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Algonquin Park, Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, Muskoka,
Parry Sound & South Algonquin
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Expression of Interest: Corporate Communications

RTO12 is one of 13 regional tourism organizations established by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport. Known by its consumer-facing name of “Explorers’ Edge,” RTO12 represents six sub-regions in Ontario: Algonquin Park, the Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, Muskoka, west Parry Sound district, and South Algonquin. The company is an independent, not-for-profit, destination development organization that is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors.

The organization is supported by the provincial government with a \$1.1 million annual transfer payment agreement and is responsible for measurable outcomes in multiple areas: Governance, Investment Attraction, Industry Relations, Workforce Development, Product Development and Consumer Marketing.

Company Mission (from the 3-Year Regional Tourism Strategy, 2023-2026): *To steward the regional tourism industry’s recovery, rebuild and renewal by developing innovative regenerative programs to ensure long-term sustainability and success for all stakeholders.*

To review the 3-year Regenerative Strategy, [click here](#).

The Project:

In the upcoming fiscal year (April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025), RTO12 embark on significant outreach targeting regional, provincial and federal audiences to inform stakeholders and potential partners about major projects being undertaken, including the work-integrated training program development that includes temporary housing (placeholder name of “Catalyst Housing”), and the launch of the “Regenerative Travel Agency”, a social enterprise intended to develop higher yield visitation.

Explorers' Edge is seeking a full-service corporate communications or public relations company to help us:

- Inform multiple community, sector, government and funding stakeholders about these innovative programs
- To develop a communication plan to target multiple stakeholders (including media lists)
- To write and distribute media releases regularly to promote the work of Explorers' Edge
- To make recommendations for and to develop communications assets for potential and current investors
- To audit and update the corporate website
- To provide media coaching for senior managers and Board members

Requirements:

Knowledge of the region is essential, and the winning bidder will be expected to meet with the RTO12 team on-site in the region throughout the course of any collaboration.

Knowledge of the RTO model and the provincial tourism and hospitality sector is not essential, though it will be expected over the course of the EOI process and in order for interested parties to ultimately be considered.

Timeline:

RTO12 is subject to annual funding by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport and, as such, cannot commence work on the new higher yield strategy until the next fiscal year (starts April 1, 2024).

Budget:

Also subject to annual funding, RTO12 is required to wait for final approval of the Draft 2024-2025 Business & Operational Plan by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport before committing to a budget for this program. Once the budget has been determined, interested parties will be informed.

Expectations for Future Work:

It is expected that the winning bidder will work with RTO12 staff over a 6-month probationary period to ensure a good fit between the organization and the service provider, and then potentially move to AOR status.

Next Steps:

Explorers' Edge invites interested parties to provide an Expression of Interest (EOI) to assist with the development of its corporate communications to support multiple facets of its annual Business & Operational Plan.

Please forward by February 16, 2024 an Expression of Interest letter in PDF format via email to:

Kate Monk
VP, Strategy & Corporate Programs
RTO12/Explorers' Edge
Email: Kate@explorersedge.ca

Please indicate the following in your EOI:

- Name of Company
- Location
- Name and role of EOI respondent
- Full-service agency or principal with sub-contractors?
- Synopsis of acumen and proven success pertaining to requirements listed above
- Relevant past clients
- Rationale for submitting an EOI for this project (be specific)

- Preferred payment framework
- What you like in a client – your expectations
- Any additional insights you would like to provide

RTO12 staff will acknowledge all submissions. All submissions will be received in confidence.

If you have questions or would like further information, please email Kate@explorersedge.ca. Inquiries will not be responded to until starting the week of January 29, 2024.

Thank you very much for your interest in working with RTO12/Explorers' Edge!