

## Procedures for Outbound Missions

The office of Economic Development and International Trade (The Office) promotes Miami-Dade as a Global Gateway by implementing a trade development program consisting of outbound and inbound trade missions. The Office organizes **business development** and **branding missions** to selected countries, and supports inbound missions organized by consulates, foreign trade offices, and economic development agencies.

### Planning Outbound and Inbound Missions

In the past, the Office led two business development missions and one Sister Cities mission for a total of three missions per fiscal year. Every fiscal year the former ITC Board recommended countries for the staff to target in its efforts to develop or expand trade with Miami Dade County as part of the agency's Missions Program. During these missions, staff organized high level meetings with government officials, and economic development agencies. It also organized and briefings by appropriate U.S. government agencies, as well as pre screened business-to-business meetings for private sector participants free of charge. Staff also combined Sister Cities missions with business development missions, when feasible, to achieve efficiencies and minimize costs; and it participated in third-party outbound missions organized by local economic development agencies. To create a strong and unified community presence in outbound missions, staff has worked closely with local economic development agencies to plan and conduct missions abroad to avoid duplication of effort. For example, staff conducted joint missions to Brazil in FY 08-09, and to Senegal and South Africa in FY 09-10, with the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise Florida, Inc., respectively.

The Office has also sponsored, supported, and coordinated inbound missions organized by other countries. It has also received and supported inbound missions generated as a direct result of its past outbound missions—reciprocal missions. In some cases, staff also organized pre-screened business-to-business meetings for inbound private sector participants that wished to meet Miami-Dade County businesses. These meetings have played a key role in expanding business opportunities. The Office has used its database to find companies that fit the business profiles of visiting companies, and it has contacted these local businesses individually to determine their interest in meeting with visiting companies. The meetings that resulted from this process have led a high likelihood of success, providing commercial opportunities to both participating parties.

In FY 09-10, the Board Chair consolidated the four trade initiatives ad hoc committees (Africa, Asia, Europe and Middle East, and Western Hemisphere) into the Trade Promotion Committee. This committee, chaired by a Board member has recommended countries for trade promotion activities, including countries for any future business development missions. The committee has ensured coordination with other local economic development agencies to better coordinate the County's trade promotion efforts, it has developed strategies to maximize resources and prevent duplicity in the planning and implementation of future missions.

## **Procedures for Outbound Missions (continued)**

Annually, staff assigned to the Trade Promotion ad hoc committee (the committee) has conducted research and has worked with committee members as well as with representatives of appropriate stakeholder organizations to ensure maximum input and participation in the planning and selection of which countries were best suited to either develop or expand trade opportunities with Miami-Dade County. The committee has recommended to the Board which country or countries would be targeted for any one mission in any one fiscal year.

As a result of the downturn in the world economy as well as revenue shortfalls in FY 09-10, the former ITC Board decided to amend the FY 09-10 Strategic Plan and conducted only one business development mission in the current year. This mission was to Senegal and South Africa in conjunction with Enterprise Florida, Inc. In FY 10-11, the Office will focus on planning, organizing, and supporting either reciprocal or other inbound missions that would create maximum business opportunities for local exporting and importing entrepreneurs, and it will work more closely with the local Consular Corps and foreign trade offices to acquaint them with the services and programs available in the County to facilitate and promote trade opportunities.

However, should the global economic situation improve and should the outbound mission program be resumed, the Office will focus on visiting countries in the Western Hemisphere where there is significant potential to increase and solidify Miami-Dade's position as a regional trade center. The Office will also focus its future missions in the emerging markets in Africa where opportunities to increase and promote trade abound. And, if possible, it will seek the support of local economic development agencies as well as Enterprise Florida Inc., in organizing outbound joint missions. Priority in selecting countries for agency led missions or for other outbound missions will depend upon the following criteria:

- Countries having or pursuing free trade agreements with the United States; i.e.—North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), Dominican Republic and Central America Free Trade Area (DR/CAFTA), Caribbean Basin Initiatives (CBI), or African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) eligible countries
- Countries having established air or sea routes with Miami-Dade County
- Countries where Miami-Dade County is pursuing air and/or sea routes
- Countries where there are demonstrated opportunities to promote, expand, and/or develop trade
- Countries that extend an invitation to Miami-Dade County to bring a trade mission
- Countries having Sister Cities affiliations with Miami Dade County
- Countries not previously visited in the last two years
- Countries conducting reciprocal missions to Miami-Dade County
- Countries where government officials agree to support a Miami-Dade County inbound mission

## **Procedures for Outbound Missions (continued)**

Other economic development agencies have undertaken missions to foreign countries. The Office missions are different from those undertaken by these agencies in three important ways.

First, a County elected official has led agency missions. The presence of a high-ranking elected official has allowed access to senior level officials in the host country. And these officials have provided Miami-Dade delegations much greater support than if a delegation where not led by an elected official. This has translated into enhanced opportunities for mission delegates – government and private sector participants.

Second, the agency's planning professionals have consistently packaged the logistics of the mission in such a way that mission participants could not have matched it on their own. By negotiating group and government rates for air, lodging, meals and transportation, value is added to both the commercial and governmental mission participants. Additionally, the mission agenda is precisely planned many weeks before the mission, allowing participants to take most advantage of their time in-country, further enhancing the return-on-investment of the mission.

Third, no other local organization conducting outbound missions can officially represent the interests of the County government and its principal economic development engines—Miami International Airport and the Port of Miami.

### **Mission Participants:**

Following Board selection of countries slated for an agency led mission, staff has worked with the relevant host country, through its official representatives, to identify the target sectors for trade opportunities and to determine missions related expenses and costs.

Staff has used the Office's database as well as information provided by consulates, foreign trade offices, and economic development agencies to recruit area entrepreneurs interested in joining an outbound mission. For joint missions with other economic development partners, staff has worked with the partner agency in planning and recruiting mission participants, some of whom may have resided outside of Miami-Dade County since the Port of Miami and Miami International Airport would benefit from the flow of future trade regardless of where an individual or business is based and would do so in the future for either agency led or joint outbound missions abroad. However, in the future mission participants will be limited to Miami-Dade businesses only, unless the mission is jointly undertaken with economic development agencies not located in Miami-Dade County. Interested parties agreeing to pay the mission costs participate in agency missions, but the number of participants is usually capped at twenty. Should the request for participation exceed twenty persons, priority for selection in the mission is determined based on the following criteria:

1. Representatives of appropriate governmental entities
2. Representatives of targeted industry sectors
3. Representatives of trade organizations
4. Other interested individuals

## **Procedures for Outbound Missions (continued)**

### **Agency Database**

Since the creation of the agency, staff has maintained an active database of local small and medium sized businesses engaged in exporting and importing goods. This database is an indispensable tool for establishing critical links for business-to-business meeting opportunities for inbound and outbound missions. For example, staff has used the database to recruit participants for outbound missions based on the sectors identified by the host country. The staff has also used the database to identify, recruit, and coordinate pre-screened business-to-business meetings for inbound missions. In addition, staff has used the information contained in the database to provide business profiles to consulates, trade offices, and economic development agencies. The agency has provided information to these interested parties free of charge. The database has also served as a mechanism to communicate with an ever growing constituency wishing to stay informed on trade related activities in the South Florida area.

### **Staff Travel and Foreign Per Diem Rates**

The Office will cover the following costs for staff travel for pre-mission site inspection and official missions: Airfare (economy class), communications, ground transportation, lodging, registration and per diem. For all official travel, the County travel policy will apply. Should foreign travel for site inspection or missions include the use of TMC funds, TMC will cover the costs of Airfare (economy class), communications, ground transportation, lodging, registration and per diem for meals and incidental expenses. However, per diem for meals and incidental expense (M&IE) will be limited up to \$100 per day with receipts or whichever is lower.

### **Non-Reimbursable Expenses**

According to Miami-Dade County Travel Policy and Procedures, the following are considered **non-reimbursable** expenses: Laundry, dry cleaning, tips, alcohol, gifts, personal entertainment, tours, in-room movies, traffic/parking, any additional expenses resulting from traveling with spouse/guest, etc.