

# APPALACHIAN sustainable DEVELOPMENT

## BRAND & MARKETING CONSULTANT - REVISED 8.28.24 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) is inviting proposals for branding and marketing consulting services as detailed below. ASD will make a final selection based on the proposal which best meets the specifications, our needs, price, and other factors. We are not limited, unless otherwise noted, to making our selection based only on the lowest-priced proposal. Please review these criteria carefully and include information in your proposal as appropriate. ASD reserves the right to ask for revised proposals from any or all companies submitting proposals if major revisions in the basic specifications become mandatory.

### **Services Description**

ASD is seeking branding and marketing consulting services to help conduct research and develop strategy for silvopasture products. This includes a Landscape Analysis and Needs Assessment with Industry Stakeholders, and a Silvopasture Marketing Plan.

### **Background**

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and multiple partners throughout the United States, including ASD, are launching a 5-year project to catalyze significant private investments into the agroforestry<sup>1</sup> industry while increasing farmers' incomes and delivering environmental benefits. This *Expanding Agroforestry Production (EAP) & Markets for Producer Profitability and Climate Stabilization* project is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under agreement number NR233A750004G005, as part of their [Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities](#) initiative. This project aims to create 30,000 acres of new agroforestry plantings over five years, including practices such as silvopasture<sup>2</sup>. Project partners intend to accomplish this goal by:

- Offering regionalized technical assistance and outreach to farmers, including underserved producers
- Providing \$36 million in direct incentive payments to farmers for tree planting
- Creating a national network of demonstration farms for education and outreach activities
- Working with companies and retailers to expand markets for climate-smart agroforestry commodities (i.e. nuts, fruits, timber, and livestock products from silvopasture settings)

ASD operates one of the oldest food hubs in the country - [Appalachian Harvest](#) (AH). Founded in 2000, AH sells fresh produce, beef, and value added goods to wholesale grocery store markets along the East coast, with over \$3MM in annual sales. As a part of the EAP project, ASD's

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<sup>1</sup> [Agroforestry](#) is the intentional mixing of trees and shrubs into crop and/or animal production systems to create environmental, economic and social benefits. There are five agroforestry practices, including silvopasture.

<sup>2</sup> [Silvopasture](#) is the intentional integration of trees and grazing livestock, which are intensively managed together on the same land. The trees can provide shade and fodder for livestock, as well as forest products for farm income.

Agroforestry Program will also provide technical support to farmers for agroforestry adoption, including silvopasture, to build the supply chain. Leveraging this expertise, ASD is the EAP partner leading this project. The landscape analysis and needs assessment, as well as the customer personas, competitive positioning, pricing, and marketing channels from the silvopasture marketing plan, will be publicly available for use by any brand that seeks to launch their own silvopasture product line. The silvopasture marketing plan will be developed for Appalachian Harvest and tested in Central Appalachian markets as a trial.

## **Business Consulting Needs**

### **Deliverables:**

**1) Phase 1 – Landscape Analysis + Needs Assessment** – The Consultant will initiate the project by conducting a landscape assessment of existing silvopasture branding & marketing efforts. Next, the Consultant will initiate a stakeholder engagement process to identify and scope out the industry needs for silvopasture branding and marketing efforts. The Consultant will hold a series of listening sessions, or focus group interviews, to solicit input from industry stakeholders across the value chain – from farmers to buyers across multiple market channel types (e.g. direct and intermediated). If the Consultant has another similar process that has been successful in the past to collect the same type of information, ASD is open to those ideas as well. It is anticipated that this work can be completed remotely without incurring travel costs.

- **Deliverable:** A minimum 5-page report that can be shared publicly with the findings from the stakeholder engagement process and landscape assessment of existing silvopasture branding and marketing efforts. This report will also include the outline of required elements for the silvopasture branding and marketing plan (e.g. identified potential market regions to target, supply chain, livestock products, or producer types to focus on, etc.). This report can serve as the basis for the Brand Marketing Plan.
- **Due Date:** No later than December 30, 2025 (early submission is acceptable)

**2) Phase 2 - Silvopasture Brand Marketing Plan Development:** Based on the findings from Phase 1, the Consultant will develop a Brand Marketing Plan for a new silvopasture product line for ASD's existing Appalachian Harvest brand. The first new silvopasture product will be under our beef line, which is currently marketed as "beefin' good" but we anticipate expanding to other products in the future (i.e. chicken, lamb, eggs, etc.). Depending on the budget, the components of this plan could include: a) brand strategy to include customer personas, messaging, competitive positioning, pricing, marketing channels, and a suggested paid advertising budget; b) brand identity development to include label design for the silvopasture product, suggested visual representation (i.e. illustration, photography) for the product, and other iconography; and c) distribution channel strategies for specific outlets. An outcome of this plan should also include sample digital/print advertisements and sample in-store shelf talkers. It is anticipated that this work can be completed remotely without incurring travel costs.

- **Deliverable:** Brand Marketing Plan
- **Due Date:** No later than June 30, 2026 (early submission is acceptable)

**Budget:** The budget for this project can range from \$48,454 on the low end to a maximum of \$100,000 on the high end. *When providing your bid, please share anticipated costs of Phase 1 and Phase 2 separately, including what services can be offered at both the low and high end of the budget for consideration.* As a funding requirement, ASD will be hiring through an open and free

competitive negotiation process. It is ASD's intention to fully consider and evaluate each proposal submitted. Invoices can be submitted as each agreed upon phase is complete. The final invoice must be submitted on or before July 31, 2026.

### **Evaluation Criteria and Relative Importance**

Value System 1 to 4: 1 = Most important

(No more than three criteria shall be rated 1; two or more criteria must be rated 2 or 3)

1. Price of services offered and materials needed: 1
2. Expertise and relevant experience in chosen field: 1
3. On-time completion dates: 2
4. References from previous clients: 2
5. Resumes of service providers: 3

Please review these criteria carefully and include information in your proposal, as appropriate. All proposals should also include:

- the phone number and email address of the primary contact person
- itemized price quote for costs associated with all consulting activities
- samples of prior work

Opportunity for this bid will be shared with a minimum of three brand and marketing consultants. ASD will accept bids **from July 30, 2024 until September 21, 2024**. Proposals must be submitted electronically via email to Katie Commender. A bidder will be selected and announcements made to all bidders by no later than **September 30, 2024**.

All consulting activities must be completed by the completion dates specified. If more time is needed, alternative completion dates can be offered for negotiation. A mutual non-disclosure agreement will be required.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you. If you should have further questions, the contact person for this RFP is:

Katie Commender  
Director of Agroforestry  
Appalachian Sustainable Development  
Email: [kcommender@asdevelop.org](mailto:kcommender@asdevelop.org)