**1a. CODE OF ETHICS PROCESS**

Updated July 24, 2017

* Recognize that the chief function of USSEC at all times is to serve the best interests of soybean producers and USSEC membership.
* Accept as a personal duty the responsibility to inform fellow Directors and staff on emerging issues and to conduct ourselves with professional competence, fairness, impartiality, efficiency and effectiveness.
* Respect the structure and responsibilities of the Board of Directors (the "Board"), provide them with facts and advice as a basis for making policy decisions and uphold and implement policies adopted by the Board.
* Strive for personal and professional excellence and encourage the professional developments of others.
* Devote time to learning USSEC functions—its uniqueness, strengths, and needs, its place in the industry.
* Carefully prepare for, regularly attend and actively participate in Board meetings and committee assignments.
* Accept and abide by the legal and fiscal responsibilities of the Board as specified in USSEC's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.
* Vote according to one’s individual conviction, to challenge the judgment of others when necessary, yet to be willing to support the decision of the Board and work with fellow Directors in a spirit of cooperation. To recognize that the USSEC Board Chairperson speaks on behalf of the Board.
* Maintain the confidential nature of Board deliberations and to avoid acting as spokesperson for the entire board unless specifically authorized to do so.
* Understand the role of the Board as a policy-making body and to avoid participation in USSEC daily management.
* Learn and consistently adhere to designated USSEC communication’s channels when responding to inquiries concerning the status of USSEC.
* Become familiar with and committed to the major responsibilities of a governing board:
	+ - Setting mission and purposes
		- Adhering to the chief executive succession plan
		- Monitoring the chief executive’s performance
		- Assessing Board performance
		- Participating in strategic planning and performance measurements
		- Reviewing programs
		- Ensuring adequate resources
		- Ensuring good management

**Contractors’ Code of Ethics**

It is the unfailing expectation of USSEC that all contractors work under USSEC’s Code of Ethics.

**Travel Ethics - USSEC Professional and Ethical Code of Conduct**

Individuals representing USSEC in any capacity and at any time or place are responsible for their personal conduct. This responsibility means acting with integrity, respect, and in an ethical and professional manner with the public, stakeholders, customers, prospective customers, employees, colleagues, and other participants in the global soy markets. It is also consistent with USSEC’s Code of Ethics and legal standards of its policies regarding conflicts of interest; personal gain; harassment; discrimination; and uncovered state and federal laws.

Ethics can be defined as a set of moral principles or rules of conduct that provide guidance for our behavior when it affects others. Individuals representing USSEC must not engage in any conduct that compro­mises the reputation or integrity of the organization.

 Not only does unethical/unprofessional behavior have the potential for serious personal consequences but such conduct from representative of the organization can damage stakeholder trust and thereby seriously impair the efforts of the organization to achieve its mission to “Maximize the use of U.S. soy internationally by meeting the needs of our stakeholders and global customers.” Therefore, when representing USSEC in any capacity one shall act with integrity, respect and in an ethical manner.

Personal responsibility for ethical and professional conduct extends beyond the US borders. It also means understanding and respecting the customs and cultures of our current and prospective international customers and partners.

One’s conduct in an ethical and professional manner is not limited to the formal and organized sessions like meetings, appointments, seminars, conferences, conventions, receptions, and meals. It extends to informal and social gatherings of one-on-one or a small group, and even where you may not be “officially” representing USSEC but your capacity is obvious and your actions and conduct can be connected to the organization. You are never “off the clock” when representing USSEC in an official capacity – and in some instances in an unofficial capacity. One should avoid any action that may discredit our organization or industry.

When interacting with the public, stakeholders, customers, prospective customers, employees, colleagues, and other participants in the global soy markets representing USSEC in an official (and potentially an unofficial one), individuals should always keep the following questions in their mind when making a decision about a possible course of conduct in any circumstance – formal, informal, or social:

* Are my actions illegal or unethical?
* Am I being fair and honest?
* Am I being respectful?
* Would I be unwilling or embarrassed to tell my family, friends, co-workers, or fellow volunteers and leaders?
* Would USSEC’s reputation be harmed if the action were revealed in the newspapers?
* Am I personally uncomfortable about the course of action?
* Could someone’s life, health, safety, or reputation be endangered by my action?
* Could the intended action appear inappropriate to a third party?

When travelling internationally, USSEC will provide the participants appropriate instruction on the customs and cultures of the countries they will be visiting so the participant represents the soy industry as courteous and respectful when meeting with the country representatives and interacting with the people in the country.