

## FY26 Azerbaijan Market Assessment RFP

### Website Question and Answers

**Q: The RFP requests a SWOT analysis of Azerbaijan's logistics capabilities regarding "import and re-export" of U.S. soy products. Does WISHH envision Azerbaijan as a potential regional re-export hub (e.g., to Georgia, Central Asia, or Iran), and should the infrastructure assessment evaluate transit corridors to those markets specifically?**

A: The assessment should ascertain the viability of Azerbaijan's role as a regional import and re-export hub to Central Asia and the South Caucasus, as well as evaluate the logistics infrastructure that would enable or limit its capacity to do so.

**Q: For the port, rail, and road infrastructure assessment, should this focus exclusively on existing capacity, or should it also evaluate planned or under-construction infrastructure projects (e.g., Baku International Sea Trade Port expansion, Middle Corridor rail investments)?**

A: Both existing and planned infrastructure should be assessed, but the primary focus should be on existing capacity. For existing logistics capacity, infrastructure for container and bulk shipments should be explored, e.g. throughput, cost competitiveness with Northern Corridor, pain points, etc. For planned infrastructure projects, scale, budget, timeframe, intended impact, and relevant stakeholders should be included.

**Q: What level of depth is expected for the logistics SWOT — a high-level strategic overview integrated into the main report, or a standalone section with detailed capacity data (throughput tonnage, storage volumes, cold chain availability, etc.)?**

A: The SWOT analysis should be a standalone section with detailed descriptions.

**Q: The RFP asks to review Azerbaijan's biotechnology regulations for import, re-export, and transit of U.S. soy products. Should this regulatory review focus specifically on GMO/biotech soy approvals and labeling requirements, or does WISHH want a broader regulatory review covering phytosanitary standards, food safety certifications, and customs procedures as well?**

A: The review of Azerbaijan's biotechnology regulations should focus on the regulatory framework around GMO/biotech soy, including labeling requirements, customs documentation for import, and other necessary certifications. If any exemptions exist, for example in a Free Economic Zone, please elaborate on those as well.

**Q: Are there any known existing regulatory barriers or pending regulatory changes in Azerbaijan related to biotech soy that WISHH is already aware of and would like the assessor to investigate in particular depth?**

A: WISHH has a high-level overview of biotech regulation in Azerbaijan with regard to the import of GMO seeds not for cultivation and the import of processed GMO products but lacks a more detailed understanding of existing regulatory barriers and pending changes.

**Q: The RFP references Free Industrial/Economic Zones with reduced regulatory barriers. Should the assessment evaluate the feasibility of U.S. soy processing or value-added manufacturing within these zones, or is the intent simply to identify and catalog them?**

A: The assessment should evaluate the feasibility for U.S. soy processing or value-added manufacturing in any such zone. If no feasibility is identified, it should be simply catalogued.

**Q: For the Strategic Development Opportunity Areas (SDOAs), does WISHH have a working definition or framework for SDOAs that should be used for consistency across its RAPP-funded assessments? Or should the assessor propose criteria for identifying SDOAs based on market findings?**

A: SDOAs in this context should be interpreted to mean aligned actors, stakeholders, or companies within priority sectors i.e. poultry, dairy, swine, oilseed processing and value addition, etc. SDOAs may also include GOA (Government of Azerbaijan), U.S.-based agricultural cooperators, or INGOs in addition to Azerbaijani companies. The assessor should identify SDOAs based on WISHH's mission, capacity, and market findings.

**Q: Regarding cooperators for joint programming — should the assessment identify specific organizations and provide an initial engagement plan, or is a directory of potential cooperators with capability profiles sufficient?**

A: A directory of the existing cooperator network in Azerbaijan with capability profiles is sufficient.

**Q: The Azerbaijan RFP scope is notably broader than comparable WISHH market assessments (infrastructure SWOT, biotech regulatory review, SDOAs, and re-export analysis in addition to the standard market assessment). Given the \$70,000 budget ceiling, does WISHH have a priority ranking among these additional scope elements if budget constraints require trade-offs?**

A: WISHH will make this decision after reviewing and scoring the submitted proposals.

**Q: Is in-country travel to Azerbaijan required, or would a combination of desk research and virtual interviews be acceptable? If in-country travel is required, what is the expected duration of the field visit?**

A: Yes, in-country travel to Azerbaijan is required. It is up to the contracted firm to determine how many days of in-country travel is needed for a comprehensive market assessment.

**Q: Is there an expected minimum number of in-country or virtual stakeholder interviews for the primary research component?**

A: There is no minimum number of expected interviews, so the contracted firm should determine what number is sufficient for a comprehensive market assessment.

**Q: Azerbaijan's population is predominantly Muslim, with minimal swine production. Should the assessment still include a full swine sector analysis as listed in the RFP, or can that section be scaled back to reflect market realities, with greater emphasis on poultry, dairy, and aquaculture?**

A: A scaled back section for an agricultural sector without significant volume-driving potential is preferred. Such a distinction should be noted but not necessarily elaborated upon. Instead, focus market research on priority growth sectors.

**Q: Does WISHH have any existing contacts, in-country partners, or prior engagement history in Azerbaijan or the broader South Caucasus region that could be leveraged for introductions?**

A: WISHH will introduce the contracted firm to any relevant in-country partners and contacts at the time of the kickoff meeting.

**Q: The Azerbaijan RFP mentions competition from "European, Russian, Central Asian or Argentine soybean meal." Given current geopolitical dynamics and sanctions considerations affecting trade flows through Russia, does WISHH want an explicit assessment of how sanctions and regional trade disruptions are affecting soy supply chains into Azerbaijan?**

A: A market share breakdown by origin is sufficient.

**Q: The Azerbaijan checklist includes "WMOSB Proof of Certification (if applicable)" which is not in the Armenia RFP. Can you confirm what WMOSB stands for and whether this certification affects scoring or is purely informational?**

A: The WMOSB Proof of Certification is a certification for proof of Women Owned Small Business and will not be considered for scoring or informational purposes and can be disregarded.

**Q: Can a single bidder submit proposals for both the Armenia and Azerbaijan RFPs, and if so, would WISHH consider awarding both to the same firm if it offers efficiency advantages in terms of regional research synergies and cost savings?**

A: Yes, single bidders are welcome to submit proposals for both the Armenia and Azerbaijan RFPs. WISHH will consider awarding both contracts to the same bidder if it is determined that their capacity is sufficient to meet the expectations of both assessments without compromising quality.

**Q: What is the RFP number for the Azerbaijan RAPP-funded Market Assessment?**

A: The firm can provide this number.

**Q: In the Bidder Instructions section, what is the difference between Items 2 and 3?**

A: #2 are the sections that need to be included in the proposal, with #3 focusing on what additional documents and attachments are required.

**Q: Will a standard SOW template be provided?**

A: The market assessment template is in the RFP and will be included in the SOW as well.

**Q: The RFP states that the Project Deliverables should include “*One market assessment report using the required template in the SOW.*” Can you kindly provide this template? Does this refer to the template provided in the RFP rather than any SOW?**

A: The market assessment template is in the RFP and will be included in the SOW as well.

**Q: Is the Armenia/Azerbaijan assessment intended to validate a program decision already under internal consideration, or to determine whether program deployment is justified at all? If validation, what internal hypotheses should the assessment explicitly test?**

A: The market assessments will be one of the tools that WISHH will use to determine future programming in both countries.

**Q: Is WISHH planning to allocate RAPP or other funding to Armenia or Azerbaijan in FY2026–2027 contingent on this assessment? If so, what specific decision milestone does this report need to inform?**

A: This information is not required for the market assessments.

**Q: In past RAPP market assessments, which section of the final report proved most influential in WISHH's decision to move forward with programming?**

A: WISHH will use the market assessment as one of the tools used to determine future programming in both countries.

**Q: Should recommendations be structured at the level of strategic opportunity identification, or as implementation-ready program modules (including sequencing, partner types, and indicative scope for activities)? We'd like to understand whether recommendations should be diagnostic and neutral or detailed and targeted? How much detail is too much or too little?**

A: The recommendations should be detailed enough and clear for WISHH to determine future programming in both countries.

**Q: Is there a preferred balance between narrative reporting on the opportunity versus structured tools that support decision-making?**

A: Narrative reporting in the executive summary is preferred and structured tools in the other sections are preferred.

**Q: For Azerbaijan, should proposals assume infrastructure and logistics feasibility are gating criteria for program viability, or contextual factors alongside demand growth?**

A: Factors to assess growth potential.

**Q: Does WISHH view Azerbaijan primarily as an end-demand growth market, or as a strategic node within the Trans-Caspian trade corridor for U.S. soy movement into the Caucuses and/or Central Asia?**

A: The market assessment should identify what type of market Azerbaijan will be.

**Q: Were findings from the Georgia assessment (or other Central Asia assessments) materially influential in shaping the Armenia/Azerbaijan scopes? If so, are there specific trade, logistics, or regulatory conclusions that should be considered foundational?**

A: Each market assessment is independent but regional dynamics are important to consider.

**Q: In prior RAPP assessments, which proved more influential in internal decision-making: quantified data on trade potential, or qualitative stakeholder and regulatory feasibility analysis?**

A: Market assessments are used in their entirety in the internal decision-making process.

**Q: Does WISHH expect scenario-based projections of potential U.S. soy export volume under different intervention pathways, or is directional market sizing sufficient?**

A: Both would be preferred.

**Q: When proposals score similarly across the published evaluation criteria, what has historically differentiated the winning submission?**

A: WISHH uses a proposal scorecard when reviewing the proposals received. The scorecard includes professional competency, proposal comprehensiveness, cost and timing

**Q: In previous assessments, what consultants have consistently overemphasized relative to what ultimately proved most useful to WISHH?**

A: Consumer profiles rather than market intelligence.

**Q: Should proposals aim to maximize scope within the stated budget ceiling, or demonstrate efficiency below the ceiling?**

A: WISHH uses a proposal scorecard when reviewing the proposals received that includes the proposal's cost