REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
Aug 29, 2023 - 12:00 PM SGT (GMT +8)

RFP TITLE: SENIOR TECHNICAL CONSULTANT - SOYBEAN MEAL & ANIMAL PROTEIN, S.E. ASIA & OCEANIA

RFP CONTACT:
Name: Charlotte Tan
Phone #: +65 6737 6233
Email: chtan@ussec.org

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INTRODUCTION:
U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. formally requests proposals for the costs of engaging a Senior Technical Director – Soybean Meal & Animal Protein (terrestrial livestock) to provide professional services for the Southeast Asia and Oceania region – collectively referred to as 'the/this region'. This region represents a major destination for whole soybeans and soybean meal, approximately 9-10 million metric tons and 20-21 million metric tons respectively. Of that volume, over 70% are for use by the feed and livestock sector. USSEC has continued to maintain a presence in the region for over 40 years providing trade support and technical servicing to the food and livestock industry and agribusinesses.

Through a global network of international offices and strong support by U.S. Soybean Producer organizations and FAS USDA, USSEC helps 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.

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(s) 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.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:
The Contractor will work closely with USSEC’s trade and technical teams to develop and oversee the livestock and animal protein program in the region, promoting a sustainable soy-optimized feed-based livestock industry using soybeans, soybean meal, and other soy products sourced from the United States - collectively referred to as 'U.S. Soy'.

Under the direction of the Regional Director and USSEC’s Focus Area Director, the Contractor will play a vital role in differentiating U.S. Soy and cultivating a preference for it in this region, encouraging its importation for application in the feed and livestock industry by importers and end-users. Additionally, the Contractor will provide guidance and support
to USSEC's Worldwide Focus Area Director as needed regarding general livestock and animal protein matters.

The Contractor will effectively highlight the superior value of U.S. Soy compared to its competitors. He/She will be responsible for implementing and coordinating various activities such as feed demonstrations, organizing technical workshops, and conducting training sessions with key customer accounts. These activities will utilize tools like the Animal Nutrition Value Calculator (NVC) to showcase the advantages of U.S. Soy and position it as the preferred feed ingredient for optimal animal performance and best overall value.

The Contractor will focus on key accounts with a primary target audience that includes feed millers, particularly feed mill nutritionists, formulators, and ingredient purchasers etc. The goal will be to effectively demonstrate the intrinsic benefits of incorporating U.S. soy into animal feeds and the higher value and cost savings U.S. Soy affords as a feed ingredient. The Contractor will also manage and coordinate the efforts of USSEC's team of technical consultants, overseeing various initiatives such as providing technical servicing and support through training and knowledge transfer. These initiatives will specifically target capacity building and increasing consumption of U.S. Soy.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The Contractor and the team of technical consultants will work together with USSEC’s in-country trade representatives to interface with industry decision-makers and influencers, buyers and sellers of food and feed ingredients, leading industry representatives, industry, trade and livestock associations, related government ministries/departments in the country etc. Examples of the organizations are, but not limited to:

- Feed Millers Associations
- Poultry, Swine, and other Livestock Associations
- Feed Ingredient Importers Association
- Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Livestock, and other related departments etc.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- Establish and foster strong working relationships, communication channels, and trade connections with local/regional stakeholders in the livestock and feed industry, including private sector personnel, government bodies, universities, and institutions.
- Differentiate, promote, and increase the demand for U.S. Soy in the region. Recommend strategies to grow the animal protein market and advocate for the use of U.S. Soy among current and potential industry participants.
- Provide technical guidance on regional and in-country programs to distinguish and promote a preference for U.S. Soy.
- Author and develop technical presentations and bulletins, oversee scientific and analytical studies, conduct soy-based feeding demonstrations, and report results in accordance with USSEC's Applied Research and Feeding Demonstration Policies.
- Deliver presentations at workshops, seminars, and conferences to advance the core mission of USSEC.
• Plan, coordinate, implement, and evaluate USSEC seminars, press conferences, lectures, demonstrations, and presentations to achieve the organization's objectives with individuals, groups, and media outlets.
• Respond promptly to internal and external inquiries for information and assistance within the Contractor’s area of expertise.
• Support specific activities within the livestock and animal protein program, such as implementing modern farm management techniques, providing aqua feed mill support, offering expertise in nutrition, feed milling and formulation technology, ensuring quality assurance, and managing disease diagnosis and control etc.
• Travel, as requested by USSEC Management, alongside USSEC regional technical staff, Contractors, and U.S. Soy Producers to observe programs, participate in industry meetings, and enhance understanding of USSEC's marketing and technical outreach initiatives.
• Contribute insights and guidance for future U.S. Soy market development programs, regularly reviewing and suggesting modifications in response to evolving market and trade conditions.
• Communicate the message of U.S. Soy Sustainability to customers and encourage them to engage with the U.S. Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP) when purchasing U.S. Soy.
• Manage and coordinate all technical projects and activities related to USSEC’s Soybean Meal & Animal Protein initiatives, adhering to the organization's administrative and operational guidelines.
• Ensure timely and successful implementation of projects/activities outlined in the current Unified Export Strategy (UES).
• Coordinate, supervise, and oversee all the activities of USSEC’s Technical Servicing Contractors in the region, including third-party technical contractors.
• Manage the preparation and submission of progress reports, output reports, and other management and technical reports regarding the livestock and animal protein program in the region, as directed by the Regional Director.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (if applicable)

Additional Considerations to include any specific information regarding the proposal that could affect the Prospective Contractors ability to submit a proposal.

Additional considerations for the video creation and development include:

• Video should be between 15-20 minutes long
• Videotaping with farmers must occur in St. Louis during the week of December 7th
• We will try to schedule the videotaping of the Economist on the same date with the farmers if their schedules permit or on a different date
• If your company also provides live streaming services please provide your fee schedule under ancillary services in the Detailed Budget section of your proposal.

DELIVERABLES:

Monthly Reporting

• Report of the Contractor(s)’s interactions with local soy-related industry contacts
• Provide updates and relate what action has been taken to promote U.S. Sustainability Initiatives and further this message to the industry and its impact/results.
• Timely reporting of latest market updates and developments – especially events that impact
the trade and preference for U.S. Soy.

- Report observations, evaluations, and feedback on the results and performance of technical programs and activities etc. and provide recommendations to the Regional Director.
- Submit monthly budget tables on the latest investment estimates for project and activities under the Contractor’s responsibility on or before the 25th of every month and or upon USSEC’s management request.
- Plan of Work for upcoming Month/Quarter which is to be shared regularly with the Regional Director and Focus Area Director upon request.
- Progress reports on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as it relates to the “Services” and “Deliverables” indicated in the Master Contract and Addendums therein

PROJECT TIMELINE:

For this contract, our expectation is for the ‘Senior Technical Consultant – Meal’ contract to start from October 30, 2023 and end on September 30, 2024 (MY 2024). After which this contract is renewable on a 12-monthly basis according to the term of each marketing season or tenure of the funding source.

RFP TIMELINE:

- RFP Distribution: Aug 16, 2023
- Last Day to Submit Questions: Aug 25, 2023 by 5:00PM SGT (GMT +8)
- Project Proposals Due: August 29, 2023 by 12:00 PM SGT (GMT +8)
- Selections Made By: August 31, 2023
- Prospective Contractors Notified By: September 1, 2023

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG by 12:00PM SGT (GMT +8) on Aug 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, 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.