintenance and security of information technology (IT) assets in order to ensure a productive interface between all Centers, minority-owned businesses, the MBDA, and the public. It is further understood that the basic requirements are the desktop workstations, the server, local area network (LAN) components and a connection to the Internet. DESA, Inc. current hardware and software fully meets the requirements of the US Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency.

3.2.8.1 Network Design

The MBEC currently has an Local Area Network, computer workstations and a connection to the internet for all staff members. All desktop computers are interconnected with the server computer using an Ethernet protocol enabling communication with all workstations on the network. A constant high-speed Internet connection is maintained at all times during business hours. Each staff persona has an individual email address that is available to its clients and the public. The local area network as described below:

-  (b)(4)
- Two mirrored 40 gigabyte 7.2K RPM IDE hard drives
- Single Intel Pentium 4 Processor; 2.4 GHz, 533 FSB includes floppy; upgradeable for dual processor
- Firewall Software
- Trend Micro Anti-Virus
- Bellsouth DSL

DESA, Inc. is confident this server meets the needs of this requirement. It is engineered for high performance, maximum uptime, serviceability, and ease of management. All servers maintained by a third party such as an Internet Service Provider (ISP) meet the minimum server specifications.

3.2.8.2 Desktop Workstation

Currently, all Desktop Workstations are under two years old. The following systems have been purchased which meet and/or exceed the application-required specifications:

- Intel Pentium 4 Processor, 2.53 GHz
- Hard drive with storage capacity of forty (40) GB
- 512 MB PC 800 RD Ram (2RIMMS)
- Microsoft Office XP Small Business and ADOBE ACROBAT 7.0

- Internet Access using Internet Explorer 6.x
- Ethernet TCP/IP protocol
- Electronic Mail
- Trend Micro Anti-Virus

At least one of these workstations has a Xerox Documate 510 scanner installed and a feed along with software fully compatible with Adobe Acrobat for the production of electronic document submissions.

3.2.8.3 Maintenance and Security

A network map is maintained for review by the MBDA. We currently have a designated administrative person who is fully competent in the operation of the Windows 2000 network and local area network (LAN) technology system. They have been on staff since early 2006 and have maintained the system in full operating order.

DESA, Inc. understands that the MBDA may require certain software to be loaded on servers and/or desktops. The cost of this additional software may be borne by MBDA.

Every employee has been assigned a unique username and password to access the system and has signed a written computer security agreement, both of which are on file at the MBDC and available to the MBDA. A photocopy of the agreement shall be sent by fax to the MBDA no later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the award. All subsequent new hires require access to the MBDA or MBDA systems shall read understand and sign the security agreement prior to issuance of a password.

3.2.8.4 Website

The SCMBDC currently hosts a public website at www.scmdbdc.com. A new website will be designed and will have the address of www.scmbec.com. We have designed our website to meet the needs of our clients and in doing so have also met the requirements for websites in this application. The index page of the website identifies the owner as the Minority Business Development Center and that it is funded by the United States Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency. The index page is fully compatible with Internet Explorer 6.x browser software and has minimal graphics to enable downloads on a normal home computer with 56 Kb/s analog phone line connection in less than ten (10) seconds. The web site contains the names of all managers and employees, the business and mailing address of the MBEC, business phone and fax numbers and email addresses of all MBEC personnel. It also includes a description of all services offered at the MBEC and the hours of operations. The site has a short biographical statement for each employee of the MBEC including management, contractors, part-time, full-time and volunteer personnel providing service to the eligible public under the award from MBDA. The cost associated is also posted on the website. The website contains many useful links including those to the MBDA homepage: www.mbda.gov.

The site also has information regarding the new Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software and services. The Geographic Information System (GIS) has the ability to tie demographic information with street addresses, zip codes and census tracts into "business maps" that help minority businesses owners and financial lenders visualize patterns and understand relationships not apparent from traditional demographic tables and financial charts. GIS analysis links locations with the information behind them and presents the results in the form of a map.

There is no third party advertising on our website. The website also includes the Annual Report of the Center. The website is professionally maintained and is updated as required, usually on a monthly basis. GIS is a great tool to help business owners make wiser, faster, more informed decisions.

Every page of the website is in compliance with Federal standards of the American With Disabilities Act, Section 508, and will be review by DESA every three (3) months for accuracy, currency and appropriateness.

3.2.8.5 Time for Compliance

DESA is currently in compliance with all technical requirements for computer hardware and software and will report, within 30 days of receipt of award, this via email to the Chief Information Officer, MBDA Office of Information Technology Services and MBDA Office of Business Development.

DESA will provide the name, contact telephone number and email address for the following people:

- Project Director
- Network or Systems Administrator
- IP Number of the Domain Name Server

DESA will also supply pertinent information about our ISP including and any other information as specified in the Technology Requirements.


3.2.8.6 Performance System

The SCMBDC is currently using the Performance database system provided by MBDA for performance reporting, accessed via the Internet. We understand this is a requirement under this application. Within 30 days after award, each MBEC Consultant and/or anyone providing business assistance to the public under this award shall have satisfactorily completed the Performance System Training Source (PTSC) on-line from the Performance website. Only the trained staff, giving service to the client, will enter data into the Performance database. Staff will be instructed that they are required to enter data on a daily basis.

3.2.8.7 Data Integrity

DESA, Inc. will continue to ensure that the necessary steps are taken for all data entered into the MBDA system, and systems operated by DESA, Inc. are accurate and timely.

3.2.8.8 Current Computer Hardware/Software Applications

-  (b)(4)
- Two mirrored 40 GB, IDE hard drive
- Dell Dimension 2400, P4 CPU 2.66 GHZ, 512 MB Ram
- Dell Dimension 2400, P4 CPU 2.66 GHZ, 512 MB Ram
- Dell Dimension 2400, P4 CPU 2.66 GHZ, 512 MB Ram
- Dell Dimension 2400, P4 CPU 2.66 GHZ, 512 MB Ram

Current Computer Hardware – Server

- Sonic Wall SOHO 10 Internet Security Appliance
- Sonic Wall Virtual Private Network
- Cable Modem Dedicated Service
- Lanier 5227 Multipurpose
- HP Color LaserJet 3700n

Current Computer Software

- Microsoft Office 2003 Professional
- Microsoft Office XP Professional
- Microsoft Fax Service
- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe PageMaker 6.5
- Adobe Acrobat Professional 7.0
- Adobe Reader 7.0
- Corel WordPerfect 7
- Corel Presentations 7
- Expert Do It Yourself Lawyer
- Finance Pro
- PPCs Business Solutions
- Pro CP Phonebook 4.0
- QuickTime for Windows
- Real Data Real Estate Calculator
- RMA Annual Statement Studies
- ArcView GIS 3.2
- ArcView Network Analyst
- ArcView StreetMap
- ArcView Business Analyst 9.0
- Crystal Reports for ESRI

- American Yellow Pages
- Precision Collection – Extended
- Precision Collection – Standard
- Expedition 6.0
- Internet Explorer 6.0
- Dodge Market Leader
- Seagate Crystal Reports
- Trend Micro Anti-Virus
- Winfax Pro
- Kudo Catalog Reader
- Street Atlas USA