



U.S. DRY BEAN COUNCIL (USDBC)

Request For Proposal: Representation In Central, South America, And the Caribbean

I. PURPOSE

The U.S. Dry Bean Council (USDBC), representing the U.S. dry bean industry, is requesting proposals from marketing agencies to manage USDBC's public relations and market development activities in Central, South America, and the Caribbean. The chosen agency will minimally enter into a twelve-month end-result contract with USDBC for January – December 2025.

All proposals are due by close of business (5 pm CST) on November 29, 2024.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The U.S. Dry Bean Council (USDBC) serves as the national trade association for the American dry bean industry, focusing on global export development and trade interests. Its members include bean growers, dealers, and processors, all sharing a common goal of boosting U.S. dry bean consumption worldwide. The USDBC represents all bean varieties typically cultivated in the U.S., with the highest export volumes for pintos, blacks, small reds, dark red kidneys, great northerns, and navy beans. Other varieties, like baby limas, are exported in smaller amounts. Garbanzos are distinctive as they are classified both as dry beans and pulses, which encompass beans, peas, and lentils.

USDBC is dedicated to developing, overseeing, and implementing programs that enhance market access for U.S. dry beans globally. Its mission is to expand the market and exports of U.S. dry beans while safeguarding domestic producers from targeted unfair trade practices. This initiative is supported by grant funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), and USDBC has successfully managed FAS programs for over fifteen years.

USDA/FAS programs require a coordinated approach, combining policy and marketing activities to initially open markets and then sustain and enhance market access. USDBC employs a dual strategy of multilateral and bilateral policy and program marketing initiatives, executed by International Representatives, to achieve these goals.

II. SCOPE OF WORK

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USDDBC is seeking an International Representative to lead programs for the Central, South America, and the Caribbean region (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, and Panama). This includes; strategic vision, direction and implementation of dry bean export development and marketing programs, the development and implementation of new programs in unexplored, underexplored, or competitor export markets, monitoring and response to trade policy challenges and opportunities, conducting local dry bean harvest surveys, and trade servicing including identifying new opportunities for growth markets with bean ingredients.

The Representative for Central, South America, and the Caribbean region is responsible for the following:

- A. Provide strategic direction, a specific detailed work plan, indicators for success, and implementation of market development programs designed to increase sales and use of U.S. dry beans in the markets noted above.
- B. Conduct consumer preference analysis in San Salvador Santa Ana, El Salvador, Tegucigalpa, and San Pedro Sula, Honduras. The consultant will produce a study that will guide the development of the USDDBC's market strategy and provide feedback for U.S. dry bean breeding programs. Also, it will identify which other U.S. varieties, possibly black beans, navy beans, and/or pintos beans may substitute for the Rojo seda beans.
- C. Coordinate and conduct 3 in-store promotions on behalf of USDDBC in El Salvador and Honduras. Consultant will hire a recognized chef who will prepare innovative recipes with the bean types that the consumer preference analysis study shows have more potential to be an alternative to the local rojo seda beans. The chef will be present at the stores, giving away the samples, interacting with the public, and promoting U.S. varieties.
- D. Manage all activities and subcontractors agreed to in a marketing plan approved by USDDBC.
- E. Manage annual budget as allocated by USDDBC.
- F. Submit monthly market reports detailing activity summaries, trade leads, and media monitoring.
- G. Coordinate market visits by USDDBC staff and industry members, including meetings with key trade members and U.S. Embassy and ATO staff.
- H. Monitor and develop strategy and response to trade policy challenges and opportunities, ensure regular communications with local country-level trade authorities, and other decision-makers and influencers, and ensure USDDBC has the critical information to prepare a response.

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- I. Design of activities and communications to both increase the specification and understanding of U.S. dry beans by importers, brokers, canners, retailers, food processors and others that purchase or use dry beans.
- J. Feedback and education to USDBC regularly about the customers or potential customers' needs and constraints to using beans in their respective situations.
- K. Develop and/or maintain USDBC's country-specific websites and social media platforms.
- L. Travel to the target markets as required to conduct trade service, promotion, and market intelligence gathering activities for the U.S. dry bean industry.
- M. Assistance with the completion of the Country Progress Report and development of Unified Export Strategy, both requirements of USDA's FAS programs.
- N. Monitor and report on crop developments and planting intentions in relevant competitor markets. Provide crop reports at least twice a year.
- O. Develop annual global trade team matrix and identify any new trade events/shows providing new opportunities for promotion and sales of US dry beans.
- P. Submit monthly report to USDBC Executive Director and Program Manager.

The agency will work under the direct supervision and with the prior approval of USDBC for all program activities. All expenditures must fall within the program budget and must be pre-approved by USDBC.

The firm or consultant shall successfully complete the above scope of work from January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025, with renewal of contract based on satisfactory performance. The consultant will work directly with USDBC's Program Manager and may occasionally interact with USDBC's International Promotion Committee (IPC). The agency or individual selected to conduct activities will contract with USDBC and will be subject to the regulations applicable to the Market Access Program (MAP), the Foreign Market Development Program (FMD), and the Regional Agricultural Promotion Program (RAPP) as administered by the Foreign Agricultural Service of the United States Department of Agriculture.

III. MARKETING/PROPOSAL OBJECTIVES

With this request for proposal, USDBC is seeking to understand the proposed agency retainer fees for managing USDBC's activities in the region as well as assessing an

agency's creativity in addressing market challenges. In this regard, your proposal should contain the following information:

Retainer Fees:

USDBC closely monitors agency retainer fees as well as out-of-pocket expenses. Please provide a proposed agency retainer fee to conduct a program with an overall budget of \$185,000. The retainer fee should include general program management of both consumer public relations and trade activities.

Creative Approach:

Please identify what you view as the greatest challenges impeding sales of dry bean products in Central, South America, and the Caribbean and outline how you would address those challenges through generic promotional activity. Please provide specific strategies and tactics along with a detailed proposed budget of \$185,000.

In addition to the retainer fee and activity proposal, please provide the following information in your submission:

- History of your work with agricultural or other food organizations or companies
- Experience conducting trade activities such as technical training seminars, educational workshops, and inbound/outbound trade missions
- Experience conducting consumer public relations activities such as in-person media events, press releases, and social media campaigns
- Knowledge of USDA's FAS program regulations

IV. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Potential conflicts of interest relative to this program are as follows: current agency representation of another entity that is directly competitive to dry beans, e.g., peas and lentils, or a firm of record for any dry bean company. Please disclose any conflicts of interest.

V. SELECTION CRITERIA

USDBC reserves the right to award the contract to the individual/agency with the best combination of attributes and ability to successfully serve as the organization's marketing representative, not necessarily the lowest bid.

VI. ADMINISTRATION

The individual or agency selected for the position will report directly to Alyson Segawa, USDBC's Program Manager.

VII. FINANCIAL

The total budget for all aspects of this scope of work should include all fees, overhead, and third-party expenses. Monthly consulting fees will be paid as an all-inclusive monthly fee. Travel expenses will be paid for at actual cost and are not included in fees. Funds for this project come from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service's

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Trade Promotion programs and are subject to the annual availability and compliance guidelines of funds for those programs.

VIII. PROPOSAL DUE DATE / PROJECT TIMING

Proposals are due by close of business (Central time) on November 29, 2024. For the individual or agency selected to complete this scope of work, the contract will run for one year commencing on January 1, 2025 and ending on December 31, 2025, in accordance with the government funding cycle. If mutually acceptable, the contract will be renewed at the end of the year at the option of USDBC.

IX. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Individuals/agencies are invited to submit proposals to USDBC by close of business (5 pm CST) on November 29, 2024. Please direct your proposal to the following email address: alysons@eliasan.com with the subject line “USDBC DR-CAFTA FY25 Proposal”.