

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

5:00 PM CST, 9/30/2024

RFP TITLE: LITERATURE REVIEW ON DIFFERENTIATING SEASONAL AND TROPICAL AGRICULTURE

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 30TH, 2024

INTRODUCTION

This Request for Proposals (RFP) invites contractors to conduct a comprehensive literature review comparing seasonal and tropical agriculture. Topics reviewed may include land use, production practices, inputs, processing, regulations, and transportation, with a focus on soybean and row crop production. The review will draw on a variety of data sources, including USDA, Farm Docs (<https://farmdoc.illinois.edu/>), Embrapa, Aprosoja, and relevant NGO data, to identify key differences between the two regions. Alternative sources of data such as peer-reviewed research, private sector reports, or interviews with industry experts should also be considered for this work.

PURPOSE OF RFP

The goal of this literature review is to identify critical differences between seasonal and tropical agricultural production, processing efficiency, and value chain optimization, with a specific focus on soybean production. By utilizing data from USDA, Farm Docs, Embrapa, Aprosoja, and relevant NGOs, and any relevant alternative sources of data (peer-reviewed research, private sector reports, or interviews with industry experts) the review will explore key differences between the two areas of soybean production.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) aims to clearly differentiate the sustainable production of U.S. soybeans from international competitors. The goal of this literature review is to identify the factors that set U.S. agricultural production apart from tropical production and identify possible areas of improvement.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The direct audience for this study is the USSEC Focus Area Directors, with potential secondary audiences including international trade partners, policy experts, and international customers of U.S. Soy.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK

The contractor will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Conducting a literature review focusing on agricultural production differentiation between seasonal and tropical production, with a key emphasis on soybean production.
- Leveraging data sources such as Farm Docs, Embrapa, Aprosoja, relevant data from NGOs, peer-reviewed research, private sector reports, and interviews with industry experts.
- Analyzing differences in sustainability practices, land use changes, production practices, inputs, processing efficiencies, regulations, and infrastructure advantages that impact transportation across these regions.
- Summarizing the review with clear, evidence-based differentiators for U.S. agricultural production.
- Producing a comprehensive report detailing clear, evidence-based findings of the literature review with recommendations for differentiators for U.S. soybean production.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- The contractor must begin work on October 7, 2024, and deliver the final report no later than November 12, 2024.

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
October 15, 2024	Submit an initial literature review framework and methodology for USSEC to review and provide feedback.
November 1, 2024	Submit the first draft of the literature review, incorporating feedback and initial findings.
November 12, 2024	Submit the final literature review report, including key findings and recommendations.
November 12, 2024	Submit all invoices.

PROJECT TIMELINE

The contract will begin on October 7, 2024, and all deliverables must be completed by November 12, 2024.

RFP TIMELINE

RFP Distribution: September 17, 2024

Last Day to Submit Questions: September 27, 2024, by 5:00 PM CST

Project Proposals Due: September 30, 2024, by 5:00 PM CST

Prospective Contractors Notified By: October 4, 2024

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG by **5:00PM Central Time on September 30th, 2024**
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 primary contractors:

- 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.