



Request for Proposals Communications Design Vendor

Background

The Food Export Association of the Midwest USA (Food Export – Midwest) and Food Export USA – Northeast (Food Export – Northeast) are not-for-profit export associations and whose primary function is to develop export markets for midwestern and northeastern (respectively) producers and processors of value-added food and agricultural products. Our members include state agricultural promotion agencies from twelve midwestern and ten northeastern states.

Both groups are participants in the Market Access Program (MAP), a federal program handled by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The MAP is intended to boost the export of value-added food and agricultural products from the U.S. through a partnership between FAS and approximately 75 other industry-based trade organizations. This includes primarily commodity-specific groups, as well as two other unaffiliated regional groups similar to Food Export - Midwest and Food Export - Northeast that handle the southern and western regions of the U.S.

The products covered for export promotion by Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast include a wide variety of processed and semi-processed products found throughout the retail, food service, 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.

Food Export - Midwest and Food Export- Northeast are independent organizations that have been engaged in a strategic alliance since April of 2000. Through this alliance, the strategy and tactics of the organizations have been aligned so that the activities and services of each group are very similar with differences based primarily on geographic focus. Food Export - Midwest focuses on midwestern exporters and a series of nine overseas target markets, including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, South America, Mexico, and India. Food Export -Northeast targets northeastern exporters and seven overseas markets, including France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Central America, Canada, the Middle East and the Caribbean. By collaborating, the activities and services of each organization are open to participation by companies from the other region. The net effect is that exporters in the Midwest and Northeast have access to a larger range of export promotion opportunities, while the limited staffs at Food Export - Midwest and Food Export - Northeast can focus on specific market development opportunities.

The states that are members of Food Export- Midwest include: Illinois, Wisconsin, Kansas, Minnesota, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, and Missouri. Food Export – Northeast encompasses: New York, New Jersey, Vermont, Delaware, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island.

More information about Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast is available on the Internet at: www.foodexport.org.

Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast are seeking one or more individuals/companies to assist with the implementation and management of our International Marketing International Marketing educational programs. These activities include Food Export Helpline™, educational seminars and webinars, Export Advisor program, Export Essentials education program, and export consulting services. The contractor will work closely with and be supervised by the appropriate International Marketing Program Manager. The contractor will also be expected to liaise with our State Department(s) of Agriculture and In-Market Representatives (IMR), as appropriate. The selected contractor will be responsible for the aforementioned activities during our 2015 Fiscal Year (January 1 – December 31, 2015).

In the Scope of Work sections below are more details on the activities for which Food Export - Midwest and Food Export- Northeast are seeking assistance. Most activities are coordinated in close partnership with our member state staff at various state agricultural promotion agencies. The specific duties and responsibilities assigned to a contractor will vary by activity and by year. Such tasks will be assigned by an International Marketing Program Manager.

Requirements & Submitting a Proposal

The contractor must be able to cite previous experience. Previous experience with not-for-profit groups, international marketing, food and/or agricultural groups will be considered favorably. The proposal should also include the names of the individuals who will be conducting the work and the qualifications of the proposed individual / vendor. The proposal should also include references. 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. Complete Mailing Address
3. EIN/TIN/SS number (or if an overseas entity, the equivalent tax identification number in your country)
4. Type of Structure (choose one):
 Individual Corporation LLC Partnership Sole Proprietorship

Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast are not liable for any costs associated with any company's response to this RFP. Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast 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.

The quotation(s) should be submitted with rates for the projects described. Vendors may choose to submit different rates per hour for various aspects.

The selected contractor must agree to abide by Food Export –Midwest and Food Export – Northeast Terms and Conditions:

Food Export - Midwest and Food Export - Northeast 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 do not tolerate fraud in their programs or services, and expect all participants to comply with our code of ethics (www.foodexport.org/codeofethics).

If you suspect any instance of fraud, please contact our Ethics Reporting Line at: www.foodexport.ethicspoint.com or 1-855-727-6715 (domestic toll-free.)

We reserve the right to deny services to any firm or individual which, in the sole opinion of Food Export – Midwest or Food Export – Northeast does not comply with MAP; FAS; Food Export – Midwest or Food Export – Northeast 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. For more information please see our Terms and Conditions located at www.foodexport.org/termsandconditions.

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 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.

The contractor must agree to abide by Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast invoicing guidelines which include:

- Invoice must contain a unique invoice number and be split among two separate invoices for Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast.
- Individual invoices per project or activity
- Each invoice must include the current hours being invoiced, the hours already invoiced on the project, and the total number of hours agreed upon for the vendor to carry out the project
- Invoices must be submitted no less-frequently than at the completion of each project phase
- Final invoices must be submitted within 30 days of completion of the project.
- The Scope of Work for a specific project as agreed to by the vendor, Food Export – Midwest and/or Food Export – Northeast must be included as a basis to track the actual work performed against the agreement.

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,
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including any text, or related concepts, strategies or tactics described, without written permission from Food Export – Midwest and/or Northeast.

The deadline for proposals is Friday, November 14th, 2014, 12:00pm Central time.
Faxed or E-Mailed proposals will be accepted. Please forward to:

Laura Buske, International Marketing Program Coordinator
Food Export Association of the Midwest USA
309 West Washington, Suite 600
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Tel (312) 334.9200
Fax (312) 334.9230
E-mail: Lbuske@foodexport.org

Questions should be directed to the following:

John Belmont, Communications Manager, Food Export Association of the Midwest USA, Food Export USA – Northeast at 312-334-9200 or jbelmont@foodexport.org

An expected date of selection is December 5th, 2014; correspondence will be sent to all who submitted regarding the final decision.

Objective

The goal of communications, marketing and outreach is to educate domestic food manufacturers about exporting opportunities and to generate awareness of and participation in Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast programs and services. Outreach and effective communications is critical function of Food Export so we can:

1. Identify the appropriate prospects and determine their value as a potential participant.
2. Educate them as to what programs and services we can offer depending on their export readiness level.
3. Develop an ongoing relationship with the companies and drive them to participate in our educational, market entry and market promotion programs.

Through continued outreach, various communications and targeted database marketing efforts we hope to recognize new growth from prospects. In addition to generating awareness and turning prospects into new participants, we hope to develop new ways of illustrating our value and benefits to existing customers to realize incremental growth.

Scope of Work

Project 1: Ongoing design services for Food Export promotional materials for outreach, awareness building and general participation

Provide design, production and brand identity for a variety of materials as needed. This will support a variety of print and electronic communications projects that support our overall plan. Activities may include developing a design theme for materials supporting Food Export programs and services. These materials may be educational or promotional in nature targeting domestic and international audiences. Various materials may be needed depending on purpose, audience, export readiness level, products variety, program/service and delivery channel. Projects may include the annual activity calendar, Branded Program manual, and other activity or program-specific materials as needed.

Project 2: Website Design Consulting

Assist with various ongoing website enhancement projects as needed. Vendor will support the Communications Program Area with special projects that include website design, process flow, user experience and other website improvements as they arise based on priorities and marketing/promotion/communications plans of the organization.

Project 3: Management of Food Export Publications

Manage and execute the design and production of Food Export Publications including Global Food Marketer™ to US companies and US Foodlink distributed to international buyers. Each publication is printed and distributed bi-monthly, 6 times a year and each comes with a monthly e-bulletin that is distributed by Food Export.

Global Food Marketer™ (6 issues a year):

- Content development: Provide outline of potential stories, Each issue include a main article, market focus, success story, news bites, Food Export Helpline™ (provided by the Food Export Helpline™ counselor) and upcoming activity listing.
- Copywriting – Write main article. Compile remaining articles. Edit market focus, news bites, Food Export Helpline™ article and upcoming activity listing.
- Layout and Design – Includes two rounds of edits
- Print- Manage printing and distribution of newsletter, work directly with printer.

Global Food Marketer™ – E-Bulletin

- Content Development – Provide outline of potential articles
- Copywriting – finalize content and write articles/request info from Food Export (Export Intelligence Video, Ask Food Export, Important Reminders, recruitment activities to profile, etc.)
- Design – Include two rounds of edits and troubleshooting on formatting issues.

US Foodlink Newsletter (6 issues a year):

- Layout and Design – Content will be provided. Includes two rounds of edits.
- Print – Manage printing and distribution of newsletter, work directly with printer.

Project 4: Special Projects

Provide assistance on an as-needed basis for additional domestic and international projects. Some examples include: assisting with projects that support the development of marketing materials such as custom marketing materials, special event mailers, advertorials, copywriting projects, special presentations or any other projects in need of marketing communications vendor assistance. Assistance may also be needed to create success stories which includes reaching out to Food Export companies and gathering information about their activities and writing a success story based on the Food Export guidelines.

The responsibilities of the contractor for these projects would be to work with the Communications Manager to provide input on a plan of work for the project and to provide the assistance required.