

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

### **SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

**October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021, by 5:00PM Central Time**

**RFP TITLE: IPRS GOLD STANDARD AMERICAS**

#### **RFP CONTACT:**

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#### **INTRODUCTION:**

The United States Soybean Export Council (USSEC) requests proposals to assist in the continued development, implementation and execution of strategies and programs within the Americas Region. For contractors, the expectations are to carry out the deliverables of the activities they are managing and are summarized in associated contracting documentation. Therefore, specific outputs and deliverables for personnel will be included as engagements with key contractors are formalized. Administrative performance will be based on delivering on the terms of those contracts. Contractors are required to provide monthly reports on progress if they are a long-term contractor, or post event reports if they are retained for a specific event. Information from the reports are used to keep stakeholders informed of the progress of their investment.

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

#### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT**

This proposal will finance contractors to implement the IPRS (In Pond Raceways System) technology of fish production under the highest standards and operating principles that allow to achieve the maximum possible production and in turn meet the objective of increasing audience awareness. objective on the advantages of the system and in turn demonstrate the superior quality of the US soybeans, used in the feeds used under this production system. Also, increase understanding of the value of US soybeans and increase sales growth potential.

The contractor will serve as a specialist in the aquaculture sector and will provide the complete installation and management of the system providing research opportunity to USSEC to promote

the use and differentiation of US soy products. Support Aquaculture Utilization and other areas deemed convenient in the Americas region.

**PURPOSE OF RFP:**

USSEC's standard practice is to RFP for every contract as much as needed 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.

USSEC is looking for a contractor who has significant capacity and / or experience in the aquaculture industry. Experience with soybeans from the US or other produce organizations is a bonus.

The purpose of this RFP is to seek proposals for the construction and assembly of a cost-effective minimum unit of the IPRS system (three rapid circulation channels in concrete and within an onshore pond) under the recommendations of USSEC and its experts, it should be based on the period from October 25, 2021, to August 30, 2022.

**BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:**

The Americas Region represents almost 25% of U.S. Soy exports. After China, it is the most important market for U.S. Soy, followed by South East Asia representing 14% of U.S. Soy exports. Unlike other regions, the Americas Region holds the largest market share of U.S. Soy vs competing origins. Due to this large market share, investments in the Americas region have an almost direct impact to U.S. Soy demand. Given the outlook of very tight balance sheets at all origins, the threat of South American imports will be very high in years to come. Promoting the U.S. Soy Advantage in Aquaculture Utilization is a critical part of our quality differentiation strategy. Animal, Aquaculture producers and Feed manufacturers have an estimated growth rate between 3 and 5% per year. This project aims to help the companies enhance their organic growth rates and to differentiate U.S. Soy to gain market share in selected countries.

Latin America has a great potential to growth the fish production and Soy demand through the IPRS Technology which is much more profitable than traditional pond fish culture.

The contractor will provide all his knowledge and tools for the construction and operation of the assembled system (3 rapid circulation channels) to promote fish production, the training of interested producers, students and other guests that USSEC considers potential users of the technology, as well as the use and differentiation of US soy products in aquaculture diets, specialized management of the system, and research and development opportunities to

improve / update the system and thereby support regional teams to create awareness and preference branded.

**TARGET AUDIENCE:**

Universities, industrial associations, government agencies, fish producers, traders and entities related to the aquaculture industry.

**SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:**

Due to the great interest that the IPRS production system has generated, USSEC will invest funds from the American soybean industry in the assembly and start-up of a production model in association with a qualified cooperator in the aquaculture area. This model must comply with all technical design and operational standards to achieve the success of increasing production, sustainability and profitability that allows training and training all those interested in investing in this type of system.

The contractor shall follow the USSEC recommendations generated by Auburn University and its technical specialists. The system to be built and operated should at least generate, in principle, during the first year of operation, a complete harvest of fish at commercial size, prior coordination and programming with specialists from USSEC and Auburn University. The production model must consist of a minimum of three rapid circulation channels or raceways (RW) built within an onshore pond that complies with the model and ratio of 1 RW of 220 effective m<sup>3</sup> / 10,000 m<sup>3</sup> of pond water volume. In the same way, 1 aerator of 2hp should be installed for each RW and another outside in the pond with the same capacity. Finally, the area for depositing the fish feces at the end of the RW must comply with the technical specifications that allow its extraction mechanically by pumping, depositing them in an external settling tank to extract the nutrients and then allow the immediate return of the water to the pond. .

For the management of fish, the standardization of protocols, principles and practices recommended by specialists must be achieved. Any modification must be consulted and approved before being made or shared with those in charge of the management.

As a fundamental objective, USSEC not only wishes to promote the use of a technology created at the University of Auburn, it also undertakes to follow up on the modifications mostly tested in the field, adapting and accepting some of the best modifications made by the producers and endorsed by the technology specialists.

This RFP will also generate the opportunity for research and development, which will allow the testing of possible structural modifications of the system, if required, others to be tested, perhaps unknown that support / can improve IPRS technology or also the use of new crop species.

**DELIVERABLES:**

<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Description of Deliverables</b>
By <u>end of first month</u> within contract term dates	1. Provide <b>Americas Budget &amp; Accounting Analyst</b> with CC to <b>Aquaculture Program Manager &amp; Project Manager</b> with the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Executive English Narrative Report (In USSEC Template) with services rendered during the month, that should include:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Report progress toward the situation described in each activity summary</li><li>b. Action photos (if any)</li></ol></li><li>ii. First invoice for the 30% of the total value of the contract</li></ol>
By <u>end of fourth month</u> within contract term dates	2. Provide <b>Americas Budget &amp; Accounting Analyst</b> with CC to <b>Aquaculture Program Manager &amp; Project Manager</b> with the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>iii. Executive English Narrative Report (In USSEC Template) with services rendered during this period, that should include:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Report progress toward the situation described in each activity summary</li><li>b. Action photos (if any)</li></ol></li><li>iv. Second invoice for the 25% of the total value of the contract</li></ol>
By <u>end of nine month</u> within contract term dates	3. Provide <b>Americas Budget &amp; Accounting Analyst</b> with CC to <b>Aquaculture Program Manager &amp; Project Manager</b> with the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>v. Executive English Narrative Report (In USSEC Template) with services rendered during this period, that should include:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Report progress toward the situation described in each activity summary</li><li>b. Action photos (if any)</li></ol></li><li>vi. First invoice for the 25% of the total value of the contract</li></ol>

**RFP TIMELINE:**

- RFP Distribution: October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- Last Day to Submit Questions: October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- Project Proposals Due: October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021

- Selections Made By: October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- Prospective Contractors Notified By: October 23<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Please email the proposal to [americasRFP@ussec.org](mailto:americasRFP@ussec.org) by 5:00PM Mexico Time

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

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

1. Please email the proposal to [americasRFP@USSEC.ORG](mailto:americasRFP@USSEC.ORG) by 5:00PM Central Time on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 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, audiotope, 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](mailto: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.