



Supplier Scouting Playbook

Supplier Scouting Team
Jul 2024

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MEP National Network Supplier Scouting Overview

Summary

Supply Chain Optimization Intelligence Network (SCOIN) is a 2-year pilot project investing in the MEP National Network™ (MEPNN) to study manufacturing ecosystems and identify gaps in an effort to build more resilient sustainable supply chains.

Supplier Scouting is a key component of the SCOIN pilot. The national Supplier Scouting service can assist in identifying domestic suppliers with the capabilities you need, in some cases allowing you to reshore production, resulting in a shorter supply chain and reduced uncertainty.

The purpose of this playbook is to share information and resources about MEP's Supplier Scouting Services and the MEIS Supplier Scouting Module. The playbook is intended to be a living document and is divided into 6 sections:

- **Frequently Asked Questions** – responses to questions from the MEPNN regarding the basics of Supplier Scouting, supplier scouting process and the supplier scouting MEIS module
- **Supplier Scouting Terminology** – definitions to commonly used terms
- **MEIS Supplier Scouting Module User Guide** – step-by-step guide to using the Supplier Scouting Module
- **Commonly Used Links** – list of commonly use links
- **Build America, Buy America (BABA) Guidance** – introduction to BABA
- **Appendix A** – Example MEIS Notifications – example email notifications that are related to the supplier scouting process

We encourage MEP Supply Chain Experts to continue asking questions and submitting recommendations to continuously improve MEPNN Supplier Scouting.

Send your questions, recommendations, etc. to scouting@nist.gov.

Frequently asked Questions

What is MEP National Network™ Supplier Scouting?

MEP National Network (MEPNN) Supplier Scouting is a key component of MEP's Supply Chain Optimization Intelligence Network (SCOIN) pilot. It is a free service that leverages the extensive knowledge of the MEPNN to identify and connect U.S. companies and government agencies with domestic manufacturers to supply/produce products. The purpose of supplier scouting is to record data on local Supply Chain Ecosystems in an effort to fortify domestic supply chains.

How do I submit an Supplier Scouting Opportunity?

Supplier Scouting Opportunities (SSO) are submitted by completing an online form. To initiate the supplier scouting process, MEP Centers and government agencies need to complete and submit our [Supplier Scouting Opportunity Synopsis Form](#). (Companies seeking to engage in supplier scouting should contact their [local MEP Center](#)).

The form is used to gather technical and business information and is divided into four sections.

- Section 1: General information (email, item and description)

- Section 2: Technical information (type of supplier being sought, reason for scout, mfg process, dimensions, tolerances, performance specs, required materials, required certifications, regulations, and additional comments)
- Section 3: Business information (business volume, target price, delivery and packaging requirements, and additional comments)
- Section 4: Additional information* (attach drawings, photos, specs, etc.) and a checkbox to notify MEP of outcomes within 30-days of receiving a results report/email

*Agencies and organization scouting to comply with BABA are required to include BABA requirements for the item being scouted and contact information for questions.

What happens after a SSO is submitted?

SSOs are reviewed for technical and business information prior to distribution to the MEPNN. SSOs are typically opened on Wednesdays to the MEPNN for response. If an SSO is submitted on a Monday, Tuesday, or early Wednesday morning, it will typically be distributed on that Wednesday if no further clarification is needed. If a SSO is submitted on Wednesday afternoon, Thursday, or Friday, it will typically be distributed the following Wednesday, pending review. This schedule is subject to change as needs and priorities shift.

What types of results are submitted by MEP Centers?

There are 5 types of responses, 4 match types and 1 no match:

- Manufacturer currently produces the exact item
- Manufacturer currently produces a similar item
- Manufacturer currently possesses the capability to produce the item
- Manufacturer possesses relevant capabilities to allow production of the item with minimal retooling
- No match(es) found

How are SSOs scouted by MEP Centers?

MEP Centers search for matches in their state using a variety of tools and resources.

What happens after a SSO closes?

A notification email is sent with an attached report, to the requester of the SSO and Supply Chain Experts at each Center.

Supplier Scouting Terminology

Supplier Scouting Match

A supplier scouting match occurs when:

- An exact match is located (manufacturer produces the exact item)
- A partial match is located which could mean:
 - Manufacturer currently produces a similar item
 - Manufacturer currently possesses the capability to produce the item
 - Manufacturer possesses relevant capability to allow production of the item with minimum retooling

Supplier Scouting Opportunity (SSO)

An SSO contains the finalized technical and business information for items/services being sought. This form is distributed to the MEPNN for scouting.

Supplier Scouting Response

A supplier scouting response is when a MEP Center submits a match or no match for a SSO.

SSO (Synopsis) Form

A SSO is the form needed to initiate supplier scouting. The purpose of this form is to gather technical and business information about the needed item and about the organization making the request. The form has 4 sections.

- General info (email, item being sought and description)
- Technical info (type of supplier being sought, reason for scout, manufacturing process, dimensions, tolerances, performance specs, required materials, required certifications, regulations, and additional comments such as agency BABA requirements)
- Business info (business volume, target price, delivery and packaging requirements and additional comments)
- Additional info (agency BABA office contact information, attach drawings, photos, specs, etc.)

MEP Center Supply Chain Experts

An MEP Center Supply Chain Expert is the staff designated at each Center to participate in the SCOIN pilot and response to SSOs.

Supplier Scouting Requester

The supplier scouting requester is the individual that submits an SSO to initiate supplier scouting services.

Supplier Scouting Response

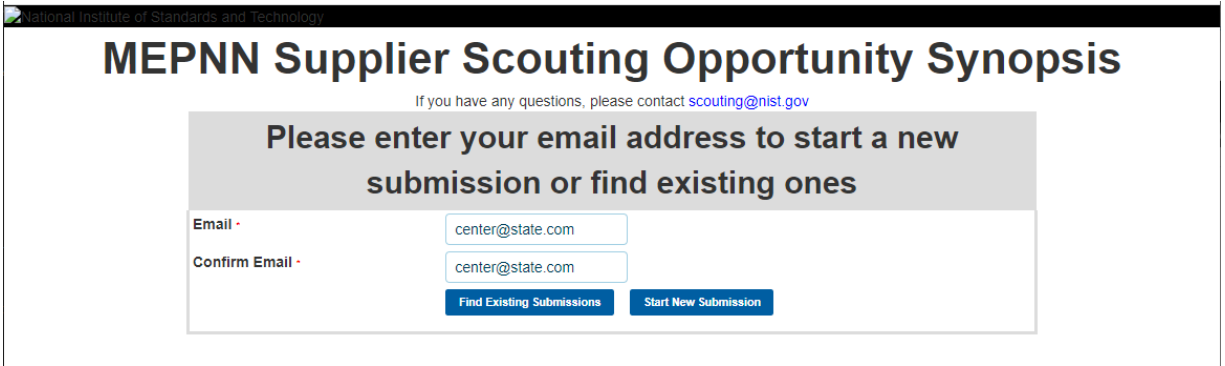
A supplier scouting response (exact match, partial match, or no match) is submitted, using the [MEIS Supplier Scouting Module](#) by MEP Center Supply Chain Experts in response to an SSO.

Submitting an Supplier Scouting Opportunity (SSO)

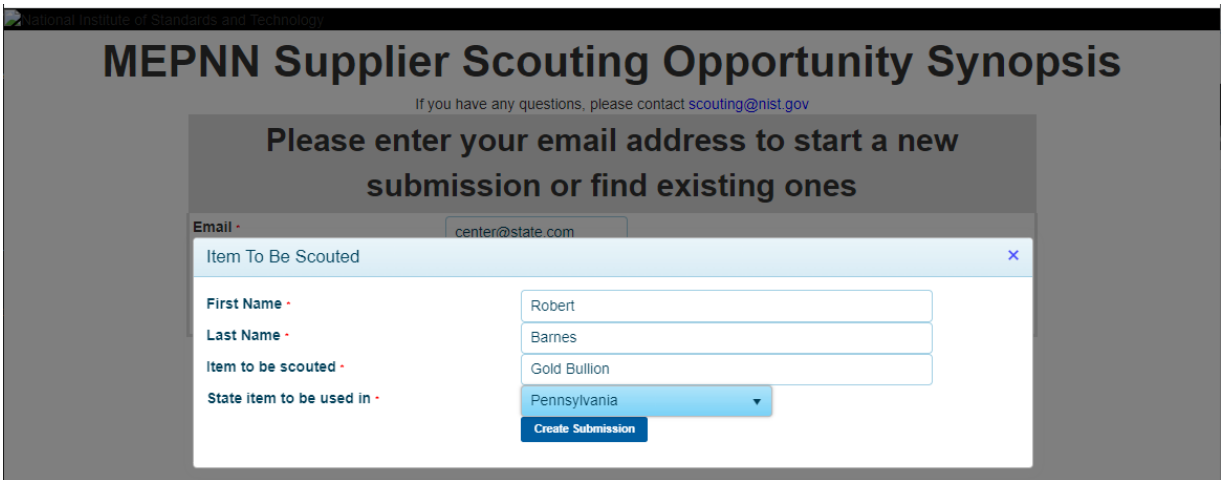
How to submit a Supplier Scouting Opportunity (SSO) Synopsis

Any individual can complete an SSO.

1. Navigate to <https://meis.nist.gov/SupplierScouting/Submit>
2. Enter and confirm your email address.

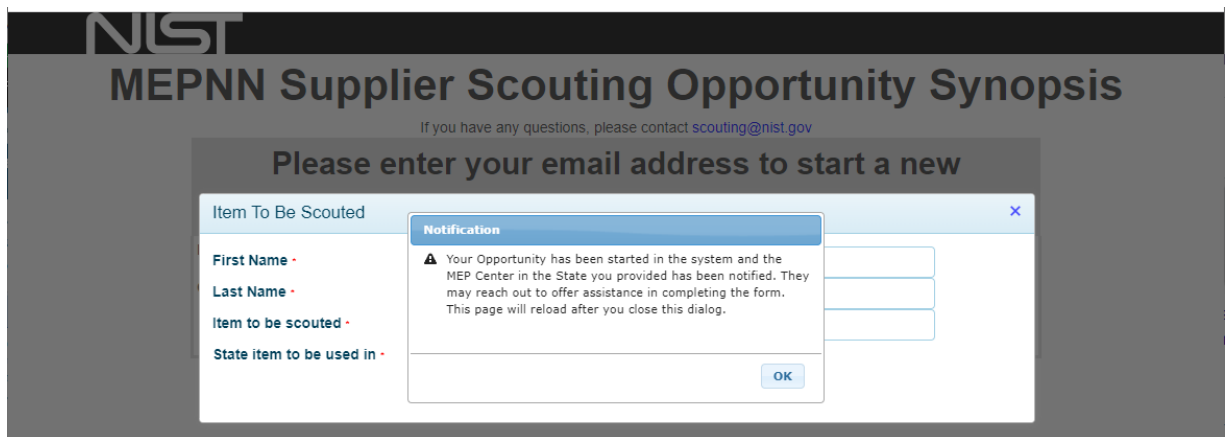


3. Click *Start New Submission*



4. Enter your First Name, Last Name and Item to be scouted.

5. Click Create Submission



6. You will receive a notification stating the following:

“Your Opportunity has been started in the system. This page will reload after you close this dialog.”

7. Click *OK* to continue.

Note: As you move from field to field you will receive notification that information is being saved.

Should you need to exit or abandon the form before submission you can return at a later time or date to continue editing or complete the form. **Until you click submit, you are able to return and edit the form using your email address (see [How to find existing submissions/edit unsubmitted synopses](#)).**

Note: Once submitted, you've submitted the synopsis it can only be edited by the MEP Supplier Scouting Team

NIST

MEPNN Supplier Scouting Opportunity Synopsis

A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with an information collection subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 unless the information collection has a currently valid OMB Control Number. The approved OMB Control Number for this information collection is 0693-0043. Without this approval, we could not conduct this survey/information collection. Public reporting for this information collection is estimated to be approximately 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the information collection. All responses to this information collection are voluntary. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection, including suggestions for reducing this burden to the NIST MEP, Attn: MEP Help Line, 301-975-8328 or webmaster (mepinfo@nist.gov).

OMB Control#0693-0043 Expiration Date: 6/30/25

This information is used to develop a clear and concise description that will be shared with MEP Centers in every state and Puerto Rico. MEP Centers will conduct a search for U.S. manufacturers with the capabilities, capacities, and business interests to supply the item(s). [Contact](#) the NIST MEP supplier scouting team for assistance to help you complete the opportunity synopsis and answer any questions.

[Submit Opportunity](#)

Section 1: General Information

Request Id	11057
Email	robert.barnes@nist.gov
First Name *	Robert
Last Name *	Barnes
Organization Type	Center
Department / Company / MEP Center *	Pennsylvania Manufacturing Extension Partnership
Bureau / Division / MEP Center Regional Office	
Item to be scouted *	Gold Coins
State item to be used in *	South Carolina
Days to be scouted *	
Notify Requester Immediately	No
Description *	No

[Submit Opportunity](#)

8. Once the page reloads, you can complete the fields in the **Contact & Item Information** section by providing the answers, as needed. You will notice some of this fields will be populated with information from the previous page.
 - a. Enter the Organization Type of the person submitting the request
 - i. Center
 - ii. Government Agency
 - iii. Private Entity
 - b. Enter your department / Company / MEP Center
 - i. Examples here are Department of Commerce, Department of Energy. **Note: Members of the MEPNN will choose their Center from the dropdown list.**

- c. Enter your Bureau / Division / MEP Center Regional Office
 - i. Examples here are NIST (part of the Department of Commerce), Catalyst Connection (part of Pennsylvania MEP), Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) (Part of the Department of Energy)
- d. Notify Requester Immediately (Only available to members of the MEPNN)
 - i. No
 - ii. Yes
 - iii. Days to be scouted (minimum of 30 days)Ex: 30 days
- e. Description
 - i. Ex: General information. End use of the item/service being sought. Conditions, in which, item will be used. For example, in a laboratory, submersed, harsh environment (high heat, extreme cold).

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL meisuat.nist.gov/SupplierScouting/Submit. The main heading is "Supplier Information". Below the heading, there are two dropdown menus: "Type of supplier being sought" with "Manufacturer" selected, and "Reason" with "2nd Supplier" selected. A blue "Submit Opportunity" button is located to the right of the dropdowns.

- 9. Complete Supplier Information
 - a. Select the type of supplier being sought.
 - b. Select the Reason

The screenshot shows the "Summary of technical specifications and performance requirements" section of the form. It contains three text input areas:

- Describe the manufacturing processes (elaborate to provide as much detail as possible):** Coins produced with a mixture of gold (99%) and nickel (1%) and stamped with picture and information to be determined.
- Provide dimensions / size / tolerances / performance specifications for the item:** Coins should have a diameter of 1.2 inches, and be 1/4 inch tall. gold (99%) and nickel (1%) Should weigh approximately 1.0909 troy ounces.
- List required materials needed to make the product, including materials of product components:** Gold and Nickel

A blue "Submit Opportunity" button is on the right. At the bottom, a red error message states "Materials Needed is required".

Complete the section on Summary of technical specifications and performance requirements.

- c. Describe the manufacturing processes (elaborate to provide as much detail as possible)
 - i. Ex: injection molding, metal casting, electronic assembly.
- d. Provide dimensions / size / tolerances / performance specifications for the item.
- e. List required materials needed to make the product, including materials of product components.

Are there applicable certification requirements? No

Are there applicable regulations? No

Are there any other standards, requirements, etc.? No

NAICS 1

NAICS 2

Additional Technical Comments *Is there other information that would impact the item's performance or usefulness?*

Submit Opportunity

- f. Are there applicable certification requirements?
- g. Are there applicable regulations?
- h. Are there any other standards, requirements, etc.?
- i. NAICS 1 and NAICS 2 - Are there any NAICS Codes associated with the item being sought?
- j. Additional Technical Comments*

*Agencies and organization scouting to comply with BABA are required to include BABA requirements for the item being scouted and contact information for questions.

MEPNN Supplier Scouting Req: x

meisuat.nist.gov/SupplierScouting/Submit

Volume and Pricing

Estimated potential business volume 1000 coins per week

Estimated target price / unit cost information (if unavailable explain) \$30 per coin

Estimated Target Price/Cost Information is required

Submit Opportunity

10. Complete the section on Volume and Pricing
 - a. Estimated potential business volume.
 - b. Estimated target price / unit cost information (if unavailable explain)

Delivery Requirements

When is it needed by? within two weeks

Describe packaging requirements Rolls in groups of 40

Where will this item be shipped? Phillidelphia, Pennsylvania

Submit Opportunity

11. Complete the section on Delivery Requirements
 - a. When is it needed by?
 - b. Describe packaging requirements.
 - c. Where will this item be shipped?

Supporting Documents

Select files...

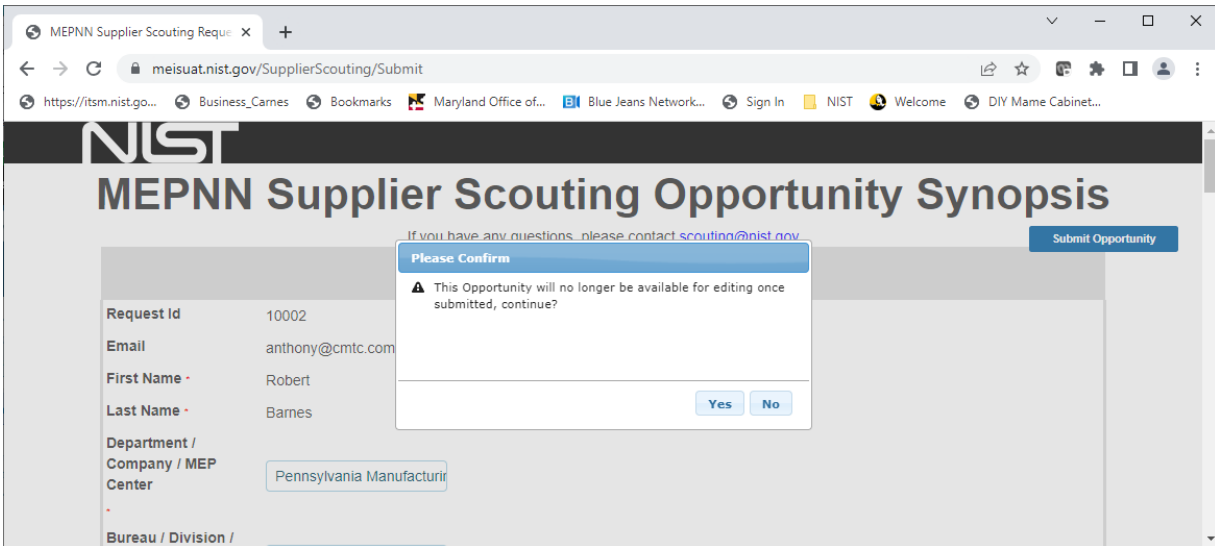
File Name

Submit Opportunity

Additional Comments

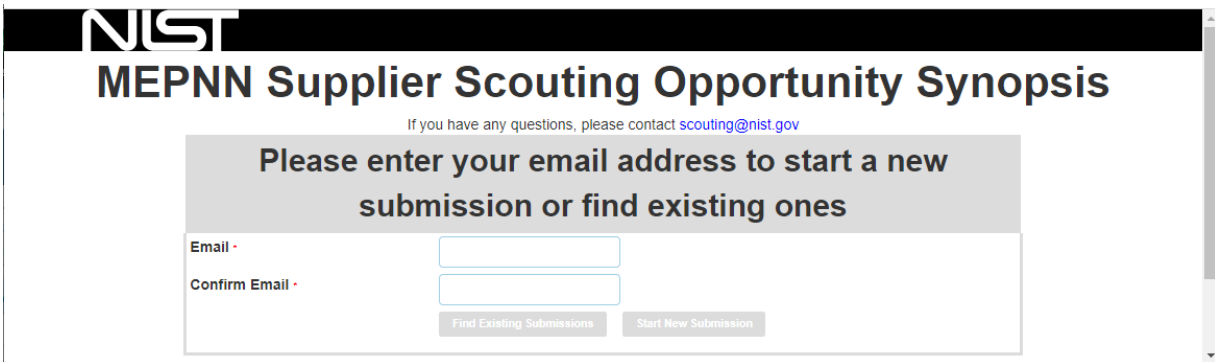
Is there other information you would like to include? Ex: Individually wrapped, palletized, groups of 5; For additional guidance...

12. Supporting Documents
 - a. Upload any necessary documents.
13. Additional Comments
 - a. Enter any additional comments and/or information.



14. Click Submit

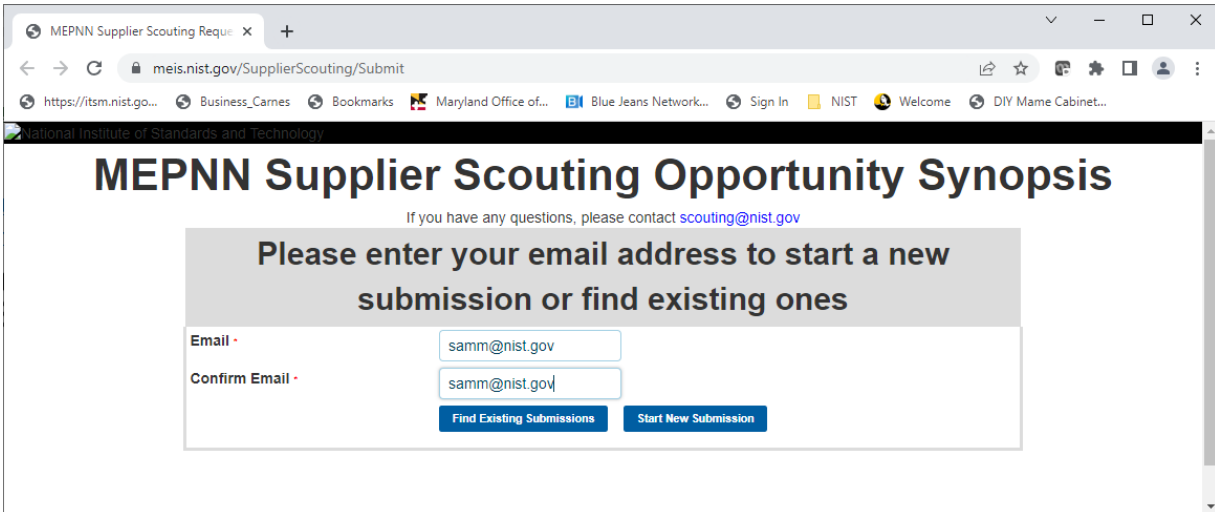
- a. You will receive a notification stating the following:
 - “This Opportunity will no longer be available for editing once submitted, continue?”**
 - i. No – you can return to the form to further edit.
 - ii. Yes
 - 1. Form will be submitted.
 - 2. You will receive a notification stating the following:
 - a. This Opportunity has been submitted and will be reviewed by NIST MEP. You will receive an email once responses have been collected for the opportunity. For questions email scouting@nist.gov. This page will reload after you close this dialog.



15. You will be returned to the landing page.

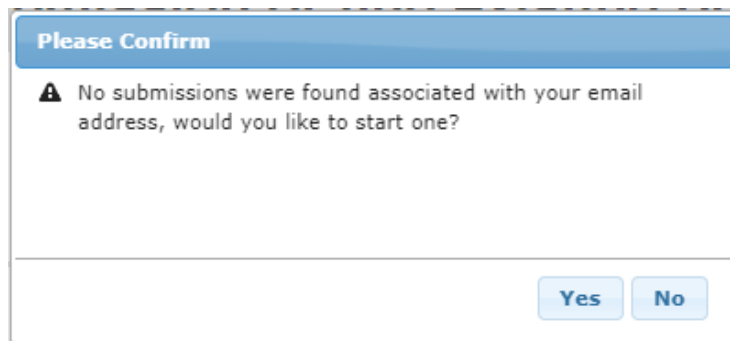
[How to find existing submitted synopses/edit unsubmitted synopses](https://meis.nist.gov/SupplierScouting/Submit)

1. Navigate to <https://meis.nist.gov/SupplierScouting/Submit>
2. Enter and confirm your email address.
3. Click *Find Existing Submissions*



1. If there are no synopses, you will receive a notification stating the following:

“No submissions were found associated with your email address; would you like to start one?”



2. If there are synopses associated with the email entered,
A list of synopses and their status is displayed.
 - a. Started – A Supplier Scouting Opportunity (SSO) synopsis has been started, but has not yet been submitted (the submit button has not been selected)
 - b. Submitted – A SSO has been forwarded to NIST MEP for Review (the submit button has been selected). The SSO can only be further edited by a member of the NIST MEP Supplier Scouting Team (SST)
 - c. Open For Responses – A SSO has been forwarded to the MEP National Network (MEPNN) to be reviewed by Supply Chain Experts in all 50 states and Puerto Rico within a specified time frame. Hopefully, producing potential matches with the ability to satisfy the need.
 - d. Closed for Responses – When the open period has elapsed, additional responses from Centers are not allowed. Responses are reviewed for very basic information. If that information is present, the response is allowed to be published along with the opportunity
 - e. Published – The opportunity synopsis, and all allowed responses are released to be reviewed by the requestor and the MEPNN.

MEPNN Supplier Scouting Opportunity Synopsis

If you have any questions, please contact scouting@nist.gov

Please enter your email address to start a new submission or find existing ones

Email

Confirm Email

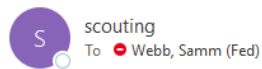
[Find Existing Submissions](#) [Start New Submission](#)

Existing Submissions

Item to be scouted	Status	State	Scouting Number
cups	Submitted	Maryland	

- f. For those with *Submitted* status, NIST MEP will need to be contacted to make changes before being distributed to the National Network for response
- g. For those with *Started* status, edits can still be made by clicking the link of the item to be scouted.
 - i. You will receive an email with a *One Time Use Link* that can be used to access the unsubmitted SSO

MEPNN: Access requested to a Supplier Scouting Request



Please use the link below to view the Supplier Scouting Opportunity you requested access to:

Request Id	10018
Item To Be Scouted	cups
One Time Use Link	Supplier Scouting Opportunity

Example

- ii. Clicking the One Time Use Link in the email will open the synopsis for editing. Changes can be made and then the window closed for additional editing later or Submit can be clicked closing the form for editing and sending to NIST MEP for review.

MEPNN Supplier Scouting Opportunity Synopsis

If you have any questions, please contact scouting@nist.gov

Contact & Item Information	
Request Id	10019
Email	samm@nist.gov
First Name *	Samm
Last Name *	Webb
Department / Company / MEP Center *	<input type="text" value="IMEC"/>
Bureau / Division / MEP Center Regional Office	<input type="text"/>
Item to be scouted *	<input type="text" value="cups 2"/>
State item to be used in *	<input type="text" value="Arkansas"/>
Days to be scouted *	<input type="text" value="30"/>
Description *	<input type="text" value="cups"/>

Note: As you move from field to field you will receive notification that information is being saved. Should you need to exit or abandon the form before submission you can return at a later time or date to continue editing or complete the form. **Until you click submit, you are able to return and edit the form using your email address** (see [How to find existing submissions/edit unsubmitted synopses](#)).

[Once an SSO has closed](#)

NIST MEP will “publish” the SSO within the MEIS Supplier Scouting module with all relevant responses. The requester will receive a email notification with a one-time link. Click the link to review responses and next steps.

Commonly Used Links

[MEPNN Supplier Scouting Opportunity Request](#)

[Executive Order 14005](#)

[MEP Supplier Scouting Team](#)

[Buy American Act \(BAA\) \(41 U.S.C. §§ 8301–8305\)](#)

[The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act \(IIJA\)](#)

[Build America Buy America Fact Sheet](#)

[Buy America Act Guidance](#)

[Made in America Office](#)

Build America, Buy America (BABA) Guidance

What are the requirements of Build America, Buy America?

(1) All iron and steel items used in covered projects must be produced in the United States. This means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States. (2) All manufactured products used in covered projects must be produced in the United States. This means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States, and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product. (3) All construction materials used in covered projects must be manufactured in the United

States. This means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States.

What Federal financial assistance awards are covered by Build America, Buy America?

Build America, Buy America provisions apply to Federal financial assistance awards (e.g., grants and loans) made after May 14, 2022, that will be used to construct, alter, maintain, or repair infrastructure in the United States. Note that these provisions are not limited to infrastructure projects funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Assistance recipients who have questions about whether their particular project is covered by Build America, Buy America should contact the funding agency. (Source: [Build America, Buy America Factsheet and FAQs for Award Recipients \(whitehouse.gov\)](#))

How can product compliance with BABA requirements be demonstrated??

The use of a signed letter is the most direct and effective form of compliance documentation for ensuring products are Buy America compliant. Companies can provide proper documentation that demonstrate compliance with the law. The Federal agency that is funding the infrastructure project subject to Build America, Buy America requirements may have specific requirements for demonstrating compliance.

Buy American Act Guidance

What Federal funding is subject to is the Buy America Act (BAA)?

Generally, BAA requirements apply to direct Federal procurement—what the Federal government buys for its own use. BAA requires a preference for domestic end products (i.e. an article, material, or supply to be acquired for public use) and domestic construction materials procured by the Federal government. BAA is implemented through Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 25.

What are the BAA requirements?

An end product or construction material that is not iron or steel qualifies as a domestic end product or construction material if it is manufactured in the U.S. and more than 65 percent of the cost of all components is also mined, produced or manufactured in the U.S. The threshold for the domestic component requirement is scheduled to increase to 75 percent in calendar year 2029. For iron and steel products, the applicable percentage of cost of domestic components is 95 percent. See FAR 25.003 for more information.

Do domestic items receive a preference in Federal procurement?

Yes, for offers of domestic end products and construction material subject to BAA, an evaluation factor (price preference) is applied. The preference is 50 percent in procurements conducted by the Department of Defense. For procurements conducted by civilian agencies, the preference is 30 percent if the offer is made by a small business and 20 percent if the offer is made by an entity other than a small business.

How do vendors ensure that they are satisfying the BAA requirements?

Offerors submitting an offer for Federal procurement subject to BAA are required to self-certify to Federal agencies that each end product is a domestic end product. See FAR 52.225-2 Buy American Certificate or DFARS 252.225-7000 Buy American-Balance of Payments Program Certificate for more information.

Appendix A – Example Supplier Scouting Notifications

Publishing Notification: Received when SSO results have been published

Recipients: Requestor

Subject: MEPNN: A Supplier Scouting Opportunity you submitted is ready for your review

Attachments: Summary Results Report (see Appendix – Summary Results Report)

Greetings {{SupplierScouting.SubmitterFirstName}},

The results for the Supplier Scouting Opportunity submitted on {{SupplierScouting.SubmittedOn}}, is ready for review. The table below details the number and types of matches that were received. Please go to [MEPNN: Supplier Scouting](#) to find opportunities associated with your email address and locate the opportunity "{{SupplierScouting.ItemToBeScouted}} ({{SupplierScouting.ScoutingNumber}})".

Match Type	Number of Matches
Manufacturer currently possesses the capability to produce this item	1
Manufacturer currently produces a similar item	5
Manufacturer possesses relevant capabilities to allow production of this item with minimal retooling	2
No match	38

MEP client matches were identified, however, some clients had concerns due to {{concern or concerns site}} Please contact the MEP Centers below if you are interested in more details.

Center	State	Responder	Responder Title	Responder Email	Concern Areas
Indiana MEP - Purdue Manufacturing Extension Partnership	Indiana	Adam West	Supply Chain Services Specialist	adam.west@purduecenter.com	Volume

NIST MEP makes no claim that this report represents all capabilities in the U.S. to produce/supply this item/service. We recommend contacting the Center point of contact prior to contacting the company, as each MEP Center has knowledge of the manufacturing ecosystem in their state. They can make introductions, as well as provide additional details about the company's ability to produce the requested item, such as pricing, timing and required investments needed for retooling facilities.

Contact the MEP Supplier Scouting Team (scouting@nist.gov) with any questions.

Submission Notification: Received when an SSO has been successfully submitted

Recipient: Requestor

Subject: ALERT: A new Supplier Scouting Opportunity has been submitted

Thank you for your submission.

MEP will review and get back to you if further information is needed. If no additional information is required, your opportunity will be distributed to National Network for scouting.

The link below allows you to view the Supplier Scouting Opportunity. Any further editing requires contacting the MEP Supplier Scouting team (scouting@nist.gov).

Request Id	12345
Item To Be Scouted	{{SupplierScouting.ItemToBeScouted}}
State item is needed in	{{SupplierScouting.StateName}}
Link to Opportunity	{{SupplierScouting.DirectAccessLink}}

Contact the MEP Supplier Scouting team (scouting@nist.gov) with any questions.

Appendix B – Example Supplier Scouting Results Report

MEP National Network Supplier Scouting Results – 20XX-XXX [Item]

07/25/2024

The results for the Supplier Scouting Opportunity submitted on Friday June 21, 2024, are ready for review.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP) makes no claim that this report represents all capabilities in the U.S. to produce this item. The requesting organization will need to vet the identified manufacturers, if any, to determine whether they are a good match. We recommend contacting the Center POC prior to contacting the company.

Scouting results

Match Type	Number of Matches
Exact Match	0
Manufacturer currently possesses the capability to produce this item	1
Manufacturer currently produces a similar item	1
Manufacturer possesses relevant capabilities to allow production of this item with minimal retooling	0
No match	50

Result 1

Company: Callahan Auto (identified by Maryland MEP)

Partial match: Manufacturer currently possesses the capability to produce this item

Product lines and relevant notes: Brakes and brake pads

Company website: Not provided

MEP Center contact:

Superb Scout
 superb.scout@mdmep.org
 (410) 555-1212

Result 2

Company: Zalinsky Auto Parts (identified by Iowa Center for Industrial Research and Service)

Partial match: Manufacturer currently produces a similar item

Product lines and relevant notes: Auto parts for personal and commercial applications

Company website: Not provided

MEP Center contact:

Excellent Scout
 excellent.scout@iastate.edu
 (515) 555-1212

Summary

The above results for this supplier scouting instance have been recorded by NIST MEP. Each U.S. manufacturer identified represents a legitimate, potential, viable domestic manufacturer for this item.

Recommendations/Next Steps

NIST MEP recommends that you:

- Contact the Center's POC prior to contacting the company.
- Vet these companies for additional information.
- Provide regular updates on the status of this opportunity.