

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE**  
**5:00 PM CST, 9/25/2020**

**RFP TITLE:** ANALYTICS FOR ISOFLAVONES AND SOYMILK/TOFU YIELDS FOR A SOY FOODS DATABASE

**RFP CONTACT:**

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**PROPOSAL DEADLINE:** 5:00 PM CST, 9/25/2020

**INTRODUCTION:**

U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. requests proposals to assist in the analytical work for a U.S. soy foods database.

The Canadian Soybean industry, through the Ontario Soybean and Canola Committee, conducts an annual soyfood survey that includes the majority of soy food bean varieties grown in Canada, and quality attributes associated with these soybeans. The results from this survey feeds into a Canadian soyfood database that is used by the Canadian soybean industry to promote Canadian soyfood beans. The database includes information on the types of soyfood beans grown in Canada, as well as their quality attributes. The U.S. currently does not have such a system, leaving U.S. suppliers, and the industry as a whole at a distinct disadvantage in soyfood marketing.

**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 related to the analysis of soyfood beans for the quality attributes related to; total isoflavones and soymilk/tofu yields. This chosen contractor will work with the University of Minnesota, who will be providing analysis of other quality attributes.

**BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:**

U.S. industry and soy food exporters currently stand at a disadvantage to their Canadian counterparts as no U.S. soyfood database exists. The purpose of this project is to analyze soybeans for quality attributes that will later be included in a U.S. soyfood quality database.

The University of Minnesota (UMN) is currently engaged in a project with Smith Bucklin/The United Soybean Board to provide quality analysis for U.S. soyfood beans. The UMN obtains soyfood samples from U.S. soyfood exporters, analyzing provided samples for: seed size, protein, oil, sucrose, oligosaccharides, total free sugars, amino acid profile, fatty acid profile. This RFP seeks to augment the work conducted by UMN by providing an analysis of total isoflavones, and soymilk/tofu yields for the samples provided by U.S. industry.

The chosen contractor will work with the University of MN to obtain samples and ensure that sample/data continuity exists so that the UMN analysis can be tied to the contractor's analysis for each sample. Every sample that is tested by the UMN will be sent on to the chosen contractor in order to provide isoflavone analysis. Due to the size of samples required, soymilk/tofu yield samples will be provided by exporters to the contractor directly. As this testing is not required of all soy food beans (i.e. natto, miso, tempeh), it is expected that the number of samples provided by exporters for this test will be considerably less than the samples provided by UMN.

In previous year's the UMN received approximately 250 soyfood samples from exporters, it is expected that there will be an increase in samples, however 250 samples should be considered the floor for samples when determining project management and per unit costs. This applies only to testing of isoflavones; testing of tofu/soymilk yields has not been conducted in the past, so no concrete number can be provided, therefore contractors should plan off of 50 tofu/soymilk samples provided.

It is expected that samples will begin to be provided to the chosen contractor sometime in November 2020 for isoflavone analysis, and likely starting in November 2020 for soymilk/tofu testing. Testing will be conducted through the beginning of 2021.

**TARGET AUDIENCE:**

- International soyfood buyers
- Domestic soyfood exporters
- Domestic soyfood stakeholders (farmers, USB, USSEC, SSGA, QSSBs)

**SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:**

- Contractor will work with the University of MN to obtain samples and ensure data/sample continuity.
- Testing of soybean samples for isoflavones.
- Testing of soybeans samples for tofu/soymilk needs.

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (if applicable)**

- In budget, break out project management cost, and per sample cost for both isoflavones, and soymilk/tofu yields.
- Contractor will need to provide USSEC with an overview of methodology used to determine tofu/soymilk yields.

**DELIVERABLES:**

<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Description of Deliverables</b>
Week of 10/12	Meeting with USSEC/UMN to discuss setting sample stewardship/data collection.
TBD	Early data provided to the UMN, and USSEC.
Ongoing	All data will be provided in Excel format to the USSEC, UMN, and stakeholders.
Ongoing	Bi-weekly updates (email or phone call)

**PROJECT TIMELINE:**

Our expectation is that the work called for in this RFP will start in early October 2020, and will last up until early 2021.

**RFP TIMELINE:**

- **RFP Distribution:** September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Project Proposals Due:** September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Selections Made By:** October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**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 Sept. 25, 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.

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, audiotope, 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).

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.