

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

**RFP TITLE:** TECHNICAL SUPPORT CONTRACTOR- BASIC MARKETS (SOY AMBASSADOR)

**RFP CONTACT:**

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**PROPOSAL DEADLINE:** February 21, 2019

**INTRODUCTION:**

United States Soybean Export Council (USSEC) requests proposals for a Technical Support Contractor for Basic Markets to serve as a Soy Ambassador in order to differentiate and build preference for U.S. Soy while ensuring that U.S. Soy enjoys market access in the markets it chooses to serve.

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 will assist in determining the fair market value for the work to be performed and allows USSEC the opportunity to evaluate various proposals and select the best contractor for the job based on experience, availability, expertise, approach, and cost.

The purpose of this RFP is to seek proposals for a Technical Support Contractor for Basic Markets to serve as a Soy Ambassador in order to differentiate and build preference for U.S. Soy while ensuring that U.S. Soy enjoys market access in the markets it chooses to serve.

**BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:**

The Context 2.0 I.M Strategy report recommends increasing investment in "Basic" markets. The reports provided the macroeconomic indicators suggesting which Basic markets to pursue. Since the U.S Soy farmers provided direction to pursue Basic markets, technical support will be required in the Basic Markets.

Key activities carried out by the technical support contractor are to differentiate and build preference for U.S. Soy while ensuring that U.S. Soy enjoys market access in the markets it chooses to serve. To achieve these overarching goals market access and relationship management strategies are developed in key markets. Communication with U.S. Exporters and our Regional Teams is critical to ensure our Programs are addressing the needs of both parties. As we implement the USB recently approved and enhanced Strategic Plan for International Marketing a greater level of engagement will be necessary ensuring USSEC's Program Investments have the appropriate focus in Basic (early stage demand) markets as this is the market space where the most upside potential can be realized. The challenges are significant requiring program customization and diversified investments to meet the unique needs of each market and the various focus areas within each country.

#### **TARGET AUDIENCE:**

International Soy Industry Customers within the Basic Markets.

Countries in Basic Market are: Algeria, Nicaragua, Bangladesh, India, Morocco, Egypt, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Pakistan, El Salvador, Honduras, Tunisia, and Myanmar.

#### **SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:**

*Under this contract, the Contractor shall promote the use and awareness of U.S. soybeans and soybean products through the following services:*

USSEC seeks a Contractor that holds an advanced degree and/or significant industry experience in U.S. Soy Technical/Management Support to serve as a Soy Ambassador on behalf of USSEC. As a Soy Ambassador, the Contractor will consult, attend, speak and/or moderate at various activities including seminars, on-site international visits, and major U.S. soy conferences. In addition, the Contractor must exhibit credibility with international soy industry customers within the Basic Markets.

- Contractor is expected to coordinate with USSEC country consultants based within the Basic Markets in regard to international on-site technical visits and speaking assignments.
- Contractor will be asked to prepare reports, presentations, provide general on-site consulting, and speak/moderate at various engagements.
- Contractor will make approximately 4-6 trips during the proposal timeline outlined below.
- Contractor will be asked to prepare a final report with recommendations

In addition to your credentials/cv and hourly rate, please provide a brief summary on why you or your company is best suited to carry out the services above.

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (if applicable)**

Submitter must have the following technological requirements:

- Reliable internet access
- Internet Explorer (version 11 or greater)
- Microsoft Office Suite (2013, 2016 or 365), which include:
  - Outlook
  - Excel
  - Word
  - PowerPoint

**DELIVERABLES:**

<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Description of Deliverables</b>
Prior to Each Proposed Mission	Provide draft presentations and/or reports as requested
Within 30 Days After Each Proposed Mission	Completion of mission report with recommendations of Basic markets to meet strategic goals.
December 05, 2019	Completion and submission to USSEC a final report with recommendations of Basic markets to meet strategic goals and recommendations for next steps
Ongoing	Submission of invoices and expenses will be in accordance with Section III.3.c. of this Addendum.

**PROJECT TIMELINE:**

The term of the proposal will last from 3/1/19 to 12/31/19.

**RFP TIMELINE:**

- RFP Distribution: February 15, 2019
- Last Day to Submit Questions: February 19, 2019 by 5:00PM Central Time

- Project Proposals Due: February 21, 2019 by 5:00PM Central Time
- Selections Made By: February 25, 2019
- Prospective Contractors Notified By: February 26, 2019

## INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to [RFP@USSEC.ORG](mailto:RFP@USSEC.ORG) by **5:00PM Central Time** on February 21, 2019.
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/>

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;
- United States Soybean Export Council (USSEC) 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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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