WUSATA

Western United States
Agricultural Trade Association

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Project Name: Japan In-Market Retainer Contractor

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Introduction:

Dear Prospective Bidders,

We are pleased to announce that the Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA) is soliciting proposals from qualified vendors to serve as in-country representatives for Japan, assisting with market development, intelligence, and trade promotion activities. As a non-profit entity, WUSATA is dedicated to expanding the export market for agricultural products originating from 13 western states (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming) and 2 U.S. territories (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam). Our core objective is to foster international growth for Western agribusinesses through financial support, export readiness, and business development services.

We seek an in-country representative for Japan who can deliver exceptional trade services aligned with our organizational mission. The ideal candidate will demonstrate market research, development, and trade facilitation expertise within the Japanese market, including managing inbound, outbound, and virtual trade missions. Prior experience with similar organizations would be advantageous. We value integrity, accountability, and excellence in our partnerships.

We encourage you to submit a comprehensive proposal detailing your relevant experience, qualifications, and strategic approach to representing WUSATA's interests in Japan. Please ensure that your proposal includes a detailed breakdown of costs, a summary of your experience, and any pertinent references. Our evaluation of proposals will be based on a set of criteria, including but not limited to your experience and qualifications, cost-effectiveness, and the capacity to fulfill our requirements.

We look forward to reviewing your proposal and collaborating with the selected in-country representative to further our mission of enhancing the export of agricultural products from the western states and territories into the Japanese market.

Sincerely,

Renata Dalton
Deputy Executive Director
Western United States Agricultural Trade Association

Background

The Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA) is a nonprofit entity established in 1980 to foster international expansion for Western agribusinesses. This is achieved through the provision of financial aid, export readiness training, and business development services. WUSATA is one of four State Regional Trade Groups (SRTGs) dedicated to promoting exports alongside SUSTA (Southern United States Trade Association), Food Export Midwest, and Food Export Northeast.

WUSATA's operational funding is sourced from the Market Access Program (MAP), Regional Agriculture Promotion Program (RAPP) and America First Trade Promotional Program (AFTPP) under the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). The organization is responsible for administering its core programs—Export Education, Global Connect, and FundMatch—in accordance with MAP and RAPP regulations.

The Export Education program utilizes our market intelligence and resources to assist small business participants in selecting markets and crafting export marketing strategies. The Global Connect program facilitates connections with quality buyers through participation in foreign and domestic trade missions, exhibitions, and promotional events. FundMatch offers financial assistance to program participants to implement their international marketing strategies and expand in critical markets.

The membership team, comprising the Department of Agriculture from 13 western states and 2 U.S. territories, collaborates with WUSATA and its contractors to plan and execute program projects. Our program participants are small companies based in the Western region whose products must contain at least 50% U.S. agricultural ingredients. We are proud of our company's wide array of products, including savory snacks, beverages, sauces, pet foods, and animal feed.

For further information on our organization, please visit our website at www.wusata.org.

Scope of Work

The definitions of the typical trade projects we engage in are outlined below. They are intended to help vendors understand the potential project's objectives, the scope of work required, and WUSATA's expectations. This helps ensure that proposals are comparable and that vendors bid on the same requirements.

Monthly Trade Servicing Retainer

The contractor will be responsible for providing a monthly report outlining the completed trade service, any results achieved, and ongoing success stories throughout the year.

Market relationships and recruitment

(a) Visit and identify qualified importers, distributors, retailers, food service, and ingredient buyers.

(i) Maintain a list of qualified buyers that are reputable and suitable to deal with U.S. suppliers.

(ii) Seek out, identify, connect with, and maintain relationships with buyers and influential contacts in the marketing, distribution, transportation, retail, food service, and ingredient sectors.

(iii) For all missions, recruited buyers must be qualified.

(iv) For inbound missions, at least 80% of the qualified buyers will not have participated in WUSATA missions to the same state in the last two years.

(v) Please note your new buyers when you submit your monthly report for WUSATA tracking purposes.

(b) Establish and maintain regular contact and collaborative relationships with:

(i) Relevant local governmental agencies, trade offices, and other regulatory bodies involved in food and agriculture policy for the market.

(ii) U.S. government agencies, including the American Embassy and Consulates, the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and Agricultural Trade Offices (ATO) or equivalents, and the U.S. Department of Commerce Foreign and Commercial Service.

(iii) Relevant U.S. Market Access Program (MAP) Cooperators.

(iv) Work with local USDA Agricultural Trade Offices or equivalents on planned WUSATA trade missions in the country.

Market intelligence and WUSATA member advising

(a) Collect market intelligence for monthly reporting, analysis, and presentations.

(i) Market intelligence includes (not limited to): local demand and market trends; key importers, distributors, and distribution channels; consumer profiles; laws and regulations; international competitors in the marketplace; emerging opportunities for products and other information that will help WUSATA companies succeed in the market.

(ii) Provide up-to-date information on tariffs and duties, customs regulations, import regulations, and other government regulations concerning trade.

(b) Consistent communication with WUSATA staff and project managers.

(i) Attend WUSATA monthly market work group conference calls, annual planning meetings, and annual contractor meetings with WUSATA leadership.

(ii) Travel to the U.S. to learn more about WUSATA's operations and activities as required.

(iii) Outreach and educational efforts to promote WUSATA programs and services.

(iv) Assist project managers in developing marketing strategies, promotions, and implementing missions for UES.

(v) Shipping and supply chain recommendations or management during missions.

(vi) Provide post-mission reports and other documentation necessary for contract reimbursement.

(vii) Follow up with buyers to gather interest and feedback after conducting a mission. Include results in post-mission report.

(c) Provide market intelligence support to new-to-market companies, including companies that are new to exporting or new to the country market. This includes fielding questions from these companies and helping connect them with relevant contacts in the market. These consultations are included as part of the contractor's monthly retainer fee.

Other deliverables

(a) Participate in a minimum of one country market webinar or podcast episode per year or more as needed throughout the year for businesses to learn from and offer a question-and-answer session.

(b) Provide and follow-up relevant trade leads through the online trade lead portal.

(c) Generate follow-up on success stories and include them in the monthly report to WUSATA.

(d) When discussing our Company's trade services, reference our technology, such as a website, social media marketing campaign, online matchmaking portal, or something else.

Monthly reporting template

(a) Monthly report with the following structure:

(i) Executive Summary
- Update on the number of qualified buyers, distributors, wholesalers, etc., identified or visited.

(ii) Market intelligence update
- Information on tariffs and duties, customs regulations, import regulations, and other government regulations concerning trade, etc.

(iii) Updates on relevant changes with Phyto-sanitary requirements, quarantine and inspection procedures, customs clearance, documentation, labeling, pricing strategy, financing, shipping, and other considerations WUSATA companies would need to know.

(iv) Provide a list of qualified buyers, distributors, importers, etc., connected with the market.

(v) Activities related to WUSATA Global Connect events and next steps.

(vi) Provide success stories, which mission it was for, and what buyer/company.

(vii) Trade and ATO communications.

(viii) Provide a list of trade leads generated during the month.

(ix) One-page visual (infographic) highlighting a few key market trends that we can use to promote on social media and send to WUSATA companies about your country's market.

Inbound Trade Mission

Inbound trade missions involve facilitating the visit of international buyers' delegations to the United States for direct engagement with WUSATA-affiliated supplier companies. The primary duties of the contractor responsible for executing an Inbound Trade Mission include:

(i) Working with WUSATA Members and Program Coordinators to determine the needs of the trade mission.

(ii) Pre-qualify and recruit appropriate Buyers, including any recommendations made by the local FAS Office.

(iii) Communicate closely with Buyers to understand their buying interests.

(iv) Provide a detailed profile of each Buyer to the WUSATA Member and Global Connect Coordinator.

(v) Assist WUSATA Member and Global Connect Coordinator with itinerary details.

(vi) Assist the WUSATA Member and Global Connect Coordinator in understanding any special or cultural needs the Buyers may have.

(vii) Work with WUSATA Member and Global Connect Coordinator and their travel agent to make appropriate travel arrangements.

(viii) Attend the mission to assist with various tasks, such as interpretation, communication and general management/logistics of the mission.

(ix) Assist with follow-up after the mission is completed.

(x) Assist WUSATA Member and Global Connect Coordinator with follow-up evaluation and claim submission process.

Outbound Trade Mission

Outbound trade missions entail organizing trips for a delegation of WUSATA-affiliated supplier companies to a foreign country to establish connections with potential buyers in that market. The contractor's responsibilities for conducting an Outbound Trade Mission include:

(xi) Work with WUSATA Members and Global Connect Coordinators to determine the needs of the trade mission.

(xii) Pre-qualify and recruit appropriate Buyers, including any recommendations made by the local FAS Office.

(xiii) Communicate closely with Buyers to understand their buying interests.

(xiv) Provide a detailed profile of each Buyer to the WUSATA Member and Global Connect Coordinator.

(xv) Assist WUSATA Member and Global Connect Coordinator with itinerary details.

(xvi) Assist the WUSATA Member and Global Connect Coordinator in understanding any special or cultural needs the Buyers may have.

(xvii) Work with WUSATA Member, Global Connect Coordinator, and their travel agent to make appropriate travel arrangements.

(xviii) Attend the mission to assist with various tasks, such as interpretation, communication and general management/logistics of the mission.

(xix) Assist with follow-up after the mission is completed.

(xx) Assist WUSATA Member and Global Connect Coordinator with follow-up evaluation and claim submission process.

Virtual Consultation

The contractor's responsibilities in carrying out the virtual consultation include the following.

(i) Review supplier profile report to be submitted by WUSATA staff indicating a supplier's product, previous experience in the market, goal for participation in a call, and questions about the one-on-one video conference.

(ii) Conduct preliminary research to answer supplier questions and provide valuable feedback to help the supplier better understand the market. Questions may pertain to but are not limited to the following topics:

a. Product preferences (taste, ingredients, format, etc.)
b. Package size, color, type, etc.
c. Red Flags (issues with product that may make it a bad fit for the market)
d. Basic import data based on product type
e. Trade show information (size, audience, potential, etc.)
f. Country-specific information regarding consumers
g. Basic marketability of product based on product type

(iii) Participate in the 30–60-minute video call.

(iv) Provide basic follow-up to any further questions discussed during the consultation. The follow-up will be limited to and included in a one—to two-page consultation report. The consultation report will record what was discussed during the virtual consultation. The WUSATA Member or Global Connect Coordinator tactic lead will provide it to the supplier.

Virtual Trade Mission

The contractor's responsibilities in the virtual trade mission include the following:

(i) The contractor will plan and coordinate the virtual trade mission, including scheduling meetings, arranging logistics, and coordinating with all parties involved.

(ii) The contractor will promote the virtual trade mission to potential attendees, including businesses, government agencies, and other relevant stakeholders.

(iii) The contractor will select and set up the appropriate virtual trade mission platform and ensure it is user-friendly and accessible to all attendees.

(iv) The contractor will facilitate networking and matchmaking opportunities for attendees, including virtual meetings and introductions.

(v) The contractor will provide attendees with training and support on using the virtual trade mission platform and ensure that all technical issues are resolved swiftly.

(vi) The contractor will provide regular reports and evaluations of the virtual trade mission, including feedback from attendees and recommendations for future improvements.

Trade Show/Special Events Servicing

The contractor's responsibilities in carrying out trade shows or special events servicing include the following:

(i) The contractor will plan and coordinate all aspects of attending the trade show, including travel arrangements, booth setup, promotional materials, etc., with WUSATA Members and Global Connect Coordinators.

(ii) The contractor will manage the trade show booth, including setting up and dismantling it, staffing it during the show, and engaging with attendees.

(iii) The contractor will develop and implement promotional strategies and marketing materials to attract potential customers to the booth. This may include designing and printing brochures, flyers, and other promotional materials.

(iv) The contractor will network with attendees and other exhibitors to develop new business relationships and partnerships.

(v) The contractor will generate leads by collecting contact information from potential customers and following up with them after the show.

(vi) The contractor will provide regular reports and evaluations of the trade show, including feedback from attendees and recommendations for future improvements.

(vii) Attend special events and/or meetings as requested by WUSATA.

Market Research, Development, and Promotion Activities

The contractor's responsibilities in conducting market research, development and promotional activities include the following.

(i) Conduct industry and/or sector studies as requested.

(ii) Identify and recommend promotional opportunities in the market's food service, retail, and ingredient sectors.

(iii) Develop and assist with implementing promotional activities within the guidelines specified by WUSATA, including negotiating promotional terms, assisting with in-store merchandising and display, developing promotional concepts and materials, etc.

(iv) Ensure that products from the appropriate companies are included in the promotion.

(v) Submit the report on the activity and provide the required evaluation results.

(vi) Perform other specific consulting work as requested by WUSATA Members and Coordinators.

Evaluation Criteria

The following guidelines shall be implemented with a request for proposals. The Proposal Review Panel shall meet the following requirements:

(i) The Proposal Review Panel will consist of at least three individuals.

(ii) The Proposal Review Panel will include at least one WUSATA employee and may include additional panelists from member departments of agriculture or board members.

(iii) The review panel evaluates the proposals according to a pre-determined weighted average scoring system below:

a. Completeness of Workplan - The proposal meets the expectations and goals described in the RFP.

b. Understanding of the Market - The contractor demonstrates comprehensive industry knowledge.

c. Staff Qualifications - The contractor clearly identifies their credentials, skills, and industry connections as described in the RFP.

d. Cost Effectiveness - The budget of the proposal is competitive and efficient.

Contractors may be asked to provide additional information or participate in an interview during the evaluation process.

Requirements and Proposal Format

Please submit your proposal in the following format with the suggested content below.

(i) Cover letter: Introduce your company and your proposal. Please include the following details.
   a. Name of entity as it would appear on contracts and invoices.
   b. Main point of contact.
   c. Complete mailing address and physical office address.
   d. EIN/TIN/SS Number or, if an overseas entity, the equivalent tax identification number in your country
   e. Type of Structure
      __Individual __Corporation __LLC __Partnership ___Sole Proprietorship

(ii) Executive Summary: Summarize the main points of your proposal, including the problem you are addressing, your proposed solution, and the main benefits of your proposal.

(iii) Company Profile: Provide information about your company's history, experience, and qualifications related to the RFP. Include a summary of similar work conducted, your experience working with WUSATA or other relevant organizations on these types of projects, experience with market development for U.S. food and agricultural products, and/or other relevant experience that qualifies you as a successful contractor.

(iv) Solution Overview: Provide a detailed description of your proposed solution of how you will fulfill the scope of work for each project type and how it meets the requirements outlined in the RFP.

(v) Cost Proposal: Provide a detailed breakdown of the costs associated with each project type. Please provide this information by completing the table below:

Service Fee Proposal:

Budget Item	Budget Description	Budget Amount (USD $)
Monthly Trade Servicing Retainer	Flat Fee per month	
Inbound Trade Mission		
Contractor Fees	Price per buyer	
Outbound Trade Mission		
Contractor Fee	Administrative Fee (includes up to 5 companies)	
Participant Fee	6th–9th Participant (additional participation)	
Participant Fee	10th+ Participant	
Virtual Consultation		
Contractor Fees	Price Per Participant	
Virtual Trade Mission		
Contractor Fee	Administrative Fee (includes up to 5 companies)	
Participant Fee	6th–9th Participant (additional participation)	
Participant Fee	10th+ Participant	
Trade Show/ Special Events Servicing		
Contractor Fee	Administrative Fee (includes up to 5 companies)	
Participant Fee	6th–9th Participant (additional participation)	
Participant Fee	10th+ Participant	

Other Activities		
Other activities not listed above.		
Other Fees		
Interpreters (per 8-hours day)	8 Hours/Day	
Printing, Misc.	Promotional Materials	
Translation	2 Pages Free	
Product Research	Product/Company	
Market Research		
Market Research, Development, etc.	5-10 Days – Price Per Day	
TOTAL		

(vi) References: Provide a list of references from previous clients or customers who can speak to your experience and qualifications.

(vii) Appendices: Include any additional supporting documentation, such as executed projects, white papers, or technical specifications that support your proposal.

Please note that WUSATA is not liable for any costs associated with any company's response to this RFP. WUSATA reserves the right not to award this contract if, in the opinion of the evaluators, a suitable proposal is not received. The awarded contract may be renewed for up to two (2) additional years.

Terms and Conditions

The selected contractor must agree to abide by all WUSATA Terms and Conditions:

WUSATA does 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 communicating program information should contact us.

WUSATA has zero tolerance for fraud in their programs and expects all participants to comply with the Code of Conduct - WUSATA.

WUSATA reserves the right to deny services to any firm or individual which, in the sole opinion of WUSATA, does not comply with MAP, FAS, or SRTG regulations and policies, reflects poorly on WUSATA, its officers, members, company participants, FAS or the USDA.

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, WUSATA reserves the right that its contractors may not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, familial/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

WUSATA's acceptance of the proposal is conditional upon the contractor disclosing all existing relationships with another party that could potentially impact and/or influence the contractor's ability to carry out the scope of work.

By responding to this request for proposal, you are certifying that your company nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency. If you are unable to certify the preceding statement but wish to proceed with a proposal to this request, you will need to include an explanation as to why you cannot certify this statement as an attachment to your proposal.

The contents of this Request for Proposal and Scopes of Work are confidential and business proprietary. They may not be reused for any purpose, in whole or in part, including any text or related concepts, strategies, or tactics described, without written permission from WUSATA.

Proposal Submission

Only electronic proposals will be accepted. All proposals must be received on or before the due date outlined below. Any proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

The deadline for submitting proposals is **5:00 pm PST on Monday, September 7, 2026.**

Proposals must be submitted electronically to:

Renata Dalton, Deputy Executive Director - renata@wusata.org

Contact Information

Questions regarding this RFP may only be addressed electronically to Renata Dalton, Deputy Executive Director at the Western United States Agricultural Trade Association. Answers to all questions will be provided to every RFP participant.

Please reference the RFP project name in the email's subject line, which is listed above the table of contents.

Name: Renata Dalton
Title: Deputy Executive Director
Email: renata@wusata.org