

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

March 17, 2023 by 5:00PM Central Time

RFP TITLE: SOY EXCELLENCE CENTER INVESTOR RETURN ON INVESTMENT

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: MARCH 17, 2023

INTRODUCTION:

Building Tomorrow's Leaders Today! USSEC's Soy Excellence Center program is building professionals for the food and agricultural supply chain.

Since launching in 2019, efforts have expanded to include several regional Soy Excellence Centers that meet local workforce development needs.

Our mission is to turn budding markets into stories of economic success by building capacity and market potential of food and agriculture businesses. We envision a future in which soy is known throughout the world as a vector for change.

We facilitate employee training and continuing education activities that build the knowledge and skills to help employees overcome key challenges and operational hurdles in food and agribusiness operations.

We believe that promoting education and excellence in emerging markets is a first step toward creating prosperity. Our professional development efforts and alumni networking activities empower individuals to advance their careers.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC is seeking to maintain its current and grow its SEC investor network. To help effectuate this, USSEC has a strong desire to clearly articulate a Return on Investment, to Enterprise level investors into the SEC program.

The primary and expected output from this project is to identify and present research methodologies which will be able to tell Enterprises what they get in return for investing in trainees from their enterprise or sponsoring trainees from their downstream customers. USSEC needs to know and be able to consistently articulate to enterprise level investors, that for every

dollar spent on SEC trainees (participation fees, salary etc.), Enterprises can expect a X \$ return on that investment.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF SEC PROJECT:

The Challenge - With the global population expected to exceed 9 billion by 2050, it is estimated that worldwide protein consumption could double by 2050.¹ Protein enterprises must be equipped to meet growing protein needs, particularly in emerging markets where protein deficiency remains a chronic problem. Soy Excellence Centers (SECs) were established by the U.S. Soy industry to assist these emerging market enterprises help to meet the protein challenges of the 21st century.

Soy Excellence Centers Approach – SECs provide protein enterprises with work force training and capacity building programs which enhance firm competitiveness and productivity. Increased work force preparedness leads to more efficient production of protein, impacting the entire value chain. Higher productivity increases profits for protein enterprises, which can create more jobs and expand access to protein at lower costs, supporting positive development outcomes in economic growth, food security, nutrition, and health.

The Vision - The Soy Excellence Center vision is to create a global network of tomorrow's leaders in soy across the globe. As a professional development program, SECs can provide a pathway for participants to achieve professional certification and career advancement. Beyond the formal curriculum, the U.S. Soy industry has invested in the development of the SEC digital platform, an online hub for on-demand continuing education content, access to industry experts, and a global community of industry peers. In turn, this platform collectively supports continuing innovation and the sustainability of program results.

The Program - Since 2019, SEC programs have been established in four emerging markets: Middle East & North Africa, South Asia & Southeast Asia, Sub Saharan Africa, and the Americas. SECs are targeted at entry to mid-level professionals seeking career advancement in the protein industry. Focus area curriculums are developed with input from local industry partners and global experts. Curriculum topics are globally validated and approved by a Steering Committee

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The external target audience for this contract are determined somewhat by the Phase. In Phase One the bidder should target the decision makers and managers within:

- Enterprises supporting their employees and/or enterprises sponsoring downstream customers.

The *internal* target audience includes the SEC's central management team, the SEC regional management teams, the SEC Steering Committee and current QSSB investors.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

USSEC is seeking to maintain and grow its SEC investor network with additional funding from enterprises. To help effectuate this, USSEC has a strong desire to clearly articulate a Return on

¹ <https://keystonedialogues.earth/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Brief2-Marine-protein.pdf>

Investment, to investors into the SEC program who are sponsoring trainees from their own organizations and/or enterprises who are sponsoring trainees from downstream customers.

The main output from this ROI is to identify and present research methodologies which will be able to tell Enterprises what they get in return for investing in trainees from their enterprise or sponsoring trainees from their downstream customers. We need to know that for every dollar spent on SEC trainees (participation fees, salary etc.), enterprises can expect an X \$ return on that investment.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION:

Bidders should carefully consider the type(s) of *quantitative as well as qualitative measurements available to achieve the goal of being able to accurately demonstrate to this investor groups the value of their investment, the source of the data and if it is a repeatable variable we are able to measure over time. The successful bidder with work with the USSEC Manager of Measurement and Evaluation to develop measurement criteria.

**Quantitative and qualitative research methods are similar primarily because they are both methods of research that are limited by variables. Additionally, qualitative and quantitative research methods can be used to study the same phenomenon. However, qualitative research is most often used to study people, while quantitative research typically measures the frequency or total of something. Regardless, both methods are often capable of investigating the same hypothesis.*

Expected output of the project: The main output from this ROI project is to identify and present research methodologies which will be able to tell Enterprises what they get in return for investing in trainees from their enterprise or sponsoring trainees from their downstream customers. We need to know that for every dollar spent on SEC trainees (participation fees, salary etc.), Enterprises can expect a X \$ return on that investment.

DELIVERABLES: Note the deliverables for Phase One and Phase two are the same. The dates below represent Phase One only.

| Completion Date | Description of Deliverables |
|----------------------------|---|
| April 3, 2023 | Review of implementation plan with SEC’s central management team, the SEC regional management teams. |
| April, 2023 | Methodology report to the SEC Steering Committee. |
| May, 2023 | Develop an Investors “Dashboard” integrated into the USSEC measurement system that will allow for semi-annual and annual reports. |
| April – September 30, 2023 | Ongoing oversight and reporting against Investment performance. |
| April-August, 2023 | Monthly Reports. |
| September, 2023 | Final status report to SEC’s central management team, the SEC regional management teams, outlining performance of the project tools and recommendations for next steps. |

PROJECT TIMELINE:

*Our expectation is for the **Investment ROI project** to last from **O/A April 1, 2023 to September 30, 2023**. We are asking that the Project Proposal include details about what the proposed timeline and scope of work would look like.*

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** February 17, 2023
- **Last Day to Submit Written Questions:** February 28, 2023 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Open Q&A Webinar:** March 1, 2023 3:30-4:30 pm CST (Hosted by USSEC to address bidder questions)

Zoom Meeting Information:

<https://ussec-org.zoom.us/j/97723148510?pwd=U0dBZm5LSGhiVkIMZ2NqSWNORUF1dz09>

Meeting ID: 977 2314 8510

Passcode: 052205

- **Project Proposals Due:** March 17, 2023 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Selections Made By:** March 24, 2023
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** March 31, 2023

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 17, 2023**
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

USSEC's strategy can be found here: <http://ussec.org/about-ussec/vision-mission/>
Information directly relevant to the **SECs** can be found at <https://soyexcellence.org/>

Building Tomorrow's Leaders Today! The Soy Excellence Center program is building professionals for the food and agricultural supply chain. Our mission is to transform budding soy markets into stories of economic success.

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USSEC is 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.