

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Softwood Export Council

The Softwood Export Council (SEC) is using this request for proposal (RFP) to identify a consultant/organization ("Consultant") to provide global strategy direction, analysis, reporting and key client outreach for its Market Access Program in Mexico.

Organizational Background

The Softwood Export Council (SEC) is a trade organization that works to increase exports of American-made softwood products. SEC represent U.S. softwood grading agencies, industry trade associations, state export promotion agencies, and others with a stake in the global trade of softwood lumber and wood-based building materials. With assistance from the Foreign Agricultural Service, we identify international opportunities, educate buyers, and develop collaborative relationships with international industry representatives and buyers.

The Softwood Export Council and its members are also actively involved in maintaining market access for U.S. wood products which includes participating in a range of codes and standards activities and working with international governments to address codes that may limit the use of wood.

Project Description and Objectives

SEC is seeking a consultant with expertise to create a high level, broad based and ambitious market development and communications strategy to expand SEC's network of influence in the architecture and design community in Mexico. In the short-term this will likely include preservative treated/outdoor use and products made for the resort and high end residential sector. This will also include furniture and may expand to other end use segments depending on critical research gathered over the first few months of collaboration.

Statement of Work

Implementation includes the following key steps:

Continue to cultivate and identify key contacts in the architecture, design, and development segment including outdoor use, resorts, the renewable building materials sector, civic/public buildings, and furniture through a trade servicing program in key Mexican cities.

Identify key industry associations to leverage connections, such as national architectural societies and green building initiatives.

Develop key messages about the value and qualities of American softwoods to be delivered via print and social media, radio spots, interviews, YouTube videos, etc.

Identify key partners and thought leaders in the three largest Mexican cities and three key resort areas to create partnerships that can be leveraged to expand outreach and disseminate culturally sensitive messaging.

Identify new opportunities to showcase U.S. softwoods such as trade shows and expos.

Manage and implement a demonstration project with wood in outdoor use and identify venue for installation, work with FAS/Mexico to create a showcase around this event.

Based on information gathered, refine the communications strategy for SEC.

Build a database of key contacts among Mexican developers, builders, and architects in interior and exterior architectural design for residential, commercial, and hospitality sectors.

I. Proposal Format and Selection Criteria

The proposal format is open but should be no longer than 8 pages. It must be submitted electronically and should include, but is not limited to, the following criteria for comparison and evaluation purposes:

- Technical qualifications of the proposer including experience with similar consulting projects, and particularly staff experience and qualifications.
- The ability to work effectively with US industry associations.
- A proposal that meets the statement requirements, the project objectives and includes appropriate deliverables to ensure that implementation will deliver desired outcomes for SEC.
- Familiarity with US agriculture and commodity market development programs in general, along with digital and print promotion in particular.
- Familiarity with wood products industry issues.
- Project costs, including breakouts for the following:
 - Hourly rates and approximate number of staff hours for the project.
 - Administrative costs, travel costs, and other miscellaneous costs along with justification for these costs.
 - Third party fees that may be incurred.
- Timeline of project milestones

II. Response and Submittal Deadline

Questions regarding this request for proposal should be directed to Rose Braden, at rbraden@softwood.org. Questions shall be submitted no later than January 30, 2025.

The response deadline for this RFP is 5:00 pm CST, February 21, 2025. Final proposals shall be submitted via email to Rose Braden at rbraden@softwood.org.

This project will run through the end of 2025. SEC reserves the right to withdraw the RFP at any time.

SEC does not discriminate in any of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, family status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.