



**Food
Export**
Midwest USA



**Food
Export USA**
Northeast



INVITATION FOR BIDS

Food Export Association of the Midwest USA (Food Export – Midwest) and Food Export USA Northeast (Food Export – Northeast), Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA) and Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA), are seeking one or more individuals/companies to be their In-Market Representative and assist in the execution of responsibilities pursuant to their market development activities for processed foods in the Sub-Saharan market, with a focus on East Africa, or other specific markets based on potential opportunities.

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

The deadline for proposals is 12:00 noon ET on **August 10, 2022**. Only email proposals will be accepted.

Please send proposals to:

Teresa Miller

Food Export Association of the Midwest USA via e-mail to TMiller@foodexport.org

Questions should be directed to:

Teresa Miller, Partnerships Manager

Food Export Association of the Midwest – USA

Food Export Northeast - USA

tmiller@foodexport.org

Request for Proposals Sub-Saharan In-Market Representative

The Organizations:

Food Export Association of the Midwest USA (Food Export – Midwest), Food Export USA Northeast (FoodExport – Northeast), Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA) and Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA) are non-profit international trade development organizations which combine federal, state, and industry resources for export market development. Food Export -Midwest and Food Export – Northeast, SUSTA and WUSATA, are the four State Regional Trade Groups (SRTGs) that work in conjunction with their member states to provide a wide range of services to facilitate trade and assist U.S. food and agricultural companies with their export endeavors.

Food Export - Midwest member states include Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. **Food Export - Northeast** member states include Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont. **SUSTA** member states include Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. **WUSATA** member states include Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. Each of the SRTG's allies with their State Agencies in each of their regions to carry out programs and services aimed at increasing U.S. agricultural exports.

More information Food Export – Midwest, Food Export – Northeast, SUSTA and WUSATA visit their websites at:

www.foodexport.org www.susta.org www.wusata.org

Background:

Background

Most of the State Regional Trade Groups promotional activities are funded by the Market Access Program (MAP), which is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). MAP funds are designed to develop overseas market awareness and demand for U.S. agricultural and food products and must be utilized according to federal regulations outlined by USDA. USDA also requires that SRTGs objectively evaluate the effectiveness of its activities, including an analysis of market constraints and performance measures.

The products covered for export promotion by the SRTGs 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, SUSTA and WUSATA promote seafood products.

SRTGs conduct two type of programs – “Branded” promotion and “Generic” promotion. Branded promotion assists individual companies carry out their own marketing activities internationally by reimbursing them for up to 50% of eligible promotional expenses that promote companies’ brand(s) in foreign markets, such as advertising, exhibiting at international trade shows, in-store sampling, etc. Companies must be small according to the Small Business Administration guidelines or be a farm cooperative to participate. Products to be promoted must be of at least 50% US agricultural origin, be marketed under a brand name, and be labeled and promoted as “Product of the USA” or “Made in USA”. Eligible companies include regional processors, manufacturers, distributors, packers and producers.

Generic promotions are industry-wide projects managed by SRTG staff and marketing specialists from the association's member State Departments of Agriculture. A generic activity benefits two or more companies, or a commodity that is not represented by another promotion organization. Any company or cooperative with products of 50% or more U.S. agricultural origin by weight is welcome to participate in SRTG generic activities. Types of activities include but are not limited to:

- Primary Market Research
- Trade missions
- Reverse (or buyer’s) trade missions
- Trade shows
- In-store promotions
- Foreign language marketing material
- Retail and HRI promotions

Scope of Work

Food Export -Midwest and Food Export – Northeast, SUSTA and WUSATA, are seeking in-country consultant(s) to help U.S. companies export their products to the Sub-Saharan Region by providing local market assistance. This first phase, includes a strategy to understand better the market needs and identify the best opportunities to promote US processed food products.

Specific responsibilities would include:

1. Trade Servicing

The responsibilities of the selected 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 at the conclusion of the year.
- Conducting outreach and educational efforts on behalf of the SRTGs to encourage participation in our programs and services including organizing Importer Seminars.
- Following up with buyers from buyers missions, Shows, other special projects and obtain evaluations and or identify problems which may be inhibiting sales.
- Liaising with USDA/FAS Posts on a regular basis. This includes proactive communication, monitoring and consolidating industry feedback.
- Informing the SRTGs 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 companies in the U.S.
- Traveling to the U.S. to visit SRTGs to learn more about their operations, activities, and companies.
- Assisting our State Marketing Specialists on a limited basis.
- Informing SRTGs 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.

Representative will be responsible for providing a monthly report outlining the trade servicing completed and any results achieved; as well as, provide ongoing success stories throughout the year.

Please quote on a per day basis.

2. Buyers Missions

Background

SRTGs' 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 SRTGs 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) Assist with follow-up after the mission is completed to understand the results of the mission (i.e., sales made).
- 10) Assist Activity Coordinator or SRTGs with follow-up evaluation process.

Please quote on a per buyer basis.

3. Market Research, Development and Promotion

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

- Undertake industry and/or sector studies as requested;
- Identify and recommend promotional opportunities in the food service, food retail, and food ingredient sectors of the market;
- Develop and assist with implementation of promotional activities within the guidelines specified by the SRTGs, 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 appropriate SRTG are included in the promotion;
- Submit report on the activity and provide required evaluation results;
- Perform other specific consulting work as requested by the SRTGs

Please quote on a per day basis.

4. Virtual Consultation

The responsibilities of the In-Market Representative in carrying out the virtual consultation includes:

- Review supplier profile report to be submitted by Food Export - Staff indicating a supplier's product, previous experience in the market, goal for participation in a call, and questions pertaining to the one-on-one video conference.
- Conduct preliminary research in order to be able to answer supplier questions and provide valuable feedback to help the supplier attain a better understanding of the market.
- Questions may pertain to the following topics:
 - Product preferences (taste, ingredients, format, etc.)
 - Package size, color, type, etc.
 - Red Flags (issues with product that may make it a bad fit for the market)
 - Basic import data based on product type
 - Trade show information (size, audience, potential, etc.)
 - Country specific information regarding consumers
 - Basic marketability of product based on product type
- Participate on the 30 min. video call
- Provide basic follow-up to any further questions discussed during the consultation. The follow-up will be limited to and included in a consultation report (no more than one page). The consultation report will provide a record of what was discussed during the virtual consultation and will be provided to the supplier by the Food Export tactic lead.

Please quote on a per day basis.

5. Special Projects

New and special projects are often undertaken by the STTGs. SRTGs were forced by the pandemic into swiftly innovating our business model in a very short period of time, just like institutions all over the globe. What started as a more reactive approach has over time developed into an intentional virtual strategy recognizing and building on our historical strengths. The continued uncertainties brought on by the pandemic and the need to maintain effective programming around these may result in further enhancements or adapting of SRTGs' core programs and services according to the evolving circumstances. The responsibilities of the contractor for new projects or adjusted events would be to work with the International Marketing Program manager of each organization and provide input

on a plan of work for the project, as appropriate, and to provide the assistance required and assigned. A specific Scope of Work and fees will be determined and agreed upon between individual SRTGs and the contractor prior to the commencement of the special project.

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

Food Export -Midwest and Food Export – Northeast, SUSTA and WUSATA are not liable for any costs associated with any company’s response to this RFP. Food Export -Midwest and Food Export – Northeast, SUSTA and WUSATA, 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, SUSTA and WUSATA, Terms and Conditions:

Food Export -Midwest and Food Export – Northeast, SUSTA and WUSATA, do not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, national origin or ancestry, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation or military status. Persons with disabilities who require alternate means of communication of program information should contact us.

Food Export -Midwest and Food Export – Northeast, SUSTA and WUSATA do not tolerate fraud in their programs or services, and expect all participants to comply with our code of ethics (www.foodexport.org/codeofethics, www.wusata.org/programs/fraudprevention/codeofconduct, www.susta.org/whoweare/principles).

We reserve the right to deny services to any firm or individual which, in the sole opinion of Food Export -Midwest and Food Export – Northeast, SUSTA and WUSATA do not comply with MAP; FAS; SRTGs 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.

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, SUSTA and WUSATA 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, SUSTA and WUSATA 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.

By responding to this request for proposal, you are certifying that your company nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency. If you are unable to certify to the preceding statement, but wish to proceed with a proposal to this request, you will need to include an explanation as to why you cannot certify this statement as an attachment to your proposal

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 Food Export – Northeast.

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