

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

March 27, 2023 by 5:00PM DUBAI TIME

RFP TITLE: WHAT CAN SUSTAINABILITY DO FOR YOU?

RFP CONTACT:

Name: Deeba Giannoulis

Email: dgiannoulis@ct.ussec.org

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: MARCH 27, 2023

INTRODUCTION:

The United States Soybean Export Council (USSEC) requests proposals to assist in the continued development, implementation and execution of strategies and programs within the South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (SAASSA) Region. For contractors, the expectations are to carry out the deliverables of the activities they are managing and are summarized in associated contracting documentation. Therefore, specific outputs and deliverables for personnel will be included as engagements with key contractors are formalized. Administrative performance will be based on delivering on the terms of those contracts. Contractors are required to provide monthly reports on progress if they are a long-term contractor, or post event reports if they are retained for a specific event. Information from the reports is used to keep stakeholders informed of the progress of their investment.

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 US 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 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.

The goal is to show that there is a market for products sold as sustainable and consumers are willing to pay a premium for such products; thus, customers will be encouraged to sign the license agreement of the Sustainable U.S. SOY™. The report will likely analyze products USSEC SAASSA region and provide sales arguments to make the case for U.S. SOY. Hence, users will be able to put a number on the sustainable U.S. SOY advantage and increment purchases from the U.S.

Expected Results:

An updated report to a 2015 report published by Nielsen called, “The Sustainably Imperative – New Insights on Consumer Expectations.”

Continuous cooperation and collaboration with the USSEC SAASSA team, and specifically with the Head of U.S. SOY Sustainability & Marketing SAASSA.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

USSEC is seeking funding to help drive the importance of sustainability for developing economies. This effort would involve commissioning an update to a 2015 report published by Nielsen called, “The Sustainably Imperative – New Insights on Consumer Expectations.” This report argues that sustainability is a greater area of concern for consumers in the developing world versus consumers in more advanced economies. This counters conventional wisdom which holds that sustainability is a topic of greater concern in the developed world. The report found:

While the relative importance of sustainable factors that influence the path to purchase is consistent across regions, the overall rates were lower in North America and Europe than in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Consumers in developing markets are often closer to and more aware of the needs in their surrounding communities as they are reminded daily of the challenges around them, which leads to a desire to give back and help others. This suggests a greater likelihood to seek out and pay more for sustainable products. Consumers in developed markets are flooded by choice, often making them more skeptical and therefore harder to influence.

Funding for this effort covers market research costs and report commissioning. RFP seeks to retain a firm until 31 December 2023 for the following items:

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide strategic advice around market complexities, focused USSEC narrative and targeted stakeholder identification.
- Use of resulting report to help drive messaging about the relevance of sustainability in the developing world and how U.S. Soy can help ensure a sustainable source of food and feed ingredients in this region.
- Drive messaging around sustainable food nutritional security and how U.S. Soy can deliver a solution.
- Compare consumer behavior from western/developed countries to that in developing countries to have tangible data around how purchase decisions of consumers in the developing world are influenced by sustainable factors

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Through this proposal, we would like to reach out to soy Importers, refiners, wholesale distributors, exporters, retail distributors, cold chain providers, industry associations, government agencies, commodity traders and brokers, restaurants, hotels and other institutions, Soybean crushers, feed manufacturers, livestock/aquaculture and poultry producers (and other end users).

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK/ METHODOLOGY:

The selected policy strategy advisory firm will provide the following support services to USSEC in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

- The study should include insights gathered through primary online research with an appropriate sample size of the target audience across 5 countries throughout SAASSA region – India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh. The sample should have quotas based on age and sex for each country based on its Internet users and is weighted to be representative of Internet consumers.
- The main purpose of the study is to assess how sustainability impacts purchase decisions, based on claimed behavior (not actual metered data).
- Compare actual sales data to determine if buying and caring truly converge
- The findings from the information to be included in the report can be collected from the target audience listed above. The data should represent a cross-section soy Importers, refiners, wholesale distributors, exporters, retail distributors, cold chain providers, industry associations, government agencies, commodity traders and brokers, restaurants, hotels and other institutions, Soybean crushers, feed manufacturers, livestock/aquaculture and poultry producers (and other end users).
- The sample size should be proportionately allocated between all the target markets to ensure appropriate data collection and outcomes.
- The report should highlight clear takeaways and recommendations for brands and organizations to win with sustainability and the importance of having a discerning sustainability strategy. The findings of the report should support the articulation of a ‘bespoke narrative’ which will enable U.S Soy to drive messaging about the relevance of sustainability in the developing world and how U.S. Soy can help ensure a sustainable source of food and feed ingredients in those respective regions.
- The findings of the report should resonate with U. S. Soy’s objective of achieving food and nutritional security through sustainable practices and should help position U.S Soy as a solutions provider.
- **Provide timely updates and reports on a monthly or bi-weekly basis** on the above areas for proactive action. The above information will be compiled into monthly written

reports. Virtual briefings to supplement written reports may also be conducted as required.

This development must be in accordance with the policies and procedures and will utilize approved templates and forms.

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
Monthly	1. Provide Budget & Accounting Analyst with CC to the Regional Director & Project Manager with the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Executive English Narrative Report (In USSEC Template) with services rendered during the month, that should include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Brief description on progress of the report b. Detailed list of consumers who will be a part of the study segregated country wise c. Details on retail data that will be used for the study d. Timely updates on responses gathered e. Detailed description on preliminary insights and findings
30 days before <i>regional travel</i> incurs within contract terms	1. Send Travel Authorization Form (TA) to the Sr Regional Project Manager with CC to Project Manager
45 days before <i>out of region travel</i> incurs within contract terms	1. Send Travel Authorization Form (TA) to Sr Regional Project Manager with CC to Project Manager
No later than 30 days after <i>travel incurs</i> within contract terms	1. Provide Budget & Accounting Analyst with: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) USSEC Travel Expense Report (in USSEC Template) b) USSEC Travel Mission Report (in USSEC Template)

RFP TIMELINE:

- RFP Distribution: 14th March 2023
- Last Day to Submit Questions: March 24, 2023
- Project Proposals Due: March 27, 2023
- Selections Made By: March 29, 2023
- Prospective Contractors Notified By: March 30, 2023
- Expected Contract Begin Date: April 17, 2023

Please email the proposal to dgiannoulis@ct.ussec.org and RFP@ussec.org

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

- At least 10 years' relevant experience working in the developing world in particular South Asia
- Ability to network and build relationships.
- A proven track record of strategic thinking and planning
- Ability to multitask by planning and implementing many projects at one time
- Highest moral integrity and character
- Located full time in South Asia with a strong network across the region

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to dgiannoulis@ct.ussec.org and RFP@ussec.org by 5:00PM Dubai time on March 27, 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: <https://ussec.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/USSEC-Strategic-Plan-2025.pdf>

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, audiotope, 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.

