



**American Seed Trade Association**

**Expert on Phytosanitary Standards and a Systems Approach for Seeds**

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

**February 21, 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. ASTA advocates on science and policy issues of industry-wide importance.

#### **Objective:**

ASTA's request for proposals (RFP) seeks a contractor with expertise in phytosanitary policy, regulations, and standards that are related to the international trade and movement of seed.

#### **Goal**

Support global alignment of phytosanitary measures by identifying opportunities to improve implementation of international standards governed by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and developing methodologies to implement a systems approach for the international movement of seed.

#### **Background**

Streamlining regulatory approaches for seed movement is critical for food security and production worldwide. International seed movement for both research and trade is subject to a wide range of phytosanitary regulations to minimize the risk of introducing, spreading, or establishing insect pests and pathogens. However, in some instances, the phytosanitary measures imposed are unnecessary, as seed is not a pathway for the entry, establishment, or spread of the pest/pathogen in question.

The global seed industry relies on standards set by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) to ensure that governments establish phytosanitary policies that are science- and risk-based, internationally aligned, and compliant with the obligations set out in the World Trade Organization (WTO). Experts from governments and stakeholders that serve as representatives to the IPPC are responsible for establishing standards through the negotiation of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) through the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures. Currently, there are 46 ISPMs, and 75 annexes accompany ISPMs 27 and 28.

However, ISPMs are currently an underleveraged source of information and guidance for national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) and seed shippers, due to lack of awareness of standards development, lack of clarity in ISPMs, complexity in interpreting the content of ISPMs, and/or overlapping or contradictory guidance between ISPMs. Using these standards can be challenging, particularly for NPPOs in developing countries that lack experience in implementing these types of phytosanitary policies. Improvements are necessary to facilitate interpretation, harmonization, and adoption of standards that are relevant to international trade and movement of seed germplasm.

There are numerous opportunities for the seed industry and governments to work together to address gaps in understanding or implementation of certain standards. For example, in recent years, the U.S. seed industry and U.S. government have collaborated to develop a systems approach for global seed movement known as the Regulatory Framework for Seed Health (ReFreSH)—which builds upon the concepts articulated in ISPM 14 and could ease regulatory burdens in channels of trade where industry and

government agree upon a risk-based approach to management of pests and diseases. In parallel, many governments are also working to address the concepts in ISPM 38, which are specific to international movement of seed. The IPPC has attempted to develop an annex to ISPM 38 to provide NPPOs guidance for using the systems approach as a phytosanitary measure, but this effort has unfortunately stalled.

This scope of work proposed under this RFP is intended to carry forward these concepts from April-December of 2024, with the opportunity to continue work under a renewed contract after successful completion.

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRAM CONTACT**

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

<b>Name</b>	Martha Malapi
<b>Address</b>	1701 Duke St, Suite 275 Alexandria, VA 22314
<b>Phone</b>	703-837-8140
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:mmalapi@betterseed.org">mmalapi@betterseed.org</a>

**CONTRACTUAL CONTACT**

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

<b>Name</b>	Sam Crowell
<b>Address</b>	1701 Duke St, Suite 275 Alexandria, VA 22314
<b>Phone</b>	703-837-8140
<b>FAX</b>	703-837-9365
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:scrowell@betterseed.org">scrowell@betterseed.org</a>

**DUE DATES**

A written email confirmation of the Contractor’s intent to respond to this RFP is required by March 7, 2024. All proposals are due by 5:00 pm, eastern time on March 21, 2024 in electronic format sent to [scrowell@betterseed.org](mailto:scrowell@betterseed.org).

**SCHEDULE**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>
1. RFP Distribution to Contractors	02/21/2024
2. Written Confirmation from Contractors with Bid Intention	03/07/2024
3. Questions from Contractors due about scope of work	03/07/2024
4. Responses to Contractors about scope due	03/14/2024
5. Proposal Due Date	03/21/2024
6. Target Date for Review of Proposals	03/22/2024
7. Final Contractors Selection Discussion(s)--	03/28/2024
8. Anticipated decision and selection of Contractor(s)	03/29/2024
9. Anticipated commencement date of work	04/01/2024
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 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 proposal 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, 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:

1. Identify an engagement strategy for the U.S. seed industry's involvement in international discussions related to a systems approach for seeds. This would include providing a stakeholder list and strategy for convening specific individuals, governments, agencies, associations, and/or companies to advance key systems approach documents and pilot projects.
2. Identify technical needs and synergies to align systems approach pilot projects. Draft technical resources, including white papers, for use by ASTA members and NPPOs to advance these discussions.
3. Identify gaps in ISPMs that impact the international movement of seed and develop a workplan and strategy to address those gaps.
4. As appropriate, identify opportunities for convening events or workshops to further engage stakeholders. Some international travel by the contractor may be considered.
5. Outline a proposed budget (by month and/or quarter) to meet these deliverables.

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 contacts with the U.S. government and seed industry
- Frequent coordination with other USDA cooperator organizations

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

The Contractor's proposal shall be formatted in several 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. Proposed Budget with 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.

**DETAILED AND ITEMIZED RATE AND COSTS**

Include a fee breakdown for services provided, including potential travel expenses. ASTA will also cover travel expenses if necessary to conduct the contracted work.

**APPENDIX: REFERENCES**

Provide three current professional references.

**APPENDIX: Resume**

Provide a one or two page summary of your skills, experience and education.