



August 20, 2020

**Request for Proposal
Export Readiness Training
0W070**

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), 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 firms to assist with the implementation of a collaborative Export Readiness Training through a competitive proposal process. Export Readiness Training is intended to provide small and mid-size companies in the southern US territory an opportunity to evaluate company capacity for exporting, teach practical export fundamentals (how to: do market research, price products, organize logistics, insure shipment) and to help small business to develop an international marketing strategy and move forward with utilizing SUSTA's programs and services. The period for the contract will be one year with the opportunity to renew in subsequent years. SUSTA requires elements of the training to involve virtual training setting.

While first-time export sales normally take 18-24 months to come to fruition, the training program will equip the participants with the basic essential export skills and information necessary to be ready to enter an international market. The idea is that after the training the small business will have an international marketing strategy to help them become export ready.

SUSTA will track the progress of each participant toward these performance measures for the project: Participation in an export promotion event with SUSTA such as a trade show or mission and eventually participation in SUSTA's 50% CostShare program.

The deliverables of the project include structural and implementation components:

1. Develop a core curriculum that will guide new-to-export companies through the process of creating and implementing an international marketing strategy.
2. Candidate should be knowledgeable and have practical experience in helping to guide new-to-export companies.
3. Identify the appropriate platform for training and have the necessary resources to carryout training.
4. Establish measurable and quantifiable goals that will provide outcomes in-line with FAS-mandated performance measures.
5. Deliver reports and program documentation.

Sufficiency of Response

Each proposal will be reviewed and scored based on the following requirements:

1. Description of proposed activities are relevant to the goal as described in the scope of work above.
2. Provide qualifications and measurable results of previous, similar export training programs managed by the respondent.
3. Provide an approach to how training will be implemented, managed, and how results will be delivered. All sub-contractors used must be identified in the proposal.
4. Brief (one paragraph) description of relevant training projects previously conducted. Please include what role and expertise you provided in export training.
5. Cost Effective. Please provide a budget breakdown for fees associated with implementing and managing export readiness training. The cost summary section should breakdown all costs (personnel, travel, marketing materials, equipment, supplies, subcontracts, etc.)

6. Relevant Body of Work. Provide the name of the entity/organization, complete mailing/physical address, contact information, as well as any web linkages for previous, similar project work.
7. Proposal includes a plan for reporting outcome and tracking company participant's progress and documenting outcome.
8. 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. SUSTA, by written notice to the Contractor, may terminate the Contract in whole or in part when SUSTA determines in its sole discretion that it is in SUSTA's best interest to do so."

Subcontractors

If someone other than the contractor will perform any services permanent staff (as described in the project principals section), 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 are due to by **October 30, 2020 at 4:00 P.M. (CST)**. The successful bidder will receive notification within 30 days of the close of the bidding date. The planned commencement of the project will start upon written notification from SUSTA. Proposals may be emailed to the following at the email address listed or mailed to each of the individuals listed below:

Bernadette M. Wiltz
Executive Director
Southern United States Trade Association

701 Poydras St., Suite 3845
New Orleans, LA 70139
Tel. +1 (504) 568-5986 Fax +1 (504) 568-6010
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And

Danielle Coco
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And

Debra May
Trade Development Administrator
Division of Marketing and Development
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Tel. +1 (850) 617-7316 Fax +1 (850) 617-7331
Debra.May@FDACS.gov

Questions

All questions regarding this RFP can be directed to any of the individuals below:

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Vendor Requirements and Qualifications

The contractor will work closely with and be supervised by SUSTA's Executive Director, Bernadette Wiltz and Marketing Director, Danielle Viguerie Coco.

The selected contractor should have previous experience in planning and conducting similar services, and works effectively with people by telephone, email and in person. The contractor must be financially and legally capable of entering into and executing a contract for the above stated project and the RFP response. SUSTA reserves the right to not award this contract, if, in the opinion of the evaluators, no suitable proposal is received. SUSTA is not liable for any costs associated with any company's response to this RFP.

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.

NOTE

All vendor selection(s) and contract awards are subject to Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) funds available funds and outcome evaluation.