

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

August 22, 2022 - 12:00 PM SGT (GMT +8)

RFP TITLE: SOUTHEAST ASIA AQUACULTURE PROJECT AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT CONSULTANT

RFP CONTACT:

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INTRODUCTION:

U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. formally requests proposals for the costs of engaging a **Southeast Asia Aquaculture Program and Technical Support Consultant (SEA AQPTS)**, to provide professional services to support the USSEC Southeast Asia Aquaculture Program (USSEC SEA AQ Program).

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 soy in feed, aquaculture, and human consumption, promote the benefits of soy use through education and connect industry leaders through a robust membership program.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC's standard practice is to RFP every three years in an openly and competitive manner. This type of cost analysis and benchmarking will assist in determining the fair market value for the services to be performed and allows USSEC the opportunity to evaluate qualified proposals and select the best Contractor(s) for the job based on technical qualifications, related industry experience, managerial abilities, strength of industry connections and contacts and suitable cost and time that matches the needs under this contract.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) has had an active aquaculture technical outreach program for over 35 years to the global aquaculture industry, currently with regional programs in the Americas, Europe/Middle East and North Africa, North Asia, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia and Oceania. (The USSEC Vietnam Aquaculture Program was specifically started in 2003.)

There is an established USSEC Southeast Asia (SEA) Aquaculture Team led by the USSEC Southeast Asian Technical Director – Aquaculture (SEA TD-AQ) based in Thailand, with an Asia Marine Specialist in Taiwan, a Program Management Team in Singapore, and national Technical Managers in Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. The USSEC SEA AQ Program also has a Program Management Team, comprising the SEA TD-AQ, a Program Support Specialist (assigned by the USSEC SEA Regional Office to the SEA AQ Program), and this AQPTS position.

The main work of USSEC is to market U.S. soy products internationally. USSEC is a non-profit organization, so the work is not a sales but a marketing position to promote the use of U.S. soy in aquafeed. Through various initiatives USSEC works to drive preference by industry to use U.S. soy and to highlight the positive differences of U.S. soy compared to soy from other origins (and other possible feed ingredients) for aquaculture. USSEC has a technical outreach program to the aquaculture industry that seeks to work along the entire aquaculture production chain to improve its overall profitability, performance and efficiency with an emphasis on use of high-quality feeds using U.S. soy.

To further our program, USSEC is seeking to fill the AQPTS position immediately. This position is anticipated to be a part-time position that will encompass approximately 10-15 average days of work per month and includes a separate expense budget for possible travel (both domestic and international) and program implementation. The position will require close attention to detail and constant interaction with the technical, administrative and accounting staff and contractors in the USSEC S.E. Asia Region. Through a selection process, the candidate awarded this contract will become a consultant to USSEC and will be trained on the basics of USSEC accounting, administration, compliance, a very important component to the overall USSEC aquaculture program approach.

Training may be a mix of physical, virtual or hybrid approaches, regional travel within the USSEC SEA and Oceania region may also be needed for training.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

Contractor will functional primarily as an assistant to support the TD-AQ in his role as part of the USSEC SEA AQ Management Team, and will work to help develop, plan and execute a program to drive preference by the regional aquaculture industry to use U.S. soy in aquaculture diets. This position was created in May 2022 and as such is still being refined in response to changing industry needs. As this is the first RFP for this position, the successful candidate will have an important role to further define the role and responsibilities of the AQPTS in conjunction and consultation with the TD-AQ and USSEC SEA AQ Management Team.

The Contractor will work individually, with the USSEC SEA AQ Management Team, with the USSEC SEA Aquaculture Team, and the various other key staff and contractors in the SEA region to help support the smooth operation of the USSEC SEA AQ Program. Additionally, the AQPTS may be required to work with USSEC HQ in St. Louis and the USSEC Global Aquaculture Team when SEA AQ programs are linked to USSEC Global AQ initiatives.

The overall intent is to help manage a program that promotes the increased use of U.S. soy products (soybean meal [SBM], soybean protein concentrate [SPC], fermented soy products, soy lecithin, soy oil, soy hulls, etc.) in aquaculture for fish and shrimp. These initiatives may be nationally, regionally or internationally organized by USSEC.

USSEC's key target audiences are (order indicates importance):

- Feedmills (these are the primary purchasers of soy products)
- Aquaculture producers (these are the primary users of feeds containing U.S. soy)
- Hatcheries
- Governments

- Standards and certification bodies/NGOs
- Processors/Exporters/Seafood Buyers
- Investors
- Researchers
- Insurance companies
- Among others.

Anticipated Key Responsibilities:

- Function as an assistant to the TD-AQ to implement the USSEC SEA AQ Program and allow the TD-AQ to focus on high-level items while the AQPTS focuses on Program management.
- Work as part of the USSEC SEA AQ Management Team, and be able to support the Program independently when the other members of the Management Team are unavailable.
- Help regional USSEC SEA AQ Team members to organize meetings, seminars and workshops on key aquaculture topics to key target audiences (typically using outside aquaculture experts).
- Based on experience suggest ways to make the USSEC SEA AQ program more efficient and effective, particularly on the administrative and accounting side (i.e., creation of checklists, workbooks and other useful templates).
- Work closely with the various levels of administration and accounting in USSEC (nationally, regionally and internationally) to meet USSEC's objectives in aquaculture

Requirements:

- MUST be a Southeast Asia country national, preference will be given to applicants originally from Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, or Vietnam.
- English proficiency: USSEC works in English, the Contractor must be able to read, write, and communicate effectively in English.
- As this is mainly an administrative position, should have previous experience with managing of international projects and programs
- Experience with event planning and management
- Experience with basic accounting and managing budgets
- Having some experience in, or exposure to, aquaculture
- Experience in working with experts and people of different nationalities and cultures
- Experience in the Microsoft365 environment (Teams, SharePoint) is desired and Microsoft office (Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint) is required
- Ability to quickly absorb new information and implement new skills learned through training
- Ability to learn and strictly follow Standard Operating Procedures (USSEC's SOP manual and training will be provided)
- Experience with Dropbox is a plus
- Access to high-speed internet in a quiet work environment
- Reasonable quality personal laptop and mobile phone
- Passport and willingness to travel domestically and internationally
- Applicant must be vaccinated for Covid-19 and will be required to maintain vaccination and booster status as needed and requested, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE, i.e. masks) and Covid-19 testing may be required as part of employment

Compensation:

USSEC usually contracts all its consultants based on an agreed number of actual consulting days over an agreed period of months. The expectation for this contract role is that this will be a long-term position over a term of at most 12 months. The winning candidate will be hired as a contractor, a separate business entity providing USSEC your service and expertise, and fully expected to be able to manage his/her own time and expenses according to USSEC accounting and compliance rules. Contractors are allowed to have other clients as long as there is no conflict of interest of any kind with their role at USSEC (potential conflicts may include, but not limited to, working directly for a feedmill in Vietnam and sales of soy products from another nation).

USSEC believes that the daily professional fee rate will be very competitive for this position. Qualified candidates reaching the final stages will be appraised of the anticipated daily rate.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (if applicable)

Please note that this position will require significant personal initiative, attention to detail, and possible travel. Other responsibilities (as assigned by the USSEC SEA TD-AQ or the SEA Regional Director) may be added to Contractor's work description.

DELIVERABLES:

Monthly Reporting

- Report of the Contractor(s)'s work in sufficient detail to support time claimed.
- Report observations, evaluations, and feedback on the results and performance of technical programs and activities etc. and provide recommendations to the TD-AQ and SEA Regional Director.
- Help to prepare monthly budget tables on the latest investment estimates for projects and activities under the USSEC SEA AQ Program on or before the 18th of every month and or upon USSEC's management request.
- Plan of Work for upcoming Month/Quarter which is to be shared regularly with the Regional Director upon request.
- Progress reports on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as it relates to the "Services" and "Deliverables" indicated in the Master Contract and Addendums therein.

Other responsibilities

- Helping to organize and maintain files for easy search and access.
- Ensure that the USSEC's Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP) is promoted through technical servicing and technical programs and events.
- Assist in the successful implementation of all funded Projects and Activities under the current marketing year, staying within budget and meeting corporate guidelines and regulations.
- Ensure that USSEC SEA AQ Team members are requesting and using local, regional and global USSEC customer surveys and evaluations.
- The Contractor will participate in meetings and develop reports as and when requested by Southeast Asia's Regional Director and USSEC management.

- Capture key details of what improvements could be made to the USSEC SEA AQ program and other actionable information.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

For this contract, our expectation is for the ‘**Southeast Asia Aquaculture Program and Technical Support Consultant**’ contract to start from October 1, 2022 and end on September 30, 2023. After which, subject to regular contract reviews and an annual performance evaluation, this contract may be renewable on a 12-monthly basis according to the term of each marketing season or tenure of the funding source.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** August 11, 2022
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** August 18, 2022 by 5:00PM SGT (GMT +8)
- **Project Proposals Due:** August 22, 2022 by 12:00 PM SGT (GMT +8)
- **Selections Made By:** August 25, 2022
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** August 26, 2022

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG by **12:00PM SGT (GMT +8)** on **August 22, 2022**.

- A description of Prospective Contractor’s capabilities, resources and experience. Emphasis should be placed on experience related to this RFP.
- A thorough proposal outlining Prospective Contractors planned work, deliverables and timeline to complete the work.
- Resumes for each of the Prospective Contractor’s personnel assigned to work directly on the implementation of the contract.
- Provide a minimum of two names and contact information for other similarly sized clients for reference purposes.
- Detailed Budget
 - All bids for services must provide a breakout of how a daily fee was derived including but not limited to a breakdown of hourly rate and the amount of effort they anticipate to do the work. USSEC works on an expectation of non-travel days being an aggregate of eight hours work equaling one working day, and working travel days accounted as the actual number of days traveled while working.

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.

END OF DOCUMENT