

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

October 15th, 2021 5:00pm Central time

RFP TITLE: COLLABORATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS AND NTF (NON-TRADITIONAL FUNNDING) OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. SOY EXCELENCE CENTERS

RFP CONTACT:

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INTRODUCTION:

Through a global network of international offices and strong support in the U.S., the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) builds 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.

USSEC established Soy Excellence Centers (SECs) to aid emerging markets in addressing their protein challenges. SECs provide work force training and capacity building in food and agriculture enterprises in these emerging markets. SECs position enterprises in the target emerging markets to be able to more rapidly meet increased demand for protein.

The first Soy Excellence Center was launched in 2019 in Egypt to serve the Middle East/North Africa. Since then, centers have been launched in Nigeria to serve Sub Saharan Africa, Honduras to serve the Americas and two locations that serve South Asia and SE Asia. (For more details on SEC, please see section on “Supplemental information and background” found at the end of this document).

PURPOSE OF RFP:

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.

The purpose of this RFP is to seek proposals to support USSEC in identifying and evaluating strategic approaches to gain partners and co-investors in SECs within the development agencies and foundation organizations communities.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

Background

USSEC created the **Soy Excellence Center** concept to fill a development need in emerging markets. Typically, as GDP improves, local dietary preferences trend toward increases in total protein consumption often led by increases in animal protein consumption. However, many emerging markets lack the broad based technical capacity at the most basic levels to improve their production systems to meet the growing demand. Providing technical training and capacity building through knowledge and educational platforms will accelerate stable growth of the animal agriculture and human nutrition sectors and to meet demand for increased protein consumption.

SECs provide capacity building and technical training to enterprises in the protein value chain value chain in emerging markets. This capacity building will facilitate commercial connections that drive market expansion in these emerging markets. The SECs contribute to developing well-trained advocates in the market place whose efforts will allow the protein industries in the target markets to meet future accelerated protein demand growth.

SECs were initiated with the U.S. Soy industry's allocation of Agriculture Trade Program (ATP) funding from the USDA and investments from state soybean boards. USSEC invested the majority of its ATP funds to diversify long term demand for U.S. Soy into newly emerging markets. ATP funds will expire in 2024.

Purpose

USSEC is developing its strategic approach to identify partners and funders to insure the long term sustainability of SECs. One potential source for partners and funders is in the development agency and foundation organizations communities.

The learning curve for developing a successful strategy of engagement with development agencies and foundation organizations would consume a lot of resources. USSEC wishes to collapse this learning curve and develop a strategy that it can implement to identify the right partners and successfully secure their collaboration in long term support for the mission of the SECs.

The purpose of this proposal is NOT to develop proposals for specific prospective partners. The purpose is to conduct an assessment of the SECs, and identify which types of partners USSEC

should pursue. Within those types of partners identify higher opportunity partners. And, develop a strategy of how USSEC can interact and engage with those partners to secure long term support.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The target audience for this mission would be USSEC's SEC Management. Inputs from the findings will enable the SEC management to implement a long term approach to seeking SEC partners within the development agency and foundation communities.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

The scope of the RFP would be to:

1. Conduct and overall assessment of the SEC vision, mission, programing and objectives to determine where SECs "fit" within the development agency and foundation communities.
2. Provide insight on how SECs programing do or do not fit traditional models of capacity building and work force development in the food and agriculture sector within the development agency and foundation communities.
3. Determine where in the development agency and foundation communities SECs model for capacity building and work force development in the food and agriculture sector would "fit".
4. Identify and prepare an exhaustive list of development agencies and foundations that would share similar mandates in terms of capacity building and work force training, to meet protein and nutrition needs. This list should reflect research that includes multinational, regional and country specific partnership opportunities.
5. Shortlist organizations whose interests are likely to fit USSEC's SEC operations and objectives and are good candidates to be USSEC partners. Provide details as to why these organizations have been identified for a short list.
6. Provide a road map as to how USSEC should position itself to interact and engage with priority targets for collaboration. This road map should include objectives, milestones and timelines, as well as specific actions that need to be implemented to meet these objectives.
7. Provide weekly updates via virtual meeting and in PPT slides on the status of the research and deliverables.
8. Present minimum of three presentations of the research outcomes to the SEC management team, USSEC senior management team, the USSEC board of directors SEC Steering Committee and Global SEC management team.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (if applicable)

Additional Considerations to include any specific information regarding the proposal that could affect the Prospective Contractors ability to submit a proposal.

Upon general initial reading – we have found that most organizations deal with some specific subjects related to human development activities that might be common and/or remote linkages between those organizations and the SEC objectives. Citing a few examples are – food security, protein needs, training, extension, capacity building, productivity enhancement, nutritional security, upliftment of communities, animal production, aquaculture production, education for producers, advisory, innovative technologies etc.

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
October , 2021	Attend first meeting after signing the contract – obtain inputs from Global SEC team; move on to work on methodology development and discuss clarity on scope of work.
October 15-November 12	Conduct weekly meetings with the SEC management team and submit weekly update on research and report progress
November 15, 2021	Present mid-term report and progress to SEC management team & USSEC Sr. Management team.
December 1, 2022	Present pre-final report to SEC Steering Committee and Global SEC team for review and feedback
January 5, 2022	Final report, with feedback incorporated, submitted to Global SEC team

PROJECT TIMELINE:

Our expectation is for the project to commence on the October 1 2021 and run through January, 2022. It may be noted from the section above (Deliverables) that there will be timelines required to report intermittent progress.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** September 9, 2021
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** October 12, 2021 by 5:00PM Central Time

- **Project Proposals Due:** October 15, 2021 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Selections Made By:** October 21, 2021
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** October 22, 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 October 15, 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

Soy Excellence Centers Key to Market Expansion Efforts

USSEC (U.S. Soybean Export Council), with support of USDA-FAS, launched the first global Soy Excellence Center in September 2019 in Cairo, Egypt. The Soy Excellence Center (SEC) is designed to aid emerging markets in addressing their protein challenges and create a cascade of demand for soy products by providing sustainable, renewable learning models. These will consider local conditions and provide best-practices for soy-related sectors.

Soy Excellence Centers will continue to provide soy value chain expertise in emerging markets and facilitate connections that drive market expansion in key regions. These regions have been identified as having great potential to create future demand for U.S. soy in high-impact markets. To date multi-level educational tracks have been prioritized to include poultry management, aquaculture management, feed milling efficiency, and crush efficiency.

SEC Model Depends on Seamless Guidance & Oversight at Local & Global Levels

Throughout SEC regions, USSEC is committed to instituting a global framework to ensure there is a consistent governance and delivery of programs. In addition to the global governance model, overseen by a Global SEC Steering Committee, each local SEC has established local advisory councils to ensure SEC training is established to meet the needs of the local industry in supporting the soy value chain.

Each regional SEC is led by a 'Center Lead' who has administrative responsibilities to guide and direct the execution. Beyond the Center Lead, each SEC has partnered with world-class educational/ international institutions like Cairo University, World Fish, Kansas State University, and Tetra Pak. We will have many more to add to this list as we collaborate with newer institutions.

Advisory Council members' core competencies vary widely but each bring industry and/or government support. Examples include Egyptian Poultry Association, WorldFish, Egyptian General Authority for Fish Resources Developments (GAFRD), Poultry Association of Nigeria (PAN); Nigerian Institute of Animal Science (NIAS); Catfish and Allied Fish Association of Nigeria (CAFFAN); and the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD).

Soy Excellence Centers Help Move the Needle for Trade

Typically, as GDP improves, local dietary preferences trend toward animal protein. However, soy value chain participants in many of those countries lack knowledge, supporting infrastructure and incentives to improve their basic production systems to meet the growing demand. Providing production support will accelerate growth of the animal protein sector and grow demand for feeds containing U.S. soybean meal.

Based on projections on population, GDP, and soybean use equivalents (SBE) consumption per capita, USSEC has classified a set of promising countries with significant U.S. soy opportunities as Emerging Markets. Detailed market studies for Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Columbia, Mexico, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Nigeria market have been conducted to dissect opportunities and constraints.

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.