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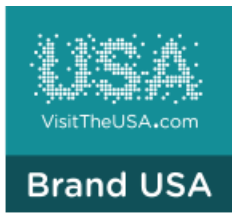
VisitTheUSA.com

Brand USA



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

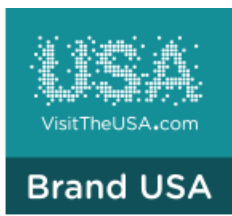
South East Asia – Travel Marketing & Public Relations Services
April 2024



Request for Proposals:
Travel Marketing & Public Relations Services in SE Asia

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Request for Proposals: Travel Marketing & Public Relations Services in SE Asia

PURPOSE

The purpose of this RFP is to identify the appropriate travel marketing and public relations firm (Representation Firm) to represent Brand USA's interests in Southeast Asia. The selected Representation Firm will be considered Brand USA's in-market expert, with the purpose of helping to build and maintain top-of-mind awareness of the USA as a premier travel destination in order to increase international visitation, spend, and market share for the United States. As an extension of the Brand USA team in market, the Representation Firm will ensure all in-market activity represents Brand USA in ways that support the organization's strategies and mission, while protecting and preserving our integrity and brand.

The Representation firm will be required to develop an integrated proactive plan for travel trade and public relations programs. The plans must work in concert with market priorities and any other plans for the market and provide partnership and consumer marketing support in conjunction with, and as directed, by Brand USA staff. Brand USA does not expect the Representation Firm to do consumer website development, e-marketing, and social media management as part of the scope of work for this contract.

OVERVIEW OF REPRESENTATION FIRM RESPONSIBILITIES

TRAVEL TRADE ACTIVITIES

Brand USA's travel trade strategies focus on broadening and deepening the breadth of the USA product being sold in the overseas markets. We strive to ensure that the global travel trade industry has the content, resources, and partnership needed to drive and propel visitation to the USA and also to inspire, promote and sell the United States with confidence. Brand USA's travel trade resources include: Travel Trade website - www.visittheusa.com/traveltrade; the USA Discovery Program, (Brand USA's online travel agent training platform); virtual educational webinars; in-person trainings; familiarization trips; trade events and product and itinerary development programs.

MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

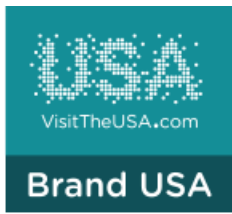
Brand USA's public relations strategy focuses on promoting the entirety of the United States and Brand USA's international marketing initiatives through a variety of earned media initiatives, Brand USA owned events and brand partnerships. A comprehensive media and public relations plan in SE Asia is an integral part of Brand USA's overall efforts to promote the wealth and breadth of experiences and range of destinations available in the United States, as well as to support key marketing messages, initiatives and the international storytelling pillars.

PARTNER MARKETING SUPPORT

A key area of Brand USA's travel marketing plan is to develop marketing partnerships that serve Brand USA's goal to increase visitation as well as provide support for funding. These partnerships can help fund the organization by delivering contributions of media space, sponsorship opportunity, production, etc. to Brand USA. The fair market value of these contributed (unpaid by Brand USA) assets are eligible to be matched by the U.S. Federal government with U.S. dollars from the Travel Promotion Fund. Representation Firms are expected to work closely with the Brand USA media and partnership teams to facilitate meetings and negotiate deals to ensure that these partnerships serve both our marketing and fundraising missions.

CONSUMER MARKETING SUPPORT

At Brand USA, we believe that an integrated marketing approach ensures that we can deliver the right message to the right person at the right time. Brand USA's Consumer Marketing Team manages all brand initiatives and campaigns, media planning and buying efforts, in-language websites, and social channels within our target



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markets. Representation Firms are required to adhere to all brand guidelines and to work in support of Brand USA's overall marketing and communications strategy. On occasion, we will request support on native language, cultural context, and content customization in order to increase relevance for and interest in travel to the United States.

The following handles are used for global, consumer-facing promotions in English:

- Website: VisitTheUSA.com
- Twitter: @VisitTheUSA
- Facebook: Facebook.com/VisitTheUSA
- YouTube: YouTube.com/VisitTheUSA
- Instagram: VisitTheUSA
- Google+: Google.com/+VisitTheUSA
- Pinterest: Pinterest.com/VisitTheUSA
- TikTok: @visittheusa

In addition to leveraging these global channels, Brand USA currently has localized social media efforts in 12 markets.

BUDGET

Brand USA will fund the contract to a maximum USD 350,000 budget including fees and activation.

The budget includes the following: Management fees and staff support for travel trade initiatives, media and public relations services, consumer marketing support, partner marketing support, and activations for travel trade activities, as well as media and public relations programs, plus administrative expenses. Third-party marketing activity costs are not included in the annual market budget allocation.

Proposers should provide an agency rate card, plus outline a plan and timeline covering anticipated deliverables, plus a breakdown of administrative expenses (including all travel), staff support (including titles and the percentage of their time each would be devoted to Brand USA activities), and third-party expenses necessary to accomplish the scope of work outlined in the section that follows.

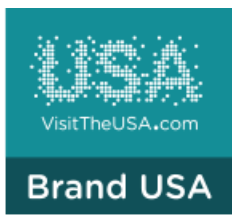
SCOPE OF WORK

The following categories represent core responsibilities of the Representation Firm in support of Brand USA's mission and annual business plan:

1. Travel Trade

The selected Representation Firm will:

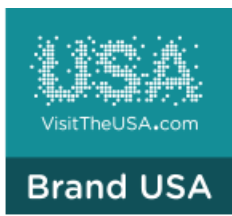
- Create and implement an approved annual strategic travel trade plan aimed at increasing visitation, visitor spend and traveler dispersal to the USA
- Provide strategic oversight, planning, and execution of all trade activities in market as proposed in approved annual marketing plan as directed by Brand USA staff.



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This will include but not be limited to the following as directed by Brand USA's global development team:

- Provide annual product analysis
- Develop and implement trade programs to increase and enhance the profile of the USA and assist the travel trade in developing new and innovative programs and products consistent with consumer marketing campaigns and messaging, to increase brand and destination awareness and visitation to the USA
- Develop and maintain strong relationships through direct outreach to: tour operators, wholesalers, OTA's, consolidators, travel agents, mice/corporate/incentive buyers, airlines, and other distribution intermediaries or related travel partners
- Work to keep destination product offerings current; and develop new travel itineraries and product ideas available for sale
- Identify, develop and implement tactical trade marketing programs with key distribution partners promoting the
- Continuously train travel agents in market to keep them up to date on Brand USA travel trade tools and keep the USA top of mind.
- Represent Brand USA at key travel industry events including exhibiting at trade shows and other events
- Develop, promote, and execute at least one Brand USA sales and media mission in market. Execution includes planning and appointment setting with key marketing partners in market
- Assist in the development, management, and execution of cooperative training programs with the travel trade, as well as workshops, road shows, and other creative and innovative programs
- Develop and execute a travel trade familiarization program with the goal of highlighting the lesser-known regions of the country. Create itineraries in conjunction with Brand USA staff. Requirement: minimum of one familiarization trips per year (not including MegaFams)
- Develop and execute a MegaFam trip upon request
- Ensure Brand USA is well represented in travel trade programs, brochures, and other industry communications
- Develop niche marketing opportunities and alternative distribution channels for a range of Brand USA niche and specialist travel experiences
- Distribute promotional brochures and literature, and other marketing assets as needed and directed.
- Log all activity in Brand USA's enterprise management system, powered by Salesforce, on a consistent basis and in compliance with prescribed procedures
- Work with Brand USA partners/vendors as needed and directed by Brand USA staff



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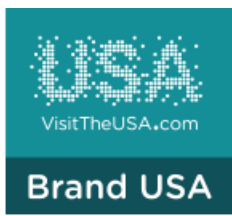
2. Public Relations Services

The selected Representation Firm will execute the following:

- Create and implement an annual strategic communications plan to increase awareness of Brand USA and the USA through a robust media relations program and earned media coverage

This will include but not be limited to the following as directed by Brand USA's communications team:

- Create a strategic communications plan that embodies Brand USA's international storytelling pillars and includes components that are relevant to the SE Asia market
- Translate and disseminate Brand USA global press releases to consumer travel, lifestyle, business and trade media contacts
- Translate and disseminate Brand USA corporate press releases as and when required
- Develop a series of hyper local press releases / bespoke stories relevant to the SE Asia market
- Create and update a quarterly list of media targets to be categorized into Tier One, Tier Two and Tier Three media across consumer travel, lifestyle, business and trade media contacts
- Maintain relationships with Tier One media through proactive pitching, responding to reactive enquiries and media meetings
- Foster media relationships and create media ambassadors for Brand USA
- Develop and execute a minimum of two Brand USA dedicated press events in market for 4 July and Thanksgiving
- Develop and implement Brand USA's Visiting Journalist Program in market as directed by Brand USA as well as a minimum of one group press trip accompanied by an agency host
- Maintain positive relationships with key communication contacts for industry partners
- Ensure promotions and activation initiatives that carry Brand USA, Visit the USA, and USA Campaign branding and marks meet all established guidelines
- Ensure all consumer promotions, sweepstakes, contests, and games of chance meet or exceed all legal requirements, terms and conditions, and are fully compliant with registration and disclosure filings
- Provide results of earned media in assigned template to report reach, sentiment, message retention, and other measurements



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4. Partner Marketing Support

Identify and help build strategic partnerships with key distribution partners selling and promoting the USA that drive traffic across the portfolio. The Representation Firm will facilitate and negotiate partnerships between Brand USA and distribution companies and assist in the management (collecting assets, reviewing and managing media plans, and provide reporting of results) of the partnership. These strategic partnerships must include components that deliver advertising or promotional benefits at no cost to Brand USA, which are used to fund the organization with matching funds generated by fees paid by international visitors and collected by the U.S. government.

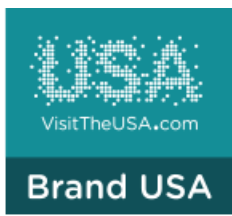
Target distribution partners include but are not limited to:

- Airlines
- Media companies (broadcast, print, out-of-home, digital, etc.)
- Online travel agencies
- Tour operators
- Production companies in which companies have contributed media, airline tickets, content development, or other assets and services with an established monetary value

NOTE: Aside from dedicated staff time, the costs associated with the strategic marketing partnerships developed for marketing and fundraising purposes are not part of the budget. The selected Representation Firm will be expected to develop cooperative joint marketing activities to increase targeted passenger sales and develop product as outlined in the Travel Trade responsibilities section. Costs associated with those activities are part of the budget.

5. Account Services

- Provide a written monthly progress report on activities and accomplishments in assigned template
- Progress Report is to be received by the 10th of the succeeding month in which the activities were performed. Sample progress report will be provided to the selected proposer upon request.
- Provide detailed back-up and appropriate receipts for all monthly expenses related to billable services and out-of-pocket purchases. This documentation shall be submitted monthly along with monthly invoice and report, and will be subject to audit at Brand USA's discretion
- Provide annual top-line report that includes a competitive analysis indicating the state of the industry, Brand USA's position in the market, and issues that could adversely or positively affect the destination's strategic position
- Store and maintain an adequate inventory of Brand USA collateral and promotional items, the selection of which meet all requirements as established by Brand USA



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- Maintain a dedicated business phone/fax/e-mail address for trade and press inquiries about the United States and be able to disseminate appropriate information expediently
- Maintain an in-country office for information and assistance to travel trade clients, a dedicated phone/fax/email address for local inquiries, and temporary office facilities as needed for Brand USA staff
- Maintain and adhere to Brand USA internal tools and systems

NOTE: Overhead includes, but is not limited to, hardline and mobile phone use, internet charges, lease of office space, local gas mileage, office supplies and cost of operations.

METRICS & REPORTING

- Provide annual marketing plan with budget projections and activities that support assigned KPIs provided by Brand USA
- Provide quarterly market intelligence report that includes key trends, threats and opportunities, and/or competitive analysis indicating the state of the industry and the impact of overall Brand USA initiatives
- Provide monthly KPI report for trade activities, marketing campaigns, and press coverage
- Provide a yearly report with product placement prospectus
- Manage all daily activities through Brand USA's enterprise management system, powered by Salesforce. Draft end of the year recap that includes any and all success in product development, product placement, familiarization trips, sales missions, roadshows, tradeshow, trade outreach, media and public relations, and other activities

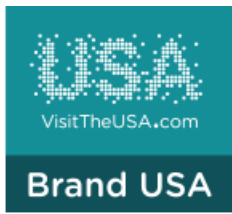
EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Evaluation Procedures

The Brand USA evaluation committee will evaluate and rate all proposals based on the evaluation criteria prescribed in Attachment 3. Proposals may be rejected if minimum requirements are not met. All proposers wishing clarification of this RFP must submit questions in writing to Brand USA, no later than May 3, 2024 (due by 5:00 pm, EST), and sent by email to rftadmin@thebrandusa.com.

Basis for Contract Award

A contract will be awarded to the organization whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to Brand USA, taking into consideration the criteria set forth in this RFP.



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Post Selection

Upon completing the selection process under this RFP, Brand USA will notify the winning proposer and all other proposers who were not selected. While we understand that non-selected proposers may wish to ascertain reasons for their non-selection, Brand USA's evaluations of proposals are confidential. Accordingly, Brand USA is unable to respond to any subsequent questions and/or requests for information as to why a company was not selected.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Term

Brand USA expects that the contractual term will start on October 1, 2024 and run 12-months with options to renew the agreement on similar terms upon mutual agreement of Brand USA and the selected Representation Firm.

Budget Form

Your proposed budget should be provided for in the format shown in Attachment 5, presented in U.S. dollars, and based on a full year of activities, administrative expenses, overhead costs that correspond to those detailed in your proposal.

Billing

The budget for this RFP and all administrative and overhead payments shall be made in U.S. dollars. All program and out-of-pocket costs will be reimbursed in the currency in which they were incurred. The RFP budget shall not be adjusted for the rate of currency exchange. Brand USA limits Representation Firm invoicing to two invoices per month. One invoice shall be for administration and overhead. The other invoice shall be for out-of-pocket and third-party expenses. Receipts are required for all out-of-pocket expenses.

Conflict(s) of Interest

Proposer shall not have direct or general interest in tour operator or tour wholesaler companies, travel agencies, airlines, or other travel trade organizations based in Mexico or other countries. The proposer must declare and provide details of any actual, potential or perceived conflict(s) of interest.

Financial Statements

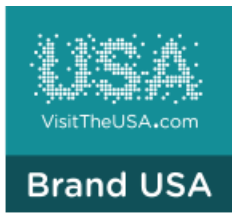
Proposer must demonstrate financial viability for maintaining an account of this size. Please provide financial statements inclusive of income statement and balance sheet. Financial statements provided must be the most recent statements available, but no more than 12 months old. Financial statements are to be submitted in a sealed envelope. After review, all financial statements will be destroyed or returned to proposer.

If proposal is a joint proposal, you must submit financial statements for all proposers.

Personnel / Management

Proposer must provide a team to Brand USA in order to execute aforementioned strategies. To best streamline reporting and office management as part of this contract, Brand USA will require a 100% allocated position of the trade and PR lead.

Please identify other positions that will conduct day-to-day work on behalf of Brand USA and their percentage of time allotment:



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- Trade
- Media and Public Relations
- Administrative
- Other recommended staffing

For all individuals assigned to this account, please provide an organizational chart of proposed staffing and information on each team member that includes:

- Overall experience in marketing accounts
- Current resumes/biographies demonstrating qualifications related to this RFP
- Length of time with agency

NOTE: Proposed team members must be proficient in English and have the necessary and relevant visas to travel to the United States.

Subcontractors

The proposer should identify all proposed subcontractors for work that exceeds \$5,000 per fiscal year and document the portions of service that will be performed by subcontractors and their ability to perform the work. Please provide the name and background of each subcontractor company, if applicable, as well as the resumes of proposed subcontractors' key personnel, including those conducting day-to-day work.

Note: The proposer must make it clear to any subcontractors included in the proposal that if the proposer is selected, the subcontractors may not necessarily be selected.

Proposal Costs

Costs for developing proposals and related presentations are entirely the responsibility of the proposer and shall not be reimbursed by Brand USA.

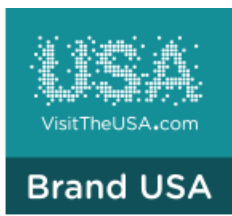
Official Contact

Brand USA requests that the proposer designate one person to receive all communications for clarification and verification of information related to this proposal. Please identify this point of contact on the Notice of Intent to Bid Form (Attachment 1).

SUBMISSION DELIVERABLES & SCHEDULE

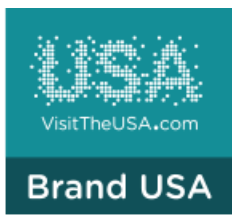
Please submit your responses in hard copy and electronic format. All proposals should include a clear, concise narrative. Proposals should not exceed 30 pages. Agencies may submit additional pages in the appendix but should not presume that they will be read. Proposals must be delivered electronically, and it must include the following information:

- **Agency Overview**
 - Company history and background in trade and public relations



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- If applicable, indicate the number of years and nature of your experience in the tourism industry and include any specific knowledge and familiarity marketing U.S. travel destinations.
 - Please provide 2-3 case studies that are relevant to the scope of work for this RFP or relevant to Brand USA. At least one case study should feature an example of your agency's experience with co-op marketing campaigns.
 - Please list any existing clients that could be considered a conflict of interest to Brand USA.
 - Financial Statements as set forth in the Administrative Information section above
 - Conflict(s) of Interest Statement as set forth in the Administrative Information section above
 - A current client list
- **Client Services & Project Management**
 - Overview of staffing plan and specific individuals that would work on the Brand USA account.
 - Please include a brief of each team member plus their experience and knowledge of the USA.
- **Pricing/Cost Structure**
 - Provide detailed pricing for account management and fees for services outlined in the RFP. Pricing must be fully comprehensive, and complete.
 - Explain how you approach a pricing structure: hourly, retainer or another model. Additional information and backup detail should be included as appropriate with your proposal.
 - Please also include a rate card for all services.
- **References**
 - Provide contact information for at least two current clients, two former clients and two journalists that Brand USA can contact. For each reference, please indicate the following:
 - Contact Name and Title
 - Contact Vendor Name
 - Contact Phone Number
 - Industry of Client
 - Service Description and length of Relationship
 - Brief explanation regarding the end of the business relationship, if applicable.



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- **Travel Trade requirements**

Market Intelligence including:

- Travel Trade landscape overview
- Identified key travel trade partners including airlines, tour operators, OTA's travel agent groups
- A list of the key target market segments and demographics on which you believe Brand USA should focus and why
- Local market insights and intelligence on trends, distribution dynamics, consumer insights, and competitor analysis
- A description of your abilities to coordinate and work with multiple U.S. stakeholders, destination/supplier offices, and other representation organizations on behalf of Brand USA

- **Public Relations requirements**

- Media landscape overview
- A tiered list of media targets across broadcast, print, online, consumer glossy titles and travel trade
- A description of your abilities to coordinate and work with multiple U.S. stakeholders, destination/supplier offices, and other representation organizations on behalf of Brand USA

RFP Management

All communications regarding this RFP must be sent to the Brand USA RFP Administrator at

RFPAdmin@thebrandusa.com

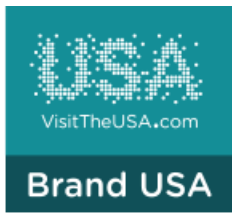
This includes delivery of the following documentation by the due dates set forth in the Tentative Scheduled section found below:

- Intent to Bid
- Written Questions
- PDF of Written Proposals

Note that all answers regarding questions and request for clarification regarding this RFP will be responded to publicly consistent with the schedule below to ensure that all respondents have the same information at hand.

Notice of Intent to Bid

Notice of Intent to Bid (Attachment 1) must be received by **May 27, 2024** 5:00 pm, EST. The notice must be submitted via e-mail to rfpadmin@thebrandusa.com. The Notice of Intent to Bid is non-binding; however, it



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ensures the receipt of all addenda related to this RFP. Proposals will be accepted only from applicants who submitted a timely Notice of Intent to Bid.

Certification Form

Certification Form (Attachment 2) must be signed and accompany all RFP Response submissions.

Tentative Schedule

This tentative schedule may be altered at any time at the discretion of Brand USA. Brand USA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or any part thereof; waive an informality in the proposals and accept the proposal that best meets the needs of Brand USA.

A. Request for Proposal Released	April 19
B. Written Questions due by 5:00 p.m. EST	May 3
C. Written Questions Answered and Posted to Brand USA Website	May 20
D. Intent to Bid due by 5:00p.m. EST	May 27
E. Proposal Due (due by 3:00 p.m. EDT)	July 8
F. Proposal Evaluation by Scoring Committee	Aug 23
G. Notification and Scheduling of Finalist Interviews	Aug 27
H. Pre-Calls to Finalists	N/A
I. Finalist Presentation/Interviews	Early Sept
J. Notice of Intent to Award Contract and Public Posting	October 4

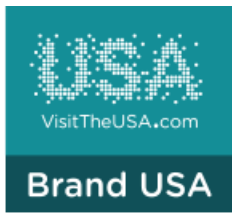
Delivery of Proposal

Each proposer is required to deliver an electronic version of the proposal. These must be in a PDF format and sent to rfpadmin@thebrandusa.com

Proposals must be received by the date and time referenced in the tentative schedule (no later than **July 8, 2024** at 3:00 p.m. EDT). Late submissions will not be accepted. Proposals may not be faxed.

Evaluation & Contracting

All proposals satisfying the requirements of this RFP will be evaluated to establish which of the providers best fulfills the needs of Brand USA and this project. This RFP in no way commits Brand USA to award a contract, to pay any costs in preparation of a proposal, or to contract for the goods and/or services offered. Brand USA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, to negotiate with all qualified providers or to cancel this RFP. After awarding the contract, the schedule will include a period of collaboration between Brand USA and the selected Representation Firm to better define, elaborate upon, and fix the Representation Firm's final Scope of Work and general Terms and Conditions.



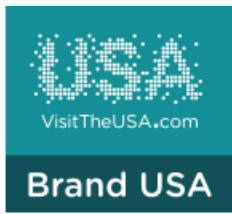
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ATTACHMENT 1

Notice of Intent to Bid

Due:
SEND TO:
Brand USA Headquarters
C/o RFP Administrator
1725 Eye Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20006
ATTN: RFP – Travel Marketing & Public Relations Services/SE Asia
Phone: 202.536.2060
Email to: rfpadmin@thebrandusa.com

NAME OF PROPOSER / COMPANY:
CONTACT PERSON:
MAILING ADDRESS:
TELEPHONE:
FAX:
E-MAIL ADDRESS:
WEB SITE:
SIGNED:



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ATTACHMENT 2

Certification

Please include the following statement as part of the proposal:

Certification Statement

By submission of this proposal and authorized signature below, proposer certifies that the undersigned corporate officer has authority to bind the proposer to the terms of this proposal and hereby certifies on behalf of the proposer that:

- He/she has read and understands all commitments and terms of this proposal
- The information contained in this proposal is accurate
- Proposer's quote is valid for at least 120 days from the date of proposal's signature below
- Proposer understands that if selected as the successful proposer, he/she will have ten (10) business days in which to complete contract negotiations, if any, and execute the final contract document
Date of execution can be extended by mutual agreement of Representation Firm / Brand USA

Authorized Signature

Typed or Printed Name

Title

Date

Official Contact

Brand USA requests that the proposer designate one person to receive all communications for clarification and verification of information related to this proposal. Please identify this point of contact below:

Official Contact Name and Title

Email Address

Organization

Phone Number

Street Address

Facsimile Number

City, State/Country, Zip



ATTACHMENT 3

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

FOR BRAND USA USE ONLY

Bid/Proposal: _____
 Evaluated By: _____
 Date: _____

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation committee will judge each written proposal based on the following criteria:

CRITERIA	MAX. POINTS	SCORE
1. Overall Experience of the Firm: Evaluation will include an assessment of such items as history of your company, your experience as it relates to the requirements within this RFP, as well as evidence of past performance and related items.	20	
2 Scope of Work: Evaluation will include an assessment of the quality of proposed strategies, creativity, detail of plan, and related items.	20	
3. Familiarity with Brand USA Brand and Product: Evaluation will include an assessment of your understanding of our organization how you incorporated this knowledge into your proposal, and related items.	10	
4. Qualifications of Personnel: Evaluation will include an assessment of the qualifications and experience of your managerial team, staff, and subcontractors and related items.	10	
5. Capabilities: Evaluation will include an assessment of your past performance related to developing effective travel marketing and public relations programs.	20	
6. Cost Effectiveness: Evaluation will include an assessment of whether the proposed budget is reasonable and appropriate and if the proposed services are cost effective in relation to the fees charged and value of overall project.	20	
TOTAL POINTS	100	

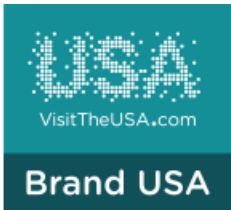


ATTACHMENT 4

Sample Budget Form

Note: The program names and dollar amounts shown below are for illustration only.

FINANCIAL BUDGET		
Budget Line Items	Name of Program	Program Cost
Communications/ Public Relations	Media Relations	\$10,000.00
	In-market Media and Public Relations	\$10,000.00
	Special Projects	\$10,000.00
	Reporting/Clippings	Included
	SUB TOTAL:	\$30,000.00
Travel Trade/Consumer	Training / Seminars	\$5,000.00
	Trade Shows Participation	\$10,000.00
	Consumer Campaigns	\$10,000.00
	Sales Missions	\$10,000.00
	Co-op	\$10,000.00
	Reporting	Included
	SUB TOTAL:	\$45,000.00
MICE	Tradeshows	\$25,000.00
	Sales Calls	
	Partnerships	
Account Administration	Overhead	\$10,000.00
	Retainer	\$30,000.00
	Printing & Production	\$10,000.00
	SUB TOTAL:	\$50,000.00
Total Cost		\$150,000.00



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Sample Staffing Form

STAFFING BUDGET				
Title	Years with Company	Years in RFP Field	Hourly Rate	% Time Assigned to Account
PR / Trade Director	10	15	\$100	100%
Travel Trade Manager	8	10	\$75	50%
Public Relations Manager	5	7	\$75	50%
Total FTEs: 2.0				