



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP Title: Central American Soy Trade and Business Opportunity Analysis and Targets

RFP Contact: Marypat Corbett **Email:** mcorbett@soy.org

Proposal Due: October 4, 2019; 17:00 CDT

Organization Background

The American Soybean Association (ASA) was founded in 1920 by soybean farmers and extension workers looking to promote the crop for high protein applications in developing market settings. Overseas activities began in the -1950s and to date, ASA has served in more than eighty countries globally. In 2000, ASA expanded and focused its international role and founded the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) whose mission is to create sustainable solutions for the protein demands of people in developing countries through the introduction and use of soy products. Since its creation, ASA/WISHH has been enhancing the protein intake of many nations through market development, education and research.

Today, ASA/WISHH works in both the feed and food sectors, in 18 countries providing a multitude of services to support its international market development activities. This is accomplished through working exclusively in partnership with host country and international community stakeholders and drawing upon the resources and experience of the commercial sector, Private Voluntary Organizations, host country and U.S. governments, international donors, academia, as well as the services of a cadre of ASA/WISHH professionals with technical expertise in the agricultural, international and commercial development spheres.

Project Purpose

WISHH received U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Trade Program (ATP) funding to conduct a market assessment Central America. This assessment will be an integral part of the future soy entrepreneurial program and develop new customers for U.S. soy products. U.S. soybean interests desire to expand their market penetration into the Central American aquaculture and food/beverage sectors. The purpose of this RFP is to solicit applications from companies and/or individuals to conduct a three-phase market investigation.

The first phase of the market investigation is to gain a better understanding of the extent to which the current China/US trade war is impacting US/Central American trade patterns and how they can be leveraged to maximize an increase in U.S. exports. Lots of experimenting is underway with soy related trade patterns and evolving trade links which may become permanent.

The second phase of the market investigation is a business opportunity analysis for soybean ingredient usage in the Central American aquaculture and human food/beverage sectors. The investigation results would be shared with entrepreneurs/elite business owners/investors in



the region to inform and assist them in evaluating and determining the sector(s) with the highest appeal and/or best fit for their near-term investment.

In most emerging/developing markets there are entrepreneurs, families and companies with capital and the desire to invest in new business opportunities. The third phase of the market investigation is to construct a prospects list composed of the leading businesspeople and investors regionally known for their successful entrepreneurial endeavors and/or business investments. Their business ventures to date may or may not utilize soy, or currently be in the aquaculture or food/beverage sectors.

Markets to be Assessed

Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

Scope of Work

Phase 1: Conduct a market assessment of the impact the current US/China trade war is having on U.S./Central American trade patterns and how they can be leveraged to maximize an increase in U.S. soybeans and/or soy protein ingredient exports. Examples of these new soy trade patterns include China's recent agreement to import Argentine soybean meal; the U.S. exporting whole soybeans to Argentina; and Mexico, a long-time U.S. customer, increasing their imports of whole soybeans and soybean meal from South American sources in lieu of sourcing U.S. product. The information gathered in the trade assessment will be helpful to conducting business in the new trade environment. The U.S./Central American trade assessment will look at any possible impediments and recommend what should be done.

Some potential areas for investigation include:

- The impact of significantly reduced China container traffic to/from the U.S., on U.S. container pricing, availability, and location (containers are the export backbone of U.S. soy exports into Central American markets)
- U.S. exporting whole soybeans to Argentina and Brazil
- Central American Country free trade agreements with China
- Mexico looking to South American soy suppliers to replace traditionally U.S. sourced product

Phase 2: Conduct a country level assessment collecting the quantitative and qualitative data necessary to, at the minimum, provide a realistic impression of the fundamental market dynamics and growth prospects in each country's aquaculture and food/beverage industry. Those aspects that would particularly interest a new business investor. Some potential areas for investigation include:

- Aquaculture and food/beverage market sector sizes, associated trends, projected growth
 - Stage of value chain development, current market system
- Current and near-term market conditions/trends within aquaculture and the food/beverages market sectors

- Market drivers
 - Barriers to entry
 - Opportunities and potential threats to success including non-tariff barriers
- Channels of distribution and key/prospective players
- Competitive intelligence – Companies, products already in the sectors
 - Market Share and geographic penetration
 - Partners
 - Production capacity
 - Distribution
 - Product offerings
 - Strengths, weaknesses, etc.
- The target markets/consumers; how they make their purchase decisions
 - What marketing strategies appeal to them?
- Recommendations and/or gap opportunities seen as likely business successes

Phase 3: Conduct a regional market sweep to construct a list of prospects composed of the leading and mid-size businesspeople and investors regionally known for their successful entrepreneurial endeavors and/or business investments. Those businesses/investments may or may not utilize soy and/or currently be in the aquaculture or food/beverage sectors. The prospects list should minimally include such information on the prospects as:

- Name and current contact information
- Concise 3 – 5-year business history
 - Business holdings/investments, by country and corresponding business category

DELIVERABLES

- Proposal document should include the evaluation approach for each of the three phases; methods for data collection; overview about data processing and analysis; list of team members' qualifications roles, and responsibilities; and planned schedule of deliverables.
- Three progress reports: Format is conference call with supporting agenda
- Draft and Final Reports for Phase One and Two are to be in MS Powerpoint format and include a concise Executive Summary that provides a brief overview of the study's purpose, project background, methods, findings, and lessons learned from the study.
 - Provide a separate line item for Spanish versions of the Final Phase One and Two Reports
- Final Phase Three Report in English only and in a MS Word format, with the contact information in a MS Excel file format.



Budget

- WISHH will consider proposals which include an evidence-based rationale to support a proposal which prioritizes the countries to be assessed and/or narrows down the number of countries to be assessed.
- Total proposal not to exceed \$100,000.

Qualifications

The lead Consultant(s) will have the following qualifications:

- At least five years of market research/market assessment experience in the agriculture/food/beverage industry, preferably in Central America
 - Consultants who don't have experience evaluating aquaculture or food/beverage markets in Central America are strongly encouraged to partner with qualified industry/technical expert(s) based in the region/country or who have had significant commercial category experience in the country/region, to collect the data.
- Experience in study design and data collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and supervisory capabilities of each of these areas.
- Proficient in written and spoken Spanish and fluent in written and spoken English;

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Timing: October 15, 2019 – January 30, 2020

RFP Posted	September 12, 2019
Questions accepted through	September 20, 2019
Answers to questions emailed by	September 24, 2019
Proposals due	October 4, 2019
Decision made	October 7, 2019
Contractor notified by	October 8, 2019
Progress report due	November 20, 2019
Phase 1 Draft Report due	November 25, 2019
Phase 1 Final Report due	December 16, 2019
Progress report due	December 20, 2019
Phase 2 Draft Report due	December 30, 2019
Phase 2 Final Report due	January 15, 2020
Progress report due	January 20, 2020
Phase 3 Draft report due	January 24, 2020
Phase 3 Final report due	January 30, 2020



Selection Criteria and Weights

Proposals submitted will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Bidder's skills/experience	30	%
Country/Regional Knowledge	20	%
Comprehensiveness	25	%
Cost	15	%
<u>Timing</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>%</u>
TOTAL	100	%

Instructions to Bidder

Proposals must contain at a minimum the specific criteria requested in the Request for Proposal:

- A description of the bidder's capabilities, resources, and experience on company letterhead.
- Please include your expertise in assessing the aquaculture and food/beverage and business environments of the countries of interest. Detail the qualifications that make the proposed assessor, or team, an expert(s) in evaluating the aquaculture and food/beverage industries in the countries to be studied.
- Goals and measurable objectives for the activity must be included.
- A line-item budget, detailing each activity cost, must be included.
- ASA/WISHH reserves the right to reject any proposal that is in any way inconsistent or irregular. ASA/WISHH also reserves the right to waive proposal defects or deficiencies, to request additional information, and/or to negotiate with the bidder regarding the proposal.

Organization website: <http://www.wishh.org/>

Non-Discrimination Statement: *In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy, ASA/WISHH prohibits discrimination in its programs and activities against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program or activity conducted. ASA/WISHH is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



Contact Information

For additional information, please contact:

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