



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

To United Soybean Board from consultants for Strategic Planning Facilitation Services

OVERVIEW

United Soybean Board (USB) is launching the planning process to develop its next strategic plan and is seeking proposals for the facilitation of that process. USB encourages firms with demonstrated capacity in successfully developing consensus-based strategic plans, strong facilitation skills across diverse audiences, and proven experience with evergreen, renewable strategic plans coupled with annual planning processes to submit their proposals for consideration. Firms demonstrating capacity and experience with innovative approaches to the strategic planning process are desired.

SCOPE OF WORK & DESIRED OUTCOMES

USB's current 5-year strategic plan expires in 2021 and they are seeking consulting services to facilitate the next strategic planning process. The resulting strategic plan will position USB to be nimble and responsive to internal and external influences on an ongoing basis.

Ideally, USB's next strategic plan will:

- clearly articulate USB's mission and vision (both may be updated to reflect 2022+ plan)
- be evergreen, allowing for measurement and evaluation and refinements as priorities of the organization evolve
- determine short- and long-term areas of strategic organizational focus
- establish SMART goals, objectives, and outcomes that are aligned with the key strategy areas
- serve as the blueprint for ongoing program design
- identify key partnerships (both ag and non-ag) needed to advance the strategic plan, while positioning USB as the trusted industry leader in information creation and dissemination
- include communication and marketing strategies to amplify USB's research and promotion strategies

The selected consultant will work with USB’s strategic plan task force made up of USB Board members, industry thought leaders, and USB staff. Additionally, the consultant will be expected to collaborate with current USB consultants developing measurement, tracking and evaluation tools and systems (currently in progress). This work may involve performance measurements that will require modifications in the collection of necessary data as the organization augments and refines success measures. This collaboration will likely include:

- Identification of key performance areas
- Analysis of necessary and available performance data
- Preparation of performance measures from the following categories:
 - Input Measures
 - Output Measures
 - Outcome Measures

DELIVERABLES

The selected consultant will be responsible for producing monthly status reports to USB staff

Additionally, the selected consultant will be expected to compile the results of the strategic planning work sessions and produce a publication quality version of the final written Strategic Plan document. An electronic, editable version will also be provided to USB for further use and publication.

TIMELINE

**Components of the timeline are subject to change as determined by the strategic planning task force in consultation with USB staff and the selected consultant.*

March 13, 2019 Request for Proposals open to submissions

April 12, 2019 Submission deadline (5:00pm CDT)

April-May 2019 Field work can begin

December 2019 Initial strategic options presented to the Board

A detailed timeline with additional milestones in the timeline to be developed in consultation with the strategic planning task force.

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Proposal deadline: April 12, 2019 (5:00pm) CDT

Submit proposals via email to: Emily Altheuser at ealtheuser@unitedsoybean.org with the following subject line: **USB Strategic Plan Facilitation Proposal - [FIRM NAME]**

Proposals are to be submitted in PDF (Portable Document File) format not to exceed 10 single sided pages, font no smaller than 10pt. If the file is too large for email, a link to the file should be provided. Late arrivals will not be accepted. Mail submissions will not be accepted. It is the responsibility of the bidder to ensure that the response is received by USB by the closing submission date. A response may be excluded from further consideration if it is not received by the deadline or does not follow the specified format.

Proposals should include the following information:

- A thorough description of approach to strategic planning and facilitation
- A summary of strategic planning capacity and experience with examples of similar projects completed within the last 1-2 year (specific examples of working with other collaborative or consensus-driven initiatives to create an evergreen strategic vision and strategic plan are highly encouraged)
- A thorough work plan including a detailed project timeline, with the strategic plan approved by the Board no later than December 2020. The work plan should include the specific activities to be conducted at each stage, milestones and deliverables tied to those activities.
- A listing of the project team, their role(s) and relevant experience
- Detailed project budget including all projected reimbursable expenses
- Three client references that can attest to the experience and capabilities of the consultant on similar areas of work

QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal consultant will possess the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience with world class and industry-leading facilitation methods
- Experience at successfully developing consensus-based, evergreen strategic plans
- Understanding and ability to facilitate highly innovative approaches to the strategic planning process
- Strong facilitation skills with diverse audiences

- The ability to foster a collaborative, engaging, and inclusive environment with diverse stakeholders
- Experience at creating a neutral environment for, and soliciting input from, individuals from various sectors
- Competency at gathering, analyzing and synthesizing data to inform the strategic planning process
- Knowledge of cutting-edge strategic planning technology and software as applicable
- Ability to constructively challenge key stakeholders, resulting in higher quality and more accurate outcomes
- Demonstrated experience inspiring others to think innovatively

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Direct additional questions to Emily Altheuser at ealtheuser@unitedsoybean.org.

INFORMATION AND 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 soybean industry. USB is governed by a board 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.

Led by volunteer farmers from across the United States, USB is today's leading source for soybean international and domestic marketing expertise, soy-related health information, and support for soybean research and development.

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 criteria by which USDA administers USB is outlined in the *Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Order (Order)*. Both documents can be accessed through the website through the provided links. The Act and Order contain certain constraints under which the checkoff program must operate, specifically restricting the use of checkoff funds for lobbying the United States government.

For additional information please visit the USB website: www.unitedsoybean.org