



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS to perform**

### **AGREED-UPON PROCEDURES on U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC)**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

United Soybean Board's (USB) Audit & Evaluation committee is requesting proposals to perform agreed-upon procedures (AUPs) for USB's contractor, U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC). USB is the industry-funded research and promotion board established by the Soybean Promotion Research and Consumer Information Act and the Soybean Promotion and Research Order & Rules and Regulations (Act & Order) and authorized by the Congress. USB is charged with investing resources to invest in four distinct areas: promotion, research, consumer education and industry information. The Act & Order and the USDA Guidelines for AMS Oversight of Commodity Research and Promotion Programs (AMS Guidelines) also specifically lay out the fiduciary responsibilities in administering checkoff funds.

#### **PURPOSE OF RFP AND SCOPE OF WORK**

The purpose of this project is to inspect expenditures and evaluate risk. The selected firm will perform specific agreed-upon procedures on work performed by USSEC on behalf of USB and perform a risk assessment of the internal control environment at USSEC. The period under review will be October 2018 through the month prior to the initiation of planning of procedures. The intent of USB is to obtain a review of activities through the most current month available prior to the fieldwork which should include transactions from the contract year ended September 30, 2019 and from the contract year ended September 30, 2020.

The expenditure procedures focus on compliance of expenditures with the terms of the contract, expenditure guidelines, and policies and procedures. Specifically, a representative sample of project expenditures should be inspected for compliance with the following:

- Act & Order
- AMS Guidelines
- USB contractor reimbursement guidelines in effect for the contract year applicable to the related expenditure
- Contract between USB and USSEC for the applicable contract year

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- If applicable, contract between USSEC and subcontractor
- USSEC policies and procedures

In addition, another representative sample of USSEC fees for staff time and out-of-pocket expenditures should be inspected for compliance with the guidance listed above.

For the risk assessment of the internal control environment at USSEC, the firm is expected to define appropriate methodology in determining and reporting risk related to the findings, observations and recommendations. Based on risk assessment procedures, the risk map/report will provide a tool for the Directors of A&E to gain an understanding of what risk exists and how and where risk can be reduced. Examples of risk map variables include but are not limited to; strategic management, project management, funding source management, delegation of authority, expense tracking, approvals, transaction classifications, contract specifications, staff continuity, internal audit/controls, etc.

**Proposal submission deadline**

**November 27, 2019**

**12:00 Noon CDT**

**To: [proposals@unitedsoybean.org](mailto:proposals@unitedsoybean.org)**

Proposals should include the specific criteria below, at a minimum.

1. An outline of the methodology to be used, including the firm's approach to risk assessment.
2. A detailed plan of work, including a timeline for all milestones and deliverables associated with the plan of work.
3. Background information about the firm and detail of the firm's experience in providing agreed-upon procedures to companies in the not-for-profit sector.
4. Information on whether the firm has provided agreed-upon procedure services to any related industry/agricultural associations or groups.
5. Details of the firm's experience working with clients to assess and report risk.
6. The name of the partner, manager and in-charge staff who will lead and/or be assigned to undertake each component of the project and provide biographies for each.
7. A detailed budget for the services to complete the scope of work including all deliverables.

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**Timeline**

NOTE: The following timeline is a guide.

11/2019	RFP issued
11/27/2019	Deadline for submission of proposals (12:00 Noon CST)
12/10/2019	A&E reviews proposals for Firm selection
01/15/2020	Upon execution of contract with USB, field work can begin
07/1/2020	Draft report submitted to USB staff and OB
07/15/2020	OB response submitted to Firm and USB
08/1/2020	Final report issued
08/2020	Presentation to A&E Committee

**Engagement Information**

Firm will be required to become familiar with relevant USB and USDA policies and adhere to the requirements of the *Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act & Order* and other related government mandates for checkoff programs which govern USB.

**Additional Information and Questions**

If interested in submitting a proposal, please contact Katherine Ayers, USB CFO, at [kayers@unitedsoybean.org](mailto:kayers@unitedsoybean.org) regarding questions.

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## **Organizational Background**

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 U.S. soybean industry. USB is comprised of 73 volunteer soybean farmers representing the interests of fellow growers nationwide. Each board member is nominated by a Qualified State Soybean Board (QSSB) and appointed by the United States Secretary of Agriculture.

For additional information, you can access USB's website at [www.unitedsoybean.org](http://www.unitedsoybean.org).

Oversight of USB is provided by the Secretary of Agriculture through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). The authority for the checkoff is the Congressional Act, Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act (Act). The criterion by which USDA administers USB is outlined in the Soybean Promotion, Research Order & Rules and Regulations (Order). Both documents can be accessed through the USB website through the provided links. The Act and Order contain certain constraints under which the soy checkoff program must operate, specifically restricting the use of checkoff funds for lobbying the United States government.