

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE**  
**5:00 PM CST, 09/18/2024**

### **RFP TITLE : ANIMAL NUTRITION & AQUACULTURE COMMUNICATIONS CONTRACTOR**

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**PROPOSAL DEADLINE:** September 18, 2024

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. formally requests proposals for an Animal Nutrition and Aquaculture Communications Contractor for the Animal and Aquaculture Focus Area.

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, advocates for the use of soy in livestock and aquaculture feed and human consumption, promotes the benefits of soy use through education and connects industry leaders through a robust membership program.

#### **PURPOSE OF RFP:**

USSEC's standard practice is to RFP every 3 years in an open 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 engaging a Communications Contractor for the development and execution of strategic communications and marketing plans for the global Animal Nutrition and Aquaculture program.

#### **BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:**

The Animal Nutrition and Aquaculture Communications Contractor involves developing and executing communication strategies to effectively promote the advantages of U.S. Soy as a feed ingredient for animal and aquaculture diets in order to differentiate and create a preference for U.S. Soy in international markets. This position ensures the development and dissemination of clear and consistent messaging and branding globally, all while ensuring compliance with USSEC standards.

The contractor selected by USSEC will take direction from the worldwide (WW) Communications Director and WW Animal & Aquaculture Focus Area Director (FAD).

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

### Essential Functions, Duties, and Responsibilities:

The Animal Nutrition and Aquaculture Communications Contractor will develop an integrated communication strategy and execute tactics through a multifaceted approach. They will partner with the Animal Nutrition and Aquaculture FAD to plan and respond to evolving communication needs, both internally and externally, when relevant. Additionally, they will partner with Regional Communications Leads to drive consistent brand experience via messaging, communication and marketing assets.

Work will be directed by the FAD and Worldwide (WW) Communications Director to ensure messages are clear, accurate, and aligned with overall USSEC goals.

### Key responsibilities include:

- **Overall Communication Strategy Development:** Under the direction of the FAD and WW Communications Director, develop Animal Nutrition and Aquaculture communications strategy and platform and execute targeted marketing and communications campaigns.
- **Stakeholder Communication:** The role involves crafting and distributing content that raises awareness of the advantages of U.S. Soy as a feed ingredient. This includes managing social media, press releases, newsletters, and public events to engage target audiences and differentiate and build a preference for U.S. Soy. Examples include:
  - Media interactions, customer testimonials, other opportunities to generate content, presentation alignment
  - Develop an annual editorial calendar of articles and social media posts, with a focus on USSEC LinkedIn, to promote and elevate awareness and reputation of U.S. Soy
  - Partner closely with the Regional Communications Leads to proactively identify and prepare for relevant media opportunities, conferences, and interviews as part of the overall communications strategy.
- **Communications Materials and Media Development:** The role supports the creation of customer-facing communications materials including fact sheets, web content, advertisements, tradeshow booths, and informational/testimonial videos.
  - Coordination of website improvements and content
  - Gathering video testimonials and generating multimedia content
  - Writing and messaging development for press releases, talking points, videos
  - Develop marketing materials including owned content in support of thought leadership, and strategic business communications (e.g. supplement CEO's presentations, marketing campaigns).
  - Create marketing assets, often in partnership with vendors and external agencies within budget and time (e.g. tradeshow booths, advertising campaigns, displays, printed materials etc.)

- Develop a wide variety of broad communications such as presentations, conference materials, infographics, and others.

Domestic and international travel as needed to support communications requirements on the ground for specific high-value industry events.

**RFP TIMELINE:**

- RFP Distribution: September 3, 2024
- Project Proposals Due: September 18, 2024
- Final Selection: September 25, 2024

**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) and [kenskat@ussec.org](mailto:kenskat@ussec.org) by September 18, 2024, 12:00 PM CST
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 Contractor's 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: <https://ussec.org/about-ussec/>

**USB's Long Range Strategic Plan** can be found here: <https://www.unitedsoybean.org/strategic-plan/>

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.

### **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).

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.