



## **USA RICE**

### **Morocco Trade Seminar Representation**

#### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

##### **I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

###### **USA Rice**

USA Rice is a nonprofit trade association representing all segments of the U.S. rice industry, including but is not limited to producers, millers, exporters, and merchants, as well as other entities involved in the production and marketing of U.S. rice. The organization was founded in 1994 by the leadership of the industry's three national associations: the Rice Millers Association, USA Rice Council and the USA Rice Farmers (formerly known as US Rice Producers Group).

USA Rice's grower representation includes approximately 90% of the U.S. rice crop. The organization also represents virtually all U.S. rice millers and processors, as well as the nation's major rice exporters, which account for nearly 100% of U.S. rice supplies and exports. Furthermore, associate members of the USA Rice cover almost the entire marketing and distribution channels for U.S. rice.

USA Rice operates a domestic promotion program as well as export promotion programs in more than 20 countries. Programs are funded by both USA Rice members and through various public programs for which USA Rice competes annually.

USA Rice is headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, and has subsidiary offices in Arkansas, Louisiana and Germany. Consultants and agencies are used as appropriate, for a wide variety of projects, including domestic and international promotion programs.

USA Rice is an equal opportunity employer and prohibits discrimination in all programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or familial status.

##### **II. MARKET SITUATION IN MOROCCO**



### **The Rice Market:**

The total population of Morocco is 38 million with a growth rate of one percent. The leading sectors in Morocco are tourism, trade, and foreign investments. The country has come a long way in successfully diversifying its economy to include agriculture, retail, foodservice, and tourism. Morocco is the only country in North Africa that enjoys socio-political stability. This has made it highly attractive as a trading hub connecting the Middle East, Europe, and Africa. Recently it has been classified as a “Frontier” market.

Morocco has capitalized on its proximity to Europe and relatively low labor costs to work towards building a diverse, open, market-oriented economy. It has increased investment in its northern port, transportation, and industrial infrastructure to position itself as a center and broker for business throughout Africa. Industrial development strategies and infrastructure improvements - most visibly illustrated by a new port and free trade zone near Tangier - are improving Morocco's competitiveness and helps positioning it as a major gateway to West Africa.

### **Market Access:**

To boost exports, Morocco entered into a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) with the U.S. in 2006, which phased out Morocco's tariffs on rice in equal annual installments over ten years, ensuring duty free access for U.S. rice sales starting in 2016. Morocco is a price sensitive long grain and medium grain rice market which traditionally imports a small amount of rice. Other bilateral free trade agreements that Morocco currently maintains include the European Union (EU), Turkey, the Mediterranean, and Arab countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In the current regulatory environment, Morocco could potentially provide a gateway to US rice imports with zero per cent duty, for re-export into the region after being further processed locally (milled or packed) to continue to be eligible for preferential import tariffs into neighboring countries.

Domestic rice consumption is estimated at 125,000 MT in 2024 and total rice imports amounted to 94,000 MT in 2024, with India and Thailand being the major suppliers of rice. The U.S. ranks quite low with only 1,200 MT and 940 MT of Morocco's rice imports coming from the U.S. in 2023 and 2024 respectively.

## **III. USA RICE OBJECTIVES IN NORTH & WEST AFRICA**

USA Rice objectives in **NORTH & WEST AFRICA** include:

A. Increasing both the value and volume of U.S. rice exports to North and West Africa



- B. Building long-lasting market awareness and preference for U.S. origin rice among consumers
- C. Providing rice consumers and importers in the region with the information on availability and high quality of U.S. origin rice to encourage increased imports
- D. Positioning the U.S. rice industry as a consistent trading partner for importers in the region

#### **IV. SCOPE OF WORK**

USA Rice seeks a qualified individual or agency to support the organization and implementation of a trade seminar in Casablanca and/or Tangier, Morocco, and to accomplish the following scope of work:

- Research hotel and event spaces in Casablanca, Morocco for the seminar to take place on the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2025. Participating traders to arrive 8<sup>th</sup> September and leave on the 10<sup>th</sup> September, with opening reception on the 8<sup>th</sup> September, seminar followed by one-to-one meetings with US rice suppliers on the 9<sup>th</sup> September and leaving on the 10<sup>th</sup> September.
- Conduct background research on potential participants, compiling a list of approximately 50 relevant importers, wholesalers, and government officials from Morocco, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria. Total expected number of participants including USA Rice staff and members is 60 pax.
- Organize all logistical aspects of the seminar – hotel reservations for 60 pax, flight reservations (economy class) for participating traders (excluding USA Rice staff and delegates), receptions and meals, meeting spaces, and transportation.
- Organize transportation from Casablanca to Tangier (potentially train) as well as site visit to Tangier Med Port for USA Rice staff and members (max 10 people) on the 10<sup>th</sup> September, official program ends after the port visit in Tangier in the afternoon of 10<sup>th</sup> September.

The firm or consultant shall successfully complete the above scope of work from June 1 – September 15, 2025. The firm will work directly with the USA Rice Director Europe, Middle East and Africa. The agency or individual selected to conduct activities will contract with the USA Rice and will be subject to the regulations applicable to the Regional Agricultural Promotion Program as administered by the Foreign Agricultural Service of the United States Department of Agriculture.



## **V. PROPOSALS**

USA Rice requests that you include the following components in discussing your capabilities:

- A. Describe how you/your agency will achieve the Objectives outlined in Section III and the Scope of Work outlined in Section IV.
- B. Explain why your qualifications and background make you the best individual/agency to represent USA Rice in Morocco (please mention language proficiencies).
- C. Provide information regarding your past work, especially related to representing U.S. agricultural commodities in Morocco and organizing trade seminars and events.
- D. Please detail which of your staff members will make up the USA Rice team and explain their roles and experience.
- E. Include a detailed costing in your proposal listing all costs necessary to complete this scope of work including staff fees, third party expenses, travel, and other direct/indirect costs needed to support your program.
- F. Include any additional information that demonstrates the ability to perform the functions outlined in this Request for Proposal.

## **VI. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Potential conflicts of interest relative to this program are as follows: agency representation of another entity that is directly competitive to rice, e.g., pasta, tortillas, potatoes; or a firm of record for any U.S., or other rice company. Please disclose any conflicts of interest.

Additionally, no USA Rice employee, officer, board member, or agent thereof will participate in the review, selection, award, or administration of a contract if a real or apparent conflict of interest would arise. Such a conflict would arise when an employee, official, board member, agent, or the employee's, officer's, board member's, or agent's family, partners, or an organization that employs or is about to employ any of these parties or their affiliates has a financial or other interest in the contract.

USA Rice officers, employees, board members, and agents thereof shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or subcontractors. Procedures shall also provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, board members, or agents thereof.



## **VII. SELECTION CRITERIA**

USA Rice 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 representative in organizing the trade seminar in Morocco, not necessarily the lowest bid.

## **VIII. ADMINISTRATION**

The individual or agency selected for the position will report directly to Eszter Somogyi, USA Rice Director Europe, Middle East & Africa, with further oversight by the Chief Operating Officer.

## **IX. FINANCIAL**

The total budget for all aspects of this scope of work, including all agency fees, third party expenses, travel (including flights for African delegates) and other expenses is \$155,000. Submitted proposals should reflect this budget. Funds for this project come from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Regional Agricultural Promotional Program and are subject to the annual availability of funds in that program.

## **X. PROPOSAL DUE DATE / PROJECT TIMING**

Proposals are due by close of business on April 21, 2025. For the individual or agency selected to complete this scope of work, the contract will run from June 1, 2025 – September 15, 2025.

## **XI. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS**

Individuals / agencies are invited to submit proposals to USA Rice by close of business on April 14, 2025, at 6:00pm (Greenwich Mean Time). Please direct your proposal to the following email address: [jkincaid@usarice.com](mailto:jkincaid@usarice.com).