REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
March 11, 2021 - 12:00 PM SGT (GMT +8)

RFP TITLE: IN-COUNTRY MARKETING REPRESENTATIVES, THAILAND

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INTRODUCTION:

U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. formally requests proposals for the costs of engaging One (1) or Two (2) In-Country Marketing Representatives to provide professional services for Thailand. Thailand is a major market of interest for the U.S. Soy industry importing whole U.S. soybeans for both the human and livestock sector and soybean meal primarily for the latter. USSEC has maintained a presence in the market providing trade support and technical servicing to the Thai food and livestock industry and agribusinesses since 1994.

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 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 and benchmarking will assist in determining the fair market value for the services to be performed and allows USSEC the opportunity to evaluate qualified proposals and select the best Contractor(s) for the job based on technical qualifications, related industry experience, managerial abilities, strength of industry connections and contacts and suitable cost and time that matches the needs under this contract.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

The primary goal of the In-Country Marketing Representative(s) is to build preference and increase imports of U.S. soybean, soybean meal and other soy derivatives (collectively referred to as ‘U.S. Soy’ into Thailand for applications in human food protein uses; poultry, swine and livestock feed rations, aquaculture feed rations, and other uses, as well as keep closely abreast of and provide management strategies for market concerns and developments especially events that have potential to impact the market access of U.S. soy shipments into the country.
The Contractor(s) will report directly to USSEC’s Southeast Asia Regional Director. He/She shall be based in Bangkok, Thailand, and will operate as in-country marketing representative(s) to USSEC but maintaining itself as fully independent Contractor(s). As each country/market differs culturally, politically, and socially, a key element to successfully impacting market behavior to the advantage of U.S. Soy will be the Contractor(s)’s ability to develop close relationships, maintain active day-to-day contact, and build trust with key customers, trade representatives, relevant institutions, and government bodies in context and for the purpose of achieving USSEC’s mission, while managing the sensitivities of the local cultures, customs, languages etc. Most importantly, the Contractor(s) will ensure that USSEC has an active and strategic presence in Thailand that is favorable and advantageous for U.S. Soy exports into the country.

The Contractor(s) is/are required to develop close relationships, maintain active and regular contact so as to build a rapport with key customers, trade representatives, relevant institutions, and government bodies for the purpose of achieving USSEC’s mission. The Contractor(s) must ensure that USSEC has a clear strategic presence in Thailand that is favorable and advantageous for U.S. Soy exports into the country.

The Contractor(s) must provide trade and program management support services (per USSEC S.E. Asia’s Standard Operating Procedures) for all programs and activities across all USSEC’s utilization areas (i.e., Human, Animal, Aquaculture, and Market Access) in Thailand. This includes planning, documentation, and implementing etc. public events and/or private in-house activities, under the direction of the Regional Director or USSEC’s management team.

Other role and responsibilities include, but not limited, providing trade support services to USSEC personnel and members of the U.S. Soy Family (e.g., United Soybean Board, American Soybean Association, U.S. Qualified State Soybean Boards, U.S. exporters etc.) during trade visits/mission to Thailand. The Contractor(s) will also occasionally be required to initiate and/or participate in conferences, seminars, workshops, and trade servicing in and around Southeast Asia, as requested by the Regional Director or USSEC’s management team.

The Contractor(s) must adhere strictly to USSEC’s accounting, administrative, compliance, and operational requirements and guidelines, as well as abide by USSEC’s corporate core values.

**TARGET AUDIENCE:**

The Contractor(s) will work together with USSEC’s other local representatives and interface with industry decision-makers and influencers, buyers and sellers of food and feed ingredients, leading industry representatives, industry, trade and livestock associations, related Thai government ministries/departments in the country etc. Examples of the organizations are, but not limited to:

- Thai Feed Millers Association
- Thai Broiler Processing Exporters Association
- Thai Broiler Association
- Thai Feed-Stuff Importers Association
• Thai Oilseed Crushers
• Ministry of Agriculture and the departments within etc.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

• The Contractor(s) will conduct trade servicing, an essential networking and market intelligence gathering activity, and promote the development of relationships between USSEC and members/stakeholders of the U.S. Soy Family with key local industry and government contacts.
• The Contractor(s) will provide full support for USSEC’s major regional buyer support programs and country-level programs and activities directed at building preference and or increasing the exports of U.S. Soy.
• The Contractor(s) will ensure that the major regional conferences, workshops and trade missions under/backed by USSEC, are well-attended and supported by key representatives/decision-makers of the key target Audience in the country.
• The Contractor(s) will provide timely and accurate responses to inquiries and questions from U.S. exporters, importers and processors of U.S. soy, trade organizations, government officials, etc. on subjects and matters that relate directly or indirectly to U.S. Soy or on the local agricultural industry as a whole.
• The Contractor(s) will assist in the execution of programs and activities under the Unified Export Strategy (UES), provide trade and technical support to local agribusinesses, agricultural trade organizations, government and non-government bodies etc. to achieve the objectives and further the interests of USSEC and U.S. Soy.
• The Contractor(s) is/are required to maintain and assist USSEC with:
  o compiling accurate and updated customer contact details and industry profiles. This information may be used for a number of purposes including supporting USSEC’s Customer Relations and Content Management systems.
  o gathering and evaluating data relevant to the present and future potential for use of soybeans, soybean meal and other relevant soy products in the industry. This requires that he/she maintain a set of trade statistics with a minimum of five (5) years data (including the current year and projections for the year ahead) on poultry, swine, livestock and aquaculture production, animal and aqua feed production, and other relevant figures etc. that is useful to USSEC in developing the UES.
  o conducting trade surveys, gather customer feedback, and other pertinent information gathering initiatives as and when required by the Southeast Asia Regional Director or USSEC Management.
  o conveying the U.S. Soy Sustainability message to the customers and encourage them to apply for the U.S. Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP) with their U.S. Soy purchases.
• The Contractor(s) will liaise and coordinate his/her marketing efforts closely with USSEC Southeast Asia staff and Contractors, as well as provide full support to USSEC’s Focus Areas
(i.e., Animal, Aqua, Human, and Marketplace) Program Managers (Contractors) and USSEC management in organizing country-specific targeted workshops, seminars, round table discussions, site visitations, etc.

- The Contractor(s) will plan, arrange, co-ordinate, and provide accompaniment for trade and technical visits and industry meetings for the Regional Director, Regional Marketing and Technical Contractors, U.S. Farmer Leadership and Trade Teams, visiting USSEC member exporter companies, U.S. Soy Exporters, etc. as directed by USSEC’s S.E. Asia Regional Director or USSEC Management.
- The Contractor(s) will provide logistic support to the Program Management Team on major regional conferences and workshops held in Thailand.
- The Contractor(s) will provide assistance to other U.S. agricultural cooperator organizations, e.g., working with the Foreign Agricultural Service on joint activities, for the benefit of U.S. agricultural exports as a whole. However, the Contractor will not participate in any activity and or event that have messages that run contrary or is irrelevant to USSEC’s core mission and objectives while under contract.
- The Contractor(s) will assist with, as well as provide insights and direction for, future U.S. Soy market development programs. He/She will periodically review and recommend modification of market development plans to USSEC’s S.E. Asia Regional Director and USSEC Management as and when necessary in response to changing market/trade conditions.

**DELIVERABLES:**

**Weekly Reporting (periodically or on request)**
- Current price of key raw feed ingredients.
- Current price of poultry, swine and livestock.

**Monthly Reporting**
- Report of the Contractor(s)’s interactions with local soy-related industry contacts
• Provide updates and relate what action has been taken to promote U.S. Sustainability Initiatives and further this message to the industry and its impact/results.
• Timely reporting of latest market updates and developments – especially events that impact the trade and preference for U.S. Soy.
• Soy and agricultural statistics, import shipments, and other trade data,
• Report observations and recommendations on programs/activities, action on trade issues, marketing strategies etc.
• Detail communications that cover inquiries and questions from U.S. exporters, importers and processors of U.S. soy, trade organizations, government officials, etc. on the application, availability and sourcing of soybeans and soybean products from the U.S. etc.
• Submit monthly budget tables on the latest investment estimates for project and activities under the Contractor’s responsibility on or before the 25th of every month and or upon USSEC’s management request.

Quarterly Reporting
(Minimum 5-year data, including current year and forward year projection)

• Soybeans
  o Total soybean imports into the country by origination
  o Percentage of total soybean imports and U.S. soybean imports into the country shipped in bulk and in containers
  o Total demand for soybeans in the country
  o If applicable – total volume of soybeans produced locally (same periods)
• Soybean meal
  o Total soybean meal imports into the country by origination
  o Percentage of total soybean meal imports and U.S. soybean meal imports into the country shipped in bulk and in containers
  o Total demand for soybean meal in the country
  o If applicable – total volume of soybean meal produced locally (same periods)
• Soybean Oil – same info required as above

During the Marketing Season

• Promote USSEC’s Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP) in Thailand.
• Aim to have local importers and end-users source U.S. Soy with the U.S. Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol certificates.
• Assist in the successful implementation of all funded programs under the current marketing year, staying within budget and meeting corporate guidelines and regulations.
• Ensure industry participation in USSEC’s local, regional and global customer surveys and evaluations.
• The Contractor will participate in meetings and develop reports as and when requested by Southeast Asia’s Regional Director and USSEC management.
Regularly reach out to customers/contacts to provide trade support and promote U.S. Soy; capture key details as it regards to their business interest and other actionable information.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

For this contract, our expectation is for the In-Country Marketing Representative contract(s) to start from March 18, 2021 and end on September 30, 2021 (MY 2021). After which this contract is renewable on a 12-monthly basis according to the term of each marketing season or tenure funding source.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution**: February 12, 2021
- **Last Day to Submit Questions**: March 9, 2021 by 5:00PM SGT (GMT +8)
- **Project Proposals Due**: March 11, 2021 by 12:00 PM SGT (GMT +8)
- **Selections Made By**: March 16, 2021
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By**: March 18, 2021

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG by **12:00PM SGT (GMT +8)** on **March 11, 2021**.

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”).
• 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.
  o 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.