

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Submission Deadline:

October 18, 2024, by 5:00 PM Central Time

RFP TITLE: SAASSA Regional Head of Communications & Marketing

RFP CONTACT:

Name: Kevin Roepke

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Project Proposals Due: Oct 18, 2024 by 5:00PM Central Time

INTRODUCTION:

United States Soybean Export Council (USSEC) requests proposals to assist in the continued development and implementation of a regional head for market intelligence, concentrating on South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (SAASSA) region.

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.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC's standard practice is to RFP every 3 years in an openly 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.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

The South Asia region (Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and Nepal) includes economies that

are growing and require targeted marketing efforts. While soy exports to emerging economies are typically low in volume, the potential for increased US soy exports remains high, due to the potential for demand growth. The current market situation and its future potential make this region important to the overall soy export market development program.

USSEC targets four main market sectors in the SAASSA region including animal (swine, dairy and poultry) utilization, aquaculture utilization, food ingredient applications, as well as efforts targeting the soy supply chain. The core strategy focuses differentiating, then elevating purchase preference for US soy, in addition to obtaining free and fair market access. Several markets in the region have a variety of market access challenges that require attention. The successful candidate will be able to articulate a clear strategy working with the Regional Director to overcome myriad issues including both tariff and non-tariff trade barriers.

Based on performance measured results, derived from target audience surveys collected at the various activities that USSEC conducts throughout the year, USSEC is making incremental progress towards these objectives in all sectors.

A critical approach to communicating the U.S. Soy Advantage is having a development team that will assist the on the ground presence that interface directly with key customers. USSEC will maintain the U.S. soybean industry's marketing and trade servicing capabilities in the SAASSA region while providing trade services, technical services and marketing support to importers, end users and soy industry organizations.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

- National, local and regional media outlets
- Soy Importers, refiners, wholesale distributors, exporters, retail distributors, cold chain providers, industry associations, government agencies, commodity traders and brokers, restaurants, hotels, and other institutions.
- Soybean crushers, feed manufacturers, livestock/aquaculture, and poultry producers

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

Under this contract, the Contractor shall promote the use and awareness of U.S. soybeans and soybean products through the following services:

The purpose of this position is to promote the sales brand image of US SOY. US SOY has several

extrinsic and intrinsic qualities and characteristics. Yet currently, many purchasers see soybeans and/or soybean meal as commodities. This position will target end users' marketing channels to work with them and create a campaign of differentiation, by using US SOY.

In addition to the overall promotion of US SOY as a concept and image, the promotion of high value specialty soy ingredient innovations. Additionally, the position will be chiefly responsible for working and collaborating with media and journalism outlets to best disseminate USSEC's messaging.

The contractor will also be fundamentally engaged in promoting US Soy's SSAP or soybean sustainability assurance protocol initiative by encouraging usage and leveraging the product to increase US soy's preference in the region. Contractor will complete this by working as a team with existing contractors on-the-ground in countries that USSEC already operates in.

Contractor shall provide Market Intelligence & Research (in collaboration with the head of market intelligence, by publishing a regional newsletter), articles, social media posts, blogs, vlogs and videos to promote the use and differentiation of U.S. soy products by supporting the human and animal utilization teams to create brand awareness and preference.

As such, the Contractor will be required to fulfill the services below:

Strategic Responsibilities:

1. Promote the use and awareness of U.S. soybeans and soybean products.
2. Identify and write proposals to differentiate the value, sustainability, and competitive advantage of U.S. soy.
3. Assist the Regional Director with strategic goals and objectives, including
 - o Identify potential growth markets for U.S. soy
 - o Identify areas of strengths to maintain
 - o Identify areas of opportunities for increased support
 - o Identify the major and targeted Customers
 - o Executive visibility
 - o Create a Customer Analysis for each of those targeted
 - o Promote higher inclusion rate of soybean meal in feed formulations
4. Collaborate with U.S. based cooperators to increase exports of U.S. soy products and meat.
5. Develop and implement effective marketing and communications strategies based on target audience insights.

Marketing Responsibilities:

1. Promote the sales brand image of U.S. SOY, including high-value specialty soy ingredient innovations.
2. Engage in promoting U.S. Soy's SSAP (Soybean Sustainability Assurance Protocol) initiative.

3. Provide market intelligence and research to support human and animal utilization teams.
4. Develop the U.S. SOY brand and differentiate U.S. soy as a product in the market.
5. Coordinate and implement events, including sponsorships and technical assistance to soybean meal processors.

Communications Responsibilities:

1. Act as USSEC representative to create brand awareness and maintain key customer relationships.
2. Establish and strengthen relationships with media, influencers, and other public information channels.
3. Collaborate with Regional team to develop and implement an effective communications strategy based on target audience.
4. Write, edit, and distribute marketing materials that communicate USSEC's mission.
5. Serve as official liaison of the Regional Office and headquarters on communication and sustainability updates.
6. Respond to media inquiries and manage public campaigns like "Right To Protein."

Program Implementation:

1. Stay up to date on knowledge of USSEC's and its Funding Source's policies.
2. Oversee and coordinate activities associated with the development and implementation of regional events pertaining to sustainability and/or communications.
3. Create program agendas, negotiate with speakers, and invite key customers to events.
4. Assist in preparing and consolidating required documents and support analysis of program/project planning.
5. Provide scheduled reports and updates on project KPIs and progress towards USSEC goals.

Administrative Support:

1. Work with Project Managers on budget and program timelines.
2. Participate in teleconferences for compliance updates.
3. Respond to regional office and trade inquiries.
4. Collect and report general administrative information to populate monthly reports.

Other Duties:

1. Provide general trade servicing assistance and respond to trade inquiries.
 2. Suggest and arrange visits and meetings with key customers.
 3. Coordinate USSEC’s participation at events through sponsorships.
 4. Perform other duties as assigned.
- For the purpose of this RFP, you will only be required to provide:
 - your CV
 - your daily rate based on an eight (8) hour workday in USD, and
 - a draft program proposal.
 - show your understanding of US Soy Marketing
 - examples of previous work
 - summary of what can/may be done using US Soy Marketing to build a preference for U.S. soybeans and soybean products, advocate for the use of soy, and promote the benefits of soy, and explanation of why you would be the best candidate.
 - See instructions below for other detailed information.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (if applicable)

- Preference will be given to proposals from companies/individuals residing in or already doing business in the country/region indicated.
- Submitter must have the following technological requirements:
 - Reliable high speed internet access
 - Microsoft Office 365, which include:
 - Outlook
 - Excel
 - Word
 - PowerPoint
 - Teams
 - SharePoint

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
As incurred, within the contract term dates of Nov. 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025	Provide applicable project support documents, forms and templates for the proper implementation of events. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide to Regional Project Manager and/or applicable USSEC department required and approved USSEC documents, forms and templates for review and approval.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All documents, forms and templates will be turned in according to the task timeline provided by the Regional Project Manager.
Monthly, or as incurred	<p>Provide invoice of professional fees for payment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide with the invoice any materials, presentations, trip reports, etc. created and utilized for any applicable services that were accomplished. Ensure all applicable invoices are submitted within 30 days of transaction and are compliant with USSEC policies and procedures. Ensure invoice is submitted to ap@ussec.org.
By the 5 th calendar day of each month	<p>Detailed report of monthly activities and events attended with expected impact(s) and outcome(s).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Report Template is utilized. Ensure report details all events with critical discussion of results for any applicable services that were accomplished. Provide inside or along with the report any insights gained that can improve the execution of the activities and events. Provide to Regional Director and Regional Project Manager.
Sept 30, 2025	<p>Detailed summary of year's events, key issues, alliances, and recommended actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Report Template is utilized. Ensure report details all events with critical discussion of results for any applicable services that were accomplished. Provide inside or along with the report any insights gained that can improve the execution of the activities and events. Provide to Regional Director and Regional Project Manager.
Ongoing	<p>Submission of invoices and expenses will be in accordance with Section III.3.c. of this Addendum.</p>

PROJECT TIMELINE:

The term of the proposal will last from November 1, 2024 – Sept 30, 2025

*Additional terms beyond 2025 at the discretion of USSEC

RFP TIMELINE:

- RFP Distribution: Sept 27, 2024
- Last Day to Submit Questions: Oct 11, 2024, by 5:00PM Central Time
- Project Proposals Due: Oct 18, 2024, by 5:00PM Central Time
- Selections Made By: Oct 25, 2024
- Prospective Contractors Notified By: Oct 25, 2024

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

- Degree from a reputable university in business, communications, agriculture, or similar
- At least 5 years' experience in sales with extensive marketing/branding knowledge
- A background in the marketing and/or communications
- Ability to network and build relationships
- Creativity and innovation to develop new and exciting programs for market development
- A proven track record of strategic thinking and planning
- Ability to multitask by planning and implementing many projects at one time
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Passion for international trade and agriculture
- A receptive appreciation and willingness to advocate for new and innovative Agriculture applications, such as GMOs, sustainable farming practices, etc
- Highest moral integrity and character
- Located full time within the markets in the region

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG and kroepke@ussec.org by **5:00PM Central Time** on Oct 18, 2024.
2. Provide a minimum of two names and contact information for other similarly sized clients for reference purposes.
3. 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/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/USSEC-Strategic-Plan-2025.pdf>

USB's Long Range Strategic Plan can be found here:
<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:

- 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 DC, 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, region, 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 1966 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.