

DOCKETED

Docket Number:	16-EPIC-01
Project Title:	EPIC Idea Exchange
TN #:	213924
Document Title:	Olgica Bakajin Comments: Written comments
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Olgica Bakajin
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	10/7/2016 10:40:55 AM
Docketed Date:	10/7/2016

Comment Received From: Olgica Bakajin

Submitted On: 10/7/2016

Docket Number: 16-EPIC-01

Written comments

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

1. What are some concerns and challenges facing the private sector, including small businesses and entrepreneurs, when considering applying for grant funding opportunities?

- Requiring a fixed %match funding and requiring that the match be available and secure at the time of the application. Match could be used as an incentive but not as a requirement and maybe match provided by small businesses should be valued more than for large businesses since it is harder to obtain for a small business.
- Administrative overhead:
For some of the small companies the prospect of high administrative overhead is a real deterrent. Reduction of the administrative overhead would, of course, be helpful. As current grantees we can testify to CEC's efforts to reduce administrative burden. Demystifying preparation of the application and contract management would also help. It could be accomplished by providing helpdesk support for applicants and encouraging current grantees to share their experience and help new grantees. CEC could, for example, allow current grantees to use hours spent advising new or potential new grantees as match funding towards their CEC projects.
- Current IP terms that are of concern for some of the businesses. CEC should consider adopting some of the IP language developed for federal SBIRs, a very successful program, and applying those IP terms to small businesses.
- Cash flow is a serious challenge for small businesses and CEC payment terms are a considerable hurdle. There are two areas of concern – the retention and the time it takes to get paid.
The fact that the projects have a 10% retention and that this retention amount is uncapped is a serious hurdle for small businesses. CEC should consider capping the retention at some non-trivial amount that any small business would want to recoup at the end (for example \$100k). At this time, if the award is \$5M, by the end of the award the recipient would be \$500k in the hole, which is a serious amount of money for any business, especially a small business. Federal government (i.e. Department of Defense) has a cap on retention, so this is not unprecedented.
The time to get paid by the CEC is long, which means that in order to operate under CEC grant, the small business has to have significant cash on hand, imposing a considerable hardship. Reducing the time to

10 business days from invoice submission, such as is the practice of several federal agencies or even paying right away like DOE does through ASP.gov. Just having the ability to monitor invoice processing status by the grantee and estimate when the invoice would be paid is something that would help the small business grantees manage cash flows.

2. How can the California Energy Commission better increase awareness of the research programs to California private sector companies?

Present at trade shows and conferences, encourage presentations about current projects by current grantees and make sure that the CEC is credited. It would help if the grants would allow travel and conference expenses to be charged to the grant if presenting.