

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
END RESULT CONTRACT
SUBMISSION DEADLINE
17:00 CT, 04/15/2022**

RFP TITLE: USSEC AMERICAS MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTION PLAN

RFP CONTACT:

Name: Oswaldo Almeida

Email: americasRFP@ussec.org

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: 17:00 CT, APRIL 15, 2022

INTRODUCTION:

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) is a non-profit organization that promotes U.S. soybeans and soybean products to international customers through knowledge transfer, on-site trainings, seminars, workshops, conferences, industry tours and demonstrations. The specific goal of the USSEC Americas Program is to promote, within the region, the use of U. S. soy products, in human consumption, aquaculture, animal feeds and the best feeding practices. A key program objective is to see a growing, long-term, high-quality, feed-based industry in the Americas Region and globally.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC Americas seeks a communications agency to develop a multiyear marketing and communications action plan for the region and implement activities for the first two to three months of the plan (through August 2022). Applicants should have bilingual capabilities in English and Spanish, an understanding of the agribusiness sector in the Americas, and experience with relevant media outlets.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

USSEC works to 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. USSEC has a global director of communications, based in the U.S., who coordinates overall corporate messaging, brand image, and customer engagement strategy. Given the importance of the Americas as a market for U.S. SOY, USSEC has been increasing support for marketing and communications activities that are tailored to the region. This includes the recent development of a regional marketing strategy and the expansion of the regional team to include marketing specialists. At present, the team is most advanced in the development and implementation of marketing and communications related to sustainability. Through this RFP, USSEC Americas seeks a communications agency to develop a multiyear marketing and communications action plan to advance the regional strategy in the Americas. The plan will incorporate marketing and

communications activities around sustainability as well as USSEC's broader work to promote the U.S. SOY advantage in the region. The communications agency will develop a plan that details concrete actions, timelines, and outputs that optimize use of human and financial resources to achieve the objectives. The communications agency will then implement activities for the first few months of the plan (through August 2022) with the USSEC team assuming responsibility beyond that date.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The contractor will develop the marketing and communications action plan for the USSEC Americas team. The target audience for marketing and communications efforts includes existing and potential customers and end users of U.S. SOY in the Americas region.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- Convene an initial consultation session with key USSEC global communications and regional team members to: 1) learn about the current strategy, goals, and objectives for communications and marketing activities in the region; 2) understand opportunities and constraints; 3) brainstorm ideas; and 4) finalize the timeline and process for developing the action plan.
- Develop a communications and marketing action plan for USSEC Americas covering at least a two-year period. The plan will provide details on specific actions – including messaging, target audience, and outputs – as well as a timeline for implementation. It will also indicate actions that the communications agency will perform during the contract period. The plan will include:
 - Recommendations and actions to leverage marketing and communications opportunities around signature events. USSEC holds four recurring events in the region – the Cooperators Conference, Sustainability Conference, Crushers Conference, and Aquaculture Investment Workshop.
 - Recommendations and actions for ongoing marketing and communications such as development of online content, newsletters, articles, and other materials.
- Implement the action plan through the end of August 2022. This will include providing marketing and communications support, such as media engagement, around one regional event (the Cooperators Conference in July 2022, as estimated month).
- Produce a final narrative report summarizing all work performed under the contract.
- Note: The action plan and final report will be written in English. The actual materials developed during the implementation phase will be in Spanish and English.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The contractor is expected to work closely with the USSEC team and maintain regular contact throughout the contract period. USSEC will provide the successful applicant with further information on existing general communications plans and preferred approach. USSEC will also provide the contractor with information on compliance requirements from the project's funder.

Note the following requirements for preparing the budget proposal:

- Proposal must be itemized, if there are different employees working at different rates and different amounts of hours, each of those amounts/employees/units of time will need to be listed out.
- Payments are made monthly upon actual deliverables. USSEC will require an invoice for the number of units worked, along with an English narrative report of services provided during the month.
- The fee must include all consulting fees, employee compensation and benefits, overhead, travel expenses or any other type of expenses incurred to effectively complete the services/deliverables agreed upon. The payment represents the sole and complete liability of USSEC for services rendered in relation to the agreement and every payment must be attached to a deliverable.
- USSEC budget table template must be completed outlining how the fee was derived, including hourly rates and an estimated total number of hours, as well as the anticipated out-of-pocket expenses. USSEC will rate proposals based on the following factors:
 - Responsiveness to the requirements set forth in this Request for Proposal (RFP).
 - Relevant past performance/experience
 - Samples of work
 - Fee (described above)
 - This proposal is subject to approval of funding.

<i>Completion Date</i>	<i>Description of Deliverables</i>
<i>Within 5 business days of contract start date</i>	<i>Conduct a brief, introductory call with USSEC team to kick-off the project and share background information.</i>
<i>May 27, 2022</i>	<i>Conduct a planning session with the USSEC regional and communications teams to: 1) learn about the current strategy, goals, and objectives for communications and marketing activities in the region; 2) understand opportunities and constraints; 3) brainstorm ideas; and 4) finalize timeline and process for developing the action plan.</i>
<i>June 3, 2022</i>	<i>Submit draft marketing and communications action plan (in English) for USSEC review and comment.</i>
<i>June 10, 2022</i>	<i>Submit revised marketing and communications action plan with USSEC comments addressed.</i>
<i>Ongoing through August 30, 2022</i>	<i>Implement activities in accordance with the timeline and deliverables detailed in the action plan.</i>
<i>August 15, 2022</i>	<i>Review progress and suggest any changes to the communications and marketing action plan going forward based on two months of implementation experience.</i>
<i>No later than August 30, 2022</i>	<i>Provide USSEC project manager with:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Invoice</i> <i>2. Electronic materials and photographic evidence of work performed.</i> <i>3. Post-board report including summary and receipts of all expenses.</i>

	4. <i>Brief English narrative report of the work performed noting any issues, challenges, next steps, and recommendations.</i>
--	--

RFP TIMELINE:

- RFP distribution: March 15, 2022.
- Last day to submit questions: April 1, 2022 by 17:00 CT
- Q&A Session: TBD. Send email to americasRFP@ussec.org to receive the zoom link
- Project proposals due: April 15, 2022 by 17:00 CT - email to americasRFP@ussec.org
- Selections made by April 20, 2022.
- Prospective contractors notified by April 22, 2022.

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. *Please email the proposal to americasRFP@ussec.org by 17:00 CT Mexico Time on April 15, 2022*
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.
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 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 doing 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 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.