DESTINATION NORTHERN ONTARIO

REQUEST FOR SERVICES

Northern Ontario Francophone Itineraries - 2-year Pilot Project

DATE ISSUED:	**September 26, 2019**
NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID:	**October 4, 2019, 1:30 pm**
RFS CLOSING DATE/TIME:	**October 11, 4:00 pm**
FINALIST BIDDER INTERVIEWS:	**Within 5 business days of closing deadline if required**
CONTACT PERSON:	Nicki Schiewe, Senior Product Development Coordinator, n.schiewe@destinationnorthernontario.ca

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

_____

BUSINESS NAME

_____

MAILING ADDRESS

_____

CITY POSTAL CODE

(___)_____(____)_____

TELEPHONE FAX

_____

CELLULAR EMAIL ADDRESS

_____ _____

SIGNATURE NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED PERSON

_____ _____

DATE HST REGISTRATION NUMBER

Intention to Submit Proposal/Questions

To ensure you are apprised of any additional information that may be provided, please complete Page 1 and submit to n.schiewe@destinationnorthernontario.ca.

Written questions (only) may be submitted to the email address above. One consolidated response to all questions (without attribution) received prior to the deadline specified above will be published to all candidates who have declared their intent to submit an Proposal for Service. Questions should be submitted by **1:30 p.m. October 11, 2019.**

A. Project Overview

Destination Northern Ontario (DNO) is a not-for-profit organization representing the tourism industry in Ontario's Region 13, Northern Ontario. The region is divided into three sub-regions with DNO maintaining an office in each with its head office in Sault Ste. Marie and satellite offices in Sudbury and Thunder Bay. Core funding is provided by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. DNO is governed by a Board of nine industry representatives with over 50% private sector representation and supported by five government advisors from both the provincial and federal level.

The organization leads tourism growth in the region by coordinating the development and delivery of tourism strategies in partnership with key tourism partners in the following areas; product development, investment attraction, workforce and industry training, and marketing.

Vision - Northern Ontario will be a unique and distinctive tourism destination wherein high quality products and experiences resonate with consumers, entrepreneurship is valued, and tourism provides local, regional and global connections for the entire region.

Mission - DNO will take a leadership role to strategically guide and champion growth in Northern Ontario's tourism industry, through innovation, strong communication, collaboration and partnerships with industry.

Values - The Board is committed to focusing on the vision in an "innovative, results-based, effective and fiscally responsible manner, with a foundation of strong governance and management leadership.

DNO is comprised of three sub-regions (13a, 13b and 13c), reflecting the unique marketing and travel corridors that link the province's north from Manitoba to Quebec borders, and south to the U.S. border. A map of DNO including its three sub-regions, along with additional background information and reports, can be found at www.destinationnorthernontario.ca.

Although the project will be described in detail later in Section G of this RFS, a brief description of the project is as follows:

DNO is seeking a consultant(s) to manage the delivery of the Northern Ontario Francophone Itineraries - 2-year Pilot Project.

DNO expects Candidates to:

- provide a comprehensive proposal that meets or exceeds all requirements of this RFS;
- demonstrate their management capabilities; and
- assume responsibility for all requirements in this RFS.

DNO expects a single Consultant to take responsibility for the completion of the plan. While teaming and subcontracting are permissible, one firm shall be the prime supplier on the contract.

B. Administrative Information

1. Definitions

This section defines the key terms used throughout the RFS document.

- The Proponent, Northern Ontario Regional Tourism Organization 13 will hereinafter be referred to as "DNO".
- The term "Candidate" is defined as "an individual or a company that submits or intends to submit a proposal in response to this Request for Services".
- The successful Candidate will be referred to as "the Consultant(s)".
- This Request for Services will hereinafter be referred to as an "RFS".
- The words "shall" or "will" are used to indicate a mandatory requirement.
- The word "should" is used to indicate an optional requirement.

2. The Process

Closing Date, Time and Location

Each Candidate must deliver his/her proposal electronically. Proposals must be received no later than **4:00 pm** local time in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario on (the "Closing Time"): **Friday October 11, 2019** to info@destinationnorthernontario.ca .

Late Proposals for Service

It is the responsibility of each Consultant to ensure that his/her proposal is received at the Closing Location by the Closing Time and the Consultant assumes the entire risk of failure of DNO to receive its proposal at the Closing Location by the Closing Time. Proposals received at the Closing Location after the Closing Time will not be considered and may be returned to the Consultant.

Schedule and Timing of Project

It is expected that the project will begin during the week of **October 29, 2019**. The completion date is expected to be on or before **March 31, 2021**.

Summary of Key Activities, Dates and Times:

Activity	Date/Time
Notice of Intent to Bid	October 4, 1:30 pm EST
Project Questions Due	October 4, 1:30 pm EST
RFS Closing	October 11, 2019, 4:00 pm EST
Finalist Candidate Interviews (if recq'd)	Within five days of closing deadline
Consultant selection complete	October 18, 2019

Contract with Consultant	October 25, 2019
Project Completion	March 31, 2021

Conflict of Interest
DNO reserves the right to disqualify any submission due to a conflict of interest. Each applicant must disclose any actual or potential conflict that may be occurring at time of bid, or may occur during the course of the project. If a vendor fails to disclose an actual or potential conflict or where such a conflict cannot be resolved, DNO has the right to terminate the contract.

Evaluation and Selection
Evaluation of Proposals will be performed by a steering committee formed by DNO consisting of funding partners. Proposals will first be checked against mandatory criteria. Proposals not meeting the mandatory criteria will be rejected without further consideration. Proposals that do meet the mandatory criteria will then be assessed against additional criteria. DNO's intent is to enter into a Contract with the Consultant who has the highest overall ranking. Please refer to Section G for a list of criteria and their weighting.

Negotiation Delay
If a Contract cannot be negotiated with the highest ranking Candidate within a period of time satisfactory to DNO, DNO may, at its sole discretion, terminate negotiations with that Candidate and either negotiate a Contract with another Candidate or choose to terminate this RFS process and not enter into a Contract with any of the Candidates. DNO may also at its sole discretion, send out a new RFS for this project should it be unable to negotiate a Contract with the successful Candidate or another Candidate.

Continuation of Work
Based on the recommendations of the final report and subject to DNO approval should future work be identified to advance or enhance this initiative, DNO being satisfied with efforts to date at its discretion may enter into an agreement with the successful bidder without retendering identified work.

C. Proposal Preparation

Signed Proposals
The Candidate must ensure that his/her submission includes the Cover Page of this RFS, signed by a person authorized to sign on behalf of the Candidate and to bind the Candidate to his/her Proposal and the terms of this RFS by the date intended.

Irrevocability and Validity of Proposals
By submission of a clear and detailed written notice, the Candidate may amend or withdraw his/her proposal prior to Closing Time. After Closing Time, all Proposals become irrevocable and

will remain open for acceptance for a period of ninety days from Closing Time. By submission of a Proposal, the Candidate agrees that, should the Proposal be successful, the Candidate will enter into a contract with DNO.

Candidates' Expenses
Candidate are solely responsible for their own expenses in preparing a Proposal and for subsequent negotiations, if any. DNO will not be liable to any Candidate whether DNO accepts a Proposal or rejects all Proposals, for any claims, whether for costs or damages incurred by the Candidate in preparing the Proposal, loss of anticipated profit in connection with the Contract or any other matter whatsoever.

Any Candidate may be required to meet in person or by telephone with the DNO Selection Committee to explain details of the proposal and the Candidate will be responsible for all costs of his/her attendance and the attendance of any of his/her representatives.

Liability for Errors
While DNO has taken considerable care to ensure an accurate representation of information in the RFS, the information contained in the RFS is supplied solely as a guideline for Candidate. The information is not guaranteed or warranted accurate, nor is it necessarily comprehensive or exhaustive. Nothing in this RFS is intended to relieve Candidates from forming their own opinions and conclusions with respect to the matters addressed in this RFS.

Firm Pricing
Prices will be firm for the entire Contract period unless specifically stated otherwise.

Sub-contracting
Using a sub-contractor (who must be clearly identified in the proposal) is acceptable. This includes a joint submission by two or more Candidate having no formal corporate links.

However, in this case, one of these Candidates must be prepared to take overall responsibility for successful performance of the Contract and this should be clearly identified in the proposal.

D. Additional Terms and Conditions

Acceptance and Rejection of Proposals
This RFS should not be construed as an agreement to purchase goods or services. DNO is not bound to enter into a Contract with any Candidate.

Right to Amend or Cancel
DNO reserves the right in its sole discretion at any time, and for whatever reason to, by addendum, modify, amend, or otherwise change this RFS. This initiative is dependent on the imminent completion of a successful funding agreement with FedNor and NOHFC.

Contract
Notice in writing to a Candidate that he/she has been identified as the successful Candidate and the subsequent full execution of a written Contract will constitute a Contract for the goods or services, and no Candidate will acquire any legal or equitable rights or privileges relative to the goods or services until the occurrence of both events.

No Public Announcements
Candidate swill not make any public announcement, or have any communication with the media in connection with this RFS without the prior written consent of DNO.

No Promotion of Relationship
Candidate swill not disclose their relationship with DNO for promotional purposes, including by means of verbal declarations and announcements through any medium whatsoever.

Proprietary Information Notice
This RFS contains proprietary and confidential information of DNO, which is provided for the sole purpose of permitting the Candidate to respond to this RFS. In consideration of the receipt of this RFS, the Candidate agrees to maintain such information in confidence and not to reproduce or otherwise distribute this information.

Assignment of Intellectual Rights
All work carried out as a result of this RFS will be the exclusive property of DNO and will be surrendered to DNO immediately upon completion, expiration, or cancellation of the project. DNO will own all rights, title, and interest in all intellectual property rights, including copyrights, patents, trade secrets and trademarks in any work created that is paid for by DNO.

Francophone Engagement
Compliance with FedNor's French language requirements will be required for this initiative. This will include but not be limited to identification of how francophone stakeholders will be engaged (such as operator and front-line training program delivery – electronic/in-person workshops) marketing materials as well as translation of any survey materials and an executive summary of the final report be made available in the French language.

E. Expression Content and Format

The following format and sequence must be followed in order to provide consistency in Candidates' responses and to ensure that each Expression receives full consideration. Proposals for Service must be on American standard letter size paper and all pages should be consecutively numbered.

1. Title page: include title of RFS, Bidder's name, contact person, address, telephone number and E-mail address.
2. Signed RFS Cover Page.

3. Completed Proposal for Service.
4. Supplemental Information as requested in this RFS.
5. File size must not exceed 4 MB and files are to be submitted in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format.

F. Proposal Content and Format

The following format and sequence should be followed in order to provide consistency in Candidates' responses and to ensure that each Proposal receives full consideration. Proposals must be on American standard letter size paper and all pages should be consecutively numbered.

1. Title page: include title of RFS, Candidate's name, contact person, address, telephone number and E-mail address.
2. Signed RFS Cover Page.
3. Candidate's Profile and Experience: This section should highlight the skills qualifications to manage this specific project (refer to *Section J – Criteria Scoring* for more details). Should highlight partnership building, project management and describe projects of a similar size and nature for which you have provided similar goods or services including one reference for each project detailed including complete contact information. (maximum 4 projects with 1 reference for each, maximum 4 pages).
4. File size must not exceed 2 MB and files are to be submitted in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format.

G. Detailed Project Information

SCOPE OF WORK

DNO requires professional services to manage and deliver the Northern Ontario Francophone Itineraries - 2-year Pilot Project.

CONTEXT

The project consists of developing travel itineraries based on francophone tourism product utilizing the BaladoDécouvertes platform. These itineraries will be promoted to independent travelers and international tour operators and will showcase Northern Ontario's francophone culture, language, history, and cuisine on a regional and/or community level. BaladoDécouvertes is a well-established application for smartphone and tablet users that provides multimedia tours, be it on foot, by car, bus or bicycle, based on interest. This platform guides visitors, proposes them paths to take during their journey and shows their position at that point throughout the tour. All thematic tours include maps, itineraries, a tracking of the user's positioning, points of interest and associated content (audio files, pictures, videos, text), and are accessible without

Internet in "preload" mode, which is imperative in areas such as Northern Ontario. The platform is offered via BaladoDiscovery (English) and BaladoDécouverte (French), and the tours can be offered in other languages. This project would include developing and deploying 8 itineraries, each consisting of 10 points of interest (POI), over two years. POIs will be identified in collaboration with the respective partner community. Assets, such as video, images and narrative text will be developed for each POI, to create interactive itineraries that highlight the region's francophone culture and experiential tourism opportunities.

The objective is to develop and grow the region's francophone tourism offer, with a focus on increasing operator and stakeholder capacity to attract culture seeking visitors, French speaking tourists and immigrants to the North. It will also provide new product offerings to promote and sell to tour operators.

Partner communities will be selected based on the number of high-quality francophone tourism products that currently exist or could be developed to fit within the project. In the 1st year, itinerary development will be concentrated on areas that have existing products and experiences to showcase. Thus providing a benchmark for other areas to support development/enhancement of products and experiences for years 2. Said itineraries will be promoted via Balado-Decouvertes, by all participating partners, via regional DMOs, Destination Ontario, Destination Northern Ontario and through traditional and web-based marketing. A significant focus will also be placed on international visitors, with these itineraries forming the basis of Northern Ontario's tourism offer presented to tour operators. Destination Ontario has strong, established travel trade partners that are looking for new destinations with capacity for growth, where visitors may explore the history, culture and natural landscape, observe wildlife, camp and tour diverse communities. The proposed itineraries based on francophone products and experiences are a perfect fit with what international tour operators are seeking and DNO plans to capitalize this through participation in key marketplaces such as Rendez-Vous Canada (RVC), Top Resa and Bienvenue Quebec. Additionally, as part of this project, Destination Northern Ontario will actively participate in Destination Ontario lead sales missions targeting key tour operators, product buyers and travel agents in international markets and host post show Familiarization tours utilizing the BaladoDécouvertes itineraries.

REQUIREMENTS AND KEY DELIVERABLES

The successful firm/consultant/organization will work with DNO and funding partners to the following deliverables (include, but not limited to):

YEAR ONE:

- Work with partners for year 1 to identify points of interest for asset development

- Create program teaser for promotion at Rendezvous Canada 2020
- Secure third-party services (e.g. photographer, videographer) for asset development
- Develop assets such as narrative, texts, video, photography, GPS points, maps for 4 itineraries
- Participate at Bienvenue Quebec marketplace
- Work with year 2 communities identified for subsequent itinerary development to build and enhance product for inclusion as POIs
- Launch four initial itineraries on Balado
- Develop promotional messaging and materials for stand alone marketing and integration into existing partner programs and campaigns
- Participate as a seller in Rendez-Vous Canada

YEAR TWO:

- Develop assets such as narrative, texts, video, photography, GPS points, maps for 4 itineraries (year 2)
- Host Familiarization (FAM) tour with select tour operators to showcase itineraries
- Launch itineraries 5 through 8
- Expand previously developed promotional messaging and materials to include new itineraries for stand alone marketing and integration into existing partner programs and campaigns
- Participate as a seller at Bienvenue Quebec marketplace
- Develop assets such as narrative, texts, video, photography, GPS points, maps for final 4 itineraries
- Participate as a seller in Rendez-Vous Canada
- Host Familiarization (FAM) tour with select tour operators to showcase itineraries
- Participate as a seller at Top Resa
- Project evaluation and reporting

H. Pricing

DNO has provided the approved and finalized project budget (see Appendix) with specific cost categories. Candidates should use this as a parameter to scale their proposal.

I. Proposal Evaluation

Evaluation of proposals will be performed by the project steering committee. Selection of the Consultant will be achieved through a formal evaluation process. Proposals will first be checked against mandatory criteria. Proposals not meeting the mandatory criteria will be rejected without further consideration. Proposals that do meet the mandatory criteria will then be assessed against the additional criteria listed below or in any addendum or addenda to this RFS. Additional consideration will be given to proposals that demonstrate a high level of professionalism, innovation and perceived commitment to the project.

The following are the mandatory requirements:

- Candidate must fax, mail or deliver a signed copy of the RFS form (first page of this document) to the "closing location" by the "closing time";
- An electronic version of the Proposal must be received at the "closing location" by the "closing time";
- The Proposal must not be mailed, delivered or sent by facsimile;
- The Proposal must contain a cover letter; and
- Size of the file should not exceed 2 MB.

J. Criteria Scoring

Criteria will be scored as follows:

Criteria	Weight
Credentials, professional knowledge, expertise	30%
Demonstrated experience and ability to meet requirements	40%
Demonstrated qualifications and expertise as supported by quality of client references	20%
Thoroughness of Proposal for Service	10%

Bidder Qualifications and References (total 30 points)

1. Credentials, professional knowledge, expertise

   a) The Proposal for Service must include a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) summarizing consultant's history, services provided, credentials of and relevant experience.
      - Minimum of five years' full-time experience in tourism planning, partnership development, destination development, and/or tourism product development is required;

   b) Knowledge of Northern Ontario's tourism industry and specifically francophone tourism

   c) The Proposal for Service should provide evidence of the Bidder's recent (in the last three years) experience and demonstrate working on similar projects.

   d) An in-depth knowledge about a range of public, not-for-profit, and private sector tourism operations;

e) Possess knowledge of, and an appreciation for, the realities of francophone tourism development in Northern Ontario with its diverse geographic landscape, urban centres/communities and visitor appeal; and

f) Bilingual – French and English (mandatory).

Highly desired additional assets include:

- Experience with Northern Ontario's francophone/international tourism industries, sectors and markets, or another northern Canadian region
- Experience with cultural tourism development; and
- Tourism operational experience;

Management Description (total 60 points)

2. Experience and Ability – 40 points

a) The Proposal for Service should demonstrate the Candidate's experience to enter into an agreement with DNO.

b) The Proposal for Service should also provide evidence of the Candidate's ability to undertake a service agreement with DNO.

c) The Proposal for Service should demonstrate proven project implementation, partnership development skills within the tourism industry;

d) The Proposal for Service should demonstrate skill as a project manager with a broad-based knowledge of the francophone/international tourism industry, experiential travel and product development, destination development and/or business development;

e) The Proposal for Service should demonstrate experience in working with tourism groups and/or tourism operators;

f) The Proposal for Service should demonstrate experience outside of Northern Ontario to bring external perspective to DNO.

3. Quality of Organization – 20 points

a) The Proposal for Service should clearly indicate excellence.

b) In addition, Candidates should be able to demonstrate a successful track record of delivering similar projects on schedule and within budget.

Thoroughness of Expression (total 10 points)

4. Document Quality – 5 points
   The Proposal for Service document should have all questions clearly answered in a concise manner.

5. Supporting Documents – 5 points
   Relevant supporting documents are attached.

Appendix A – BUDGET

Expenses	Year 1	Year 2	TOTAL
Consulting Fees	$45,000	$45,000	$90,000
Translation	$5,000	$5,000	$10,000
Digital Asset Creation	$20,000	$20,000	$40,000
Marketing and Promotion	$8,000	$10,000	$18,000
Travel	$2,000	$5,500	$7,500
Balado-Decouvertes fees	$15,000	$13,000	$28,00
TOTAL	**$95,000**	**$98,500**	**$193,500**