



**MEETING MINUTES OF THE
HAWAII TECHNOLOGY CORPORATION (HTDC)
Federal Projects Standing Committee
July 25, 2022
Hawaii Foreign Trade Zone – Conference Room 202
521 Ala Moana Blvd., Honolulu, HI 96813**

Members Present

Sandra Fujiyama, Member-At-Large (Ms. Fujiyama)
Vincent Kimura, Member-At-Large (Mr. Kimura)

Excused

Edward Barnabas

Staff Present

Len Higashi, Acting Executive Director (Mr. Higashi)
Wayne Inouye, MEP Center Director (Mr. Inouye)
Wayne Layugan, MEP Senior Project Manager (Mr. Layugan)
Cindy Matsuki, MEP Project Engineer (Ms. Matsuki)
Olivia Sou, HTDC Special Assistant (Ms. Sou)
Stephanie Yuu-Sato, Fiscal and Contract Specialist (Ms. Yuu-Sato)

1. Call to Order

Mr. Inouye called the meeting to order at 9:17 am

2. Hawaii Small Business Innovation Research (HSBIR) matching Grant Program – Review, discuss, and determine recommendation for application review and award process.

Mr. Inouye briefed the Hawaii Technology Development (HTDC) Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Matching Grant Review process that was presented at the July 06, 2022, board meeting at which the time the board assigned three members to the Federal Projects Committee to review and make recommendations.

A. Administrative Rules for HTDC HSBIR Matching Grant Program

Mr. Inouye describes the current process which is guided by the Administrative Rules. Applications are scored and sorted into tiers. We are requesting guidance on how to distribute funds to those tiers and at what tier point do we stop distributing funds.

Mr. Inouye reiterates that these companies have already received funding from the Federal Government for their technology so all applicants are already vetted. The review committee is considering the economic impact for additional money that the State is awarding.

B. HSBIR Phase I/II grant applications

Mr. Inouye presents an example of the current application form and advises that the companies also have ten minutes to present to the review committee. We are requesting confirmation that all the necessary questions are being asked.

C. Current Review Process

Mr. Inouye explains that there is a two-step review process. First the review committee prepares a score sheet based on the application. Second the committee comes together in to listen to the company's presentation. There are times when the score sheet may change after listening to the presentation and after discussion within the committee.

Mr. Kimura wants to know how to avoid group bias in scoring.

Mr. Higashi suggests that the committee can document the preliminary score sheet, listen to the company's proposal then document the revised score sheet based on information gathered.

D. Committee Scoring Sheet

Mr. Inouye asks if additional considerations need to be given for first time applicants.

Ms. Fujiyama asks if there should be a priority for State of Hawaii strategic industries?

Mr. Higashi comments that it is possible, but not clear on how this would be achieved as the review committee are economic development experts not subject



matter experts. Perhaps adding points to the scoresheet for targeted industries may be a simple way to address.

Mr. Kimura requests that an example of a past presentation be available for participants. Requests that resources are made available to review a presentation before it is presented to committee to provide feedback so that it does not score less for not providing insufficient information.

Mr. Inouye suggests a third party provide this service and not someone from the committee as this may cause a conflict of interest.

Mr. Kimura agrees that the current template is okay as is.

E. Committee members bio's

F. Grant Priorities & Scoring process

Mr. Kimura states his concerns that the presentation system may favor past award winners over first-time applicants.

Ms. Fujiyama requests clarification if Mr. Kimura's concerns are that first-time applicants are not receiving a fair score. Having served on the review committee, there have been first-time applicants that were awarded and repeat companies that have not.

Mr. Inouye advises that they have considered no longer doing the presentation and just base the awards on the application.

Ms. Fujiyama states that doing so would be difficult because then those who have completed the application and have won awards will continue to be awarded as they will know exactly what to complete each time versus if you have a presentation, you have a chance to get know the applicant and they have a chance to explain themselves at a different level.

Mr. Kimura requests data be obtained on past awards and various tiers as well as those companies that did not have their applications processed. Mr. Kimura requests data from other states on the process used to make awards.

Mr. Higashi states that NIST MEP considers Hawai'i's program to be the best practice and other states are advised to contact us. We will check with the states that have contacted us to see if they have adopted our procedures.



Ms. Fujiyama explains that the applications not processed were those that did not meet the administrative requirements (HCE or complete the application completely)

Mr. Inouye reiterates that all applications are processed unless they are incomplete and/or do not have all necessary requirements. Because all applications are processed, he asks again should all applicants receive an award which will be smaller awards to all companies or only the top tier with larger award amounts.

3. Discussion and Recommendation

Mr. Higashi advises there are two options: first option is that the committee has enough information to make a recommendation to the Board or second option is we defer and have another Federal Projects committee meeting after the next board meeting.

Mr. Inouye advises that applications are planned to be released in November.

The Federal Projects Committee decides more time is needed.

4. Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 11:47 am

