REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
END RESULT CONTRACT
SUBMISSION DEADLINE
05:00 PM CST, 12/4/26

TYPE OF CONTRACT: END RESULT CONTRACT
The fee includes all consulting fees, employee compensation and benefits, overhead, travel expenses or any other type of expenses incurred to effectively complete the services/deliverables agreed upon. The payment represents the sole and complete liability of USSEC for services rendered in relation to the agreement. USSEC Budget Table Template must be completed outlining how the fee was derived. The Budget Table Template should be requested from Kim Liliensiek kliliensiek@ussec.org USSEC will rate proposals based on the following factors: • Responsiveness to the requirements set forth in this Request for Proposal (RFP) • Relevant past performance/experience • Samples of work • Budget USSEC is seeking proposals for the work outlined in the RFP. This type of cost analysis will assist in determining fair market value, and it provides USSEC with the opportunity to evaluate various proposals to select the best contractor for the job based on experience, availability, expertise, approach, and cost.

RFP TITLE:	**USSA TRADE SERVICING FOR EUROPEAN MARKET EXPANSION**
RFP CONTACT:	
Name:	Kim Liliensiek
Phone #:	+1-660-537-3964
Email:	kliliensiek@ussec.org

PROPOSAL DEADLINE:	December 4, 2026 5:00 pm CST

INTRODUCTION:
The U.S. Sustainability Alliance (USSA) represents the U.S. agricultural, forestry, and fisheries industries, committed to promoting sustainable U.S. products within the European market. Taking a multi-sector approach, USSA brings together diverse stakeholders to emphasize American sustainability practices in these sectors. By aligning with European values of environmental stewardship, resource conservation, and social responsibility, USSA works to enhance the perception of U.S. agricultural, fisheries, and forestry products across Europe. Since 2013, USSA has actively aimed to exchange with European counterparts around topics of sustainability by engaging policymakers, trade associations, and sustainability organizations. By advocating for shared standards, transparency, and strong transatlantic

trade relationships, USSA supports a commitment to responsible sourcing. In 2027, USSA plans to showcase the sustainability of U.S. products in its Agri-bulk, Animal & Seafood Related Products, and Specialty sectors, ultimately aimed at increasing market access opportunities for USSA cooperator organizations.

The table below outlines the USSA sectors along with the cooperator organizations associated with each sector.

USSA Sector	Cooperator Organization
Agri-Bulk	American Feed Industry Association (AFIA)
	North American Export Grain Association (NAEGA)
	U.S. Grains Council (USGC)
	U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC)
	U.S. Wheat Associates (USWA)
	USA Rice
Animal & Seafood Related Products	Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI)
	Food Export Association of the Northeast (FEANE)
	Leather and Hide Council of America (LHCA)
	North American Renderers Association (NARA)
	U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC)
	U.S. Livestock Genetics Export, Inc (USLGE)
	U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF)
	USA Poultry & Egg Export Council (USAPEEC)
Specialty	Almond Board of California (ABC)
	American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC)
	American Peanut Council (APC)
	American Seed Trade Association (ASTA)
	California Prune Board (CPB)
	Cotton Council International (CCI)
	Florida Department of Citrus
	Food Export Association of the Midwest (FEAM)
	Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC)
	North Carolina SweetPotato Commission (NCSPC)
	Organic Trade Association (OTA)
	Softwood Export Council (SEC)
	U.S. Dry Bean Council (USDBC)
	U.S. Dry Pea and Lentil Council (USDPLC)

PURPOSE OF RFP:

This RFP seeks a contractor(s) to support USSA's trade servicing goals in European markets. The chosen contractor(s) will manage ongoing initiatives while identifying new opportunities to promote U.S. sustainability through outreach, stakeholder relationships, and participation in trade missions and policy discussions.

This contractor(s) will bring expertise in agricultural sustainability and international trade, particularly in relation to European regulations and market expectations. Through their work, the contractor(s) will strengthen USSA's reputation in sustainable trade and enhance visibility among European stakeholders. This engagement will also ensure the alignment of USSA's objectives and those of its member organizations, reinforcing the market credibility and competitive edge of U.S. products by emphasizing sustainable practices.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

Since its inception, USSA has promoted sustainable U.S. agricultural practices in Europe. By establishing trust with European officials and stakeholders, USSA has positioned itself as a credible source of information on sustainable U.S. practices. In response to evolving European policies, USSA aims to enhance its trade servicing efforts.

The contractor(s) will expand on USSA's past efforts by deepening trade servicing activities servicing the Agri-Bulk, Animal & Seafood Related Products, and Specialty sectors. The contractor(s) will organize trade missions, facilitate policy dialogues, and engage in key trade events across Europe, strengthening U.S.-Europe trade relationships and aligning U.S. products with European sustainability goals.

The contractor(s) will ultimately aim to secure a stronger presence in European markets by demonstrating U.S. producers' commitment to responsible practices. By guiding USSA's European engagement strategy, the contractor(s) will enhance USSA's influence, setting a foundation for future initiatives that foster sustainable trade between the U.S. and Europe.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The primary audience includes European policymakers at the EU and national levels, industry stakeholders, and influential trade associations. Additionally, the contractor(s) will engage with NGOs and advocacy groups. The contractor(s) will engage with USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) posts in Europe and USSA Cooperator organizations, while reporting back to the USSA Management Council.

SCOPE OF WORK:

The selected contractor(s) will work closely with USSA to:

- Stakeholder Outreach:
    - Coordinate ongoing engagement with European officials and trade associations to promote U.S. sustainability practices and align on shared sustainability goals.
- Policy and Industry Events:

- Facilitate USSA's participation in relevant policy forums and trade events across Europe, securing speaking opportunities and briefing sessions to communicate USSA's sustainability initiatives.

- Trade Missions:
  - Organize an outreach mission to key European markets to strengthen relationships with policymakers and industry leaders.
- Collaborative Government Dialogue:
  - Facilitate discussions with European governments on sustainable production standards, positioning U.S. industries as trusted partners in sustainable trade.
  - Provide 'alert' notification of 'breaking news' and new developments that could impact USSA.
  - Collaborate with Cooperators to identify local partners for joint activities related to sustainable agriculture.
- Briefing Papers and Position Statements:
  - Develop targeted briefing materials for use in discussions with European stakeholders, addressing key issues in sustainability and promoting U.S. practices. Develop and publish one trade-related article per quarter on sustainability topics for European audiences.
- Metrics and Feedback Collection:
  - Establish a process for gathering feedback from European stakeholders on USSA's trade servicing efforts, using these insights to refine strategies for greater alignment with European market expectations.
- Regular Progress Reports:
  - Provide reports detailing trade servicing activities, engagement metrics, and updates on ongoing initiatives with European stakeholders.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The selected contractor should align all materials with USSA's Strategic Plan, and the contractor must also have a deep understanding of the agricultural sector, regulatory compliance, and sustainability.

Contractors are encouraged to submit proposals for individual deliverables, multiple deliverables, or the complete set of deliverables specified in this RFP, depending on their area of expertise and resources. Proposals will be evaluated based on the quality and suitability of each contractor's approach to the specific deliverables they select. This flexible approach allows us to engage a range of specialized providers to achieve the RFP's objectives effectively.

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables

January 20, 2027 - Monthly	European Stakeholder Engagement: Maintain contact with European officials, trade associations, and industry stakeholders to promote U.S. sustainability practices and shared goals.
January 20, 2027 - Ongoing	Policy and Industry Event Participation: Facilitate USSA's presence in policy forums and trade events across Europe, secure speaking opportunities, and prepare briefing sessions.
January 30, 2027 - Quarterly	Media Publications: Collaborate with the Communications Contractor to develop and publish one trade-related article per quarter on sustainability topics for European audiences.
February 1, 2027 - Ongoing	Stakeholder Outreach and Government Dialogue: Facilitate ongoing discussions with European government representatives on sustainable production standards and alignment between U.S. and EU sustainability frameworks, positioning the U.S. as a credible partner in sustainable trade.
March 1, 2027 - Ongoing	Feedback Collection from European Stakeholders: Establish a process to gather insights on USSA's trade servicing efforts, analyze results, and refine strategies based on market needs.
April 1, 2027 - Ongoing	Briefing Papers and Position Statements: Develop targeted materials for discussions with stakeholders, focusing on U.S. sustainability practices and industry initiatives.
April 1, 2027 - Ongoing	Organize an outreach mission to key European markets to strengthen relationships with policymakers and industry leaders.
February 1, 2027 - Ongoing	Facilitate USSA's participation in relevant policy forums and trade events across Europe, securing speaking opportunities and briefing sessions to communicate USSA's sustainability initiatives.
June 1, 2027 - Quarterly	USSA Trade Servicing Progress Reports: Provide detailed progress reports with metrics on trade servicing activities, stakeholder engagement, and updates on ongoing initiatives in Europe.
September 1, 2027 - TBD	High-Level Conference in Brussels: Organize a conference with USDA FAS EU and EU institutions to engage stakeholders on sustainability themes and strategies.
Ongoing	Media and PR Support for Events: Coordinate with the Communications Contractor to provide media and PR support for engagements and communicate USSA initiatives effectively.
Ongoing	Breaking News Alerts: Provide timely alerts on new developments or changes that could impact USSA's strategy or operations.

RFP TIMELINE:

- RFP distribution: November 13, 2026
- Last day to submit questions: November 30, 2026
- Project proposals due: December: 4, 2026
- Selections will be made by: December 18, 2026
- Prospective contractors will be notified by: December 23, 2026

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to kliliensiek@ussec.org by 05:00 PM CST on 12/04/26.

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 Contractor(s)'s 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. A Budget Table must be completed, please write Kim Liliensiek (kliliensiek@ussec.org) to request the USSEC Budget Table Template.
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 contractor selected.
- Confidentiality - Without USSEC's prior written consent, Prospective Contractors and their officers, employees, agents, representatives, affiliates, and subcontractors shall not disclose to any third party any documents, materials or information that the Prospective Contractor(s) 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.

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 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 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. 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.

Request for Proposal Budget Development

Company Name:	
Contact Person:	
Proposal Name:	
Total Budget:	**$ -**

This budget proposed contains information including all consulting fees, overhead, travel expenses or any other type of expenses incurred to effectively complete the services/deliverables agreed upon. The payment represents the sole and complete liability of USSEC for services rendered in relations to the agreement.

PROFESSIONAL FEES:

Total Fees
$ -

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Provide the anticipated travel expenses to successfully execute the project:

Domestic Travel	International Travel	Purpose
$ -	$ -	
$ -	$ -	
$ -	$ -	
$ -	$ -	
$ -	$ -	
$ -	$ -	
$ -	$ -	
$ -	$ -	
$ -	$ -	

Other

Provide list of any other costs related to the project that are not included in Professional Fees or Travel Expenses

Type of Expenses	Cost	Purpose
	$ -	
	$ -	
	$ -	
	$ -	
	$ -	
	$ -	
	$ -	

Budget Summary

Professional Fees	$ -
Travel Expenses	$ -
Other	$ -
	$ -