

**Office: China**

**Date: October 27, 2021**

## Shared Trade Office – Request for Proposal

The Conference of Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers (GSGP) is a partnership of the Governors from the eight Great Lakes States in the U.S.—Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin—and the Premiers from the Canadian Provinces of Ontario and Québec. GSGP seeks the services of a qualified Contractor to provide trade promotion services to companies for the primary purpose of expanding exports of products and services to China. Proposals are sought from qualified contractors to provide these services in China.

GSGP will enter into a contract for trade promotion services with the successful contractor of which the amount will be finalized pending evaluation of the Proposals.

Operating costs including staff salaries, office space/rent, office equipment, office supplies, postage, printing, telephones, local transportation as well as all other costs unless otherwise noted will be the sole responsibility of the Contractor and derived from the contract fees listed in Appendix A Scope of Work. As noted below, GSGP and its participating member States and Provinces will additionally pay for pre-authorized travel expenses related to annual visits to the participating member States and Provinces, or for additional pre-authorized expenses incurred for activities outside of the scope of the Contractor's contract with GSGP.

The term of the initial contract shall be from January 15, 2022, through June 30, 2022, and shall be renewable subject to mutual agreement on an annual basis beginning July 1, 2022.

### **Mandatory Requirements:**

- Contractor must have an appropriate office site in China.
- Contractor must be legally registered to do business in China.
- Contractor must have the ability to obtain a US Visa for traveling to the United States at least once a year.
- Contractor must be fully bilingual with the ability to read, write and compose business correspondence in English.
- Contractor and staff must be familiar with US and China business practices and culture.
- Contractor must have an established business and at least five years of experience in consulting, marketing, sales or other areas that provide services to international, preferably US and Canadian, companies.

- Contractor must have experience working with small-to-medium sized companies (average annual sales less than US\$50 million).
- Contractor's staff must have access to exceptional research, writing, and interpersonal skills.
- The Contracting Principal Officer must have a bachelor's degree. A master's, legal or specialized degree in a relevant field is preferred but not required.

**Services to be Provided:**

The Contractor shall serve as the official representative for GSGP and the participating member States and Provinces in China. GSGP, on behalf of these participating member States and Provinces, shall retain the Contractor for the purpose of increasing the export of products and services from small-to-medium sized companies in the participating member States and Provinces to China. This contract is on a non-exclusive basis and the Contractor may have other clients and/or provide work for other US States or Canadian Provinces or foreign governments/legislatures where no conflict of interest exists.

Trade development services to be provided by the Contractor, in addition to those described below, will be determined by specific parameters submitted by each participating member State and Province. Minimum services required are as follows:

**(a.) Agent/Distributor Searches and Matchmaking**

At any participating member State's and Province's request, the Contractor shall conduct agent/distributor searches for small-to-medium sized companies. The agent/distributor searches shall include investigating the products or services made by the companies, identifying and/or qualifying agents and distributors to represent products or services, interviewing prospective representatives and distributors, arranging appointments with agents and distributors, arranging for translators, conducting pre-and post-briefings and follow-up activities. The Contractor may also be required to conduct market research and viability studies, as well as end user searches.

**(b.) Trade Events**

At any participating member State's and Province's request, the Contractor shall recommend trade events for its participation. The Contractor shall serve as the primary coordinator for participation in trade events. Examples of these events include trade fairs/exhibitions and catalogue shows. The Contractor will be responsible for all pre- and post-event activities including but not limited to publicity, information distribution, contracting of event space, layout, interpreters, participant briefings, participation on behalf of the participating member State and Province, and post-event evaluation. The Contractor will not be responsible for direct costs including exhibition space, interpreter fees, shipment of exhibition displays, preparation of printed materials, etc.

**(c.) Referrals**

At any participating member State's and Province's request, the Contractor shall provide qualified referrals to that member State's or Province's firms, including but not limited to

referrals for legal, translation, advertising, local employment practices, credit and other professional services.

**(d.) Database of Trade Contacts**

The Contractor shall maintain a database of agents, distributors, manufacturers, retail outlets, international trade service providers including translating companies, advertising companies, law firms, government offices and government officials, and other organizations and individuals as necessary to perform duties as Contractor.

**(e.) Development of Trade Contacts and Leads**

The Contractor shall obtain, maintain, and strengthen contacts with businesses throughout China in order to create additional trade leads for the participating member States and Provinces.

**(f.) Business Appointments and Assistance**

At any participating member State's and Province's request, the Contractor shall assist in arranging business appointments and itineraries for visiting business executives from the participating member States and Provinces.

**(g.) Annual State/Province Trip**

At any participating member State's and Province's request, the Principal Officer of the Contractor shall visit the member State and Province annually for up to one week per State and Province to attend and/or participate in conferences, programs and training sessions arranged by the State and Province. The State and Province will pay for pre-authorized travel expenses incurred.

**(h.) Trade Missions**

At any participating member State's and Province's request, the Contractor shall help organize and participate in all official member State and Provincial trade delegations to China. Expenses incurred outside the normal scope of the contract will be the responsibility of the participating member State and Province.

- I. Business Matchmaking - The Contractor will arrange customized business one-on-one business appointments with prospective agents, distributors or buyers. Participants average one to four business appointments each day depending on the company's products, services and objectives in addition to the distance between meetings.
- II. Market Research – Customized market research, industry information and analysis should be provided to the participating companies prior to the visit.
- III. In-Country Business briefings – The Contractor or its subcontractor will be required to coordinate an in-country briefing for participating countries within 36 hours of arrival to the market. This includes coordinating space, speakers, and topics such as: economic outlook, leading sectors, legal considerations, business cultural tips, distribution and sales channels, and other approved topics. Speakers may include contractor staff, U.S Commercial Service specialists, industry experts, associations, local business and/or government officials.

In Country Staff Support – The Contractor will assist companies with preparation for missions, accompany the delegation, and provide post mission follow-up. Director or approved delegate is required to travel with the delegation to manage the in-country service delivery.

- IV. Ground Transportation – The Contractor will arrange group ground transportation to and from the airport and hotel; assist companies with coordinating and paying transportation for in- country meetings.
- V. Group-Rate Accommodations – The Contractor or it’s subcontractor will provide hotel suggestions and negotiated group rates for the delegation.
- VI. Other services – Recommendations for suitable drivers, interpreters and business services should be available upon request.

#### **(i.) Information**

The Contractor shall maintain an in-depth knowledge of the participating member States’ and Provinces’ economic structure, business interests/practices and culture. The participating member States and Provinces shall provide information and materials to the Contractor on a continuing basis.

#### **(j.) Monthly/Annual Reports**

The Contractor shall submit a monthly report to GSGP and participating member States and Provinces detailing content and results of work related to points (a.) through (i.). Expenses incurred at the request of GSGP or the member States and Provinces that are outside of the contract, if any, and a corresponding request for reimbursement, should also be reported.

The Contractor shall also prepare and provide GSGP and member States and Provinces with an annual report summarizing all business development and other activities engaged in by the Contractor in China.

#### **Proposals:**

Proposals and any attachments must be submitted in English by email and in PDF format. Proposals must not exceed ten (10) single spaced pages and attachments, if any, should be kept to a minimum. **To receive consideration, the proposal must contain elements outlined in the following Request for Proposal Contents:**

#### **1.) Business Organization and History**

- a. Company legal name and type (e.g. partnership, corporation, LLC, non-profit)
- b. Company mailing address
- c. Company physical address
- d. Local registration or ID number
- e. Principal Contact, address, telephone number, email address, skype name
- f. Profile of the Contractor’s organization, including percentage of business that is export related.
- g. An explanation of why you are interested in this contract.
- h. Any material litigation the organization has been involved in over the last five years.

## **2.) Contractor Staff and Capabilities**

- a. Number of full-time, part time and independent contractors
- b. Management – positions and personnel
- c. Staff Information – for all staff and management provide a one paragraph biography for each individual including the following information:
  - i) Role of each staff member in organization
  - ii) Experience and education of each staff member
  - iii) Industry sector and/or geographic experience or specialization of each staff member
  - iv) Language skills (native, fluent or conversational in reading, writing, speaking) of each staff member
  - v) Other skills and experience of each staff member
  - vi) Years of international business experience of each staff member
  - vii) Total years of professional experience of each staff member
  - viii) Any relevant staff knowledge of the North American Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region

## **3.) Facilities**

A list of office locations and geographic coverage. Please include the exact address where each office is located. Include a brief description of office administration, communication capabilities (telephone, internet, on-line conference facilitation and IT infrastructure).

## **4.) Capabilities**

- a. Current services provided.
- b. Knowledge and experience in international trade promotion including trade mission organization and trade show participation.
- c. Knowledge and contact with international trade associations, chambers of commerce, government agencies and other business groups.
- d. Special knowledge or expertise in specific industry sectors or product specializations
- e. Current contracts with other U.S. States and other countries and regions.
- f. Current capabilities other than international trade development.
- g. Provide two samples of market research reports and agent distributor searches that you completed for a company this year. Remove all names and confidential information.
- h. Include a brief description of economic development metrics collected from completed projects (job creation, export sales, new distribution channels etc.).

**5.) Service Providers, Subcontractor and Resources** - Listing of service providers, subcontractors and resource partners and their role in contributing to the services you intend to provide.

**6.) References** - List three professional references with complete contact information and a brief description of your business relationship with each.

**7.) Pricing Summary**

- a. Using the document included in Appendix A, list your estimated price of services sought by GSGP.

**8.) Conflicts** - Describe any existing or potential conflicts of interest of the company or organization that may arise from working with other parties or participating in other projects that might affect this engagement.

**Proposal Submission**

Proposals must be submitted via email to [rfptrade@gsgp.org](mailto:rfptrade@gsgp.org).

Proposals will be accepted via email until **9 a.m. Eastern Standard Time on November 26, 2021.**

Due to the expected number of proposals, GSGP is unable to respond to questions on this RFP separate from the interviews with selected candidates.

**Schedule of GSGP Request for Proposal**

**GSGP Releases Request for Proposal.....October 27, 2021**

**Proposal Submission Deadline.....November 26, 2021**

**Interviews of Selected Candidates (by invitation only) and Reference Checks...December 6-10, 2021**

**GSGP Notification of Award.....December 20, 2021**

Pending State/Provincial budget approvals, the Contractor will be expected to start work under the contract on January 15, 2022.

Documents included in the Request for Proposal

- Request for Proposal
- Appendix A: Scope of Work & Pricing Structure. Please fill out pricing and hours in chart.
- Appendix B: Example of a Market Assessment Template
- Appendix C: Example of a Partner Search Template
- Appendix D: Example of a Business Meeting Facilitation Template