



MetroConnect Prize FAQs

What is the MetroConnect Prize?

The MetroConnect Prize is the flagship program of the Go Global San Diego Initiative that provides small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) the resources they need to engage in global markets. SMEs represent the vast majority of businesses in San Diego and are responsible for much of the innovation and job creation activity that propels the regional economy. The success of these firms is critical to the region's future, and increasing their global reach is crucial to the region's economic competitiveness.

Administered by World Trade Center San Diego, MetroConnect provides 15 finalists \$10,000 in matching funds to cover up to 50 percent of the costs associated with the company's next step in going global. Thanks to the support from JPMorgan Chase & Co., these funds assist companies in any scenario that increases their presence abroad. Examples of the way the MetroConnect Prize can be utilized include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Business to business matchmaking
- Customized market research
- Establishment of overseas offices/sales team
- Export plan development
- Gold Key services from U.S. Commercial Service
- One-on-one export counseling
- Participation in trade show or trade mission
- Partners search (distributor, agent, joint venture, etc.)
- Pricing assistance
- Product modification research
- Supply chain analysis and assistance
- Translation services

How is MetroConnect Prize funded?

JPMorgan Chase & Co. provided a grant to World Trade Center San Diego to award the MetroConnect Prize.

How many matching grants will be distributed?

WTC San Diego will distribute fifteen (15), \$10,000 prizes.



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Are there any eligibility requirements?

In order to be considered for grant funding, an authorized representative of the company must certify that the applicant is eligible to receive MetroConnect funds under all of the following elements of small- and medium-sized eligibility:

- Complies with SBA size standards found at 13 C.F.R. Part 121: http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=50ff66d5d1cc9357d5f4ce114fcc5c79&mc=true&node=pt13.1.121&rgn=div5#se13.1.121_1201
- Have at least five (5) employees
- Have been in business for at least two years on the date that the application is submitted
- The product / service is made in San Diego, or is made outside of San Diego and the region will derive a significant benefit from the increased international sales or investment
- Complies with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act

Is MetroConnect targeted toward any industries or markets?

MetroConnect is open to any company that has export potential. All industries are eligible for MetroConnect funding, however, companies within the wireless communications, life sciences, and connected health industries are strongly encouraged to apply.

Preference will be given to companies trying to reach the following markets: Australia; Canada; France; Germany; India; Japan; Mexico; New Zealand; People's Republic of China; Republic of Korea; Singapore; Sweden; and the United Kingdom.

How does my company apply for MetroConnect?

The MetroConnect Prize application can be found at www.metroconnectsd.com

What is expected of each company selected for a MetroConnect Prize award?

Submission of the application does not require companies to accept export assistance services. However, submission of a company's application accepts the terms, conditions, and expectations of the MetroConnect Prize.

A MetroConnect Prize recipient is required to:

- submit a public-facing case study that outlines information related to the company's export experience, including the positives, negatives, and advice for other exporters;
- submit confidential key performance indicators, which include, but are not limited to, data about direct sales, new investors, signed partner agreements, and other evidences of exporting to track export success over the course of the prize;
- attend export related events hosted by the MetroConnect Prize grantors;
- attend ancillary public events to discuss exporting experience, the MetroConnect program, doing business in San Diego, and other related topics; and
- submit a one page, anonymous survey annually to track international growth.



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How long is the MetroConnect Prize application period open?

The MetroConnect Prize application is open from Friday April 1, 2016 until Tuesday, May 2, 2016.

How will winning companies be determined?

The MetroConnect Advisory Task Force – consisting of representatives from Biocom, Qualcomm Ventures, San Diego Regional EDC, Taylor Guitars, Tech San Diego, UC San Diego, WTC San Diego, and others – will review complete applications submitted by eligible companies. Task Force members will use the following criteria in determining the companies selected for awards:

- Evidence of previous or current export activity
- Evidence of success in developing previous international sales or partnering opportunities
- Evidence of proactive interest in new markets
- One year and three-year plans demonstrating realistic steps for export development
- Evidence that support through MetroConnect will make a substantive difference in the company's ability to achieve its goals in export/FDI development
- Evidence that company has the capacity to begin or expand exports/international engagement
- Company demonstrates that increased exports or FDI will benefit the San Diego region (e.g. job creation, new city revenue, higher salaries, etc.)
- Priority will be given to companies in targeted industry clusters and trying to reach targeted metro markets

When will my company receive MetroConnect funds if the company is selected for an award?

Companies will be notified of their selection for MetroConnect by Friday, May 20. Upon notification of selection and submission of supporting documents, they will receive the first \$5,000. The remaining \$5,000 will be awarded upon successful submission of a case study, which will include:

- a brief description of the company;
- why going global is important to their business;
- the ways in which MetroConnect assisted the company in its efforts to go global, including the impact to date and what is expected to occur because of MetroConnect in the next six to twelve months; and
- the company's next steps to continue increasing its global engagement.



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When can my company use the funds awarded through MetroConnect?

The MetroConnect Prize will support activities and services taking place between May 20, 2016 and December 31, 2016. Successful submission of the case study by October 12, 2016 will make your company eligible for participation in the MetroConnect Grand Prize, tentatively scheduled for November 2016.

What is the MetroConnect Grand Prize?

The MetroConnect Grand Prize is a PitchFest that invites four prize winners to compete for a Grand Prize of up to \$50,000 in November 2016. Each finalist presents their export strategies and what they have accomplished over the duration of the prize to an audience of business, civic, and community leaders. These individuals will vote on a winner and a runner-up for the Grand Prize.