

World's Best Snowmobile Destination - 3-year Pilot Project

DATE ISSUED: **September 18, 2019**

NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID: **September 25, 2019, 1:30 pm**

RFS CLOSING DATE/TIME: **October 4, 2019, 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

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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. September 25, 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 World's Best Snowmobile Destination 3-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 4, 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 21, 2019**. The completion date is expected to be on or before **March 31, 2022**.

Summary of Key Activities, Dates and Times:

Activity	Date/Time
Notice of Intent to Bid	September 25, 2019, 1:30 pm EST
Project Questions Due	September 25, 2019, 1:30 pm EST
RFS Closing	October 4, 2019, 4:00 pm EST
Finalist Candidate Interviews (if req'd)	Within five days of closing deadline
Consultant selection complete	October 16, 2019

Contract with Consultant	October 21, 2019
Project Completion	March 31, 2022

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 the World’s Best Snowmobile Destination Project steering committee formed by DNO. 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 will 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 will 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 is undertaking implementing the World's Best Snowmobile Destination pilot project and requires professional services to manage and deliver the program.

CONTEXT

Snowmobiling has been identified as one of several priority segments and best bets for tourism development in Northern Ontario. As such, DNO has established a snowmobile product development team and strategy to address issues and identify opportunities pertaining to the snowmobile tourism industry. In the winter of 2014/15 snowmobilers spent \$22.9 million in the region (Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs District (OFSC) 14 and 15). Historically, the region has focused primarily on trail development and marketing which has resulted in the attraction of a solid base of snowmobile tourists to the region. However, based on considerable evidence, a targeted approach to the establishment of a broader snowmobile tourism ecosystem is fundamental to advancing the objective of creating the World's Best Snowmobile

Destination (WBSD). Implementing the WBSD 3-year pilot project will lead to collaboration

amongst regional communities, increased tourism dollars spent, increased visitation due to higher satisfaction, referrals, return visits, longer stays, investment attraction, new and enhanced product, increased permit sales, job creation/retention and significant economic growth across the region. The WBSD will serve as an innovative and sustainable best-in-class model for snowmobile tourism development in other regions of Northern Ontario.

In 2015, the Northeast Community Network (NeCN) along with Destination Northern Ontario undertook a comprehensive plan for the development of the World's Best Snowmobile Destination, recognizing the benefits that a planned approach represents for tourism product development. The plan provided recommendations and strategies to strengthen and mobilize the snowmobiling network within the communities of Cochrane, Timmins, Temiskaming Shores, Hearst, and Kapuskasing. The goal of the plan is to provide a sustainable model for with the aim of enhancing existing product, developing new product, and providing snowmobile tourists with a best-in-class experience. The NeCN along with DNO are ready to move ahead with implementing this detailed/strategic plan and build this region to truly become the World's Best Snowmobile Destination.

REQUIREMENTS AND KEY DELIVERABLES

The successful firm/consultant/organization will work with DNO and World's Best Snowmobile Destination steering committee to the following deliverables (include, but not limited to):

YEAR ONE

1. Establish Board of Directors.
2. Create the not-for-profit corporation, bylaws, mandate and clear reporting
3. and operations processes.
4. Develop and deliver in-person presentations (refer to communication plan for more information).
5. Establish partnership with OFSC.
6. Develop trail system name and brand on existing best bet trails.
7. Select pilot region for looped trail development based on community interest, capacity and infrastructure.
8. Create checklists, how-to guides and best-in-class criteria matrix in both English and French.
9. Work with Tourism Excellence North to develop business training and front-line staff programs. Develop training platform available in English and French and deliver online and in-person in participating communities to operators and front-line employees.
10. Collaborate with organizations such as post-secondary partners to host training sessions and or implement within business training programs for frontline staff.
11. Develop training certification that can be displayed on-site and online and create 'snowmobile friendly' unifier to display at establishments.
12. Engage with public to garner feedback and marketing specialists to develop brand.
13. Collect KPIs via online surveys with operators (annually).
14. Develop local business sponsorship opportunities and corporate sponsor recognition

program.

15. Establish funding support through the Municipal Accommodations Tax with participating communities.

YEAR TWO

16. Audit and inventory current signage and wayfinding. Map opportunities for signage locations and work with DNO on implementing wayfinding upgrades year 2. Create unified signage utilizing brand.
17. Develop colour coding system for all levels of experience.
18. Initiate partnership development between communities for community entrance
19. and welcome signage.
20. Market new trail systems, businesses, amenities and services to identified target markets.
21. Utilize video promotion, collateral materials, print and online advertisements, website and social media platforms.
22. Delivery of 1st snowmobile event, programs and/or activities.
23. Develop safety delivery strategy.
24. Upload trail systems to Ontario Trails Council and Go Ride.

YEAR THREE

25. Develop and deliver 'rules of the trails' in-person and online training sessions and workshops in partnership with stakeholders.
26. Establish safety programs utilized across the region. e.g. estimated time of arrival of riders.
27. Develop platform or utilize the website to advertise 'snowmobile friendly' locations for revenue generation.
28. Establish consistent bylaws regarding snowmobilers throughout the region.
29. Create partnership with OPP and local police departments to enforce safety rules.
30. Educate businesses owners about the opportunity of the training and safety programs along with the benefits of the programs related to their businesses operations. Utilize email newsletter, social media, website, local media and face-to-face consultations to market the opportunities.
31. Delivery of 2nd snowmobile event, programs and/or activities.

For further details, please refer to World's Best Snowmobile Destination Plan provided.

H. Pricing

DNO has provided the approved and finalized project budget (see Appendix) with specific cost categories. This budget has been confirmed by both NOHFC and FedNor. 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 snowmobile 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 tourism development in Northeastern Ontario with its diverse geographic landscape, urban centres/communities and visitor appeal; and

Highly desired additional assets include:

- Experience with Northeastern Ontario's tourism industries, sectors and markets, or another northern Canadian region
- Experience with power sports tourism;
- Tourism operational experience; and
- Bilingual – French and English.

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 snowmobile 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	Year 3	TOTAL
Project Management	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$180,000
Travel	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$15,000
Administrative	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$24,000
Marketing	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$60,000
Translation	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$15,000
Training	\$30,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$50,000
Wayfinding	\$-	\$100,000.00	\$-	\$100,000
TOTAL	\$128,000.00	\$208,000.00	\$108,000.00	\$444,000