



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
TRAVEL TRADE MARKET READINESS PROGRAM (TTMR)
PROGRAM ASSESSMENT / FORWARD STRATEGY

CLIENT:

Hospitality NL is a non-profit membership association that leads, supports, represents and enhances the province's tourism industry, with a membership of 480 members, eight full-time staff and a 12-member volunteer Board of Directors. Hospitality NL is the voice of the provincial tourism industry and has successfully advocated on behalf of its members and the entire tourism industry for 38 years.

Hospitality NL has brought together the leading businesses and organizations of the tourism and hospitality industry under the association in order to effect change in the policy and business environment to assist tourism businesses become more viable, raise the quality of service and experiences provided to tourists and travelers and to grow partnerships and collaboration within the membership to advance tourism industry opportunities.

Hospitality NL is facilitating the TTMR Program training delivery with its partners in Atlantic Canada.

Additional information on the organization can be found at <https://hnl.ca/>.

BACKGROUND:

Travel Trade is the network of businesses that form the international travel distribution system. Trade are buyers and sellers, who in turn sell to both consumers or other buyers within the network. These buyers include tour operators, receptive tour operators (also known as receptives) and travel agents. Marketing through various channels allows a Tourism business to balance their business and revenues. And diversifying their customer base means their business can continue to thrive despite potential adverse conditions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. When economic or political downfalls are experienced in one country or region, it's rare that all markets are affected. Thus, the Tourism sector in Atlantic Canada was extremely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Travel Trade Market Readiness Program (TTMR) was developed and rolled out over two phases:

Phase I:

The Atlantic Canada TTMR Program was developed by ACOA and the four Atlantic Canada provinces, in collaboration with the Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick (TIANB). The intent of developing the program was to enable operators to fully understand the business model of the travel trade and assess the opportunity of selling to this influential segment.

Significant consultations took place during the program development: buyer consultations; interviews with international operators, receptive tour operators, DMO/PMO's; destination best practice research; and program piloting. The resulting program provides concrete tactics, processes, and best business practices on how to develop and expand distribution to increase visitation by working closely with the travel trade. The toolkit, along with the accompanying workshops, webinars, and mentoring help tourism industry stakeholders confidently interact with the travel trade market.

Phase II:

Hospitality NL administers the current project, which is rolling out training broadly across the region. To date, the program has reached over 300 participants between workshops and webinars.

More information on the program can be found at: [Travel Trade Readiness Toolkit – HNL | Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador](#).

ASSIGNMENT

Hospitality NL is seeking proposals from qualified consultant(s)^{***} with demonstrated expertise in program evaluation and strategic planning to conduct a comprehensive program evaluation and determine how the program can make the greatest impact going forward. There is an opportunity to revisit the intent of the TTMR program and consider what potential changes could be made to the program to best support Atlantic Canada based tourism businesses.

Deliverables will include an evaluation of the current program as well as an action-plan that will guide the evolution of the program by ensuring its content, goals and objectives are responsive to and advancing industry needs.

Hospitality NL will contract with an experienced and qualified consultant to review client survey data, analyze similar programs, and conduct in-depth interviews with key stakeholders. The consultant must have a tourism background and demonstrated expertise in data analysis, in-depth interviewing and report writing. The consultant must also demonstrate the ability to carry out interviews in French.

^{***}(Consultants who were part of the development and delivery of Phase I & II will not be eligible to bid on this external evaluation of the program.)

SCOPE OF WORK

Immediately upon award of contract, the consultant will meet with the Working Committee comprised of Hospitality NL, ACOA NL, Tourism Atlantic and the four Provincial Governments (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland & Labrador, and Prince Edward Island), to review the consultant's proposal and discuss expected outcomes. During this meeting, the consultant will be provided with the opportunity to request copies of any reports, research, or other information relevant to this assignment.

The work will be conducted in two phases, outlined as follows:

Phase 1: Review/Evaluation of the Current TTMR Program:

1. **Satisfaction survey review.** Evaluations to date has been satisfaction surveys immediately following program workshops, where results have been generally positive; however, there is a

need to determine if the program is yielding results (i.e., more tourism operators working with travel trade). The consultant will review and analyze the satisfaction survey results to provide a baseline understanding of overall program satisfaction.

2. **Desk research.** The consultant will complete a review of other travel trade industry programming to determine if like programming exists and if there are any best practices, models, etc. that could be applied to the next iteration of the TTMR program. The consultant will research how these programs operate as well as their strengths and weaknesses. These programming ideas will also help inform the discussion guides to be used with the two stakeholder interview groups in Phase II.
3. **Follow-up surveying and/or interviewing of past participants.** Required to measure implementation/effectiveness. The consultant will work with the committee to design the survey questions. Some questions to consider are, for example:
 - Who is using and finding value in the program?
 - How many participants are following through to develop a trade plan?
 - What has been the success rate with implementation? (*Important to note it may be challenging to measure efforts due to COVID*)
 - If participants were unable to advance in the trade market, what were some of the obstacles?
 - What are the gaps to achieve results and what are the training needs to close these gaps? (i.e., education on FIT opportunity, more RTO involvement in training, etc.)
 - How can the toolkit be sharpened to focus on pressing needs?

The consultant will prepare a topline report of this review for the Steering Committee's consideration and input.

Phase 2: Establish New Approach for the TTMR Program

1. **Stakeholder interviews.** The consultant will engage with key client groups within Atlantic Canada
 - the enablers (Provincial, Federal, Municipal, DMOs, and sector groups) and key industry operators. The consultant will prepare two distinct discussion guides to be approved by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will provide the participant lists, including contact information, for both stakeholder groups. The discussion guides should be constructed to provide insights into a forward-thinking discussion to assist in the evolution of the program.
- a. SME interviews.
 - The consultant will interview tourism SMEs (for-profit and non-profit) throughout Atlantic Canada. Interviews will be conducted in-person or online/telephone. The number of interviews will be determined in consultation with the committee, they will provide a regional and industry category coverage.
- b. Enabler interviews.
 - The consultant will interview key industry stakeholders that represent federal and provincial government interests as well as industry associations, sector groups, DMO's and RTA's. Interviews will be conducted in-person or by telephone. The number of interviews will be determined in consultation with the committee, they will provide a regional coverage.

- c. Travel Trade interviews.
 - The consultant will interview key industry travel trade representatives. Interviews will be conducted in-person or by telephone. The number of interviews will be determined in consultation with the committee, they will provide a regional coverage.
- d. In depth interview with Eva Gutsche, leader facilitator to the TTMR program in Atlantic Canada.

2. Review of Tourism NS REFOCUS Travel Trade program: The current TTMR project originally had a significant line item for one-on-one mentoring with the trainer to help action lessons learned. Despite the minimal fee for participants for this mentoring, there was little uptake from participants. Tourism NS has developed a similar trade mentoring program (REFOCUS) that is seeing strong uptake and the consultant should assess this program to see if elements could be adapted to a pan-Atlantic program.

The consultant will prepare a topline report of the stakeholder interviews and a review of the REFOCUS program for the Steering Committee's consideration and input.

3. New Strategy: "TTMR - a New Direction". Using the topline reports prepared for and discussed by the Steering Committee, the consultant will deliver a final, integrated draft report to include recommended changes to the TTMR program and an action-plan to implement the recommendations over the next two years. Recommendations will address key program activities including – effectiveness of toolkit and self-guided resources, necessity of introductory workshops, optimal training format (virtual vs. in-person), mentoring needs, budget requirements, business resources etc. The proposed program approach will result in strong uptake from industry. Considerations for new program implementation should include key industry events like Rendez-vous Canada, Atlantic Canada Showcase, etc.

The report will be submitted in draft to the Steering Committee and adjusted based on any relevant feedback prior to final submission.

GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS:

Proposal submissions must include the following information:

- Corporate name and company profile;
- Company personnel assigned to the project and relevant experience overview;
- Demonstrated understanding of the assignment and its deliverables;
- A strong understanding of the region in terms of the tourism economy, assets, etc.
- A strong understanding of the travel trade market and its current challenges/opportunities;
- A proposed approach for program evaluation;
- Detailed experience of all involved with the submission and their ability to evaluate programs;
- Leadership, facilitation, and motivational skills and experience in leading multidisciplinary teams;
- and an understanding of the components required for conducting research and presenting reports on findings.

Proposals should clearly indicate approach and timeline to complete the components outlined in the scope of work. Proposal should provide a minimum of three (3) recent projects that demonstrate the

skills required for this project, and a minimum of three (3) references who can provide insight into working with the consultant(s). Proposal should be submitted to the contact below electronically as an .pdf file.

BUDGET

Total costs associated with this project are expected not to exceed \$33,000 inclusive of HST and travel. Bidders must submit a comprehensive and detailed costing proposal.

TIMING

All proposals are due by 12 noon (Newfoundland Standard Time) on January 14, 2022. Any late proposals will not be evaluated for award. The contract will be awarded on or about January 21, 2022. Final Report is due to the committee by March 15, 2022.

CONTACT:

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