

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL Southern Forest Products Association

Coordination and promotion of wood product seminars in the Caribbean and Central America

I. Introduction and Overview:

The Southern Forest Products Association (SFPA), founded in 1914, is a non-profit trade association representing the Southern Pine lumber industry. SFPA is recognized as one of the foremost trade organizations in the forest products industry and represents Southern Pine lumber manufacturers from Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Member mills produce half of the Southern Pine lumber in the United States.

SFPA is headquartered in the metro New Orleans area, with staff directing marketing programs to serve the entire U.S., and international market consultants serving markets in Europe, the Middle East, Mexico, the Caribbean, China, and India.

SFPA is seeking proposals for an individual or agency to organize seminars promoting U.S. wood products in the Caribbean, Costa Rica and Guatemala over the course of 2023.

II. Candidate Proposal:

Please submit your proposal by February 28, 2023, and include the following:

1. A brief description of your firm
2. At least three references, including the names of individual contacts and their contact information
3. A detailed description of the project team, including experience, education, and representative clients in the past five years

III. Proposal Objective:

SFPA routinely holds technical seminars to train wood traders (importers, wholesalers, and retailers) and wood specifiers (builders, architects, engineers, joinery and furniture producers) on proper selection and use of softwood lumber from the United States. The seminars, which are offered to attendees free of charge, are typically three hours in duration and feature expert speakers from the United States on the subject. SFPA provides training literature and coffee breaks, lunch, or reception depending on the timing of the event.

This project seeks to gather the above target audiences at six seminars in the Caribbean (islands to be determined and over the course of 2023) and in Guatemala City, Guatemala, scheduled for mid-September. For the seminars in the Caribbean, SFPA envisions the events taking part in pairs with travel to two markets in a given week. SFPA will provide speakers and training literature; the individual or agency chosen to assist with the project is tasked with organizing and promoting the events and arranging site visits prior to the seminars.

IV. Project scope of work

Specific tasks of the individual or agency include:

1. Arrange for seminar venues, audio/visual, and interpreters (where needed) for the seminars. Costs must be in accordance with U.S. federal regulations as advised by SFPA.
2. Promote the events to the target audience with an aim to gather at least 25 wood traders and specifiers at each seminar. Experience has shown that this is best accomplished through partnerships with local trade associations, such as contractor associations, builder associations, architectural associations, or other like trade groups.
3. Attend the events to assist with on-site arrangements and literature and survey distribution.
4. Arrange for and attend site visits prior to the seminars. Site visits would include lumber yards, retailers, construction sites, and any other venues that provide insight on lumber consumption in the market.
5. Assist with hotel recommendations for the speakers and any other travel arrangements.

V. Rough itinerary

For the Caribbean, SFPA envisions accomplishing the seminars and site visits in one week. Three sets of two seminars are envisioned:

Sunday – Travel to first market
Monday -- Tour lumber yards and construction sites
Tuesday – Seminar in first market
Wednesday -- Travel to second market
Thursday -- Tour lumber yards and construction sites in second market
Friday -- Seminar in second market; speakers travel home if possible. If not, travel home
Saturday

For Costa Rica and Guatemala, SFPA envisions accomplishing the seminar and site visits in one week, ideally in mid-September, and includes one-on-one meetings with at least three lumber buyers:

Monday – Travel to San Jose / Guatemala City
Tuesday -- Tour lumber yards and construction sites
Wednesday – One-on-one meetings with lumber buyers
Wednesday – Seminar in San Jose / Guatemala City

Thursday – Speakers return to U.S.

VI. Selection Criteria:

The selection of the individual or agency will be based upon the following:

1. Knowledge of the wood, building materials, and construction industry in the target markets.
2. Contacts in the target countries involved in the wood trade and construction industry.
3. Experience in organizing similar events in the target countries.
4. Relevant background of staff to be assigned to this project.
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 SFPA construes no conflict of interest with the Agency's other clients or affiliates.
9. Completeness and thoroughness of the proposal.

Selection will be made by March 7, 2023. Only those firms meeting the criteria above will be considered. All proposals must be received by February 28, 2023, and addressed to:

Eric Gee
Executive Director
Southern Forest Products Association
egee@sfpa.org
Tel 504-443-4464

Alaina Hanson
Director of Administration
Southern Forest Products Association
ahanson@sfpa.org
Tel 504-443-4464

Jerry Hingle
Project Consultant
jerry@intltradeassociates.com
Tel 504-756-3520

Questions regarding this RFP or your proposal submission may be addressed to:

Jerry Hingle
Project Consultant
jerry@intltradeassociates.com
Tel 504-756-3520

VII. Proposal Format:

The format of the proposal is open, except for the breakdown of costs. While the fee will be all-inclusive, we require that the following information be specifically included in the budgeting section of the proposal to compare the value of various proposals. The more detailed the information you provide, the better assessment we can make as to the overall merit of your proposal. The cost breakdown should include:

1. Name and title of all staff people assigned to this account with corresponding hourly rates at which will be charged, and the approximate number of hours per seminar/seminar pair that each person will spend. For example:

a. Senior Staff Consultant:		
	\$1.00/hour x 2 hours/seminar	\$ 2.00
b. Project Director:		
	\$ 0.75/hour x 20 hour/seminar	\$15.00
c. Support Staff:		
	\$.25/hour x 60 hour/seminar	\$15.00
<u>d. Total fees per seminar (a+b+c):</u>		<u>\$32.00</u>

* None of these examples reflect any expectation of staff requirements or a fee structure. These hourly rates should include any administrative or overhead costs – including international phone, fax, courier, etc. -- that are part of the normal course of doing business.

2. **Travel costs** will be reimbursed separately by SFPA and must be in accordance with federal travel regulations.
3. **Seminar costs**, such as meeting room rental, audio-visual, interpreters, coffee breaks, etc. will be paid directly by SFPA to the vendors.
4. Please provide a listing and explanation of any other costs that your firm feels should be incorporated into the final fee.

SFPA reserves the right to award the contract to the company with the best combination of attributes, not necessarily the lowest bid.