

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

5:00 PM SGT/GMT+8, 1st October, 2022

RFP TITLE: PROJECT MANAGER & CENTER LEAD FOR U.S. SOY EXCELLENCE CENTERS – SOUTH ASIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: 5:00 PM SGT/GMT+8, 1st October, 2022

INTRODUCTION:

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

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC seeks a contractor to serve as Project Manager and Center Lead for South & Southeast Asia Soy Excellence Centers; one center based in Bangkok Thailand that services the feed and livestock industry, and another based in Singapore that services the soy food and soy beverage industry. The contractor will broadly have two primary areas of responsibility: 1) administrative, business, and project management; and 2) event planning and on-site logistics across multiple South and Southeast Asian countries. The contractor is accountable for the successful implementation of USSEC's Soy Excellence Centers.

This RFP is for a maximum term of 12 months. Contract extension is subject to performance and other terms and conditions. USSEC's standard practice is to RFP every 3 years in an openly and competitive manner.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

[USSEC's Soy Excellence Center](#) program is designed for and targets emerging markets in South Asia and Southeast Asia to provide technical training and knowledge transfer to promote capacity building and professional development. The Soy Excellence Center helps its course participants advance in their profession and serves as a key resource for business leaders to bring into employment trained professionals and serves as a tool for talent development.

USSEC's regional Soy Excellence Centers conduct specialized food and agribusiness courses and workshops that help companies to overcome any key inefficiencies or operational challenges. After completing the curriculum, graduates may qualify towards attaining an industry accredited certification that is recognized by the industry.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION:

In the [South Asia](#) and [Southeast Asia](#) regions, the Soy Excellence Center focuses on livestock, aquaculture, as well as food & beverage sectors. USSEC's regional team of technical experts, academic and industry partners will design and conduct about seven to ten training workshops per year through a combination of in-person and online events. The USSEC regional and in-country teams will lead and direct the Soy Excellence Center's technical program and activities.

The Project Manager and Center Lead for South & Southeast Asia Soy Excellence Center will provide the necessary administrative, business, project and event management support to implement the SEC program and activities. USSEC anticipates a return to a combination of in-person and virtual platform for the SEC program implementation.

SEC basic level training courses, tend to have larger groups approximately 50-80 participants and will use mainly the virtual platform, while intermediate and advance level courses, have smaller groups around 25 participants and the courses will be a combination of virtual and in-person workshops. Trainings may be regional or targeted to a specific country in South or Southeast Asia.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The target participants for the Soy Excellence Center training courses includes young professionals in the early stages of their careers that is looking for advancement in their technical or production knowledge and skill sets in the livestock, aquaculture, animal/aqua feed, and food & beverage sectors.

The contractor will interact, co-operate, and collaborate with the USSEC regional technical and marketing teams, industry partner organizations, training institutes and instructors, and other collaborators and stakeholders as appropriate or required in the course of meeting the contract objectives.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- 1. Work with USSEC technical consultants to develop a comprehensive 12 months Soy Excellence Centers program schedule and ways/means to make the Centers financially self-sustainable:**
 - The contractor will create a business plan with USSEC identifying activities and needs to create a compliant self-sustaining Center. The Center Lead will work with USSEC to identify and list needs (partnerships, locations, tracks, and facilities) to create a compliant SEC projecting its future auto sufficiency. If any partner is already in mind, the bidder should list it in the proposal. These partners may be a private enterprise, a production center or a public university considering any cultural concerns or biases.

- The contractor will propose a collaboration agreement with each SEC partner to ensure the following core functions are included in the Center framework:
 - Provide technical assistance to support the implementation of SEC approved tracks related to animal production and specifically feeding with an increase inclusion of SOY products (with focus on U.S. Soy).
 - Ongoing access to a physical facility to host educational and trade facilitation groups, access to data and experience results relative to adoption of best practices to be shared.
 - Communications and outreach capabilities to attract regional and international stakeholders and media coverage to the Center through showcased events hosted at the facility.
- The contractor will serve as the main coordinator and liaison with and between the SEC industry partners and USSEC technical teams, namely:
 - Technical Program Partners which for the South Asia and Southeast Asia regions is primarily USSEC's own technical leads and network of technical and subject matter experts;
 - SEC Industry Collaborators which for the SEC (feed and livestock) program is currently with Kasetsart University, Bangkok Thailand and for the SEC (food and beverage) program, Tetra Pak Asia Singapore.
 - SEC Communications which is managed out of USSEC USA. The Center Lead will also need to develop a communication and outreach plan to attract visitors to the SEC program for the target participants in South and Southeast Asia.

2. Provide administrative, business, and project management services

- The contractor or Center Lead serves as the primary administrator of the SEC and direct liaison with USSEC SEC leadership and teams in the U.S. and in the regions. The Center Lead is functionally the General Manager of the SEC program for South Asia and Southeast Asia.
- Coordinate with the USSEC regional technical teams to develop an annual work plan for the Soy Excellence Center including the training event schedule, the timeline and process for planning each event, and budget estimations and cost management etc., ergo all the business aspects for the SECs.
- The USSEC regional technical team will draw up the technical and event program – determining training topics, instructors, and course participants and other event needs – and will rely on the contractor for support and assistance to meet the administrative, financial, operational, logistical etc. requirements to implement the SEC program.
- Represent and promote the Soy Excellence Center to industry members and external stakeholders in the region, as appropriate.
- Serve as the business manager for the Soy Excellence Center. Prepare and manage the project and event budgets. Ensure that events/activities are cost effective and within the budget allotted. Maintain project financial records and all supporting documentation in compliance with USSEC and funding source policies and procedures.

- Track progress towards project goals, objectives, outputs, and outcomes. Maintain course participant records to determine when they have completed the necessary requirements to receive the course certifications.
- Produce monthly and performance reports, summary reports on each training event, and an annual report that summarizes all Soy Excellence Center activities. Additional reporting and documentation maybe required upon request by USSEC.

3. Provide event planning and on-site logistical support services for all training events:

- Liaise with the USSEC regional technical teams to determine the specific needs for each training event – such as target audience, anticipated group size, any specific equipment or supplies needed to conduct the trainings. On average, there may be seven to ten events each year – a combination of in-person and virtual trainings.
- Develop communications materials/messaging to promote the training events (with input from the USSEC regional technical teams).
- Manage the training event promotion and participant registration process. Serve as the primary point of contact for participants to answer questions, provide additional information, and assist as needed. Distribute pre- and post-event information and materials to participants.
- Coordinate with USSEC on training material preparation such as presentation templates, graphics/logos and wording for name badges, place cards, conference room backdrop, banners, brochures, workshop giveaways, and Certificates of Attendance. USSEC will provide any technical content, but the contractor will be responsible for design, formatting, and printing in accordance with the appropriate branding policies.
- For virtual events, serve as the event host and troubleshoot any technical difficulties that may arise during the event.
- For in-person events, manage all meeting logistics including negotiating and managing contracts with third-party vendors (such as meeting venues, simultaneous translation services, graphic designers, etc.).
 - Provide on-site logistical support and serve as the main point of contact for third-party vendors.
 - Register participants as they arrive, distribute materials, and assist them as needed.
 - Support the instructor during the event by completing tasks such as loading/organizing presentations, working with the venue to connect projectors or audio to the designated computer, keeping track of time, passing microphones for questions, etc.
- Conduct pre- and post-event participant surveys for monitoring & evaluation purposes and to identify opportunities for improvement or expansion of course offerings.

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
November 15	Provide USSEC project manager with documentation for contract: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Signed W9 or W8BEN-E 2. Banking information (USSEC template) 3. Payment terms etc.
December 30	Work with USSEC assigned staff to develop a comprehensive 12 months Soy Excellence Centers program schedule and ways/means to make the Centers financially self-sustainable. Covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning calendar/timeline with milestones; • Budget planning for each SEC event including anticipated third-party contracting needs; • Definition and detail of the scope of the work; • Work plan for the implementation of the SEC; • KPIs and proposal of success measures etc.
Pre-Event/Workshop Report Submission least 4 weeks before start of event Post-Event/Workshop Report Submission no later than 1 week after the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a detailed plan of action from development to implementation of each SEC workshop and or event; • Submission of a post SEC workshop and or event to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Course evaluation; ○ Feedback survey from course participants; ○ Analysis on the performance of the SEC workshop/event; ○ Gather at least 3 course participant interviews; ○ Collect and or report on any other information or details that would serve to improve or promote the program.
Monthly	Submit brief, narrative report summarizing all work performed during the report period and work planned for the next reporting period. This document and its preparation in accordance with USSEC requirements is required for invoicing.
Semi-Annually	Produce a semi-annual report on the work and achievements of the South and Southeast Asia Soy Excellence Center. The narrative report will summarize the Center’s work over the fiscal year, progress against the stated goals and objectives, lessons learned, and challenges encountered. The report will conform with USSEC and funding source requirements.

RFP TIMELINE:

- RFP Distribution: August 19, 2022
- Last Day to Submit Questions: September 23, 2022
- Project Proposals Due: October 1, 2022
- Selections Made By: October 20, 2022

- Prospective Contractors Notified By: October 31, 2022

Please email the proposal to singapore@ussec.org by 5:00PM SGT/GMT+8

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to singapore@ussec.org by 5:00PM SGT/GMT+8 on or before Oct 1, 2022
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.
4. Resumes for each of the Prospective Contractor's personnel assigned to work directly on the implementation of the contract.
5. Provide a minimum of two names and contact information for other similarly sized clients for reference purposes.
6. 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.
7. Proposals should be no longer than 10 pages (8 ½" x 11").
8. Preference may be given to the bidder with the capacity and history of doing similar work in this region.

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](mailto: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.