



INVITATION FOR BIDS

Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast are seeking one or more individuals/companies to assist in the execution of all responsibilities pursuant to their market development activities for processed foods in the Caribbean market, specifically The Bahamas, The Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, and the Caribbean Islands. These activities include Market Builder service, Focused Trade Missions, various Buyers Missions, market research, food promotions, special projects and trade servicing for the program year. The selected In-Market Representative(s) will be responsible for the aforementioned activities during our 2020 Program Year from January 1 to December 31, 2020.

Attached please find the official Request for Proposal for details, requirements and deadlines.

The deadline for proposals is 12:00 noon ET on **Wednesday, July 31, 2019**.

Please e-mail proposals to:

Ben Cortese, International Marketing Program Coordinator
Food Export USA - Northeast
1617 JFK Boulevard, Suite 420
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Tel: (215) 829-9111
Fax: (215) 829-9777
Email: bcortese@foodexport.org

Questions should be directed to:

Suzanne Milshaw, International Marketing Program Manager
Food Export USA – Northeast at 215-829-9111 or via email to
SMilshaw@foodexport.org

OR

Teresa Miller, International Marketing Program Manager
Food Export Association of the Midwest USA at 312-334-9200 or via e-mail to
TMiller@foodexport.org



Request for Proposals Caribbean In-Market Representative

Background

The Food Export Association of the Midwest USA (Food Export – Midwest) and Food Export USA – Northeast (Food Export – Northeast) are not-for-profit export associations whose primary function is to develop export markets for midwestern and northeastern (respectively) producers and processors of value-added food and agricultural products. Our members include state agricultural promotion agencies from thirteen midwestern and ten northeastern states.

Both groups are participants in the Market Access Program (MAP), a federal program handled by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The MAP is intended to boost the export of value-added food and agricultural products from the U.S. through a partnership between FAS and approximately seventy-five other industry-based trade organizations. This includes primarily commodity-specific groups, as well as two other unaffiliated regional groups similar to Food Export - Midwest and Food Export - Northeast that handle the southern and western regions of the U.S.

The products covered for export promotion by Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast include a wide variety of processed and semi-processed products found throughout the retail, foodservice, and food processing sectors. These include products or derivations of meat, dairy, poultry, seafood, grains, fruits and vegetables, salty and savory snack foods, confections, beans, sauces and condiments, pet foods, beverages, canned foods, animal feeds, bakery products, pasta and many others. Marketing channels include mass market retail, specialty foods, convenience foods, private label, healthy/organic, food ingredients, frozen foods, and others. Additionally, Food Export – Northeast promotes benchmark seafood products from the northeastern U.S. including lobster, scallops, monkfish, Atlantic herring, squid, Atlantic mackerel, dogfish and skate.

Food Export - Midwest and Food Export- Northeast are independent organizations that have been engaged in a strategic alliance since April of 2000. Through this alliance, the strategy and tactics of the organizations have been aligned so that the activities and services of each group are very similar with differences based primarily on geographic focus. Food Export - Midwest focuses on midwestern exporters and a series of eight overseas target markets, including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, Oceania, and Mexico. Food Export -Northeast targets northeastern exporters and eight overseas markets, including Europe, Central America, Canada, the Middle East, South America, China, Hong Kong and the Caribbean. By collaborating, the activities and services of each organization are open to participation by companies from the other region. The net effect is that exporters in the Midwest and Northeast have access to a larger range of export promotion opportunities, while the limited staff at Food Export - Midwest and Food Export - Northeast can focus on specific market development opportunities.

The states that are members of Food Export- Midwest include: Illinois, Wisconsin, Kansas, Minnesota, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri and Oklahoma. Food Export – Northeast encompasses: New York, New Jersey, Vermont, Delaware, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island.

More information about Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast is available on the Internet at: www.foodexport.org.

Scope of Work

Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast are seeking an individual/company to assist in the execution of all responsibilities pursuant to their market development activities in the Caribbean markets. These activities include the Market Builder service, Focused Trade Missions, various Buyers Missions, market research, product promotions, special projects and trade servicing for the program year. Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast are seeking individuals/companies to assist with aforementioned responsibilities for processed food products. The selected In-Market Representative will be responsible for the aforementioned activities during our 2020 Program Year from January 1 to December 31, 2020. Training and orientation will start in late 2019.

Please provide a quotation for each of the following services:

1. Trade Servicing

Scope of Work

The responsibilities of the selected In-Market Representative in carrying out trade servicing may include, but are not limited to:

- Visiting with potential importers, distributors, retailers, food service and food ingredient buyers and developing lists of these companies that are the most reputable, experienced, and in the best position to deal with our exporters.
- Developing and maintaining a database of potential importers and buyers from the representative's market, their contact information, and their product interests. Data developed as part of this trade servicing agreement will be shared with Food Export, as allowed by law.
- Conducting outreach and educational efforts on behalf of Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast to encourage participation in our programs and services including organizing Importer Seminars.
- Following up with buyers from buyers missions, FSP!TM, Market Builder, Focused Trade Missions, other special projects and obtain evaluations and or identify problems which may be inhibiting sales.
- Participate actively in the usage of Food Export NetForum database either by entering notes in the system or providing any updates on contacts listed.
- Developing a list of recipients for distribution/dissemination of Food Export's newsletters, including *US Foodlink*, and the like.
- Liaising with USDA/FAS Posts on a regular basis. This includes proactive communication, monitoring and consolidating industry feedback.
- Informing Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast of market development opportunities that arise throughout the year and activities that should

- be included in our annual funding application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Unified Export Strategy (UES).
- Generating trade lead inquiries for dissemination to Midwest and Northeast companies.
 - Assisting with Branded Program inquiries as requested.
 - Assisting our State Marketing Specialists on a limited basis.
 - Informing Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast of any noteworthy market intelligence that should be included in our communication tools that goes out to exporters (newsletters, social media, blog, etc.)
 - Reporting on any potential success story leads and actual sales that have resulted from a Food Export program or activity.

***US Foodlink* Newsletter and Email Bulletins**

The In-Market Representative is responsible for the promotion and distribution of *US Foodlink* by:

- Maintaining a database of addresses for distribution of the bi-monthly *U.S. Foodlink* newsletter, including importers, retailers, foodservice operators, other trade contacts and FAS Overseas Post(s)
- Continually add new addresses, update existing ones and send this database to Food Export-Midwest and Northeast December of each year or as requested
- Translate the *US Foodlink* newsletter, or collaborate regarding translation with relevant other market representatives conducting business in the same language if appropriate
- Promote the *US Foodlink* by-monthly newsletter and email bulletin to all contacts
- See that buyers with an interest in the *US Foodlink* email bulletin are entered in Food Export NetForum database with an active e-mail
- Inform Food Export – Midwest and Northeast of any success stories that may come out of the newsletter or email bulletin. This should include not only sales from the New Products section, but any evidence of use such as attendance at a trade show due to use of the Events section or changes in operations due to research that is incorporated on the website
- Make recommendations for content and improvements to *US Foodlink*
- Conduct evaluation of *US Foodlink* every three years

In addition to the above, the In-Market Representative is expected to assist Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast to:

Track sales and other performance measures resulting from all events in which services are provided. Assist in documenting performance results by completing evaluations using Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast standard evaluation formats, where appropriate. Generate success stories as results warrant. Identify problems which may be inhibiting sales and in obtaining evaluation results.

- Refer participating importers and exporters to other relevant services offered by Food Export –Midwest and Food Export - Northeast, the FAS offices and other service providers that can further assist them in achieving increased sales/purchases of U.S. food and agricultural products.
- The In-Market Representative will be responsible for providing a monthly report outlining the trade servicing completed and any results achieved.

Please quote on a per day basis. We do not anticipate this to be a full-time engagement, and estimate coverage of approximately 2-3 days of trade servicing per month.

2. Market Builder

Background

The Market Builder Service is designed to assist U.S. companies to learn whether their products are appropriate for a given export market, and if so, to establish a base for securing an appropriate distributor relationship in that market. The service is provided by Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast through their network of In-Market Representatives. The service consists of two independent packages, i.e., Market Scan and Rep Finder. Although companies are encouraged to sign up for both packages (or a full Market Builder), companies may choose to participate in one or both packages detailed below depending on their needs and goals in the market. Participating companies will need to choose a product and identify the export market for which they want the service to be conducted. For the Market Scan component, the In-Market Representative will have thirty days after samples or company literature from participants are received to complete the scope of work. In the interest of standardizing reports that our export companies receive, Food Export has developed report templates which include the components outlined below.

Scope of Work

Package A – Market Scan

1. Introduction and Product Specific Market Overview
The In-Market Representative will provide a well-rounded, comprehensive overview of the market, current product usage in the market and applicable trends.
2. Store Check
The In-Market Representative will assist U.S. food companies to determine competing and similar products that are being sold in the overseas market.
3. Competitive Product Shopping
The In-Market Representative will purchase samples of similar and competing products sold in the market – up to US\$25 value of samples + shipping. If need be, the IMR can send only the products' packaging, especially when products are liquid, shelf-sensitive, etc.
4. Distribution Analysis
This section outlines physical movement of the product to be successfully delivered and marketed to the end customer.
5. Importation Analysis & Regulations
The In-Market Representative will create a report that identifies import regulations and restrictions affecting the importation of said product into the country.
6. Distributor Referrals
The In-Market Representative will forward product samples (if possible), product brochures or literature, company profile and indicative export pricing to six appropriate and pre-qualified importers. The representative will create a report containing feedback from at least five buyers regarding said product.

7. Target Importer List

The In-Market Representative will provide a list of potential importers, including those involved in the distributor referrals above. Importers will be prioritized according to interest in the product as well as provide a brief summary of each importer's profile such as distribution, existing product lines and other available public information. Buyers that are not interested are also listed with reasoning behind the lack of interest.

8. In-Market Representative's General Marketability View

This includes the IMR's view of product's marketability with important marketing recommendations; should be subjective and based on opinions and/or observations in the market and no more than two to three paragraphs.

Package B – Rep Finder

1. Distributor Referrals

The In-Market Representative will forward product samples, product brochures or literature, company profile and indicative export pricing to six appropriate and pre-qualified importers. The In-Market Representative will create a report containing feedback from at least five buyers regarding said product.

2. Target Importer List

The In-Market Representative will provide a list of potential importers, including those involved in the distributor referrals above. Importers will be prioritized according to interest in the product. The list will include contact name and contact information as well as also provide a brief summary of each importer's profile such as distribution, existing product lines and other available, public information. Buyers that are not interested are also listed with reasoning behind the lack of interest.

3. In-Market Assistance

The In-Market Representative will arrange at least three one-on-one appointments between participating U.S. exporters and targeted importers in his/her market. It must be clear to supplier before project begins that a minimum of three one-on-one meetings only stands if market allows and finds product conducive.

The In-Market Representative will make arrangements for the time, place, interpreter (if necessary) and other details of the meetings.

The In-Market Representative will also make personal introductions and accompany the supplier to the appointments and will assist with communication or interpretation, if necessary, and moderate the sessions. The Representative will also provide the participating U.S. exporter with a candid evaluation of the meetings and make recommendations for future action steps.

This service is provided on an as-needed basis. A detailed template for the report will be provided; Market Scan reports average 25 – 40 pages. A full Market Builder requires approximately 6-7 days of work. Please provide quotes for a Market Scan and for a Rep Finder. In addition, please provide quote for a full Market Builder, i.e., combination of Package A and B.

4. Buyers Missions

Background

Food Export – Midwest’s and Food Export Northeast’s approach to organizing buying teams is to first identify sectors of the food industry in which their suppliers are competitive. These sectors include Grocery Products, Specialty Foods, Seafood, Food Ingredients, Private Label, Natural/Organic, Food Service (HRI), Pet Food, and Feed Ingredients and Additives. Next, markets that are appropriate for that segment of the food industry are targeted, and important Buyers within these sectors are selected.

Buyers are invited to travel to the U.S. to participate in a broad series of private one-on-one meetings with U.S. suppliers. These meetings offer an unparalleled opportunity for each to learn more about the other’s business, product line, marketing requirements or capabilities, strategies, opportunities, requirements and limitations.

Scope of Work

The responsibilities of the selected In-Market Representative in carrying out a Buyers Mission are as follows:

- 1) Work with Activity Coordinator(s) to determine needs of the Buyers Mission.
- 2) Pre-qualify and recruit appropriate Buyers, including any recommendations made by the local FAS Office.
- 3) Communicate closely with Buyers to understand their buying interests.
- 4) Provide a detailed profile of each Buyer to the Activity Coordinator.
- 5) Assist Activity Coordinator with details of the itinerary.
- 6) Assist Activity Coordinator to understand any special/cultural needs the Buyers may have.
- 7) Work with Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast and their travel agents to make appropriate travel arrangements.
- 8) Depending on the mission, the In-Market Representative may be requested to attend the mission to assist with various tasks, such as interpretation, communication and general management/logistics of mission.
- 9) Provide input into retail tour needs.
- 10) Assist with follow-up after the mission is completed to understand the results of the mission (i.e., sales made).
- 11) Assist Activity Coordinator or Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast with six-month evaluation process.

Please quote on a per buyer basis. The quote should only include price for identifying, qualifying, nominating and following up with buyer. The buyer is subject to selection and approval by Food Export.

5. Focused Trade Missions

Background

Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast and their member states work with small and medium-size food companies. Among the challenges of working with these companies is their lack of understanding and exposure to many markets. Often times, these companies try to sell their products and develop business relationships in countries they have not traveled to or toured in order to familiarize themselves with the basics of that market. This lack of understanding leaves U.S. exporters with only product specifications and prices as tools to market to foreign markets and often ends in failure.

The Focused Trade Mission is designed to offer U.S. exporters both a sales opportunity and educational experience. This project will take advantage of established relationships and programs available to U.S. exporters and provide a unique opportunity to travel to a target market not anchored to exhibiting at a tradeshow. Often, cost and time prohibit U.S. tradeshow exhibitors from the opportunity to study the market outside the tradeshow walls.

The Focused Trade Mission will partner with the following services and service providers: FAS Overseas office, Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast representatives, the Branded Program and member state representatives to offer U.S. companies a first hand experience of the target market and highlight opportunities and constraints. Coupled with the educational component of this mission, there will be scheduled meetings and a tabletop reception to put U.S. exporters in contact with potential Buyers.

Scope of Work

Total participation averages eight or more companies per mission, depending on recruitment. The responsibilities of the selected In-Market Representative in carrying out a Focused Trade Mission are as follows:

- 1) Develop an executive summary of goals, objectives, plans and budget to administer the project, and a detailed timeline for completion of each phase of the project plan in close coordination with the Activity Coordinator. Budget should include a total cost to administer the project for eight companies.
- 2) Communicate project details to the appointed Activity Coordinator. Conduct pre-event product research (approximately 5 – 8 pages) on one product per registered supplier which includes three of the four following components: market overview, cost assessment, importation analysis and distribution analysis.
- 3) Conduct a market briefing in conjunction with FAS Office. The In-Market Representative will coordinate with the FAS Office to present a market briefing to the participating companies. If agreed by FAS, the briefing could take place in FAS facilities. In-Market Representative will make the request to the FAS office as soon as the project is approved.
- 4) Organize pre-scheduled one-on-one meetings. The In-Market Representative will set-up a number of appointments with importers, distributors, supermarket buyers, etc. The appointments may take place in a joint meeting space or at the importers' offices, as appropriate for the market.
- 5) Arrange supermarket or industry tours. In-Market Representative will organize visits to different retail stores as part of the learning experience of visiting the market. During the tours, companies will be able to learn who is doing business in the market, what types of products are selling, and what prices various products are selling at in the market.
- 6) Conduct a Table Top Show and Reception. In-Market Representative will organize a table-top display of participating companies products and, where feasible, a reception including sampling of the products being showcased. The table-top display can be held at the FAS facilities, if available. Importers, Distributors and Buyers will be invited to the reception (a minimum of thirty trade contacts should be confirmed). In-Market Representative will produce and disseminate invitations to the showcase to all local trade contacts.
- 7) Transportation coordination: The In-Market Representative will coordinate the in-country transportation of all the mission participants to business events that are part

of the Focused Trade Mission agenda. Passenger vans will be rented as they are needed.

- 8) Interpreters: The In-Market Representative will coordinate hiring additional interpreters, so all the participating companies are able to get clear translation/interpretation during the complete Trade Mission.
- 9) Hotel Reservations: The In-Market Representative will be in charge of arranging hotel accommodations for mission events as well as lodging for all Mission participants at federal per diem rate. (Exporter/participants will pay their own lodging and meal expenses).
- 10) Importation of samples into the market: The In-Market Representative will coordinate the importation of the samples into the market.
- 11) The In-Market Representative will arrange for the printing of a mission brochure containing information on all the Mission participants, including contact information and company and/or product profiles. Approximately 500 copies (or a sufficient number of copies according to the needs of each particular market) may be printed in large, professional format. Each participating exporter will use this as a handout during the showcase, the reception and during the one-on-one business appointments. Any brochures remaining will be left at the FAS office to hand-out to people inquiring for information.

Based on our experience, we estimate a Focused Trade Mission activity will require approximately 50 days of preparation work and execution of the mission. Please provide a quote which is comprised of an overall administrative fee for the mission, plus a per-supplier participant fee for mission services for participants one through eight, then, include cost per supplier beyond eight participants.

6. Market Research, Development and Promotion

Scope of Work

The responsibilities of the selected In-Market Representative in carrying out market research, development and promotion are as follows:

- Undertake industry and/or sector studies as requested;
- Identify, recommend and facilitate promotional opportunities in the food service, food retail, seafood and food ingredient sectors of the market;
- Develop and assist with implementation of promotional activities within the guidelines specified by Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast including negotiating promotional terms, assisting with in-store merchandising and display, development of promotional concepts and materials, etc;
- Assist in ensuring that products from the Midwest and Northeast are included in the promotion;
- Submit a report on the activity and provide required evaluation results;
- Perform other specific consulting work as requested by Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast.

Please quote on a per day basis.

Requirements

The In-Market Representative must be able to cite previous experience in market research, market assessment and evaluation, and market promotion/public relations activities. Previous experience with not-for-profit groups, international marketing, and food and/or agricultural groups will be considered favorably. The contractor must also be financially and legally capable of entering into and executing a contract for the above stated projects. In addition, please provide the following information:

1. Name of Entity (as it would appear on contract/invoices)
2. Main point of contact
3. Complete Mailing Address / Physical Office Address
4. EIN/TIN/SS number (or if an overseas entity, the equivalent tax identification number in your country)
5. Type of Structure (choose one):
 Individual Corporation LLC Partnership Sole Proprietorship
6. List the specific countries in Central America where expertise and services can be rendered.

Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast are not liable for any costs associated with any company’s response to this RFP. Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast reserve the right to not award this contract if, in the opinion of the evaluators, no suitable proposal is received. The awarded contract may be renewed for up to three (3) years.

Selected vendors may be requested to participate in interviews with Food Export staff and/or its representatives.

The selected contractor must agree to abide by Food Export –Midwest and Food Export – Northeast Terms and Conditions:

Food Export - Midwest and Food Export - Northeast do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, familial/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Persons with disabilities who require alternate means of communication of program information should contact us. Food Export - Midwest and Food Export – Northeast do not tolerate fraud in their programs or services, and expect all participants to comply with our code of ethics (www.foodexport.org/codeofethics).

If you suspect any instance of fraud, please contact our Ethics Reporting Line at: www.foodexport.ethicspoint.com or 1-855-727-6715 (domestic toll-free.)

We reserve the right to deny services to any firm or individual which, in the sole opinion of Food Export – Midwest or Food Export – Northeast does not comply with MAP; FAS; Food Export – Midwest or Food Export – Northeast regulations or policies, or otherwise reflect positively on them; their members states; FAS; or USDA, in pursuit of their mission of increasing food and agricultural exports, or for continued public support for their programs. For more information please see our Terms and Conditions located at www.foodexport.org/termsandconditions.

The selected contractor must agree to abide by the provisions contained in Section 202 of Executive Order 11246 (30 Federal Register 12319) with regard to employment and contracting practices. In addition, Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast require that its contractors may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, familial/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast acceptance of proposal is conditional upon contractor disclosing all existing relationship with another party that has the potential of impacting and/or influencing the contractor’s ability to carry out the scope of work.

The contents of this Request for Proposal and Scopes of Work are confidential and business proprietary. They may not be re-used for any purpose, in whole or part, including any text, or related concepts, strategies or tactics described, without written permission from Food Export – Midwest and/or Northeast.

The deadline for proposals is 12:00 noon ET on **Wednesday, July 31, 2019**. Faxed or emailed proposals will be accepted.

Please email proposal to:

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