

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE September 15,2026

RFP TITLE: AMERICAS AQUACULTURE LEAD

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 15,2026

INTRODUCTION:

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) champions U.S. Soy worldwide. Through innovation, sustainability and partnerships, we connect farmers to global markets.

USSEC members represent the soy supply chain, including U.S. Soy farmers, processors, commodity shippers, merchandisers, allied agribusinesses and agricultural organizations.

USSEC is funded by the U.S. soybean checkoff, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) matching funds, and industry.

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) Global Aquaculture Program is dedicated to advancing sustainable aquafeed and aquaculture production worldwide through the promotion of U.S. Soy-based ingredients and technical support. The program aims to build preference for U.S. Soy by demonstrating its nutritional performance, supply reliability, and sustainability profile by working across all segments of the production chain from feed manufacturers and fish farmers to industry associations and researchers.

PURPOSE OF RFP AND BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

USSEC seeks proposals from qualified individuals or firms to serve as the Americas Region Aquaculture Lead, the initial contract is planned for the period January 01,

2027, through September 30, 2027; with the intention to review and extend into a year-over-year engagement based on performance and mutual alignment.

The contractor will act as a strategic catalyst for the growth of U.S. Soy in aquaculture by integrating technical leadership, market intelligence, stakeholder engagement, and disciplined program execution.

The position will promote the sales and utilization of U.S. Soy throughout the aquaculture sector across the Americas and translate USSEC priorities into measurable regional outcomes aligned with three strategic pillars: Elevate the visibility, credibility, and technical leadership of U.S. Soy; Attain commercial impact by increasing demand, utilization, and customer preference; and Differentiate U.S. Soy as a reliable, sustainable, consistent, and high-value feed ingredient.

The role will also support the dissemination of technologies, production systems, and other innovations that improve production efficiency, biosecurity, nutrition, reproductive efficiency, mortality reduction, and sustainability. Market intelligence and research will be used to strengthen differentiation, brand awareness, and customer preference for U.S. Soy products.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

- Aquaculture producers
- Feed manufacturers
- Industry associations and governmental agencies
- Commodity traders and brokers
- Universities and research institutions
- Commercial partners and U.S. cooperators

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

The contractor will serve as USSEC's principal technical representative for aquaculture in the Americas and support regional strategy through the following services:

Strategic and market development – Identify priority markets, customers, and opportunities; develop customer analyses and proposals; promote higher soybean meal inclusion rates; identify and coordinate sponsorship and technical-assistance opportunities; and collaborate with U.S. cooperators to support exports.

Relationship management – Represent USSEC; build and maintain relationships with key customers and partners; respond to trade inquiries; arrange and participate in customer meetings and visits; maintain accurate contact information; identify collaboration opportunities; and travel for missions, meetings, conferences, and related events.

Technical leadership – Develop and deliver trainings, seminars, workshops, conferences, webinars, and other educational programs; provide technical support to feed manufacturers, producers, nutritionists, researchers, processors, and other stakeholders; promote innovation in nutrition, sustainability, production efficiency, and feed formulation; coordinate technical experts; and ensure the scientific credibility and consistency of USSEC messaging.

Program implementation – Propose and manage approved events and activities, including technical trainings, site visits, trade teams, trade shows, feeding demonstrations, market research, sponsorships, publications, and memberships. Develop project plans and budgets; coordinate speakers and content; select participants; manage timelines; monitor KPIs; measure impact; supervise contractors; and review deliverables, presentations, biographies, reports, and travel authorizations.

Reporting and market intelligence – Monitor developments affecting soy imports; identify near- and long-term opportunities for soybean products; provide timely updates on projects, contacts, recommendations, and opportunities; and submit all required narrative, travel, mission, and expense reports using USSEC templates.

Cross-functional collaboration – Work closely with the Managing Director, Focus Area Director, Market Leads, Global Program Operations, regional staff, contractors, external consultants and U.S. cooperators.

Administration, Reporting and Compliance

1. Reporting

- Submit individual travel reports and a monthly service report.
- Provide ongoing strategic reporting for multiple funding sources, covering success stories, investment rates and implementation updates.

2. Compliance

- Comply with USSEC and funding-source policies and regulations when implementing activities.
- Follow regional procedures, approved budgets, timelines, templates and processes.
- Use USSEC templates and systems for administrative tasks, including travel authorizations, travel expense reports, flight bookings, and event and sponsorship requests.

3. Program management

- Identify market opportunities and develop proposals for the upcoming fiscal year.
- Work closely with Project Managers on budget investment.
- Keep contact lists up to date.
- Identify and contract technicians and speakers, and oversee their work.
- Attend strategic and implementation meetings.
- Develop event agendas and coordinate logistics with the events team.

CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATIONS AND POSITION REQUIREMENTS

- Advanced degree in aquaculture, animal nutrition, fisheries, veterinary medicine, agriculture, or a related field; master's degree or Ph.D. preferred
- At least 10 years of professional experience in aquaculture, aquafeeds, animal nutrition, or agribusiness
- Demonstrated experience developing and implementing regional or international programs
- Strong understanding of aquaculture production systems, feed formulation, ingredient evaluation, and sustainability
- Proven ability to build relationships with senior industry stakeholders and to manage consultants, technical experts, and multidisciplinary teams
- Strong strategic planning, project management, analytical, written, and verbal communication skills

- Bilingual proficiency in English and Spanish is required
- Willingness and ability to travel extensively throughout the Americas and internationally

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (if applicable):

This is a full-time contractor assignment. Activities may be adjusted based on market conditions and USSEC needs. Performance will be evaluated using measurable outcomes, including execution of regional initiatives and annual KPIs; the quality and impact of technical education and market-development activities; stakeholder engagement; commercial opportunities generated for U.S. Soy; timely reporting; budget compliance; and alignment with USSEC policies and strategic priorities.

Availability to travel within the region, U.S.A and other USSEC regions

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
For each approved activity	Project plan, budget, KPIs, participant and prospect information, technical content, and other required documentation. Draft agendas are due at least six months before an event; final agendas, speaker or contractor scopes of work, and customer prospect lists are due at least three months before an event.
By the end of each month	Executive English Narrative Report in the USSEC template covering market and regional updates, opportunities for soybean products, progress by activity, recommendations, key industry contacts, project status, and action photos when applicable.
At least 30 days before travel	Travel Authorization for travel within the Americas, submitted in the required USSEC format.
At least 45 days before travel	Travel Authorization for travel outside the Americas, submitted in the required USSEC format.
Within 30 days after travel	Travel Expense Report in the required USSEC template.
Within 30 days after travel	Travel Mission Report in the required USSEC template.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

- The initial contract is planned for the period January 1, 2027, through September 30, 2027, with the intention to review and extend into a year-over-year engagement based on performance and mutual alignment.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** August 18, 2026
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** September 04, 2026
- **Project Proposals Due:** September 15, 2026
- **Selections Made By:** September 23, 2026
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** September 25, 2026

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG and CC mcheatham@ussec.org and amonreal@ussec.org, by September 15, 2026, 5:00 pm **Central Time**
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.
4. Resumes for each of the Prospective Contractor's personnel assigned to work directly on the implementation of the contract.
5. Provide a minimum of two names and contact information for other similarly sized clients for reference purposes.
6. Detailed Budget
 - All bids for services must provide a breakout of how the fee was derived, including but not limited to a breakdown of daily rate and the amount of effort they anticipate doing the work.
 - *The daily rate must be quoted in U.S. dollars and be inclusive of all applicable taxes.*
 - *The maximum number of billable days per month is 22.*
 - *Travel expenses are reimbursed within 30 days of submission of a complete expense report.*
7. 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 selected contractor.
- 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 learn 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 agree 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.

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) focuses on attaining market access, differentiating, and elevating preference for the use of U.S. Soy for human consumption, aquaculture, and livestock feed in more than 90 countries. USSEC members represent the soy supply chain including U.S. Soy farmers, processors, commodity shippers, merchandisers, allied agribusinesses, and agricultural organizations. USSEC is funded by the Soy Checkoff, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) matching funds, and industry. Visit www.ussec.org for the latest information about USSEC and U.S. Soy internationally.

Our 16-member board of directors is comprised of four members from the American Soybean Association (ASA), four members from the United Soybean Board (USB), and eight 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 77 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 primary



contractors. U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. is contracted to manage projects for international marketing and global opportunities activities.

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, 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 and providing proof of payment to the subcontractor for any work they have performed. If proof of payment cannot be provided, USSEC will be unable to reimburse the contractor. 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.