

**The Federal Government's Efforts to Coordinate Inter-Agency Support for Exporters:  
"Deal Teams"**

As some of you have no doubt noticed, the business and trade milieu that U.S. firms face when attempting to export or operate abroad has now shifted dramatically. Reports of inflation, supply chain jam-ups, a frustration over financing delays mixed with new Federal programs are all too common. Moreover, in certain markets, particularly where Chinese SOE's are involved, it is a challenge to get all the pieces together in a timely fashion so as to even be competitive.

Enter recent the "Deal Teams" initiative which was created to mobilize the resources of the U.S. government to help U.S. companies win business abroad and to advance U.S. strategic commercial interests. Embassy Deal Teams are working groups of interagency officers and staff at our overseas posts focused on helping U.S. companies do business in their markets. The purpose of the Deal Team Initiative is to support U.S. businesses interested in exporting and investing overseas by identifying opportunities early in the deal cycle and deploying all available U.S. government tools to help U.S. companies successfully compete abroad.

The NADEC Trade Policy Committee recently held an important meeting with Commerce's Patrick Kirwan, who leads the "Deal Teams" inter-agency effort. Mr. Kirwan stressed to the Committee that the "Deal Teams" concept is essentially a "back of the house" effort to pull the key agencies together to both respond more quickly to strategic commercial challenges. Part of this effort is to help assemble support packages among the agencies to assist U.S. companies.

The "Deal Team" initiative is not something that your firm would invoke or tap into directly. It is an internal, inter-agency focus directed at the post or embassy level in an effort to prioritize a commercial win for a given U.S. firm in an international market. Part of this effort, Mr. Kirwan explained to the Committee, takes place with trainings within the Foreign Service Institute of the State Department to get Ambassadors and staff to focus on what the various Federal agencies do and how their respective programs can be brought in to assist in a given project.

There are now some 150 deal teams in operation. They include the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Energy, Homeland Security, State, Transportation, and Treasury; the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM), the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), and the Small Business Administration (SBA).

A couple of closing points on this topic. First, “Deal Teams” are designed to work on infrastructure-related projects and are not setup to go after one-off deals. Second, in the private sector, we are likely to see the “Deal Team” in motion only by the results and the coordination at the post (embassy or consulate) level.

If you know that firm has been involved in a Deal Team effort, we would like to hear from you.