

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
12:00 PM CST, 03/24/2025

RFP TITLE: STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION MANAGER – SEC INDIA

RFP CONTACT:

CONTACT: Vijay Anand: vanand@ussec.org

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: MARCH 24, 2025

INTRODUCTION:

U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. formally requests proposals for a Strategic Implementation Manager – Sec India Contractor for the Soy Excellence Center India programs. The Soy Excellence Centers (SECs) provide protein enterprises with work force training and capacity building programs to enhance productivity in the protein value chain of emerging markets. SECs target entry to mid-level professionals seeking career advancement in the protein industry. Increased workforce preparedness leads to more efficient production of protein, impacting the entire value chain.

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, advocates for the use of soy in livestock and aquaculture feed and human consumption, promotes the benefits of soy use through education and connects industry leaders through a robust membership program.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

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

The purpose of this RFP is to seek proposals for contractor that will Serve as SEC India Strategic Implementation Manager and coordinate with India SEC Lead and Team to effectively execute India SEC Courses. Assist SEC Centre Lead in management of SPH, Community and In person courses.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

The Soy Excellence Center program builds professional capacity in emerging market protein value chains. Our curriculum is built and administered by international experts and offered to aspiring agribusiness professionals where access to training is scarce. SEC training programs are organized into sector-specific track-based curriculum. The SEC training readies the participating enterprises to be for increase in protein demand in their markets.

The SEC program has foundational funding from U.S. soy stakeholders. Effective communication is vital in aligning the public, governing stakeholders, and foundational funding members, ensuring that each group is well-informed and engaged. For the public, clear communication builds awareness and trust, encouraging active participation in the program.

With other stakeholders, including the global advisory panel and regional advisory council, communication fosters collaboration and alignment. For foundational funding members, transparent and consistent communication reinforces their investment, demonstrating the program's impact and the responsible use of resources, thereby securing ongoing support.

The contractor selected by USSEC will Serve as SEC India Strategic Implementation Manager and coordinate with India SEC Lead and Team to effectively execute India SEC Courses. Assist SEC Centre Lead in management of SPH, Community and In person courses.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

Serve as SEC India Strategic Implementation Manager and coordinate with India SEC Lead and Team to effectively execute India SEC Courses.

Assist SEC Center Lead in management of SPH. Community and In person courses.

The major services are categorized to 3 main categories. Designing Systems for Scale; Guidance on Automation of Processes; Strategies to Improve Community Pod Engagement

A. Designing Systems for Scale:

Gap Identification and Analysis: Identify inefficiencies or bottlenecks in current workflows and processes. Create a comprehensive plan to bridge these gaps.

Systematic Process Workflows: Develop and implement standardized workflows for the program, ensuring consistency and scalability in operations. This includes defining clear roles, responsibilities, and dependencies for various processes.

Standardizing SEC India Event Templates: Create standardized templates and processes for events hosted by SEC India. This involves developing reusable formats for planning, communication, and follow-ups, which can be adapted to future events, ensuring uniformity and efficiency.

B. Guidance on Automation of Processes:

Collaborate with teams to identify areas where manual tasks can be automated, providing recommendations for tools and technologies to streamline routine operations.

Coordinate and oversee the implementation of automation tools and workflows with technical team in case the automation is approved and to be implemented.

Design and maintain interactive data dashboards that provide real-time insights into operational metrics, event outcomes, community engagement, and other key performance indicators (KPIs). Ensure these dashboards are user-friendly and help teams make data-driven decisions.

C Strategies to Improve Community Pod Engagement

- **User Base Segmentation:** Analyze the user base to create distinct segments based on demographics, behaviors, and engagement levels. Tailor community engagement strategies and communication efforts for each segment to maximize participation and value.
- **Reward Systems for India Community:** Develop and implement reward and recognition programs to incentivize active participation in the India community pods.

- **Leveraging Data Trends:** Use data analytics to track community engagement, identify emerging trends, and optimize content and engagement tactics. Create reports that visualize trends and actionable insights to improve interaction and participation.
- **Coordinating with Global Teams:** Work closely with global counterparts to address design gaps in the community platform, ensuring alignment on design standards and user experience across regions. Collaborate to share best practices and localize global strategies for the India market.
- **Continuous Feedback Loops:** Establish systems to regularly collect feedback from community members, analyze sentiment, and adjust engagement strategies accordingly. Build mechanisms for iterative improvement in community engagement approaches.

D. Program Team Support

- Support program team in training and problem solving
- Support SEC India Lead with inputs to annual plans, training schedules and in-person event assistance
- All solutions will be reviewed and co-designed with SEC India Lead as necessary

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
1 st April 2025 - 30 th September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as Strategic Implementation Manager for India SEC and support the India SEC Center Lead in running the whole program. • Provide workflow and process establishment to ensure smooth running of the SEC program • Address e-learning process inefficiencies and bottlenecks and provide solutions • Demonstrate and put in place reusable formats for planning, communication, and follow-ups • Demonstrate and put in place systems for automation and streamlining routine SEC processes. • Develop and demonstrate workflow processes that will help tackle increased scale of SEC operations. • Provide periodic real-time insights into operational metrics, event outcomes, community engagement. • Undertake routine data analysis and use those inputs to make management decisions with India SEC Center Lead. • Demonstrate multiple ways to increase community engagement. • Show some working ideas that have actually increased community engagement. • Overall improve community management, engagement and communications • Provide support for SPH courses and train a new team to help tackle scale. • As a part of India SEC team collaborate and ensure successful implementation of in-person and community activities. • Undertake timely submission of invoices as stipulated by USSEC norms.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in preparing SEC reports as needed, utilizing templates approved by the SEC/USSEC. • Undertake any planning and coordination work that may be required for India SEC operations in the next fiscal.
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PROJECT TIMELINE:

1st April 2025 - 30th September 2025

Additional Terms:

Extension of contract From October 1, 2025, to Sept 30, 2026, and Oct 1, 2026 to Sept. 30, 2027 will be based on evaluation of first term performance.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** March 11, 2025
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** March 18, 2025
- **Project Proposals Due:** March 24, 2025
- **Selections Made By:** March 26, 2025
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** March 27, 2025

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG and vanand@ussec.org by March 10, 2025 12:00 PM CST
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: <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.