



Request for Proposal: Global Opportunity Assessment

January 3, 2023

I. Purpose

The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC), representing the highbush blueberry industry, is requesting proposals from international research agencies to assess the global market opportunities for the U.S. highbush blueberry industry. The selected agency will propose a 5-year plan that supports the Council's strategic goal to double exports from 5% to 10% of domestic production by 2025.

All proposals are due by January 20, 2023, at 5 p.m. Pacific Time.

Background Information

The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (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) as well as eight additional council members (one handler representative, four importer representatives, four exporter representatives, and one public member). Learn more about the USHBC at www.blueberry.org.

The blueberries represented by USHBC are available for purchase for direct consumer consumption and industrial food applications. Blueberries are available in numerous forms, including fresh, frozen, dried, and further processed (i.e., juice concentrate, powder, and puree). In addition to fresh applications, blueberries can be used as an ingredient in baked goods, dairy products, beverages, and more.

Exports have become increasingly important to the U.S. blueberry industry. As blueberry production expands throughout the world, the industry will face challenges with increasing supplies of fresh and frozen if opportunities to grow global demand are not realized. To ensure blueberries retain a high value and ensure sustainable profitability for growers, the USHBC is uniquely positioned to unify the industry on a global demand strategy to expand markets for blueberries.

This RFP is designed to help USHBC identify the best market opportunities for USA Blueberries to reach its strategic goal by 2025.

II. Objective and deliverables

USHBC's Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 directs USHBC to continue to build increased per capita consumption of fresh, frozen, and dried blueberries in offshore markets, develop new long-term markets in new areas and pursue external funding opportunities (such as USDA Foreign Agricultural Service trade programs) to supplement current industry-funded programs.

Specifically, USHBC utilizes industry and federal grant funds annually to promote U.S. blueberries in China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Southeast Asia (Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam). Activities across these markets vary; however, typical promotions include retail, food service, and food manufacturing campaigns, trade show exhibitions, public relations, and educational seminars. USHBC relies on expertise from its in-market representatives in each target market to help plan and execute marketing strategies that drive sales of USA Blueberry products. Additionally, USHBC provides technical support to address trade barriers in potential growth markets like Australia, New Zealand, Chile, South Africa, and Israel.

To help facilitate USHBC's export market strategy, USHBC seeks to assess market opportunities and establish a data-driven focus on where the USHBC should concentrate its promotional efforts to realize its goal of exporting 10% of the annual U.S. production. This assessment would include one-on-one interviews with key U.S. exporters to gauge their current and future prioritization on export markets, identifying their business motivations for exporting, the percentage of their crop or business that is involved with exporting and an opportunity assessment of countries that serves to prioritize international markets for USHBC's global business development.

This assessment will investigate opportunities in the following countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, UAE, UK, and Vietnam.

USHBC seeks to:

1. Interview USA Blueberry exporters to identify their market priorities and their motivations for exporting markets.
2. Identify what markets represent the largest opportunities to drive demand for USA fresh, frozen, and dried blueberries to realize our goal of exporting 10% of the domestic production by 2025.
3. Provide a SWOT analysis for each market and recommendations to address areas of weakness and threats.
4. Estimate the potential for incremental sales in each recommended market.
5. Identify new market opportunities and generate new leads for fresh, frozen, and dried USA Blueberries within the recommended markets' retail, food service, and food manufacturing channels.

III. Evaluation of Proposal

There is no required format for the proposal; however, proposals should be limited to 20 pages and should include the following at a minimum:

- Company information, including prior experience with comparable projects and staff capabilities/backgrounds.
- Proposed approach and methodology to evaluate each market, including a timeline for delivery of the final report.
- Proposed budget.

USHBC will independently review and evaluate each proposal and consider any necessary and proper factors, including but not limited to the work plan, prior experience with similar projects, and attained results for the client, staff background, and cost.

IV. Non-Discrimination Clause

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

V. Instructions for Submitting Proposals

Proposals should be submitted electronically to:

Renata Dalton
Director, Global Business Development
rdalton@nabcblues.org

All proposals are due January 20, 2023, at 5 p.m. Pacific Time. USHBC anticipates making a final decision on an agency by January 20, 2023, but reserves the right to reach a decision and/or notify applicants of its selection at a later date.

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to Renata Dalton by email.

Thank you for your interest in working with the U.S. blueberry industry.