



May 10, 2021

**Request for Proposal
Colombia Promotions
9W099**

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), 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 it is 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 in collaboration with the Texas Department of Agriculture, one of the fifteen members that make up the association in seeking an in-country representative in the Colombian market to help with marketing and promotional activities to promote Texas agriculture products. The in-country market representative will work on behalf of the Texas Department of Agriculture to increase awareness and facilitate export sales of Texas products.

The Texas-Led Colombia Promotion is a multi-faceted promotion with several activities planned this year. The initiative would utilize the in-country market representative to carry out the marketing and promotional activities planned this year with follow-up activities for next year. The focus of the in-market representative's goals is to work with the Texas Department of Agriculture to increase awareness and interest in the procurement of Texas products by retail and restaurant trade.

The in-market representative will carry out marketing and promotional activities that consist of the following types of activities for the market:

1. Trade Representation in Colombia that will focus on market pathways for Texas agriculture and give insight on import logistics while also providing critical insight into new partnerships and educational opportunities for Texas companies and commodities.
2. As part of this agreement, the in-country consultant will provide general marketing and consulting services, and research and development of market assessment.
3. Conduct webinars, seminars, and develop videos to help educate Texas businesses and food/agriculture organizations about the Colombian market.
4. The consultant will develop and maintain relationships with key buyers and liaise with the Foreign Agricultural Services about activities in the market that may provide opportunities for Texas producers.
5. Development of marketing and outreach materials focused on the Colombian market with content in English and Spanish. This will include advertising translation as well as custom pieces for select sectors that Texas will focus on in Colombia. The effort will also encompass recipe cards and pairings featuring Texas products and online promotions/advertising in English and Spanish.
6. Assist with an outbound trade mission to Colombia. This will provide local insight and meetings for Colombian buyers meeting with Texas producers. These meetings will include outreach to

Texas commodity groups and private brand companies, giving them background on the Colombian market and consumer preferences.

7. Outline an alternative event this year, 2021 should the travel restrictions still be in place at the time the event is scheduled.
8. Notify the Agriculture Trade Office in Colombia of planned activities and work with ATO if necessary.

The period for the contract will be June 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021.

Specific strategy responsibilities for the initiative would include:

1. Structure of Initiative: The in-market representative would structure a cost effective, result-oriented program that may include trade mission participation, product education, trade relations, and marketing materials for the market. These activities would take place throughout the calendar year, and next year's event would build on the efforts of this year.
2. Create marketing materials that will support messaging for all proposed Colombian focused activities, while also providing unique calls to action for highlighted products being promoted in the Colombian market. The marketing and promotional materials will be designed to align with the broader Texas agriculture, food, and beverage marketing initiative, but give a decidedly Colombian feel to the materials, acknowledging the uniqueness of the market and distinctions between the U.S. and Colombia.
3. Sales support flyers, translated videos, and recipe cards will be tailored to the Colombian market and consumers, making it easy for partners across the food value chain to find options to work with Texas organizations and businesses.
4. The in-market representative will work with the Texas Department of Agriculture, to carry out a trade mission planned for the market, and report on the success of the strategies.
5. The consultant would ensure the necessary follow-up is done with any retailer, HRI, wholesaler and importer in the market that participates in the mission and has one-on-one meetings with Texas companies and industry partners in the market. At the end of the period, a final report will be required to the Texas Department of Agriculture and SUSTA to close out the program year.
6. One of the most important aspects of carrying out the program is the evaluation of the U.S. company participants and key buyers. The in-market representative will be responsible for evaluating the foreign buyers after each activity carried out and assist with providing feedback for the 6-month follow-up evaluation following the activities.

7. In addition, it is important to give feedback to our constituents on the success of the promotional activities. The in-market representative will be responsible for sharing success stories on the promotions conducted to increase awareness and exports of Texas Grown products in Colombia.
8. Following each promotional event, a report should be completed for each project that gives results on performance measures dictated by Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS).
9. The in-market representative 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.

This program should not only promote Texas 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 Colombia and Texas producers.

Activity Background:

These promotional events will specifically target Colombia to promote and generate interest in Texas region products.

Budget:

Funding for this project is provided through the USDA Agriculture Trade Promotion (ATP), 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 **Tuesday, May 27, 2021 at 4:00 P.M. (CST)**. The successful bidder will receive notification by **Tuesday, June 3, 2021**. The planned commencement of the project will start upon written notification from SUSTA. Please email proposals to the following:

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And

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Questions

All questions regarding this RFP should be directed to the following:

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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 because of: age, disability, national origin or ancestry, race, color, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation, military status, marital or familial status.