

best satisfy the selection criteria as outlined below. A minimum of 15 companies will be selected to participate in the mission from the applicant pool. U.S. companies already doing business with Turkey and Kazakhstan as well as U.S. companies seeking to enter these markets for the first time may apply.

*Expenses:*

After a company has been selected to participate on the mission, a participation fee to the U.S. Department of Commerce is required. The participation fee for one representative is \$3,160 for a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME)<sup>1</sup> and \$4,585 for large firms. The fee for each additional firm representative (SME or large) is \$450.

Expenses for travel, lodging, most meals, and incidentals will be the responsibility of each mission participant. Delegation members will be able to take advantage of Embassy rates for hotel rooms.

*Conditions for Participation:*

- An applicant must submit a completed and signed mission application and supplemental application materials, including adequate information on the company's products and/or services, primary market objectives, and goals for participation. If the Department of Commerce receives an incomplete application, the Department may reject the application, request additional information, or take the lack of information into account when evaluating the applications.

- Each applicant must also certify that the products and services it seeks to export through the mission are either produced in the United States, or, if not, marketed under the name of a U.S. firm and have at least 51 percent U.S. content of the value of the finished product or service.

*Selection Criteria for Participation:*

Selection will be based on the following criteria:

- Suitability of the company's products or services to the Eurasian Region oil and gas equipment and services market
- Applicant's potential for business in Turkey and Kazakhstan, including likelihood of exports resulting from the mission

- Consistency of the applicant's goals and objectives with the stated scope of the mission

Diversity of company size, type, location, demographics and traditional under representation in business, may also be considered during the review process.

Referrals from political organizations and any documents containing references to partisan political activities (including political contributions) will be removed from an applicant's submission and not considered during the selection process.

**Timeframe for recruitment and Applications**

Mission recruitment will be conducted in an open and public manner, including posting on the Commerce Department trade missions calendar—<http://www.ita.doc.gov/doctm/tmcal.html>—and other Internet websites, publication in domestic trade publications and association newsletters, direct outreach to internal clients and distribution lists, posting in the **Federal Register**, and announcements at industry meetings, symposia, conferences, and trade shows.

Recruitment for the mission will begin immediately and conclude no later than April 15, 2011. The U.S. Department of Commerce will review all applications immediately after the deadline. Applications received after this date will be considered only if space and scheduling constraints permit. We will inform applicants of selection decisions as soon as possible after the deadline.

**Contact Information**

*U.S. Commercial Service Domestic Contact*

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**Frank Spector,**

*Global Trade Promotion Programs, U.S. & Foreign Commercial Services.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Institute of Standards and Technology**

[Docket Number: 101129594-0594-02]

**Alternative Personnel Management System (APMS) at the National Institute of Standards and Technology**

**AGENCY:** National Institute of Standards and Technology, Department of Commerce.

**ACTION:** This notice provides for changes to existing provisions of the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Alternative Personnel Management System (APMS) published October 21, 1997 (62 FR 54604).

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces changes to existing provisions of the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Alternative Personnel Management System (APMS), primarily to expedite hiring and align APMS Direct-Hire procedures with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Direct-Hire Authority (5 CFR part 337 and 69 FR 114). NIST will pilot direct-hire authority under 5 CFR part 337, subpart B, for a period of one year from the issuance date of this notice, for all positions within NIST in the Scientific and Engineering (ZP) career path at the Pay Band III and above, for Nuclear Reactor Operator positions in the Scientific and Engineering Technician (ZT) career path at Pay Band III and above, and for all occupations for which there is a special rate under the General Schedule pay system.

**DATES:** This notice is effective on January 5, 2011.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Essex Brown at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, (301) 975-3801; or Pamela Boyland at the U.S. Department of Commerce, (202) 482-1068.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

<sup>1</sup> An SME is defined as a firm with 500 or fewer employees or that otherwise qualifies as a small business under SBA regulations. See <http://www.sba.gov/contractingopportunities/owners/basics/whatis-small-business/index.html>. Parent companies, affiliates, and subsidiaries will be considered when determining business size. The dual pricing reflects the Commercial Service's user fee schedule that became effective May 1, 2008. See <http://www.export.gov/newsletter/march2008/initiatives.html>.

## Background

In accordance with Public Law 99-574, the NIST Authorization Act for 1987, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) approved a demonstration project plan, "Alternative Personnel Management System (APMS) at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)," and published the plan in the **Federal Register** on October 2, 1987 (52 FR 37082). The project plan has been modified twice to clarify certain NIST authorities (54 FR 21331 of May 17, 1989, and 55 FR 39220 of September 25, 1990). The project plan and subsequent amendments were consolidated in the final APMS plan, which became permanent on October 21, 1997, (62 FR 54604). NIST published an amendment on May 6, 2005 (70 FR 23996), which became permanent on June 6, 2005.

The plan provides for modifications to be made as experience is gained, results are analyzed, and conclusions are reached on how the system is working. This notice formally modifies the APMS plan to align Direct-Hire procedures with OPM's Direct-Hire Authority on a pilot basis. During this pilot period, NIST will be gathering data on the impact of direct-hire authority on veterans preference eligibles as well as information supporting whether or not there is a severe shortage of candidates for the positions covered under the direct-hire authority. Veterans preference is the preferential treatment given to qualified veterans of the United States armed forces under Federal law.

Dated: December 28, 2010.

**Charles H. Romine,**

*Acting Associate Director for Laboratory Programs.*

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### I. Executive Summary

The National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Alternative Personnel Management System (APMS) is designed to (1) Improve hiring and allow NIST to compete more effectively for high-quality researchers through direct hiring, selective use of higher entry salaries, and selective use of recruiting allowances; (2) motivate and retain staff through higher pay potential, pay-for-performance, more responsive personnel systems, and selective use of retention allowances; (3) strengthen the manager's role in personnel management through delegation of personnel authorities; and (4) increase the efficiency of personnel systems

through installation of a simpler and more flexible classification system based on pay banding through reduction of guidelines, steps, and paperwork in classification, hiring, and other personnel systems, and through automation.

Since implementing the APMS, according to findings in the Office of Personnel Management's "Summative Evaluation Report National Institute of Standards and Technology Demonstration Project: 1988-1995," NIST accomplished the following: NIST is more competitive for talent; NIST retained more top performers than a comparison group; and NIST managers reported significantly more authority to make decisions concerning employee pay. This modification builds on this success by piloting direct-hire authority under 5 CFR part 337, subpart B, for a period of one-year.

This amendment modifies the October 21, 1997 **Federal Register** notice. Specifically, it enables NIST to hire, after public notice is given, any qualified applicant without regard to 5 U.S.C. 3309-3318, 5 CFR part 211, or 5 CFR part 337, subpart A for a period of one-year. During the one-year pilot period, NIST will gather data on the impact of direct-hire authority on preference eligibles as well as information supporting whether or not there is a severe shortage of candidates for the positions covered under the direct-hire authority.

NIST will continually monitor the effectiveness of this amendment.

### II. Basis for APMS Plan Modification

Section 3304 (c) of title 5, United States Code, provides agencies with the authority to appoint candidates directly to jobs for which OPM determines that there is a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need.

In 1987 with the approval of the NIST APMS (52 FR 37082), and in 1997 when the APMS plan was modified (62 FR 54604), OPM concurred that all occupations in the ZP career path at the band III and above constitute a shortage category; Nuclear Reactor Operator positions in the ZT Career Path at the Pay Band III and above constitute a shortage category; and all occupations for which there is a special rate under the General Schedule pay system constitute a shortage category.

OPM's Direct-Hire Authority enables agencies to hire, after public notice is given, any qualified application without regard to 5 U.S.C. 3309-3318, 5 CFR part 211, or 5 CFR part 337, subpart A.

NIST APMS allows the NIST Director to modify procedures if no new waiver from law or regulation is added. Given

this modification is in accordance with existing law and regulation, the NIST Director is authorized to make the changes described in this notice. The modification to our final **Federal Register** Notice, dated October 21, 1997, with respect to our Staffing authorities is provided below.

### III. Changes in the APMS Plan

The APMS at the NIST, published in the **Federal Register** October 21, 1997 (62 FR 54604) is amended as follows:

1. The subsection titled: "Direct Examination and Hiring" is deleted.
2. The subsection titled "Direct Hire: Critical Shortage Highly Qualified Candidates" is deleted.
3. The information under the subsection titled: "NIST Applicant Supply File" is replaced with: NIST advertises the availability of job opportunities in Direct-Hire occupations by posting on the OPM USAJOBS Web site. NIST would follow internal Direct Hire procedures for accepting applications.
4. The subsection titled: "Referral Procedures for Direct Examination and Hiring and Agency Based Staffing Authorities" is deleted.
5. A new subsection titled: "Referral Procedures for Direct-Hire" is added and the information under this subsection is as follows: After public notice is given, a qualified candidate may be referred without regard to 5 U.S.C. 3309-3318, 5 CFR part 211, or 5 CFR part 337, subpart A.
6. The subsection titled: "Direct Referral" is deleted.
7. The subsection titled: "Rating and Ranking" is deleted.

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Institute of Standards and Technology

#### National Conference on Weights and Measures 2011 Interim Meeting

**AGENCY:** National Institute of Standards and Technology, Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The National Conference on Weights and Measures (NCWM) 2011 Interim Meeting will be held January 23 to 26, 2011. Publication of this notice on the NCWM's behalf is undertaken as a public service. The meetings are open to the public but a paid registration is required. Please see registration information in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below.