



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE 5:00 PM CT, 5/20/2024

RFP TITLE: INTERNATIONAL IDENTITY PRESERVED TECHNICAL ADVISOR

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: MAY 20, 2024

INTRODUCTION:

The Specialty Soya and Grains Alliance (SSGA) – the identity preserved alliance of the United States – requests proposals to assist in implementing projects related to its programs under the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)/Agricultural Trade Program (ATP) to increase exports of U.S. identity preserved specialty soya and specialty grains through foreign market development programs. SSGA is looking for an International Identity Preserved Technical Advisor (IPTA) to perform work related to the South Asia region.

SSGA is the business alliance of identity preserved agriculture in the United States – the leading voice for the industry that delivers traceable, high-quality, variety-specific field crops to food markets worldwide. Its members include producers, processors, suppliers and transportation allies whose work ensures integrity throughout the supply chain. SSGA's mission is to build, grow and sustain a reliable supply chain that ensures integrity of the end-product, with a commitment to quality, stewardship and innovation. SSGA's vision is to promote and enhance value throughout the supply chain, from farmers to food businesses.

The purpose of the International Identity Preserved Technical Advisor is to develop, manage and oversee the implementation of SSGA initiatives and projects in the region. The IPTA implements SSGA projects, provides administrative, logistical, and regulatory/information support for those projects to help expand US exports of IP products to the area. The advisor liaises with other associations involved in this field. The role (or position) reports directly to SSGA Executive Director but will work with SSGA partner contractors and members in the country/region.





PURPOSE OF RFP:

SSGA's standard practice is to RFP 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 SSGA the opportunity to evaluate various proposals and select the best contractor – or multiple contractors – for the job(s) based on experience, availability, expertise, approach, and cost.

FAS/USDA awarded foreign market development grants in February 2019 for SSGA to implement several broadly defined projects overseas. SSGA built a U.S. Identity Preserved assurance plan and created an Identity Preserved United States brand mark that were launched in December 2021 and currently in use by 15 U.S. companies.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

The International Identity Preserved Technical Advisor (IPTA) will coordinate and support SSGA's projects and initiatives to advance implementation of SSGA's strategy in the South Asia region, provide overall technical vision and leadership in areas that relate to SSGA. The IPTA will be responsible for a wide range of programs. The IPTA needs to learn, keep abreast of, and be able to communicate the current and developing identity preserved IP handling systems, practices and resources commonly employed by U.S. Identity Preserved soy, grain and oilseed exporters to help assure the overseas buyers they will receive the high quality and specific product type they want. These may include, but not limited to: independent, third-party certification agencies; seed certification; private companies and laboratories used for verification of standards; shipping, logistics and packaging means that aid in delivering U.S. quality IP products globally. The IPTA, at a minimum, will be held accountable for the following four categories.

Project Implementation and Administration

Provide support to SSGA staff and global contractors to implement project plans. Take full ownership of all aspects of the IPTA region. Create an environment that fosters collaboration between SSGA members and in-region stakeholders, such as other commodity organization and U.S. embassy offices of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service.

Respond to questions from home and field offices regarding SSGA's initiatives and programs. Assess business opportunities and monitor developments that will affect SSGA projects.

Develop and manage strategies to achieve project implementation and success. Oversee mission critical projects with a structured approach to see initiatives from beginning through implementation to review. Have a culture of continuous improvement through structured, solution-oriented problem solving with the support of SSGA cross functional association partners.





Conduct regular conference calls with relevant SSGA staff and stakeholders. Coordinate any meetings and conferences as requested by the SSGA Executive Director. Maintain records of conference calls and other appropriate documents and disseminate such documents to SSGA Executive Director.

Assist in efforts to achieve the goals and objectives of SSGA. This includes coordinating, developing, writing and submitting any requested information from the SSGA Executive Director. Review project deliverables and reports for completeness and provides comments and technical input.

The ability to trace a product up and down the supply chain has become on an important component of trade. Your time will evaluate and share your knowledge of trade with SSGA staff and stakeholders and foreign buyers. You will review projects from SSGA in your region and provide expert advice on them to staff and contractors about their relevance and success.

Seek input and program suggestions from SSGA members, staff, and other relevant associations including FAS and other entities (domestic and foreign). In conjunction with SSGA members and staff, coordinate planning, program implementation and evaluation of activities. Prepare and deliver presentations to provide updates on the progress made on programs.

As necessary, travel domestically and internationally as directed by the SSGA Executive Director. Participate in outside organizational meetings or events related to IP standards as directed by the SSGA Executive Director (such as conferences, trade shows).

Communication/People Focus Responsibilities

Set the tone for SSGA by role modeling honest communication, integrity and a get it done attitude. Establish positive two-way communication with SSGA staff and partner groups, sourcing feedback and fresh ideas from staff and sharing initiative plans and objectives with the team.

Implement SSGA's relationship based, consultative export program to develop customers, build IP sales pipeline and meet strategy goals. Drive broader and more in-depth relationships through frequent proactive contact with stakeholders, especially key decision makers at multiple levels within organizations. Raise SSGA awareness by meeting with stakeholders to support our current partnerships and to look for opportunities to generate new ones. Working within a business environment of other USA commodity trade associations, interact, support, and communicate with other groups.

Serve as a trusted advisor and work in partnership with other leaders to integrate messages and methods in support of SSGA priorities. Develop, execute and measure external communications strategies that support SSGA business priorities. Write and edit "how-to" and





other guidance documents, reports, summaries and other written content for digital placement; identify which channels to use for each campaign; telling stories in a clear, concise and engaging manner.

Build, manage, and maintain relationships with stakeholders and third-party influencers in the region. Facilitate communication, outreach, and close coordination with all stakeholders of the activity, especially on substantive matters. Ensure SSGA members have effective channels of communication with customers. Proactively work with members of the media, following the media policies of SSGA, its partners and grants obligations.

Market Information

Research the economic, agricultural and trade policies that pertain to assigned areas of responsibility and prepares briefing memoranda, correspondence, market profiles, etc. Analyze information needed to formulate SSGA strategies and policy.

Participate in the compilation, review and analysis of economic information and data regarding production, trade, consumption, prices, etc. Prepare oral and written briefings as required, with thorough analysis of policy options and strategies.

Identify and prioritize target types of end users and buyers in region/countries for food grade IP market development. Identify constraints and opportunities on selling more USA IP products. Make available a customized database of current and potential international customers.

Identify any pertinent issues that enhance or may detract from the preference a foreign buyer may have for U.S. identity preserved soy products. Report on logistics, cargo container, shipping or certification obstacles or opportunities.

Trade Servicing

SSGA has created an implemented an international IP value-added branding effort, usidentitypreserved.org, to target buyers around the world. Both traditional and digital marketing will back SSGA educational efforts to get global customers to think "U.S. First" when purchasing IP value-added products. The effort also included an educational platform and materials, SSGA University, that the IPTA, contacts and buyers use in their region, along with inperson meetings/presentations and webinars to guide global purchasers on how to source and use the U.S. IP Soybean brand.

The IP value-added soybean activities will center around Identity Preserved International Summit in 2025 in the USA. The conference and trade show will include educational seminars, and short courses for foreign buyers to better utilize U.S. IP value-added soybean products, tour options to see U.S. IP value-added soybean production/processing and logistics, and purchaser/supplier meetings.





The Identity Preserved Technical Advisor (IPTA) will support this IP branding campaign in the following ways:

Visit with potential importers, distributors, retailers, food service and food ingredient buyers and develop a database of the companies that are the most reputable, experienced, and in the best position to deal with SSGA exporters. Coordinate with SSGA's other IPTAs in the North Asia and Southeast Asia regions to enter trade leads and notes into a system, providing updates on contacts listed, and vetting trade lead inquiries for dissemination to SSGA member companies.

Conduct outreach and educational efforts on behalf of SSGA to encourage participation in SSGA programs and services including the trade shows and conferences. Follow up with buyers from conferences, trade shows, seminars, and other special projects to obtain evaluations and identify problems which may be inhibiting sales. The IPTA will be responsible for providing a monthly report outlining the trade servicing completed and any results achieved.

Liaise with USDA/FAS Posts on a regular basis, U.S. Soybean Export Council, and the U.S. Grain Council as needed to maintain awareness of policy, trade and market issues that may affect US IP soy industry exports. Inform SSGA of market development opportunities and market intelligence that arise throughout the year that should be included in the SSGA communication tools that goes out to exporters (newsletters, social media, blog, etc.).

QUALIFICATIONS and WORK EXPERIENCE

Selected contractors, or employees of management companies should meet these criteria:

- U.S. Citizen or U.S. Permanent Resident (Green Card Holder). The contractor may be located domestically or abroad.
- Bachelor's degree or equivalent work experience; Master's degree preferred. Minimum ten years of relevant administrative or professional work experience.
- Previous experience in market research, market assessment and evaluation, and market promotion/public relations activities. Experience with not-for-profit groups, international marketing, and food and/or agricultural groups will be considered favorably. You should have knowledge of, or demonstrate the ability to develop, USDA export market development programs, the structure of the U.S. soy and specialty grains industry, and the technical trade issues affecting identity preserved grain.
- Knowledgeable about the trade in field crops' exports in containers and/or identity preserved trade practices. Requirements of the functions of trade documents and certifications.





- Experience with the production, loading, transport, and end use of field crops for specific end uses. Knowledgeable about trends in seed production, farm production, or processing of field crops for food and nutritional ingredients.
- Fluency in written and spoken English required. Proficiency in at least one other language spoken in the assigned geographic area is preferred. Strong cross-culture communication and sensitivity skills are required.
- Must have the ability to travel within the region. Demonstrated resourcefulness in problem solving and initiative to learn new skills. Must show a knowledge of how to comply with USDA travel and ethics regulations and be prepared to organize travel and request travel funds by fulfilling those regulations. Possession of intellectual, communications, leadership, and managerial skills necessary to develop, articulate and implement SSGA's strategic goals.
- Ability to multitask with strong attention to detail, organization, and time management with minimum oversight.
- Proficiency/strong knowledge of MS Office applications.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (if applicable):

The contractor will travel as needed, by prior agreement with the purchaser (SSGA) as to cost and reimbursement. The contractor will primarily use telephone, video conference, or travel (by prior agreement with the purchaser) to conduct the survey. All travel will be at rates and regulations for U.S. Federal travel and will be reimbursed under prior agreement. The contractor will submit the written report by the agreed deadline for acceptance. The purchaser will have the right to review the submitted report, and identify gaps, omissions, or mistakes, and request the contractor to repair its submission. The contractor will agree to finish at their expense any missing text or data requested by the purchaser if the report is rejected at the contractor's cost. SSGA is flexible with respect to location of the contractor inside the United States or abroad. The location of the contractor may be a factor in the determination of the bid.

DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT

Respondents may be individual consultants or agencies and should include CV of lead consultant with proposal. The principal work should be completed June 1 to Sept. 30, 2024, with the possibility of extension.

Renewable upon the discretion of the SSGA Executive Director, and as governed by contracting principles in place relative to SSGA's contracting authority.





RFP TIMELINE:

RFP Distribution: May 3, 2024

• Last Day to Submit Questions: May 17, 2024 by 5 PM Central Time

Project Proposals Due: May 20, 2024, by 5 PM Central Time

• Selections Made By: May 28, 2024

Prospective Contractors Notified By: May 31, 2024

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

- 1. An emailed proposal to rfp@soyagrainsalliance.org by 5 PM Central Daylight Time, May 20, 2024.
- 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. A minimum of two names and contact information for other similarly sized clients for reference purposes.

6. Detailed Budget

- a. 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. A proposal 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.





- SSGA 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 SSGA and the contractor selected.
- Confidentiality Without SSGA'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, SSGA reserves the right to request additional information or clarifications from proposers, or to allow corrections of errors and omissions.
- SSGA reserves the right to reject any proposal that is in any way inconsistent or irregular. SSGA 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 SSGA 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.
- SSGA and Prospective Contractor agrees to comply with the provisions of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). SSGA 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

Information about SSGA can be found here: soyagrainsalliance.org.

Information about U.S. Identity Preserved can be found here: usidentitypreserved.org.

SSGA is the business alliance of identity preserved agriculture in the United States – the leading voice for the industry that delivers traceable, high-quality, variety-specific field crops to food markets worldwide. Its members include producers, processors, suppliers and transportation allies whose work ensures integrity throughout the supply chain.

SSGA's mission is to build, grow and sustain a reliable supply chain that ensures integrity of the end product, with a commitment to quality, stewardship and innovation.

SSGA's vision is to promote and enhance value throughout the supply chain, from farmers to food businesses.

This RFP is part of an activity approved for financing under the FAS/USDA Agricultural Trade Promotion program with a focus on Southeast Asia, North Asia and South Asia and a goal of creating an identity preserved brand that identifies the United States as a quality origin for U.S. field crops and helps growers, processors, shippers, end users and food and health professionals to:

- Source U.S. IP soybeans and soy products, and specialty grains
- Connect seamlessly with exporters
- Understand the benefits of U.S. identity preserved products
- Trace the origin of U.S. identity preserved soybean and specialty grain products
- Navigate regulatory pitfalls to food processing
- Better understand logistics of getting products to end user

SSGA is undertaking this RFP directly with the contractor, with operational support and assistance by agreement with the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC). Through a global network of international offices 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.

USSEC's strategic plan can be found here: ussec.org/about-ussec/vision-mission.

SSGA and USSEC partner when applicable to provide resources for the identity-preserved industry. SSGA also focuses on other identity preserved crops and the shipping of these products.

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.