



Request for Proposals: Innovation Convening for Packaging Innovation Program at the Foundation for Fresh Produce-Event Storm Collaborator

Company Name: The Foundation for Fresh Produce by IFPA, Inc.

Posting Date: 1 September 2026

Due Date: 4 weeks from posting date

Introduction

The Foundation for Fresh Produce (TFFP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit of the International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA). IFPA includes over 3,000 member companies along the entire fresh produce and floral supply chain. IFPA assists its members through advocating on their behalf to global decision makers and consumer-facing entities, connecting them with each other, buyers, and consumers and guiding them to identify existing and emergent needs as well as solutions for these needs. TFFP received an Assisting Specialty Crops Exports grant from USDA-FAS and now seeks a contractor to assist with meeting objectives of the project by facilitating a virtual event storm summit, leading to the award of a cost-reimbursable contract.

Project Overview

Worldwide, emerging restrictions on single-use and plastic packaging will limit access for U.S. specialty crops in global markets. TFFP is partnering with FFAR and Clemson University through the grant program within the Assisting Specialty Crop Exports program by the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service to advance packaging innovations for U.S. produce and specialty crop exporters. The Packaging Innovation Program, funded for a total of five years, develops packaging and packaging alternatives for specialty crops compliant with emerging packaging regulations in the European Union, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan and other key markets. The long-term goal of this team is to foster development and adoption of economically and environmentally sustainable packaging for fresh and fresh-cut produce, and value-added products that ensures food safety and quality of the product, extends its shelf-life and does not create additional carbon footprint. Therefore, the overarching goal of the Packaging Innovation Program project is to identify existing novel packaging and packaging alternative technologies that have completed initial R&D to facilitate their scale up, piloting, and adoption. To be successful, TFFP will host an innovation convening to define the current state of packaging science, identify current packaging technology gaps that negatively impact exports of fresh produce into EU, Canada and other markets, barriers to adoption of innovative packaging formats and best practices for compliance with packaging requirements in the EU, Canada and other markets.

More information about the Innovative Packaging Program can be found here:

<https://www.freshproduce.com/resources/technology/packaging-innovation-program/>

Project goals

The contractor selected to organize and moderate the innovation convening will be instrumental in meeting the following objectives: organize stakeholder convening to define the state of packaging science, identify specific industry achievements, opportunity gaps and best practices for meeting packaging requirements in import markets (EU, Canada, others) for the US fresh produce, as well as barriers to adoption of innovative packaging formats, upstream and downstream impacts on the supply chain associated with the novel packaging formats.





The selected entity will plan and facilitate a virtual innovation convening session to discuss and start to uncover issues for U.S. grower/shippers, packaging companies, exporters, world-wide retailers, foreign buyers, technology input companies, and federal regulators in developing solutions for exporting produce out of the U.S. This event will include a mix of industry members and potential applicants for a related grant, working to identify best practices for the development of innovative packaging and regulatory compliance and opportunities for education and engagement with decision-makers worldwide.

We anticipate that the output of this convening will be shared broadly with start-up and existing companies developing alternative packaging technologies to support commercialization of novel packaging technologies and to be a resource for the broader packaging innovation ecosystem.

Scope of Work

Event Design & Facilitation

It is expected that the selected contractor will use their convening methodology adapted for this industry context. During the convening, we are looking for the selected contractor to actively engage stakeholders in virtual activities such as (but not limited to) an innovation sprint, challenge sprint, open space technology, mini-unconference, co-creation workshop, event storming, collabathon or a data sprint to achieve Project Goals. Policy analysis and analysis of packaging regulations are explicitly outside the scope of this project.

Stakeholder Engagement

It is expected that the selected contractor will engage stakeholders in all parts of the supply chain, U.S. and global, to participate. The selected contractor will have an active and comprehensive list of contacts among interested stakeholders, particularly among innovative packaging companies and start-ups.

Program Management & Technical support

It is expected that the selected contractor will recruit participants, design and run the virtual event with minimal support from TFFP and IFPA staff for event execution. The selected contractor will need to coordinate with appointed TFFP and IFPA staff for marketing, registration, and virtual platform execution (use of ZOOM).

Upon completion of the convening, the contractor will synthesize key takeaways into a report to be posted on the IFPA website.

Deadline for Submission

Proposals should be received no later than 4 weeks from the posting date by COB (**September 29th, 2026**). **Packages should be emailed to: smarques@freshproduce.com**. Respondents shall restrict all contact and questions regarding this RFP and selection process to Sophie Marques via email at smarques@freshproduce.com (preferred) or call at (302)-607-2142.

- Deadline for bidders to submit questions: two weeks from posting
- Deadline for bidders to request NDA (optional): two weeks from posting
- Response to bidder questions: within 24 business hours
- Selection of top bidders/ notification of unsuccessful bidders: October 13th, 2026





- Presentation to the project team: 5-7 weeks from posting date
- Start of negotiation: 7-8 weeks from posting date
- Contract award: by end of October 2026

Submission Requirements

Applicants should submit a thoughtful, clear and well-organized proposal package (up to 3 pages) that includes a description of how they plan to lead the convening with detailed descriptions of each deliverable. Please include a projected budget, key team member resumes (no longer than 2 pages per key team member, in addition to the 3-page proposal). Selected finalists will be invited to give a 30-45 min presentation (via zoom or a similar web platform) to the selection team, and the selected finalists should be open to iterative conversations about the evolving needs of the projects. Applications should focus on one year of the project.

Privacy

As it pertains to this project and all related data, the service provider is expected to assure adherence to the strict data privacy and security standards as defined in the contract. Please include a copy of your standard privacy policy and data security and governance policies with your response (in addition to the 5-page proposal package).

NDA

Non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) are not required by IFPA to submit a proposal or to be engaged in pre-contract discussions. However, IFPA will review and consider reasonable NDA that follow industry standards prior to the submission of the proposal. Please note the deadline for NDA request.

Evaluation Metrics and Criteria

(In order from highest priority to lowest):

Quality and user-friendliness of measurement, reporting and validation services that include (but are not limited to):

- Qualifications of the project team
- Partnering experience
- Project cost
- Ability to work with IFPA

Budget Amount

The contract for the chosen data company will be cost-reimbursable, not to exceed \$40,000.

Proposal Reviews/ Selection

A panel of experts in areas including sustainability, supply chain, and agricultural research and technology industries will review the proposals and be involved in the final interview process. Finalists being solicited for this RFP will be asked to conduct 30-45 min presentations and time for Q&A in October 2026. Consideration is expected to be given but is not guaranteed to be given to the weighted criteria listed on this page. Evaluation criteria are subject to change with reasonable notice to applicants.

