



**November 19, 2021**

## **Request for Proposal Colombia Initiative 2LA18**

### **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 Agriculture Trade Promotion (ATP), which is administered by the USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS). The organization is tasked with promoting exports of high-value food and agricultural products of U.S. origin and the funds must be utilized according to federal regulations outlined by USDA.

SUSTA assists companies in promoting products internationally through two basic types of programs: The Market Access Program "Branded" program and the Market Access Program "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 promotional expenses. Companies must be small according to the Small Business Administration (SBA) guidelines and their products must be of at least 50% U.S. agricultural origin. Products promoted have been as diverse as 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.

- SUSTA's Global Events (Generic) activities are industry-wide projects managed by SUSTA staff and its member State Departments of Agriculture. Activities typically include trade missions, trade shows, in store 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 is seeking an in-country consultant to help with marketing and promotional activities for the Colombia market. The consultant will work with SUSTA and assigned State Department of Agriculture Activity Managers.

The Colombia Initiative is a multi-faceted promotion to source high value added food products from the U.S. to Colombia. The initiative would utilize an in-country consultant to build trade relationships, determine what challenges the trade face in importing southern products, increase awareness and interest in the procurement of southern products by retail and restaurant trade. The in country consultant will assist in identifying key buyers from Colombia to meet with southern exporters. **The time frame for the contract will be determined by the dates identified to assist with planning and executing the project for the market.**

Specific responsibilities strategy for the initiative would include:

1. Structure of Initiative: The consulting firm would structure a cost effective, result-oriented program that includes an Inbound Trade Mission to the Americas Food and Beverage Trade Show in Miami, Florida taking place September 12 – 13, 2022.
2. Implementation: The contractor would carry out the planned activities for the period and report on the outcome of the strategy. The contractor would also follow-up with retailers, wholesalers and importers to report on sales and other measures of success. At the end of the period, a final report will be submitted to SUSTA and any State Department of Agriculture Activity Managers. This report will follow a format that SUSTA will provide.
3. One of the most important aspects of carrying out the program is the evaluation of the U.S. company participants. The consultant will be responsible for evaluating foreign buyers participating in the mission and provide 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 our marketing and promotional activities. The consultant will be responsible for providing success stories at the conclusion of the event.

Following each promotional event, a report should be completed for each project to include performance measures dictated by Foreign Agriculture Services (FAS). This report will follow a format that SUSTA will provide.

5. The consultant should work closely with FAS post to utilize their expertise and knowledge and include them in SUSTA's planned events for the market.

This program should not only promote southern region products, but also follow through with linking the appropriate U.S. supplier to the appropriate Colombian 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 Colombian buyers and the U.S. suppliers.

### **Budget**

Funding for this project is provided through the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service Agricultural Trade Promotions, and is subject to the appropriate regulations and policies.

### **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 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, December 17, 2021 at 4:00 P.M. (CST)**. The planned commencement of the project will start upon written notification from SUSTA. Proposals may be emailed to [Penney@susta.org](mailto:Penney@susta.org) or submitted to the following:

Penney Lawrence  
Global Events Director  
Southern United States Trade Association  
701 Poydras St., Suite 3845  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70139  
Tel. +1 (504) 568-5986 Fax +1 (504) 568-6010  
[Penney@susta.org](mailto:Penney@susta.org)

And

Katie Caballero  
Senior Global Events Coordinator  
Southern United States Trade Association  
701 Poydras St., Suite 3845  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70139  
Tel. +1 (504) 568-5986 Fax +1 (504) 568-6010  
[Katie@susta.org](mailto:Katie@susta.org)

## **Questions**

All questions in regard to this RFP should be directed to:

Penney Lawrence  
Global Events Director  
Southern United States Trade Association  
701 Poydras St., Suite 3845  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70139  
Tel. +1 (504) 568-5986 Fax +1 (504) 568-6010  
[Penney@susta.org](mailto:Penney@susta.org)

## **Rejection of Proposals**

SUSTA retains the right to reject all proposals submitted in response to this RFP.

SUSTA does not and shall not discriminate against employees, members, participants or those otherwise engaged in the activities of the association on the basis of race, color, national origin

(including gender identity and expression), religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital or familial status, political beliefs, parental status or protected genetic information.