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:	**COMMUNICATIONS AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT FOR U.S. SUSTAINABILITY ALLIANCE**
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) has promoted sustainable U.S. agricultural production globally, building a reputation as a reliable source for insights into the environmental and social impact of U.S. production practices. USSA's communications efforts have yielded a significant increase in awareness and understanding of U.S. agricultural sustainability, with Europe as the focus, where collaborations with media partners, government officials, and industry stakeholders have amplified the message. Through workshops, media tours, and strategic digital campaigns, USSA facilitated constructive dialogues around sustainable farming policies and U.S. contributions to innovation-based agricultural productivity.

These initiatives underscore USSA's commitment to improving perceptions and fostering an accurate, informed narrative around American farming, forestry, and fisheries industries. Building on this success, USSA is looking to continue and expand its communication efforts in 2027, seeking a contractor(s) to help develop and implement a comprehensive strategy. This contractor(s) will be pivotal in helping USSA reinforce its positioning as a thought leader in sustainability, fostering greater international alignment with U.S. sustainability goals, and supporting policy and market access efforts for U.S. agricultural products.

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:

USSA seeks an experienced contractor(s) to provide strategic communications, operational management, and stakeholder coordination support, advancing its mission to promote U.S. sustainability practices and strengthen market access in Europe. The selected contractor(s) will serve as a strategic partner to USSA, working closely with the Management Council, cooperator organizations, and communications partners to ensure effective day-to-day operations, consistent messaging, and coordinated implementation of the Alliance's strategic priorities.

This RFP aims to identify a contractor(s) with demonstrated expertise in agricultural sustainability, international communications, stakeholder engagement, and project management. Responsibilities will include supporting Management Council coordination, managing ongoing USSA operations, organizing monthly cooperator calls, facilitating media content development and placement, coordinating participation in priority trade shows and industry events, and providing media and public relations support. Through these activities, the selected contractor(s) will strengthen USSA's visibility, foster meaningful engagement with European stakeholders, and communicate the sustainability achievements of U.S. agriculture, forestry, and fisheries industries.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

In recent years, USSA has supported market access for U.S. agricultural, forestry, and fisheries products in Europe by increasing awareness and understanding of U.S. sustainability practices, policies, and regulatory frameworks. Building on these efforts, USSA's mission emphasizes both the sustainability of U.S. production practices and the mechanisms that facilitate market access and regulatory alignment with European markets.

In 2027, USSA seeks to expand its reach and strengthen its presence across Europe through strategic media, communications, and stakeholder engagement activities. The selected contractor(s) will develop a unified narrative highlighting USSA's sustainability objectives, the achievements of its cooperator organizations, and the Alliance's broader sustainability vision. Through consistent messaging, targeted media content, and participation in high-impact events, the contractor(s) will position USSA as a credible thought leader, facilitate dialogue on U.S. sustainability practices, and support efforts to advance market access and regulatory alignment.

The selected contractor(s) will also provide ongoing operational, administrative, and strategic coordination support to USSA, working closely with the Management Council, member organizations, cooperators, and communications contractors. Responsibilities will include coordinating Management Council priorities and messaging, managing day-to-day operations and stakeholder communications, supporting new member onboarding, and organizing 10

monthly cooperator calls, including speaker coordination, agenda development, meeting management, and follow-up reporting.

Additionally, the contractor(s) will coordinate the development and placement of quarterly media articles, identify and support participation in priority trade shows and industry events in collaboration with local USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) offices, and provide media and public relations support in coordination with the communications contractor. Collectively, these activities will ensure effective USSA operations, strengthen stakeholder relationships, maintain consistent messaging, and support the implementation of the Alliance's strategic priorities.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Key stakeholders include government officials, trade associations, European officials and decision-makers across the United Kingdom (UK) and European Union (EU).

SCOPE OF WORK:

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

- Management Council Coordination and Strategic Support: Support the USSA Management Council in implementing strategic priorities, coordinating messaging across activities, liaising with contractors and cooperator organizations, preparing progress reports, and organizing monthly and ad hoc meetings.
- Day-to-Day USSA Operations: Manage ongoing administrative and operational activities, including responding to inquiries, maintaining stakeholder contacts, coordinating new member onboarding, and facilitating communication between the Management Council, cooperators, and other relevant stakeholders.
- Monthly USSA Cooperator Calls: Organize and manage 10 cooperator calls annually, including identifying and coordinating speakers, aligning discussion topics with USSA policy priorities, developing agendas, facilitating meetings, and preparing post-meeting summaries and reports.
- Communications Materials and Media Publications: Coordinate the development of communications materials, including reports, brochures, blog posts, and other content highlighting U.S. sustainability practices across the agricultural, forestry, and fisheries sectors.
- Social Media and Digital Engagement: Manage and expand USSA's digital presence across its website and social media platforms, including maintaining USSA member factsheets, developing engaging content, and monitoring engagement metrics to strengthen audience reach and visibility.
- Media Outreach and Public Relations: Identify media opportunities, coordinate interviews and press releases, and provide ongoing media and public relations support in collaboration with USSA's communications contractor, cooperators, and other relevant partners to ensure consistent messaging and promotion of USSA initiatives.
- Trade Show Coordination and Event Support: Identify and prioritize relevant trade shows, conferences, and industry events in consultation with the Management Council. Coordinate with local USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) offices, cooperators, and communications contractors to support quarterly event participation,

speaking engagements, media tours, webinars, and promotional activities, including event attendance and social media coverage as needed.

- Performance Monitoring and Reporting: Monitor and analyze communications and stakeholder engagement metrics, gather feedback, and provide regular progress reports to the Management Council. Use these insights to refine outreach strategies, improve communications effectiveness, and ensure alignment with USSA's strategic objectives.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

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**
Monthly	Campaign Management (includes communications strategy, planning, partner management, and regular meetings)
Monthly	Reporting (includes digital traffic analytics, PR review, and monthly reports)
Monthly	Website Updates (adding news, case studies, member factsheets, and reports)
Monthly	Social media (organic promotion of news/reports with calendar provision)
Monthly	Social Content Video Editing (creation of video content featuring USSA spokespeople on sustainability)
Monthly	Cooperator & 3rd Party Reports (interviewing, writing, sourcing, and packaging)
Monthly	Newsletter (template creation and monthly writing)
Monthly	Social media tracking and reporting
Monthly	Ad hoc design requirements, such as member factsheets and pamphlets

Monthly	Coordinate Management Council strategy, messaging integration, contractor liaison, reporting, and monthly and ad hoc meetings.
Monthly	Manage day-to-day USSA operations, including responding to inquiries, maintaining contacts, onboarding new members, and liaising with the Management Council and cooperators.
Monthly	Organize 10 monthly USSA cooperator calls, including researching and coordinating speakers, aligning discussions with policy priorities, managing agendas and meetings, providing monthly support, and preparing post-meeting reports.
Monthly	Coordinate the development and publication of one media article per quarter, including identifying relevant topics, drafting content, obtaining approvals, sourcing photography, and arranging publication placement.
Monthly	Coordinate trade show activities by identifying priority events with the Management Council, collaborating with local FAS offices, coordinating with the communications contractor, and providing event attendance and/or social media support for USSA representatives.
Monthly	Provide media and public relations support by coordinating with the primary trade servicing contractor, identifying relevant events, liaising with cooperators, and sharing information.
Ongoing throughout 2027	Media Relations (press office management, media liaison, press release issuance)
TBD	Media Trip Execution and attendance (inbound U.S. visits for European trade media with activities including planning, partner coordination, and media liaison)
Various (Event-specific)	Network Events (liaison with FAS for presence at key events)
Various (Event-specific)	Event Support (on-site event support, preparation, and allocation across other events)
Quarterly	White Papers (creation of technical papers on sustainable agriculture topics)
Quarterly	Tailored Newsletters (creation of specialized newsletters for specific audiences)
Ongoing	High-Value Media Engagement (coordination of bespoke U.S. trips for high-profile media)
Ongoing	Sustainability Reporting (research, interviews, design, approval, and distribution)

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 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. 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 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 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	$ -
	$ -