



**EXPLORERS'**  
**EDGE**

*Naturally Adventurous*

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

# **Online Booking Referral - Reservation System**

**Contents**

Introduction ..... 1

The RFP Process ..... 1

Project Timetable ..... 1

Proposal Submission Guidelines ..... 2

    Restrictions on Communications with Staff..... 2

    Information Submission Format..... 2

    Submit Information to: ..... 2

    Number of Copies Required / Format of Copies ..... 2

    Confidentiality ..... 2

Executive Summary ..... 3

The Opportunity..... 3

Objective..... 3

Application Overview ..... 3

Implementation Plan..... 4

On-Going Relationship with Explorers’ Edge ..... 4

On-Going Relationship with System Participants..... 5

Corporate Information ..... 5

Selection Process..... 6

Proponent Qualifications..... 7

Evaluation Criteria..... 7

Bidder Certification ..... 9

Proposal Preparation and Format..... 10

Pricing..... 10

Bidder Qualifications and References ..... 10

Cost of Proposal Submissions ..... 11

Information Indicative Only ..... 11

Confidentiality..... 11

Other Considerations ..... 11

## Introduction

---

The Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture created 13 Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) in the province to identify and implement regional priorities, allowing for more consistent marketing of Ontario's tourism regions. The RTO12 area includes Algonquin Park, Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, Parry Sound and Muskoka.

RTO12 is a not-for-profit agency that is governed by a volunteer board of directors. The mandate for RTO12 includes: providing industry leadership and strategic planning, developing strong, collaborative partnerships and packages, marketing, developing the workforce and skills training.

RTO12 is the administrative name for the region that is known in the consumer marketplace as Explorers' Edge: [www.explorersedge.ca](http://www.explorersedge.ca).

Explorers' Edge programs will fuel the new brand with meaning, create awareness, and have measurable components while driving business to our stakeholders.

For more information on Ontario's 13 Regional Tourism Organizations, visit <http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/regions/regions.shtml>.

## The RFP Process

1. The RFP process will take place as follows:
2. Potential bidders will be e-mailed a copy of the RFP.
3. Upon receiving the document and reading its content, potential bidders are requested to send an email to [james@explorersedge.ca](mailto:james@explorersedge.ca) to acknowledge their intent to provide information about their solutions. This step will guarantee that the bidder name is entered in the bidder list.
4. The bidders prepare their formal response and send their document in an electronic format to Explorers' Edge by the specified RFP close date.

## Project Timetable

Request for Proposal Issued	Monday February 3, 2014
RFP Due	Monday February 17, 2014 – 2pm EST
Notice of intent to award contract	Monday March 3, 2014

## **Proposal Submission Guidelines**

---

### **Restrictions on Communications with Staff**

If you wish to seek clarification on any of the information presented here, please contact James Murphy, Executive Director, by email to james@explorersedge.ca until the due date.

### **Information Submission Format**

All responses to the questions in this document must be submitted in a Microsoft Office Windows compatible format or PDF format.

### **Submit Information to:**

- Explorers' Edge
- 11A Taylor Road Bracebridge, ON
- Bracebridge, Ontario P1L 1R1
- Attention: James Murphy, General Manager

### **Number of Copies Required / Format of Copies**

- Electronic copy by e-mail

### **Confidentiality**

During the RFP process, the bidder may obtain confidential information in regards to Explorers' Edge businesses and / or its members and employees. The Bidder agrees to keep such information strictly confidential at all times. The bidder may disclose confidential information only when necessary for the submission of a response to the RFP. This does not apply to information known and available to the public.

The Bidder acknowledges that Explorers' Edge will receive many responses to the RFP that might contain information considered confidential by the bidder. The bidder will allow Explorers' Edge to use such information for the purpose of the RFP process.

All information and the responses provided to Explorers' Edge about the RFP will become property of Explorers' Edge and will not be returned to the Bidder.

## **Executive Summary**

---

Explorers' Edge is seeking an online referral/reservation system that will increase its effectiveness in serving travelers with accommodation and promotional packages through its family of consumer websites.

Funding for implementation of the Online Referral/Reservation System will be found within the 2014 operating budget. The execution of the contract is expected to begin within 2 weeks of approval and implementation is expected to take place within 3 months of contract signing

## **The Opportunity**

---

Consumer web traffic to ExplorersEdge.com and subsequent stakeholder's referrals has grown steadily over the last three years. We are of the opinion that opportunities to increase the level of sales are available and can be achieved.

## **Objective**

---

The purpose of this RFP is to have the successful proponent implement a new Online Referral/Reservation system through Explorers' Edge consumer website.

Your proposal will form an integral part of the contract and will be considered the Scope of Work for the Initial Term.

The expected deliverable from this RFP will be a proposal for a new booking application. At a minimum, this proposal must include the following:

## **Application Overview**

---

- ✓ Booking process
- ✓ User interface
- ✓ Content management system
- ✓ Comprehensive reporting on consumer activity and system performance
- ✓ Ability to integrate with a CRM program (e.g. email opt-ins and email user flow)

- ✓ Access and transaction security
- ✓ Infrastructure requirements
- ✓ The Usability evaluation process for your application
- ✓ Documentation on security measures in place
- ✓ All costs associated with:
  - Initial acquisition
  - Adaptation and implementation
  - Annual support and licensing
  - Usage fees
  - Ad hoc requests
  - Materials
  - Supplier travel and associated expenses
  - Any requirements for content management
- ✓ Any requirement for Data migration from current application

## **Implementation Plan**

---

- ✓ A schedule for installation, including all tasks and responsibilities
- ✓ Identification of staff, including their professional qualifications, that would be assigned to work on this project
- ✓ Identification of any additional outside companies, contractors, or agents that would be involved in installation and on-going maintenance or operations

## **On-Going Relationship with Explorers' Edge**

---

Please include a description of all obligations by Explorers' Edge staff including any training requirements, including but not limited to:

- ✓ The on-going support relationship including hours of operation, scope of support, and service levels
- ✓ Expected Frequency of version upgrades
- ✓ Process for requesting application modifications
- ✓ Requirements for conducting and treasuring financial transactions.

## **On-Going Relationship with System Participants**

---

Please include a description of all obligations by Explorers' Edge members who will be offered for sale on the proposed system including any training requirements, including but not limited to:

- ✓ The on-going support relationship including hours of operation, scope of support, and service levels provided to members
- ✓ Methods (and alternatives) for members to update prices and product offerings
- ✓ Costs for participants to be included for sales online

## **Corporate Information**

---

- ✓ A description of previous installations of this technology for comparable clients
- ✓ A description of the respondent's company, including location(s), business operations, financial security, and corporate history
- ✓ A standard contract proposal that addresses the acquisition and support agreements. This should be reflective of the proponent's terms, but will not necessarily represent the final agreement to be endorsed by the respondent and Explorers' Edge.

### **Note:**

Proponents shall identify, within their submission, all excluded items.

### **Assumptions:**

The new application will be fully implemented no later than July 1, 2014

## Selection Process

---

The following aspects of your proposal will be used to evaluate the proposals:

1. Proposed technology, including operational benefits, flexibility, ease of use, and adaptability into the Explorers' Edge business;
2. Demonstrated experience of key personnel in a project of similar scope and nature;
3. Demonstrated strong corporate history and presence, financial standing, and capacity to perform;
4. Implementation approach and methodology, including project timing, scheduling, staff training, and transition from the existing application;
5. Proposed business relationship with Explorers' Edge throughout the lifecycle of the agreement;
6. Cost competitiveness;
7. References (minimum of three).

As part of the selection process, respondents **may** be asked to present their proposal to a Explorers' Edge staff selection committee. A demonstration of the proposed software would be required during the presentation.



## Proponent Qualifications

---

Proponents considered for this project will be able to demonstrate the following credentials/expertise:

1. Excellence and experience in the online reservations function
2. Experienced, professional in-house project team (including Project Manager) to meet all project deadlines
3. Proven use of current technologies, standards, and best practices
4. Demonstrated ability to become familiar with a brand and as a result, be able to recommend appropriate strategies to increase key performance metrics specifically capture rate and conversions.

## Evaluation Criteria

---

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. **A complete understanding of online booking referral/reservation system trends and best practices** including demonstration of qualifications outlined in “Proponent Qualifications” section above.
  - A description of the proponent’s business(es)
  - A description of the services the proponent has previously and/or is currently delivering, with an emphasis on relevant experience in providing an industry leading Online Referral/Reservation System, including:
    - ✓ example(s) of performance metrics the proponent has delivered for other destination marketing organizations;
    - ✓ a list of clients to whom the proponent has provided a full breadth of services

**Score Weight: 10%**
2. **Proven approach for implementation and performance**
  - A description of approach, to ensure all those involved with the project are well coordinated and fully informed of progress and deadlines, for the system implementation to run smoothly, on time and within budget.
  - An outline of the metrics that are associated with the proposed system that Explorers’ Edge can reasonably expect to achieve through its application.

**Score Weight: 25%**

**3. Dedicated Online Booking Referral/Reservation system support team**

- Outline roles and responsibilities of the proponent and all of its agents, employees and sub-contractors who will be involved in providing the services (as outlined in the “Objective” section above), along with the identity of those who will be performing the roles identified, and their relevant expertise

**Score Weight: 25%**

**4. Social Media & Other Interactive Integration** including a brief description of proponent’s methodology related to the integration of social media and other interactive features related to the referral/reservation system.

**Score Weight: 10%**

**5. Proposed Costs**, including:

- Estimates for all elements of the projects as listed above within the “Objectives” section
- Estimates for any and all additional fees that may be incurred including (but not limited to):
  - ✓ Technical development
  - ✓ License fees
  - ✓ Legal fees
  - ✓ Administration fees
  - ✓ Other fees that will impact Explorers’ Edge reservation processes

**Score Weight: 30%**

Explorers’ Edge is not obligated to select the proponent with the lowest proposal cost. We will evaluate the proposals in a comprehensive manner based on the above-listed criteria.

## Bidder Certification

(Bidder must sign and return.)

I certify that this information is complete and correct to the best of my understanding and that I am authorized to submit this information on behalf of the company.

Authorized

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Print/Type

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Print/Type Company Name

Here \_\_\_\_\_

## Proposal Preparation and Format

---

**The Bidder must** ensure that the proposal meets the following mandatory requirements.

- An intent to Bid email is received by email before the “Closing Date and Time” as outlined in the RFP Timelines
- A complete bid is received by email “before the “Closing Date and Time” as outlined in RFP Process and Timeline
- Includes a cover letter including Bidder’s name, address, telephone, e-mail address and primary contact person with a note of date and time of submission. The letter should be submitted by a person authorized to sign on behalf of and to bid the Bidder to its Proposal and the terms of the RFP.
- Includes a statement that the Project Conditions outlined in the RFP have been reviewed and understood.

## Pricing

**Bidders must** provide a detailed/line-itemed breakdown and summary of costs to provide the proposed services with total price shown. Prices must be quoted in Canadian dollars, including freight and delivery charges, and taxes.

**Notes:** Be advised that taxes are considered within the project budget. Prices must remain valid for at least 120 days. Bidders are required to provide their payment terms as part of their proposal.

## Bidder Qualifications and References

Bidders shall provide the following information:

- Company profile outlining history, capabilities, qualifications, and experience as well as other information you deem relevant
- Summary of prior experience (within last 3 years) in providing the goods or services similar to those described in this RFP.
- Identification of all key personnel, including sub-contractors, who will be assigned to this project. Please include their relevant experience and qualifications and their roles and responsibilities in the project, as well as their level of efforts
- References including names, position, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for which the Bidder has performed similar work. These references might be contacted during the proposal evaluation phase to determine their satisfaction with the work carried out.

## Cost of Proposal Submissions

- The Bidder is responsible for all and any costs associated with the preparation and submission of the Proposal. Explorers' Edge will not be liable to pay any such costs or reimburse the Bidders in the event Explorers' Edge decides to reject all Proposals.

## Information Indicative Only

- The information that is provided in this RFP is indicative only. Through the review of the proposals and subsequent finalization of an agreement with the successful Bidder Explorers' Edge reserves the right to request further information or clarification of information. Explorers' Edge reserves the right to request new or additional information regarding a Bidder and any individuals or other persons associated with a response.

## Confidentiality

- If the Bidder does not want the documents that are submitted in response to this RFP to be made available to the public, the Bidder must indicate that the documents are submitted in confidence. The documents contain trade secrets, technical, commercial, financial or labor relations information that disclosure of the documents could reasonably be expected to result in harm, as specified in Section 10 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act. While Explorers' Edge will endeavor to maintain the confidentiality of all such information, the Bidder must realize that such information may well become public or be disclosed

## Other Considerations

- **Explorers' Edge** in its sole and absolute discretion, may discuss or negotiate with any Bidder, the terms and conditions of its response without any obligation to other Bidders and without giving rise to any rights of other Bidders to amend or negotiate their response.
- **Explorers' Edge** shall not have any obligation to notify any of the Bidders of discussions or negotiations with any other Bidder, to invite amended responses from any other Bidders, to disseminate other information disclosed to any one Bidder, or to approve a further submission made as a result of such information.
- **Conflict of Interest.**
  - The bidder must declare any actual or potential conflict of interest including situations or circumstances that could give a bidder an unfair advantage during a procurement process or compromise their ability to perform
  - Explorers' Edge reserves the right to disqualify a vendor's quote due to a conflict of interest
  - The bidder must avoid and disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest during the performance of their contractual obligations

- Explorers' Edge reserves the right to terminate an agreement where a vendor fails to disclose an actual or potential conflict or where such a conflict cannot be resolved.
- In the event of any discrepancies appearing, or differences of opinion, misunderstanding or dispute arising between the Bidder and Explorers' Edge respecting the intent or meaning of this RFP, or accompanying documents, or as to any omission there from or misstatements therein, the decision and interpretation of Explorers' Edge shall be final and binding upon all parties. There shall be no review or appeal of such decision.

**End of RFP. Thank you for your time.**