



**Request for Proposals
U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council
Public Relations Campaign
Southeast Asia**

August 10, 2022

I. Purpose

The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC), representing the U.S. highbush blueberry industry, is seeking proposals from firms to develop and launch a regional public relations campaign across Southeast Asia in 2023. Target markets to consider include, but are not limited to, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam. The campaign will consist of a two-pronged approach to increase awareness of the health benefits, versatility and superior taste of U.S. blueberries among Southeast Asian consumers, as well as drive U.S. blueberry use in the food manufacturing industry. The chosen agency will enter into a contract with USHBC in January 2023 through project completion.

II. Background Information

The USHBC is a federal research and promotion program located in Folsom, California. USHBC, established in 2000, is directed by a 20-member council that includes elected grower representatives from each of four U.S. regions (West, Midwest, East and South); eight elected state grower representatives from the top eight highbush blueberry production states (Michigan, New Jersey, Oregon, California, Washington, Florida, North Carolina and Georgia); and eight additional council members (one handler representative, four importer representatives, two exporter representatives and one public member). USHBC represents and promotes U.S. blueberry products in all forms, including fresh, frozen and further processed. Information on the USHBC is available at blueberry.org.

USHBC supports industry-directed export development programs in targeted international markets, including China, India, Japan, South Korea and Southeast Asia. Promotional activities include wholesale and retail support, education, market and nutritional research, trade missions, consumer outreach, advertising and digital and social media campaigns.. Fresh U.S. blueberries are available from April through September in most

markets. Frozen and further processed blueberry products are available year-round.

USHBC's general program in Southeast Asia concentrates on Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam. Demand throughout the region continues to grow, however, volume to the countries remains limited. In 2021, 150 metric tons of U.S. blueberries were exported to Southeast Asia at an estimated value of over \$894,000. USHBC currently has in-market representatives in each country who act as the industry's trade representatives and coordinate consumer and trade promotions. To enhance these efforts, USHBC wants to develop and launch a public relations campaign that targets, but is not limited to, these three countries. The campaign will focus on consumers and food manufacturers to increase awareness, use and consumption throughout the region.

III. Scope of Services and Agency Responsibilities

The selected agency will be responsible for developing a cohesive, regional public relations campaign for the 2023 program year. The target markets of this campaign include Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam, however, the proposed strategy should also include a broader regional component. The agency will develop messaging, using existing U.S. blueberry resources, for digital promotions, social media campaigns and other consumer-facing promotions. Additionally, messaging will be developed to educate industry professionals and increase U.S. blueberry use in food manufacturing. The agency will also coordinate translating the messaging into the local languages.

The agency should propose a public relations strategy that targets both consumers and industry members with the newly developed collateral. The agency will work with USHBC throughout the design development process and public relations campaign to ensure USHBC guidelines and goals are met. Additional details on the services required are listed below:

Development of Messaging and Collateral:

- The agency should develop cohesive messaging and branding (including taglines or hashtags) that can be used effectively across all three markets and the region as a whole.
- The agency must account for the cultural and language differences among the target markets; agencies with offices or contacts in USHBC's target markets are preferred so that in-country input can be included.
- The messaging should highlight the flavor, high quality and health benefits of the blueberries, as well as their U.S. origin.

Southeast Asia Public Relations Campaign:

- The agency must develop and execute a public relations campaign during the 2023 program year that targets consumers and the food manufacturing sector. The objectives of the campaign are:
 - Consumers – Develop consumer awareness of the availability, quality and health benefits of U.S. blueberries.
 - Food manufacturers – Drive U.S. blueberry use and sales within the food manufacturing and processing sectors.
- The campaign must be consistent across the three markets, but prioritize the most effective promotions in each country.
- Proposed activities can include, but are not limited to, social media advertising, digital activations, traditional media outreach and engagement, key opinion leader engagement, banner advertising and point-of-sale materials.
- The agency should propose the ideal timeframe for this campaign.

The project must be completed by December 31, 2023.

IV. Evaluation of Proposals

There is no required format for the proposal; however, **proposals should be limited to 15 pages** and should include the following at a minimum:

- Proposed public relations campaign strategy and detailed budget, including management fees and all expenses. USHBC's preliminary budget for this project is \$200,000 USD, inclusive of the full scope of work.
- The ideal timeframe for this campaign. For example, should the campaign run for 12 months or focus on the peak blueberry shipping window (April-September)?
- Experience working with other U.S. agricultural commodity associations.
- Description of overseas offices/contacts that will provide input on this project.
- Examples of similar international public relations projects and management experience on similar projects, and the outcome of these promotions.

VI. Authority

The agency will work under the direct supervision of USHBC for all program activities. All expenditures must fall within the program budget and must be pre-approved by USHBC.

VII. Non-Discrimination Clause

USHBC does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, or marital or familial status.

VIII. Instructions for Submitting Proposals

Proposals should be submitted electronically to:
Shelby Sackett, USHBC Export Program Consultant
shelby.sackett@bryantchristie.com

Proposals are due by August 31, 2022, at 5 p.m. Pacific Time. Interested organizations should plan to be available for a virtual interview by USHBC representatives, likely during the week of September 5, 2022. USHBC anticipates making a final decision on a contractor by October 1, 2022, but reserves the right to reach a decision and/or notify applicants of the USHBC's selection at a later date.

Questions regarding this RFP or USHBC's activities in Southeast Asia should be directed to Shelby Sackett by email.