

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
SUBMISSION DEADLINE  
5:00 PM CST, 3/30/2023**

**RFP TITLE: ASSESSMENT OF OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND SOY EXCELLENCE CENTER ACTIVITIES  
IN COLOMBIA**

**RFP CONTACT:**

**NAME:** Oswaldo Almeida

**PHONE:** +52 331 057 9900

**EMAIL:** [americasRFP@ussec.org](mailto:americasRFP@ussec.org)

**PROPOSAL DEADLINE: 17:00 CST, March 30, 2023**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) focuses on differentiating, elevating preference, and attaining market access for the use of U.S. Soy for human consumption, aquaculture, and livestock feed in 80+ countries internationally. USSEC members represent the soy supply chain including U.S. Soy farmers, processors, commodity shippers, merchandisers, allied agribusinesses, and agricultural organizations. USSEC is funded by the U.S. soybean checkoff, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service matching funds, and industry.

**PURPOSE OF RFP:**

USSEC Americas seeks a contractor to conduct an assessment of opportunities to expand Soy Excellence Center activities in Colombia to include small-scale, commercially-oriented poultry and swine production operations in underserved areas of Colombia. The contractor will: 1) conduct an analysis of the market share, public and private sector stakeholder perspectives, geographic distribution, and demographics of these operations; 2) assess their workforce training needs; 3) recommend priority areas of focus for optimal impact and effective use of resources; and 4) provide guidance on design and implementation of activities. The contractor must have Spanish and English language capabilities (speaking, reading, and writing) and the ability to travel within Colombia.

**BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:**

USSEC's Soy Excellence Centers (SEC) in the Americas, Asia, Middle East & North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa support workforce training for professionals in the poultry, swine, aquaculture, and feed sectors. International and regional subject-matter experts provide training both virtually and on-site with an emphasis on early-career employees at medium to large businesses. In the Americas, the SEC collaborates with Zamorano University in Honduras and in 2023 the program will offer a total of 24 online or on-site courses reaching 1,500 entry-level employees.

USSEC is exploring the potential for adapting the SEC model to engage small-scale commercial poultry and swine operations in underserved areas of Colombia. This will require adapting the

training methodology and potentially the curriculum to meet the needs of small-scale operations. The contractor will conduct an assessment of the opportunities to expand and adapt SEC activities to reach poultry and swine operations in underserved areas of Colombia. The contractor will conduct an analysis of the size, market share, geographic distribution, and demographics of small-scale, commercially-oriented producers in Colombia. The contractor will identify existing training opportunities for this population and assess their training needs through stakeholder interviews with the producers themselves, their customers, their suppliers, and other organizations active in this space (such as extension, universities, research institutes, NGOs, or donor-funded programs). The contractor will then provide USSEC with recommendations on how to strategically focus SEC activities for optimal impact and efficient use of resources. This may include recommendations on priority geographies, the profile of producers most likely to benefit, and training topic areas of interest. Lastly, the contractor will provide practical guidance for designing and implementing activities. This may include suggestions on adapting training methodology or curriculum, the feasibility of virtual and on-site trainings, and potential training partners.

#### **TARGET AUDIENCE:**

The target audience is the USSEC Americas team and SEC implementing partners.

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

- Design and plan the assessment of opportunities to expand SEC activities in Colombia
  - Consult with USSEC to understand the SEC model and the potential challenges and opportunities in adapting it to the context of small-scale operations in Colombia
  - Engage relevant ministries and agencies within the Government of Colombia, in collaboration with USSEC, to understand their strategy and priorities for reaching underserved areas
  - Propose criteria for prioritizing activity opportunities, geographies, and target participants
  - Develop and finalize a scope, methodology, and timeline for completing the assessment
- Conduct the assessment and produce a narrative report:
  - Gather/Review and analyze data on small-scale, commercially-oriented poultry and swine producers in Colombia: demographics, relative market share, size of operations, geographic distribution, overlap with the Government of Colombia's target geographies or demographics
  - Identify existing training opportunities or programs serving this population
    - Summarize existing opportunities – scope, scale, timeframe, geography, main points of contact
  - Assess small-scale, commercially-oriented producers' training needs as relevant to the scope of SEC
    - Conduct stakeholder interviews with producers, their customers, their suppliers, extension, research, NGOs, and donor-funded programs
    - Identify common resource or capacity constraints relevant to training topics

- Provide recommendations on how to strategically focus the SEC activities with small-scale, commercially-oriented producers
  - Analyze findings against prioritization criteria and make recommendations
- Offer practical guidance on designing and implementing activities which may include
  - Logistical considerations for virtual or on-site trainings
  - Adaptations to training methodologies or curriculum
  - Potential training partners or opportunities to complement existing programs
- Citations, sources, and data
- Develop a summary PowerPoint presentation and discuss with the USSEC team; present findings to the Government of Colombia, if requested

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The contractor is expected to work closely with the USSEC Americas team and maintain regular contact throughout the contract period.

Note the following requirements for preparing the budget proposal:

- Proposal must be itemized, if there are different employees working at different rates and different amounts of hours, each of those amounts/employees/units of time will need to be listed out.
- Payments are made monthly upon actual deliverables. USSEC will require an invoice for the number of units worked, along with an English narrative report of services provided during the month.
- The fee must include all consulting fees, employee compensation and benefits, overhead, travel expenses or any other type of expenses incurred to effectively complete the services/deliverables agreed upon. The payment represents the sole and complete liability of USSEC for services rendered in relation to the agreement and every payment must be attached to a deliverable.
- USSEC budget table template must be completed outlining how the fee was derived, including hourly rates and an estimated total number of hours, as well as the anticipated out-of-pocket expenses. USSEC will rate proposals based on the following factors:
  - Responsiveness to the requirements set forth in this Request for Proposal (RFP).
  - Relevant past performance/experience
  - Samples of work
  - Fee (described above)
  - This proposal is subject to approval of funding.

**DELIVERABLES**

<b><i>Completion Date</i></b>	<b><i>Description of Deliverables</i></b>
<b><i>Within 5 business days of contract start date</i></b>	<i>Conduct a brief, introductory call with USSEC team to kick-off the project and share background information.</i>
<b><i>April 30, 2023</i></b>	<i>Submit report on the proposed assessment design, methodology, and timeline (in English)</i>

<b>May 15, 2023</b>	<i>Submit final assessment design, methodology, and timeline based on USSEC feedback</i>
<b>July 15, 2023</b>	<i>Submit first draft of the assessment narrative report (in English)</i>
<b>August 15, 2023</b>	<i>Submit final version of the assessment with USSEC comments incorporated (in English and Spanish)</i>
<b>August 15, 2023</b>	<i>Submit summary PowerPoint presentation (in English and Spanish) and conduct a discussion with the USSEC team.</i>
<b>No later than August 31, 2023</b>	<p><i>Provide USSEC project manager with:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Invoice</i></li> <li><i>2. Electronic materials and photographic evidence of work performed.</i></li> <li><i>3. Post-board report including summary and receipts of all expenses.</i></li> <li><i>4. Brief English narrative report of the work performed noting any issues, challenges, next steps, and recommendations.</i></li> </ol>

#### **RFP TIMELINE:**

- RFP distribution: February 28, 2023.
- Last day to submit questions: March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 by 05:00 PM Mexico Time
- Q&A Session: March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023  
Please request Zoom Link, email to [americasRFP@ussec.org](mailto:americasRFP@ussec.org)
- Project proposals due: March 30, 2023 by 05:00 PM Mexico Time - email to [americasRFP@ussec.org](mailto:americasRFP@ussec.org)
- Selections made by April 15, 2023.
- Prospective contractors notified by April 15, 2023.

#### **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 Mexico Time on March 30, 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.
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").

**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](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.