- (5) Access to environmentally related information or expertise. A center might propose to fund access to databases or other sources of environmentally-related information or expertise which might be necessary to augment the environmentally focused activities of the manufacturing extension center.
- (6) Addition of environmentally focused staff. It may be necessary for manufacturing extension centers to have an environmental program manager or lead field engineer/agent with environmental training and experience. Funds could be requested to hire this person. However, the proposer would have to demonstrate a clear and reasonable plan for providing for the support of this person after the funds provided under this project are exhausted since no commitment is being made to on-going funding.
- (c) Award period. Projects initiated under this category may be carried out over multiple years. The proposer should include optional second and third years in their proposal. Proposals selected for award may receive one, two or three years of funding from currently available funds at the discretion of DOC. If an application is selected for funding, DOC has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with that award. A separate cooperative agreement will be written with winning applicants. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of DOC. It is anticipated that successful projects will be given the opportunity to roll the funding for these efforts into the base funding for the extension center. Such a roll-over will be based on a performance review and the availability of funds.
- (d) Matching requirements. No matching funds are required for these proposals. However, the presence of matching funds (cash and in-kind) will be considered in the evaluation under the Financial Plan criteria.
- (e) Environmental integration projects evaluation criteria. In most solicitations, preference will be given to projects which are focused on a single industry sector. This is desired to build on the expertise and resources which are being built in tools and resources projects in these industry sectors. Industry focus will be specified in the solicitation announcement. However, actual services need not be limited exclusively to this sector. In addition preference may be given to extension centers which do not have extensive environmentallyrelated services already in place. In addition to these preferences, the criteria for selection of awards will be

as follows in descending order of importance:

(1) Demonstrated commitment to incorporating environmentally related services. The extension center must demonstrate its commitment to incorporate environmentally-related technical services into its overall manufacturing extension services even after funding for this project is exhausted. It is not the objective of this effort to establish completely autonomous environmentally focused extension centers. Rather, the goal is to ensure that such services are integrated directly with general manufacturing extension services focused on competitiveness. The center must demonstrate that such integration will take place. Factors that may be considered include: The amount of matching funds devoted to the efforts proposed as demonstration of the center's commitment to the activity; indication that environmental services are a significant aspect of the organization's long range planning; strength of commitment and plans for continuing service beyond funding which might be awarded through this project; the degree to which environmental services will become an integral part of each field engineers' portfolio of services; the level of current or planned education and training of staff on relevant environmental issues: and the extent of environmentally related information and expert resources which will be easily accessible by field engineers.

(2) Demonstrated understanding of the environmentally related technical assistance needs of manufacturers in the target population. Target population must be clearly defined. The manufacturing center must demonstrate that it understands the populations environmentally related needs or include a coherent methodology for identifying those needs. The proposal should show that the efforts being proposed will enable the center to better meet those needs. Factors that may be considered include: A clear definition of the target population, its size and demographic characteristics; demonstrated understanding of the target population's environmental technical assistance needs or a plan to develop this understanding; and appropriateness of the size of the target population and the anticipated impact for the proposed expenditure.

(3) Coordination with other relevant organizations. Wherever possible the project should be coordinated with and leverage other organizations which are providing high quality environmentally-related services to manufacturers in the

same target population or which have relevant resources which can be of assistance in the proposed effort. If no such organizations exist, the proposal should build the case that there are no such organizations. Applicants will need to describe how they will coordinate to allow for increased economies of scale and to avoid duplication of services in providing assistance to small and medium-sized manufacturers. Factors that may be considered include: Demonstrated understanding of existing organizations and resources relevant for providing technology assistance related services to the target population; adequate linkages and partnerships with existing organizations and clear definition of those organizations' roles in the proposed activities; and that the proposed activity does not duplicate existing services or resources.

(4) Program evaluation: The applicant should specify plans for evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposed program and for ensuring continuous improvement of program activities. Factors that may be considered include: Thoroughness of evaluation plans, including internal evaluation for management control, external evaluation for assessing outcomes of the activity, and "customer satisfaction"

measures of performance.

(5) Management experience and plans. Applicants should specify plans for proper organization, staffing, and management of the implementation process. Factors that may be considered include: Appropriateness and authority of the governing or managing organization to conduct the proposed activities; qualifications of the project team and its leadership to conduct the proposed activity; soundness of any staffing plans, including recruitment, selection, training, and continuing professional development; appropriateness of the organizational approach for carrying out the proposed activity; evidence of involvement and support by private industry.

(6) Financial plan: Applicants should show the relevance and cost effectiveness of the financial plan for meeting the objectives of the project; the firmness and level of the applicant's total financial support for the project; and a plan to maintain the program after the cooperative agreement has expired. Factors that may be considered include: Reasonableness of the budget both in income and expenses; strength of commitment and amount of the proposer's cost share, if any; effectiveness of management plans for control of budget; appropriateness of matching contributions; and plans for