

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP TITLE: REGIONAL PROJECT SPECIALIST- SOUTH ASIA

RFP CONTACT:

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INTRODUCTION:

United States Soybean Export Council (USSEC) requests proposals for Regional Project Specialist in South Asia covering the countries of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

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 feed, aquaculture and human consumption, promotes the benefits of soy use through education and connect industry leaders through a robust membership program.

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 for Regional Project Specialist in South Asia covering the countries of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. This RFP is for a 12-month contract for January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021 with the potential to be extended based on performance and the availability of funding.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

The South Asia region (Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, and Nepal) includes economies which fall into the definition of CONTEXT's emerging market development phase. While soy exports to emerging economies are typically low in volume with larger annual percentage increases, South Asia is bucking that trend. Exports into the region overall more than doubled (growing 54% in FY16/17), a large annual increase. But, Bangladesh—which accounted for over half of the region's imports at 55.5%—is now the U.S. soy industry's tenth largest export market overall. The current market situation and its future potential make this region important to the overall soy export market development program.

In FY17, USSEC targeted four main market sectors in the South Asia region including animal (swine and poultry) utilization, aquaculture utilization, opportunities for soy protein in human food applications, as well as efforts targeting the soy supply chain. The core strategy focuses on educating the target audiences about the specific advantages of U.S. soy in various applications, increasing their realization of those advantages, and establishing purchase preferences because of those advantages.

Based on performance measure results derived from target audience surveys collected at the various activities that USSEC conducts throughout the year, USSEC is making incremental progress towards these objectives in all sectors except for the aquaculture sector. Awareness of feeding practices surpassed USSEC's goal, but actual change in behavior as a result of that information fell short of the goal. With an opportunity for an additional growth for soy in the aquaculture sector of about 3.4 MMT, there are clear opportunities for growth if USSEC can successfully convince the sector of the U.S. soy advantage.

A critical approach to communicating the U.S. Soy Advantage is having a development team that will assist the on the ground presence that interface directly with key customers. USSEC will maintain the U.S. soybean industry's marketing and trade servicing capabilities in South Asia region while providing trade services, technical services and marketing support to importers, end users and soy industry organizations. This team is supported by top quality project managers and other project administration professionals. This RFP targets this group.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Emerging Markets (specifically South Asia: India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Pakistan)

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

Under this contract, the Contractor shall promote the use and awareness of U.S. soybeans and soybean products through the following services:

As a Regional Project Specialist for the Asia Subcontinent region, your core services are to oversee, coordinate and manage all activities directly associated with the development and implementation of events in the region. Contractor will coordinate all meetings and travels, both in and from the region, in conjunction with the regional contractors, project manager and director, while providing the documentation required for effective operational execution:

- a. Assist in the development of events for Regional/Country Representatives and Regional USSEC Staff utilizing USSEC approved templates and forms.
- b. Assist with the development of internal regional processes; including timeline reporting.

- c. Assist with maintaining the Master Event list; including calendar.
- d. Assist in coordinating events in the region with regional event support specialists, as needed.
- e. Assist in preparing and consolidating required documents and support analysis of program/project planning for USSEC Regional Staff.
- f. Prepare monthly report of development tasks.
- g. Provide scheduled reports, as required.
- h. Prepare monthly summary reports of events attended, as required
- i. Prepare end of year summary report of events attended, as required
- j. Attend and assist at meeting/conference, as required.

- **For the purpose of this RFP, you will only be required to provide:**
 - your CV,
 - your daily rate based on an eight (8) hour workday in USD, and
 - explanation of why you would be the best candidate.
- **See instructions below for other detailed information.**

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (if applicable)

- Submitter must have the following technological requirements:
 - Reliable high speed internet access
 - Microsoft Edge
 - Microsoft Office 365, which include:
 - Outlook
 - Excel
 - Word
 - PowerPoint
 - Teams
 - SharePoint

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
As incurred, within the contract term dates of 1/01/2022 – 12/31/2022	Provide applicable administration documents, forms and templates for the proper execution of project management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide to Regional Project Team Lead and/or applicable USSEC department required and approved USSEC documents, forms and templates for review and approval.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All documents, forms and templates will be turned in according to the task timeline found in the contractor’s Admin Support Manual provided by the Regional Project Team Lead.
Monthly, or as incurred	Provide invoice of professional fees for payment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide with the invoice any materials, presentations, trip reports, etc. created and utilized for any applicable services that were accomplished. Ensure all applicable invoices are submitted within 30 days of transaction and are compliant with USSEC policies and procedures. Ensure invoice is submitted to ap@ussec.org.
By the 5 th calendar day of each month	Detailed report of monthly activities and events attended with expected impact(s) and outcome(s). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Report Template is utilized. Ensure report details all events with critical discussion of results for any applicable services that were accomplished. Provide inside or along with the report any insights gained that can improve the execution of the activities and events. Provide to Regional Director and Regional Project Team Lead.
December 31, 2022	Detailed summary of year’s events, key issues, alliances, and recommended actions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Report Template is utilized. Ensure report details all events with critical discussion of results for any applicable services that were accomplished. Provide inside or along with the report any insights gained that can improve the execution of the activities and events. Provide to Regional Director and Regional Project Team Lead.
Ongoing	Submission of invoices and expenses will be in accordance with Section III.3.c. of this Addendum.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

The term of the proposal will last from January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022.

*Additional terms from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 and January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024 possible after first term performance.

RFP TIMELINE:

- RFP Distribution: November 19, 2021
- Last Day to Submit Questions: November 30, 2021 by 5:00PM Central Time
- Project Proposals Due: December 13, 2021 by 5:00PM Central Time
- Selections Made By: December 18, 2021
- Prospective Contractors Notified By: December 20, 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 December 13, 2021.
2. Provide a minimum of two names and contact information for other similarly sized clients for reference purposes.
3. 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.

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.