REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

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

RFP TITLE: PROJECT MANAGER – SPECIAL PROJECTS AND HIGH IMPACT INITIATIVES, S.E. ASIA & OCEANIA

RFP CONTACT:
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INTRODUCTION:

U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. formally requests proposals for the costs of engaging a Project Manager for Special Projects and High Impact Initiatives to provide professional services for the Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand market (collectively referred to as ‘region’ in this document).

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 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.

The purpose of this RFP is to seek proposals for engaging a Project Manager for Special Projects and High Impact Initiatives.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

The goal and purpose of the ‘Project Manager – Special Projects and High Impact Initiatives’ (abbrev. PM-SPHII), as directed by the Regional Director, is to primarily manage specific parts or in its entirety, a set of projects and activities funded under the Agricultural Trade Promotion (ATP) program and other funding sources under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The PM-SPHII may also be asked to provide project management assistance in other areas and funding that concerns
managing third-party services, e.g., corporate communications, online social media content and web development, advertising, promotional and publication of materials, industry studies and surveys etc. The PM-SPHII will also assist the Regional Director to secure additional funding sources under USDA’s Emerging Market Program (EMP), or from any other non-profit organizations to further the U.S. Soy mission objectives directly or indirectly - build preference and increase exports of U.S. soybean, soybean meal and other soy derivatives into this region for applications in Animal Feed and Human Food applications.

**SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:**

- The Contractor will report directly to USSEC Southeast Asia Regional Director and Director of Operations for all matters related to the execution of services as described under this contract.
- The Contractor will liaise and co-ordinate, and co-operate with other USSEC Regional/ Southeast Asian Technical Staff and Contractors when implementing projects and activities under his/her charge.
- The Contractor will establish and nurture strong working relationships, good lines of communication, and beneficial trade connections.
- The Contractor must be prepared, and able to, give presentations to internal/external audiences at virtual or live events/meetings for the benefit of and to achieve the objectives under this contract.
- The Contractor shall plan, co-ordinate, evaluate, negotiate (where needed) and implement as needed to carry his/her objectives with key individuals, industry and government groups, contractors and service providers etc.
- The Contractor shall respond to inquiries for information and provide assistance that is in his/her area of expertise and knowledge base in a timely manner.
- The Contractor will assist with, and provide insights and direction for, current and future U.S. Soy market development projects and activities.
- The Contractor will diligently organize all funded projects and activities and manage overall the events and activities under his/her responsibility in accordance to USSEC’s guidelines and requirements, e.g.
  - Undertake managerial, reporting, budgetary, and any other administrative duties that are required by USSEC.
  - Develop, recommend and utilize budgetary funds assigned to market development activities or other projects, meeting all reporting requirements and expending funds in such a manner as to ensure maximum effectiveness, subject to the policies of USSEC.
  - Prepare correspondence, activity plans, market development activities, budgets and other documentation as requested by the Regional Director or USSEC management, etc.
DELIVERABLES/SCOPE:

Weekly Reporting

- Special Projects and High Impact Initiatives Progress Report

Monthly Reporting

- Report of the Contractor(s)’s interactions with USSEC team, key individuals, industry and government groups, contractors and service providers etc. in relation to meeting contract objectives.
- Provide project management updates/progress and detail what actions (include GANTT charts) has been taken to meet the contract objectives.
- 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.

During the course of the contract

- Assist in the successful implementation of all funded programs under the current marketing year, staying within budget and meeting corporate guidelines and regulations.
- The Contractor will participate in meetings and develop reports as and when requested by Southeast Asia’s Regional Director and USSEC management.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

For this contract, our expectation is for the ‘Project Manager for Special Projects and High Impact Initiatives’ contract to start from March 18, 2021 and end on December 31, 2021 (MY 2021). After which this contract is renewable on a 12-monthly basis subject to the term of each marketing season, availability and tenure of the 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”).

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/](http://ussec.org/about-ussec/vision-mission/)
USB’s Long Range Strategic Plan can be found here: [http://unitedsoybean.org/about-usb/strategic-planning/](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.