

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

July 31, 2024 - 12:00 PM SGT (GMT +8)

RFP TITLE: SEA PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: July 31, 2024 - 12:00 PM SGT (GMT +8)

INTRODUCTION:

U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. formally requests proposals for the delivery of services and costs of engaging a Program and Event Management (abbrev. P&EM) Contractor to provide professional services for the Southeast Asia market.

Through a global network of international offices and strong support in S.E. Asia, USSEC helps build a preference in this region for U.S. soybeans, soybean meal and soybean products (collectively known as 'U.S. soy'), advocate for the use of soy in livestock feed and for human consumption, promote the benefits of soy through education, and connect S.E. Asia's food and agriculture industry through a robust customer program.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC's standard practice is to RFP every 1 to 3 years, or as and when required, 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.

CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATIONS:

The P&EM Contractor position demands a professional with comprehensive knowledge and significant experience in both project management and the organization of events and activities from conception through to completion. Candidates should possess a minimum of a bachelor's degree in Event Management, Project Management, Business Administration, or a related field. Advanced degrees or certifications in project management (such as PMP) or event planning would be an advantage.

The ideal contractor will have at least 8 years of demonstrated experience in managing various scale programs and events. This includes a proven track record of successfully planning, executing, and overseeing events such as conferences, seminars, workshops, trade missions, and industry meetings. Experience within the agricultural or commodity sector, particularly related to U.S. Soy, would be a distinct advantage.

Key competencies for this role include exceptional organizational skills, attention to detail, and the ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously. The candidate must demonstrate strong leadership and team collaboration abilities, effectively coordinating with diverse teams and stakeholders. Proficiency in budgeting, financial management, and logistics coordination is essential to ensure the successful execution of events within scope, time, and budget constraints.

Furthermore, the contractor should possess excellent communication and interpersonal skills, enabling them to build and maintain relationships with key industry representatives, government officials, NGOs, and other stakeholders. A proactive approach, problem-solving capabilities, and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances are crucial for managing the dynamic nature of event planning and program execution.

Familiarity with modern event management tools and software, as well as an understanding of marketing and promotional strategies for events, will be highly beneficial. The contractor must also be adept at handling administrative tasks related to compliance, reporting, and documentation to support USSEC's objectives efficiently.

CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBJECTIVES:

The P&EM must be able to lead a team or play a supporting role as determined by USSEC leadership. Key responsibilities include,

- **Event Planning and Coordination:**
 - Plan, organize, and execute a variety of events including conferences, seminars, workshops, trade missions, and industry meetings.
 - Develop detailed event plans, including timelines, budgets, logistics, and resource allocation.
 - Coordinate all aspects of event logistics, such as venue selection, catering, transportation, accommodation, and audio-visual requirements.
 - Ensure all events comply with safety, legal, and regulatory requirements.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:**
 - Collaborate closely with USSEC leadership and team to align event objectives with organizational goals and objectives.
 - Collaborate with USSEC team to engage key industry representatives, government officials, NGOs, and other stakeholders to ensure their participation and support.
 - Foster and maintain strong relationships with vendors, partners, and service providers to ensure high-quality event delivery.
- **Project Management:**

- Oversee the planning and execution of multiple projects simultaneously, ensuring they are completed on time, within scope, and budget.
- Develop and maintain comprehensive project documentation, including project plans, status reports, and post-event evaluations.
- Identify potential risks and implement mitigation strategies to ensure project success.
- **Budget and Financial Management:**
 - Prepare and manage event budgets, ensuring efficient use of resources and adherence to financial constraints.
 - Track expenses, process invoices, and ensure timely payment to vendors and service providers.
 - Provide regular financial reports and updates to USSEC leadership.
- **Marketing and Promotion:**
 - Develop and implement marketing strategies to promote events and programs, ensuring maximum visibility and attendance.
 - Create promotional materials, including invitations, brochures, and digital content, in collaboration with the communications team.
 - Utilize social media, email marketing, and other channels to reach target audiences and generate interest.
- **Administrative Support:**
 - Handle administrative tasks related to event planning and project management, including compliance, reporting, and documentation.
 - Ensure all necessary permits, licenses, and insurance are obtained for events.
 - Maintain accurate records of all event-related activities and expenditures.
- **Post-Event Evaluation:**
 - Conduct post-event evaluations to assess the success of events and identify areas for improvement.
 - Collect and analyse feedback from participants, stakeholders, and team members.
 - Prepare detailed post-event reports, including lessons learned and recommendations for future events.
- **Communication and Reporting:**
 - Provide regular updates to USSEC leadership on the status of events and projects.
 - Respond promptly to inquiries and requests from stakeholders, ensuring clear and effective communication.
 - Submit comprehensive event and project reports, including summaries of activities, outcomes, and financial performance.

Collectively contribute to USSEC's mission to develop a strong preference for U.S. soybeans and soybean products in S.E. Asia, ultimately increasing U.S. soy exports to the country.

GENERAL SCOPE OF SERVICES/WORK:

- **Event Planning and Coordination:**
 - Develop detailed event plans, including objectives, timelines, budgets, and resource allocation.
 - Identify and secure suitable venues, vendors, and service providers.

- Coordinate with USSEC leadership and regional technical directors to ensure event goals are met.
- Create and distribute event agendas, schedules, and promotional materials.
- **Logistics Management:**
 - Arrange all logistical aspects of events, such as transportation, accommodation, catering, and audio-visual requirements.
 - Manage on-site logistics during events, ensuring smooth operations and addressing any issues promptly.
 - Oversee the setup and breakdown of event spaces, ensuring compliance with safety and accessibility standards.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:**
 - Ensure active participation from stakeholders in USSEC events and initiatives.
 - Coordinate stakeholder communication and engagement before, during, and after events.
- **Project and Budget Management:**
 - Prepare and manage detailed project plans, including milestones, deliverables, and risk management strategies.
 - Develop and oversee event budgets, ensuring cost-effective use of resources.
 - Monitor project progress, track expenses, and ensure timely payment to vendors and service providers.
 - Provide regular financial reports to USSEC leadership.
- **Marketing and Promotion:**
 - Create promotional materials in collaboration with the communications team.
 - Track and analyze the effectiveness of promotional efforts, adjusting strategies as needed to maximize attendance and engagement.
- **Compliance and Administration:**
 - Ensure all events comply with relevant safety, legal, and regulatory requirements.
 - Handle administrative tasks related to event planning and project management, maintaining accurate records and documentation.
 - Obtain necessary permits and insurance coverage for events.
- **Post-Event Evaluation and Reporting:**
 - Conduct post-event evaluations to assess success and identify areas for improvement.
 - Collect and analyze feedback from participants, stakeholders, and team members.
 - Prepare detailed reports summarizing event outcomes, financial performance, and recommendations for future events.
 - Submit comprehensive reports to USSEC leadership in a timely manner.
- **Communication and Inquiry Response:**
 - Provide regular updates to USSEC leadership on the progress and status of events and projects.
 - Respond promptly to inquiries and requests from stakeholders, ensuring clear and effective communication.
 - Maintain open lines of communication with all event participants, providing necessary information and support.
- **Additional Support and Flexibility:**

- Assist with the development and implementation of programmatic initiatives as directed by USSEC leadership.
- Be adaptable to changing needs and requirements, demonstrating flexibility in managing multiple projects and priorities.
- Ensure all activities and events align with USSEC's mission and strategic goals.

CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT:

- Abide by instructions from USSEC's management, accounting, and compliance teams.
- Meet the Services, Deliverables, and KPIs outlined in the Master Agreement and Addendum.
- Uphold USSEC's core values: (1) Deliver World Class Performance, (2) Act Responsibly, (3) Foster Our Diversity, and (4) Trust Our Team.
- Refrain from any activities that contradict or reflect negatively on USSEC or USSEC's Mission.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (if applicable)

- N.A.

CONTRACT DELIVERABLES:

- Comprehensive event plans for each USSEC event, including objectives, timelines, budgets, and resource allocation, submitted on or before date required by USSEC management.
- Signed agreements with selected venues, vendors, and service providers, ensuring all logistical needs are met, submitted on or before date required by USSEC management.
- Finalized event agendas and schedules, including detailed itineraries for participants, submitted on or before date required by USSEC management.
- Development and distribution of promotional materials for each event, including flyers, brochures, social media content, and email campaigns, submitted on or before date required by USSEC management.
- Comprehensive logistics plans, covering transportation, accommodation, catering, and audio-visual requirements, submitted on or before date required by USSEC management.
- Reports detailing stakeholder engagement activities, including lists of invited and confirmed participants, submitted on or before date required by USSEC management and a summary report post-event.
- Detailed budget reports for each event, including actual expenses and variances from the planned budget, submitted on or before date required by USSEC management and updated post-event.
- Documentation ensuring compliance with all relevant safety, legal, and regulatory requirements for each event, submitted on or before date required by USSEC management.
- Comprehensive post-event evaluation reports, including participant feedback, assessment of event outcomes, and recommendations for future improvements, on or before date required by USSEC management.
- Regularly progress reports summarizing activities, achievements, challenges, and upcoming tasks, submitted to USSEC leadership.

- Additional reports as requested by USSEC leadership, addressing specific aspects of event planning, stakeholder engagement, or project management, submitted within the specified timeframe.
- Detailed travel and accommodation plans for USSEC leadership, team members, U.S. Soy Family Organizations, and U.S. Soy Producers and Exporters visiting the region, submitted on or before date required by USSEC management.
- Risk management plans identifying potential risks and mitigation strategies for each event, submitted on or before date required by USSEC management.

REPORTING AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

- Submit an invoice accompanied by a detailed monthly report to USSEC leadership in the prescribed USSEC format. The monthly report should include:
 - Chronological listing and description of activities and events planned, coordinated, or executed during the reporting period.
 - Updates on event progress, including milestones achieved, challenges encountered, and resolutions implemented.
- Provide monthly budget tables detailing the latest investment estimates for this contract and any associated projects and activities under the Contractor's purview. Submit these tables by the 20th of each month or upon request from USSEC management.
- Respond promptly to ad hoc report requests from USSEC leadership, addressing specific information needs or urgent matters related to ongoing projects, events, and initiatives. These reports may cover aspects such as event feedback, stakeholder engagement, and logistical issues.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

Contract for: SEA PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

Contract start date: October 1, 2024

Contract end date: September 30, 2025

Following this period, and subject to regular contract reviews and an annual performance evaluation, the contract may be renewed for a mutually agreed term or period, subject to and in alignment with the terms of each marketing season and or the tenure of the funding source.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** June 24, 2024
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** July 26, 2024 by 5:00PM SGT (GMT +8)
- **Project Proposals Due:** July 31, 2024 by 5:00PM SGT (GMT +8)
- **Selections Made By:** August 5, 2024
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** August 5, 2024

Please note that the selection and notification period outlined in this RFP may be extended under certain circumstances. While we aim to adhere to the specified timeline, unforeseen factors may necessitate an extension. Such factors include, but are not limited to:

- A high number of submissions may require additional time for thorough evaluation and review; conversely time may be required to draw more submissions to meet compliance or if there are no suitable candidates in the first round.
- Additional time may be required if we need to request clarifications or additional information from prospective contractors.
- Conflicts in scheduling with key evaluators or decision-makers within USSEC may result in delays.
- Changes in regulatory requirements or funding sources may impact the timeline for finalizing selections.

We appreciate your understanding and patience should an extension become necessary. We will communicate any changes to the timeline promptly to ensure transparency throughout the selection process.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Proposals must include, at a minimum, the specific criteria listed below:

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG and chatan@ct.ussec.org by 12:00 PM SGT (GMT +8) on July 31, 2024.
2. A description of the Prospective Contractor's capabilities, resources, and experience, with an emphasis on experience related to this RFP.
3. A thorough proposal outlining the Prospective Contractor's 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:
 - a. All bids for services must include a breakdown of how the fee was derived, including but not limited to, an hourly rate breakdown and the anticipated effort required to complete 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 the 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 their officers, employees, agents, representatives, affiliates, and subcontractors shall not disclose to any third party any documents, materials, or information learned from or 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, request additional information, and/or 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 the 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 an 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 the Prospective Contractor agree 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/>

ABOUT USSEC:

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 receive 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:

- Smith Bucklin - St. Louis: Domestic marketing, new uses, production research, and Board initiative activities.
- Osborn & Barr Communications: Communications/public relations activities.
- U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc.: 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, 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.
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.

END OF DOCUMENT