

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
SUBMISSION DEADLINE  
17:00 CT, 02/28/2023**

**RFP TITLE: COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY AND/OR FREELANCERS IN LATIN AMERICA**

**RFP CONTACT:**

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**PROPOSAL DEADLINE: 17:00 CT, FEBRUARY 28, 2023**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) is a non-profit organization that promotes U.S. soybeans and soybean products to international customers through knowledge transfer, on-site trainings, seminars, workshops, conferences, industry tours and demonstrations. The specific goal of the USSEC Americas Program is to promote, within the region, the use of U. S. soy products, in human consumption, aquaculture, animal feeds and the best feeding practices. A key program objective is to see a growing, long-term, high-quality, feed-based industry in the Americas Region and globally.

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE RFP:**

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) Americas Team is seeking a communications agency communication and/or freelance professionals to lead and/or support the development and/or implementation of communications plans and/or initiatives through September 2023. USSEC has an ongoing U.S. Soy reputation and B2B marketing communications strategy and program to shape the differentiation, preference, and market access for U.S. Soy. Applicants should have strong bilingual (English/Spanish) marketing and communications capabilities (particularly in B2B communications), solid experience in the agribusiness sector in Latin America, and access to relevant news/media networks across Latin America.

**TARGET AUDIENCES**

- B2B customers in animal nutrition, aquaculture, oil, soy food sectors (traders; R&D / product development; supply chain - procurement, nutritionist; manufacturing / production; product management / marketing; finance; sustainability)
- USSEC Members and Investors
- News media
- NGOs
- International food and agriculture stakeholders

**SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:**

**Communications Plans**

- U.S. Soy differentiation and preference with user industries (aquaculture and animal protein, human, oil)

- Soy Excellence Centers
- Support integration of WorldWide and Region Communications plans and calendar

### **Branding and Marketing Materials**

Brand identity, and communications and marketing materials and plans development (for example but not limited to)

- Logos
- Videos and videography
- Visuals, infographics, pictures, photography
- Newsletters
- Annual report
- Banners
- Ads
- Booth
- Invitations
- Event collateral
- Giveaways

### **Content Development**

- Blog posts and web content
- Social media posts
- Videos, and videography
- Visuals, infographics, pictures, photography
- News releases
- Email
- Newsletters
- Annual report
- Country / market snapshots
- PowerPoints
- Speeches / talking points

### **Digital and social media**

- Website and social media channels design, management, and content refresh, updates, and metrics reporting.
- Define USSEC's social voice; develop and implement plans to build USSEC's presence on social media as a thought leader and consistent participant in relevant conversations about food, ag, ESG/sustainability, and trade. Cultivate and maintain USSEC's social media community.
- Manage USSEC Hubspot communications and marketing assets, and organize targeted campaigns in collaboration with internal teams, and agency partner(s). Provide organization-wide leadership in the utilization and training of Hubspot in direct marketing communications

### **News media**

- Build and maintain media list and relationships in Latin America.
- Develop media pitch / briefing / background materials, talking points, Q&A, responses to media inquiries, press releases, etc.
- Preparation and coordination of spokespeople for interactions; media interaction (interview / story) pitching, generate coverage, and reporting.

### **Executive Visibility**

- Develop and implement USSEC leaders' executive visibility plans to position as thought leaders and consistent participants in relevant conversations, leveraging content (e.g. speeches/ talking points, presentations, videos, visuals etc.); social media conversation and connections; events/speaking engagements; and news media
- Identify and engage potential food and ag industry leaders and/or related stakeholders for stakeholder engagement / dialogue with USSEC leaders

### **Market Research**

- Support market research needs related to customer segmentation, customer journey, and customer insights on drivers of differentiation and preference.

### **Events Marketing and Communications Gameplan**

- Develop and execute a marketing and communications gameplan for USSEC Americas flagship events, including the 2023 Americas Agricultural Cooperators Conference, scheduled for June 28-29, 2023 in San Jose, Costa Rica.

### **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The contractor is expected to work closely with the USSEC team and maintain regular contact throughout the contract period. USSEC will provide the successful applicant with further information on existing general communications plans and preferred approach. USSEC will also provide the contractor with information on compliance requirements from the project's funder.

Note the following requirements for preparing the budget proposal:

- Proposal must be itemized, if there are different employees working at different rates and different amounts of hours, each of those amounts/employees/units of time will need to be listed out.
- Payments are made monthly upon actual deliverables. USSEC will require an invoice for the number of units worked, along with an English narrative report of services provided during the month.
- The fee must include all consulting fees, employee compensation and benefits, overhead, travel expenses or any other type of expenses incurred to effectively complete the services/deliverables agreed upon. The payment represents the sole and complete liability of USSEC for services rendered in relation to the agreement and every payment must be attached to a deliverable.

- USSEC budget table template must be completed outlining how the fee was derived, including hourly rates and an estimated total number of hours, as well as the anticipated out-of-pocket expenses. USSEC will rate proposals based on the following factors:
  - Responsiveness to the requirements set forth in this Request for Proposal (RFP)
  - Relevant past performance/experience
  - Samples of work
  - Fee (described above)
  - This proposal is subject to approval of funding.

<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Description of Deliverables</b>
<b>Within five business days of contract start date</b>	<i>Conduct a brief, introductory call with USSEC team to kick-off the project and share background information.</i>
<b>April 14, 2023</b>	<i>Conduct a planning session with the USSEC regional and communications teams to: 1) learn about the current strategy, goals, and objectives for communications and marketing activities in the region; 2) understand relevant USSEC programs in the region and opportunities and constraints; 3) brainstorm ideas; 4) start building editorial calendar; 5) design Spanish-Speaking Channels; 6) draft marketing and communications gameplan for Americas 2023 Cooperators Conference; 7) submit FY23 marketing and communications gameplan.</i>
<b>May 30, 2023</b>	<i>Submit to-date report on Implementation of activities following FY23 marketing and communications gameplan.</i>
<b>June 30, 2023</b>	<i>Submit to-date report on Implementation of activities following FY23 marketing and communications gameplan.</i>
<b>July 30, 2023</b>	<i>Submit draft narrative report (including impact metrics), relevant PowerPoint presentations, and Excel tables, to USSEC for review and comment.</i>
<b>No later than August 30, 2023</b>	<i>Provide USSEC Project Manager with:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Invoice</i></li> <li><i>2. Electronic materials and photographic evidence of work performed.</i></li> <li><i>3. Final administrative report including summary and receipts of all expenses.</i></li> <li><i>4. Final narrative report summarizing all marketing and communications planning and activities conducted (including impact metrics such as media, audience, etc.) and recommendations on next steps.</i></li> </ol>

## **RFP TIMELINE:**

- RFP Distribution: January 30, 2023
- Last Day to Submit Questions: February 10, 2023
- Q&A Session: February 15, 2023, 11:00 CT. (Request the zoom access link by sending an email to [americasRFP@ussec.org](mailto:americasRFP@ussec.org))
- Project Proposals Due: February 28, 2023 17:00 CT. Email the proposal to [americasRFP@ussec.org](mailto:americasRFP@ussec.org)
- Selections Made By: March 06, 2023
- Prospective Contractors Notified By: March 10, 2023

## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

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

1. Please email proposal to [americasRFP@ussec.org](mailto:americasRFP@ussec.org) by 17:00 CT Mexico Time on February 28, 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.
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 doing the work.
7. Proposals should be no longer than **10 pages** (8 1/2" 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](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.