

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

5:00 PM CST, January 31,2023

RFP TITLE: BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF SUSTAINABLE U.S. SOY (SUSS) LOGO

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: JANUARY 31, 2023

INTRODUCTION:

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

Sustainability is an important differentiator for U.S. Soy. U.S. soybean farmers are leaders in environmentally sustainable production, the U.S. Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP) is recognized in key export markets, and use of SSAP certificates and the Sustainable U.S. Soy logo have been increasing.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC seeks a contractor to conduct a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the benefits that companies derive from using the Sustainable U.S. Soy (SUSS) logo on their packaging or in their marketing. The analysis will inform USSEC's marketing and communications work to promote use of the logo.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

Demand for sustainable soy is increasing in response to consumer preferences, corporate sustainability strategies, and market regulations. The U.S. Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP) is a national system, developed through a multi-stakeholder process, based on sustainability and conservation laws and regulations and farmer participation in the U.S. Farm Program. Companies that meet certain purchasing levels of SSAP-certified soybeans have the option of using the Sustainable U.S. Soy (SUSS) logo on their products in accordance with the logo usage policy. Globally, there are approximately 62 companies actively using the logo on more than 900 products.

Through this RFP, USSEC seeks a contractor to conduct an analysis of companies currently using the logo to identify the quantitative and qualitative benefits of logo usage. The quantitative analysis will focus on all licensees, and the qualitative analysis will focus on a subset of companies (10) currently using the logo. The companies are in the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. USSEC will use the information from the study to better promote use of the logo among eligible companies and to inform marketing/communication strategies around logo usage.

USSEC will identify the companies that will participate in the analysis, and the contractor will work closely with the USSEC sustainability and regional teams to engage with the companies. This is envisioned as a remote assignment (i.e. no travel required); however, the contractor will be expected to communicate with companies and USSEC team members based in multiple time zones.

TARGET AUDIENCE: The direct audience for the study is the USSEC sustainability and regional teams.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- Produce an initial report that describes the study methodology, key questions and metrics, and timeline/process for completing the study. As the contractor will work closely with USSEC team members to communicate with the companies, the detailed timeline will include proposed timeframes for engaging the individual companies to help to coordinate schedules and availability.
- Interview approximately ten companies, collect data, and conduct the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the benefits that companies derive from using the SUSS logo. Examples of metrics and topics for analysis include:
 - Improved brand recognition
 - Increased purchases
 - Improved access to financing
- Develop a narrative report, with an executive summary, that describes the methodology, presents overall findings, includes company-specific examples, and incorporates quotes from company representatives. As applicable, the report should disaggregate data by region or company characteristics (such as company size or product lines) to illustrate any differences in benefits across these categories. The report should highlight findings that would be of interest to companies that are considering using the logo.

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
Within 5 business days of contract start date	Conduct a kick-off call with the USSEC sustainability team to discuss the scope/objective of the study, topics to be covered, and timeline.

February 15, 2022	Submit draft initial report on methodology, key questions and metrics, and timeline/process for completing the study.
February 28, 2023	Finalize initial report with USSEC feedback addressed.
May 15, 2023	Submit record of company meetings conducted. This will include the date/time of the meeting, name and job title of the person interviewed, and topics covered. This can take the form of an Excel spreadsheet or table in Word format.
June 1, 2023	Submit draft narrative report, with an executive summary, that describes the methodology, presents overall findings, and includes company-specific examples.
June 30, 2023	Finalize the report with USSEC feedback addressed.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

The estimated contract period is for **March 2023 to August 30, 2023**

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** October 28, 2022
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** January 31, 2022, by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Project Proposals Due:** January 31, 2023, by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Selections Made By:** February 10, 2023
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** February 17, 2023

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to LVargas@ussec.org by **5:00PM Central Time on January 31, 2023**
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.