

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS SUBMISSION
DEADLINE 5:00 PM CST, 05/06/2021**

**RFP TITLE: STUDY OF THE POTENTIAL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF IPRS
TECHNOLOGY IN MEXICO**

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: 05:00 PM CST, May 6th, 2021

INTRODUCTION:

U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. is a non-profit organization that promotes U.S. soybeans and soybean products to international customers through knowledge transfer, on-site trainings, seminars, workshops, conferences, industry tours and demonstrations. The specific goal of the USSEC Americas Program is to promote within the region the use of United States soy products, in human consumption, aquaculture, animal feeds and the best feeding practices. A key program objective is to see a growing, long-term, high-quality, feed-based industry in the Americas Region and globally.

In the aquaculture sector, USSEC has supported the development and promotion of in-pond raceway systems (IPRS) technology in Mexico and other countries. The technology has demonstrated results in improving productivity, efficiency, and environmentally sustainable production practices. IPRS contributes to increased demand for U.S. soy as it allows producers to realize the full advantages of using a high-quality, U.S. soy-based aquafeed.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC seeks a contractor to conduct a study to: 1) determine the growth potential for IPRS production technology in Mexico for the next five years; 2) provide census data on the marine shrimp value chain in Mexico; and, 3) establish a roadmap for USSEC's future investments in the promotion of IPRS in Mexico. The contractor must have expertise in aquaculture production and agricultural economics, familiarity with IPRS technology and aquafeed production, and knowledge of the market for aquaculture products.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

USSEC developed IPRS technology as an efficient, highly productive aquaculture system that facilitates sustainable use of water resources. The IPRS performs best when producers utilize high quality feeds, and USSEC promotes use of U.S. soy-

optimized aquafeeds as an integral part and critical principle of the IPRS technology package.

To inform USSEC's future work with IPRS technology in Mexico, USSEC seeks a contractor to: 1) conduct a market analysis of the potential to expand use of IPRS in marine and freshwater aquaculture, 2) conduct a census of the marine shrimp value chain, and 3) develop recommendations and an action plan for USSEC's future work to promote IPRS. The primary focus of the contractor's work will be marine and freshwater fish.

The market analysis for IPRS will determine the potential for expanding use of IPRS technology to increase sustainable marine and freshwater fish production in Mexico. The census of the marine shrimp value chain in Mexico will provide basic information about the size, structure, and operation of the sector. Lastly, the contractor will provide recommendations for if and how to expand promotion of IPRS among fish and shrimp producers and/or new investors interested on the technology. The recommendations will include a core action plan for next years that includes key steps for implementation, illustrative yearly investment requirements, and anticipated outcomes for U.S. Soy. In conducting the study and developing the recommendations, the contractor will build on USSEC's current work with IPRS in Mexico.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The target audience for the market prioritization study is USSEC. The USSEC team will then use the information from the study to plan for implementation of promotion activities in FY2022 (October 2021-September 2022) and subsequent years.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- Conduct a market opportunity assessment for IPRS for marine and freshwater fish production in Mexico and the related use of U.S. soy. This will include the following:
 - Based on the available literature/data, provide an overview of the shrimp and marine and freshwater fish production sectors including information on number, location and identification of farms, current production, growth trends, feed used, species produced, and destination of final product.
 - Provide an overview of current production systems used, size of operations, current demand for aquafeed, current sources of aquafeed, competitive advantages, and constraints to production.
 - Assess the potential market for IPRS technology based on current conditions and projections for the next five years (through 2025). Identify the target customer base. Include cost/benefit analysis of IPRS versus current production methods, disaggregated by species. Identify any constraints to IPRS adoption.
 - Assess the capacity to meet marine and freshwater fish production IPRS input requirements including aquafeed and fingerlings. This would involve an assessment of current feed and fingerling production capacities as well

as the ability to scale up production to meet increased demand from producers that will be using IPRS technology.

- Assess the potential market for U.S. soy as a result of marine and freshwater fish IPRS adoption in Mexico. Identify the contexts in which marine and freshwater fish IPRS offers the greatest impact on demand for U.S. soy (e.g., when production reaches a certain volume or value, for particular species, etc.).
- Conduct a census of the marine shrimp value chain in Mexico including data on the following: number of farms, location (coordinates), production year 2020 and production potential year, identification of larva production laboratories and production capacity, identification and availability of processing plants as well as identification and supply of feed for national and imported shrimp and finally, destination of the final product for both internal and external markets.
- Develop recommendations and an action plan for USSEC to promote IPRS in Mexico over the next five years (beginning in October 2021). This will include the following:
 - Provide recommendations for if/when/how to further promote IPRS beyond the current footprint and the related use of U.S. soy-based aquafeed in Mexico over next five years' time horizon. This should include recommendations for rolling out technical assistance/training as well as identifying any further research that may be needed to adapt the technology to the local context.
 - Include ideas for harnessing opportunities and overcoming constraints as identified in the assessment.
 - Suggest measures to engage key stakeholders for efficient implementation and adaptation. This should include opportunities to work with government agencies and/or government programs for aquaculture development, as well as opportunities to work with third parties to enhance the technology.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The budget proposal must be itemized. If there are different individuals working on the project at different rates and different amounts of hours, each of those amounts/individuals/units of time will need to be listed out at the budget.

The payment schedule will consist of two payments as follows: 30% on submission of the report on preliminary findings, and 70% on acceptance of the final study.

The contractor will work with the USSEC team and other USSEC cooperators to obtain information and verify findings.

DELIVERABLES:

<i>Completion Date</i>	<i>Description of Deliverables</i>
<i>Within 10 business days of contract signing</i>	<i>Work with USSEC assigned staff to finalize study design and timeline.</i>
<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Provide brief email updates on progress</i>
<i>July 26, 2021</i>	<i>Submit draft report on preliminary findings to date.</i>

	<i>Provide invoice for the 30% of the project's total</i>
<i>October 1, 2021</i>	<i>Submit full draft of the study for USSEC review and comment</i>
<i>October 31, 2021</i>	<i>Provide USSEC project manager with:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Electronic materials of study.</i> <i>2. English narrative final study with USSEC comments addressed</i> <i>3. Invoice for the 70% of the project's total</i>

PROJECT TIMELINE:

Our expectation is that the work called for in this RFP will start towards the end of May 2021 and will last up until October 31, 2021.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** April 22, 2021
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** April 29, 2021 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Project Proposals Due:** May 6, 2021 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Selections Made By:** May 11, 2021
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** May 12, 2021

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 6th, 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 1/2" 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:

- Smith Bucklin-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.