

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

5:00 PM CST, 3/25/2021

RFP TITLE: REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE USSEC IN-POND RACEWAY SYSTEM MANUAL AND MATERIALS

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: **March 25, 2021**

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, advocates for the use of soy in livestock and aquaculture feed and human consumption, promotes the benefits of soy use through education and connects industry leaders through a robust membership program.

The aquaculture sector is expected to grow significantly over the next ten years and presents opportunities for U.S. soy in aquafeeds. One of USSEC's most successful aquaculture initiatives is the development and promotion of an in-pond raceway system technology which allows producers to realize the full benefits of high quality, U.S. soy-optimized feeds.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC seeks a contractor to review an existing USSEC manual and other materials on the in-pond raceway system (IPRS) technology, engage with the USSEC global and regional aquaculture teams, and consolidate this information into a new edition of the comprehensive IPRS manual. The updated version of the comprehensive IPRS manual will incorporate the latest research and lessons learned from field experience. It will serve as a guide for the USSEC team, aquaculture producers, feed mill personnel, extension agents, government representatives, and other stakeholders.

The contractor must demonstrate expertise in intensively managed pond aquaculture, firsthand knowledge of IPRS, and strong technical writing abilities. Experience working with aquaculture and IPRS in any of the following regions is preferred: North Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Americas, Europe, and Middle East.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

USSEC developed IPRS technology as an efficient, highly productive aquaculture system that facilitates sustainable use of water resources. IPRS is also sometimes known as intensive pond

aquaculture (IPA). The IPRS performs best when producers utilize high quality feeds, and USSEC promotes use of U.S. soy-optimized aquafeeds as an integral part and critical principle of the IPRS technology package.

USSEC first piloted the technology in China in 2013. Today, USSEC continues to support expanded use of the technology in China and promotes its introduction to other countries. USSEC's ongoing work to advance adoption of IPRS includes demonstration projects, on-site technical assistance, and training seminars on both the construction and operation of the IPRS itself as well as optimization using U.S. soy-optimized feeds.

Through this experience, USSEC has developed an extensive library of technical documents, publications, training materials, videos, presentations, and other written information on IPRS. Many of these materials were developed independently by contractors working in specific countries or regions. USSEC last issued a comprehensive IPRS manual in 2017, and there is a need to update this manual to reflect current research, lessons learned from field experience, and address issues encountered as IPRS expands to new countries/regions.

USSEC now seeks a contractor to review this library, engage with USSEC's global and regional aquaculture and IPRS experts, and consolidate this information into a comprehensive updated IPRS manual for internal and external audiences. The manual will cover the core principles for fixed, freshwater IPRS at a global level and make note of adaptations that may be necessary for different geographies, climates, and species. It will serve as a resource to align USSEC's IPRS work across regions around core IPRS principles and concepts, as well as a practical resource for aquaculture producers, feed mill personnel, extension agents, and others interested in implementing the technology. The manual will serve as the main reference material for USSEC's future development of presentations, training materials, and other technical communications on IPRS.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The target audience for the manual includes USSEC global and regional aquaculture teams, aquaculture producers, feed mill personnel, extension agents, and government representatives.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- Organize, consolidate, and review all existing English-language material on IPRS in the USSEC library. This information will serve as the basis for updating the manual.
 - Organize and consolidate USSEC IPRS information in a SharePoint folder for easy navigation and use by the aquaculture team. This may include, but is not limited to documents, papers, training materials, presentations, photos, and videos.
 - Identify any materials that are outdated for archiving or future updating.
 - Identify any gaps in information needed to update the IPRS manual, and work with the USSEC team to address them.

- Report findings to the USSEC team.
- Conduct a rapid review of widely-available IPRS information from non-USSEC sources.
 - Consult with the USSEC team to identify resources that they commonly encounter in their work and conduct an online search.
 - Identify any external resources that should be incorporated into the manual.
 - Identify any common misconceptions that may need to be addressed in the manual.
- Develop a content outline for the revised manual in collaboration with the USSEC team. The manual will focus on fixed, freshwater IPRS. It will be written in a modular format that will allow for easy updating, adaptation, and separation of sections.
 - Review the content of the current IPRS manual as well as comparable materials such as the short course used by the USSEC Southeast Asia team.
 - The outline may generally follow that of the current manual with adaptations as needed. The contractor should flag the topic areas requiring the most significant updates and any recommended new topic areas.
 - Required sections that must be included: 1) economics of IPRS, and 2) advantages of using U.S. soy in feeds in IPRS.
 - All units in the manual will be in Standard International (SI) metric units.
- Write an updated IPRS Manual in accordance with the agreed upon outline. The manual will use the most up-to-date approaches, principles and standards for IPRS and will use generous amounts of photos, figures and tables. The contractor will deliver the manual in electronic (softcopy) format, but USSEC may choose to print copies as needed. Therefore, photos and other graphics should be at sufficient resolution to allow for quality appearance when printed.
- Create training presentations and materials for USSEC contractor use: These would be in PowerPoint format, using USSEC templates, and would extract key information for use by USSEC contractors when promoting or training interested aquaculture industry members. These materials should generally track the material approach in the manual and should provide a basis for direct use or for further customization by USSEC contractors for specific audience use.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

USSEC anticipates that the contractor may be able to update the manual based on existing information in the USSEC library. USSEC will provide the contractor with access to these materials, and USSEC regional teams will assist with securing any additional materials, data, or photos to aid the contractor.

The contractor will work closely with the USSEC global and regional aquaculture teams. This will include regional teams in North Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Americas, Europe, and Middle East/North Africa as well as USSEC global IPRS experts and an IPRS task force. USSEC

envisioning this project to be a collaborative process in order to ensure that the final product is reflective of USSEC’s cumulative subject matter expertise and global experience.

DELIVERABLES:

The deliverable schedule listed below is illustrative, and applicants may propose an alternative schedule in their proposals. However, all work must be completed by October 31, 2021. Preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate the ability to deliver quality work in a shorter timeframe.

| Completion Date | Description of Deliverables |
|------------------------|---|
| April 20, 2021 | Organize, consolidate, and review existing USSEC IPRS information in SharePoint. Present approach/findings to the USSEC IPRS task force for review and comment. |
| May 15, 2021 | Complete any revisions to the organization of the library based on USSEC feedback. Complete rapid review of non-USSEC IPRS materials and share findings with USSEC IPRS task force. |
| June 1, 2021 | Submit draft of the IPRS manual content outline to USSEC IPRS task force. |
| July 1, 2021 | Submit first draft of the IPRS manual for USSEC review and comment |
| August 1, 2021 | Submit second draft of the IPRS manual for USSEC review and comment |
| August 15, 2021 | Submit first draft of planned PowerPoint resource materials approach. |
| September 1, 2021 | Submit final version of the IPRS manual |
| September 15, 2021 | Submit final versions of the PowerPoint resource material |
| As needed | Participate in conference calls with the USSEC team |

PROJECT TIMELINE:

The contract will last from approximately April 8 to October 31, 2021.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** March 15, 2021
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** March 19, 2021 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Project Proposals Due:** March 25, 2021 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Selections Made By:** April 1, 2021
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** April 1, 2021

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 March 25, 2021.**

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;
- U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. 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.

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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.