



**American Seed Trade Association (ASTA)**

**Contractor: Phytosanitary Policy Impacting Seed Trade**

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

**March 3, 2026**

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **PURPOSE OF THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

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 and universities involved in seed production and distribution, plant breeding, and related industries in North America. As an authority on plant germplasm, ASTA advocates for science and policy issues of industry-wide importance.

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

#### **Objective:**

ASTA is seeking proposals for a contractor with expertise in seed pathology and testing, phytosanitary policy, and regulations that are related to the international trade and movement of seed. The Contractor must demonstrate knowledge and/or experience with phytosanitary principles and implementation of phytosanitary measures. The Contractor should have an advanced degree (MS or Ph.D.) in plant sciences, preferably in plant pathology or a related field. In lieu of an advanced degree, the Contractor must demonstrate 5+ years of professional experience in the phytosanitary field.

This contract is for calendar year 2026 with the option to renew based on satisfactory completion of deliverables.

#### **Goal:**

In this role, the contractor will work in close collaboration with ASTA's Senior Director of Seed Health and Trade to proactively identify, analyze, and help resolve phytosanitary challenges affecting the ability of ASTA members to trade with key global markets.

Primary responsibilities include monitoring, assessing, and responding to changes in phytosanitary import and export requirements notified by trading partners through the World Trade Organization (WTO). The contractor will review and synthesize scientific literature related to seed-borne pathogens and evaluate new or revised diagnostic protocols for regulated pests to support science-based advocacy on phytosanitary issues. The contractor will support ongoing improvements to ASTA's Pest Database for Seeds (PeDS). The contractor will also assist members in addressing held or rejected seed shipments, resolving issues related to phytosanitary certificates, and navigating country-specific regulatory requirements. Additional responsibilities may include supporting ASTA engagements by drafting agendas, white papers, and briefing materials, and tracking evolving phytosanitary and market access trends relevant to the global seed trade.

#### **Background:**

The American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) is committed to supporting the development of an effective and globally coordinated system for the exchange of germplasm that benefits all members of the seed sector. Streamlining regulatory approaches for seed movement is essential to global food security, agricultural productivity, and innovation.

International movement of seed for research and commercial purposes is subject to a broad range of

phytosanitary regulations intended to prevent the introduction, establishment, and spread of plant pests and pathogens. While these measures are critical to safeguarding plant health, some requirements are imposed in cases where seed is not a scientifically supported pathway for pest or pathogen transmission. Such measures can unnecessarily restrict trade and limit market access. The global seed industry relies on standards developed under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) to guide governments in establishing phytosanitary policies that are science-based, risk-based, internationally harmonized, and consistent with obligations under the World Trade Organization (WTO). These principles are implemented through the development and application of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs). However, ISPMs remain an underutilized resource for many National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) and seed shippers due to limited awareness of the standards-setting process, lack of clarity within some ISPMs, complexity in interpretation, and, in some cases, overlapping or conflicting guidance across standards. Applying ISPMs can be particularly challenging for NPPOs in developing countries that may have limited experience or capacity to implement risk-based phytosanitary systems. Compounding this challenge, proposed phytosanitary measures notified to the WTO typically allow only a short comment period (45–60 days), during which stakeholders must assess potential impacts on trade and provide timely, technically sound feedback. As the volume of WTO notifications continues to increase, the need for careful review of proposed measures for scientific validity and practical feasibility has become increasingly important.

Input from the seed industry plays a critical role in this process, particularly in assessing whether seed is a demonstrated pathway for pest or pathogen movement and whether proposed measures can be effectively and realistically implemented. This technical and operational feedback is essential to promoting sound phytosanitary policy, supporting international regulatory alignment, and maintaining market access for U.S. seed exports.

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRAM CONTACT**

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

<b>Name</b>	Dr. 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>	Ben Rietmann
<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:brietmann@betterseed.org">brietmann@betterseed.org</a>

**DUE DATES**

A written email confirmation of the Contractor’s intent to respond to this RFP is required by March 17, 2026. All proposals are due by 5:00 pm, EDT on April 3, 2026 in electronic format sent to [mmalapi@betterseed.org](mailto:mmalapi@betterseed.org) and [brietmann@betterseed.org](mailto:brietmann@betterseed.org).

## SCHEDULE

Event	Date
1. RFP Distribution to Contractors	03/03/2026
2. Written Confirmation from Contractors with Bid Intention	03/17/2026
3. Questions from Contractors due about scope of work	03/20/2026
4. Responses to Contractors about scope due	03/27/2026
5. Proposal Due Date	04/03/2026
6. Target Date for Review of Proposals	04/06/2026
7. Final Contractors Selection Discussion(s)--	04/10/2026
8. Anticipated decision and selection of Contractor(s)	04/17/2026
9. Anticipated commencement date of work	05/01/2026
10. Final report/invoice due	01/15/2027

## 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 provide periodic reports to ASTA's Director of Seed Health and Trade on changes in phytosanitary import/export requirements that may affect seed trade.
- The Contractor shall support the preparation of ongoing phytosanitary meetings.
- The Contractor shall provide timely technical support to members on shipment holds, rejections, and phytosanitary certification issues, and develop concise country- and region-specific phytosanitary barrier briefs to support ASTA's preparation for relevant bilateral engagements.
- The Contractor shall provide expert support to the Phytosanitary Committee and Emerging Diseases Subcommittee meetings.

For the purpose of the agreement resultant from an accepted proposal, 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 resources, organizations, contacts that should be engaged through the project's activities.
2. Outline a strategy to identify, track, and manage phytosanitary issues to coordinate and target engagement efforts.
3. As appropriate, identify opportunities to communicate and 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.