

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
SUBMISSION DEADLINE  
17:00 CT, 11/30/2023**

**RFP TITLE: ASSESSMENT OF GRAIN LOSSES IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

**RFP CONTACT:**

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**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 training, 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. soybean 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.

**PURPOSE OF RFP:**

The appointed consultant will undertake a thorough analysis of grain discharge and handling procedures at the ports of Haina and Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic. The primary goal is to pinpoint existing and potential factors leading to undesirable grain losses of imported U.S. grains and feed ingredients, with a particular focus on SBM. Moreover, the consultant will present actionable plans and controls for addressing these identified areas of concern.

**BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:**

The Dominican Republic is a significant importer of agricultural products, particularly around 450,000 metric tons of soybean meal and 28,000 metric tons of soybeans, primarily utilized in animal feed manufacturing. The nation boasts a robust livestock sector, encompassing animal feed manufacturers, poultry, and swine producers. A notable characteristic of this sector is the integration and sophistication of many of these enterprises, rendering them intricate and multifaceted businesses. Given this dynamic, the Dominican Republic stands as a crucial market for U.S. Soy products.

The persistent challenge of product loss during grain shipments in the Dominican Republic has garnered notable attention from local stakeholders and the media. In response, a proactive initiative has been set in motion to explore strategies through which USSEC can provide substantial support to the Dominican Republic in mitigating this issue, which has been observed to impede operational efficiency.

To ensure the success of this endeavor, the consultant should perform a thorough assessment of the entire unloading process of ships in the Dominican Republic. Relevant details about various ships will be supplied by the DR buyers. It is imperative that the consultant travels to the DR to be physically present during the unloading process. This approach will necessitate a considerable amount of planning to ensure a seamless execution.

**TARGET AUDIENCE:**

The primary focus of this study is directed towards soybean meal buyers in the Dominican Republic. As deemed suitable, USSEC may choose to disseminate the study, either in its entirety or in segments, to other relevant soybean-related entities in the U.S., such as the United Soybean Board or Qualified State Soybean Boards.

**SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:**

The project's focus will encompass the following activities:

- Travel to the Dominican Republic and conduct on-site visits to the ports of Haina and Puerto Plata.
- Engage in comprehensive interviews with pertinent figures including port authorities, security personnel, grain concessionaires (if applicable), customs officials, shipping agencies, trucking union representatives, and representatives from the five importer groups.
- Conduct an extensive tour of the grain storage facility within the port premises and engage in discussions with management regarding grain importation and internal logistical matters.
- Conduct a thorough audit of port grain offloading procedures to pinpoint potential areas of grain loss. This will involve activities such as:
  - Observing the complete discharge of a designated vessel at the port of Haina, along with obtaining relevant FGIS-related inspection documents (estimated five days).
  - Observing the discharge of a designated vessel during a two-day inspection of Puerto Plata (2 days).
  - Observing port handling, storage, and shipping procedures related to grain, including Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) employed by shipping agents.
- Identifying product and document flows within the port, supported by diagrams and photos.
- Reviewing and analyzing receiving, storage, shipping, and customs-related documents.
- Identifying and analyzing existing control mechanisms.
- Reviewing port security protocols.
- Reviewing procedures for inbound and outbound weights and grading.
- Reviewing scale certification records and maintenance logs, conducting scale inspections, and interviewing scale service providers.
- Investigating truck loading and outbound trucking operations, along with reviewing associated procedures and documents.
- Reviewing historical vessel discharge data provided by importers.

- Conducting interviews with identified shippers/exporters regarding their experiences in shipping to the Dominican Republic.
- Exploring the filing of insurance claims related to losses, if applicable, and engaging in discussions with insurance carriers.
- Obtaining relevant FAS shipping records if accessible.
- Providing a detailed narrative of FGIS oversight procedures pertaining to US grain exports.

## **DELIVERABLES**

- Provision of diagrams and photos depicting current product and document flows.
- Provision of an analysis of current port procedures and compliance in the following areas:
  - Receiving, storage, and shipping
  - Weighing and grading procedures and compliance
  - Inventory procedures and records, including shrink management
  - Trucking operations and related logistics
- Provision of an analysis of the current condition of port grain handling equipment and systems.
- Provision of an analysis of current scale inspection and maintenance procedures.
- Provision of diagrams and analysis of current port security systems relevant to grain.
- Generation of a modified Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HAACP) plan.
- Generation of a final summation report, including recommended modifications or additions to procedures, SOPs, systems, and controls to mitigate current grain losses.

## **RFP TIMELINE:**

- RFP distribution: October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- Last day to submit questions: November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 by 17:00 CT
- Q&A Session: November 13<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 - 16:00 CT
  - Request Zoom Link by sending an email to [americasRFP@ussec.org](mailto:americasRFP@ussec.org) .
- Project proposals due: November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 by 17:00 CT - email to [americasRFP@ussec.org](mailto:americasRFP@ussec.org)
- Selections made by: December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- Prospective contractors notified by December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

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

1. *Please email the proposal to [americasRFP@ussec.org](mailto:americasRFP@ussec.org) by 5:00PM Mexico Time on November 30, 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 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](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.