

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
5:00 PM CST, 9/20/2019

RFP TITLE: EUROPEAN UNION MARKET ACCESS ADVISOR

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 – 5:00PM CST

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.

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) seeks an individual or organization to provide representation for USSEC in the European Union.

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

The purpose of this RFP is to seek proposals that will focus on addressing the challenges of the biotech approval process in the EU and on the emerging threat of the EU's increasingly restrictive policies on pesticides which could impact U.S. soybean exports. Ancillary efforts will be covered for Russia and Turkey. The project also will allocate attention to plant breeding innovation and precision agriculture as both these issues come more under focus of civil society, officials and stakeholders.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

Prior years have shown that the above policy and market access challenges are becoming ever more intertwined. Several NGOs and leftwing/Green political parties are campaigning hard to

have as many traditional plant protection products banned, partly because they understand it is another channel to attack biotech. In addition, the NGOs seek to portray biotech and pesticides as key components of large-scale intensive and unsustainable agriculture. These groups also are determined to bring gene editing and plant breeding techniques under the EU's biotech regime. The NGOs have considerable traction, as demonstrated by the partial bans on glyphosate in several EU countries (and their campaigns in other world regions where they leverage the 'EU issue') as well as the problematic renewal of glyphosate's EU authorization.

There is an opportunity for the U.S. soy industry to articulate counter-arguments to, and / or support for, these issues: innovative farming techniques (for example very precise application of plant protection products and conservation tillage facilitated by biotech crops) allow U.S. farmers to become more sustainable than many other farmers in the world. USSEC's message points for advocacy in the EU need to be strengthened and refined along these lines.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Target audiences in national governments and EU institutions for USSEC messages on biotech and on pesticides will be identified in line with their responsibilities. In many cases target audiences for both policy within industry associations and other stakeholder groups may be the same.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

Biotech in the EU plus Turkey and Russia:

- Ongoing tracking, analysis and reporting of biotech developments in the EU. Developments with regard to new breeding techniques will be included.
- Regular conference calls and meetings between USSEC and Contractor to discuss developments, progress of the program and plans for required action.
- Provide USSEC with regular bulletins and alerts on 'breaking issues' and reports that would support the program.
- USSEC and Contractor to develop advocacy materials as appropriate.
- Contractor to communicate regularly with officials, politicians, industry groups and other stakeholder groups at EU and national level on behalf of USSEC.
- Contractor to explore potential to brief European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) officials and the GMO Panel.

- Identify speaking opportunities for USSEC (farmers and/or staff) at workshops/conferences in Europe to communicate the benefits of biotech, i.e. sustainability, and the USSEC Soybean Sustainability Assurance Protocol.

Pesticides in the EU:

- Develop adequate activities with respect to EU’s ongoing renewal of crop protection products used by U.S. soybean growers and any changes to their Maximum Residue Limit (MRLs) and import tolerances.
- Continue to build relationships with EU industry associations and industry crop protection products platforms in Brussels with a view to exchanging information and coordinate advocacy work if and when appropriate.

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
October 2019 – September 2020	<p>EU Biotechnology & PBI Outreach and Other Potential Trade Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing tracking • Regular Conference Calls and meetings with USSEC • Provide regular bulletins and alerts on breaking issues • Communicate regularly with officials, politicians, industry groups and other stakeholders at EU and national level on behalf of USSEC when requested • Provide in-person briefings to USSEC staff and farmer leaders as requested • Implement outreach missions as requested • Conduct the Global Biotech Environmental Scan and complete report <p>Pesticides Issues Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing tracking • Regular Conference Calls and meetings with USSEC • Communicate regularly with officials, politicians, industry groups and other stakeholders at EU and national level on behalf of USSEC when requested • Provide in-person briefings to USSEC staff and farmer leaders as requested
August 30, 2020	Submit the Global Biotechnology Environment Scan to the Senior Director, Market Access and Project Manager

PROJECT TIMELINE:

Our expectation is for the Project to last from **October 1, 2019** to **September 30, 2020**. We are asking that the Project Proposal include details about what the proposed timeline and scope would look like.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** September 9, 2019
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** September 17, 2019 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Project Proposals Due:** September 20, 2019 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Selections Made By:** September 27, 2019
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** September 30, 2019

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 Friday, September 20**
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, audiotape, 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.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Civil Rights Clause

Contractor agrees that during the performance of this Agreement it will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status, parental status or protected genetic information. Contractor further agrees that it will fully comply with any and all applicable Federal, State and local equal employment opportunity statutes, ordinances and regulations, including, without limitation, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Equal Pay Act of 1963. Nothing in this section shall require Contractor to comply with or become liable under any law, ordinance, regulation or rule that does not otherwise apply to Contractor.