

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

## NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

And

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION – U.S. AND FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE

### PURPOSE

The International Trade Administration U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service (US&FCS) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Program, referred to individually as a “Party” and collectively as the “Parties,” agree to enter into this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the purpose of formally establishing a working relationship to more efficiently serve the U.S. manufacturing base and increase global exports.

### BACKGROUND

The US&FCS is a network of over 100 U.S. offices, 150 foreign country offices, and 1,700 trade specialists that assist U.S. business to enter and succeed in world markets. Last year, US&FCS helped more than 9,000 U.S. businesses, including many small to medium-sized enterprises, to export \$34 billion in goods and services. US&FCS has a special program initiative to provide assistance to U.S. small and medium-sized manufacturers.

Created in 1988 by congressional governing statute, Title 15 USC 278K, MEP’s sole purpose is to provide small and medium sized manufacturers with the help they need to succeed by improving their productivity, economic competitiveness and technological capabilities. MEP is a results-based network of locally operated, staffed and controlled non-profit and university-based organizations leveraging Federal, state, local, and private resources. This partnership among the Federal government, state and local governments, and the private sector has manufacturing extension offices providing services in every state across the country and in Puerto Rico. The approximately 440 locations across the country are linked together through the Department of Commerce’s National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Research has shown that growth opportunities for manufacturers are increasingly international, and there is an enormous opportunity to assist small manufacturers to increase international sales. In particular, there are many U.S. manufacturers that ship to only one or a handful of international markets. Together, MEP and US&FCS can help these companies expand into additional countries and accelerate global growth.

The US&FCS U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEAC) provide expertise in international trade, which complements MEP center capabilities in manufacturing

processes and overall business strategy. These two organizations, through collaboration, can amplify each other's impact and support each other's missions.

Specific projects arising in the course of this working relationship that require the commitment of resources by either or both parties will operate under separate written agreements.

### COLLABORATION OBJECTIVES

Both organizations have an interest in working collaboratively within areas authorized and if funds are available. The specific opportunities for collaboration may include, but are not limited to:

- *Export Seminar:* Continue roll out of the jointly developed Successful Strategies for Growing International Sales research and seminar. Consider future research and seminar work on factors related to international growth for manufacturers.
- *Market Segmentation Research:* Conduct research regarding exporter customer needs and purchasing behavior in order to improve customer targeting, service delivery and impact.
- *Partnerships:* Continue to build joint private sector partnerships that support the missions of both organizations.
- *Knowledge Transfer:* Pursue knowledge transfer between MEP Communities of Practices (e.g., Growth Strategy CoP, Supply Chain CoP,) and US&FCS Teams (e.g., Automotive Team, Manufacturing Team).
- *International Trade Leads:* Link US&FCS international trade leads to the U.S. small manufacturing base through MEP.
- *Field Office Collaboration:* Promote collaboration between USEACs and MEP centers, including bi-directional referrals, joint service delivery for clients leveraging each organization's complementary expertise, joint development and delivery of seminars, arrangement for office hours of specialists in each other's field offices, and potential co-location of staff. (Example of complementary capabilities: MEP can help firms get ready to be exporters; US&FCS can help firms rapidly expand into multiple international markets.)
- *Cross-training:* Conduct cross training of each group, including regional conferences, periodic formal updates, leveraging each other's formal training programs, and one-on-one interaction and coaching.
- *Knowledge-sharing:* Facilitate knowledge sharing of center/field client-related best practices.

- *Tools:* Jointly develop client-specific tools that will benefit each others' practice areas, e.g., strategic international business assessment, CEO guide to exporting, international market planning guide.

**TERMS AND TERMINATION**

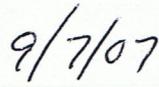
This MOU will take effect on the date of execution and will remain in effect for 2 (two) years, will be reviewed annually, and may be renewed by mutual agreement. The MOU may be terminated by either party upon written notice, may be modified by written mutual agreement, and may be extended in 1 (one) year increments for a total period not to exceed 5 (five) years.

Nothing herein shall be construed to create any joint venture or similar relationship or to subject the parties to any implied duties or obligations respecting the conduct of their affairs that are not expressly stated herein. Neither party shall have any right or authority to assume or create any obligation or responsibility, either expressed or implied, on behalf of or in the name of the other party, or to bind the other party in any matter whatsoever.

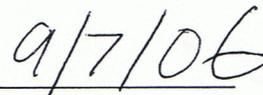
This MOU is a statement of intent of the parties to cooperate and does not create legally binding obligations. All activities contemplated by this MOU are subject to the availability to the parties of funds and other necessary resources. Neither party is required to obligate funds under this agreement. Funding arrangements, if any, will be addressed in separate implementing agreements under proper authorities.

**FOR THE PARTIES:**

  
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Roger D. Kilmer  
Director  
Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program  
National Institute for Standards and Technology

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Colleen Litkenhaus  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Office of Domestic Operations  
U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



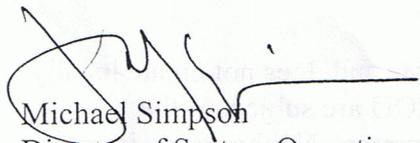
September 27, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR The File

From: Michael Simpson  
Director of System Operations, MEP

Subject: Discrepancy in date on MOU

This memo is to clarify the discrepancy about the date on the last page of the MOU. The date signed by Colleen Litkenhaus, Deputy Assistant Secretary, is incorrect. The correct date should be 9/7/07 not 9/7/06. The MOU is effective as of 9/7/07.

  
Michael Simpson  
Director of System Operations, MEP