



VIEW ON RENEWABLES

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HELP FOR RENEWABLE COMPANIES GOING GLOBAL

When Energy Photovoltaics (EPV), a Lawrenceville, N.J.-based solar energy panel manufacturer, was looking to expand its export sales, it found a partner in the U.S. Commerce Department's Commercial Service, including renewable energy trade specialists from the Department's Energy Team. Working to bring together potential buyers from India who were part of a renewable energy reverse trade mission to the Eastern United States, trade specialists from the Commercial Service's New Jersey network contacted Jeff Szczepanski, EPV's Director of Business Development, and encouraged him to participate in meetings with the delegation. Although Szczepanski was new to the India market, he was briefed by Commercial Service counseling on the latest renewable energy market incentives offered by India, such as increased investment incentives and tax cuts, and on the high priority the local Indian government places on solar, wind and other renewable energy projects. Trade specialists also briefed the Indian delegation on what U.S. firms such as EPV offer the Indian market.

"Beforehand, we hadn't considered India as a top market for us, but the trade mission and counseling really brought home the excellent business opportunities in India" Szczepanski says. "With this knowledge, we were highly motivated to pursue Indian sales opportunities, and as a result, we signed a contract with an Indian energy solutions distributor for a solar energy panel supply worth millions of dollars." EPV is working to keep up with the demand, and its Indian customers have said they will buy all the solar panels that EPV can provide.

EPV is just one of the American renewable energy firms bolstering its bottom line by making new sales abroad with help from the U.S. Commercial Service. An organization that helps U.S. companies export and looks out for American business interests abroad, the Commercial Service has a network of trade specialists in 109 cities and in embassies and consulates in nearly 80 countries. Within this network are different industry teams, including a team with renewable energy trade specialists. In addition to the export counseling and market research service that Szczepanski received, the Commercial Service offers resources that include trade events, international partner searches and prearranged business appointments abroad. It also works to build partnerships with groups such as the American Council on Renewable Energy and the Department of Energy's Clean Cities Initiative.

Many times, companies have reservations about exporting, either because they believe it's too burdensome or they may not be aware of the available export services provided by the U.S. Government, including the Commercial Service and financing agencies. Commercial Service's renewable energy trade specialists work with many U.S. companies, helping them explore global opportunities. Some good reasons to export include:

- Global demand for renewable energy and alternative fuel technologies is growing, particularly in Asia, as countries look to increase their consumption capacity and develop long-term sustainable energy strategies.
- Exporting is good for the bottom line, and it enables U.S. renewable energy firms to grow and compete by diversifying their portfolios in the marketplace.
- Competitors of companies that are not exporting likely are or will be selling internationally.

- American engineering know-how and maintenance contracting is second-to-none in its value around the world.

The U.S. Commerce Department's Commercial Service can help renewable energy companies explore their export potential. Some of the Department's most successful companies gain experience exporting first to countries like India where high demand exists for renewable energy. These firms then leverage their successes and refine their technologies to pursue additional export markets. This allows the companies to bolster their bottom lines while pursuing opportunities in U.S. markets.

U.S. renewable energy companies are pursuing opportunities in other parts of the world, too.

Martin Booth, President of Geothermal Development Associates of Reno, Nev., was looking into an Ethiopian project to rehabilitate the Aluto Langano geothermal power plant, which had also attracted the interest of several foreign companies. While pursuing the project, his company was one of several contacted by the U.S. Commercial Service in Nevada, which was working with the U.S. Trade and Development Agency and State Department to show the Ethiopians the benefits of working with American technology and know-how. Working together, the Commercial Service's Reno office and Energy Team organized a campaign to the renewable energy community that recruited 14 U.S. companies for a conference and Web-supported call with Ethiopian representatives.

"The call really brought home to the Ethiopians the depth of interest from the U.S. Government and businesses, and I think it was a real psychological boost to the Ethiopians, that Americans were ready to do business," Booth says. "For countries in the developing world, it's important in business dealings to have government-to-government contact as they are sometimes apprehensive when dealing with private sector firms on their own."

Booth's firm eventually won a \$3 million contract to study the best way to bring Aluto Langano back on-line and complete a project upgrade. The U.S. Commercial Service continues to work with Booth's firm, which is exploring new opportunities in Indonesia.

Some of the best markets for U.S. renewable energy firms include India, Turkey and Brazil. India is interested in all types of renewable energy technologies, including hydropower, wind, biomass, geothermal and solar. In Turkey, wind, solar and geothermal are growing rapidly as the country works to meet the European Union's renewable energies portfolio standard. Brazil is focusing on wind, solar, desalination and other alternative power sources; and has a fairly stable and transparent business market.

In addition, island nations in the Indian Ocean and South Pacific, including New Zealand, Australia and the Philippines, are good markets. While Africa tends to be a more challenging place to do business, it has good opportunities and a rising demand for technologies that can produce clean drinking water and electricity for rural villages.

For more on the Commercial Service and to locate your nearest U.S. Export Assistance Center, visit www.export.gov or call 1-800-USA-TRADE. Renewable energy companies can also contact the team at Cynthia.Torres@mail.doc.gov and Glen.Roberts@mail.doc.gov.