



American Seed Trade Association

Consultant to ASTA for intergovernmental organizations impacting U.S. seed industry

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

January 05, 2024

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 nearly 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 for one-year term who has extensive experience with intergovernmental organizations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, as well as United Nations negotiations and the range of instruments impacting the use of genetic resources by the seed industry, such as the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Goal:

Ensure that the U.S. seed industry receives accurate, up-to-date information about developments occurring through negotiations under the ITPGRFA and CBD, particularly related to access and benefit sharing, farmer's rights, and digital sequence information. Represent U.S. seed industry positions at relevant meetings and before government and industry stakeholders.

Background:

The American Seed Trade Association is committed to helping establish an effective, global system for exchanging germplasm for all its members. The role involves developing (in consultation with ASTA members) the U.S. industry position, representing the U.S. industry at planning meetings and consultations with government stakeholders, and keeping ASTA and the U.S. industry apprised of progress and decisions related to the International Treaty and the CBD.

This year, emerging rules governing access and benefit sharing related to digital sequence information (DSI) will be discussed in detail under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The goals of these discussions will include continued negotiations over the definition of DSI and the scope and a potential framework to address DSI. The Commission on Genetic Resources of FAO is also following these negotiations, as is the International Treaty. The International Treaty's Governing Body is also actively discussing access benefit sharing mechanisms in the context of Annex 1 of the ITPGRFA, which will have important impacts on the U.S. seed industry.

The International Treaty has formed several technical groups that will study and assess the implementation of Farmers' Rights and implementation of the articles of the Treaty on conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

Since the topics taken up at the International Treaty and the Convention on Biological Diversity are similar and interrelated, tracking and monitoring of the discussions in each of these international fora is critical.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRAM CONTACT

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

Name	Samuel Crowell
Address	1701 Duke St, Suite 275 Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone	703-837-8140
Email	scrowell@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 19, 2024. All proposals are due by 5:00 pm, EDT on February 05, 2024 in electronic format sent to scrowell@betterseed.org.

SCHEDULE

Event	Date
1. RFP Distribution to Contractors	01/05/2024
2. Written Confirmation from Contractors with Bid Intention	01/19/2024
3. Questions from Contractors due about scope of work	01/24/2024
4. Responses to Contractors about scope due	01/26/2024
5. Proposal Due Date	02/02/2024
6. Target Date for Review of Proposals	02/05/2024
7. Final Contractors Selection Discussion(s)--	02/06/2024
8. Anticipated decision and selection of Contractor(s)	02/09/2024
9. Anticipated commencement date of work	02/14/2024
10. Final report/invoice due	01/31/2025

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 offers 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 stability, experiences, and record of past performance in delivering such services.
5. Availability of sufficient high quality Contractor personnel 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.

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:

- The Contractor shall prepare for and represent ASTA as a subject matter expert at ongoing international meetings regarding the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- The Contractor shall participate on the International Seed Federation's Sustainable Agriculture Committee and ad-hoc discussions related to contractor's scope of work
- The Contractor shall represent the U.S. seed industry's positions in meetings with the U.S. government, and with other interested parties.
- The Contractor shall provide a written report of the outcomes of the meeting no longer than 30 days after a relevant meeting takes place.
- The Contractor shall provide updates to ASTA's membership via the Intellectual Property Rights Committee and Intellectual Property Rights Emerging Issues Working Group.

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 contacts of U.S. seed industry serving on ad-hoc subject matter working groups related to contractor priorities
- 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 most responsive 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 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.

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

Contractor's proposal in response to this RFP will be incorporated into the final agreement between ASTA and the selected Contractor(s). The submitted proposals are 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. For example:

1. Identification of specific individuals, associations, and companies that should be engaged through the project's activities.
2. Outline a strategy to build coalitions with existing organizations and/or through existing projects to coordinate on advocacy efforts.
3. As appropriate, identify opportunities for convening events or workshops to further engage stakeholders in policy discussion.

4. Outline a proposed budget (by month and/or quarter) to meet these deliverables.

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 anticipated hours required for project completion.

APPENDIX: REFERENCES

Provide three current professional references.

APPENDIX: Resume

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