



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE WORLD INITIATIVE FOR SOY IN HUMAN HEALTH (WISHH)**

### **I. DATE**

February 16, 2026

### **II. PROJECT OBJECTIVE & BACKGROUND**

The World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH), a program of the American Soybean Association (ASA), requests proposals for a contractor to design and implement Capital Connect (CapCon), a program to prepare small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in sub-Saharan Africa to solicit financing, culminating in an investment pitch at the Africa Food Systems Forum (AFSF). AFSF is tentatively scheduled to take place in the first half of September 2026 in Kigali, Rwanda.

Access to finance is a major obstacle to the growth of SMEs in sub-Saharan Africa. Agribusinesses often struggle to access financing due to high perceived risk from lenders and limited insurance coverage. Many firms also lack formal financial records, collateral, or credit histories, making it difficult to meet lending requirements. Underdeveloped financial markets and high interest rates restrict the availability of long-term, affordable capital needed for growth and modernization.

Limited access to finance makes U.S. soy products less competitive in sub-Saharan Africa. These barriers push buyers toward smaller purchases, lower-cost substitutes, or locally available but less consistent protein sources, even when U.S. soy offers better nutritional value and reliability. Financing constraints also limit investment in storage, crushing, and feed manufacturing infrastructure, reducing demand for imported U.S. soy. Addressing these financing barriers would enable African agribusinesses to scale operations, invest in modern processing and feed systems, and purchase inputs on a longer-term, commercial basis. As firms grow and formalize, demand would increase for high-quality, consistent protein sources, opening new and more stable markets for U.S. soy products across the livestock, aquaculture, and food sectors.

Five SMEs will be selected from WISHH's markets in Africa, which include Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda. WISHH is targeting SMEs in their growth stage with annual revenues of at least USD \$1 million, but one or two SMEs may be startups with lower revenues. WISHH will conduct an initial screening of applicants to determine whether they meet the basic requirements of the program, such as whether their business operates within the soy value chain. Those who make it through the initial screening will then go through an application process designed by the contractor in consultation with WISHH. The contractor will collect and review applications based on key criteria, including each applicant's potential to attract financing and the extent to which they would benefit from focused investment readiness support. This selection process ensures that participating SMEs

are well aligned with the program's objectives and investor expectations. WISHH will make the final decision on which SMEs to include in the program.

Selected SMEs then receive comprehensive, virtual investment readiness training to prepare them to solicit financing at AFSF. The program works closely with each SME to strengthen and clearly articulate their value proposition and to develop professional marketing materials, including an investment teaser, pitch, and slide deck for investor outreach. In addition, the program provides in-person support at AFSF, offering real-time guidance, pitch rehearsals, and on-site assistance as SMEs engage directly with potential investors during the forum.

### **III. ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND**

The American Soybean Association (ASA) was founded in 1920 by soybean farmers and extension workers to promote soy for high protein applications in developmental settings. Overseas activities initiated in the mid-1950s, and to date ASA has worked in over 80 countries. The World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) was founded in 2000 to expand the work of the American Soybean Association (ASA) in developing and emerging markets to improve health, nutrition and food security, building the groundwork for future markets of soy. WISHH provides services in food technology, business development, nutrition services, and program and proposal development. WISHH expertise extends its network into additional areas, such as aquaculture and animal feed.

ASA/WISHH connects trade and development to strengthen agricultural value chains in emerging markets, creating trade and long-term demand for U.S. soy. Trade can improve lives worldwide for both farmers and consumers. U.S. soy trade in emerging markets is pivotal to improve accessibility, affordability, and acceptability of high-quality plant and animal-sourced proteins in developing economies. Rising incomes in emerging economies generates further opportunities for trade. ASA/WISHH builds opportunity for long-term trade by improving agricultural value chains, human and animal nutrition, and farmer net incomes. ASA/WISHH initiatives broadly fit in two arenas: (1) trade-building long-term, early-stage market development, and (2) trade-building international agriculture and economic development. The St. Louis-based Program operates in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Central America.

ASA/WISHH offers proven feed sector capacity and decades of accumulated knowledge from ASA programs. Principal approaches include market and economic assessments, technical assistance and capacity building, food and feed trials and demonstrations, farmer field days, youth mentorship programs, food and feed value chain development, and market linkages.

ASA/WISHH achieves its mission by working in close partnership with: (1) the public sector (e.g., USDA, U.S. land grant universities, and host country governments), (2) the private sector (e.g., trade associations: Qualified State Soybean Boards, United Soybean Board and U.S. Soybean Export Council), and (3) private voluntary organizations. The Program draws upon the resources and experience of these partners and the services of a cadre of ASA/WISHH consultants with technical expertise in agricultural, international, and commercial development spheres. ASA/WISHH relies on decades of experience in food commercial development and agricultural development programming. The Program takes pride in its growing portfolio of success with U.S. government-funded projects, including USDA (Food for Progress, Foreign Market Development, Market Access

Program, Emerging Markets Program, Regional Agricultural Promotion Program, America First Trade Promotion Program, and Quality Samples Program) funding in both prime and sub-recipient capacities. ASA/WISHH has also attracted both private sector and other complementary funding sources from various donors to build on and leverage core funding from Qualified State Soybean Boards.

WISHH's objective is to increase the international consumption of soy protein in the human, livestock, and aquaculture sectors in new markets and thereby create new opportunities for soybeans and providing higher economic returns to U.S. soybean producers.

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

Activities include:

##### **Application Development & Assessment**

- a. Develop an application form to gather the information needed to determine whether an SME is suited for inclusion in the program.
- b. Collect and review application submissions, and rate applicants based on factors such as their potential to attract financing at AFSF and the degree to which they would benefit from training.

##### **Training**

- a. Provide investment readiness training to five SMEs selected by WISHH to prepare them to solicit financing at AFSF. All training will be conducted virtually.
- b. Assist each SME to develop and refine their value proposition.
- c. Work with each SME to develop marketing materials, including an investment teaser, a pitch, and a slide deck, to be shared with investors.

##### **AFSF Attendance**

- a. Attend AFSF to provide in-person guidance and training during the forum. This includes conducting pitch rehearsals with SMEs and answering questions that may arise from their discussions with investors.
- b. Facilitate a partial-day training for the SMEs during AFSF on topics related to investor negotiation, including the due diligence process.

##### **Post-AFSF Assistance**

- a. Advise and assist SMEs during negotiations that arise as a direct result of their participation in AFSF.
  - a. As not all SMEs may attract interest at AFSF, the proposal should reflect activities and pricing on a per SME basis.

##### **Administrative**

- a. Provide quarterly invoices, reports and key performance indicators (KPI) to WISHH staff. Reports should follow the requested format and at a minimum, include narratives of activities, tracking key performance indicators, recommendations, and challenges.
- b. Submit required backup documents verifying activities as outlined in approved proposal for compliance purposes. The deliverables will be based on the nature of the activities conducted.
- c. Ensure that all activities meet the compliance standards of the program. The implementer should be aware that donor compliance standards are non-negotiable.

## V. TIMING

RFP posted	February 16, 2026
Questions due to ASA/WISHH	February 27, 2026
Answers posted to WISHH Website	March 3, 2026
Proposals due to ASA/WISHH	March 13, 2026
Contract awarded	March 20, 2026
Contract signed	March 31, 2026
Activities begin	April 1, 2026
Final deliverables and invoice due	October 31, 2026

## VI. SELECTION CRITERIA AND CRITERIA WEIGHTS

Proposals submitted will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Comprehensiveness	40%
Consultant skills/experience	35%
Cost	20%
Timing	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Special consideration will be given to Women or Minority Owned Small Business (WMOSB) entities with SBA certifications (proof of certification must be provided at time of submission).

## VII. INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

Proposals must contain at a minimum the specific criteria requested in the Request for Proposal:

- 1) A description of the bidder's capabilities and experience (Can be submitted as a CV)
- 2) A proposal that includes the following sections (10 pages maximum):
  - a) Proposal executive summary
  - b) Action plan
  - c) Proposed budget, including estimated travel costs to AFSF in Kigali, Rwanda for five nights
- 3) Checklist of additional items that must be submitted:
  - a) Attachment A Technical Proposal Authorization Cover Page Completed and Signed
  - b) 100-word executive summary of the proposal
  - c) Full detailed proposal
  - d) Proposal detailed budget
  - e) WMOSB Proof of Certification (if applicable)

**Proposals should be submitted no later than 5:00 PM CDT on March 13, 2026.** To be considered for award, proposals must be submitted by e-mail to the following: Peter James ([pjames@soy.org](mailto:pjames@soy.org)) and Chris Slempe ([cslempe@soy.org](mailto:cslempe@soy.org)). Mr. James will confirm receipt of each proposal; if receipt has not been confirmed, your proposal has not been received.

**If your proposal is not authorized by signature on Attachment A Proposal Authorization Cover Page, it will not be considered and will be rejected.**

**Submission of Questions:** All questions regarding the preparation of proposals must be submitted in writing (by e-mail) to Peter James at [pjames@soy.org](mailto:pjames@soy.org) (cc: [cslemp@soy.org](mailto:cslemp@soy.org)) **no later than 5pm CST on February 27, 2026. All questions and responses will be available on the WISHH [website](#) on or shortly after March 3, 2026.** No questions will be answered over the phone or in person; all questions must be in writing and sent via email.

**Non-Discrimination Statement:** In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaints filing deadlines vary by program or incident. ASA/WISHH is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

The firm or individual selected will be required to sign the ASA/WISHH code of conduct and conflict of interest statement.

**Award:** This RFP does not commit the ASA/WISHH to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparations or submission of proposals, or costs incurred in making necessary studies for the preparation thereof or to procure or contract for services or supplies. The ASA/WISHH reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFP and to negotiate with any of the vendors or other firms in any manner deemed to be in the best interest of the ASA/WISHH. The ASA/WISHH reserves the right to negotiate and award only a portion of the requirements; to negotiate and award separate or multiple contracts for the elements covered by this RFP in any combination it may deem appropriate, at its sole discretion to add new considerations, information or requirements at any stage of the procurement process, including during negotiations with vendors; and reject proposal of any vendor that has previously failed to perform properly or in a timely manner contracts of a similar nature, or of a vendor that, in the opinion of the ASA/WISHH, is not in a position, or is not sufficiently qualified, to perform the contract.

This RFP contains no contractual proposal of any kind; any proposal submitted will be regarded as a proposal by the vendor and not as an acceptance by the vendor of any proposal by the ASA/WISHH. No contractual relationship will exist except pursuant to a written contract document signed by the authorized procurement official of the ASA/WISHH and by the successful vendor(s) chosen by the ASA/WISHH.

Offerors submitting proposals must (1) be officially licensed to do such business in the country of ***their*** business operation, (2) be able to receive USDA funds, and (3) not have been identified as a terrorist prior to being awarded a contract. In addition, Offeror may be required to provide the following information prior to awarding of the contract:

- Documentation to verify licensure (i.e., tax id, registration certificate, etc.)
- Code of Conduct
- Conflict of Interest

- Equal Opportunity

## **VIII. ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Submission sheet

**ATTACHMENT A: Technical Proposal Submission Sheet**

*Complete this form with all the requested details and submit it as the first page of your technical proposal, with the documents requested above attached. Ensure that your proposal is authorized in the signature block below. A signature and authorization on this form will confirm that the terms and conditions of this RFP prevail over any attachments. If your proposal is not authorized, it may be rejected.*

Date of Technical Proposal:	
RFP Number:	
RFP Title:	

We offer to provide the goods/services described in the Scope of Work, in accordance with the terms and conditions stated in Request for Proposal referenced above. We confirm that we are eligible to participate in public procurement and meet the eligibility criteria specified.

The validity period of our proposal is \_\_\_\_days/weeks/months from the time and date of the submission deadline.

Type of Business/Institution (Check all that apply)

Offeror certifies that it is:

Non U.S. Owned/Operated       Government Owned/Operated

(If Non U.S. Owned/Operated is selected, continue to Anti-Terrorism Certification)

**OR FOR US ORGANIZATIONS ONLY:**

Nonprofit                       For-Profit                       Government  
 Large Business               Small Business               College or University  
 Women Owned       Small and Disadvantaged Business

Anti-Terrorism Certification

The Offeror, to the best of its current knowledge, did not provide, within the previous 10 years, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it does not and will not knowingly provide, material support or resources to any individual or entity that commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated, or participated in terrorist acts.

The Offeror also verifies that it does not appear on 1) the website of the Excluded Party List: <https://www.sam.gov>; or 2) the website of the United Nations Security (UNSC) sanctions committee established under UNSC Resolution 1267 (1999) (the “1267 Committee”): <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1267/consolist.shtml>.

The undersigned declares s/he is authorized to sign on behalf of the company listed below and to bind the company to all conditions and provisions stated in the original RFP document including attachments from ASA/WISHH.

**Proposal Authorized By:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Authorized for and on behalf of:* \_\_\_\_\_ *(DD/MM/YY)*

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Registration Number \_\_\_\_\_