

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
12:00 PM CST, 5/21/2018

RFP TITLE: GRAIN & OILSEED MARKET ACCESS INDEXES

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: MAY 21, 2018

INTRODUCTION:

Through a global network of international offices and strong support in the U.S., USSEC helps build a preference for U.S. soybeans and soybean products, advocate for the use of soy in feed, aquaculture and human consumption, promote the benefits of soy use through education and connect industry leaders through a robust membership program.

United States Soybean Export Council (USSEC) requests proposals to prepare and complete a Grain Oilseeds Market Access Index (GOMAI) for 2018. Bidders are expected to take into account past GOMAI reports, third party evaluations and USSEC comments.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC's standard practice is to RFP every 3 years in an openly and competitive manner. This type of cost analysis will assist in determining the fair market value for the work to be performed and allows USSEC the opportunity to evaluate various proposals and select the best contractor for the job based on experience, availability, expertise, approach, and cost

United States Soybean Export Council (USSEC) requests proposals to prepare and complete a Grain Oilseeds Market Access Index (GOMAI) for 2018. Bidders are expected to take into account past GOMAI reports, third party evaluations and USSEC comments.

The 2018 GOMAI will be a comprehensive database of various market access barriers for selected U.S. export commodities and selected countries. In addition, the GOMAI aggregates these barriers into a composite 'market access index' that provides a comparative 'measure of market openness' for each commodity in each country. The index then will be aggregated for each commodity across all selected markets and for each

country across all commodities. The 2018 GOMAI also will assess the comparative importance of various access barriers by country and commodity

The 2018 GOMAI will provide USSEC with information that enables them to set priorities for efforts to reduce or eliminate access barriers. GOMAI will enable USSEC to adjust export market development efforts based on the nature of market access barriers and prospects for their elimination.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

In 2004, a coalition of USDA sponsored agricultural export commodity promotion organizations “the Collaborators” led by the North American Export Grain Association with the support of the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service funded a third party project to develop a “Grain and Oilseed Market Access Index” (GOMAI). The purpose of this indicator was to develop a quantitative measurement tool to assess the [impact] of collaborator activities intended to improve international market access for U.S. origin agricultural products over a number of years.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

Individual market access barriers are assigned scores which are established to reflect the degree of openness of markets to U.S. commodities in each of the targeted countries. These individual scores are converted into broader measures which are used to show accessibility of a given commodity in a given target country, all commodities into a given target country and all countries for a given commodity.

The indexes cover price, quantity and technical measures. The sub-categories of measures such as tariffs, variable levies, preferences, taxes, and advance payment requirements in the price category are treated cumulatively.

USSEC has determined the following list of countries in which they wish to see the indicators developed or continued:

Countries

1. Algeria
2. Bangladesh
3. Brazil
4. Canada
5. China
6. Colombia
7. Costa Rica
8. Cuba
9. Dominican Republic

10. Ecuador
11. Egypt
12. EU-28
13. Guatemala
14. India
15. Indonesia
16. Iraq
17. Japan
18. Lebanon
19. Malaysia
20. Mexico
21. Morocco
22. Nigeria
23. Pakistan
24. Peru
25. Philippines
26. Russia
27. Saudi Arabia
28. South Korea
29. Sri Lanka
30. Sudan
31. Taiwan
32. Thailand
33. Trinidad & Tobago
34. Turkey
35. Venezuela
36. Vietnam

Selection of Commodities

- Soybean Meal
- Soybean Oil
- Soybeans

Each composite GOMAI will use a two-pronged approach: objective factors and subjective factors (e.g. monopolistic tendencies).

Historical Objective Factors: UNCTAD's Trade Analysis and Information System (TRAINS) includes many of the objective data categories needed for each CMAI. TRAINS' categories have been reviewed by USSEC to exclude categories that have limited or no impact on the commodities of interest for each CMAI. To cover potential weaknesses in TRAINS (potential bias against the U.S. and EU), other indexes

and data like that found in the Agricultural Market Access Database (AMAD) can be utilized.

Historical Subjective Factors: A survey of key participants in the trade is planned to serve as a primary tool in the collection of subjective information on market access. Other existing data or index may also be utilized. There are potential resources within USSEC membership that could assist in crafting the survey.

Survey Pool: Targeted survey respondents include collaborator staff and membership, and FAS attaches.

Database: A comprehensive database of information collected and used to the GOMAI will be maintained. USSEC will have exclusive access to any original data collected for the database.

Survey Content: The survey questions need to be focused on GOMAI project's key objective creditable measurement of relative market access.

Administration: The GOMAI project will be administered by USSEC, in compliance with applicable FAS program requirements.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (if applicable)

The successful bidder will be expected to conduct the entire GOMAI analysis.

Proposals should contain the following basic information:

1. **Proposed Methodology:** Bidder should briefly explain their approach to carrying out each component and sub-component of the GOMAI.
2. **Proposed Work Plan:** Summarize the major tasks, timing and benchmarks for completion of the entire GOMAI covered by this report.
3. **Proposed Budget:** The budget should provide a total U.S. dollar amount required to prepare the GOMAI.
4. **Actual Deliverable:** Electronic copies of the bidder's proposal will need to be delivered to USSEC by COB on May 21, 2018 to rfp@ussec.org. The product must be transparent and the database, model or other information used in the product cannot be proprietary to the bidder. All submitted materials must include the name of the primary contact for the bidder and contact information for the bidder.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria:

The contract will be awarded to the firm that offers the best total value as determined by the contractor and “the Collaborators”. Best value will be measured as follows:

- Proposed Total Project Cost
- Transparency – the ability to understand the logic, evaluation, methodology and process used for each component and sub-component.
- Proposed Methodology – including detailed explanation of treatment of subcategories and sub-components per component
- Consistency with of the methodology employed to prepare GOMAI 10 and dated August 2017
- Sustainability of the proposed methodology in subsequent years
- Interviewing Plan

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
Within one week of signing contract	Submit the draft communication for USSEC to distribute to country directors to urge a quick turnaround.
Within 8 weeks of signing contract	Submit draft report
Within 9 weeks of signing contract	Submit final report and database

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** May 7, 2018
- **Project Proposals Due:** May 21, 2018 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Selections Made By:** May 31, 2018
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** June 1, 2018

INSTRUCTIONS:

Proposals must contain at a minimum the specific criteria listed below:

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG by **5:00PM Central Time** on **May 21, 2018**

2. A description of Prospective Contractor's capabilities, resources and experience. Emphasis should be placed on experience related to this RFP.
3. A thorough proposal outlining Prospective Contractors planned work, deliverables and timeline to complete the work.
3. Resumes for each of the Prospective Contractor's personnel assigned to work directly on the implementation of the contract.
4. Provide a minimum of two names and contact information for other similarly sized clients for reference purposes.
5. Detailed Budget
 - All bids for services must provide a breakout of how the fee was derived including but not limited to a breakdown of hourly rate and the amount of effort they anticipate to do the work.
6. Proposals should be no longer than **10 pages** (8 ½" x 11").

NOTES:

- Prospective Contractors are hereby notified that proposals will be duplicated for internal review only. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality of all information presented. The appropriate representatives from staff and legal counsel will review proposals. Proposals will not be returned.
- USSEC reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the submitter of the conditions contained in the request for proposal, unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the contract between USSEC and the contractor selected.
- Confidentiality - Without USSEC's prior written consent, Prospective Contractors and its officers, employees, agents, representatives, affiliates, and subcontractors shall not disclose to any third party any documents, materials or information that the Prospective Contractors learns from or is provided in relation to the RFP request.
- During the evaluation process, USSEC reserves the right to request additional information or clarifications from proposers, or to allow corrections of errors and omissions.
- USSEC reserves the right to reject any proposal that is in any way inconsistent or irregular. USSEC also reserves the right to waive proposal defects or deficiencies, to request additional information, and/or to negotiate with the Prospective Contractor regarding the proposal.

- Prospective Contractor agrees that Fees are in lieu of any and all other benefits, including, but not limited to, repayment of any and all taxes related to contractor service fees, health and life insurance, administrative costs and vacation.
- Prospective Contractor agrees that any income taxes, value added taxes or any other form of direct or indirect taxes on compensation paid under the contract shall be paid by Contractor and not by USSEC or Funding Sources.
 - Prior to any payment to a Contractor, a contractor must provide a W-9, W-8, or W-8BEN upon agreement signature
- Non-Competition. Contractor shall not act as agent or representative for any product or service directly or indirectly competitive with U.S. soybeans or soybean products for the length of the contract.
- USSEC and Prospective Contractor agrees to comply with the provisions of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). USSEC provides EEO to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty, or status as a covered veteran in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND BACKGROUND

BUILDING A PREFERENCE FOR U.S. SOY

USSEC's strategy can be found here: <http://ussec.org/about-ussec/vision-mission/>

USB's Long Range Strategic Plan can be found here: <http://unitedsoybean.org/about-usb/strategic-planning/>

We are a dynamic partnership of key stakeholders representing soybean producers, commodity shippers, merchandisers, allied agribusiness and agricultural organizations.

Through a global network of international offices and strong support in the U.S., we help build a preference for U.S. soybeans and soybean products, advocate for the use of soy in feed, aquaculture and human consumption, promote the benefits of soy use through education and connect industry leaders through a robust membership program.

Our 15-member board of directors is comprised of four members from the American Soybean Association (ASA), four members from the United Soybean Board (USB), and seven members representing trade, allied industry, and state organizations.

New board members are seated annually. We are receiving funding from a variety of sources including soy producer checkoff dollars invested by the USB and various state soybean councils; cooperating industry; and the American Soybean Association's investment of cost-share funding provided by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foreign Agriculture Service.

The United Soybean Board, created by the 1990 Farm Bill to manage and direct the National Soybean Checkoff, is dedicated to marketing and research for the soybean industry. USB is comprised of 73 volunteer soybean farmers representing the interests of fellow growers nationwide. Each board member is nominated by Qualified State Soybean Boards (QSSBs) and appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

Because of the limitations on administrative and salary costs established in the Act, USB outsources the majority of its program management responsibilities to USB's three primary contractors:

- SmithBucklin-St. Louis for domestic marketing, new uses, production research and Board initiative activities;
- Osborn & Barr Communications for communications/public relations activities and;
- United States Soybean Export Council (USSEC) for international marketing and global opportunities activities.

As one of these three primary contractors USSEC may also undertake initiative activities on behalf of USB. USB considers primary contractor staff (approximately 60 people) as core USB staff. These three primary contractors use a number of subcontractors and, together,

these entities carry out approximately 450 projects each year for USB. USB also manages approximately 10 subcontractors.

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 {voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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