REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

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

RFP TITLE: TECHNICAL CONSULTANT – SOY FOODS AND OIL PROGRAM, SOUTHEAST ASIA AND OCEANIA

RFP CONTACT:
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INTRODUCTION:

U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. formally requests proposals for the costs of engaging a ‘Technical Consultant – Soy Foods and Oil Program’ to provide professional services for the S.E. Asia and Oceania region (i.e., Australia and New Zealand).

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, 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 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 Technical Consultant or Consultancy to provide strategic direction and leadership in the implementation of USSEC’s Soy Foods and Oil initiatives in S.E. Asia and Oceania.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

The goal and purpose of the Technical Consultant - Soy Foods and Oil Program is to build preference and increase exports of U.S. soybean, soybean meal and other soy derivatives for the S.E. Asia and Oceania region for human utilization and consumption. The Contractor’s role and responsibilities will cover 3 major objectives with focus on building preference and utilization of U.S. soybeans and soy products for food uses:
(1) As the Contractor, you will be responsible for leading, developing, and building strategic collaborations to plan, organize, and implement projects focused on building capacity and increasing consumption of both Soy Protein and Animal Protein sources for human consumption in Southeast Asia. Your role will involve identifying key stakeholders, coordinating project management activities, and driving initiatives to raise awareness and create demand for these protein sources.

(2) As the Contractor, you will take the lead in developing and fostering strategic collaborations to plan, organize, and implement USSEC's 'Soy Excellence Center - Food Protein' (SEC-FP) programs for the South Asia and Southeast Asia region. The SEC-FP program is designed to provide technical and professional development training to support and benefit the soy foods and soy beverage industry. Your responsibilities will include coordinating program activities, facilitating training sessions, and ensuring the program's effectiveness in advancing the industry.

(3) In your role as the Contractor, you will lead or support USSEC's initiatives related to Soy Foods and Soy Oil, as well as industry communication on Sustainability, Biotechnology, and Human Health. You will play a key role in driving these initiatives forward, engaging with stakeholders, and effectively communicating USSEC's mission. Your expertise in these areas will contribute to the development and execution of impactful strategies that promote the sustainable use of soy products, advocate for biotechnology advancements, and raise awareness about the health benefits of soy protein and soy oil.

To accomplish the aforementioned objectives, the Consultant will collaborate with food and beverage processors, government and NGOs agencies, industry associations, and health professionals to promote the utilization of soy products in the regional food and beverage industry, with a specific focus on promoting the use of U.S. soy.

Under the guidance of the Regional Director and USSEC's Focus Area Director (FAD) for Soy Foods and Oil Initiatives worldwide, the Contractor will support USSEC's efforts to advocate for U.S. soybeans, meal, oil, and soy ingredients in the food and beverage sector for human consumption in Southeast Asia and Oceania.

The Contractor will work closely with USSEC's in-country representatives and consultants in Southeast Asia to develop, implement, and evaluate marketing plans, projects, and activities aligned with their goals and objectives in promoting U.S. soy. Additionally, the Contractor will provide technical support to other USSEC offices as requested by the Regional Director, FAD, or USSEC Management.

Furthermore, the Contractor will offer guidance and assistance, as requested, to USSEC's Focus Area Director (FAD) for Soy Foods and Oil Initiatives worldwide on general food and nutrition matters.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The Contractor will engage with a diverse range of stakeholders within the food and beverage industry and related fields. The target audience includes:
- **Food and beverage companies**: The Contractor will collaborate with these companies to promote the use of soy products in their manufacturing processes. This includes engaging with key decision-makers and stakeholders within these organizations.

- **Food technologists, scientists, and technical staff**: The Contractor will interact with professionals involved in research, development, and production within food and beverage companies. This target audience will benefit from technical guidance and support on incorporating soy products into their formulations and processes.

- **Government and NGO officials**: Engaging with government and non-governmental organizations is crucial for creating an enabling environment for the adoption of soy products. The Contractor will work closely with officials to advocate for supportive policies, regulations, and incentives that encourage the use of soy and promote sustainable practices.

- **Health professionals and related trade/professional associations**: Collaboration with health professionals, such as nutritionists, dietitians, and healthcare organizations, is essential to raise awareness about the health benefits of soy and its incorporation into a balanced diet. Trade and professional associations within the food and beverage industry will also be targeted to disseminate relevant information and foster industry-wide collaboration.

- **Other peripheral members of the food and beverage industry**: This includes suppliers, distributors, and other stakeholders who play a role in the production, distribution, and promotion of food and beverage products. The Contractor will collaborate with these peripheral members to encourage the use of soy products and promote sustainable practices throughout the industry value chain.

Expanding and engaging with a diverse target audience to help drive the adoption and consumption of soy products in the food and beverage industry while fostering a supportive ecosystem for sustainable and healthy food choices.

**SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:**

- The Contractor will report administratively and operationally to USSEC's Southeast Asia Regional Director for all matters related to the execution of services as described under this contract.
- The Contractor will liaise, coordinate, and cooperate with other USSEC Regional/Southeast Asian Technical Staff and Contractors when implementing projects and activities.
- The Contractor will establish strong working relationships, maintain good lines of communication, and foster beneficial trade connections with importers and end-users of soybeans and soy ingredients for food use.
- The Contractor will author/develop technical presentations and bulletins, manage scientific or analytical studies and research, and conduct soy-based food or beverage trials when opportunities arise.
- The Contractor will assist in the preparation of technical publications and studies to promote U.S. soybeans and soy ingredients for use by industry, universities, government officials, and research centers.
- The Contractor must be prepared to give presentations at workshops, seminars, and conferences.
to advance USSEC's core mission.

- The Contractor shall plan, coordinate, evaluate, negotiate (when necessary), and conduct virtual seminars, press conferences, lectures, demonstrations, publicity, and presentations to achieve their objectives with key individuals, groups, and media.
- The Contractor shall respond to inquiries and provide timely assistance within their area of expertise.
- The Contractor shall recommend, recruit, and support outside consultants and technicians to assist with specific projects and activities.
- The Contractor will ensure that U.S. Soy Producers and other members of the U.S. Soy Family have meetings with relevant local/regional industry members to establish trade connections.
- The Contractor will assist in conveying the U.S. Soy Sustainability message to customers and encourage them to apply for the U.S. Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP) and/or adopt the Sustainability U.S. Soy Logo (SUSS) with their U.S. Soy purchases and products.
- The Contractor will provide insights and direction for future U.S. Soy market development programs and periodically review and recommend modifications to market development plans.
- The Contractor will organize funded projects and activities and manage the technical activities under their responsibility according to USSEC's guidelines and requirements, including undertaking managerial, reporting, and administrative duties as required.
- The Contractor will prepare correspondence, activity plans, budgets, and other documentation as requested by the Regional Director or USSEC management.

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.
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<th>Completion Date (Cannot be outside the contract term dates)</th>
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| October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024 Monthly            | The Contractor will submit an invoice and a monthly report to the Regional Director in the specified format. The monthly report provides a comprehensive update on the Contractor’s activities, emphasizing their engagement with industry contacts and commitment to promoting sustainability. It enables the Regional Director to evaluate progress, identify areas for improvement, and ensure alignment with the contract’s objectives.  

The monthly report will include, but not be limited to, the following details:  

1. Contractor interactions with soy industry contacts: This section summarizes the Contractor’s engagements and interactions with key stakeholders in the soy industry, including meetings, discussions, collaborations, and notable outcomes.  
2. Sustainability efforts: The report highlights the Contractor’s actions to promote sustainability within the industry, encompassing environmental conservation, social responsibility, and sustainable practices in soy production and utilization. It outlines the impact and results achieved through these initiatives, if applicable.  
3. Timely reporting of the latest market updates and developments, with a focus on events that impact the trade and preference for U.S. Soy.  
4. Providing observations and recommendations on programs, activities, and trade issues, as well as marketing strategies.  
5. Handling communications related to inquiries and questions from U.S. exporters, importers, processors of U.S. soy, trade organizations, and government officials regarding the application, availability, and sourcing of soybeans and soybean products from the U.S.  
6. Creating a monthly Plan of Work for the upcoming month/quarter, to be shared with the Regional Director, WW Focus Area Director for Soy Foods and Oil programs, and/or CEO upon request.  
7. Submitting budget tables with the latest investment estimates for projects and activities under the Contractor’s responsibility.  
8. Offering reviews, observations, and recommendations on programs, activities, action on trade issues, and marketing strategies as required. |
| On Request | 1. Author/develop technical presentations and technical bulletins.  
2. Give presentations to audiences at virtual workshops, seminars and/or conferences for the benefit of and to achieve USSEC’s core mission |
|---|---|
| At least two (2) stories a month | Submit a minimum of two (2) event/success stories each month, including:  
2. Demonstrate the benefits of U.S. Soy resulting from the interaction, highlighting the Contractor's role in facilitating the outcome.  
| October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024 Ongoing | The Contractor will engage with a minimum of 30 key industry decision-makers and influencers in Southeast Asia and Oceania throughout the marketing year:  
1. Detail the role and responsibility of each contact, emphasizing their significance to USSEC's mission.  
2. Provide a contact list for input into USSEC's CRM and Content Management systems.  
3. Summarize each meeting and offer recommendations for next steps.  

The Contractor will support the Southeast Asia Regional Director in accomplishing USSEC's corporate goals:  
2. Strive to secure a minimum of 5 customers who will seek SSAP certificates in FY 2024.  
3. Successfully implement all funded programs within the allocated budget, ensuring compliance with corporate guidelines and investment rates.  

Supervise and direct the activities of all USSEC Soy Foods Technical Servicing Contractors.  

Work with the Regional Director, WW Director – Soy Foods and Oil program, and other USSEC Soy Food Staff to provide guidance and recommendations on details of implementation plans for Soy Food and Oil programs and related projects. |
PROJECT TIMELINE:

Our expectation is for the TECHNICAL CONSULTANT - SOY FOODS AND OIL PROGRAM, SOUTHEAST ASIA AND OCEANIA to last from October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024 (or be completed by a certain date). We are asking that the Project Proposal include details about what the proposed timeline and scope would look like.

RFP TIMELINE:

- RFP Distribution: August 16, 2023
- Last Day to Submit Questions: August 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 August 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.