



INTERNATIONAL TRADE



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**



YOUR PATH TO EXPORTING STARTS HERE

THE ABILITY TO GROW AND COMPETE GLOBALLY IS CRUCIAL.

Exporting creates a diversified customer base which stabilizes a company's sales, ultimately growing their business and contributing to more and better jobs in our state.



CONNECTING MICHIGAN BUSINESSES TO THE WORLD

MICHIGAN BUSINESSES FACE CHALLENGES WHEN CONSIDERING WHETHER TO EXPORT.

- Is my business ready for export?
- What markets should I be in?
- What if I lack financial or staff resources?
- How do I make the connections I need?
- What if I don't speak the language?

MEDC CAN HELP. WE REMOVE THESE BARRIERS SO YOU CAN PURSUE GLOBAL MARKET OPPORTUNITIES.

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Challenger Communications has benefitted greatly from the assistance of MEDC and the MI-STEP program, which helped fund our participation in four trade missions. In-market experts arranged face-to-face meetings with strong international prospects in the satellite communications market in five countries.

- Jill Sorgi, Challenger Communications
Director of Sales and Marketing

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It definitely is worthwhile for any company that is here in Michigan to really understand all of the different ways MEDC can assist to have their operation grow faster or even grow smarter.

- Paul Ryznar, OPS Solutions, LLC
President and Founder

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YOUR GATEWAY TO EXPORT SERVICES

INTERNATIONAL TRADE PROGRAM

MEDC’s International Trade Program is the gateway to export services for Michigan businesses. The program facilitates opportunities for small- to medium-sized businesses to export their products around the world so they can grow and prosper in the state. Regionally based International Trade Managers act as a concierge service to help identify companies’ export objectives and recommend appropriate export programs and resources.

The International Trade Program offers a variety of tools and resources, including:

Regional Partners: Michigan businesses have access to the state’s Regional Export Network (REN). MEDC leverages partnerships at the federal, state and local levels to deliver export services statewide.

Financial Assistance: Eligible Michigan small businesses can receive financial assistance for export-related activities, helping them access global markets and buyers while increasing sales.

Trade Missions and Shows: MEDC leads Michigan business delegations in trade missions to foreign markets or international trade shows to facilitate connections with international companies in promising export markets.

International Trade Centers: MEDC’s in-market experts serve over 90 countries by offering business matchmaking services, customized market research, pricing analysis and more.

Trade Counseling and Education: Michigan businesses can learn how to overcome barriers to exporting, identify new markets, safeguard intellectual property in foreign countries, alleviate the challenges of using foreign currencies, and more.

SUCCESS STORY



PROLIM GROWS OPERATIONS AND SALES TO INDIA AS RESULT OF TRADE MISSION

For **PROLIM Global Corporation**, expanding into India’s automotive and industrial machinery market was essential to its continued growth, the company turned to the MEDC’s International Trade Program for assistance.

With funding provided through the Michigan State Trade Expansion Program (MI-STEP), PROLIM joined MEDC’s trade mission to India, which visited New Delhi, Bangalore, Pune and Mumbai. PROLIM met with more than 10 companies in one week to evaluate new business opportunities. Later, the company utilized local resources and developed a strategy, marketing plan and sales approach to reach another 50 companies.

“I was very skeptical about the capabilities of MEDC to help our company expand sales in India

and I was surprised with the outcome,” said PROLIM President and CEO Prabhu Patil. “We opened our new sales and service office in New Delhi and expanded our Michigan operations within three months of the India trade mission.”

Thanks to the support of MEDC’s trade team, PROLIM received its first order at its new sales office within three months. **The company earned more than \$250,000 in sales in 2019 with expectations to continue growing.** Sales in an international market like India help PROLIM expand its customer base, maintaining steady growth and profitability which support jobs in Michigan.



INTERNATIONAL TRADE SERVICES

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

MEDC offers a federally and state-funded grant called the Michigan State Trade Expansion Program, also known as **MI-STEP**, to help eligible Michigan-based small businesses increase their reach in international markets.

Qualifying companies can apply for a grant to help offset the cost of export-related activities, reducing the cost of doing business in global markets so they can increase and diversify their customer base. The program is a reimbursement model with an annual cap of \$15,000 per company.

Program funds may be approved for a variety of export-related activities, including:

- Foreign trade missions and sales trips
- Reverse trade missions
- International website development
- International trade shows
- Export training
- U.S. Department of Commerce services
- International marketing media

Contact an international Trade Manager to see if your business qualifies for the MI-STEP grant or to inquire about other available financial assistance.

SUCCESS STORY



OPS SOLUTIONS EXPANDS INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TO 28 COUNTRIES

OPS Solutions, LLC produces Light Guide Systems (LGS), an augmented reality tool that uses projected lights and proprietary software to transform manual assembly and manufacturing processes. In order to take this technology to international markets, the company turned to MEDC’s International Trade Program.

Over the past five years, OPS Solutions received grants totaling more than \$30,000 from MEDC to help fund export activities such as trade missions, trade shows, and translation. While traveling for MI-STEP funded activities, the company landed contracts upwards of \$3.5 million, established channel partners in new markets, received quotes from potential customers and attended dozens of vetted matchmaking meetings.

“It is definitely worthwhile for any company here in Michigan to understand all the different ways MEDC can assist to help their operation grow faster or even smarter,” said President and CEO Paul Ryznar. “Thanks in large part to MEDC and the MI-STEP program, we’re engaged with more than 175 non-U.S. companies in 28 countries worldwide.”

Due to increasing sales in Europe and China, OPS Solutions has opened offices in Czechia and China to assist with its international exports. **The company is tracking to increase sales by 70 to 100 percent over 2020 and expects to continue using the MEDC International Trade Program to accelerate its international expansion in Europe, Asia and South America.**



MICHIGAN. PURE PARTNERSHIP. 6

MAKING INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS

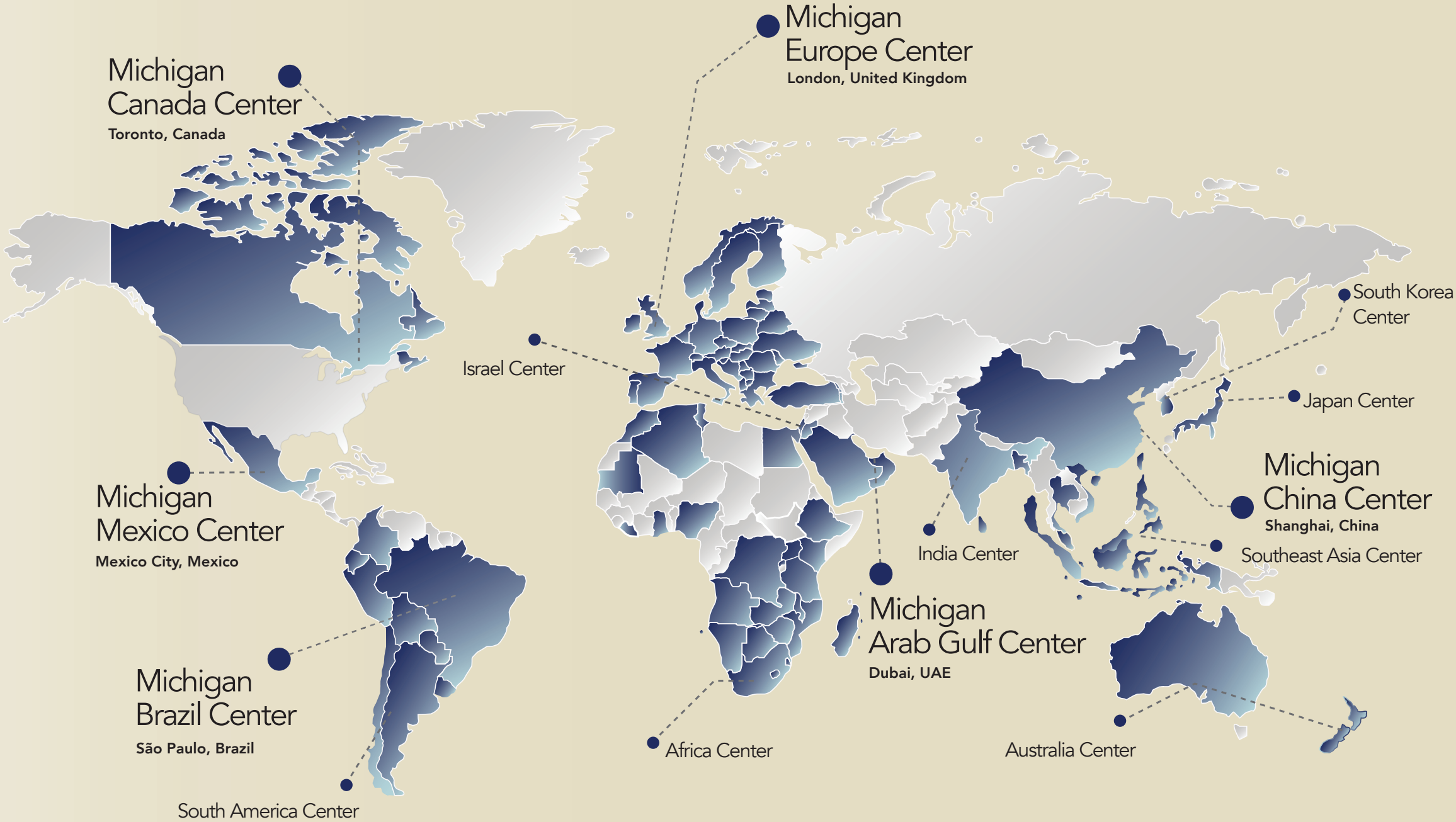
INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTERS

MEDC has six international trade centers and representatives that cover 90+ countries around the world. For companies looking to reach established or emerging markets, MEDC's international trade centers offer simple, responsive and comprehensive service to ease the cost of entering foreign markets.

The centers have local expertise and market knowledge that connects Michigan companies with vetted buyers and partners best suited to the companies' objectives. Each of the centers offers:

- Customized market research
- Country market and sector information
- Foreign company background checks
- Market entry strategy
- Matchmaking meetings
- Prequalification of agents, distributors, partners and customers
- Pricing and competitive analysis
- Product review and company assessment
- Regulatory, customs, logistics, certification information
- Trade show and trade mission assistance
- Translation services
- Other export counseling services

MICHIGAN'S TRADE CENTERS and the markets they serve.



LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL EXPORT SUPPORT

LEVERAGING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

MEDC and its strategic partners provide geographically accessible export programs and events statewide. Leveraging partnerships at the federal, state and local levels reduces duplication and manages resources effectively. Services offered include market research, training, website development, credit reports and more.

Regional Export Network

Designated organizations around the state act as regional export resources providing access to MEDC’s trade programs, trainings, statewide and global events, and other business services. These partners are called Regional Export Network (REN) Hosts. Michigan State University, Van Andel Global Trade Center, Networks Northwest, and Automation Alley serve as MEDC’s four REN Hosts.

Export Resources

MEDC’s International Trade team offers a range of concierge services aimed at identifying company needs and making connections to resources that present opportunities to be successful in the highest-potential global markets. MEDC offers services such as market research; legal, compliance and business culture training; website development and international search engine optimization, and more to jumpstart a company’s momentum into a foreign market.

Local Support

With the assistance of regionally located International Trade Managers around the state, you’ll learn what services are available and best matched to your company’s objectives. Connect with an International Trade Manager to get started today.

SUCCESS STORY



REDI-ROCK INTERNATIONAL MOVES FROM ZERO EXPORT SALES TO GLOBAL MARKET LEADER

Redi-Rock recognized that its biggest business opportunity was to export to international markets, so it contacted MEDC’s International Trade Program for assistance.

Charlevoix, Michigan-based Redi-Rock International manufactures 1-ton, interconnecting cement blocks used to build retaining walls, yet the blocks were too heavy to be cost-effectively transported overseas. The company developed equipment that would enable others to manufacture the blocks instead.

Redi-Rock worked with MEDC’s trade team to make inroads overseas. MEDC’s satellite offices in six countries across the world vetted prospects to find the best partners for the company. By connecting with MEDC-contracted service providers, Redi-Rock received customized market assessments, export trainings and translation services. Redi-Rock also received MI-STEP funding to help with marketing in targeted international markets.

“The MEDC paved a quicker pathway for us than we could have done on our own,” said Kevin Loe, Redi-Rock sales director. “Working with MEDC over the last four years, we now have about 120 manufacturers in 16 countries on five continents.”

Having engaged with nearly every service MEDC’s International Trade Program offers, Redi-Rock has launched its business from zero export sales to global market leader. As a result of MEDC support, **Redi-Rock has grown export revenue to more than \$3.5 million in exports to Austria, France, Italy, Belgium, United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany and Estonia.**





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