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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

International Trade Administration

[Docket No.: 151106999-5999-01]

Call for Applications for the International Buyer Program Select Service for Calendar Year 2017

AGENCY: International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice and call for applications.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), International Trade Administration (ITA) announces that it will begin accepting applications for the International Buyer Program (IBP) Select service for calendar year 2017 (January 1, 2017, through December 31, 2017). This announcement sets out the objectives, procedures and application review criteria for IBP Select. Under IBP Select, ITA recruits international buyers to U.S. trade shows to meet with U.S. suppliers exhibiting at those shows. The main difference between IBP and IBP Select is that IBP offers worldwide promotion, whereas IBP Select focuses on promotion and recruitment in up to five international markets. Specifically, through the IBP Select, the DOC selects domestic trade shows that will receive DOC assistance in the form of targeted promotion and recruitment in up to five foreign markets, export counseling to exhibitors, and export counseling and matchmaking services at the trade show. This notice covers selection for IBP Select participation during calendar year 2017.

DATES: Applications for IBP Select must be received by Friday, January 8, 2016.

ADDRESS: The application form can be found at www.export.gov/ibp. Applications may be submitted by any of the following methods: (1) Mail/Hand Delivery Service: International

Buyer Program, Trade Promotion Programs, International Trade Administration, U.S.

Department of Commerce, Ronald Reagan Building, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 800 – Mezzanine Level –Atrium North, Washington, D.C. 20004; (2) Facsimile: (202) 482-7800; or (3) email: IBP2017@trade.gov. Facsimile and email applications will be accepted as interim applications, and must be followed by a signed original application that is received by the program no later than five (5) business days after the application deadline. To ensure that applications are received by the deadline, applicants are strongly urged to send applications by express delivery service (e.g., U.S. Postal Service Express Delivery, Federal Express, UPS, etc.).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Vidya Desai, Acting Director, International Buyer Program, Trade Promotion Programs, International Trade Administration, U.S.

Department of Commerce, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Ronald Reagan Building, Suite 800M - Mezzanine Level - Atrium North, Washington, DC 20004; Telephone (202) 482-2311; Facsimile: (202) 482-7800; Email: IBP2017@trade.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The IBP was established in the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 (Pub. L. 100-418, title II, §2304, codified at 15 U.S.C. § 4724) to bring international buyers together with U.S. firms by promoting leading U.S. trade shows in industries with high export potential. The IBP emphasizes cooperation between the DOC and trade show organizers to benefit U.S. firms exhibiting at selected events and provides practical, hands-on assistance such as export counseling and market analysis to U.S. companies interested in exporting. Shows selected for the IBP Select will provide a venue for U.S. companies interested in expanding their sales into international markets.

Through the IBP, the DOC selects trade shows that DOC determines to be leading trade shows with participation by U.S. firms interested in exporting. DOC provides successful

applicants with assistance in the form of targeted overseas promotion of the show by U.S. Embassies and Consulates; outreach to show participants about exporting; recruitment of potential buyers to attend the events; and staff assistance in setting up and staffing international trade centers at the events. Targeted promotion in up to five markets can be executed through the overseas offices of ITA or in U.S. Embassies in countries where ITA does not maintain offices.

ITA is accepting applications for IBP Select from trade show organizers of trade events taking place between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2017. Selection of a trade show for IBP Select is valid for one event. A trade show organizer seeking selection for a recurring event must submit a new application for selection for each occurrence of the event. For events that occur more than once in a calendar year, the trade show organizer must submit a separate application for each event.

There is no fee required to submit an application. For IBP Select in calendar year 2017, ITA expects to select approximately 8 events from among the applicants. ITA will select those events that are determined to most clearly support the statutory mandate in 15 U.S.C. 4721 to promote U.S. exports, especially those of small- and medium-sized enterprises, and that best meet the selection criteria articulated below. Once selected, applicants will be required to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the DOC, and submit payment of the \$6,000 2017 participation fee (by check or credit card) within 30 days of written notification of acceptance into IBP Select. The MOA constitutes an agreement between the DOC and the show organizer specifying which responsibilities for international promotion and export assistance services at the trade shows are to be undertaken by the DOC as part of the IBP Select and, in turn, which responsibilities are to be undertaken by the show organizer. Anyone requesting

application information will be sent a sample copy of the MOA along with the application form and a copy of this Federal Register Notice. Applicants are encouraged to review the MOA closely, as IBP Select participants are expected to comply with all terms, conditions, and obligations in the MOA. Trade show organizer obligations include the construction of an International Trade Center at the trade show, production of an export interest directory, and provision of complimentary hotel accommodations for DOC staff as explained in the MOA. ITA responsibilities include targeted promotion of the trade show and, where feasible, recruitment of international buyers to that show from up to five target markets identified, provision of on-site export assistance to U.S. exhibitors at the show, and the reporting of results to the show organizer.

Selection as an IBP Select show does not constitute a guarantee by DOC of the show's success. IBP Select participation status is not an endorsement of the show except as to its international buyer activities. Non-selection of an applicant for IBP Select status should not be viewed as a determination that the event will not be successful in promoting U.S. exports.

ELIGIBILITY: 2017 U.S. trade events with 1,350 or fewer exhibitors are eligible to apply, through the show organizer, for IBP Select participation. First-time events will also be considered.

EXCLUSIONS: U.S. trade shows with over 1,350 exhibitors will not be considered for IBP Select.

GENERAL EVALUATION CRITERIA: ITA will evaluate applicants for IBP Select using the following criteria:

(a) Export Potential: The trade show promotes products and services from U.S. industries that have high export potential, as determined by DOC sources, including industry analysts' assessment of export potential, ITA best prospects lists, and U.S. export analysis.

(b) Level of International Interest: The trade show meets the needs of a significant number of overseas markets and corresponds to marketing opportunities as identified by ITA. Previous international attendance at the show may be used as an indicator.

(c) Scope of the Show: The event must offer a broad spectrum of U.S. made products and services for the subject industry. Trade shows with a majority of U.S. firms as exhibitors are given priority.

(d) U.S. Content of Show Exhibitors: Trade shows with exhibitors featuring a high percentage of products produced in the United States or products with a high degree of U.S. content will be preferred.

(e) Stature of the Show: The trade show is clearly recognized by the industry it covers as a leading event for the promotion of that industry's products and services both domestically and internationally, and as a showplace for the latest technology or services in that industry.

(f) Level of Exhibitor Interest: There is significant interest on the part of U.S. exhibitors in receiving international business visitors during the trade show. A significant number of U.S. exhibitors should be new-to-export or seeking to expand their sales into additional export markets.

(g) Level of Overseas Marketing: There has been a demonstrated effort by the applicant to market prior shows overseas. In addition, the applicant should describe in detail the international marketing program to be conducted for the event, and explain how efforts should increase individual and group international attendance.

(h) Level of Cooperation: The applicant demonstrates a willingness to cooperate with ITA to fulfill the program's goals and adhere to the target dates set out in the MOA and in the event timetables, both of which are available from the program office (see the "FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT" section above). Past experience in the IBP will be taken into account in evaluating the applications received.

(i) Delegation Incentives: Waived or reduced (by at least 50%) admission fees are required for international attendees who are participating in IBP Select. Delegation leaders also must be provided complimentary admission to the event. In addition, show organizers should offer a range of incentives to delegations and/or delegation leaders recruited by the DOC overseas posts. Examples of incentives to international visitors and to organized delegations include: special organized events, such as receptions, meetings with association executives, briefings, and site tours; or complimentary accommodations for delegation leaders.

REVIEW PROCESS: ITA will vet all applications received based on the criteria set out in this notice. Vetting will include soliciting input from ITA industry analysts, as well as domestic and international field offices, focusing primarily on the export potential, level of international interest, and stature of the show. In reviewing applications, ITA will also consider sector and calendar diversity in terms of the need to allocate resources to support selected events.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS: Show organizers submitting applications for 2017 IBP Select are required to submit: (1) a narrative statement addressing each question in the application, OMB 0625-0143 (found at www.export.gov/ibp); and (2) a signed statement that "The above information provided is correct and the applicant will abide by the terms set forth in this Call for Applications for the International Buyer Program Select (January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017);" on or before the deadline noted above. Applications for IBP Select must

be received by Friday, January 8, 2016. There is no fee required to apply. ITA expects to issue the results of this process in April 2016.

LEGAL AUTHORITY: The statutory program authority for ITA to conduct the IBP is 15 U.S.C. § 4724. ITA has the legal authority to enter into MOAs with show organizers under the provisions of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 (MECEA), as amended (22 U.S.C. sections 2455(f) and 2458(c)). MECEA allows ITA to accept contributions of funds and services from firms for the purposes of furthering its mission.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved the information collection requirements of the application to this program (0625-0143) under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.) (OMB Control No. 0625-0143). Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

For further information please contact: Vidya Desai, Acting Director, International Buyer Program (IBP2017@trade.gov).

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Trade Promotion Programs

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