



April 29, 2019

**Request for Proposal
U.S. Based Consultant
Taiwan Georgia Grown Pecan Promotions
9AS99**

The Organization

The Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA) is a 501c non-profit international trade development organization which combines federal, state and industry resources for export market development. SUSTA's 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.

SUSTA cooperates with its member State Departments of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to carry out programs that will increase U.S. agricultural exports. SUSTA promotes U.S. agricultural products in over 30 countries by way of international trade exhibitions, trade missions, in store promotions, export seminars, and point-of-sale promotions. It also provides export assistance to small business to offset their export promotion costs.

Background

SUSTA's funding is almost entirely derived from the federal Market Access Program (MAP) and the Agriculture Trade Promotion (ATP), which is administered by the USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS). The organization is tasked with working with southern exporters to find markets for their agriculture products and enhance the economic well-being of the region it serves. All federal funds under MAP and ATP must be utilized according to federal regulations outlined by USDA.

SUSTA assists companies in promoting products internationally through two basic types of programs: The MAP and ATP "Branded" program and the MAP and ATP "Generic" program:

- SUSTA's 50% CostShare (Branded) program assists individual companies to carry out their own marketing activities internationally by reimbursing them for 50% of eligible marketing and promotional expenses. Companies must be small according to the Small

Business Administration (SBA) guidelines for MAP and three times SBA standards for ATP. Their products must be of at least 50% U.S. agricultural origin. Products promoted have been as diverse as pecans, rice, seafood, alligator hides, snack foods and hot sauce. Companies apply for funding on a fiscal year basis, with marketing and promotional activities taking place year-round and concluding by December 31st.

- SUSTA's Global Events (Generic) activities are industry-wide projects managed by SUSTA staff along with its member State Departments of Agriculture. Activities typically include trade missions, trade shows, in store promotions, chef promotions, and trade seminars. Any company or cooperative with products of 50% or more U.S. agricultural origin are welcome to participate in SUSTA's Global Events.

Scope of Work

SUSTA in collaboration with the Georgia Department of Agriculture, one of the fifteen members that make up the association is seeking a U.S. based consultant to help with marketing and promotional activities to promote Georgia Grown pecans. The consultant will work with an in-country market representative who will work on behalf of the Georgia Department of Agriculture to increase awareness and facilitate export sales of Georgia Grown pecans.

The Taiwan Georgia Grown Pecan Promotion is a multi-faceted promotion with several activities planned this year. The initiative would utilize the U.S. based consultant to ensure the in-market representative carries out the marketing and promotional activities planned this year. We estimate that the contractor will work on average, seven days (56 hours) per month on program management and administrative tasks. The contractor will also participate in specific activities that will require international and domestic travel, planning, preparation and reporting. The focus of the U.S. consultant's goals is to work with the in-country consultant to increase awareness and interest in the procurement of Georgia Grown pecan products by retail and restaurant trade. The in-country consultant will carry out marketing and promotional activities that consist of: trade servicing to conduct retail audits, technical seminars, arrange foreign buyer meetings with growers visiting the market on an Outbound Trade Mission, invite buyers back to Tifton, Georgia for meetings with pecan growers, and help to identify the best opportunities to promote Georgia Grown pecan products in Taiwan in future strategies. **The time-frame for the contract will be May 27, 2019 – December 31, 2019.**

Specific responsibilities strategy for the initiative would include:

1. Structure of Initiative: The U.S. consulting firm would structure a cost effective, result-oriented program that may include trade show participation, trade mission participation, technical seminars, chef demonstrations at the shows, product education and trade relations. These activities would take place throughout the calendar year, for up to three years and each year would build on the efforts of the previous years.

2. Implementation: The contractor will work with the in-market representative to carry out planned activities for the period and report on successful strategies. The U.S. based consultant would also ensure the necessary follow-up is done with the in-country representative and retailers, wholesalers and importers in the market. At the end of the period a final report will be submitted to the Georgia Department of Agriculture and SUSTA to close out the program year.
3. One of the most important aspects of carrying out the program is the evaluation of the U.S. company participants and key buyers. The U.S. based consultant will be responsible for ensuring the in-country consultant evaluates foreign buyers after each activity is carried out and assist with providing feedback for the 6-month follow-up evaluation following the activities.
4. In addition, it is important to give feedback to our constituents on the success of the promotional activities. The U.S. based consultant will be responsible for sharing success stories on the promotions conducted to increase awareness of Georgia Grown pecans in Taiwan.

Following each promotional event, a report should be completed for each project that gives results on performance measures dictated by Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS).

5. The consultant should work closely with the FAS agricultural trade office in the market in order to utilize their expertise and knowledge and include them in planned events for the market.
6. The consultant would be required to travel to Taiwan and Hong Kong to manage Georgia Grown pecan events as well as being present to facilitate Georgia Grown-Pecan events in the U.S.

This program should not only promote Georgia Grown pecan products, but also follow through with linking the appropriate U.S. supplier to the appropriate Taiwan buyers. We have found that one of the biggest shortcomings of promotional activities is follow-up with the U.S. supplier and the buyers. Therefore, an important aspect of this initiative is ensuring that the connection is made between contacts from Taiwan buyers and the U.S. pecan suppliers.

Activity Background:

These marketing and promotional events planned will specifically target Taiwan to promote and generate interest in U.S. Georgia Grown pecan products.

Budget:

Funding for this project is provided through the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service Agriculture

Trade Promotion and is subject to the appropriate federal regulations and policies.

Please provide a budget breakdown for fees associated with managing each of the Georgia Grown pecan events from beginning to end. This budget should not include any fees associated with travel to the events. Travel cost will be paid separately.

Sufficiency of Response

Each proposal will be scored on the following measurements:

- Description of proposed activities and relevancy
- Measurable results of previous, similar programs managed by the respondent
- Approach to managing the activity
- Cost
- References (minimum of 3)

Proposals should be concisely written to respond to this RFP. Elaborate attachments are not necessary.

Acceptance of Proposal

The successful bidder's proposal will be the basis of a contract executed with SUSTA on behalf of the Georgia Department of Agriculture to perform all services at the specified costs contained in the bidder's proposal. SUSTA retains the right to negotiate with the successful bidder prior to final contract execution.

Subcontractors

If any service is to be performed by someone other than the contractor's permanent staff, all subcontractors and their addresses must be included in the proposal. These will be subject to approval by SUSTA.

Deadline for Proposal

All proposals from bidders must be submitted by **Friday, May 17, 2019 at 4:00 P.M. (CST)**. The successful bidder will receive notification by **Friday, May 24, 2019**. The planned commencement of the project will start upon written notification from SUSTA. Proposals may be emailed to Bernadette@susta.org and Jeanne.Maxwell@agr.georgia.gov or submitted to the following address:

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Questions

All questions regarding this RFP should be directed to:

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Rejection of Proposals

SUSTA retains the right to reject all proposals submitted in response to this RFP. SUSTA does not discriminate in any of its programs and activities against recipients on the basis of age, disability, national origin or ancestry, race, color, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation, military status, marital or familial status.