REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
05:00 PM CST, 09/02/2026

RFP TITLE: SOY EXCELLENCE CENTER-INDIA CENTER LEAD

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 02ND ,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.

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, advocate for the use of US soy in feed, aquaculture and human consumption, promote the benefits of soy use through education and connect industry leaders through a robust membership program.

The Soy Excellence Center (SEC) is a workforce training and capacity building program developed by USSEC in 2019 to train early-to-mid career individuals from protein industries in emerging and expansion markets.

PURPOSE OF RFP AND BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

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.

India is one of the fastest-growing economies in South Asia and is a major consumer of soybeans, soybean meal, and soy oil. The country's poultry, aquaculture and livestock industries, in particular, are driving demand for soy products as feed ingredients. Growing demand for soy food products, due to changing dietary preferences and higher disposable incomes, have also created opportunities for enhancing soy utilization in the food and beverage industry. Soy milk and tofu are becoming increasingly popular among Indian consumers as healthy and nutritious food options. Overall expanding opportunities in soy foods, poultry, aquaculture and livestock industries could make it a key market for US soy.

U.S. Soy has been collaborating with markets in the South Asia, India, solidifying the presence of soy in the Region.

The Soy Excellence Center India enhances the skills of early- to mid-career protein professionals to help meet local nutrition and food security needs. The Soy Excellence Center program provides world-class workforce training and capacity building within the soy value chain. The SECs collaborate with diverse food and agriculture stakeholders in emerging markets and targets entry and midlevel employees in soy enterprises.

The program prepares future leaders to enable health, nutrition, and environmental sustainability in these emerging markets. The program provides a sustainable, renewable education and learning model with locally relevant best practices in and soy-related sector.

Soy Excellence Centers Approach – SECs provide protein enterprises with work force training and capacity building programs which enhance firm competitiveness and productivity. Increased work force preparedness leads to more efficient production of protein, impacting the entire value chain. Higher productivity increases profits for protein enterprises, which can create more jobs and expand access to protein at lower costs, supporting positive development outcomes in economic growth, food security, nutrition, and health verticals.

The Vision - The Soy Excellence Center vision is to create a global network of tomorrow's leaders in soy across the globe. As a professional development program, SECs can provide a pathway for participants to achieve professional certification and career advancement. Beyond the formal curriculum, the U.S. Soy industry has invested in the development of the SEC digital platform, an online hub for on-demand continuing education content, access to industry experts, and a global community of industry peers. In turn, this platform collectively supports continuing innovation and the sustainability of program results.

The purpose of this RFP is to seek proposals for a full-time SEC India Center Lead, who will provide regional strategic leadership and content direction for activities developed for the India Soy Excellence Center.

This role is responsible for developing and managing high-level relationships with companies to define trainee selection criteria and approve trainees for participation in SEC activities, as well as leading the community manager and technical administrator support team. This team is responsible for ensuring seamless digital operations, platform reliability, and technical support across all SEC virtual learning and community activities, strategy, partner coordination, and program expansion.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The U.S. SOY Excellence Center will target Midlevel employees in soy enterprises, influential farmers, end-users, animal protein integrators, feed millers, agribusinesses, animal nutritionists, among others key stakeholders.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

The SEC India Center Lead provides regional strategic leadership and content direction for activities developed at the Soy Excellence Center, in order to facilitate employee training and continuing education activities that build the knowledge and skills to help employees overcome key challenges and operational hurdles in food, feed and agribusiness operations.

1) This role focuses on:

- Developing and managing high-level relationships with companies to define trainee selection criteria and recruit trainees for participation in SEC activities.
- Identifying and evaluating the training facilities as well as assessing their training capabilities
- Designing high-impact agendas, identifying and securing high-level speakers, and defining the strategic requirements of programs that support USSEC's objectives in the India region
- The contractor will identify the relevant existing training facilities and will assess their training capabilities on these, as per the curriculum requirements. This assessment will include the meetings and interviews with their in-house technical people and the outsourced subject matter specialists/ trainers. This review and selection of such facilities will involve universities, government and private institutions running such courses and imparting training.
- In coordination with the utilization area leads, the contractor will identify USSEC's in-house as well as outsourced speakers/trainers.
- In coordination with the utilization area leads, the contractor will work on development or domestication of SEC courses suitable to India along with accreditation of the courses wherever necessary.
- Coordinating, managing and leading in-person meetings and/or webinars with the USSEC Global Operations Team
- Tracking progress towards project goals, objectives, outputs, and outcomes. Maintain course participant records to determine when they have completed the necessary requirements to receive the course certifications
- Preparing up-to-date information and participating in virtual and on-site meetings with SEC Global SEC Steering Committee and Regional Advisory Council
- Acting as the main liaison with global leadership, aligning regional efforts with global strategy

- Overseeing regional governance, partner engagement, and stakeholder collaboration
- Managing budgets, workplans, and performance metrics for accountability and improvement

This position includes activities such as, but not limited to:

1. Provide scheduled reports, as required.
2. Provide project updates with relevant information to achievements on project KPIs´ as well as progress towards project and USSEC goals on promoting U.S. Soy benefits.
3. Provides dedicated support to expand training participation and strengthen alumni engagement, complementing the Community Engagement Manager with person-to-person outreach.
4. Leads the Country Community Ambassador Program (one per country); monitors progression across the three tiers (Participants → Pathfinders → Tomorrow Solvers); and ensures recognition of Tomorrow Solvers (leadership roles, STAR Awards).

CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATIONS AND POSITION REQUIREMENTS

- Preferred degree from a reputable university in business, engineering, agriculture, or similar
- Individuals/organizations should be fully equipped to recruit incoming students and deploy the on-demand and in-person learning structure. That means they should have a good network of industry representatives and companies to recruit from. They should be prepared to conduct their own administrative functioning and expense reconciliation for reporting.
- A background in education delivery and design is a plus.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills (in English and Spanish)
- Ability to network and build relationships
- Creativity and innovation to develop new and exciting programs for market development
- Ability to multitask by planning and implementing many projects at one time
- Passion for international trade and agriculture
- A receptive appreciation and willingness to advocate for new and innovative agriculture applications, such as GMOs, sustainable farming practices, etc
- Highest moral integrity and character
- Located full time within the markets in the region

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverable
September 24th 2026	Provide USSEC Project Manager with documentation for contract: 1. Signed W9 or W8BEN-E 2. Banking information (USSEC template) 3. Payment terms etc.
October 1st 2026 to September 30th 2027	• Develop and implement a comprehensive 2027 action plan for all existing and new SEC India courses, covering course development, implementation, timelines, milestones, and delivery strategy. • Prepare a detailed 12-month SEC India program schedule in coordination with USSEC Utilization Area Leads, including a planning calendar, event timelines, key milestones, and resource planning for all SEC activities. • Define the scope of work for each SEC program and event, detailing responsibilities, course development requirements, implementation processes, delivery methodology, stakeholder coordination, and execution plans as outlined in the Scope of Services. • Speakers' services and deliverables for contracts requests should be provided to the SEC Regional Project Manager using the predetermined templates, and according to the deadlines established by the Global Operations Team • Attend catch up call with SEC regional project manager and/or SEC Executive Director • Arrange RAC Meetings and RAC-GAP meetings as per requirement • Attend regional and global SEC meetings • Upon request, provide reports that summarize the Center's work, insights, progress against the stated goals and objectives, lessons learned, and challenges encountered.
Ongoing	• Provide monthly executive English Narrative Report (In USSEC Template) with services rendered during the month • Provide monthly invoice for services provided

	• Submit Travel Authorization, travel expenses reports and other administrative information following the Global Operations Team guidelines

PROJECT TIMELINE:

*Our expectation is for the **SEC INDIA CENTER LEAD** to be a full time contract position. The initial contract is planned from October 1, 2026 to 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 14th 2026
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** August 22nd 2026 5pm Central Time
- **Project Proposals Due:** September 02nd 2026 5pm Central Time
- **Selections Made By:** September 15th 2026
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** September 20th 2026

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG and saitej@ct.ussec.org by ***5:00PM Central Time*** on September 02nd ***, 2026.***

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 <u>must</u> 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 to do the work.

6. Proposals should be no longer than ***08 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.

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 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.

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.