

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
SUBMISSION DEADLINE  
5:00 PM CST, 12/05/2022**

**RFP TITLE: U.S. SOY EXCELLENCE CENTER - NIGERIA**

**RFP CONTACT:**

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**PROPOSAL DEADLINE:** December 5, 2022 by 05:00 PM CST

**1. INTRODUCTION:**

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) is a non-profit organization that promotes sustainable, production approaches through knowledge transfer, on-site trainings, seminars, workshops, conferences, industry tours and demonstrations. The specific goal of the USSEC Nigeria Program is to promote the use of U.S. SOY products in feeds and the best feeding practices.

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. To this end, USSEC has received support from USDA's Agricultural Trade Promotion Program (ATP) whose mandate is to help U.S. agricultural exporters develop new markets.

**2. BACKGROUND OF PROJECT:**

USSEC has identified Nigeria as a new and growing market, as part of a long-term strategy to build a strong pipeline of demand for U.S. soy and soy-related products. Nigeria is an emerging market that represents a substantial growth opportunity for U.S. soy given its large population and very low per capita consumption of soy and soy-related products. There are significant opportunities to drive growth in protein consumption, improvements in the overall efficiency and functionality of the food chain and increases in the utilization of soy within the supply chain. The best growth prospects for the region lie in the long-term, where growth opportunities abound in poultry, aquaculture and for food use. Encouraging the growth in the consumption of soybean and soybean-related products in Nigeria could turn the country into one of U.S. soy's top three growth markets by 2030.

## *Nigeria*

The Soy Excellence Center will build awareness of benefits of soy use through education end users by establishing, teaching, and disseminating best practices. The Center will also facilitate business linkages between local and international businesses and value chain actors. Below we outline the market growth opportunities in each region and country.

### *What is a U.S. SOY Excellence Center?*

The U.S. Soybean Export Council established Soy Excellence Centers (SEC) in Nigeria in 2020 as part of the strategic shifts in international market development initiatives designed to target emerging markets offering significant medium to long-term opportunities. The U.S. SOY Excellence Center is a proprietary global education and training platform established with a vision to provide workforce training and capacity-building program to diversify demand for U.S. soy exports through real-world application of cutting-edge knowledge. The center offers curriculum-based training programs to professionals that cut across the soybean value chain with the aim of increasing protein production and soybean consumption, both in humans and animals, through the training of relevant stakeholders.

SEC demonstrates best production practices creating a resource for ongoing USSEC promotional efforts, education, and relationship building. These facilities are designed and tailored to fit the market dynamics specific to the region consolidating the Center as:

1. Information repository: web and physical repository of case studies, best practices.
2. Soybean discussion forum: a platform to increase knowledge about soybeans and best practices (also a web forum).
3. Training center: Online and physical training center where case studies and demonstrations take place.
4. Research center: training method to outline, implement, follow-up and adapt best practices.

SEC Nigeria will develop, communicate, and demonstrate soy-based best management practices with an emphasis on providing opportunities for stakeholders to directly experience these practices in a real-world setting that is relevant to the local market and at a commercial scale. As part of measuring effectiveness, the SEC Nigeria will follow SEC Global structures for measurement and evaluation of “overall educational effectiveness” and “participant professional progress” using the system proposed by USSEC.

### *Soy Excellence Center Digital Platform*

To further the establishment of Soy Excellence Centers as a world-class programming for agribusiness professionals in emerging markets, USSEC launched in 2022 the SEC Digital Platform— a global, online learning and professional development platform for SEC. The platform provides a uniform experience for all Global Soy Excellence Centers. A requirement of the Center lead is to actively manage and execute regional program administration under the

SEC Digital Platform. This would include session registration, participant attendance and scoring, and all data input necessary to support Global SEC reporting.

Within the digital platform, USSEC has established a SEC Community concept that extends training beyond the classroom to provide learners with a global, online professional development platform. The Community provides participants the opportunity to connect with industry peers from across the globe, as well as access to on-demand supplemental training content and seminars, continuing education opportunities and direct access to industry experts sourced from the U.S. Soy international network. A requirement of the Center lead is to actively support Nigerian community participation by working with Global teams to deliver supplemental experiences, rich with relevant local content, that incentivizes regular activity by Nigerian members within the community.

#### *Hybrid Training Model*

The USSEC SEC training model will increasingly adopt a Hybrid training model to expand the reach of the program & incentivize training. The SEC Hybrid training model will be based on a virtual learning management system that allows self-paced and on-demand training for Basic level training. Instruction under the SEC Hybrid model includes trainer-monitored discussion boards and mandatory weekly virtual “progress check-ins” with a live trainer. As participants successfully complete the Basic level training, they would be eligible for in-person Intermediate training.

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.

### **3. TARGET AUDIENCE:**

The U.S. SOY Excellence Center Nigeria will target influential farmers, end-users, animal protein integrators, feed millers, agribusinesses, animal nutritionists and local academic resources in Nigeria.

### **4. SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:**

#### *Goal*

To build awareness of benefits of soy use through education of end users by establishing, teaching, and disseminating best practices. Ultimately, SECs help Nigeria address pressing food security, nutrition, and sustainability challenges by providing professional development and capacity building programming.

#### *Objectives*

Soybean Excellence Center (SECs) will demonstrate commercial scale production that is relevant to the local environment that can be used to showcase real-world application of cutting-edge animal ag feeding practices, and the specific benefits of increased inclusion of soybean meal derived from U.S. origin. The center will demonstrate best in class production practices in a real-world environment at a commercial scale creating a resource for ongoing promotional efforts, education, and relationship building / PR. These facilities will be designed and tailored to fit the market dynamics specific to the region.

## **5. PURPOSE OF RFP:**

The purpose of this RFP is to seek business plan proposals from qualified organizations to be selected as the Center Lead to administer approved U.S. SOY Excellence Center (SEC) programs in Nigeria.

USSEC requests proposals to assist in the continued development, implementation and execution of strategies and programs within Nigeria. The expectations are to carry out the deliverables of the activities they are managing and are summarized in associated contracting documentation.

At present, SEC Nigeria has the following training tracks and courses at Basic and Intermediate levels:

- Poultry Management
- Aquaculture Management
- Feed Mill Management
- Agronomy

With the exception of Agronomy, all tracks are expected to follow the Hybrid Training Model outlined above.

The Center Lead will work with USSEC to identify and list needs (partnerships, locations, tracks, and facilities) to create a compliant SEC projecting its future auto sufficiency. If any sub-partner is required, the bidder should list it in the proposal. These partners may be a private enterprise, a production center or a public university considering any cultural concerns or biases. The location of the Center will be selected based on ease of access ensuring that it is representative of 'typical' conditions in the region.

Specific selection criteria of the proposal will be established and utilized in this process including, but not limited to:

- Scale of operation, relevance to region, location, safety, reputation, facilities, and communications & logistics capabilities.
- Progressive orientation, interest, and receptivity towards approach.

The Center Lead will propose a collaboration agreement with each partner, depending on the structure presented for the RFP, to ensure the following core functions are included in the Center framework:

- Provide technical assistance to support the implementation of SEC approved tracks related to animal production and specifically feeding with an increase inclusion of U.S. SOY products.
- Resources to support the establishment of appropriate facility improvements or additions to host tour and implement SEC approved tracks.
- Ongoing access to a physical facility to host educational and trade facilitation groups, access to data and experience results relative to adoption of best practices to be shared.
- Communications and outreach capabilities to attract regional and international stakeholders and media coverage to the Center through showcased events hosted at the facility.

The U.S. SOY Excellence Center must embody the following functions in any configuration that is easy to control, compliant and result oriented. The center lead or a sub-partner should embody one or more functions depending on their demonstrated capabilities. All should be drafted in the proposal. The required partners are:

1. Center Lead: Purpose of this proposal, always the administrative partner and direct liaison with USSEC authorized staff in the region. In a best-case scenario, the implementing partner will embody all functions. The Center Lead is charge of executing curriculums from global USSEC's established Soy Excellence Centers (Ex.: Global SEC Poultry Track) and providing education advise.
2. Facilities center: Have a real-world environment at a commercial scale for ongoing education, promotional efforts and relationship building. The Center will have access to tangible, real-world demonstration facilities to create awareness about the benefits of U.S. SOY.
3. Communications partner: dedicated to promoting, write content, attract regional & international stakeholders, and pull media coverage to the Center through showcased events hosted at the facility.

Execute SEC tracks, provide advice to USSEC on training needs appropriate for Nigeria;

The Center Lead will engage with partner organizations with strong technical expertise in oilseeds procurement, animal nutrition and feed production practices for the relevant species (poultry & aquaculture). The Center Lead must define a plan on how to teach best practices, according to SEC approved tracks utilizing the Hybrid Training model, recommend necessary improvements for the facility operations, and customize an improvement plan to follow-up participant companies. These improvements will be based on a comparison of current management practices with those that can be reasonably implemented to improve production efficiencies and profitability.

Then the Center Lead will elaborate an education plan to execute SEC approved tracks, including inputs from local production experts or qualified advisors as well as experts from the U.S. and USSEC. This will include data gathering on current/existing practices as well as typical outcomes related to operational performance to serve as a baseline that enables tracking of progress/improvements. This data gathering will provide input into Local community pod supplemental education as well as measurement and evaluation baselines.

Proposals that include a relevant recognized U.S. based education institution in the SEC track execution, education baseline and follow-up plan will be better valued. The Center Lead will continue to foster and engage with the established local Advisory Council. The Center Lead will develop a communication and outreach plan to attract visitors to the center via showcase events hosted at the Center facility and provide sponsored transportation where appropriate. At least 5 case study outcomes comparing the baseline situation, recommended improvements, implementation experience and outcomes.

An ideal U.S. SOY Excellence Center will have the following attributes:

- The ability to demonstrate direct improvements and efficiencies in animal protein production following consultation with a dedicated USSEC facilitated technical service team and implementation of recommended improvements. These recommendations are expected to emphasize the nutritional benefits of feed rations with increased U.S. SOY inclusion and may provide recommendations on animal rearing best practices.
- Documented and summarized best practices for both demonstration and research purposes to show economic benefits of U.S. SOY to stakeholders.
- Testimonials from partners (if any), owner-operators and/or nutritionists, available to use in promoting the benefits of U.S. SOY.
- The process of providing the education baseline assessment, planning and training to convert a local facility into an SEC will generate data that can be analyzed and summarized for potential academic publications and reports that can be used in local and regional ag shows and conferences promoting associated benefits.
- A plan in place on how to deploy and foster program growth utilizing the Global SEC Digital Platform with the Hybrid Training model and institutionalize the training by creating an on-going Center with a rich and active Community pod participation.
- The ideal Center Lead must demonstrate the capacity to be the vital link between SEC and the participants to ensure active and robust engagement on the Global Community Platform.
- The Center Lead must demonstrate sufficient capacity to offer the prescribed SEC training courses in both the hybrid and in-person format.

**6. SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:**

The following deliverables are envisioned: Exact dates and timelines will be mutually agreed upon by contractor and USSEC upon award of the contract.

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
<b>Q1 2023</b>	Top and influential livestock and poultry producers representing 50% of the commercial production within the region invited to the SEC – 50% of those exposed have made at least 1 change to their operation as a result of the program at the SEC based on a follow-up survey
<b>Q2 2023</b>	Top feed mills representing 75% of commercial feed production within the region invited to the SEC – 50% of those exposed express an intent to

	change their feed formulations as a result of the SEC program based on a follow-up survey
<b>Q3 2023</b>	<p>Definition of the curriculum, demonstrations, best practices: invitee lists &amp; a well-structured communications plan.</p> <p>75% of surveyed participants who report an increased understanding of the value of using soy as a functional or nutritive ingredient and recognize potential for increased profitability <sup>b</sup> # information campaign activities conducted <b>in the region</b> about the advantages of consuming soy</p>
<b>Q4 2023</b>	<p>-The SEC results in positive coverage from a minimum of 10 distinct media outlets during the year with overall coverage that reaches a national audience.</p> <p>Series of SEC demonstration processes and collateral materials (case studies, training, curriculum) established by year end including materials that clearly demonstrate the benefits of adopting U.S. soy based best management practices in animal ag feeding practices within the region</p>

**RFP TIMELINE:**

- RFP distribution: **October 12, 2022**
- Last day to submit questions: **November 31, 2022 by 05:00 PM CST**
- Project proposals due: **December 5, 2022 by 05:00 PM CST**
- email to [rfp@ussec.org](mailto:rfp@ussec.org)
- Selections made by: **December 9, 2022**
- Prospective contractors notified by: **December 12, 2022**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

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

1. Please email the proposal to [rfp@ussec.org](mailto:rfp@ussec.org) by December 5, 2022 by 05:00 PM CST
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. 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 doing the work.
7. Proposals should be no longer than **10 pages** (8 ½" x 11").
8. Preference may be given to the bidder with the capacity and history of doing similar work in this region.

**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 most 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 several 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](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.