

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
SUBMISSION DEADLINE
12:00 PM CST, August 2, 2021

RFP TITLE: EVALUATION AND DATA VISUALIZATION OF SEC. 108 SHORT TERM ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH ASIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA.

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: 12:00 PM CST, August 2, 2021

INTRODUCTION:

U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. requests proposals to evaluate marketing activities conducted in order to build short term demand for soybeans and soybean meal in Southeast Asia and the Asia Sub-Continent.

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, advocates for the use of soy in livestock and aquaculture feed and human consumption, promotes the benefits of soy use through education and connects industry leaders through a robust membership program.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC seeks proposals to evaluate two specific marketing activities conducted in Southeast Asian and South Asian markets (excluding China) in 2019-2021. The program funding these activities is scheduled to end December 31, 2021, although one activity was completed in 2020, and the other has been completed in stages.

The first activity is a series of one-on-one meetings between USSEC and select customers in 10 countries in the region. This activity resulted 73 customer meetings. The activity manager deployed a survey to collect information from the customers about awareness and preference for the extrinsic (nutritional) and intrinsic (supply chain, sustainability) characteristics of soy meal derived from U.S. origin soybeans.

USSEC seeks an evaluator to conduct a follow up evaluation among the original survey participants and among USSEC key customers in the region. The survey must be completed, and all reports submitted no later than November 30, 2021.

The second activity involves paid digital marketing advertisements in support of a broad social & digital media campaign titled Dare to Compare. The campaign focused on the three pillars of the US Soy Advantage: (1) U.S. Soy protein for animal nutrition, (2) U.S. Soy sustainability, and (3) U.S. soybean oil. Dare to Compare concluded in Spring 2021. Additional advertising will be implemented in Fall 2021 as part of a follow-on campaign.

USSEC seeks an evaluator to measure the medium to long term impact of the digital advertising. USSEC is already well provided with standard digital media metrics of impressions, click-throughs and conversions. USSEC seeks an evaluation of the medium to long term impact on awareness and preference for U.S. soy protein and soy oil.

The final product must include a dashboard visualization of evaluation data & metrics.

USSEC's standard practice is to RFP every 3 years in an openly and competitive manner. This type of cost analysis will assist in determining the fair market value for the work to be performed and allows USSEC the opportunity to evaluate various proposals and select the best contractor for the job based on experience, availability, expertise, approach, and cost.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

These activities are funded under the project Growing Demand for U.S. Soy: Short-term Chinese Tariff Mitigation Strategy, Section 108 – Agreement #108-2019-01. The project end date is November 30, 2021.

The one-on-one meetings activity provided the venue for USSEC to talk directly to buyers and prospective buyers of U.S. soy. These meetings were designed to be able to demonstrate the U.S. soy advantage. Increasing the sales of U.S. soy in the regions is a matter of increasing preference relative to real price differences between origins. USSEC assumes that as preference for U.S. soy increases, the amount of U.S. origin soy meal that a buyer purchases will increase. Because the market is dynamic, the work done in the 1-1 meetings may take time to realize. USSEC maintains a presence and conducts other marketing activities in the region, aimed at increasing demand for U.S. soy.

The initial survey conducted as part of the activity demonstrates that customers in the region generally recognize the intrinsic advantages of U.S. soy compared to other origin soy meals. Customers experience different opportunities to capture the value of the advantage depending on country market and market segment. Stand-alone feed mills, for example, are in the habit of guaranteeing (only) crude protein on documentation. The feed mills tend to favor the cheaper priced soy meal. Integrated feed mills, on the other hand, are more likely to recognize U.S.

quality advantages, because these operations can observe the impact of higher nutritional value and availability on their feeding profitability.

The value for extrinsic advantages depends on individual customer needs in particular markets. Fulfilling extrinsic needs, such as shipper reliability, technical support, market information, and sustainable documentation, requires focused cooperation between customers and shippers, and also the logistics service providers involved in the transactions.

In sum, quality represents the foundational component for which customers will pay for U.S. origin soy versus other origins. But the market price spread is generally great enough to overcome preference based on quality factors alone. When extrinsic advantages, specific to each country market and market segment, are also recognized and sufficiently valued, then U.S. origin soybean meal becomes attractive enough for increase trade.

The digital marketing campaign Dare to Compare was spread over a four-month period to amplify the U.S. Soy Advantage messaging, enhance global soy utilization, and create a long-term commitment and preference for U.S. Soy. The campaign sought to focus customers on the quantitative information about U.S. soy intrinsic and extrinsic qualities in order to demonstrate and differentiate U.S. soy from other origins. The campaign was part of a strategy to diversify into emerging markets (to mitigate China Tariff Situation) that offer untapped potential.

The digital campaign is expected to have the following impacts: (1) elongate the U.S. Soy marketing year to demonstrate value despite higher prices, (2) create long-term commitment for U.S. soy based on the U.S. soy sustainability verification scheme, and (3) create a long-term preference for U.S. Soy in newly emerging markets.

USSEC partnered with a digital communications agency to develop content marketing strategies and deployment of campaign tactics including paid digital advertising. The agency provides standard digital media metrics of the reach of the advertisements.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The target audience for these activities are customers and potential customers for U.S. soy in specific markets and general markets in the South Asia region and the Southeast Asia region.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- (1) Evaluate original one-on-one activity participants and USSEC key customers, to be identified by USSEC, for current awareness and preference of U.S. soy, and for indications of behaviors that resulted in increased purchases and utilization of U.S. soy.
 - a. Review original survey report findings and provide updated conclusions.
 - b. Provide a report including data visualizations of key information.
 - c. Provide raw data including customer contact logs or contact lists.

- d. The survey must be complete, and all reports submitted no later than November 30, 2021.
- (2) Evaluate the medium to long term impacts of USSEC paid digital advertising in the regions.
- a. Review content and digital ad placements.
 - b. Review digital media metrics.
 - c. Provide a detailed description of method and metrics to be employed and expected methodological outputs.
 - d. Provide an impact evaluation to include customer awareness and preference for U.S. soy.
 - e. Provide raw data in the form of a database or spreadsheet.
 - f. Provide a visualization of data in the form of a dashboard, including a guide or process for updating and maintaining the dashboard.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (if applicable)

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
11/30/21	Report on one-one-one participant and USSEC key customer outcomes and conclusions, including raw data.
11/30/21	Analysis of medium to long term impact of USSEC paid digital advertising.
11/30/21	Dashboard visualization of key metrics and data, in the form of a database and visualization tool that can be updated.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

Our expectation is for the project to be completed by November 30, 2021. We are asking that the Project Proposal include details about what the proposed timeline and scope would look like.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution: July 12, 2021.**
- **Last Day to Submit Questions: August 2, 2021** by 5:00PM Central Time.
- **Project Proposals Due: August 2, 2021** by 5:00PM Central Time.
- **Selections Made By: August 9, 2021.**
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By: August 12, 2021.**

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG by **5:00PM Central Time** on August 2, 2021.
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 must provide a breakout of how the fee was derived including but not limited to a breakdown of hourly rate and the amount of effort they anticipate to do the work.
6. Proposals should be no longer than **10 pages** (8 ½" x 11").

NOTES:

- Prospective Contractors are hereby notified that proposals will be duplicated for internal review only. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality of all information presented. The appropriate representatives from staff and legal counsel will review proposals. Proposals will not be returned.
- USSEC reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the submitter of the conditions contained in the request for proposal, unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the contract between USSEC and the contractor selected.

- Confidentiality - Without USSEC's prior written consent, Prospective Contractors and its officers, employees, agents, representatives, affiliates, and subcontractors shall not disclose to any third party any documents, materials or information that the Prospective Contractors learns from or is provided in relation to the RFP request.
- During the evaluation process, USSEC reserves the right to request additional information or clarifications from proposers, or to allow corrections of errors and omissions.
- USSEC reserves the right to reject any proposal that is in any way inconsistent or irregular. USSEC also reserves the right to waive proposal defects or deficiencies, to request additional information, and/or to negotiate with the Prospective Contractor regarding the proposal.
- Prospective Contractor agrees that Fees are in lieu of any and all other benefits, including, but not limited to, repayment of any and all taxes related to contractor service fees, health and life insurance, administrative costs and vacation.
- Prospective Contractor agrees that any income taxes, value added taxes or any other form of direct or indirect taxes on compensation paid under the contract shall be paid by Contractor and not by USSEC or Funding Sources.
 - Prior to any payment to a Contractor, a contractor must provide a W-9, W-8, or W-8BEN upon agreement signature
- Non-Competition. Contractor shall not act as agent or representative for any product or service directly or indirectly competitive with U.S. soybeans or soybean products for the length of the contract.
- USSEC and Prospective Contractor agrees to comply with the provisions of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). USSEC provides EEO to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty, or status as a covered veteran in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND BACKGROUND

BUILDING A PREFERENCE FOR U.S. SOY

USSEC's strategy can be found here: <http://ussec.org/about-ussec/vision-mission/>

USB's Long Range Strategic Plan can be found here: <http://unitedsoybean.org/about-usb/strategic-planning/>

We are a dynamic partnership of key stakeholders representing soybean producers, commodity shippers, merchandisers, allied agribusiness and agricultural organizations.

Through a global network of international offices and strong support in the U.S., we help build a preference for U.S. soybeans and soybean products, advocate for the use of soy in feed, aquaculture and human consumption, promote the benefits of soy use through education and connect industry leaders through a robust membership program.

Our 15-member board of directors is comprised of four members from the American Soybean Association (ASA), four members from the United Soybean Board (USB), and seven members representing trade, allied industry, and state organizations.

New board members are seated annually. We are receiving funding from a variety of sources including soy producer checkoff dollars invested by the USB and various state soybean councils; cooperating industry; and the American Soybean Association's investment of cost-share funding provided by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foreign Agriculture Service.

The United Soybean Board, created by the 1990 Farm Bill to manage and direct the National Soybean Checkoff, is dedicated to marketing and research for the soybean industry. USB is comprised of 73 volunteer soybean farmers representing the interests of fellow growers nationwide. Each board member is nominated by Qualified State Soybean Boards (QSSBs) and appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

Because of the limitations on administrative and salary costs established in the Act, USB outsources the majority of its program management responsibilities to USB's three primary contractors:

- SmithBucklin-St. Louis for domestic marketing, new uses, production research and Board initiative activities;
- Osborn & Barr Communications for communications/public relations activities and;
- U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. for international marketing and global opportunities activities.

As one of these three primary contractors USSEC may also undertake initiative activities on behalf of USB. USB considers primary contractor staff (approximately 60 people) as core USB staff. These three primary contractors use a number of subcontractors and, together, these entities carry out approximately 450 projects each year for USB. USB also manages approximately 10 subcontractors.

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, 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.