REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
May 11, 2020 5:00PM CST

RFP TITLE: MARKET PRIORITIZATION STUDY FOR IN-POND RACEWAY SYSTEMS

RFP CONTACT:
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INTRODUCTION:

Soybean meal is an important ingredient in aquafeeds with U.S. soy currently accounting for approximately one-third of total demand (6 million MT out of 18.5 million MT). With global demand for aquaculture-produced fish and seafood projected to increase significantly over the next ten years, aquaculture producers need to increase productivity and improve efficiency in an environmentally-sustainable manner. There is a clear opportunity for U.S. soy to support the aquaculture sector in achieving these goals.

USSEC has supported the development and promotion of In-Pond Raceway Systems (IPRS) technology in China 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.

Based on the experience gained in China, USSEC believes that IPRS technology has the potential to contribute to aquaculture growth in other countries. Given that 95% of current aquaculture production is in Asia, the region is a natural starting point for introducing and scaling up the technology.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC seeks a contractor to conduct research and analysis that will allow USSEC to strategically prioritize its efforts to promote the IPRS in the Asia Subcontinent. Based on preliminary analysis, USSEC has identified Bangladesh and Pakistan as potential markets for IPRS. The contractor will research and analyze the market opportunity for IPRS, and its use of U.S. soy, in these two countries specifically while providing some insight into the Asia Subcontinent region more broadly. Drawing on this analysis, the contractor will then develop a five-year plan (2021-2025) with recommendations for USSEC to act on the market opportunities for IPRS and the related use of U.S. soy-based aquafeed.
BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

Aquaculture offers tremendous long-term solutions to providing protein to a growing global population. With increasing global demand for seafood, aquaculture production must expand to supply the world as wild caught seafood cannot sustain such demand. By 2030 (according to FAO), an additional 41 million tons of fish and shrimp per year will be needed to maintain current levels of seafood consumption, which could result in 13.5 million tons of additional soy demand for feed (626 million bushels), assuming optimal soy utilization (source: FAO). IPRS allows for more efficient water conservation and recycling in an industry that is water-intensive, thus making them more sustainable. IPRS also offers the opportunity for higher-volume use of U.S. soy-based feeds as a higher quality feed is prioritized by producers.

U.S. soy has supported the development of IPRS, as well as successful demonstration projects in various countries. USSEC's aquaculture program provides on-site technical services and training seminars, as well as organizing visiting teams to well-operated IPRS cells. USSEC is currently working to expand the number of such systems in China and is pushing the adoption of IPRS in new markets. The contractor’s work will provide a data-driven, analytical framework that will allow USSEC to better focus this work.

The market opportunities associated with the implementation of IPRS vary by country and region – to date, these have not been thoroughly evaluated and prioritized. The benefits and profitability of IPRS depend on the producers’ current aquaculture systems, available natural resources, and associated costs. Ideally, IPRS promotion and support activities should focus on producers who would a) most benefit from converting to or adding IPRS and b) be able to purchase large volumes of U.S. soy optimized feeds for these new systems. This project addresses the need for detailed research into opportunities for IPRS in international markets, the prioritization of these opportunities, and the development of a long-term plan for promoting IPRS and their use of U.S. soy.

TARGET AUDIENCE: USSEC staff will use the market opportunity assessment and five-year plan to inform USSEC’s work on IPRS promotion. USSEC will also use information from these documents to mobilize resources and engage stakeholders in support of IPRS promotion.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- Conduct a market opportunity assessment for IPRS and the related use of U.S. soy
  - Work with USSEC staff to design the assessment, identify data sources, develop a list of interviewees, and develop the interview questionnaire. USSEC staff will introduce the contractor to key stakeholders.
  - Based on the available literature/data, provide an overview of the aquaculture sector in Asia Subcontinent generally, and Bangladesh and Pakistan specifically, including information on current production, growth trends, and species produced.
o For Bangladesh and Pakistan, 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.

o Assess the potential market for IPRS technology in Bangladesh and Pakistan 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. A reliable power source is a requirement for IPRS, and the cost of this should be factored into the cost/benefit analysis.

o Assess the capacity to meet 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 using IPRS.

o Assess the potential market for U.S. soy as a result of IPRS adoption in Bangladesh and Pakistan. Identify the contexts in which 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.).

• Develop a five-year plan market prioritization plan for IPRS with recommendations for USSEC to act on the market opportunities identified in the assessment.
  o Conduct a focus group with USSEC staff, and possibly other stakeholders as identified by USSEC, to discuss findings from the assessment and solicit input into the five-year plan.
  o Provide recommendations for if/when/how to promote IPRS and the related use of U.S. soy-based aquafeed in Bangladesh and Pakistan over a five-year 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.
  o Include ideas for harnessing opportunities and overcoming constraints as identified in the assessment.
  o 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.
  o Develop a core action plan for 2021-2025 that includes key steps for implementation, illustrative yearly investment requirements, and anticipated outcomes for U.S. Soy.

• NOTE: The contractor will be required to collaborate closely with USSEC staff in the implementation of this project. The assessment will be based on existing literature and data sources as well as a series of interviews with USSEC staff, aquaculture sector stakeholders in Bangladesh and Pakistan, and current users of IPRS technology in other
countries. While ideally interviews would be conducted in person, USSEC recognizes that may not be possible given travel restrictions related to the covid-19 pandemic. Proposals and budgets should include options with and without travel for interviews.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Description of Deliverables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Conference calls with USSEC staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 10 2020</td>
<td>Finalize project design with USSEC staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 15 2020</td>
<td>Finalize interview questionnaire and interviewee list with USSEC staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 15 2020</td>
<td>First draft report on the market opportunity assessment</td>
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<td>July 20 2020</td>
<td>Call with USSEC staff to discuss feedback on the draft market opportunity assessment</td>
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<td>July 31 2020</td>
<td>Final market opportunity assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 7 2020</td>
<td>Focus group discussion with USSEC staff on five-year plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 28 2020</td>
<td>First draft report on five-year plan/recommendations</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 4 2020</td>
<td>Call with USSEC staff to discuss feedback on the draft five-year plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 18 2020</td>
<td>Final five-year plan/recommendations</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 30 2020</td>
<td>Final report</td>
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PROJECT TIMELINE: June 1, 2020 – September 30, 2020

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** April 27, 2020
- **Q&A Timeframe:** Last day to submit questions May 4, 2020 by 5:00PM CST
- **Project Proposals Due:** May 11, 2020 by 5:00PM CST
- **Selections Made By:** May 25, 2020

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 11, 2020**

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. Note that the plan should include options with and without travel to Bangladesh and Pakistan.
4. Resumes for each of the Prospective Contractor’s personnel assigned to work directly on the implementation of the contract.

5. Provide a minimum of two names and contact information for other similarly sized clients for reference purposes.

6. Detailed Fee and Expense Breakdown
   - 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.

7. 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 learn 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 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.