

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

RFP TITLE: COMPARATIVE SOYBEAN PRODUCTION STUDY FOR COLOMBIA

RFP CONTACT:

Name: Oswaldo Almeida
Phone: +52 331 057 9900
Email: 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 a comparative soybean production study to examine for the potential and limitations for growth in soybean production in Colombia. The study will inform public and private sectors decisionmakers on whether to promote soybean production in the country as a strategic area of focus. The contractor must be proficient in Spanish and English (including speaking, reading, and writing) and have the ability to meet in-person with stakeholders in Colombia.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

Colombia is currently an importer of soybean meal, and the possibility of promoting soybean production within the country has been raised. Through this RFP, USSEC seeks a contractor to conduct a study on the potential and limitations for soybean production and value chain development in Colombia. The study will primarily focus on the soybean production side and include benchmarking information to compare Colombia's potential to established soybean producing countries such as the U.S., Brazil, and Paraguay. Among other variables, the study will examine growing conditions, availability of inputs, yield potential, costs of production, operational efficiency, and profitability. The study will also include a description and analysis of the value chain from field to feed manufacturer making note of what market infrastructure already exists and what would need to be developed.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The target audience is the USSEC Americas team and decisionmakers in Colombia's public and private sectors.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- Design a comparative study of the potential and limitations for soybean production and value chain development in Colombia
 - Work with the USSEC team to finalize the scope and define the variables
 - Finalize the selection of benchmark production areas – likely to include at least one U.S. state, Mato Grosso in Brazil, and Paraguay; analysis of these areas will use existing data and desk research (no travel is anticipated for this part of the exercise).
 - Define the study methodology and timeline for completion
- Conduct the comparative study and produce a narrative report (in Spanish and English). The study will include:
 - Analysis of the potential and limitations for soybean production in Colombia compared to international benchmarks (U.S., Brazil, and Paraguay) including consideration of the following:
 - Growing conditions: soils, water resources, climatic and weather conditions, topography, disease/pest pressures, land availability
 - Input supply – availability and costs: seed, fertilizer, agrochemicals, farm equipment, agricultural technology
 - Human resources: farmer knowledge of or interest in soybean production, extension/research capacity to support soybean farmers, labor costs and availability, employment potential
 - Finance: availability of financing to establish soybean farms, crop insurance coverage, working capital
 - Profitability: yield potential, costs of production, operational efficiency, profitability, minimum farm size for a competitive commercial operation
 - Description and analysis of the value chain from field to feed manufacturer:
 - Describe the steps involved from harvest through feed manufacturing
 - Analyze Colombia's current infrastructure and level of private sector development related to those links in the value chain
 - Summary and recommendations
 - Analysis of Colombia's overall potential for soybean production and value chain development as compared to existing producing countries
 - If applicable, recommendations for other crops or agricultural sectors for future consideration
 - Citations, data sources, and data tables
- Summary PowerPoint presentation and discussion with USSEC staff, and possibly to Colombian stakeholders, 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

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
Within 5 business days of contract start date	<i>Conduct a brief, introductory call with USSEC team to kick-off the project and share background information.</i>
April 30, 2023	<i>Submit report on the proposed study design, methodology, and timeline (in English)</i>
May 15, 2023	<i>Submit final study design, methodology, and timeline based on USSEC feedback</i>
July 15, 2023	<i>Submit first draft of the comparative study on soybean production and value chain development in Colombia (in English)</i>
August 15, 2023	<i>Submit final version of the comparative study with USSEC comments incorporated (in English and Spanish)</i>
August 15, 2023	<i>Submit summary PowerPoint presentation (in English and Spanish) and conduct a discussion with the USSEC team.</i>
No later than August 31, 2023	<i>Provide USSEC project manager with:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invoice 2. Electronic materials and photographic evidence of work performed. 3. Post-board report including summary and receipts of all expenses.

	4. <i>Brief English narrative report of the work performed noting any issues, challenges, next steps, and recommendations.</i>
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RFP TIMELINE:

- RFP distribution: February 28, 2023.
- Last day to submit questions: March 17th, 2023 by 05:00 PM Mexico Time
- Q&A Session: March 23rd, 2023
Please request Zoom Link, email to americasRFP@ussec.org
- Project proposals due: March 30, 2023 by 05:00 PM Mexico Time - email to 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 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.

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.