

March 1, 2024

Executive Summary

The Hawaii MBDA Center will host a trade delegation to Vietnam March 19, 2024 – March 26, 2024. The delegation solidifies strategic cooperation to build on existing contracts and to secure new contracts and investments to strengthen diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties between United States MBEs and Vietnamese business owners and companies. This delegation enables U.S. MBEs to leverage trade and investment opportunities, deepen current business relationships and foster collaborations in four to five sectors. The delegation will engage with key government officials, business organizations, and institutions at a much more practical and local level to expand bilateral trade. Measurable goals of this delegation include, securing a minimum of \$100M in IDIQ contracts or signed MOU/LOI agreements that express interest for cooperation between MBDA's U.S. MBE delegation firms and Vietnamese counterparts specifically focusing on fuel, energy, and agriculture. This report summarizes and outlines the key reasons to support this initiative and highlights the unique strengths of the Hawaii MBDA Center.

Existing Contacts, Contracts and Local Expertise:

Team members have over 40 years of combined experience in Vietnam and 50 years in the ASEAN Region and are part of a business/alumni network that contributes more than 25% to Vietnam's GDP.¹ One MBDA team member spent 15 years of residence in Vietnam. The MBDA Hawaii Team brings unparalleled insights into the local business landscape, culture, and regulatory environment, not to mention the quality networks in various industries. For example, past performance includes Hawaii clients closing more than \$2.1B in contracts and IDIQ's over a ten-year period for fuel, LNG, energy, solar farms, and hydroelectric dam projects, and agriculture. Other existing contracts include \$25M in textiles, \$12M in edamame (young soybeans) exports to Trader Joe's, and \$40M in corn contracts benefiting our U.S. Agriculture MBEs. Our team's established contacts within governmental and nongovernmental agencies provide a solid foundation for facilitating interactions and navigating the Vietnamese business environment. MBDA will leverage of MBDA Center members that are also teachers and alumni of the University of Hawaii Shidler College of Business Executive MBA program which is the number one MBA program in Vietnam for 22 years.

Strengthening Diplomatic and Economic Ties:

Hosting a trade delegation offers a unique opportunity to strengthen diplomatic relations between U.S. MBEs and Vietnam, fostering goodwill and mutual understanding. Reviewing current and structuring new trade agreements, investment opportunities, and partnerships in various sectors will enhance bilateral economic collaboration. The timing for this delegation fits perfectly into the U.S.-Vietnam New Comprehensive Partnership that went into place in late 2023. The Hawaii MBDA Center will be able to leverage the heightened partnership status in key trade sensitive industries. Vietnam is also a member of the U.S. initiative, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF). The Hawaii MBDA Center will assist in advancing the resilience, inclusiveness, fairness, and competitiveness initiatives with Vietnam around the IPEF pillars of trade, supply chains and clean energy enabling Hawaii MBDA Center to grow its footprint into the

¹ <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/news/article.php>, University of Hawaii, Shidler College of Business, June 21, 2007

ASEAN and IPEH Region.² This will be accomplished by setting up cooperative partnerships with the procurement officers and business decision makers in Vietnam.

Educational and Cultural Collaboration:

The Hawaii MBDA's office experience in education in the region³ can be leveraged to explore partnerships with Vietnamese educational institutions, promoting academic collaborations and student exchanges. Targeted engagements and events can enhance cultural understanding, a crucial aspect of successful international business ventures. Example contacts include, International University HCMC, Vietnam National University HCMC, Hanoi Business School and Kien Giang University. Specifically, University of Hawaii's Shidler College of Business Executive MBA program, strategically located in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, has over 1,000 alumni and 70% of those alumni hold a C-Suite, director, or COO position.⁴ These are the decision makers our MBDA delegation will have access to.

Business Expansion:

The delegation identified four to five key sectors in Vietnam where U.S. MBEs businesses can expand, creating new opportunities for growth and economic development. The focus will begin around agriculture, manufacturing, energy/fuel, IT, and banking/finance. Businesses in these key sectors are ready to establish IDIQ contracts and initial purchase orders from U.S. MBEs. Solidifying current and establishing new business connections and partnerships during the delegation lays the foundation for stronger joint ventures and cooperation agreements.

Leveraging Team Expertise for Strategic Meetings:

Utilizing team members' significant contacts⁵ in governmental agencies allows for strategic meetings with key officials, including Trade Ministers and Heads of State. Tailoring the delegation to address specific sectors of interest maximizes the impact of each meeting, ensuring targeted and productive discussions. Many of these contacts are looking for trustworthy long-term public-private partnerships with U.S. companies, especially for access to capital markets. Within the four to five sectors, we will be meeting with at least 3 Vietnamese counterparts in each category to close on contracts.

Economic Impact for Minority Businesses:

The delegation focuses on opportunities specifically benefiting minority businesses, promoting inclusivity and economic growth within U.S. MBE minority communities. Vietnam is one of the most robust economies in ASEAN, and with this delegation, we will strengthen the ties between U.S. MBEs and Vietnam. MBDA clients they will benefit from acquiring technical assistance in

² ASEAN and IPEH countries include Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Cambodia, Republic of Korea, Japan, New Zealand, Malaysia, India, Brunei, Fiji, Australia.

³ Includes Shidler College of Business Executive MBA, corporate training, Thai Nguyen University, Nguyen Hue High School, VATC English Academy, Smart Train Accounting, RMIT Internship and Mentorship MBA programs, LCCI Accounting School.

⁴ Shidler Business, Volume 38, Number 2 Fall/Winter 2015

⁵ Governmental Contacts include the offices of: Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), Department of Planning and Investment (DPI), Ministry of Finance (MOF), General Department of Taxation (GDT), Vietnam Chamber of Commerce (VCCI), Ministry of Defence (MOD); Departments of Industry, Technology and Logistics, Civil Aviation Authority of Vietnam (CAAV).

certain industries and gain access to new markets, contracts, and capital opportunities.⁶ This enables our MBE delegation to become more globally competitive.

Utilizing Long-Term Relationships:

The delegation reinforces our current U.S. MBE commitments and deepens those economic relationships. This delegation is also a stepping-stone towards additional new long-term economic and diplomatic relationships between U.S. MBEs and Vietnam businesses. Post-delegation follow-up initiatives between MBEs and Vietnam counterparts will solidify relationships, pursue identified opportunities, ensure sustained collaboration, and expand bilateral trade by closing on contracts.

In conclusion, hosting a trade delegation to Vietnam aligns with MBDA Center's mission of supporting minority business development. The combination of on-the-ground business expertise, academic credentials, and strategic networking positions, this delegation is a powerful catalyst for economic growth and fostering collaboration between U.S. MBEs and Vietnam. This delegation builds off positive past performance and reputation. The success of this initiative solidifies a lasting and mutually beneficial relationship between the two regions and further elevates MBDA's importance and visibility. The Hawaii MBDA Center's unique strengths, including the team members' business experience in Vietnam and academic background, create a compelling case for organizing this trade delegation. By leveraging these advantages, the center has the potential to make significant contributions to diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations between the United States and Vietnam. This initiative not only aligns with the broader goals of MBDA but also addresses specific areas of opportunity that can lead to tangible benefits for MBDA's MBE businesses and bilateral trade with the U.S. This report highlights the potential for leveraging existing contacts and contracts, business expansion, cultural collaboration, with the expectation of closing contracts and securing \$100M in IDIQ agreements. To maximize the impact of the trade delegation, careful planning and coordination will be essential. The suggested delegation plan outlines a systematic approach to engaging with various sectors and officials in Vietnam, ensuring that each meeting serves a specific purpose and contributes to the overall objectives of the visit.

Report for Delegation

The following outlines the compelling reasons for the Hawaii Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) Center and MBDA Federal Procurement Center to host a trade delegation to Vietnam. Leveraging our extensive experience and connections of team members, team members have over 40 years of combined experience in Vietnam and 50 years in the ASEAN Region, this initiative aims to strengthen economic ties, foster collaboration, create business opportunities and close contracts between the United States and Vietnam.

Delegation Composition:

- Fifteen representatives from diverse industries, including agriculture, aviation, technology, manufacturing, finance, healthcare, and environmental sustainability.
- Delegation leader with experience in international business and diplomatic relations.

⁶ Vietnamese counterparts include: Vietcombank, HSBC, Deutsche Bank, Petro Vietnam, EVN, IBM, VNPT, FPT, Baker McKenzie, Ernst & Young, Deloitte, VinaCapital, Intel, Vietnam Airlines, The Pan Group, Pepsi, Microsoft, Chubb, Vietnam Maritime Commercial Bank, Novartis, Zuellig Pharma, KMS Technology.

Pre-Visit Preparation:

- Conduct briefings on Vietnam's political, economic, and cultural landscape.
- Provide cultural sensitivity training to the delegation members.
- Develop individualized briefing documents for each delegate based on their respective sectors.

Government Officials:

- Schedule meetings with Heads of State and Government officials to discuss bilateral relations and regional cooperation.
- Arrange sessions with Ministers of Foreign Affairs to explore diplomatic ties and collaboration opportunities.
- Engage with Trade Ministers to discuss trade agreements, economic partnerships, and investment incentives.

Business and Trade Organizations:

- Facilitate interactions with local Chambers of Commerce for networking and exploring trade opportunities.
- Arrange sector-specific meetings with Industry Associations to promote collaboration and address sector-specific issues.
- Connect with Investment Promotion Agencies to explore investment opportunities and incentives.

Economic and Development Agencies:

- Schedule discussions with Finance Ministries to understand economic policies, fiscal matters, and financial cooperation.
- Explore collaboration opportunities with Development Agencies on joint development projects and initiatives.
- Learn how to effectively work with the various levels in State Owned Enterprises (SOE) and see how SOEs have transitioned to the private sector.

Technology and Innovation:

- Arrange meetings with local Tech Companies to discuss innovation, collaboration, and potential investments.
- Engage with Research Institutions to foster academic and technological partnerships.

Defense and Security:

- Schedule discussions with Defense Ministers, military officials, or military attaché to explore regional security issues and potential defense cooperation.
- Connect with different representatives to collaborate on counterterrorism efforts and regional stability.

Environmental and Sustainability Organizations:

- Engage with Environmental Ministries to address environmental challenges and explore sustainable development initiatives.
- Connect with NGOs focused on environmental conservation and sustainability.

Cultural and Educational Institutions:

- Schedule meetings with Education Ministries to discuss educational partnerships, student exchanges, and academic collaborations.
- Engage with Cultural Exchange Organizations to promote cultural understanding and people-to-people ties.

Health Officials:

- Arrange discussions with Health Ministries to collaborate on public health initiatives, disease prevention, and healthcare infrastructure development.

Organize and Sponsor Networking Events, Site Visits, One to One Meetings:

- 4 days of business interactions and personalized meetings
- Host an Opening Day business reception to foster relationship-building.
- Organize networking events to facilitate interactions between the U.S. delegation and local businesses, government officials, and key stakeholders.
- Host a closing day Gala Dinner Event for the delegation, as is tradition for this type of business event in Vietnam.

Post-Visit Follow-Up:

- Compile a comprehensive report summarizing the outcomes of each meeting and identifying potential areas for collaboration.
- Develop a strategy for ongoing communication and follow-up to solidify relationships established during the delegation visit.
- The delegation aims to contribute to the enhancement of economic, diplomatic, and strategic ties between the United States and Vietnam.

In summary, hosting a trade delegation to Vietnam is a strategic move for the Hawaii MBDA Center, capitalizing on the expertise of its team members and director to forge meaningful connections and open doors for economic growth and collaboration. We can build off past performance and further expand on current contracts. The success of this initiative has the potential to establish a lasting and mutually beneficial relationship between the United States MBEs and Vietnam.