

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
SUBMISSION DEADLINE
JANUARY 15, 2026 – 12:00 PM JST (GMT +9)

RFP TITLE: JAPAN COUNTRY MANAGER

RFP CONTACT:

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INTRODUCTION:

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. formally requests proposals for engaging a **Japan Country Manager**, based in Tokyo, Japan. The selected contractor will provide professional services to support USSEC's programs and strategy in the Japanese market.

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. USSEC advocates for the use of U.S. soy in animal feed (including poultry and hog production), aquaculture, human consumption, industrial applications, and other uses. It also promotes the benefits of soy through education and connects industry leaders through a robust membership program.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC's standard practice is to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) every three years in an open and competitive manner. This regular cost analysis and benchmarking process helps determine fair market value for the services to be performed. It also allows USSEC to evaluate qualified proposals and select the best contractor based on technical qualifications, relevant industry experience, managerial abilities, strength of industry connections, and a suitable cost/time structure that meets the needs of this contract.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT

The primary goal of the Japan Country Manager is to build preference for, and increase imports of, U.S. soybeans, soybean meal, and other soy derivatives (collectively referred to as "U.S. Soy") into Japan for use in poultry, swine, and livestock feed rations, aquaculture feed rations, and other applications. The Contractor is also expected to stay closely abreast of market developments and concerns, especially events that could impact the market access of U.S. Soy into Japan. **Note:** This role **does not include** responsibility for food-grade soybeans intended for direct human food use (such activities are outside the scope of this contract).

The Contractor will report directly to USSEC's Deputy Director – Japan and to USSEC's Regional Animal Utilization Lead – East Asia, working under their direction (rather than autonomously). As the Japanese market has its own cultural, political, and social context, a key element of success will be the Contractor's ability to develop close relationships, maintain active day-to-day contact, and build trust with key customers, industry representatives, relevant institutions, and government bodies to achieve USSEC's mission in Japan. Most importantly, by engaging regularly with stakeholders, the Contractor will ensure that USSEC has an active and strategic presence in Japan, one that is favorable and advantageous for U.S. Soy exports.

The Contractor will provide trade servicing and program management support (in alignment with USSEC's standard operating procedures) for USSEC initiatives in Japan across relevant focus areas – e.g. Animal Nutrition (livestock feed), Aquaculture, Sustainability, and Market Access programs. The Contractor must strictly adhere to USSEC's accounting, administrative, compliance, and operational requirements, and abide by USSEC's corporate core values at all times.

The Contractor will interface with industry decision-makers and influencers in Japan – including buyers and sellers in the feed, poultry, swine, livestock, and aquaculture sectors – as well as with leading company representatives, trade associations, academic institutions, and pertinent government ministries/departments.

SCOPE OF WORK (Services)

- **Oversight and Reporting:** Report administratively and operationally to USSEC's Deputy Director – Japan and USSEC's Regional Animal Utilization Lead – East Asia for all matters related to contract execution. The Contractor will work under the direction of these USSEC supervisors and **will not operate autonomously**.
- **Coordination:** Liaise and coordinate closely with USSEC's East Asia leadership (including the Deputy Director – Japan and Regional Animal Utilization Lead – East Asia) to align marketing efforts and program activities in Japan.
- **Relationship Building:** Establish and nurture strong working relationships and communication channels with local industry stakeholders in the poultry, swine, livestock, and feed sectors through technical support and trade servicing efforts. This includes (but is not limited to) engagement with personnel in the private sector, government bodies, universities, and industry institutions.
- **Market Research:** Gather and evaluate data relevant to the current and future potential for use of soybeans, soybean meal, and other soy products in Japan's feed and livestock industries.
- **Representation at Events:** Attend and/or represent USSEC at agricultural trade shows, fairs, technical meetings, international seminars, and other industry events (as requested by USSEC management). All participation must adhere to USSEC's latest travel and safety protocols and regulations.

- **Travel Support:** When requested by USSEC, provide assistance during visiting delegations and business travel – for example, accompanying USSEC staff, regional technical experts, and/or U.S. soybean farmer-leaders on in-country trips – in accordance with USSEC’s travel policies and safety protocols.
- **Sustainability Promotion:** Convey the U.S. Soy sustainability message to customers and encourage buyers to utilize the **U.S. Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP)** certification with their U.S. Soy purchases.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** Provide assistance to other U.S. agricultural cooperator organizations when appropriate (e.g., work with the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service on joint activities that benefit U.S. agricultural exports overall). However, the Contractor shall not participate in any event with messages that run contrary to USSEC’s mission and objectives.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Dedicate sufficient time and attention to fulfill all contracted services, deliverables, and key performance indicators (KPIs) as required under the terms of the Master Agreement and contract addendum.
- Conduct oneself in a manner consistent with USSEC’s core values – maintaining a respectable image and credibility as a USSEC representative, and refraining from any activities that may reflect adversely on USSEC.
- Provide full cooperation to USSEC to maximize USSEC’s success in Japan and the East Asia region.
- As an expert professional in this field, remain informed and knowledgeable about the latest developments in relevant industries and be able to effectively communicate new insights to target audiences.
- Work closely with, and give full cooperation to, members of USSEC’s program management and accounting teams in the region.
- Be fully prepared and equipped to work from home or a remote location as needed. This includes the technical know-how to conduct virtual/online meetings and engage with customers via teleconference or other digital communication tools.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (if applicable)

N/A

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
March 1, 2026 – September 30, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Reporting: Submit a monthly activity report to USSEC (in the format prescribed) along with the invoice. Each report should include, at minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A summary of interactions with soy industry contacts and feedback received while marketing and promoting the U.S. Soy Advantage.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Timely updates on market developments, especially any events that impact the trade and preference for U.S. Soy. ○ Relevant data and statistics on soy usage in Japan (e.g., import volumes, price trends, feed formulations) that support contract objectives. ○ Any observations, insights, or recommendations for actions on market issues, including ideas for future marketing strategies to increase demand for U.S. Soy. (These reports ensure transparency and allow USSEC's regional team to monitor progress throughout the contract period.) • Ad Hoc Reports and Support (Upon Request): Provide additional reporting and assistance at USSEC's request. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Market Intelligence Reports: For example, price lists of key raw feed ingredients and local livestock prices in Japan, and analysis of any major technical or trade issues that could affect U.S. Soy's market position. ○ Industry Meeting Support: Organize and facilitate industry meetings (in-person or virtual) with Japanese feed producers, integrators, or other stakeholders to advance understanding of USSEC's programs and technical outreach. These meetings will help communicate the U.S. Soy Advantage and gather feedback from the industry.
Ongoing	Submission of invoices will be in accordance with Section III.3.c. of this Addendum. Invoices must include the Agreement Number, Allocation ID and the Project Number shown on Page 1 of the Addendum.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

For this contract, the expected term is from **March 1, 2026** to **September 30, 2026**. This period aligns with USSEC's fiscal year. After this term, the contract may be renewed on a 12-month (annual) basis – subject to the tenure of funding sources, the USSEC marketing cycle, and the Contractor's performance.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** December 17, 2025
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** January 5, 2026 (by 5:00 PM JST)
- **Project Proposals Due:** January 15, 2026 (by 12:00 PM JST)
- **Selections Made By:** February 1, 2026
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** February 1, 2026

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. **Submission Method:** Please email the proposal **on or before January 15, 2026 (12:00 PM JST)** to RFP@USSEC.ORG and Chatan@ct.ussec.org. Proposals received after the deadline may not be considered.
2. **Qualifications & Experience:** Provide a description of the prospective contractor's capabilities, resources, and prior experience – especially any experience relevant to the requirements of this RFP.
3. **Technical Proposal:** Submit a thorough proposal outlining the proposed work plan, anticipated deliverables, and timeline for completing the work. The proposal should demonstrate an understanding of Japan's market context and how the contractor will achieve USSEC's objectives.
4. **Key Personnel:** Include resumes or CVs for all personnel who will be directly involved in executing the contract. Highlight each individual's qualifications and experience in relation to this role.
5. **References:** Provide at least two references (client names and contact information) from similarly sized projects or clients, for whom you have performed comparable work.
6. **Budget:** Submit a detailed budget breakdown. Clearly explain how the total fee was calculated – including, for example, daily or hourly rates for personnel, estimated level of effort for each task, and any other cost components.
7. **Length & Format:** Proposals should be written in English and **not exceed 10 pages** (standard 8½" x 11" or A4 size). This page limit does not include appendices such as resumes or references.

Notes and Conditions:

- Proposals will be duplicated for internal review by USSEC staff and legal counsel, and they will not be returned. USSEC reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance of all conditions contained in this RFP, unless specifically noted otherwise in the proposal and confirmed in the contract.
- Without USSEC's prior written consent, Prospective Contractors and their officers, employees, agents, affiliates, or subcontractors shall not disclose to any third party any documents, materials, or information provided by USSEC in relation to this RFP.
- During the evaluation process, USSEC may request additional information or clarifications from proposers, or allow correction of errors and omissions.
- USSEC reserves the right to reject any proposal that is inconsistent or irregular, and to waive any defects or deficiencies in proposals. USSEC also reserves the right to request additional information and/or negotiate modifications with any prospective contractor.

- Prospective Contractors agree that the fees proposed are in lieu of any and all other benefits or compensation (including, but not limited to, health or life insurance, retirement contributions, and paid leave).
- Any income taxes, value-added taxes (VAT), or other direct or indirect taxes on the compensation paid under the contract are the responsibility of the Contractor (neither USSEC nor the funding sources will withhold or pay such taxes on the contractor's behalf).
- Prior to receiving any payment, the selected contractor must provide the appropriate tax form (e.g., a W-9 for U.S.-based contractors, or W-8/W-8BEN for non-U.S. contractors).
- **Non-Competition:** For the duration of the contract, the Contractor shall not act as an agent or representative for any product or service that is directly or indirectly competitive with U.S. soybeans or soybean products.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND BACKGROUND

Building a Preference for U.S. Soy: USSEC's overarching strategy and vision can be found on its website. In summary, USSEC is a dynamic partnership of key stakeholders representing U.S. soybean producers, commodity shippers, merchandisers, allied agribusinesses, and agricultural organizations. Through its global network and strong U.S. support, USSEC works to build a preference for U.S. soybeans and soybean products, advocates for the use of soy in feed, aquaculture and human consumption, promotes the benefits of soy through education, and connects industry leaders through a robust membership program. This strategy is guided by the long-range plans of the U.S. soy industry and is supported by various funding sources (including U.S. soybean farmer checkoff funds, industry co-operators, and USDA Foreign Agricultural Service programs).

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:

- 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.