

technology to develop and transfer technologies related to NIST research results and expertise in the technical areas noted in the MEP regulations found at 15 CFR part 290?

(3) *Technology Delivery Mechanisms.* Does the proposal clearly and sharply define an effective methodology for delivering advanced manufacturing technology to small- and medium-sized manufacturers?

(i) *Linkages.* Development of effective partnerships or linkages to third parties such as industry, universities, nonprofit economic organizations, and state governments who will amplify the center's technology delivery to reach a large number of clients in its service region.

(ii) *Program Leverage.* Provision of an effective strategy to amplify the center's technology delivery approaches to achieve the proposed objectives as described in 15 CFR 290.3(e).

(4) *Management and Financial Plan.* Does the proposal define a management structure and assure management personnel to carry out development and operation of an effective center?

(i) *Organizational Structure.* Completeness and appropriateness of the organizational structure, and its focus on the mission of the center. Assurance of full-time top management of the center.

(ii) *Program Management.* Effectiveness of the planned methodology of program management.

(iii) *Internal Evaluation.* Effectiveness of the planned continuous internal evaluation of program activities.

(iv) *Plans for Financial Matching.* Demonstrated stability and duration of the applicants funding commitments as well as the percentage of operating and capital costs guaranteed by the applicant. Identification of matching fund sources and the general terms of the funding commitments.

(v) *Budget.* Suitability and focus of the applicant's detailed one-year budget and budget outline for years 2–5 and beyond.

Proposal Selection Process

Proposal evaluation and selection will consist of four principal phases: proposal qualification, proposal review, site visits and award determination.

a. Proposal Qualification

All proposals will be reviewed by NIST to assure compliance with the proposal content as described in 15 CFR 290.5 and other basic provisions of this notice. Proposals that satisfy these requirements will be designated as qualified proposals. Non-qualified

proposals will not be evaluated and will be returned to the applicant.

b. Proposal Review

NIST will appoint an evaluation panel, consisting of one non-Federal Government employee and at least two Federal Government employees, to conduct an independent and objective review and evaluation of all qualified proposals in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth in this notice. Based upon this review, the panel will deliberate, and each panelist will assign a numeric score based on the evaluation criteria. Proposals with an average score of 70 or higher will be deemed finalists and will receive site visits.

c. Site Visits

Finalists will be notified and a day, time, and location for a site visit will be established. The panel will review finalists again on site, based on the evaluation criteria. Subsequently, the panel will deliberate again, and each panelist may revise his or her numeric scores based on the evaluation criteria, assessing equal weight to each of the four criteria. Proposals are then ranked based on the sum of the panelists' final numeric scores. The ranked proposals are then submitted to the Director of NIST or the Director of the NIST MEP Program for final award recommendation to the NIST Grants Officer.

d. Award Determination

The Director of NIST or the Director of the NIST MEP Program shall make final recommendation of whether an award should be made to the proposing organization based on a review of the panel's adherence to program objectives and program procedures and the availability of funds. The final approval of the selected applications and award of cooperative agreements will be made by the NIST Grants Officer based on compliance with program requirements and whether the recommended applicants appear competently managed, responsible, and committed to achieving project objectives. The decision of the Grants Officer is final.

Application Forms and Kit

The proposal must, at a minimum, include the following:

A. An executive summary of the proposed project, consistent with the Evaluation Criteria stated in this notice.

B. A description of the proposed project, sufficient to permit evaluation of the proposal, in accordance with the proposal Evaluation Criteria stated in this notice.

C. A detailed budget for the proposed project that breaks out all expenses for year 1 of operation and identifies all sources of funds to pay these expenses.

D. A budget outline for annual costs and sources of funds for potential years 2 through 5 and beyond. It is expected, especially for newly created centers, that year one costs are lower because of a ramp-up of operations from start-up to the point where the center is fully operational and services are being provided. If such a ramp-up of operations is to occur, this should be reflected in the budget outline for years 2 through 5 and beyond. A detailed budget and budget narrative will be required prior to each of years 2 through 5.

E. A description of the qualifications of key personnel who will be assigned to work on the proposed project.

F. A statement of work that discusses the specific tasks to be carried out, including a schedule of measurable events and milestones.

G. A Standard Form (SF) 424, 424–A, and 424–B (Rev 7/97) prescribed by 15 CFR part 14 (OMB Circular A–110), Form CD–511, Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements and Lobbying, and Form CD–346, Applicant For Funding Assistance (Name Check). The SF 424 and CD series of forms will not be considered part of the page count of the proposal.

In addition, the proposal must contain the requirements identified in 15 CFR 290.5(a)(3), which are:

A. A plan for the allocation of intellectual property rights associated with any invention or copyright which may result from the involvement in the Center's technology transfer or research activities consistent with the conditions of 15 CFR 290.9.

B. A statement that provides adequate assurances that the host organization will contribute the required cost share. (Although the MEP regulation, 15 CFR 290.5(a)(3)(ii), states that applicants should provide evidence that the proposed Center will be self-supporting after six years, this requirement is no longer in effect, as indicated above.)

C. A statement describing linkages to industry, government, and educational organizations within its service region.

D. A statement defining the initial service region including a statement of the constituency to be served and the level of service to be provided, as well as outyear plans.

E. A statement agreeing to focus the mission of the Center on technology transfer activities and not to exclude companies based on state boundaries.