

U.S. Department of Commerce
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee
Fourth Charter, 2016-2018

March 1, 2017
In-Person Meeting 2
Herbert C. Hoover Building, Rm. 48019
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

MINUTES

Welcome, Introductions, & Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Cindy Thyfault, REEEAC Chair
 - Ms. Thyfault opened the meeting, welcomed the members, and proceeded to lead a round of introductions by all attendees.
 - She noted that just yesterday after Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross was confirmed and sworn in. She also sent the REEEAC letter to him via email.
 - Ms. Thyfault walked through the day's agenda and highlighted the four short regional-specific discussions on the United Kingdom, Canada, Mexico, and Japan. She highlighted the survey that the committee members received and noted the results would be discussed later.
 - She further outlined the goals of the meeting – as to develop a concrete list of action recommendations and a path forward from now until the May 4 meeting.
 - She noted the Committee calendar for 2017 will include meetings on the following dates: May 4, July 27, and November 16. In-person meeting dates for 2018 will be determined at a later date – with a goal to meet one/two times in 2018 before the charter expires in June 2018.

- Vickie Gunderson, Designated Federal Officer of the REEEAC, U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC)
 - Ms. Gunderson provided a series of highlights on DOC programs and activities since the last REEEAC meeting on December 1 and planned in the near future. These included:
 - International Buyer Program at POWER-Gen International, Orlando, FL (December 2016)
 - International Buyer Program at DistribuTECH, San Diego, CA (January/February 2017)
 - International Buyer Program at National Ethanol Conference, San Diego, CA (February 2017)
 - Upcoming DOC travel and programming at India Smart Grid Week (March 2017)

- Upcoming DOC travel and events under the Market Development Cooperator Program partnership with UTC at their annual Summit in Brazil (April 2017)
- Development of programming and recruitment for International Buyer Program at Solar Power International, Las Vegas, NV (September 2017)
- Continued development of online “toolkits”

U.S. - United Kingdom Bilateral Trade Relationship Discussion

- Ms. Gunderson and Ms. Dickson provided an overview of the trade data for the overall balance of trade for related RE&EE sectors and specifically for the United Kingdom (see presentation).
- Ms. Gunderson walked through the REEEAC’s survey results both overall and for the United Kingdom.
- David De Falco provided brief context on the recent United Kingdom Brexit and noted there is interest in better understanding (1) what Brexit means for the industry and (2) that are the long-term challenges and opportunities for these industries in this market.

Sub-Committee Work Sessions

- Export Competitiveness
 - Scott Sklar, Matt Card and Jorge Sanchez participated. Matt Card advocated for tied aid noting the disparity in export finance and financial aid policies citing competitors such as China which require quid pro quo provisions that tie access to capital to the procurement of Chinese made goods. The U.S. can enhance export competitiveness by modifying non-conforming aid and financing mechanisms to include a provision that ties securing financial assistance to the procurement of U.S.-manufactured goods.
 - Mr. Card also raised the importance of having harmonized tariffs on imports across NAFTA countries.
 - Mr. Sanchez highlighted the issue of using only Bloomberg Tier 1 and 2 guidelines for project bankability.
 - Mr. Sklar underscored the importance of increasing the technical capabilities of EXIM, OPIC, and TDA to include staff that are dedicated to working on emerging issues and technology deployment. This further includes enhancing the technical capacity of U.S. embassy staff abroad on industry issues (i.e., renewable energy) and establishing a go-to USG point of contact for companies that experience trade/crossborder issues while in a foreign country.
- Finance
 - During the Finance sub-committee discussions, led by Slav Gatchev and Ken Kramer, the group outlined the following target outcomes:
 - Near-term OPIC/EXIM defensive "survival" recommendation that could be approved by a phone call soonest.

- Longer-term offensive OPIC/EXIM-related recommendations for improving programs that will allow the United States to export its quality and innovative products/services more easily as well as level the playing field
 - The group outlined a set of action items:
 - Mr. Kramer would pull together the first draft of a "survival" recommendation
 - Mr. Gatchev would gather information and statistics related to competitiveness of EXIM and OPIC and its relationship to commercial offerings
- Market Access
 - Mr. Stewart led a discussion for the group by walking through the action items in the sub-committee's work plan and providing updates for all sub-committee members on the ongoing work.
 - Areas the group discussed in details:
 - Is a single window for U.S. RE&EE exporters with all tariff structures and data feasible, cost-effective, and/or does this resource already exist in some form? Who would maintain this website and where would it be housed?
 - Regarding surveys, can the group send them? (Ms. Gunderson still awaiting feedback from DOC legal team.) Would a workshop or dedicated discussion be a better path forward?
- Market Outreach & Education
 - Zolaikha Strong provided a summary of the action items being worked on by the sub-committee in accordance with four of the REEEAC priorities:
 - Communicate the REEE opportunity to the Secretary of Commerce and staff – completed with letter sent on February 28
 - Education through webinars, white papers, and brochures to effectively communicate the opportunity for U.S. exporters and increase workforce training to improve assistance to U.S. exporters and connect with potential buyers.
 - Recommendations to TPCC working group to assist U.S. government programs to work together and provide more aggressive exporter support
 - Look for ways to connect new technologies for export assistance and easy-to-understand guidelines to encourage more exports from new exporters.
 - Areas the group discussed in detail:
 - Developing one-pagers and info graphics (e.g., what RE&EE does for jobs – at a glance)
 - Finding other avenues to leverage and repeat key messages from recent letter to the Secretary
 - REEEAC website, a subsite of the current REEE portal.

- Cora Dickson explained the website is being upgraded. Meeting announcements and REEEAC recommendations will be more prominent in the new design. Other resources for exporters will be on the main portal, be careful not to be redundant, just use links.

Sub-Committee Chairman Reports

- Scott Sklar, Export Competiveness Sub-Committee Chair
 - Mr. Sklar highlighted the discussion of this sub-committee and the four action items the group is interested in pursuing:
 - Increase the “tied” component of foreign aid and export assistance
 - Disengagement of export assistance agencies and multilateral programs contributions from using only Bloomberg Tier 1 and 2 guidelines for project bankability.
 - Increase the promotion of integrated U.S. clean energy solutions (e.g., smart cities and microgrids)
 - Increase the technical capabilities of EXIM, OPIC, and TDA to include staff that are dedicated to working on emerging issues and technology deployment
 - REEEAC members discussed at length the role of “tied aid” to U.S. competitiveness
- Ken Kramer, Finance, Sub-Committee Chair
 - Mr. Kramer highlighted the Finance Sub-Committee has been primarily focused on keeping EXIM and OPIC “alive.”
 - He underscored other action items and potential recommendations from this group include increasing the small-project divisions
 - REEEAC members further discussed the role of export credit agencies and how other competitors (e.g., China, Japan, and Canada) define the “content/nexus” requirements compared to the United States. For example, U.S. firms have benefited from financing by other country agency funds.
 - It was noted that the more liberal interpretation of “content” may lead to more project wins for the agency.
 - Ultimately the sub-committee determined it would like to move a recommendation ASAP regarding EXIM.
- Jonathan Stewart, Market Access, Sub-Committee Chair
 - Mr. Stewart walked through the action items for the Market Access group. These included:
 - Aggregating information from sources for RE&EE exporters on export.gov
 - Reviewing the top market reports – possibly the smart grid report first (given the timelines for revision)
 - Increasing the China-specific engagement – repeat the meeting held the day before with DOC and USTR China leads.

- Zolaikha Strong, Market Outreach & Education Sub-Committee Chair
 - Ms. Strong briefed the actions by this sub-committee. She noted the sending of the recent letter to Secretary Ross. She highlighted the discussions regarding the DOC website and how the Department may leverage the REEEAC for feedback on the site.
 - She noted that the group was briefed further on the “toolkit” launch and would be working with DOC to lead the beta testing when available.
 - She noted the role of the training modules and plan to generate a short briefing material for TPCC-REEE agencies on this sector.

Working Lunch: U.S. – Canada -- Mexico Trilateral Trade Relationship Discussion

- Ms. Gunderson and Ms. Dickson provided an overview of the trade data for the overall balance of trade and related to Canada and Mexico (see presentation).
- Ms. Gunderson walked through the REEEAC’s survey results both overall and for Canada and Mexico.

U.S. - Japan Bilateral Trade Relationship Discussion

- Ms. Gunderson and Ms. Dickson provided an overview of the trade data for the overall balance of trade and related to Japan (see presentation).
- Ms. Gunderson walked through the REEEAC’s survey results both overall and for Japan.
- Ms. Farrell provided brief comments about the bilateral relationship with Japan. She noted that President Trump and Prime Minister Abe have held discussions and economic engagement remains a high priority for future discussions. She underscored that committee feedback on the relationship with Japan – as an export market and as a supply chain provider – would be welcome as the DOC team engages bilaterally.

Sub-Committee Working Sessions

- Export Competitiveness
 - In this discussion, participants emphasized some frustrations with the Foreign Commercial Service overseas offices (so-called, Posts). REEEAC members indicated said that post could be doing more of the following:
 - Surveying locals to identify country partners and analogous industries
 - Looking for opportunities to consolidate input: military bases, cooperatives, political drivers, small alliances, and development banks
 - Resource assessments and feasibility analyses should be expanded to include community priorities and community leaders
 - Educating host governments about the new technologies and possible applications in order to streamline the regulatory

- process and include certain technologies in the portfolio standards under the proper categories
 - Participants focused on the importance of understanding the priorities of the local communities in order to determine which projects are feasible and will receive more local support, and thus ultimately lead to commercial sales for U.S. firms.
 - The group noted that assessments of provincial needs can inspire ideas for projects where the technology application would not be so obvious otherwise (e.g. using solar panels to power irrigation pumps).
 - The sub-committee members noted that Posts cannot conduct an assessment of every village or township in every country. However, surveying different types of communities could help companies identify how their products and services might apply.
- Finance
 - The Finance Sub-Committee discussed challenges facing EXIM and OPIC, including:
 - Lack of resources, particularly at EXIM,
 - EXIM's dismantling of its dedicated renewable energy team
 - The disconnect between EXIM business development staff and the loan authorization division and the inability for EXIM to finance smaller deals
 - The Sub-Committee discussed the role of export credit agencies and how other competitors (e.g., China, Japan, and Canada) have a lower domestic content requirement, which enables their access to finance.
- Market Access
 - The group walked through the action items under its plan.
 - It discussed the “data app” proposal – or bringing together tariff resources for RE&EE exporters under one web-home. It was decided that members of the subcommittee will meet on May 3rd with relevant DOC experts to understand existing resources.
 - REEEAC members discussed interest in conducting a survey to gather information about barriers to exports and competitor advantages. It was discussed that this could be targeted at trade associations, where some members felt that trade association directors could answer these questions on behalf of their members.
 - The group discussed possibly holding a webinar for gathering associated information.
- Market Outreach & Education
 - Ms. Strong led the sub-committee discussion. The group focused its discussions on intersections with ongoing work of the TPCC-REEE and on the potential overlap in training module development with existing resources.
 - Ms. Thyfault briefed on the biofuels training module being developed with other REEEAC members and as an action item from the previous charter.

- Ms. Chatrath highlighted the trade association database under discussion and agreed to work with DOC staff to cross check organization lists for information and outreach for any activities.

Next Steps including Fall/Winter Meeting Dates

- Cindy Thyfault, REEEAC Chair
 - Ms. Thyfault highlighted the ongoing work of the group and underscored there appear to be some synergies between sub-committees. As such, she will work with DOC to schedule a conference call with the sub-committee leadership to de-conflict issues.
 - Given the Finance Sub-Committee interest in moving a letter/recommendation regarding EXIM financing, the group determined to hold a conference call on March 22 at 4pm EST to consider potential deliverables.
- Vickie Gunderson, Designated Federal Officer of the REEEAC, U.S. Department of Commerce
 - Ms. Gunderson noted the upcoming meeting schedule and indicated she would follow-up with the group with calendar invitations, etc.
 - No public comments were delivered. Meeting Adjourned.

Adjourn

ATTENDANCE

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Adam	Atkinson-Lewis	Natel Energy
Bruce	Bauchmire	DLZ Corporation
Matt	Card	Suniva
Rani	Chatrath	Geothermal Energy Association
Mike	Davis	NC Sustainable Energy Association
Kelly	Davis	Renewable Fuels Association
Jen	Derstine	Capstone Turbine Corporation
Subhash	Dhar	XALT Energy
Svetoslav	Gatchev	Delphos International, Ltd.
Phillip	Green	Green Powered Technology
Arthur	Haubenstein	8minutenergy Renewables
Praveen	Kathpal	AES Energy Storage, LLC
Kenneth	Kramer	Rushton Atlantic
Joseph	Mendelson	SolarCity
Greg	Merritt	Cree, Inc.
Gary	Rackliffe	ABB Inc.
Jorge	Sanchez	Sana, Inc.
Scott	Sklar	The Stella Group, Ltd.
Kevin	Smith	SolarReserve

Jonathan	Stewart	NEMA
Zolaikha	Strong	Cooper Development Association
Trey	Taylor	Verdant Power Inc.
Cindy	Thyfault	Westar Trade Resources
Laura	Van Wie McGrory	Alliance to Save Energy
Kendell	Keith	Louis Dreyfus Co (Member of Public)
Vickie	Gunderson	U.S. Department of Commerce
Cora	Dickson	U.S. Department of Commerce
Man	Cho	U.S. Department of Commerce
Adam	O'Malley	U.S. Department of Commerce
Blake	Murray	U.S. Department of Commerce
Keith	Roth	U.S. Department of Commerce
Diane	Farrell	U.S. Department of Commerce
Danius	Barzdukas	U.S. Department of Commerce
Elena	Berger	U.S. Department of Energy
David	De Falco	U.S. Department of Commerce
Ian	Lloyd	U.S. Department of State
Maureen	Hinman	Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
Bill	McElena	Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
Patrick	Krisseck	U.S. Department of Commerce
Rob	Sandoli	U.S. Department of Energy