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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Consulting Services for the Development of a Regional Indigenous Youth Tourism Entrepreneurship Strategy

Issued by: Explorers' Edge (Regional Tourism Organization 12)

RFP Issue Date: June 2, 2025

Closing Date: June 16, 2025 @ 5.00pm

Contact Person:
James Murphy, CEO

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1. Introduction

Explorers' Edge (RT012) is seeking proposals from qualified consultants or consulting teams to develop a Regional Strategy for Indigenous Youth Entrepreneurship through Tourism Product Development. This strategy will build upon the insights and recommendations in the 2022 Desktop Assessment of Indigenous Communities and focus on unlocking economic and cultural opportunities for Indigenous youth through regenerative tourism practices in the region.

2. About Explorers' Edge

Explorers' Edge is one of 11 Regional Tourism Organizations funded by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming. Explorers' Edge operates in the geographic area that includes Algonquin Park, the Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, Muskoka, Parry Sound, South Algonquin, and the traditional territories of nine Indigenous communities.

3. Project Background and Rationale

The 2022 Desktop Assessment of Indigenous Communities in Explorers' Edge outlined the importance of relationship-building, respect, and support for Indigenous self-determined

economic development. It identified Indigenous youth as an important demographic for targeted capacity-building and entrepreneurship support.

4. Project Objectives

- Identify opportunities for Indigenous youth-led tourism product development;
- Highlight challenges and system-level barriers to youth entrepreneurship;
- Outline community-led and culturally appropriate support mechanisms;
- Provide a roadmap for future investment, programming, and partnership development;
- Align with regenerative tourism and community economic development principles.

5. Scope of Work

The successful consultant/team will undertake the following activities:

Phase 1 – Community Engagement (Months 1–3)

- Re-engage the nine Indigenous communities in the region;
- Host youth-led focus groups, Elders' consultations, and engagement circles;
- Build on the 2022 Desktop Assessment to validate and deepen community-specific findings.

Phase 2 – Research and Strategic Mapping (Months 3–4)

- Identify existing supports, programs, and partners;
- Map tourism product development opportunities;
- Align findings with regenerative tourism principles and development models.

Phase 3 – Strategy Development (Months 4–6)

- Draft a regional strategy with community validation and feedback loops;
- Develop a pilot program framework;
- Recommend implementation tools, funding sources, and evaluation methods.

6. Deliverables

- Work Plan and Engagement Schedule;
- Community Engagement Summary Report;
- Draft Strategy Document;
- Final Strategy Report.

7. Budget

A maximum budget of \$130,000 CAD (including HST and all expenses) is available for this project.

8. Timeline

Milestone | Date

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RFP Released | June 2, 2025

Proposal Deadline | June 16, 2025, 5.00pm

Consultant Selected | June 23, 2025

Project Start | July, 2025

Final Report Due | February 27, 2026

9. Proposal Requirements

- Cover Letter and Executive Summary;
- Project Understanding and Approach;
- Work Plan and Timeline;
- Relevant Experience and Qualifications;
- Team Bios;
- Detailed Budget;
- At least two references from similar work.

10. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria | Weight

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Understanding of project goals | 30%

Indigenous engagement experience | 30%

Methodology | 20%

Budget | 10%

References | 10%

11. Submission Instructions

Submit proposals via email in PDF & Word format by June 16, 2025 @ 5.00pm to:

James Murphy

CEO, Explorers' Edge

Email: james@explorersedge.ca

12. Additional Notes

- Indigenous-led proposals or those involving Indigenous partners are encouraged;
- Project must respect OCAP principles and cultural safety;
- Trauma-informed and community-first approaches are required.