

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
(RFP)**

**SUBMISSION
DEADLINE**

May 29, 2023 - 12:00 PM SGT (GMT +8)

RFP TITLE: SEA Project Management Consultant

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE:

May 29, 2023 - 12:00 PM SGT (GMT+8)

INTRODUCTION:

U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. formally requests proposals for the costs of engaging a Project Management Consultant to provide professional services for the S.E. Asia region.

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.

**PURPOSE OF
RFP:**

USSEC's standard practice is to RFP every 3 years in an open and competitive manner. This type of cost analysis and benchmarking will assist in determining the fair market value for the services to be performed and allows USSEC the opportunity to evaluate qualified proposals and select the best contractor for the job based on technical qualifications, related industry experience, managerial abilities, strength of industry connections and contacts and suitable cost and time that matches the needs under this contract.

The purpose of this RFP is to seek proposals for engaging a **Project Management Consultant**.

**BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF
PROJECT:**

The goal and purpose of the Project Management Consultant, as directed by the Regional Director, is to provide administrative, marketing, communications and program management support for projects, events, and activities under USSEC S.E. Asia's Unified Export Strategy (UES) set of initiatives developed for the marketing season.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

- Key customers and industry participants in the animal feed, livestock, and food industries,

covering the following countries: Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Myanmar, Australia, and New Zealand.

- Agribusinesses, trade and technical associations, government and non-government organizations involved in the agricultural and food sectors, etc.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- The Contractor will provide comprehensive support and assistance in the implementation of programs and activities under the Unified Export Strategy (UES) in order to achieve the objectives and further the interests of USSEC and U.S. soy.
- The Contractor will manage the planning, execution, and assessment of USSEC's major regional Buyer Support programs as well as country-level programs and activities aimed at promoting the preference for, and increasing the preference and purchase of U.S. soy.
- The Contractor will coordinate marketing efforts, liaising closely with USSEC Southeast Asia Staff and Contractors, providing trade support to USSEC's regional Focus Areas Teams (i.e. Animal, Aquaculture, Human, Value Chain, Sustainability, and Market Access).
- The Contractor will collaborate with the USSEC team to ensure that the major regional conferences, workshops, trade missions and other events organized by USSEC are well-attended and have the participation of key representatives/decision-makers of the target audience within the region.
- The Contractor will, as and when directed by USSEC's management team, provide support and assistance to other members of the U.S. Soy Industry and U.S. agricultural cooperator organizations so as to benefit U.S. agricultural exports, i.e. primarily corn, soy, and wheat products, into the region.
- The Contractor will dedicate time and attention to meet the Services, Deliverables and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as required and in accordance with the terms of the Master Agreement and Addendum contained within the contract.
- The Contractor will conduct oneself in a manner consistent with USSEC's core values and refrain from engaging in activities which reflect adversely on USSEC or presents a conflict of interest.
- The Contractor will provide timely and accurate responses to inquiries and questions from U.S. exporters, importers and processors of U.S. soy, trade organizations, government officials, etc. on subjects and matters that relate directly or indirectly to USSEC's events and activities.
- The Contractor may be called upon to perform additional duties and responsibilities that is within his/her expertise, knowledge, and or capacity as requested by the Regional Director.
- The Contractor must of his/her own accord, stay well informed and knowledgeable in the latest/current developments in the industry so as to be able to communicate effectively to target audiences.
- The Contractor will have primarily an 'inward-facing' role (i.e. as an extension of the Project Support Team) and will provide assistance under this capacity as directed by USSEC's S.E. Asia Management. Overall, the Contractor will still report to and be accountable to the Regional Director.
- Any trade or technical information, data, statistics, reports, etc. that is prepared by USSEC contractors/staff for U.S. Soy activities is deemed the exclusive and private property of USSEC unless classified otherwise. Under no circumstances should the Contractor use such information, in any way shape or form, for any other purpose than for the benefit of U.S. Soy.

SKILLSETS ADVANTAGEOUS FOR THE ROLE:

- At least 3-5 years of project management experience. Understanding of project management principles, methodologies, tools and techniques is an advantage.
- Strong communication skills, including the ability to listen, convey information clearly, and write effectively.
- Ability to lead, motivate, and work together as a team to positively impact project success.
- Ability to analyze complex problems, identify and evaluate potential solutions, and make sound decisions that support project goals.
- Strong organizational skills, including the ability to prioritize tasks, manage timelines and budgets, and track progress.
- Ability to identify and manage project risks, including developing contingency plans, mitigating risk factors and managing issues as they arise.
- Interpersonal Skills: Ability to work collaboratively with stakeholders, team members, and clients, and build strong relationships.

DELIVERABLES:

Administrative

- The Contractor must ensure that all activities under his/her responsibility adhere strictly to USSEC's accounting, budget, compliance, contracts, and operational requirements.
- Submit Invoice and Monthly Report to the Regional Director in format as directed and using latest prescribed USSEC format.
- Submit budget tables, on or before the 20th or upon request, on the latest investment estimates for project and activities under the Contractor's responsibility
- Provide reviews, observations, and recommendations on programs/activities, action on trade issues, marketing strategies etc. as and when required by USSEC Management

Marketing

- The Contractor shall undertake marketing responsibilities as it relates to USSEC's activities and events under the direction of the Regional Director that is within the scope of work.

Communications

- The Contractor will provide support to the Regional Director and the regional Communications Consultant when required and is within the scope of work.

Program management support

- The Contractor will lead and or support, as determined by the Regional Director, the organization and implementation of USSEC's regional activities and events, e.g.
 - AG Supply Chain Asia Conference
 - U.S. Soy Supply Workshops
 - U.S. Soy Sustainability Conference
 - Asia Soy Excellence and Food Summit

- U.S. Soy Producers Mission
- SE Asia U.S. Agricultural Co-operators Conference
- U.S. Soy Trade Teams to the U.S.
- And any other third-party events where USSEC is supporting
- The Contractor will ensure that for the events under his/her lead that besides the execution, all pre and post event administrative, marketing, and communications are taken care of by the Project Support Team.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

For this contract, our expectation is to start from April 1, 2023 and end on September 30, 2023. After which, subject to regular contract reviews and an annual performance evaluation, this contract may be renewable on a 12-monthly basis according to the term of each marketing season or tenure of the funding source.

RFP TIMELINE:

- ✓ **RFP Distribution:** May 15, 2023
- ✓ **Last Day to Submit Questions:** May 25, 2023 by 5:00PM SGT (GMT +8)
- ✓ **Project Proposals Due:** May 29, 2023 by 12:00 PM SGT (GMT +8)
- ✓ **Selections Made By:** June 6, 2023
- ✓ **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** June 6, 2023

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG and chtan@ussec.org by **12:00PM SGT (GMT +8)** on **May 29, 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

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, audiotope, 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.