

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP TITLE: MENA Communications and Media Outreach Specialist

RFP CONTACT:

Name: Hibah Ameer
hameer@ct.ussec.org

INTRODUCTION:

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), a globally focused non-profit funded by the U.S. soybean checkoff, USDA-FAS matching funds, and industry partners, works to build preference and market access for U.S. soybeans and soybean products in over 80 countries. USSEC differentiates U.S. Soy through technical leadership, reliability, sustainability, and nutrition advantages in animal feed, aquaculture, and human food use concentrating on Middle East and North Africa region.

In support of these goals, USSEC is seeking qualified proposals from communications professionals to provide part-time (10–15 days per month) services in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, focusing on amplified media presence, stakeholder outreach, and brand elevation for U.S. Soy.

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 purpose of this RFP is to identify a Communications and Media Outreach Specialist with the industry knowledge, networks, and demonstrated capacity to elevate USSEC and U.S. Soy's brand presence across key stakeholder audiences within the MENA region. This role will support building the reputation of U.S. Soy, expand media engagement, establish sustained public relations platforms, and reinforce USSEC's strategic objectives as outlined in regional strategy documents. The role will report and work alongside the Regional Communications Lead of Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA).

As part of USSEC's ongoing efforts to deepen customer engagement and build preference for U.S. Soy in the MENA region – communications support tailored to regional media, agriculture trade, and business stakeholders remains a priority.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The contractor will engage with:

- Regional and international media outlets (print, digital, broadcast)
- Trade and business publications focused on agriculture, feed, aquaculture, sustainability, and food security
- Journalists and editors covering agribusiness, trade, ESG, and nutrition
- Conference organizers, event producers, and industry platforms
- Industry associations, chambers of commerce, and trade bodies
- Commercial customers and strategic partners across the soy value chain

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

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 Communications & Media Outreach Specialist will deliver services including, but not limited to:

Required Language – Arabic, French and English

A. Strategic Communications & Messaging

- Develop region-specific communications plans aligned with USSEC's global and regional strategies.
- Align messaging with U.S. Soy value propositions, including sustainability, reliability, nutrition, and performance.

B. Media Database Development & Management

- Build and maintain a **comprehensive, categorized database** of:
 - Newspapers
 - Trade magazines
 - Online publications
 - Journalists and editors

- Broadcast and digital platforms
- Segment the database by country, sector, and relevance to USSEC priorities and obtain costing for various activities – advertising, interviews, etc.

C. Content Development

- Review and learn to draft press releases, op-eds, media pitches, interview briefs, backgrounders, and feature articles.
- Work with Regional Communications lead in supporting leadership talking points and keynote messaging for conferences and events.

D. Media Outreach & Engagement

- Proactively pitch stories and thought leadership content to targeted media.
- Secure interviews, feature articles, and expert commentary opportunities.
- Build and maintain long-term relationships with journalists and editors.

E. Thought Leadership & Speaking Opportunities

- Identify and assess key conferences, forums, summits, and trade events across the MENA region.
- Proactively engage with event organizers to:
 - Secure speaking slots, panel participation, and keynote opportunities for USSEC leadership
 - Position USSEC executives as expert voices on protein, sustainability, and food security
- Coordinate speaker submissions, abstracts, and supporting materials.
- Track and report on speaking engagements secured and outcomes

F. Event & Program Support (Including Travel)

- Support on-site communications, media engagement, and speaker coordination at selected USSEC events and partner conferences.
- Be available to travel within the MENA region as required to support:

- Conferences and trade shows
- Media briefings
- USSEC programs and stakeholder engagements

G. Reporting, Analytics & Continuous Improvement

- Provide monthly activity reports covering:
 - Media outreach and coverage
 - Speaking engagements secured
 - Event participation and outcomes
- Provide strategic recommendations to improve reach, relevance, and impact.

H. Compliance & Coordination

- Ensure all activities comply with USSEC policies and funding source guidelines.
- Coordinate closely with USSEC regional leadership and global communications teams.
- 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 February 25 - September 30, 2026 | <p>Provide applicable project support documents, forms and templates for the proper implementation of events.</p> <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 Executive Director and Regional Project Manager. |
| Sept 30, 2026 | <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 Executive Director and Regional Project Manager. |

| | |
|---------|---|
| | Manager. |
| Ongoing | Submission of invoices and expenses will be in accordance with Section III.3.c. of this Addendum. |

PROJECT TIMELINE:

The term of the proposal will last from February 25, 2026 – Sept 30, 2026

Part Time Engagement: 10-15 days per month

RFP TIMELINE:

- RFP Distribution: January 30, 2026
- Last Day to Submit Questions: February 10, 2026 by 5:00PM Dubai time
- Project Proposals Due: February 16, 2026 by 5:00PM Dubai time
- Selections Made By: February 18, 2026
- Prospective Contractors Notified By: February 19, 2026

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

- Fluent in French, Arabic and English
- Degree from a reputable university in business, communications, agriculture, or similar
- 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
- Highest moral integrity and character
- Located in the MENA region

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG and hameer@ct.ussec.org by **5:00PM Central Time** on February 16, 2026
2. Provide a minimum of two names and contact information for other similarly sized clients for reference purposes.
3. Budget (daily rate to be listed on the CV)
4. 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.