

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

July 29, 2024 - 12:00 PM SGT (GMT +8)

RFP TITLE: IN-COUNTRY MARKETING REPRESENTATIVE - VIETNAM

RFP CONTACT:

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INTRODUCTION:

U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. formally requests proposals for the delivery of services and costs of engaging an In-Country Marketing Representative to provide professional services for the Vietnamese market.

Through a global network of international offices and strong support in Vietnam, USSEC helps build a preference in Vietnam 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 Vietnam 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 RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBJECTIVES:

The Contractor will support USSEC's efforts in Vietnam and the region. Key responsibilities include:

- **Administrative, Marketing, and Program Management Oversight:**
 - Oversee the end-to-end implementation of projects and activities in Vietnam, co-managing all phases of the project lifecycle from initiation to completion.
 - Facilitate the involvement of industry representatives and customers from Vietnam in USSEC's in-country, regional, and international programs and initiatives.
- **Relationship Building and Business Development:**

- Establish and nurture strong relationships with key customers, industry and trade representatives, relevant institutions, and government bodies to drive engagement and business growth.
- Ensure active and consistent communication to foster good rapport, enhance collaboration, and advance USSEC's mission.
- Identify and develop new business opportunities within the market to expand the reach and impact of USSEC's initiatives.
- **Strategic Presence and Market Intelligence:**
 - Establish and maintain a clear and strategic presence for USSEC in Vietnam, ensuring visibility and influence in key industry sectors.
 - Promote a strong preference for U.S. soy in food and feed applications to increase U.S. soy exports, leveraging targeted marketing and outreach efforts.
 - Monitor and analyse industry and market developments, focusing on opportunities and challenges related to market access for U.S. soy products.
 - Proactively address market access barriers and advocate for favourable trade policies to enhance the competitiveness of U.S. soy in Vietnam.
- **Proactive Collaboration and Partnership Development:**
 - Foster close collaboration with USSEC's other in-country trade representatives and leadership team in the U.S. to align strategies and maximize impact.
 - Engage proactively with industry decision-makers, influencers, buyers, and sellers in the food, feed, and livestock sectors to promote U.S. soy products.
 - Interface with industry representatives, trade associations, NGOs, and relevant government ministries/departments etc. to advocate for favourable policies and partnerships that support USSEC's objectives in Vietnam.

The purpose is to develop a strong preference for U.S. soybeans and soybean products in Vietnam, ultimately increasing U.S. soy exports to the country.

GENERAL SCOPE OF SERVICES/WORK:

- Coordinate closely with USSEC's Vietnam In-Country Representative and Contractors to effectively organize and implement USSEC's programs.
- Conduct in-person and/or virtual trade servicing and networking activities to cultivate relationships with key local industry and government stakeholders.
- Provide project support for USSEC's major regional buyer support programs and country-level initiatives, aiming to promote and increase exports of U.S. Soy.
- Ensure active participation of representatives, decision-makers, and influencers from Vietnam in major regional conferences, workshops, and trade missions organized by USSEC.
- Collaborate with USSEC Southeast Asia Staff and Contractors to organize country-specific workshops, seminars, and round table discussions to further USSEC's mission in Vietnam.
- Plan, coordinate, and facilitate in-person and/or virtual trade and industry meetings for USSEC's Leadership and Team, U.S. Farmer Leadership and Trade Teams, and USSEC member exporter companies.

- Respond promptly and accurately to inquiries from U.S. exporters, importers and end-users, processors of U.S. soy, trade organizations, and government officials etc. regarding U.S. Soy and local agricultural industry matters.
- Assist with developing the program and travel arrangements for USSEC Leadership and Team, U.S. Soy Family Organizations, U.S. Soy Producers and Exporters visiting Vietnam.
- Coordinate additional arrangements as directed by USSEC Leadership ensuring at all times strict compliance with travel and safety protocols.

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)

- NA

CONTRACT DELIVERABLES:

- **Admin and Operations**
 - Establish and maintain logs of relationships with key customers, industry and trade representatives, relevant institutions, and government bodies.
 - Ensure active and consistent communication with stakeholders, providing regular reports on engagement activities and outcomes.
 - Interface with industry representatives, trade associations, NGOs, and government ministries, documenting interactions and outcomes.
 - Plan, coordinate, and facilitate in-person and virtual trade and industry meetings, providing detailed reports on each meeting's outcomes.
 - Respond promptly to inquiries from stakeholders, maintaining logs of inquiries and responses.
- **Strategic Planning and Market Analysis**
 - Continuously monitor and analyse industry and market developments, providing reports on opportunities and challenges related to market access for U.S. soy products.
 - Develop and implement strategic plans to proactively address market access barriers. Advocate for favourable trade policies that enhance the competitiveness of U.S. soy in Vietnam.
 - Conduct thorough analyses of competitive products and market dynamics to identify key differentiators and strategic advantages for U.S. soy.
 - Identify potential risks to market access and develop mitigation strategies to ensure the continuous and favourable presence of U.S. soy in the market.

- Design and propose engagement strategies to influence and collaborate with key stakeholders, including government bodies, trade associations, and industry leaders, to support USSEC's market access goals.
- Develop comprehensive plans for market expansion, identifying new opportunities and potential markets within Vietnam that align with USSEC's strategic goals.
- Regularly conduct SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analyses to inform strategic decision-making and optimize market positioning of U.S. soy products.
- **Project Implementation**
 - Develop and submit detailed proposals/plans for the end-to-end implementation of USSEC projects and activities in [Home Country], covering all phases from initiation to completion.
 - Facilitate and document the involvement/collaboration with industry representatives and customers from Vietnam in USSEC's in-country, regional, and international programs and initiatives.
 - Collaborate with USSEC Southeast Asia Staff and Contractors to organize and document country-specific workshops, seminars, and round table discussions.
- **Business Development**
 - Identify and develop new business opportunities, submitting detailed proposals to expand USSEC's reach and impact in Vietnam.
 - Develop and execute marketing and outreach plans to promote U.S. soy in food and feed applications, aiming to increase exports.
 - Engage proactively with industry decision-makers, influencers, buyers, and sellers in the food, feed, and livestock sectors, providing reports on these activities.
- **Communications**
 - Ensure the prompt submission of communication pieces such as success stories, event reports, and other relevant updates that highlight the impact and progress of USSEC's initiatives in Vietnam.
 - Provide swift and accurate responses to communication requests from USSEC leadership, demonstrating a high level of responsiveness and reliability.
 - Be thoroughly familiar with USSEC's comprehensive catalogue of communication and marketing collateral. Utilize these resources effectively in all communication and outreach efforts.
 - Propose proactive communication strategies to keep stakeholders informed and engaged, enhancing the visibility and credibility of USSEC's activities in Vietnam.
 - Prepare and submit regular reports on communication activities, detailing the engagement with stakeholders and the dissemination of key messages.
 - Develop and maintain a crisis communication plan to address any potential issues promptly and effectively.
 - Ensure seamless internal communication within USSEC's team, keeping all relevant parties informed about ongoing projects, market developments, and strategic initiatives.
 - Assist in creating and distributing content across various platforms, ensuring consistency and alignment with USSEC's messaging and objectives.

- Establish a feedback mechanism to gather input from stakeholders and customers alike, using this feedback to gather information as well as to improve and tailor future strategic marketing efforts.

REPORTING AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

- Monthly: Submit an invoice accompanied with report to USSEC leadership in a prescribed USSEC format. The monthly report should include, but is not limited to:
 - List chronologically activities and description of activities for reporting period.
 - List Contractor’s interactions with industry, government (including FAS USDA offices), agricultural NGOs, importers and end-users, U.S. Soy ‘family’ organizations, and other related contacts.
 - Reporting of business development activities and the frequency of presentations to potential customers. Include brief outline of topics covered in each presentation, e.g. U.S. Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol, U.S. Soy Value Calculators (soybean, meal, and oil), U.S. soy supply chain, etc.
 - Reporting of the latest market updates and developments, particularly events impacting the trade and preference for U.S. Soy. ***Urgent, important, and or time-sensitive matters must be conveyed to USSEC leadership timely and without delay.*
 - Communications detailing inquiries and questions from U.S. exporters, importers, processors of U.S. soy, trade organizations, government officials, etc., regarding the application, availability, and sourcing of soybeans and soybean products from the U.S. or other related matters. ***Urgent, important, and or time-sensitive matters must be conveyed to USSEC leadership timely and without delay.*
- Budget tables detailing the latest investment estimates for this contract and or projects and activities under the Contractor’s responsibility must be submitted by the 20th of each month or upon USSEC management's request.
- Weekly comparative price tables for soybean and soy products trading in Vietnam.
- Monthly comprehensive report (PowerPoint) on the Vietnam agricultural (e.g. animal feed, livestock, feed ingredients and its origination, crushing industry if any, and economic indicators etc.) and/or similar for food industry (e.g. soy foods and soy beverages, production and consumption etc.
- Provide ad hoc reports to USSEC leadership upon request.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

Contract for: IN - COUNTRY MARKETING REPRESENTATIVE - VIETNAM

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 18, 2024
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** July 23, 2024 by 5:00PM SGT (GMT +8)
- **Project Proposals Due:** July 29, 2024 by 12:00PM SGT (GMT +8)
- **Selections Made By:** July 30, 2024
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** July 30, 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 maybe 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 29, 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.

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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