

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
5:00 PM CST, 10/11/2019

RFP TITLE: FACT-BASED NARRATIVE ON U.S. SOYBEAN CASH MARKETS

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: October 11, 2019

INTRODUCTION:

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) requests proposals to establish a fact-based narrative on the U.S. soybean cash markets in the context of global trade.

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 see proposals to establish a fact-based narrative on the U.S. soybean cash markets in the context of global trade. The project would include a cash market assessment for each major soy producing state as well a comparative analysis of the U.S. and two major competitors which explores the transparency, diversified supply and transportation networks.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

The U.S. system of soybean production and marketing channels has a competitive advantage over international competitors and benefits for customers. However, no collective source exists to provide information on the U.S. soybean cash market. A fact-based narrative on this

multifaceted system of origination points would help build a more accurate understanding of the cash market for soybeans throughout the U.S.

Building from this initial assessment of the U.S. system, it is necessary to appreciate how the U.S. is positioned in comparison to international competitors, Argentina and Brazil. Collection of similar information of these two major exporters' supply chains and cash discovery processes is critical to understand the competitive advantage or challenges the United States face. A full comparative analysis of the U.S. and the two competitors would better inform how the U.S. contents in the international market place.

Information on the U.S., coupled with a comparison to competitors could demonstrate where the United States has the greatest advantages in global trade and into specific export markets, while illustrating to customers the added value they benefit from when they originate from the U.S. Conversely, U.S. production and market channels can also understand where challenges may exist to increase our competitive advantage.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Participants in the export and import market channels of U.S. soybeans

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

A prospective consultant should address the scope of work below that would be integral to the project and include the following steps:

- Conduct a thorough fact-based narrative about the U.S. soybean cash markets of major soybean producing states to at least include:
 - Demand profile;
 - On-farm storage (state-level);
 - Soybean crush plant location (proximity if not in-state);
 - Major export pull (e.g. Dakotas-Minnesota pull to PNW);
 - Commercial locations each state by classification (private company, COOP, public company);
 - The average cost of a commercial operation that is buying grain from the farmer and then hauling/moving it to its customer or the next delivery point and weigh the value of this segment of the marketing channel in the U.S. system; and
 - Average basis levels before the trade friction and after the friction with China at no more than a 5-year cycle.
- Conduct a comparative analysis of the U.S. and two major competitors which explores the transparency, diversified supply and transportation networks to at least include:
 - Overview of Argentina and Brazil:
 - Details on major producing provinces, recognizing that role of farm size in comparison to those within U.S. "state scale.
 - Description of the cash discovery process in each country, the major players in that process and how it is the same or different than in the U.S.; and

- Analysis of how the U.S. compares to these markets in respect to transparency, diversified supply and structure and transportation networks to identify competitive advantages/disadvantages and customer benefits.

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
November 2019	Hold an initial conference call with USSEC team to finalize scope of work details and timeline, as well as existing information and expertise resources that may be necessary to perform the work.
November 2019 – May 2020	Conduct a thorough fact-based narrative about the U.S. soybean cash markets of major soybean producing states
November 2019 – May 2020	Conduct a comparative analysis of the U.S. and two major competitors which explores the transparency, diversified supply and transportation networks
May 31, 2020	Provide a draft report inclusive of the two deliverable components above as outlined in the scope of work and agreed to in the initial project meeting.
June 30, 2020	Provide a report inclusive of the two deliverable components above as outlined in the scope of work and agreed to in the initial project meeting.
As needed	Check-in with USSEC Director, rleeck@ussec.org and Project Manager, kbasala@ussec.org to report on developments being made and status of project.
Ongoing	Submit monthly invoices to USSEC Accounts Payable, ap@ussec.org and Project Manager, kbasala@ussec.org

PROJECT TIMELINE:

Our expectation is for the project to last from **November 1, 2019** to **June 30, 2020**. We are asking that the Project Proposal include details about what the proposed timeline and scope would look like.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** September 20, 2019
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** September 27 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Project Proposals Due:** October 11 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Selections Made By:** October 25, 2019
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** October 31, 2019

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 October 11, 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;
- 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.