



# American Sweet Potato Marketing Institute

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## American Sweet Potato Marketing Institute (ASPMI)

### Request for Proposal – Evaluation of Emerging Market Program projects in Thailand and Romania

#### **ASPMI 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 Emerging Market Program (EMP) funds on a cost-share basis to conduct exploratory and development work for U.S. sweet potatoes in Romania and Thailand. The Institute is seeking an agency to assist with evaluating the impact of these projects.

***Importantly, this evaluation is being carried out in close coordination with FAS's Grants division. In addition to assessing the impact of sales to the market, this evaluation is a "pilot project" aimed to serve as a framework for a standard approach to evaluating all future EMP grants administered by FAS and assist the agency in improving its grant programming.***

#### **Project background**

The project is conducted in three phases and seeks to:

- 1. Phase 1** -- Assess the potential for U.S. sweet potato sales to Romania and Thailand;
- 2. Phase 2** -- Conduct follow-up technical training and promotional work to enable buyers to begin or increase their purchases, and ;
- 3. Phase 3** -- Engage an independent, third-party agency to survey program participants to determine whether they have begun or increased purchase of U.S. sweet potatoes as a result of the training/promotional work.

ASPMI has begun work under Phases 1 and 2 in both markets; this request for proposal addresses work under Phase 3 to be conducted by an independent agency.

**Specific scope of work:**

ASPMI seeks an agency to:

- 1. Develop an *initial* survey to be completed by program participants upon completion of Phase 2 training that determines:**
  - a. Understanding of U.S. product as a result of the training.
  - b. Willingness to increase or begin purchases as a result of the training.
  - c. Additional training needs that would help trainees purchase U.S. sweet potatoes.
  
- 2. Several months after completion of the Phase 2 training, do a *follow-up* survey of program participants to determine:**
  - a. Whether participants still recall key points addressed in the training.
  - b. Whether they began or increased purchases of U.S. product since the training took place.
  - c. Why did they (or did not) increase/begin purchases.
  - d. What other activities might help participants' desire to purchase from the U.S. (e.g. additional technical training, travel to the U.S., samples etc.).

As to **sample size**, the number of program participants in each market is approximately 15-25 individuals representing 7 to 10 firms, thus no more than 20 firms and 50 individuals collectively.

As to **timing**, ASPMI envisions completing Phase 1 and Phase 2 by the Fall of 2020. Thus, the agency is requested to develop initial surveys over the coming months and the follow-up survey in the Fall of 2020/Spring of 2021.

Other considerations:

- 1.** ASPMI will provide the agency with a list of training participants and their contact information in order to conduct the follow-up survey.
  
- 2.** ASPMI will conduct the initial survey upon completion of the Phase 2 training and provide the results to the agency.
  
- 3.** Given the small sample size and the importance of achieving a high, qualitative response rate – ideally reaching all training participants -- ASPMI envisions the follow-up survey being conducted in person or by telephone by competent speakers of the native languages.

4. ASPMI and FAS Grants divisions envision the end product to be a 10-20-page evaluation report and requests that the agency present the findings to USDA and ASPMI in Washington, DC, no later than 8-months after completion of the research.

**Scope of the Proposal:**

Your proposal should include the following:

1. Agency introduction and philosophy.
2. Agency team proposed for the ASPMI account and their respective responsibility on the project.
3. Recommended evaluation methodology strategy, both short and long-term.
4. Proposal for conducting the activities outlined above.
5. Budget recommendations, including estimated out-of-pocket expenses and fees.
6. Primary agency contact and his/her contact information.
7. Additional information that would be of assistance in choosing your firm.

**Selection Criteria**

1. Experience with similar evaluation projects.
2. Experience, contacts, and resources in Thailand and Romania.
3. Relevant background of staff to be assigned to this project.
4. Proficiency in the relevant languages.
5. Experience with USDA/FAS cooperator promotion programs.
6. Experience with the U.S. Agricultural Trade Offices, Foreign Agricultural Service, the U.S. cooperators and the American Embassy staff.
7. Suggested fee schedule.
8. Statement that working with the Institute construes no conflict of interest with the Agency's other clients, affiliates, or interests.

9. Completeness and thoroughness of the proposal.

**Timing and Submission of Proposals:**

Please submit your proposal in English no later than **April 7, 2020** 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  
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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

***The American Sweet Potato Marketing Institute is an Equal Opportunity Employer.***