



# *American Sweet Potato Marketing Institute*

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## **American Sweet Potato Marketing Institute (ASPMI)**

### Request for Proposal – Evaluation of ASPMI’s FAS-funded export promotion programs

#### **Background:**

The American Sweet Potato Marketing Institute (ASPMI) is a U.S. agricultural trade association representing U.S. sweet potato packers, growers, exporters, processors, trading companies, state associations, and affiliated industries. The role of the Institute is to explore, develop and maintain international markets for U.S. sweet potato exports through promotion, market research, and evaluation of potential new export markets. U.S. sweet potato exports are growing sharply, with key foreign markets including the UK, Benelux, Germany and Canada.

ASPMI is a USDA/FAS cooperator using Market Access Program funds on a cost-share basis to conduct export promotion in Europe, Canada, and Mexico. The Institute is seeking an agency to assist with evaluating the impact of its programs.

#### **Scope of the Proposal:**

Your proposal should include the following:

1. Agency introduction and philosophy
2. Agency team proposed for the ASPMI account
3. Recommended evaluation methodology strategy, both short and long-term
4. Proposal for conducting the activities outlined below
5. Budget recommendations, including estimated out-of-pocket expenses and fees. **Note: Total budget available for this project for the fiscal year is \$24,000, inclusive of all hard costs and fees.** The scope of work under this budget only addresses Canada and Europe.
6. Primary agency contact and contact information
7. Additional information that would be of assistance (i.e., government relations, current work samples, etc.)

8. Statement that undertaking this project would not constitute a conflict of interest with other clients or interests.

## **Background**

Establishing sound benchmarks, setting goals based on those benchmarks, and undergoing objective third-party research each year to measure progress towards those goals is integral to all of ASPMI's programs. ASPMI sees this as a necessary and ongoing component of its strategy and has requested funding for evaluation in every country or region targeted.

In Europe, ASPMI established benchmarks on consumer awareness and purchases of sweet potatoes in 2014 and conducted similar research in 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 to measure changes as a result of its promotional efforts. Surveys of European consumers show awareness of U.S. sweet potatoes increased and those that specifically purchase U.S. sweet potatoes grew significantly since 2014.

Similarly, in Canada, benchmarks were established in 2015 and follow-up research was conducted in 2016, 2017, and 2018 to measure ASPMI's progress in that market. Surveys of Canadian consumers show those that purchase sweet potatoes at least once per month increased while and those that never purchase sweet potatoes fell significantly.

While the evaluation, which centers on seven core metrics, has provided valuable insight on how ASPMI has been "moving the needle" in target markets, a fresh look at the metrics is needed.

### **Specific scope of work:**

ASPMI seeks an agency to:

1. In consultation with ASPMI's marketing committee, Identify new metrics that will measure progress in Europe and Canada and provide guidance on its messaging and promotional strategy;
2. Survey target audiences to establish benchmarks on these new metrics;
3. Report on the findings;
4. In subsequent years survey audiences using the same research methodology to measure changes from the benchmark.

As to timing, ASPMI envisions completing the benchmarking exercise by the Spring of 2020.

## Selection Criteria

1. Experience with similar benchmarking/evaluation projects.
2. Contacts in the target countries involved in the produce and sweet potato trade.
3. Relevant background of staff to be assigned to this project.
4. Experience with USDA/FAS cooperator promotion programs.
5. Experience with the U.S. Agricultural Trade Offices, Foreign Agricultural Service, the U.S. cooperators and the American Embassy staff.
6. Suggested fee schedule (e.g., planning fees, monthly representation fees, etc.).
7. Statement that working with the Institute construes no conflict of interest with the Agency's other clients, affiliates, or interests.
8. Completeness and thoroughness of the proposal.

## Timing and Submission of Proposals:

Please submit your proposal in English no later than **December 15, 2019** to:

Jerry Hingle, International Program Consultant  
American Sweet Potato Marketing Institute  
Email: [Jerry@intltradeassociates.com](mailto:Jerry@intltradeassociates.com)

Kay Rentzel, Program Consultant  
American Sweet Potato Marketing Institute  
Email: [ksrentzel@aol.com](mailto:ksrentzel@aol.com)

No in-person interviews will be conducted, although interviews may be conducted via video conferencing following reviews of the written proposals.

For more information please contact Jerry Hingle at [jerry@intltradeassociates.com](mailto:jerry@intltradeassociates.com) or tel +1-504-756-3520

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