

for the most recent period; (3) for all other PRC exporters, the cash deposit rate will be the PRC-wide rate, which is currently 54.21 percent; and, (4) for all other non-PRC exporters, the cash deposit rate will be the rate applicable to the PRC supplier of that exporter. These deposit requirements shall remain in effect until publication of the final results of the next administrative review.

#### Notification of Interested Parties

This notice also serves as a final reminder to importers of their responsibility under 19 CFR 351.402(f)(2) to file a certificate regarding the reimbursement of antidumping duties prior to liquidation of the relevant entries during this review period. Failure to comply with this requirement could result in the Secretary's presumption that reimbursement of the antidumping duties occurred and the subsequent assessment of double antidumping duties.

This notice also serves as a reminder to parties subject to administrative protective orders (APOs) of their responsibility concerning the return or destruction of proprietary information disclosed under APO in accordance with 19 CFR 351.305, which continues to govern business proprietary information in this segment of the proceeding. Timely written notification of the return/destruction of APO materials or conversion to judicial protective order is hereby requested. Failure to comply with the regulations and terms of an APO is a violation which is subject to sanction.

We are issuing and publishing this determination and notice in accordance with sections 751(a)(1) and 771(I) of the Act.

Dated: March 10, 2003.

**Joseph A. Spetrini,**

*Acting Assistant Secretary for Import Administration.*

[FR Doc. 03-6481 Filed 3-18-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-DS-P

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### International Trade Administration

[C-580-835]

#### Final Results and Partial Rescission of Countervailing Duty Administrative Review: Stainless Steel Sheet and Strip From the Republic of Korea

AGENCY: Import Administration, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of final results of countervailing duty administrative review.

**SUMMARY:** On September 10, 2002, the Department of Commerce (the Department) published in the **Federal Register** its preliminary results and partial rescission of administrative review of the countervailing duty order on stainless steel sheet and strip from the Republic of Korea for the period January 1, 2000 through December 31, 2000 (67 FR 57395) (*Preliminary Results*). The Department has now completed this administrative review in accordance with section 751(a) of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (the Act).

Based on information received since the *Preliminary Results* and our analysis of the comments received, the Department has revised the net subsidy rate for Incheon Iron and Steel Co. (Inchon) The final net subsidy rate for the reviewed company is listed below in the section entitled "Final Results of Review."

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** March 19, 2003.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Tipten Troidl or Carrie Farley, Office of AD/CVD Enforcement VI, Import Administration, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20230; telephone: (202) 482-2786.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

Pursuant to 19 CFR 351.213(b), this review covers only those producers or exporters of the subject merchandise for which a review was specifically requested. Accordingly, this review covers Incheon. This review covers the period January 1, 2000 through December 31, 2000 and eighteen (18) programs.

On August 6, 1999, the Department published in the **Federal Register** the countervailing duty order on stainless steel sheet and strip in coils from the Republic of Korea. *See Amended Final Determination: Stainless Steel Sheet and Strip in Coils from the Republic of Korea; and Notice of Countervailing Duty Orders: Stainless Steel Sheet and Strip from France, Italy and the Republic of Korea*, 64 FR 42923 (August 6, 1999). In addition, we published the *Amended Final Results of Countervailing Duty Administrative Review: Stainless Steel Sheet and Strip in Coils from the Republic of Korea*, 67 FR 8229 (February 22, 2002) and published the *Final Results and Partial Rescission of Countervailing Duty Administrative Review: Stainless Steel*

*Sheet and Strip in Coils from the Republic of Korea*, 67 FR 1964 (January 15, 2002) and the accompanying Issues and Decision Memorandum (January 8, 2002).

#### Rescission of Sammi Steel Co., Ltd. (Sammi)

As noted in the *Preliminary Results*, Sammi did not export subject merchandise to the U.S. during the POR, and the Department preliminary found that Sammi and Incheon were not cross-owned. *See* 67 FR 57398. Therefore, the Department intended to rescind the administrative review for Sammi. As discussed in the Decision Memorandum, we affirm our decision from the *Preliminary Results* and are rescinding the review for Sammi.

We published the *Preliminary Results* of the instant administrative review in the **Federal Register** on September 10, 2002 (67 FR 57395). We invited interested parties to comment on the results. On January 10, 2003, we received case briefs from petitioners and respondents. On January 17, 2003, we received rebuttal briefs from petitioners and respondents.

#### Scope of the Review

For purposes of this review, the products covered are certain stainless steel sheet and strip in coils. Stainless steel is an alloy steel containing, by weight, 1.2 percent or less of carbon and 10.5 percent or more of chromium, with or without other elements. The subject sheet and strip is a flat-rolled product in coils that is greater than 9.5 mm in width and less than 4.75 mm in thickness, and that is annealed or otherwise heat treated and pickled or otherwise descaled. The subject sheet and strip may also be further processed (e.g., cold-rolled, polished, aluminized, coated, etc.) provided that it maintains the specific dimensions of sheet and strip following such processing.

The merchandise subject to this review is classified in the *Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States* (HTSUS) at subheadings: 7219.13.00.30, 7219.13.00.50, 7219.13.00.70, 7219.13.00.80, 7219.14.00.30, 7219.14.00.65, 7219.14.00.90, 7219.32.00.05, 7219.32.00.20, 7219.32.00.25, 7219.32.00.35, 7219.32.00.36, 7219.32.00.38, 7219.32.00.42, 7219.32.00.44, 7219.33.00.05, 7219.33.00.20, 7219.33.00.25, 7219.33.00.35, 7219.33.00.36, 7219.33.00.38, 7219.33.00.42, 7219.33.00.44, 7219.34.00.05, 7219.34.00.20, 7219.34.00.25, 7219.34.00.30, 7219.34.00.35, 7219.35.00.05, 7219.35.00.15, 7219.35.00.30,

7219.35.00.35, 7219.90.00.10, 7219.90.00.20, 7219.90.00.25, 7219.90.00.60, 7219.90.00.80, 7220.12.10.00, 7220.12.50.00, 7220.20.10.10, 7220.20.10.15, 7220.20.10.60, 7220.20.10.80, 7220.20.60.05, 7220.20.60.10, 7220.20.60.15, 7220.20.60.60, 7220.20.60.80, 7220.20.70.05, 7220.20.70.10, 7220.20.70.15, 7220.20.70.60, 7220.20.70.80, 7220.20.80.00, 7220.20.90.30, 7220.20.90.60, 7220.90.00.10, 7220.90.00.15, 7220.90.00.60, and 7220.90.00.80. Although the HTS subheadings are provided for convenience and Customs purposes, the Department's written description of the merchandise is dispositive.

Excluded from the scope of this order are the following: (1) Sheet and strip that is not annealed or otherwise heat treated and pickled or otherwise descaled, (2) sheet and strip that is cut to length, (3) plate (*i.e.*, flat-rolled stainless steel products of a thickness of 4.75 mm or more), (4) flat wire (*i.e.*, cold-rolled sections, with a prepared edge, rectangular in shape, of a width of not more than 9.5 mm), and (5) razor blade steel. Razor blade steel is a flat rolled product of stainless steel, not further worked than cold-rolled (cold-reduced), in coils, of a width of not more than 23 mm and a thickness of 0.266 mm or less, containing, by weight, 12.5 to 14.5 percent chromium, and certified at the time of entry to be used in the manufacture of razor blades. *See* Chapter 72 of the HTSUS, "Additional U.S. Note" 1(d).

The Department has determined that certain specialty stainless steel products are also excluded from the scope of this order. These excluded products are described below:

Flapper valve steel is defined as stainless steel strip in coils containing, by weight, between 0.37 and 0.43 percent carbon, between 1.15 and 1.35 percent molybdenum, and between 0.20 and 0.80 percent manganese. This steel also contains, by weight, phosphorus of 0.025 percent or less, silicon of between 0.20 and 0.50 percent, and sulfur of 0.020 percent or less. The product is manufactured by means of vacuum arc remelting, with inclusion controls for sulphide of no more than 0.04 percent and for oxide of no more than 0.05 percent. Flapper valve steel has a tensile strength of between 210 and 300 ksi, yield strength of between 170 and 270 ksi, plus or minus 8 ksi, and a hardness (Hv) of between 460 and 590. Flapper valve steel is most commonly used to produce specialty flapper valves in compressors.

Also excluded is a product referred to as suspension foil, a specialty steel product used in the manufacture of suspension assemblies for computer disk drives. Suspension foil is described as 302/304 grade or 202 grade stainless steel of a thickness between 14 and 127 microns, with a thickness tolerance of plus-or-minus 2.01 microns, and surface glossiness of 200 to 700 percent Gs. Suspension foil must be supplied in coil widths of not more than 407 mm, and with a mass of 225 kg or less. Roll marks may only be visible on one side, with no scratches of measurable depth. The material must exhibit residual stresses of 2 mm maximum deflection, and flatness of 1.6 mm over 685 mm length.

Certain stainless steel foil for automotive catalytic converters is also excluded from the scope of this order. This stainless steel strip in coils is a specialty foil with a thickness of between 20 and 110 microns used to produce a metallic substrate with a honeycomb structure for use in automotive catalytic converters. The steel contains, by weight, carbon of no more than 0.030 percent, silicon of no more than 1.0 percent, manganese of no more than 1.0 percent, chromium of between 19 and 22 percent, aluminum of no less than 5.0 percent, phosphorus of no more than 0.045 percent, sulfur of no more than 0.03 percent, lanthanum of between 0.002 and 0.05 percent, and total rare earth elements of more than 0.06 percent, with the balance iron.

Permanent magnet iron-chromium-cobalt alloy stainless strip is also excluded from the scope of this order. This ductile stainless steel strip contains, by weight, 26 to 30 percent chromium, and 7 to 10 percent cobalt, with the remainder of iron, in widths 228.6 mm or less, and a thickness between 0.127 and 1.270 mm. It exhibits magnetic remanence between 9,000 and 12,000 gauss, and a coercivity of between 50 and 300 oersteds. This product is most commonly used in electronic sensors and is currently available under proprietary trade names such as "Arnokrome III."<sup>1</sup>

Certain electrical resistance alloy steel is also excluded from the scope of this order. This product is defined as a non-magnetic stainless steel manufactured to American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) specification B344 and containing, by weight, 36 percent nickel, 18 percent chromium, and 46 percent iron, and is most notable for its resistance to high temperature corrosion. It has a melting point of 1390 degrees Celsius and displays a creep

rupture limit of 4 kilograms per square millimeter at 1000 degrees Celsius. This steel is most commonly used in the production of heating ribbons for circuit breakers and industrial furnaces, and in rheostats for railway locomotives. The product is currently available under proprietary trade names such as "Gilphy 36."<sup>2</sup>

Certain martensitic precipitation-hardenable stainless steel is also excluded from the scope of this order. This high-strength, ductile stainless steel product is designated under the Unified Numbering System (UNS) as S45500-grade steel, and contains, by weight, 11 to 13 percent chromium, and 7 to 10 percent nickel. Carbon, manganese, silicon and molybdenum each comprise, by weight, 0.05 percent or less, with phosphorus and sulfur each comprising, by weight, 0.03 percent or less. This steel has copper, niobium, and titanium added to achieve aging, and will exhibit yield strengths as high as 1700 Mpa and ultimate tensile strengths as high as 1750 Mpa after aging, with elongation percentages of 3 percent or less in 50 mm. It is generally provided in thicknesses between 0.635 and 0.787 mm, and in widths of 25.4 mm. This product is most commonly used in the manufacture of television tubes and is currently available under proprietary trade names such as "Durphynox 17."<sup>3</sup>

Finally, three specialty stainless steels typically used in certain industrial blades and surgical and medical instruments are also excluded from the scope of this order. These include stainless steel strip in coils used in the production of textile cutting tools (*e.g.*, carpet knives).<sup>4</sup> This steel is similar to ASTM grade 440F, but containing, by weight, 0.5 to 0.7 percent of molybdenum. The steel also contains, by weight, carbon of between 1.0 and 1.1 percent, sulfur of 0.020 percent or less, and includes between 0.20 and 0.30 percent copper and between 0.20 and 0.50 percent cobalt. This steel is sold under proprietary names such as "GIN4 HI-C." The second excluded stainless steel strip in coils is similar to AISI 420-J2 and contains, by weight, carbon of between 0.62 and 0.70 percent, silicon of between 0.20 and 0.50 percent, manganese of between 0.45 and 0.80 percent, phosphorus of no more than 0.025 percent and sulfur of no more than 0.020 percent. This steel has a carbide density on average of 100 carbide particles per square micron. An

<sup>2</sup> "Gilphy 36" is a trademark of Imphy, S.A.

<sup>3</sup> "Durphynox 17" is a trademark of Imphy, S.A.

<sup>4</sup> This list of uses is illustrative and provided for descriptive purposes only.

<sup>1</sup> "Arnokrome III" is a trademark of the Arnold Engineering Company.

example of this product is "GIN5" steel. The third specialty steel has a chemical composition similar to AISI 420 F, with carbon of between 0.37 and 0.43 percent, molybdenum of between 1.15 and 1.35 percent, but lower manganese of between 0.20 and 0.80 percent, phosphorus of no more than 0.025 percent, silicon of between 0.20 and 0.50 percent, and sulfur of no more than 0.020 percent. This product is supplied with a hardness of more than Hv 500 guaranteed after customer processing, and is supplied as, for example, "GIN6."

#### Analysis of Comments Received

All issues raised in the case and rebuttal briefs by parties to this review are addressed in the "Issues and Decision Memorandum: Final Results and Partial Rescission of Countervailing Duty Administrative Review: Stainless Steel Sheet and Strip from the Republic of Korea" (Decision Memorandum) dated March 10, 2003, which is hereby adopted by this notice. A list of issues which parties have raised and to which we have responded, all of which are in the Decision Memorandum, is attached to this notice as Appendix I. Parties can find a complete discussion of all issues raised in this review and the corresponding recommendations in this public memorandum, which is on file in room B-099 of the Main Commerce Building. In addition, a complete version of the Decision Memorandum can be accessed directly on the World Wide Web at <http://ia.ita.doc.gov>, under the heading "Federal Register Notices." The paper copy and electronic version of the Decision Memorandum are identical in content.

#### Final Results of Review

In accordance with section 705(c)(1)(B)(i) of the Act, we calculated an *ad valorem* subsidy rate for Incheon. For the period January 1, 2000 through December 31, 2000, we determine the net subsidy for Incheon to be 3.79 percent *ad valorem*.

We will instruct the Customs Service ("Customs") to assess countervailing duties as indicated above. The Department will instruct Customs to collect cash deposits of estimated countervailing duties in the percentage detailed above of the f.o.b. invoice prices on all shipments of the subject merchandise from the producers/exporters under review, entered, or withdrawn from warehouse, for consumption on or after the date of publication of the final results of this administrative review. As of April 1, 2001, Incheon, changed its name to INI. Thus, for all of Incheon's shipments of the subject merchandise from the

producers/exporters under review, entered, or withdrawn from warehouse, for consumption on or after April 1, 2001, we will instruct customs to assign Incheon's cash deposit to INI.

Because the URAA replaced the general rule in favor of a country-wide rate with a general rule in favor of individual rates for investigated and reviewed companies, the procedures for establishing countervailing duty rates, including those for non-reviewed companies, are now essentially the same as those in antidumping cases, except as provided for in section 777A(e)(2) of the Act. The requested review will normally cover only those companies specifically named. See 19 CFR 351.213(b). Pursuant to 19 CFR 351.212(c), for all companies for which a review was not requested, duties must be assessed at the cash deposit rate, and cash deposits must continue to be collected, at the rate previously ordered. As such, the countervailing duty cash deposit rate applicable to a company can no longer change, except pursuant to a request for a review of that company. See *Federal Mogul Corporation and The Torrington Company v. United States*, 822 F. Supp. 782 (CIT 1993) and *Floral Trade Council v. United States*, 822 F. Supp. 766 (CIT 1993). Therefore, the cash deposit rates for all companies except those covered by this review will be unchanged by the results of this review.

We will instruct Customs to continue to collect cash deposits for non-reviewed companies at the most recent company-specific or country-wide rate applicable to the company. As of April 1, 2002, Sammi changed its name to BNG. Thus, for all of Sammi's shipments of the subject merchandise from the producers/exporters under review, entered, or withdrawn from warehouse, for consumption on or after April 1, 2002, we will instruct customs to assign Sammi's cash deposit rate to BNG. Accordingly, the cash deposit rates that will be applied to non-reviewed companies covered by this order will be the rate for that company established in the most recently completed administrative proceeding conducted under the URAA. If such a review has not been conducted, the rate established in the most recently completed administrative proceeding pursuant to the statutory provisions that were in effect prior to the URAA amendments is applicable. See *Stainless Steel Sheet and Strip in Coils from the Republic of Korea: Amended Final Results of Countervailing Duty Administrative Review*, 67 FR 8229 (February 22, 2002). This rate shall apply to all non-reviewed companies until a review of a company assigned

this rate is requested. In addition, for the period January 1, 2000 through December 31, 2000, the assessment rates applicable to all non-reviewed companies covered by this order are the cash deposit rates in effect at the time of entry.

This notice also serves as a final reminder to importers of their responsibility under 19 CFR 351.402(f) to file a certificate regarding the reimbursement of duties prior to liquidation of the relevant entries during this review period.

This notice serves as a reminder to parties subject to administrative protective order (APO) of their responsibility concerning the disposition of proprietary information disclosed under APO in accordance with 19 CFR 351.305(a)(3). Timely written notification of return/destruction of APO materials or conversion to judicial protective order is hereby requested. Failure to comply with the regulations and the terms of an APO is a sanctionable violation.

This administrative review and notice are issued and published in accordance with section 751(a)(1) of the Act.

Dated: March 10, 2003.

**Joseph A. Spetrini,**

*Acting Assistant Secretary for Import Administration.*

#### Appendix I—Issues and Decision Memorandum

- I. Methodology and Background Information
  - A. Rescission of Sammi Steel Co., Ltd. (Sammi)
  - B. Program-wide Change
  - C. Name Changes
    1. Incheon Iron and Steel Co. (Incheon) to INI
    2. Sammi to BNG
- II. Subsidies Valuation Information
  - A. Allocation Period
  - B. Benchmarks for Loans and Discount Rates
  - C. Attribution
    1. Cross-ownership of Incheon and Sammi
    2. Treatment of Subsidies Received by Trading Companies
  - D. Untimely Subsidy Allegation
- III. Analysis of Programs
  - A. Programs Determined to Confer Subsidies
    1. *The GOK's Direction of Credit*
    2. *Article 16 of the Tax Exemption and Reduction Control Act (TERCL): Reserve for Export Loss*
    3. *Article 17 of TERCL: Reserve for Overseas Market Development*
    4. *Technical Development Fund Under Restriction of Special Taxation (RSTA) Article 9, formerly TERCL 8*
    5. *Asset Revaluation TERCL Article 56(2)*
    6. *Electricity Discounts under the Requested Loan Adjustment Program (RLA)*
    7. *POSCO's Provision of Steel Inputs for Less than Adequate Remuneration*

8. *Tax Credit for Investments on Productivity Improvement Facilities under RSTA Article 24*
  9. *Inchon's Local Tax Exemption*
  - B. *Programs Determined to Be Not Used*
  1. *Investment Tax Credits under RSTA Articles 10, 18, 26, 27 and 71 of TERCL*
  2. *Loans from the National Agricultural Cooperation Federation*
  3. *Tax Incentives for Highly-Advanced Technology Businesses under the Foreign Investment and Foreign Capital Inducement Act*
  4. *Reserve for Investment under Article 43-5 of TERCL*
  5. *Export Insurance Rates Provided by the Korean Export Insurance Corporation*
  6. *Special Depreciation of Assets on Foreign Exchange Earnings*
  7. *Excessive Duty Drawback*
  8. *Short-Term Export Financing*
  9. *Export Industry Facility Loans*
- IV. *Total AD Valorem Rate*
- V. *Analysis of Comments*
- Comment 1: Rescission of Sammi from the Final Results*
- Comment 2: Sammi's name change to BNG*
- Comment 3: Cross-ownership between Inchon and Sammi*
- Comment 4: Debt-for-equity swap received by Kangwon*
- Comment 5: Tax Subsidies received by Inchon*
- Comment 6: Calculation Revision for Inchon's Long-term Loans*
- Comment 7: Sammi's debt forgiveness from KAMCO*
- Comment 8: Loan Benchmark Rates*
- Comment 9: GOK's control of POSCO*
- Comment 10: Program-wide change: POSCO's privatization*
- Comment 11: POSCO's Provision of Hot-Rolled Coil (HRC) for Less than Adequate Remuneration*
- Comment 12: POSCO's purchase of Sammi's Changwon Facility for More than Adequate Remuneration*
- Comment 13: Adjustments to Import Prices*

[FR Doc. 03-6480 Filed 3-18-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-DS-P

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### International Trade Administration

RIN 0625-ZA05

#### Market Development Cooperator Program

**AGENCY:** International Trade Administration, Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of Funding Availability.

**SUMMARY:** The International Trade Administration (ITA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce (the Department) requests that eligible organizations submit proposals (applications) for the fiscal year (FY) 2003 competition for Market Development Cooperator Program (MDCP) awards. ITA creates economic

opportunity for U.S. workers and firms by promoting international trade, opening foreign markets, ensuring compliance with U.S. trade laws and agreements, and supporting U.S. commercial interests at home and abroad.

Through MDCP cooperative agreements the Department works with export multiplier organizations providing technical and financial assistance which these organizations match. Export multiplier organizations compete for a limited number of MDCP awards.

Eligible export multipliers include trade associations, state economic development/trade departments, small business development centers, World Trade Centers, chambers of commerce, and other non-profit industry organizations. These export multipliers are particularly effective in reaching small- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs). MDCP awards help to underwrite the start-up costs of new export ventures which export multipliers are often reluctant to undertake without Federal Government support. MDCP aims to develop, maintain and expand foreign markets for non-agricultural goods and services produced in the United States and served to:

- Challenge the private sector to think strategically about foreign markets;
- Spur private-sector innovation and investment in exporting; and
- Increase the number of U.S. companies, particularly SMEs, taking decisive export actions.

As an active partner, ITA will, as appropriate, guide and assist export multipliers in achieving project objectives. ITA encourages export multipliers to propose projects that (1) best meet their industry's market development needs; and (2) leverage the partnership between the export multiplier and ITA.

**DATES:** *Public Meeting:* The Department will hold a public meeting to discuss MDCP proposal preparation, procedures, and selection process on Friday, April 4, 2003. The two-hour meeting will begin at 10 a.m. in Room 6059, at the Herbert Clark Hoover Building, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC. The Department will not discuss specific proposals at this meeting. Attendance is not required.

*Applications:* The Department must receive completed applications by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, Tuesday, May 15, 2003. Late applications will not be accepted. They will be returned to the sender. Applicants must ensure that

the service they use to deliver their application can do so by the deadline. Due to recent security concerns, packages and envelopes sent to the Department via U.S. mail have been delayed several days or even weeks. The delays have affected all forms of the U.S. mail, including first-class, priority, and express.

As set forth under *IV.B.2. Number of Copies*, ITA requests one original application, plus seven (7) copies. Applicants for whom this is a financial hardship should submit an original and two copies. Applications should be submitted to the contact below.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Brad Hess, Manager, Market Development Cooperator Program, Trade Development, ITA, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW., Room 3215, Washington, DC 20230.

Email: [Brad\\_Hess@ita.doc.gov](mailto:Brad_Hess@ita.doc.gov).

Phone/Fax: (202) 482-2969/ -4462.

Internet: <http://www.export.gov/mdcp>.

*Application Kit:* A kit which includes required application forms is available at <http://www.export.gov/mdcp>. A "hard-copy" version is available upon request.

*Pre-Application Counseling:* Applicants with questions should contact the Department as soon as possible, while continuing to prepare their proposals. The Department will not extend the deadline for submitting applications.

From March 19, 2003 through May 15, 2003, the Department does not counsel potential applicants regarding the merits of projects they may propose in their applications. During this competition period, the Department may respond to potential applicants' questions regarding eligibility, technical issues, procedures, general information, and referral.<sup>1</sup> For example, during the competition period the Department may refer a potential applicant to sources for market research on a foreign market identified by the potential applicant. However, to continue the example, the Department may not comment on the merits of including that market in a proposal, or suggest an alternative market.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** *Authority:* The Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988, Pub. L. No. 100-418, Title II, sec. 2303, 102

<sup>1</sup> Outside of the competition period, the Department is free to counsel potential applicants on the merits of their proposed projects.