



**Northern Soy Marketing
Request for Proposals
Released 1/21/2025
Fiscal Year 2026: 7/1/2025 – 6/30/2026**

RFP Contact:

Name: Gary Williams
Phone: (507) 949-7700
Email: RFP@soyquality.com

Submission Deadline: February 28, 2025

Summary and Background

Northern Soy Marketing, LLC (NSM) is a farmer-led board formed by the soybean checkoff boards of South Dakota, Wisconsin and Minnesota. The board invests grower checkoff funds to conduct research on soybean quality in soybeans and soybean meal destined for export, especially those from the Pacific Northwest (PNW) ports. NSM funds educational outreach sessions for international soybean buyers to consider critical amino acid value as a complete assessment of soybean feed quality rather than only crude protein levels.

Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is not an offer to enter into an agreement, but rather a means to solicit proposals from various investigators and collaborators to help increase the profitability of soybean producers. NSM will conduct an open, fair, and complete evaluation of all proposals based on the criteria listed herein and select those investigations that best represent the needs NSM desires to address.

NSM reserves the right to reject all proposals, in whole or in part, and/or enter negotiations with any party. NSM shall not be obligated for the payment of any sums, to any RFP respondent unless a written contract between the parties is executed. Successful bids, as determined by the NSM Board of Directors, will:

- Bring awareness of checkoff-funded projects and programs implemented to increase profitability to U.S. soybean farmers.
- Promote, educate, and increase awareness of soybean farmers and the importance of soybeans and soybean products to influencers and consumers.

Other considerations:

- Collaborator must maintain records and make them available for audit and inspection by NSM, the United Soybean Board, or USDA.
- NSM must retain ownership of all materials and information generated by collaborators.

- Collaborators cannot assign their duties under the contract to anyone else without prior written authorization from NSM.
- Funds awarded must not be used for any lobbying or influencing legislation at any level of government.
- Contracts will only be valid for NSM's 2026 fiscal year of July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026. If a longer term is anticipated, a clause allowing termination on a yearly basis must be included.

Funds distributed must be used toward a specific project with deliverables. If the project is generally called a sponsorship or partnership, it must include deliverables such as advertisements, speaking opportunities, admission to an event, booth space, etc.

No project is final or approved and no expectations of payment based on an action team approval or NSM approval is reasonable without a signed final contract.

General Guidelines

This Request for Proposals represents an open and competitive process.

Proposals should be directed to Northern Soy Marketing, LLC, to the following e-mail address: RFP@soyquality.com.

The proposal must contain the signature(s) of a duly authorized representative of the organization submitting the proposal.

If submitting a proposal with the intention to outsource or sub-contact any of the components, this must be clearly stated in the proposal and a list of sub-contractors to be used included along with associated fees/charges included in the budget breakdown. NSM will not refuse a proposal based upon the use of sub-contractors; however, we retain the right to refuse sub-contractors you have identified in your proposal.

A good proposal fits the mission of NSM and benefits soybean producers as a component of that mission. It is important to identify what significant contribution your project will contribute toward fulfilling that mission.

Proposals should be written as to begin on July 1, 2025, and be completed by June 30, 2026. Project extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Proposals will be reviewed by a broad range of farmers and experts. Avoid use of acronyms whenever possible. Include the reason and background for the project and materials and methods for each proposal.

Any potential political activity as a component of proposed research must be identified as part of the pre-proposal process.

Investigation Purpose

Proposals must address specific grower-assessed priority areas identified for the 2026 funding cycle. Proposals outside these priority areas will be given consideration after those within the priority areas have been evaluated.

Northern Soy Marketing is accepting proposals in the following priority areas. On the proposal template, indicate which area(s) the proposed project falls under.

International trade missions/events to promote northern-grown soy and NSM priority areas

Targeted international work to promote purchases of northern-grown soy destined for export. Project must include arranging meetings for an NSM delegation of consultants and farmer leaders with international soy purchasers and feed nutritionists (customers), arranging in-country transportation, lodging and meals, and creating detailed trip itineraries and meeting agendas. Contractor must work with other NSM consultants and organizations, such as the U.S. Soybean Export Council, to identify key customers and meeting opportunities. The itinerary of these trade missions could also include larger seminars with presentations from the NSM delegation.

Reverse trade missions for current or prospective customers

Guide pre-determined international soy buyers, feed nutritionists or others involved in soybean purchasing on tours and meetings in the U.S. to learn about, and drive preference for, soybeans and soybean meal grown in NSM member states. Project must include inviting international guests, assisting with their travel and accommodations, creating detailed trip itineraries, arranging ground transportation, meals, lodging and activities. Activities should include tours at farms, grain elevator facilities and grain export facilities.

Promotion of northern-grown soy exported from Pacific Northwest ports

Any project that will encourage or promote international purchases of northern grown soy based on quality, consistency, reliability and accessibility from Pacific Northwest ports.

Promotion of northern-grown soy exported from the Ports of Duluth-Superior and/or Milwaukee

Any project that will encourage or promote international purchases of northern grown soy based on quality, consistency, reliability, and accessibility from the Ports of Duluth-Superior and Milwaukee.

Comprehensive communications plan to support NSM's mission

Seeking proposals for comprehensive, year-round communications services including website maintenance, media relations, social media and digital communications strategies to effectively communicate the value of soybeans/soybean meal destined for export grown in NSM member states and NSM's work and priority messages to soybean farmers, international soy purchasers and livestock nutritionists, especially those in Southeast Asia.

Specific Guidelines

Proposals must be written on the proposal template. All submissions must also include a budget. Proposals should be no longer than 10 pages. Proposals submitted on materials other than the provided budget and template forms will not be accepted.

List one to three specific objectives and up to three goals for each objective identified. Please avoid generalized or broad statements of purpose as objectives. Your status (monthly, final) reports will require measurement and evaluation of objectives and goals.

Include explanation of the location of farmers that will be impacted by this: county, state, regional or national.

Include a methodology section introducing how the project will be established, conducted and how the results will be analyzed. Current literature review is assumed and need not be included, but pre-proposals will be evaluated for current relevance.

Explain the timeline to accomplish your objectives and goals. If the project is expected to be multiple years, indicate the project year (1st, 2nd, etc.) and total number of years that funding will be sought (remember, funding is granted on an annual basis).

Please identify other agencies/organizations to which you are also submitting this pre-proposal even if this pre-proposal is only asking for funding of a portion of a greater project. Identify total project funding requirements and the percent this pre-proposal represents as well as in-kind and financial support from your organization/institution.

Include how project results will be disseminated to producers. Dissemination to media or other outlets when applicable is strongly encouraged along with detailed reports related to events with customers. All communication must be submitted electronically to NSM.

In a brief paragraph, please describe the qualifications, available resources and facilities that will enable the principal investigator and collaborators and/or subcontractors to successfully complete this project.

Project Schedule/Timeline

All bids in response to this Request for Proposal are due no later than **5 p.m. CST on February 28, 2025**. Late proposals will not be considered. Deadline for any questions related to the proposals is **5 p.m. CST February 24, 2025**. Evaluation of proposals by NSM will begin after that date and initial decisions regarding funding will be based on the written bid. Should clarification on the proposal(s) be desired, NSM may invite individuals in for an oral presentation at the March 14, 2025, board meeting in Minneapolis.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

NSM will evaluate all proposals with equity. To ensure consideration, your proposal should reflect the mission statement of NSM. The proposal should also be on time, complete and include:

- Identification of the priority area the proposal addresses and suitability to provide soybean growers with information to meet NSM's mission statement.
- Adherence to the proposal guidelines listed in General Guidelines.
- Adherence to deadlines listed in Project Schedule/Timeline.
- Value and cost: Submissions will be evaluated on cost effectiveness of the proposal.

Funding Requested/Justification – Budget

All proposals must include budgets of expected expenditures with as much detail as possible including breakdowns such as salary, equipment (non-capitalized), sub-contractors and travel expenses as applicable. Incomplete budgets may result in delayed consideration for funding. All anticipated cost and fees must be included in the proposal. No depreciable capital equipment shall be purchased with funds provided without prior approval from NSM.