

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**International Trade Administration**

[Docket No. 171213999-7999-01]

Call for Applications for the International Buyer Program Quarter 1 Calendar Year 2019

AGENCY: International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice and call for applications.

SUMMARY: In this notice, the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) International Trade Administration (ITA) announces that it will accept applications for the International Buyer Program (IBP) for quarter 1 of calendar year 2019 (January 1, 2019, through March 31, 2019). The IBP is currently undergoing a program review that may result in new ITA products and services for trade shows. The program review may not be complete in time to provide products and services for shows that occur in the first quarter of calendar year 2019, so the IBP is moving forward with accepting applications for only that time period. The IBP may announce subsequent calls for applications for other quarters of calendar year 2019, depending on how soon ITA finalizes the program review. Should the program review result in new ITA products and services for trade shows, they will be announced separately in the **Federal Register**.

This announcement also sets out the objectives, procedures and application review criteria for the IBP. The purpose of the IBP is to bring international buyers together with U.S. firms in industries with high export potential at leading U.S. trade shows. Specifically, through the IBP, the ITA selects domestic trade shows which will receive ITA services in the form of global promotion in foreign markets, recruitment of foreign buyers, and provision of export counseling to exhibitors at the trade show. This notice covers selection for IBP participation during quarter 1 of calendar year 2019.

DATES: Applications for the IBP for quarter 1 of calendar year 2019 must be received by March 19, 2018.

ADDRESSES: The application form can be found at www.export.gov/ibp. Applications may be submitted by any of the following methods: (1) Mail/Hand (including express) Delivery Service: International Buyer Program, Trade Promotion Programs, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, Ronald Reagan Building, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite

800M—Mezzanine Level—Atrium North, Washington, DC 20004; (2) Facsimile: (202) 482-7800; or (3) email: IBP2019@trade.gov. Facsimile and email applications will be accepted as interim applications, but 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, Senior Advisor for Trade Events, 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: IBP2019@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 shows 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 will provide a venue for U.S. companies interested in expanding their sales into international markets.

Through the IBP, ITA selects U.S. trade shows, with participation by U.S. firms interested in exporting, that ITA determines to be leading international trade shows, for promotion in overseas markets by U.S. Embassies and Consulates. The DOC is authorized to provide successful applicants with services in the form of overseas promotion of the show; outreach to show participants about exporting; recruitment of potential buyers to attend the events; and staff assistance in setting up international trade centers at the shows. Worldwide promotion is executed through ITA offices at U.S. Embassies and Consulates in more than 70 countries representing the United States' major trading partners, and also in Embassies in countries where ITA does not maintain offices.

ITA is accepting applications from trade show organizers for the IBP for

trade shows taking place between January 1, 2019, and March 31, 2019. Selection of a trade show is valid for one show, *i.e.*, a trade show organizer seeking selection for a recurring show must submit a new application for selection for each occurrence of the show. For shows that occur more than once in a calendar year, the trade show organizer must submit a separate application for each show.

For the IBP in quarter 1 of calendar year 2019, the ITA expects to select approximately 8 shows from among the applicants. The ITA will select those shows that are determined to most clearly meet the statutory mandate in 15 U.S.C. 4721 to promote U.S. exports, especially those of small- and medium-sized enterprises, and the selection criteria articulated below.

There is no fee required to submit an application. If accepted into the program for quarter 1 of calendar year 2019, a participation fee of \$9,800 is required for shows of five days or fewer. For trade shows more than five days in duration, or requiring more than one International Trade Center, a participation fee of \$15,000 is required. For trade shows ten days or more in duration, and/or requiring more than two International Trade Centers, the participation fee will be determined by DOC and stated in the written notification of acceptance calculated on a full cost recovery basis. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with ITA within 10 days of written notification of acceptance into the program. The participation fee (by check or credit card) is due within 30 days of written notification of acceptance into the program.

The MOA constitutes an agreement between ITA and the show organizer specifying which responsibilities for international promotion and export assistance services at the trade shows are to be undertaken by ITA as part of the IBP 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 and a copy of this **Federal Register** Notice. Applicants are encouraged to review the MOA closely as IBP participants are required to comply with all terms, conditions, and obligations in the MOA. Trade show organizer obligations include, but are not limited to, providing waived or reduced admission fees for international attendees who are participating in the IBP, 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. Some of the most important commitments for the trade show organizer are to: Include in the terms and conditions of its exhibitor contracts provisions for the protection of intellectual property rights (IPR); to have procedures in place at the trade show to address IPR infringement which, at a minimum, provide information to help U.S. exhibitors procure legal representation during the trade show; and to agree to assist the DOC to reach and educate U.S. exhibitors on the Strategy Targeting Organized Piracy (STOP!), IPR protection measures available during the show, and the means to protect IPR in overseas markets, as well as in the United States. ITA responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the worldwide promotion of the trade show and, where feasible, recruitment of international buyers to that show, 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 partner does not constitute a guarantee by DOC of the show's success. IBP selection is not an endorsement of the show except as to its international buyer activities. Non-selection of an applicant for the IBP should not be viewed as a determination that the show will not be successful in promoting U.S. exports.

Eligibility: All 2019 U.S. trade shows taking place between January 1, 2019, and March 31, 2019, are eligible to apply for IBP participation through the show organizer.

Exclusions: Trade shows that are either first-time or horizontal (non-industry specific) shows generally will not be considered. Trade shows that take place April 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019, will not be considered at this time.

If the program review described in the **SUMMARY** section above does not result in new ITA programs and services for trade shows that take place April 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019, a separate **Federal Register** Notice will be issued to call for applications for the International Buyer Program for other quarters of calendar year 2019.

General Evaluation Criteria: The ITA will evaluate shows for the International Buyer Program 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 statistics.

(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 of such interest.

(c) **Scope of the Show:** The show offers 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 will be 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 show 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:** U.S. exhibitors have expressed interest in receiving international business visitors during the trade show. A significant number of U.S. exhibitors should be seeking to begin exporting or to expand their sales into additional export markets.

(g) **Level of Overseas Marketing:** There has been a demonstrated effort by the applicant to market this show and prior related shows. For this criterion, the applicant should describe in detail, among other information, the international marketing program to be conducted for the show, and explain how efforts should increase individual and group international attendance.

(h) **Logistics:** The trade show site, facilities, transportation services, and availability of accommodations at the site of the exhibition (*i.e.* International Trade Center, interpreters) are capable of accommodating large numbers of attendees whose native language will not be English.

(i) **Level of Cooperation:** The applicant demonstrates a willingness to cooperate with the ITA to fulfill the program's goals and adhere to the target dates set out in the MOA and in the show 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.

(j) **Delegation Incentives:** The IBP Office will be evaluating the level and/

or range of incentives offered to delegations and/or delegation leaders recruited by U.S. overseas Embassies and Consulates. 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; and complimentary accommodations for delegation leaders (beyond those required in the MOA).

Review Process: ITA will evaluate all applications received based on the criteria set out in this notice. Vetting will focus primarily on the export potential, level of international interest, and stature of the show. In reviewing applications, ITA will also consider scheduling and sector balance in terms of the need to allocate resources to support selected shows.

Application Requirements: Show organizers submitting applications for quarter 1 of calendar year 2019 IBP are requested to submit: (1) A narrative statement addressing each question in the application, Form OMB 0625-0143 (found at www.export.gov/ibp); (2) a signed statement that "The information submitted in this application is correct and the applicant will abide by the terms set forth in the Call for Applications for the 2019 International Buyer Program (January 1, 2019, through March 31, 2019);" and (3) two copies of the application: one copy of the application printed on company letterhead, and one electronic copy of the application submitted on a CD-RW (preferably in Microsoft Word® format), on or before the deadline noted above. There is no fee required to apply. Applications for the IBP must be received by Wednesday, January 31, 2018. ITA expects to issue the results of its review process in April 2018.

Legal Authority: The statutory program authority for the ITA to conduct the International Buyer Program is 15 U.S.C. 4724. The DOC 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. 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 (Form OMB 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, Senior Advisor for Trade Events, Trade Promotion Programs (IBP2019@trade.gov).

Frank Spector,

Trade Promotion Programs.

[FR Doc. 2018-01869 Filed 1-30-18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Patent and Trademark Office

[Docket No.: PTO-P-2017-0051]

Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, Ninth Edition, Revision of January 2018

AGENCY: United States Patent and Trademark Office, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The United States Patent and Trademark Office (“USPTO”) issued a revision of the ninth edition of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (“MPEP”) in January 2018 to provide updated information on patent examination policy and procedure (“January 2018 revision”). The MPEP is published to provide patent examiners and the public with a reference work on the practices and procedures relative to the prosecution of patent applications before the USPTO. The MPEP contains instructions to examiners, as well as other material in the nature of information and interpretation, and outlines the current procedures which the examiners are required or authorized to follow in appropriate cases in the normal examination of a patent application.

ADDRESSES: The USPTO prefers that suggestions for improving the form and content of the MPEP be submitted via email to mpepfeedback@uspto.gov or via the IdeaScale® tool available at: <https://uspto-mpep.ideascale.com/a/index>. Written comments may also be submitted by mail addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, marked to the attention of Editor, Manual of Patent Examining Procedure. The USPTO prefers that any comments or suggestions specifically directed to subject matter eligibility be directed to: 2014_interim_guidance@uspto.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Robert A. Clarke, Editor of the MPEP by telephone (571-272-7735) or by email (Robert.Clarke@uspto.gov) or Linda Therkorn, Patent Examination Policy Advisor by telephone (571-272-7837) or by email (Linda.Therkorn@uspto.gov).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The USPTO issued a revision to the ninth edition of the MPEP in January 2018, which provides USPTO patent examiners, applicants, attorneys, agents, representatives of applicants, and other members of the public with a reference work on the practices and procedures relative to the prosecution of patent applications before the USPTO. The MPEP contains instructions to examiners, as well as other material in the nature of information and interpretation, and outlines the current procedures which the examiners are required or authorized to follow in appropriate cases in the normal examination of a patent application. Although the MPEP does not have the force of law or the force of the rules in Title 37 of the Code of Federal Regulations, it “is well known to those registered to practice in the PTO and reflects the presumptions under which the PTO operates.” *Critikon, Inc. v. Becton Dickinson Vascular Access, Inc.*, 120 F.3d 1253, 1257 (Fed. Cir. 1997).

In the January 2018 revision, sections of chapters 200, 700-1000, 1200, 1400, 1500, 1800, 2000-2300, 2500, and 2700 have been updated. The updated sections have a revision indicator of [R-08.2017], meaning these sections have been updated to reflect USPTO patent practice and relevant case law as of August 31, 2017. In addition, Chapter FPC (the Form Paragraph Book), the Table of Contents, Foreword, Introduction, Subject Matter Index, and all Appendices except Appendix I and Appendix P have been updated. The changes in the January 2018 revision are discussed in the Change Summary for the Ninth Edition, Revision 08.2017. The policies stated in the January 2018 revision supersede any policies stated in prior editions, including revisions, of the MPEP to the extent that there is any conflict.

The January 2018 revision of the ninth edition of the MPEP may be viewed or downloaded free of charge from the USPTO website at <https://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/mpep/> and is available to search online at <http://mpep.uspto.gov>. Archived copies of each of the prior revisions and editions of the MPEP continue to be available for reference. Links to the archived copies are available on the

USPTO website at <https://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/mpep/old/index.htm>.

Dated: January 25, 2018.

Joseph Matal,

Associate Solicitor, performing the functions and duties of the Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

[FR Doc. 2018-01866 Filed 1-30-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-16-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

[FE Docket No. 17-167-LNG]

Galveston Bay LNG, LLC; Application for Long-Term, Multi-Contract Authorization To Export Liquefied Natural Gas to Non-Free Trade Agreement Nations

AGENCY: Office of Fossil Energy, DOE.

ACTION: Notice of application.

SUMMARY: The Office of Fossil Energy (FE) of the Department of Energy (DOE) gives notice of receipt of an application (Application), filed on December 22, 2017, by Galveston Bay LNG, LLC (Galveston Bay LNG), requesting long-term, multi-contract authorization to export domestically produced liquefied natural gas (LNG) in a volume equivalent to 785.7 billion cubic feet (Bcf) per year of natural gas. Galveston Bay LNG seeks authorization to export this LNG from its proposed natural gas liquefaction facility to be located in Texas City, Texas (Galveston Bay LNG Project).

Galveston Bay LNG seeks authorization to export this LNG to countries with which trade is not prohibited by U.S. law or policy, including both countries with which the United States has entered into a free trade agreement (FTA) requiring national treatment for trade in natural gas (FTA countries) and all other countries (non-FTA countries). Galveston Bay LNG requests the non-FTA authorization for a term of 20 years, to begin on the date of first export following the commencement of operations or seven years from the date of a final order granting export authorization, whichever is first. In addition, Galveston Bay LNG is requesting that it be afforded a three-year make-up period for the purpose of exporting any volume it is unable to export during the original export period, consistent with DOE/FE precedent. Galveston Bay LNG further requests this authorization on its own behalf and as agent for other entities who hold title to