

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 5/26/2023

RFP TITLE: SAMPLE COLLECTION FROM FARMERS TO PREPARE FOR CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: May 26th, 2023

INTRODUCTION:

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

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC seeks a U.S.-based contractor to support an international project by collecting soybean samples in the U.S. following an established protocol, storing half of each sample for 2 years, and shipping the other half to an international research partner. A successful contractor will communicate frequently with the USSEC team and support the logistics needed to send samples to an international research partner in Northern Ireland.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

The U.S.-based contractor will assist USSEC in implementing an international project that involves the chemical analysis of soybeans. The contractor will collect samples from U.S. farmers in the top ten soybean producing states, they will conduct this work independently and will coordinate with USSEC and the appropriate qualified state soybean boards (QSSBs) to achieve project deliverables, following an established shipment protocol (an example of which is provided below). The U.S. based contractor will specifically conduct the following:

1. While USSEC will provide a draft form letter to share with the contractor, the contractor will update the form letter and will use the final version to inform the farmers of the instructions for collecting the samples. The letter will include the following sections:
 - a. Sampling Instructions – To be finalized by contractor.
 - b. Sampling Survey Questions – Originally developed by USSEC
 - c. Soybean Sample Questionnaire – Originally developed by USSEC
2. The contractor will send a package of materials to the farmer contacts provided by USSEC.

3. The contractor will receive all the samples in a timely manner and follow up with the farmers to ensure timely delivery and that contacts have access to the necessary materials.
4. The contractor will divide each sample received in two, shipping half to an international research partner and storing the remaining counter sample under the proper conditions at their site; 30-40°F in winter and 40-60°F in summer and at an acceptable moisture content (11-19 %); for 24 months.
5. The contractor will maintain a database with all the data collected on the samples received and will share that database with USSEC.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- Collect up to 300 samples of soybeans from the top ten soybean producing states.
 - Collect samples from the farmers using the contact list provided by USSEC and in accordance with a protocol developed and finalized by the contractor.

Example Protocol for Collecting Soybean Samples by Farmers:

1. *Take soybean samples from at least two different fields.*
2. *Please fill the two sample bags labeled with your assigned number as #A and #B with your soybeans.*
3. *Fill each of the two sample bags up to the red line that is shown in the picture below.*



- *Each bag can hold up to 4 pounds (4 lbs.) of soybeans.*
- *If possible, please try to fill each sample bag with as clean of a sample as you can.*
- *There are two additional sample bags (each) included in case the sample bags with the numbers get damaged.*

Prepare the shipping box as follows:

4. *Seal the bottom of the shipping box with duct or packaging tape as follows:*



- *Be sure not to cover the shipping label with duct or packaging tape.*
5. *Put the two sample bags in the shipping box as follows:*



- *Please include in the shipping box the letter with the information that you need to fill out below.*
6. *Seal the top of the shipping box with duct or packaging tape as follows:*



- *Be sure not to cover the shipping label with the duct or packaging tape.*

Shipping Instructions:

1. *After you seal the shipping box, you can drop the shipping box at any FedEx Pick Up location in your area. Also, you can call FedEx at 1-866-393-4585 to schedule a pickup at your farm or home.*
2. *The shipping cost is already pre-paid by the contractor.*
3. *Send the samples to the contractor's address below.*
 - *[Insert contractor shipping address below].*

- Procure the materials and supplies for sample collection, in accordance with the protocol.
- Prepare and ship all documentation, instructions, postage, and supplies to the farmers for collection of the samples. USSEC will provide a pre-determined list of farmers, their contact information, and a form letter to send farmers with instructions on how and when to send samples. Recognizing that harvest timeframes vary by state, the contractor will ensure that farmers receive adequate notice to enable them to collect samples during harvest.
- Coordinate with farmers to ensure that they collect samples and ship them to the contractor following the protocol and timeline.
- Create and maintain a database with all the required information for each sample, as specified in the established protocol that USSEC will share with contractor. Send the complete database to USSEC after all samples have been received and recorded.
- Prepare and store or ship samples
 - After recording sample information in the database, divide each sample in two – half for shipping and half for storage as a counter sample.
 - Package samples for shipment in accordance with instructions from an international research partner, and coordinate with them to obtain any documents required for shipping samples internationally.
 - Coordinate with an international research partner to arrange shipping courier pickup of the samples. Note: The international research partner will pay the shipping costs directly to the courier.
 - Store the counter samples for 24 months in appropriate storage conditions.

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
Within 5 business days of contract signing	Conduct a kickoff call with the USSEC Sustainability team to discuss background information and determine a process/timeline for ongoing coordination and communication.
July 1 st – July 15 th , 2023	Prepare and finalize the letter to send to farmers with all shipment instructions and developed protocols, approved by USSEC
August 1st, 2023	Prepare and ship all documentation, instructions, postage, and supplies to the farmers for collection of the samples.
September 1, 2023 – September 30, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collect up to 300 samples from the participating farmers. ● Create a database with all required information for each sample and divide each sample in two for shipping and storage of counter samples. Send the complete database to USSEC after all samples have been received and recorded. ● Prepare up to 300 samples for storage.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate shipment of up to 300 samples with an international research partner
Ongoing	Store up to 300 samples in proper conditions for 24 months
Ongoing	Monthly invoices on expenses incurred

PROJECT TIMELINE:

The contract will last from approximately June 15th, 2023 to September 30th, 2023. Note: The contractor will complete active work on the project by September 30th, 2023, but will be expected to store the counter samples in proper conditions for an additional 24 months.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** May 15, 2023
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** May 19, 2023, by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Project Proposals Due:** May 26, 2023, by 5:00 PM Central Time
- **Selections Made By:** May 31, 2023
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** June 1, 2023

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG by **5:00PM Central Time on May 26th, 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 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.