



American Seed Trade Association

Independent Contractor: Pest Risk Assessment and Seed Health Technical Expert

R E Q U E S T F O R P R O P O S A L

January 5, 2023

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

PURPOSE OF THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

ASTA's mission is to be an effective voice of action in all matters concerning the development, marketing and movement of seed, associated products and services throughout the world. ASTA promotes the development of better seed to produce better crops for a better quality of life.

Founded in 1883, the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) is one of the oldest trade organizations in the United States. Its membership consists of over 700 companies involved in seed production and distribution, plant breeding, and related industries in North America. As an authority on plant germplasm, ASTA advocates science and policy issues of industry-wide importance.

Objective:

Retain independent contractor who will support ASTA's international and seed health initiatives to mitigate phytosanitary barriers to trade for the 2023 calendar year (February 2023- December 2023), with the opportunity for renewal in future program years upon satisfactory performance. This includes ASTA pest database management, pest risk assessment research, and technical support related to the systems approach for phytosanitary risk management. The Contractor must have experience managing phytosanitary issues pertaining to seed and must have the relevant scientific academic background.

Goal:

Ensure that ASTA's Pest Database for Seeds (PeDS) is updated in an accurate and timely manner. Provide in-depth technical expertise as requested to pest risk assessments and related efforts to harmonize global seed movement, by supporting domestic and international efforts related to the systems approach for phytosanitary management.

Background:

ASTA is committed to reducing phytosanitary trade barriers and harmonizing phytosanitary requirements for seed movement globally for all its members.

Governments create lists of regulated pests believed to pose threats to agricultural commodities, including seeds for planting. The regulated pest lists and associated mitigation measures can inhibit smooth and reliable movement of seeds across borders, especially in cases where governments have differing requirements for the same regulated pest or when governments regulate seed for pests that are not scientifically justified (seed not a pathway). Therefore, regulated pest lists must be periodically reviewed, analyzed, and updated to ensure the inclusion of a particular pest is scientifically justified and supported by the best and latest evidence.

Since 2015, ASTA has stewarded and added new data to the PeDS database. The PeDS database provides valuable information to the seed industry and regulators regarding regulated pests in a transparent, centralized manner. Accurate and timely information reflected in PeDS, as well as harmonization of pest databases between the seed industry and governments, supports industry's ability to respond to government requirements. Continued alignment between industry and government databases will help facilitate pest risk assessments and smooth seed movement.

To develop a more efficient and effective mechanism to ensure the safe movement of seed, the U.S. seed industry and U.S. government have collaborated to develop a systems approach for global seed movement formally known as the Regulatory Framework for Seed Health (ReFreSH). The systems approach is being developed as an alternative to consignment-by-consignment phytosanitary certification for seed. In

addition, in 2019, the International Plant Protection Convention is in the process of developing an Annex to ISPM 38 which would formalize a global model for phytosanitary risk management. ASTA continues to collaborate in the development and operationalization of the ReFreSH program and ISPM 38.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRAM CONTACT

Questions concerning technical specifications or Statement of Work requirements must be directed to:

Name	Lainey Wolf
Address	1701 Duke St, Suite 275 Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone	903-703-9218
Email	lwolf@betterseed.org

CONTRACTUAL CONTACT

Any questions regarding contractual terms and conditions or proposal format must be directed to:

Name	Samuel Crowell
Address	1701 Duke St, Suite 275 Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone	703-837-8140
FAX	703-837-9365
Email	scrowell@betterseed.org

DUE DATES

A written email confirmation of the Contractor’s intent to respond to this RFP is required by January 20, 2023. All proposals are due by 5:00 pm, EDT on January 25, 2023 in electronic format sent to lwolf@betterseed.org and scrowell@betterseed.org.

SCHEDULE

Event	Date
1. RFP Distribution to Contractors	01/05/2023
2. Written Confirmation from Contractors with Bid Intention	01/20/2023
3. Questions from Contractors due about scope of work	01/20/2023
4. Responses to Contractors about scope due	01/23/2023
5. Proposal Due Date	01/25/2023
6. Target Date for Review of Proposals	02/03/2023
7. Final Contractors Selection Discussion(s)--	02/06/2023
8. Anticipated decision and selection of Contractor(s)	02/10/2023
9. Anticipated commencement date of work	02/20/2023
10. Final report/invoice due	02/24/2024

GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION

EVALUATION FACTORS FOR AWARD CRITERIA

Any award to be made pursuant to this RFP will be based upon the proposal with appropriate consideration given to operational, technical, cost, and management requirements. Evaluation of proposals will be based upon the Contractor's responsiveness to the RFP and the total price quoted for all items covered by the RFP.

The following elements will be the primary considerations in evaluating all submitted proposals and in the selection of a Contractor:

1. Completion of all required responses in the correct format.
2. The extent to which Contractor's proposed solution fulfills ASTA's stated requirements as set out in this RFP.
3. An assessment of the Contractor's ability to deliver the indicated service in accordance with the specifications set out in this RFP.
4. The Contractor's ability, experiences, and record of past performance in delivering such services.
5. The Contractor's expertise with the required skills and experience for the specific approach proposed.
6. Overall cost of Contractor's proposal.

ASTA may, at their discretion and without explanation to the prospective Contractors, at any time choose to discontinue this RFP without obligation to such prospective Contractors.

ASTA's review for this RFP and management of the selected Contractor will be conducted in accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [civil rights regulations and policies](#).

SCOPE OF WORK

REQUIREMENTS

The following information should be used to determine the scope of this project and provide pricing for this engagement.

DELIVERABLES

For the purpose of the agreement resultant from an accepted proposal, the CONTRACTOR, at a minimum, will be responsible for the following:

- Management of ASTA's PeDS, including reviewing, updating the current data, and adding additional information from relevant scientific sources, including from appropriate pest risk assessments. Contractor will update approximately 40-50 pests/pathogens per year.
- Work with ASTA's IT provider to ensure that the PeDS database is user friendly.
- Harmonize PeDS with other pest databases.
- Conduct literature reviews and provide additional information on pests important to the U.S. seed industry.
- Summarize pest risk assessments from competent authorities for up to 100 pests (list determined by ASTA), assess and provide recommendations on the scientific validity of measures implemented by competent authorities, and add the new information to PeDS.
- Prepare for and represent ASTA as a subject matter expert, as needed, at ongoing domestic and international meetings related to seed industry systems approach programs.

- Compile ASTA’s contributions to other technical databases related to seed health on as needed basis.
- Participate in monthly calls with ASTA to review the status of contract.

For the purpose of the agreement resultant from an accepted proposal the ASTA, at a minimum, will be responsible for providing the CONTRACTOR with:

- Relevant and up-to-date pest list information related to industry priorities.
- Access to our developed databases with user-friendly editing capabilities. The contractor will have access technical support and is not expected to manage computer programming for the database.
- Travel expenditures related to mutually agreed upon trips related to contractor’s scope of work.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Award of the contract resulting from this RFP will be based upon the Contractor whose offer will be the most advantageous to ASTA in terms of expertise, functionality, and other factors as specified elsewhere in this RFP.

ASTA reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all offers and discontinue this RFP process without obligation or liability to any potential Contractor,
- Accept proposals other than the lowest priced offer,
- Award a contract on the basis of initial offers received, without discussions or requests for best and final offers, and
- Award more than one contract.

The Contractor's proposal shall be formatted in sections as set forth below. The Contractor will confine the submission to those matters sufficient to define the proposal and to provide an adequate basis for ASTA’s evaluation of the Contractor’s proposal.

The Contractor’s proposal in response to this RFP will be incorporated into the final agreement between ASTA and the selected Contractor(s). The submission is suggested to include each of the following sections:

1. Executive Summary
2. Approach and Methodology
3. Project Deliverables
4. Project Management Approach
5. Detailed and Itemized Costs
6. Appendix: References
7. Appendix: Contractor Bio/Resume

The detailed requirements for each of the above-mentioned sections are outlined below.

DETAILED RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section will present a high-level synopsis of the Contractor's responses to the RFP. The Executive Summary should be a brief overview of the engagement and should identify the main features and benefits of the proposed work.

SCOPE, APPROACH, AND METHODOLOGY

Outline proposed strategy to achieve desired goals. This section should include a description of each major type of work effort and activity being requested of the Contractor. All information that is provided will be held in strict confidence.

DELIVERABLES

Include descriptions of the anticipated outcomes of activities conducted for work related to the project.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Provide description of key personnel involved with project and approximate timeline of work completion.

DETAILED AND ITEMIZED RATE AND COSTS

Include a fee breakdown for services provided, including monthly retainer and anticipated hours required for project completion.

APPENDIX: REFERENCES

Provide three current professional references.

APPENDIX: Resume

Provide one or two page summary of the skills, experience and education for all personnel working on the project.