REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
NOVEMBER 1, 2023, 5:00 p.m (IST)

RFP TITLE: Soy Excellence Center Nigeria - Center Lead

RFP CONTACT:
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INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) is a non-profit organization that promotes sustainable, production approaches through knowledge transfer, on-site trainings, seminars, workshops, conferences, industry tours and demonstrations. The specific goal of the USSEC Nigeria Program is to promote the use of U.S. SOY products in feeds and the best feeding practices.

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. To this end, USSEC has received support from USDA’s Agricultural Trade Promotion Program (ATP) whose mandate is to help U.S. agricultural exporters develop new markets.

BACKGROUND OF PROJECT

USSEC has identified Nigeria as a new and growing market, as part of a long-term strategy to build a strong pipeline of demand for U.S. soy and soy-related products. Nigeria is an emerging market that represents a substantial growth opportunity for U.S. soy given its large population and very low per capita consumption of soy and soy-related products. There are significant opportunities to drive growth in protein consumption, improvements in the overall efficiency and functionality of the food chain and increases in the utilization of soy within the supply chain. The best growth prospects for the region lie in the long-term, where growth opportunities abound in poultry, aquaculture and for food use. Encouraging the growth in the consumption of soybean and soybean-related products in Nigeria could turn the country into one of U.S. soy’s top three growth markets by 2030.
Nigeria

The Soy Excellence Center will build awareness of the benefits of soy use through educating end users by establishing, teaching, and disseminating best practices. The Center will also facilitate business linkages between local and international businesses and value chain actors. Below we outline the market growth opportunities in each region and country.

What is a U.S. SOY Excellence Center?

The U.S. Soybean Export Council established Soy Excellence Centers (SEC) in Nigeria in 2020 as part of the strategic shifts in international market development initiatives designed to target emerging markets offering significant medium to long-term opportunities. The U.S. SOY Excellence Center is a proprietary global education and training platform established with a vision to provide workforce training and capacity-building program to diversify demand for U.S. soy exports through real-world application of cutting-edge knowledge. The center offers curriculum-based training programs to professionals that cut across the soybean value chain with the aim of increasing protein production and soybean consumption, both in humans and animals, through the training of relevant stakeholders.

SEC demonstrates best production practices creating a resource for ongoing USSEC promotional efforts, education, and relationship building. These facilities are designed and tailored to fit the market dynamics specific to the region consolidating the Center as:

1. Information repository: web and physical repository of case studies, best practices.
2. Soybean discussion forum: a platform to increase knowledge about soybeans and best practices (also a web forum).
3. Training center: Online and physical training center where case studies and demonstrations take place.

SEC Nigeria will develop, communicate, and demonstrate soy-based best management practices with an emphasis on providing opportunities for stakeholders to directly experience these practices in a real-world setting that is relevant to the local market and at a commercial scale. As part of measuring effectiveness, the SEC Nigeria will follow SEC Global structures for measurement and evaluation of “overall educational effectiveness” and “participant professional progress” using the system proposed by USSEC.

Soy Excellence Center Digital Platform

To further the establishment of Soy Excellence Centers as a world-class programming for agribusiness professionals in emerging markets, USSEC launched in 2022 the SEC Digital Platform— a global, online learning and professional development platform for SEC. The platform provides a uniform experience for all Global Soy Excellence Centers. A requirement of the Center lead is to actively manage and execute regional program administration under the SEC Digital Platform. This would include session registration, participant attendance and scoring, and all data input necessary to support Global SEC reporting.
Within the digital platform, USSEC has established a SEC Community concept that extends training beyond the classroom to provide learners with a global, online professional development platform. The Community provides participants the opportunity to connect with industry peers from across the globe, as well as access to on-demand supplemental training content and seminars, continuing education opportunities and direct access to industry experts sourced from the U.S. Soy international network. A requirement of the Center lead is to actively support Nigerian community participation by working with Global teams to deliver supplemental experiences, rich with relevant local content, that incentivizes regular activity by Nigerian members within the community.

**Hybrid Training Model**

The USSEC SEC training model will increasingly adopt a Hybrid training model to expand the reach of the program & incentivize training. The SEC Hybrid training model will be based on a virtual learning management system that allows self-paced and on-demand training for Basic level training. Instruction under the SEC Hybrid model includes trainer-monitored discussion boards and mandatory weekly virtual “progress check-ins” with a live trainer. As participants successfully complete the Basic level training, they would be eligible for in-person Intermediate training.

USSEC’s standard practice is to RFP every 3 years in an open and competitive manner. This type of cost analysis will assist in determining the fair market value for the work to be performed and allows USSEC the opportunity to evaluate various proposals and select the best contractor for the job based on experience, availability, expertise, approach, and cost.

**The Challenge** - With the global population expected to exceed 9 billion by 2050, it is estimated that worldwide protein consumption could double by 2050. Protein enterprises must be equipped to meet growing protein needs, particularly in emerging markets where protein deficiency remains a chronic problem. Soy Excellence Centers (SECs) have been established by the U.S. Soy industry to assist these emerging market enterprises help to meet the protein challenges of the 21st century.

**Soy Excellence Centers Approach** – SECs provide protein enterprises with work force training and capacity building programs which enhance firm competitiveness and productivity. Increased work force preparedness leads to more efficient production of protein, impacting the entire value chain. Higher productivity increases profits for protein enterprises, which can create more jobs and expand access to protein at lower costs, supporting positive development outcomes in economic growth, food security, nutrition, and health verticals.

**The Vision** - The Soy Excellence Center vision is to create a global network of tomorrow’s leaders in soy across the globe. As a professional development program, SECs can provide a pathway for participants to achieve professional certification and career advancement. Beyond the formal curriculum, the U.S. Soy industry has invested in the development of the SEC digital platform, an online hub for on-demand continuing education content, access to industry experts, and a global community of industry peers. In turn, this platform collectively supports continuing innovation and the sustainability of program results.
SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK
In order to facilitate employee training and continuing education activities that build the knowledge and skills to help employees overcome key challenges and operational hurdles in food, feed and agribusiness operations:

- The contractor will work closely with the enterprises for both human and animal utilization tracks to spot and select the right candidates for this course in coordination and concurrence with the utilization area leads.
- The contractor will identify the relevant existing training facilities and will assess their training capabilities on these, as per the curriculum requirements. This assessment will include the meetings and interviews with their in-house technical people and the outsourced subject matter specialists/trainers. This review and selection of such facilities will involve universities, government and private institutions running such courses and imparting training.
- In coordination with the utilization area leads, the contractor will identify USSEC’s in-house as well as outsourced speakers/trainers.
- In coordination with the utilization area leads, the contractor will work on development or domestication of SEC courses suitable to Nigeria along with accreditation of the courses wherever necessary.
- The contractor will work to adapt training methodologies, as per the curriculum, to meet the needs of small, medium and large enterprises for both the tracks. The target trainees will be beginners and junior level executives from the soy food and animal feed processing industries in Nigeria. They may or may not have a formal education in the respective tracks but will have on-the-job training experience.
- This training module will broadly fall into two parts: (1) Execution of prescribed curriculum and (2) the recording/production of the developed material to be used as a teaching tool. The contractor is responsible for the recording and production of the course material, power point presentations and other related perceptible materials to be given to the course participants in printed or digital format. This will include the course certificate and group pictures, additionally.
- Contractor will coordinate, manage and lead an in-person meeting(s) and/or webinar with the Senior Management Team and key Nigeria contractors/employees and selected members of the coalition to team kick-off the project, initiate collaboration with the team, share the path forward and become familiar with USSEC’s existing research, market structure, and other critical background information.
- Attend and Represent SEC's in the Events organized in Nigeria.
- Recruiting a pipeline of beginner level students for continuous education, of which will be used to draw from for the intermediate levels.
- Before commencing any such training programs, the contractor will advise and discuss with the utilization area leads about how this strategically focused SEC activity will have the optimal impact in order to accomplish the desired outcome for both the tracks.
- Create and execute the following tracks for Nigeria:
  - Poultry
  - Feed Milling
  - Aqua culture
  - Agronomy
- Dairy (if needed)
- Human Utilization (If needed)

**Project Reporting**

a. Following each on-site course, a written report on project implementation progress must be submitted, which should include updates on all current and upcoming SEC courses, database of past and current students, courses curriculum, as well as current and accumulated administrative and financial information. Submit to USSEC invoices for all services rendered under scope of work following each on-site course or any other SEC event (no later than 30 days after course/event completion).

b. Track progress towards project goals, objectives, outputs, and outcomes. Maintain course participant records to determine when they have completed the necessary requirements to receive the course certifications.

c. Prepare up-to-date information and participate in virtual and on-site meetings with SEC Global SEC Steering Committee and Regional Advisory Council.

d. Additional reporting and documentation may be required upon request by USSEC.

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The contractor is expected to work closely with the USSEC South Asis and Sub-Saharan Africa and maintain regular contact throughout the contract period.

**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.
- The Proposal can be divided into phases i.e., Phase 1 being Developmental phase which includes domestication of the Courses, Accreditations, planning and Phase 2 being Execution and delivery.
- Proposals should be submitted and will be evaluated on a cost per pupil basis. Thus, respondents should propose a cost structure per student for the amount they will be compensated for. Within that amount, the contractor will have derived all their expenses (which will need to be shown for reimbursement) and professional fees. If the contractor wishes to present a tiered cost structure, based upon the number of students, that is acceptable.
- Payments are made monthly upon actual deliverables. USSEC will require an invoice for the number of units worked, along with a 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.
- 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.
# DELIVERABLES:

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<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Description of Deliverable</th>
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<tr>
<td>December 10, 2023</td>
<td>Provide USSEC Project Manager with documentation for contract: 1. Signed W9 or W8BEN-E 2. Banking information (USSEC template) 3. Payment terms etc.</td>
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| January 1 - February 29, 2024 | **Phase 1: Development/ Domestication of SEC Courses, Accreditations and Planning.** Provide a detailed plan of action for 2024 from development to implementation of each of the current and new courses by the SEC of Nigeria. In coordination with USSEC utilization area leads, develop a comprehensive 10-month SEC Nigeria program schedule, to include:  
  - Planning calendar/timeline.  
  - Planning for each SEC event.  
  - Definition and detail of the scope of the work, both on the development and delivery of courses (as outlined in scope/services of work) section. |
| February 29, 2024     | Submission of Plan of action Report for 2024                                                                                                                                                                                |
| March 1 – December 31, 2024 | **Phase 2: Execution and Delivery**  
Training and Conducting the SEC Courses as per the Mutually Agreed calendar Timeline  
Conduct and Arrange 1 In Person Advisory Council Meeting  
Provide Budget & Accounting Analyst with CC to the Regional Director, SEC Lead, and Project Manager with the following:  
1. **Executive English Narrative Report** (In USSEC Template) with services rendered during the month, that should include:  
   a. Summary of activities and number of hours used under rendered services.  
   b. Report progress towards goals described in Scope (Services) of Work Section.  
   c. Updated list of SEC of the Americas’ past and current students, as well as candidates for upcoming courses.  
   d. Recommendations and opportunity areas for further programs or activities.  
   e. List of key industry contacts  
   f. Action photos/videos (if any)  
2. Monthly Invoice indicating number of hours used under rendered services.  
Produce two semi-annual reports on the work and achievements of the SEC of Nigeria. Reports will summarize the Center’s work, progress against the stated goals and objectives, lessons learned, and challenges encountered. Reports will conform with USSEC and funding source requirements.

Qualification and Eligibility:

The candidate should have experience in virtual and in-person education, ideally with a background in animal science/husbandry and some knowledge of soy foods processing. An advanced degree is not required, although preferred. One of the

Individuals/organizations should be fully equipped to recruit incoming students and deploy the on-demand and in-person learning structure. That means they should have a good network of industry representatives and companies to recruit from. They should be prepared to conduct their own administrative functioning and expense reconciliation for reporting.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The U.S. SOY Excellence Center Nigeria will target influential farmers, end-users, animal protein integrators, feed millers, agribusinesses, animal nutritionists and local academic resources in Nigeria.

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
- Fee (described above)

This proposal is subject to approval of funding.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

Our expectation is for the Project to last from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024. We are asking that the Project Proposal include details about what the proposed timeline and scope would look like.

RFP TIMELINE:

- RFP Distribution: October 04, 2023
- Last Day to Submit Questions: October 25, 2023
- Project Proposals Due: November 1, 2023 by 5:00 p.m. IST
- Prospective Contractors Notified By: November 15, 2023
**Instructions:** Proposals must contain at a **minimum** the specific criteria listed below:

1. Please email the proposal to **Rrfp@ussec.org; kroepke@ussec.org** by November **1, 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
   
   i. - 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.

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: [https://ussec.org/about-ussec/](https://ussec.org/about-ussec/)

USB’s Long Range Strategic Plan can be found here: [https://www.unitedsoybean.org/strategic-plan/](https://www.unitedsoybean.org/strategic-plan/)

- 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.