

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE**  
**5:00 PM CST, 2/17/2025**

**RFP TITLE: BENCHMARKING PLATFORM FOR THE AMERICAS POULTRY SECTOR**

### **RFP CONTACT:**

Name: Daniel Hernandez, Dr. Maria Adkison

Phone #: 1-314-964-4039

Email: [americasRFP@ussec.org](mailto:americasRFP@ussec.org), [madkison@ussec.org](mailto:madkison@ussec.org)

**PROPOSAL DEADLINE:** 5:00PM CST, 2/17/2025

### **PURPOSE OF RFP:**

USSEC's standard practice is to issue RFPs in an open and competitive manner. The purpose of this RFP is to seek proposals for a contractor to develop a Poultry Data Collection Standardized Protocol (PDCSP) and a web-based benchmarking platform that will allow customers from the Americas region to compare their performance against both local and regional poultry industry standards, key performance indicators (KPIs), and best management practices to provide valuable insights that drive strategic decision-making and performance improvement. Moreover, this tool will provide data for USSEC's strategic planning for programming and funds allocation within the region. This is envisioned as a project that will cover two fiscal years, and applicants should submit proposals and budgets covering both years. However, the initial contract will be through the end of the current fiscal year (September 30, 2025) with renewal for a second year (October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026) based on performance and continued availability of funds.

### **BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:**

Through this project, USSEC aims to support the growth of the poultry sector in key markets in the Americas. In response to increasing consumer demand, poultry businesses are seeking to improve their operational efficiency and make better use of data to drive decision making. Through this RFP, USSEC aims to develop a benchmarking platform for the region that will enable businesses to make data-driven decisions, set goals, and assess their performance over time. The contractor will first develop a PDCSP to guarantee that the data used for benchmarking is comparable. The contractor will then develop a web-based benchmarking platform to collect and analyze information. This big data analysis will allow the poultry industry of the Americas region to 1) manage costs through a correct and timely diagnosis of irregularities or inefficiencies at different points in the production process; 2) reduce uncertainty by identifying patterns and trends to develop forecasting capacity; 3) improve productivity by enabling businesses to confidently implement efficient, data-based decision-making processes. Collectively these improvements will boost human capital and increase productivity by identifying improvements, optimizations and redundancies. Additionally, data gathered about soybean meal inclusion in poultry diets at different phases of production will inform USSEC's strategic planning for the region.

## **TARGET AUDIENCE:**

The target audience for the protocol and benchmarking platform is poultry businesses in key markets in the Americas as specified in the Scope of Work below. The target audience for the data on soybean meal inclusion and the narrative reports is the USSEC team.

## **SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:**

### Year 1:

- Develop a Poultry Data Collection Standardized Protocol (PDCSP) to collect information related to the main operational KPIs. At a minimum, the KPIs must include hatchability percentage, feed intake, weight gain, feed conversion ratio, egg mass percentage, mortality percentage, age and weight to market ratio, carcass yield percentage, and breast yield percentage. Contractors may propose additional KPIs for USSEC's consideration. Data related to these main operational KPIs are expected to be continuously collected/updated in the platform.
- Collect and analyze data statistically in different areas of the operation (e.g. hatchery, poultry house, processing plant) in the following countries Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela, via Zoom with customers. The USSEC Americas team will identify the customers and facilitate introductions to the contractor. Statistical analysis will be at both the country level and the individual company level.
  - Establish a baseline for each KPI at the company level to measure progress effectively.
- Develop a web-based benchmarking platform for the customer to set benchmarks based on the aggregate regional and national poultry industry data to assess their performance against industry norms.
  - Design and implement an exclusive TLS encrypted platform for the generation of users with anonymous profiles (not linked to names or companies).
  - Design and implement a benchmarking platform for data comparison considering:
- Test, pilot, and refine the benchmarking platform with a small group of customers
- Based on data collected through the platform, establish the level of inclusion of soybean meal and/or full-fat soybean meal in poultry diets (broiler and layer hens), for each feeding phase, and the dietary electrolyte balance (DEB) according to the dietary level of crude protein. This information must be reported at the national level for each of the focus countries and the regional level (i.e. the aggregate of information from all of the focus countries).
- Provide a narrative report that includes the following sections:
  - Executive summary of the main findings as a reference.
  - Deliver a final diagnostic outlining methodology, results, and recommendations considering the results achieved during Year 1 (Power Point presentation).

### Year 2:

- Launch the platform for general use by customers.
- Develop an app for educational purposes where the customer will find the protocol/methodology to collect information, glossary, and other features.

- Online and onsite training and implementation of the Poultry Data Collection Standardized Protocol (PDCSP) to collect information related to the main operational KPIs in the Americas region.
- Measure the data collected and results obtained in Years 1 and 2 and review the progress and efficacy of the project regionally and nationally for each country (previous vs. acquired knowledge).
- Maintain the platform and provide tech support to customers.
- Based on the level of inclusion of soybean meal and/or full-fat soybean meal in poultry diets (broiler and layer hens), for each feeding phase, per country and regionally:
  - Measure the data collected and results obtained in Years 1 and 2 and project the potential increase of soy utilization.
  - Implement an additional module to compare nutritional values used for diet formulation.
- Develop a second tier of KPIs and data related to feed formulation and feed manufacturing. Specifics will be determined based on the results from Year 1.
- Provide a narrative report that includes the following sections:
  - Executive summary of the main findings as a reference.
  - Deliver a final diagnostic outlining methodology, results, and recommendations considering the results achieved during Years 1 and 2 (Power Point presentation).

#### **DELIVERABLES (YEAR 1)**

<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Description of Deliverables</b>
Within five business days of contract start date	Hold a kick-off call with USSEC assigned staff. Establish a regular communication schedule.
May 15, 2025	Develop the draft Poultry Data Collection Standardized Protocol (PDCSP) for USSEC review and comment
June 30, 2025	Finalize the Poultry Data Collection Standardized Protocol with USSEC feedback addressed
September 30, 2025	Collect data in accordance with the PDCSP from businesses in Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela
November 30, 2025	Analyze data collected and establish baselines for all KPIs
July 30, 2025	Develop the web-based benchmarking platform
September 30, 2025	Establish the level of inclusion, for each country, of soybean meal and/or full-fat soybean meal in poultry diets (broiler and layer hens), for each feeding phase, domestically and regionally and the dietary electrolyte balance (DEB) according to the dietary level of crude protein
November 30, 2025	Submit a narrative report and summary PowerPoint presentation including a summary of the main findings, methodology, results, and recommendations for Year 1.

#### **DELIVERABLES (YEAR 2)**

<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Description of Deliverables</b>
------------------------	------------------------------------

Within five business days of contract start date	Hold a kick-off call with USSEC assigned staff. Establish a regular communication schedule.
February 28, 2026	Analysis of the results obtained in years 1 and 2 on the level of inclusion, for each country, of soybean meal and/or full-fat soybean meal in poultry diets (broiler and layer hens), for each feeding phase, domestically and regionally.
March 30, 2026	Educational app launch.
April 30 2026	Module implementation on nutritional values used for diet formulation, such as synthetic amino acids inclusion.
February 15, 2026, to September 30, 2026	Online and onsite training and implementation of the Poultry Data Collection Standardized Protocol (PDCSP)
October 30, 2026	Preliminary report on the progress and efficacy of the project regionally and domestically
November 30, 2026	Submit a narrative report and summary PowerPoint presentation including a summary of the main findings, methodology, results, and recommendations for Year 2.

### PROJECT TIMELINE:

This is a project that will span two fiscal years and is expected to begin in March 2025. Applicants should cover the full period in their proposals with clearly defined budgets for each fiscal year. However, the initial contract will be through the end of the current fiscal year (September 30, 2025), renewable through the end of the next fiscal year based on performance and continued availability of funds.

### RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP distribution:** January 16, 2025
- **Last day to submit questions:** February 3, 2025, 5:00pm Central time
- **Q&A Session:** February 6, 2025, 10:00 am Central time
- **Project proposals due:** February 17, 2025, 5:00pm Central time
- **Selections made by:** February 24, 2025, Central time
- **Prospective contractors notified by:** February 25, 2025, Central time

### INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to [RFP@USSEC.ORG](mailto:RFP@USSEC.ORG) and [mcheatham@ussec.org] by **5:00PM Central Time on 2/17/2025**
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 doing 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: <https://ussec.org/about-ussec/>

**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:

- 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, audiotope, 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](mailto: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.



## MANDATORY CONTRACTUAL TERMS

Contracts: *the following terms are required:*

1. USSEC, as well as the Secretary of Agriculture, may terminate the contract and be relieved of payment. USSEC will pay for all work performed under contract until the date of termination.
2. Any work a contractor undertakes prior to contract approval by AMS is at their own risk and USSEC is not financially liable if the contract is not approved.
3. Funds paid to the contractor may not be used for the purpose of influencing legislation or governmental policy or action. "Influencing legislation" is defined as any attempt to affect the opinions of the general public or any segment thereof concerning current or proposed legislation or any attempt to influence legislation through communication with any member or employee of a legislative body or with any government officials who may participate in the formulation of legislation. "Government officials" refers to federal employees outside of USDA, foreign, and State governments/officials, legislators, and legislative staffs. "Influencing of governmental policy or action" is defined as any action the principal purpose of which is to bring about a change in existing policy or regulation or affect the outcome of proposed policy or regulation, except those actions which are specifically provide for in the Soybean Act and Order.
4. The contractor must (a) keep accurate records, books and documents involving transactions relating to the contract; (b) retain the records, books and documents for 3 years; and (c) said records, books and documents may be subject to inspection and audit by a representative of USDA and/or USSEC.
5. EEO policy statement: contractor agrees that, during the performance of this Agreement, contractor will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, protected genetic information, or reprisal. 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, but not limited to, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, Genetic Information Act of 2008, and the Equal Pay Act of 1963. Nothing in this section shall require contractor to comply with or become liable under any law, ordinances, regulation or rule that does not otherwise apply to the contractor.

6. Subcontractors. Subject to USSEC's approval, the contractor may subcontract specific tasks to outside parties. Should the contractor elect to subcontract specific tasks, subcontractors will be subject to the same contractual terms as its contract agency in regard to:

- (1) Reporting and record keeping;
- (2) Travel expenses;
- (3) Title of property;
- (4) Confidential information
- (5) Influencing legislation and/or influencing governmental policy or action;
- (6) Federal civil rights policies.

The primary contractor agency who has a direct contract with USSEC will be fully responsible for the quality of all work product, including any approvals from AMS. Any such authorization in the contract must state that entering into a subcontract does not relieve the contractor of primary responsibility to carry out the terms and conditions of the underlying contract in accordance with the Act, Order, Regulations and USDA policies.

7. Confidentiality

Financial or commercial information obtained under contract with USSEC that is privileged and confidential shall be kept confidential by all persons, including employees and former employees of USSEC, USDA and the contractor having access to such information.

Contracts: ***the following terms are not allowed:***

1. Indemnification provisions, unless it is clear that the indemnification will in no way obligate the U.S. government to pay on a potential claim.
2. Liquidated Damages

**Intellectual property.** Rights will be governed by the Bayh Dole Act, 35 U.S.C. §200-212 for any entity that is a "contractor" as defined by the Act at §201(c).

**Expenses.** The following expenses are prohibited under the Act and Order:

1. University Principal Investigator salaries;
2. University overhead/indirect costs; non-Principal Investigator salaries are an exception
3. Entertainment expenses;
4. Spousal/family/companion expenses;
5. Personal expenses (except as specifically allowed in USSEC's Travel policies);
6. Open bars;

7. Funding of capital equipment unless the equipment is purchased (a) in direct connection with a plan or project, and (b) necessary for the completion of the plan or project.