

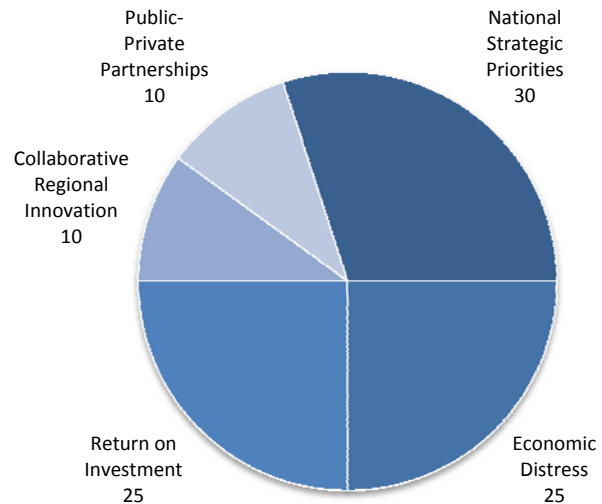
Helpful Hints for Submitting a Strong Proposal to EDA

Understand EDA's Merit Review Rating Process

The purpose of EDA's Merit Review is to evaluate the proposal's match with EDA's Investment Priorities. The evaluation does not encompass many other critical aspects of the application (legal, environmental, engineering, etc.) that will be considered in total by the Investment Review Committee (IRC).

Each of the evaluation criteria outlined in Section IV of the Public Works, Economic Adjustment Assistance, and Global Climate Change Mitigation Incentive Fund (GCCMIF) Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) dated October 14, 2010 has been assigned a weight (see pie chart) that contributes to the overall rating of the proposal. EDA will rate a proposal as *highly competitive* if the proposal is rated as *highly competitive* on evaluation criteria whose weights sum to 60 or more. For example, a proposal that is rated *highly competitive* under National Strategic Priorities, Collaborative Regional Innovation and Economic Distress would be rated *highly competitive* overall, since the combined weights of these criteria is 65 (30+10+25=65).

EDA will rate a proposal as *not competitive* if the proposal is rated as *not competitive* on evaluation criteria whose weights sum to 60 or more. Proposals that are neither *highly competitive* nor *not competitive* will be rated *competitive*.



Provide Supporting Evidence for Claims

EDA's merit review will only consider information contained in the application. Citing third-party evidence (such as federal/state data or an independent report) to support a claim will generally make that response highly competitive. **EDA prefers that applicants provide data from federal or state sources, whenever possible; however, applicants may cite other quantitative or qualitative data, including** news articles, economic studies/market research, **and** letters of support from prospective partners and beneficiaries of the project. Where possible, **applicants should provide copies of supporting data as attachments, or provide a complete citation/source-reference for the supporting evidence in the project narrative.**

- **Highly Competitive** responses will make a persuasive argument for the claim, and provide supporting documentation/data.
- **Competitive** responses will make a persuasive argument for the claim, but not necessarily document it using third-party evidence.
- **Non-Competitive** responses will not make a persuasive argument for the claim.

Make the ED-900 Application Form Work for You

Below are some helpful hints to ensure your ED-900 application highlights the fit between your project and EDA's evaluation criteria and provides EDA staff with the strongest possible evidence to support your claims. In general, the narrative responses to the questions in **Section A** of the ED-900 are the best forum for documenting how your project will match the goals and criteria outlined by the FFO. Other sections that can be effectively used to highlight a particular response to the criteria are highlighted below in **bold**.

Please note that the application needs to fully address only one of the sub-categories listed in the FFO under *National Strategic Priorities* to receive full credit for that criterion; however, the sub-categories listed under the other evaluation criteria should each be fully addressed to receive full credit for those criteria.

National Strategic Priorities

Technology-Led Economic Development. Describe how the project will forward technology-led economic development in your region. EDA views projects with beneficiaries in the scientific, healthcare, or IT industries as highly competitive. Be sure to specify which industry the project supports by using a relevant North American Industry Classification (NAICS) code(<http://www.naics.com/search.htm>). **Section B.5: Project Beneficiaries** requests this information.

Support Small/Medium Sized Businesses. EDA supports small and medium size business growth. What is the average size (sales/employees) of the businesses benefitting from this investment? Supporting evidence may include information from these firms, which can be included in the letters requested in **Section B.5**.

Economic Dislocation because of Auto Industry Restructuring or Natural Disasters. The strength of the application in this area is solely dependent on the economic characteristics of the targeted region, and will be largely based on the responses to the questions in **Section B.1 – B.3: Regional Eligibility**.

- To document auto-industry restructuring: provide a Worker Adjustment and Retraining (WARN) notice or a cluster analysis showing the industry's decline in the community.
- To document a disaster: provide the FEMA disaster declaration number(<http://www.fema.gov/news/disasters.fema>)

Global Competitiveness and Innovation. How will the proposed investment help the region compete in the global marketplace? Does it target high-growth industries? Does it assist an industry with export potential? Will it support facilities or infrastructure to sustain or attract foreign direct investments?

Commercialization of Research. Will the investment support tech transfer; link to a business incubator or commercialization center; or commercialize a patent or invention?

Environmentally Sustainable Development. Will the investment result in a green end-product, green an existing process or function, or utilize sustainable construction practices? More information on EDA's definition of Environmentally Sustainable Development is available here: http://www.eda.gov/PDF/GCCMIF_%20OnePager_External%20_081409.pdf.

Economically Distressed and Underserved Communities

The strength of the application in this area is solely dependent on the economic characteristics of the targeted region, and will be based on the responses to the questions in **Section B.1 – B.3**. When citing your data, please be sure to document the counties that make up the region you are describing and the year that was used to generate the data.

Return on Investment:

Job Creation/Private Sector Investment. What are the average wages in your region? Will the jobs created by the project provide higher wages? If so, include this information in your project narrative in **Section A**. Document the beneficiaries that will create or save jobs, or commit to investing additional funds in the region, due to the proposed investment in section **B.5: Project Beneficiaries**.

Collaborative Regional Innovation (Regional Collaboration):

Multi-Jurisdictional Collaboration. What other organizations are "actively involved" in the development and/or implementation of the project? Describe each organizational entity and its role in the project. Strong applications will draw from a broad range of partners in the project.

Leveraging Regional Assets. What are the region's major industry/occupational clusters? Use these to help document your region's unique economic assets. How will the proposed investment leverage these assets? How will the proposed investment expand or enhance the clusters you have identified?

Planning. Does the proposed project support the vital programs, projects, and activities identified in the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) or other regional planning document?

Public-Private Partnerships:

What is the nature of any private sector engagement in the project? Have they provided letters of support, offered committed to provide matching share for the project or otherwise contribute financially, match contribution or been part of the leadership of this project? Does the project form part of a larger public initiative? If so, what is the nature/sources of other investments that are committed to the larger initiative?