



EXPLORERS'
EDGE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

**Paddling Inventory & Strategic
Recommendations for Promotion**

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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, the Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, Muskoka and Parry Sound.

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.

Explorers' Edge programs will fuel the new brand with meaning, create awareness, and have measurable components while driving retail sales 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. The RFP will be posted online and 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 to acknowledge their intent to provide information about their proposal. 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	Friday November 16, 2015
RFP Due	Friday December 4, 2015 @ 4pm
Notice of intent to award contract	January 4, 2016

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
- 3 Taylor Road Bracebridge, ON
- Bracebridge, Ontario P1L 1R1
- Attention: James Murphy, Executive Director

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

With Algonquin Park, the Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, Muskoka and Parry Sound, Ontario within its borders, the Explorers' Edge region of Ontario, Canada is home to thousands of sparkling rivers and lakes, and some of the best paddling in the nation. The region is also home to a growing list of impressive paddling events, including Muskoka River X (and the new Coureur des Bois edition), the Great Muskoka Paddling Experience, the Women on the Water Festival, and Paddlepalooza. Opportunities to canoe, to (sea) kayak, and to stand up paddle board (SUP) are abundant and easily accessed in the great Canadian wilderness just north of Toronto.

Explorers' Edge is seeking a qualified organization or individual to develop an inventory of paddling experiences and opportunities in the region (including prominent paddling routes and service providers) to appeal to visitors of various skill levels, and to then create strategy recommendations to position and promote these experiences and opportunities to domestic and international markets.

The Opportunity

Reporting to the RTO12 Executive Director and Director of Communications, the Consultant will develop a compilation of paddling experiences and opportunities available in the region (e.g. workshops, guided tours, clinics, events, rentals, paddling outfitters, routes, access points), collate them according to skill levels (e.g. beginners, some paddling experience, experienced paddlers), and then create strategic positioning and messaging that will be implemented to successfully target all levels of paddlers in domestic and international markets.

Objective

The purpose of this RFP is to identify a Consultant who will:

- Assist Explorers' Edge in positioning the region as a premier paddling destination in Ontario and Canada
- Identify paddling experiences and opportunities for all levels of paddlers
- Determine strategic positioning that provides Explorers' Edge with a competitive advantage in the provincial and national tourism marketplaces
- Make recommendations for marketing communications messaging and initiatives (e.g. earned media opportunities, paddling organizations, etc.) to promote the inventory of paddling experiences and opportunities, as well as our strategic positioning in the marketplace

The expected deliverables from this RFP will be a substantial inventory of paddling experiences and opportunities from across Algonquin Park, the Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, Muskoka and Parry Sound, as well as strategic recommendations for promoting paddling product in the region.

Corporate Information

A description of previous project coordination or management and working methodology. Also include:

- A description of the respondent's company, including location(s), business operations, financial security, and corporate history
- A standard contract proposal

Assumptions:

The entire project will be fully implemented no later than March 31, 2016.

Selection Process

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

1. Demonstrated experience in developing and recommending successful paddling programs.
2. Demonstrated industry experience, secure financial standing, and capacity to perform.
3. Implementation approach and methodology, including project timing, scheduling, budgeting, etc.
4. Proposed business relationship with Explorers' Edge throughout the lifecycle of the agreement.
5. Cost competitiveness.
6. References (minimum of three)

As part of the selection process, respondents may be asked to present their proposal to an Explorers' Edge staff representative.

Proponent Qualifications

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

1. Excellence and experience in project management
2. Extensive scheduling and budgeting oversight experience
3. Proven use of current technologies, standards, and best practices
4. Demonstrated ability to work with a multi-member team composed of internal and external resources
5. 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:

Research and Stakeholder Management

- Thorough understanding of paddling product development
- 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 project coordination
- example(s) of recommendations for promotion of applicable product
- a list of clients to whom the proponent has provided a full breadth of services

Score Weight: 45%

Analytics

- Proven approach for product inventory and development
- A description of Project Management approach to ensure all those involved with the project work in symbiosis and are fully informed of progress and deadlines, and to ensure the strategic development of the project runs smoothly, on time and within budget

Score Weight: 30%

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
- Other fees that will impact Explorers' Edge ability to assure quality project coordination

Score Weight: 25%

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_____ 10

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 taxes and total cost.

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.