RTDC RFP Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

A summary of questions and an answer to those questions will be posted here. Please check back regularly for new FAQs. Written questions will be accepted through August 1, 2011.

Question #1
…one of the requirements noted in the "Request for Proposals" is that the applying non-profit is "organized to perform activities including, but not limited to, the promotion, attraction, stimulation, development and expansion of manufacturing-oriented and science and technology-oriented economic activity in a particular region of New York State..."

My concern is that our Certificate of Incorporation does not explicitly state that it is organized for the aforementioned purposes, any proposal submitted by us will be disqualified.

Question #2
I wanted to clarify the eligibility portion of RFP NYSTAR 11-01 RTDC. My question is, can a university foundation be an applicant? I think the answer is yes, as long as they are a not-for-profit corporation. Can you please confirm and add any additional insight that would be helpful? Thank you!

Answer #1 & #2
See RFP Section I.C.

Question #3
The RFP states that the RTDC Regions are the same as Empire State Regional Offices, However some of the regions differ from the Empire State Regions which is correct.

Answer #3
The regions will be the same as the ESD regions. The correct listing of the regions is:

North Country: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence

Southern Tier: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins

Mohawk Valley: Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie

Central New York: Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga and Oswego

Question #4
A. Firstly, I note that 10 centers already exist – I assume that their initial 5-yr. support period has come to an end and this is an open competition for the next 5-years - Is this correct?

B. Do the RTDCs need to be broad and comprehensive in all aspects of technological development, or can they focus on a more narrow range of industries that is in the process of rapid development?

C. Can you please provide more information on the typical structure of an RTDC? How many full-time people are involved vs. specialists and advisors in various topics? I realize that this likely varies among centers, but can you provide the description of a typical structure?

Answer #4
A. This RFP is an open competition to designate RTDCs in the respective for the next 5 year cycle.

B. See Section 1.E.

C. ESD does not dictate how an RTDC should be structured. As, stated in the question, structure varies and there is no preferred organization structure. As you stated the structure of an RTDC varies. It is up to the applicant to determine the best structure for their region and organization to effectively serve their clients.

Question #5
We have several questions regarding this funding opportunity for the RTD Centers.

1 - Will there be a bidders' conference call?
2 - Is there a link you can provide to completed funding opportunities on the NYSTAR web site? Specifically, I am interested in past submissions for RTDC funding.
3 - With regard to matching funds: Can a particular match amount (e.g., one source of local cash worth $XXX) be used to satisfy the need for both Federal and state match? In other words, can the match funds be used twice?

Answer #5
1. There will not be a bidders conference call.

2. This information is not available at this time.

3. There are instances where local funds can match state and federal funds.

Question #6
Are private institutions of Higher Education (bearing tax exempt status) eligible to apply to this program?

The RFP clearly states that any *not-for-profit corporation* subject to NY State's corporation law promoting manufacturing oriented and science/technology oriented activity in a particular NYS

region is eligible. Going by my initial read of the clause, it appears that private institutions of Higher Education may be ineligible.

Answer #6
See RFP Section I.C.

Question #7
Can the RTDC funds be used in one area of technology?

Answer #7
See RFP Section 1.E.

Question #8
On page 1 the RFP states that the period begins on July 1, 2011, however on page 10, the table indicates a contract start date of October 1, 2011. Which date should be used for any work item milestones identified in the narrative section and what is the date range for the budget forms which require "Projected Budget for First Year (FY 11-12)". Similarly, what is the date range for the Regional Allocations identified on pages 3 and 4 of the RFP?

Answer #8
For the milestones, use the October 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012 timeframe. The contract years will cover the following schedule:

October 1st, 2011 to June 30, 2012
July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013
July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014
July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015
July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016

The Regional Allocations are for 12 month periods. The first 9-month allocation will be reduced accordingly.

Question #9
Government funds are not eligible to match other government funds of the same type. MEP Federal funds are not the same type as TDO State funds (Fed vs State). Am I correct that we can use MEP Federal funds to match the State TDO funds along with local cash, Non-MEP Federal Funds and In-Kind?

*****Answer #9*** REVISED**
Only <u>non-MEP</u> <u>federal</u> funds, local cash and some in-kind can be used towards match for TDO funds. MEP (federal) Funds cannot be used as match towards TDO.

Question #10
The RFP, Section II, subsection C requires:

In addition to the hard copies, the Applicant must submit an identical electronic version of the proposal in MS Word/Excel or compatible editable format to rtdcinfo@empire.state.ny.us within 24 hours of the Proposal deadline.

Many of the forms required for submission are not in MS Word format this time. They are "fill-in" pdf forms.

- Notice of Intent
- Cover form, checklist, and certification
- Appendix 4 - Board Member List

Questions:

- May we submit those required files (listed above) in pdf format, since that is the format of the templates furnished by ESD/NYSTAR?
- If not, must we convert all pdf files into MS Word format? If so, how can we do that?
- Must the electronic versions of the Certification contain the written signature of our Authorized Organizational Representative? Or is the form with the information fields completed all that is required?

Answer #10
Yes, those documents can be submitted in PDF form.

Signatures are not required on the electronic copy. But a written signature must be submitted as part of the hard copies.

Question #11
Per instructions in the RFP, I am submitting the following questions to you about the RTDC RFP.

- Section C.2.d. on Page 5 states that "...funds cannot be provided to any for-profit organization other than for general operating needs, such as equipment....". Does this mean that funds can be provided to for profit companies for these purposes? For example, can we provide a matching funds program to help companies purchase equipment (say, a 1:2 matching funds program)?
- The RFP mentions business plan contests in a few different places. Can ESD/NYSTAR funds be used as part of the prize money awarded to contest winners? How about for the operating costs of running the contests?
- Regarding other state funding and matching: We have a contract with ESD-ESU (Environmental Services Unit) for EIP (Environmental Investment Program) to assist local

manufacturing clients. Can these funds be used to meet matching requirements for the RTDC contract - in particular the federal portion?

Answer #11

1. This section refers to purchases and costs for the operation of the center.

2. ESD/NYSTAR money cannot be used for awards for business plan competitions. However, ESD/NYSTAR money can be used for a reasonable portion of the operating costs to undertake a competition.

3. These funds can be used to match NIST MEP funds.

Question #12

Can funds received from a different ESD program (not a ESD/NYSTAR program) for working with manufacturers be used as match to the federal dollars under this program?

Answer #12

Yes

Question #13

In answer #8 it says the first year will be 10/1/11-6/30/12 and that the allocation will be reduced accordingly. When submitting the budget, should we send in a budget for 12 months at the FY 2011-12 allocation for the region we are applying or take 75% of the allocation and budget for 10/1/11-6/30/12?

Answer #13

Please submit your proposal with a 12 month budget based on the allocations in the RFP.

Question #14

Will the listing of all organizations filing a NOI be published after July 27?

Answer #14

No.

Question #15

Based on Question #8 – should we submit a 9-month or a 12-month budget with the proposal?

Answer #15

See FAQ 13

Question #16
In FAQ 9 the question was, aren't MEP federal funds also allowed as TDO match.

Answer #16
MEP federal funds cannot be used to match TDO funds.

Question #17
Question in Reference to answer to question #3

Will the allocations of funds change due to the change in counties assigned to regions? For example, Otsego is listed in Southern Tier for the allocations and budget forms, but is not included in the Southern Tier in the answer to question 3.

Answer #17

The allocations were figured correctly in the RFP.

Question #18
While looking at the budget forms on the website, the ** at the bottom of Budget Form 1 mention that REVISE will show up if the budget does not meet the FY 2006-07 allocations. When I budget using the allocations from the FY 2001-12 allocations, I get this REVISE message. Are the budgets correct in the budget forms? They refer to fields that are hidden.

Answer #18
The form will be updated and reposted.

Question #19
Is it acceptable to use some pages in “landscape” form?

Answer #19
Yes.

Question #20
What time are proposals due on August 10th?

Answer #20

Hard copy of the proposals are due in NYSTAR offices by 5pm. Proposals received after 5pm will not be accepted.

Question #21

A. Related to Funding on Page 2, Section 3 of the RFP is stated that each RTDC has a base line funding of $300K. Is this included in the figures shown on the RTDC Table with allocations for FY 2011-12? If yes, in which column?

B. Question 2: Related to Matching Funds Requirement

How does a first-time applicant demonstrate the ability to generate matching funds from sources identified on Pages 5-8 of the RFP? Is any NYS funding through contracts with the proposing organization, other than ESD/NYSTAR funding, eligible as matching funds to attract federal moneys?

C. Related to the Budget Preparation

On Page 16 of the RFP is given a breakdown of the components of the budget. Please explain what may be included in the "third party consultants for Center" and in the "third party consultants for clients."

D. Related to the Board of the RTDC

Please confirm that the required Board Membership stated in the RFP can be established through an expansion of the existing Board Membership of the nonprofit.

E. Related to MWBE Participation

In the RFP (Contracts Document) MWBE participation is stated, ranging from 1% to 7%. We intend to include MWBEs in our submission. Should they be included in the organizational structure of the RTDC, or as external service providers?

F. Related to Interactions Prior to the Proposal Submission Dates

Given the strategic importance of this project for the economic growth of NYS, is there an option to include a meeting between the ESD Program Managers and candidate applicants to host RTDCs?

Answer #21

A. Yes. The $300,000 is split between the columns on a percentage basis.

B. The applicant must determine how best to demonstrate the ability to meet matching funds requirements. See RFP Section I.D.1.c.

C. Third party consultants for center are consultants used to assist center operations or personnel. Third party consultants for clients are consultants used to provide services to a center's clients.

D. See RFP Section I.C.1.d.

E. It is up to the applicant to determine the best structure and or partnership relationships – such as with MWBE's - for their region and organization to effectively serve their clients.

F. No.