SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION

Introduction

Pulse Canada is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) to acquire the services and support necessary to gather consumer insights on opportunities for positioning and marketing the use of pea protein ingredients in US food market.

Background

Canada is the significant producer of pulses in the world and is actively looking to diversify its markets for pulses to areas that have less risk, provide greater price stability and are higher value. The use of peas for fractionation processing into protein, starch and fibre components has grown significantly in Canada over the last 10 years, as well as food product launches with pea protein ingredients. Technology for pea protein fractionation has also been applied to other pulse types including faba bean, chickpea and lentil. However the volume use of pea and other pulse protein ingredients in the human food market is relatively small owing to its use primarily in product categories with lower per capita consumption, lower rates of inclusion for pea/pulse protein ingredients and a small market penetration in current categories of use.

Pea/pulse protein is a plant-based protein ingredient option, with a complementary amino acid profile to many other protein sources, and a strong sustainability store with can be leveraged with consumers across a range of product categories. Pulse Canada would like to better understand the opportunities to align core values and inherent properties of pea/pulse protein ingredients with consumer needs and interests across staple food applications with high volume potential for these ingredients.

The objective of this study is to prioritize marketing and positioning opportunities for Canadian pea/pulse protein ingredients in the US food markets.

Pulse Canada Profile

Pulse Canada is the national association representing Canadian growers, processors and exporters of pulse crops – peas, beans, lentils and chickpeas. Pulse Canada works to improve the profitability, and thus the viability, of the industry by enhancing value and reducing costs.

Pulse Canada works under the leadership and direction of four provincial grower associations (Alberta Pulse Growers Commission, Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers, Ontario Bean Growers, and Saskatchewan Pulse Growers) and the processors and exporters of Canadian pulses that are members of the Canadian Pulse & Special Crops Trade Association (CPSC).

Pulse Canada works to enhance value by developing new market opportunities for Canadian pulses and creating efficiencies for trade and transportation of pulse crops.

SECTION II – TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. Statement of Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure

Bidders agree to standard business practice related to the confidential treatment of information provided by the Pulse Canada while this agreement is in effect, and at all times thereafter, the successful Bidder and any officers, employees or agents of the successful Bidder will:

- Treat as confidential all information, data, documents and materials acquired or to which access has been given in the course of, or incidental to, the performance of the agreement,
- Not disclose or permit to be disclosed, to any person, corporation or organization such information, data, documents or materials without first obtaining written permission from Pulse Canada; and
- Comply with any rules or directions made or given by Pulse Canada with respect to safeguarding or ensuring the confidentiality of such information, data, documents or materials.

This document must not be copied in whole or in part for any reason other than in the course of providing the information requested, without the express written permission of Pulse Canada.

2. Proposal

The Bidder offers to provide to Pulse Canada, upon the terms and conditions set out in this RFP, the services detailed herein and at the price set out in the proposal (The "Proposal") or otherwise agreed to by the parties.

3. Price Quotation/Evaluation Period

The Bidder agrees that the prices quote in its Proposal are firm and must be valid for acceptance by Pulse Canada for 60 days from the RFP submission closing date. All prices must be quoted in Canadian dollars.

4. Schedule of Events – Criteria Dates

Milestone	**Date**
Deadline for proposal submission	February 15, 2024
Proposal review process completed	April 1, 2024
Project end date	July 25, 2024

5. Proposal Acceptance

Pulse Canada reserves the right to award the RFP in whole or in part to the best interest of Pulse Canada. The successful Bidder's project team or resource will report to the Director, Diversification and Market Insights at Pulse Canada. The Bidder, if successful, agrees by submitting a proposal to abide by the terms and conditions of the RFP as specified.

6. Response Disqualification

Proposals received from a Bidder after the closing deadline WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Pulse Canada reserves the right to reject any and all response, and the lowest or any bid will not necessarily be accepted.

7. Evaluation of Responses

All responses to this RFP will be evaluated on the basis of the following factors:

- Bidder's understanding of the Statement of Work as stated in Section IV and ability to meet the specifications stated in this section
- Bidder's reputation, experience and proven results in similar outreach work, and overall qualification
- Cost competitiveness

8. Proposal Costs and Expense

This RFP does not commit Pulse Canada to pay any cost incurred in the submission of proposals or to contract for any services.

9. Publicity and Corporate Identification

A Bidder shall not use Pulse Canada identification or name in any advertisement, promotion or otherwise without the prior written consent of Pulse Canada, which may be delayed or withheld without explanation.

10. Governing Laws

This RFP is governed and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the Province of Manitoba and the federal laws of Canada applicable therein.

11. Contact

If you have any questions regarding his RFP, please contact:

Tanya Der
Director of Diversification & Market Insights
Pulse Canada
Telephone: 204-925-3783
Email: tder@pulsecanada.com

12. Right to Approve Subcontractors

Pulse Canada reserves the right to approve any subcontractors used by the Bidder and the Bidder must have the prior written approval of Pulse Canada prior to contracting any subcontractor for goods or services related to this RFP or the subsequent agreement.

SECTION III – INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

This section describes the Proposal requirements.

1. Submission of Proposals

All proposals must be submitted via email, be clearly identified and **submitted no later than 4:00PM CT on February 15, 2024** to:

Tanya Der
Email: tder@pulsecanada.com

Bidders should make sure they receive confirmation of the successful receipt of their submission. Bidders must address the requirements described in Section IV – Statement of Work. They must also provide cost information as it is described in Section VI- RFP Response requirements.

All proposals received by Pulse Canada will then be the custody of Pulse Canada. Therefore, proposals shall not be returned to Bidders.

2. Responding to RFP Items

2.1 Complete Proposals

Submissions must propose full specifications for all of the relevant requirements detailed in Section IV – Statement of Work of the RFP. Submissions that do not present complete proposals may be at a disadvantage or may be disqualified.

2.2 Additional Specifications/Alternative Approaches

Submissions may include additional specifications for items not covered by the RFP that the Bidder considers necessary and integral to its proposal. Please include a detailed rationale as to why these specifications should also be considered for adoption.

SECTION IV
STATEMENT OF WORK

Background

Pulse Canada is a national industry association that represents Canadian growers, processors and exporters of pulse crops – peas, beans, lentils and chickpeas. Canada is actively looking to diversify its markets for pulses to areas that have less risk, provide greater price stability and are higher value. The use of peas for fractionation processing into protein, starch and fibre components has grown significantly in Canada over the last 10 years, as well as food product launches with pea protein ingredients. Technology for pea protein fractionation has also been applied to other pulse types including faba bean, chickpea and lentil. However the volume use of pea and other pulse protein ingredients in the human food market is relatively small owing to its use primarily in product categories with lower per capita consumption, lower rates of inclusion for pea/pulse protein ingredients and a small market penetration in current categories of use.

Pulse Canada would like to better understand the opportunities to align core values and inherent properties of pea/pulse protein ingredients with consumer needs and interests across staple food applications with high volume potential for these ingredients. Pulses and their protein derivatives are non-GMO and are not considered a major allergen in North America. Pulse proteins are plant-based protein options that have a complementary amino acid profile to cereal, nut and seed sources of protein. Pulse proteins contains higher amounts of the essential amino acid lysine, which is lacking in these cereals, nuts and seeds. Therefore, when pea/pulse protein is blended with these other protein sources, the quality of protein is improved because higher amounts of all the essential amino acids are provided. Protein ingredients produced from dry peas, faba beans and lentils in particular have a positive impact on the environment. Dry peas, faba beans and lentils do not require nitrogen fertilizer due to their unique ability to fix nitrogen from the atmosphere, and nitrogen fertilizer is the largest contributor of green house gas emissions for agricultural crop production. Pulses are also a very drought tolerant crop, requiring minimal moisture or water for production compared to other protein sources. Growing pulses in rotation with other crops can improve soil health, and particularly when peas are produced in a no till system, are a key aspect of regenerative agricultural systems.

The objective of this study is to prioritize opportunities for marketing and positioning pea and other pulse protein ingredients in food applications based on US consumer perception of pea/pulse protein inclusion and the range of attributes that these ingredients offer to food formulations and products.

Under the current project, Pulse Canada is aiming to:

- Understand current US consumer perceptions of pea/faba bean/lentil and chickpea protein ingredients
- Understand which reasons/attributes/claims related to nutrition, sustainability or other attributes that these pulse protein ingredients provide to food formulations, would appeal most to consumers in this geographic market and influence purchase intent
- Understand how to best market the pulse protein ingredients and/or particular attributes of pulse protein to consumers in the US for food product applications, including most effective language to optimize understanding of specific sustainability, nutrition and health attributes
- Understand the opportunities for pulse protein ingredients in the US food industry across product categories with high volume potential

Project Scope

- Assessment should include an evaluation or determination of ingredient or end-product attributes that are most important to consumers for the following food applications that are relevant for pea protein ingredients (meat and dairy alternatives, bakery products, cereal and snack products)
- Assessment should include an evaluation of consumer perceptions of pea protein for relevant attributes such as degree of processing, allergenicity, flavor, plant-based, free from/clean label, nutrient density (vitamins, minerals), protein quality/amino acid profile, sustainability (low green house emissions, improve soil quality/soil health, low water use, role in regenerative agriculture, local production (North America)
- Pea protein ingredients of interest include both wet milled (pea protein isolates ranging from ≥80% protein on a dry weight basis) and dry milled ingredients (pea protein concentrates ranging from ≥ 48% and < 80% protein on a dry weight basis) and may be labeled as such or simply as pea protein.