



VÉLOROUTE
VOYAGEUR
CYCLING ROUTE

A project lead by Discovery Routes Trails Organization

Request for Proposal

Véloroute Voyageur/ Voyageur Cycling Route Marketing Strategy

Date Issued: June 21, 2018

Issued By: VVCR Marketing Steering Committee
c/o Discovery Routes Trails Organization
205 Main Street East, North Bay, ON P1B 1B2

Background/ Context

Véloroute Voyageur / Voyageur Cycling Route is Ontario's next major cycling tourism experience spanning over 630km and connecting 25 communities across rural and northern Ontario from Sudbury to Ottawa. Following the path of the Voyageurs along four heritage waterways and sharing alignment with parts of the Trans Canada Trail, the Voyageur Cycling Route celebrates a national significance. The Voyageur Cycling Route was recently identified as a primary cycling route in the Province-wide Cycling Network with direct connections to the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, the National Capital region and Quebec's La Route Verte.

The effort to develop the Voyageur Cycling Route began in 2015 as a cross-regional collaboration coordinated by Discovery Routes Trails Organization based in North Bay under the direction of a stakeholder-based working group. Sections of the Voyageur Cycling Route in Northeastern Ontario became operational in 2018 with wayfinding signage and supports for cyclists installed in communities across the northeast. Expansion of the cycling route through eastern Ontario is well underway with full connection to Ottawa projected over the next two years.

Positioning the Voyageur Cycling Route in the highly competitive tourism marketplace and rapidly growing cycle tourism market is essential. Long-distance cycling routes like the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail and the Greenbelt Route are established and thriving examples of the powerful economic impact of a connected and coordinated tourism product. Still in its infancy, the Voyageur Cycling Route has yet to establish a foothold in the cycling market.

Project

In collaboration with industry, municipal and provincial partners, Discovery Routes Trails Organization will contract a qualified and experienced tourism consultant with demonstrated expertise in strategic planning and a strong understanding of cycle tourism to lead in the development of a marketing strategy for Véloroute Voyageur/ Voyageur Cycling Route.

The Voyageur Cycling Route encompasses three distinct Regional Tourism Organizations; Tourism Northern Ontario (RTO13), Ontario's Highland Tourism Organization (RTO11) and Ottawa and Countryside (RTO10). All of these regions have identified cycle tourists as a priority market. In addition to these tourism regions, there are a great number of local/ regional agencies that also market destinations within the project area. These agencies include but are not limited to: Lanark Tourism; Ottawa Valley Tourist Association; Mattawa-Bonfield Economic Development; Tourism North Bay; Northeastern Ontario Tourism; and, local municipalities and First Nations.

The objective of the marketing strategy is to increase the tourism competitiveness of the Voyageur Cycling Route's host communities in a growth industry by branding these communities as premier destinations for cycle tourists. The strategy will assist tourism agencies to be effective in the allocation of marketing resources and demonstrate how to leverage new and existing marketing partnerships in support of tourism receipts across three distinct tourism regions.



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Deliverables

The VVCR Marketing Steering Committee is seeking a qualified consultant to:

- Inventory cycle tourism marketing initiatives across the length of the Voyageur Cycling Route including programs of the Province, Regional Tourism Organizations (RTO), Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO), municipalities, First Nations, Non-Governmental Organizations and private sector. Demonstrate how current cycle tourism marketing can integrate the Voyageur Cycling Route as a signature cycling experience across the regions.
- Align the Voyageur Cycling Route with other tourism/ product development strategies and plans of the province and across the regions in the project area. Demonstrate to industry stakeholders how to integrate marketing efforts and leverage the Province's considerable brand equity.
- Identify unique cycle tourist experiences that support demand generators and demonstrate how the Voyageur Cycling Route provides a unique experience that differs from other long-distance cycling routes.
- Identify the Voyageur Cycling Routes' high potential markets including an exploration of the Québec and Francophone markets as well as the route's attraction for cycling events and tour companies.
- Demonstrate cycle tourists' needs and inventory cyclist services, facilities and amenities across the regions connected by the Voyageur Cycling Route. Note that this action should go beyond an inventory of businesses that are registered with the Ontario by Bike Network.
- Determine the market readiness of the private sector to attract cycle tourists. Identify any gaps in services for touring cyclists of the identified high potential markets and recommend programs and tools that promote entrepreneur engagement and support businesses to expand to cater to cycle tourists.
- Define leadership roles for marketing the Voyageur Cycling Route through partnerships and collaborations amongst the diverse network of industry stakeholders.
- Recommend targeted marketing programs and tools to drive awareness and interest in the Voyageur Cycling Route and recommend a framework for funding and implementation.
- Develop marketing measurement tactics to monitor performance and evaluate success of marketing investments. Metrics must be clearly tied to the objectives of the marketing strategy.

The successful candidate will be provided with contacts in each of the three RTO's as well as the DMO's and municipalities that have been involved with the development of the Voyageur Cycling Route to date.

The consultant will be required to provide brief updates, tracking progress and outcomes on a bi-weekly basis. A presentation of the draft strategy to the VVCR Marketing Steering Committee will be required. In addition, the consultant will provide a digital presentation that can be used by the Committee in the future to generate support and buy-in with stakeholders not engaged in the current project.

Qualifications

Preference will be given to proponents who have demonstrated:

- Experience in preparing marketing strategies
- Clear understanding and knowledge of cycle tourism
- Knowledge of the tourism industry at provincial and regional level, as well as inter-provincial level
- Experience working with multiple stakeholders
- Knowledge of the Francophone market will be considered an asset



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Proposal Requirements

To be considered, proposals must include the following:

- Demonstration of leadership and knowledge in developing marketing strategies
- Experience working with multiple partners
- Strong knowledge of the cycle tourism industry
- Success in the tourism and regional development sector
- Detailed timeline and project schedule with a clearly presented series of work to be undertaken, and associated deliverables
- Demonstration of qualifications, including a clear identification of the roles and experience of all team members
- Identification of dedicated team lead
- Approach and methodology to deliver the goals of the project including demonstration of proponent's organizational ability to manage projects, timelines and work within a budget.
- Detailed budget including project management fees, expenses and incidental charges that will be included. Provide payment terms.
- Listing of similar projects completed, including summary of deliverables
- A minimum of two references from past engagements that are relatable to marketing strategies for multiple partners within the tourism sector

Conflict of Interest

We reserve the right to disqualify any submission due to a conflict of interest.

Each proponent must disclose any actual or potential conflict that may be occurring at time of bid, or may occur during time of project.

If a vendor fails to disclose an actual or potential conflict or where such a conflict cannot be resolved, we have the right to terminate the contract.

Evaluation Criteria

The VVCR Marketing Sub-Committee will evaluate submitted proposals based on the following criteria:

Comprehension of project	= 40 points
Approach and methodology	= 30 points
Qualifications including experience	= 20 points
Detailed budget	= 10 points

Project Budget and Schedule

The maximum level of effort will be \$40,000 HST included.

The deadline for completion and delivery of a final marketing strategy to the Marketing Steering Committee is **October 31, 2018**.



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Questions

Only questions related specifically to this Request for Proposal will be considered.

Questions must be sent by email to jennifer@discoveryroutes.ca no later than **July 5, 2018**.

All bidders asking questions will be provided answers and confidentiality of bidders will be maintained. All questions will be responded to within two full working days from the inquiry.

Proposal Submission

One electronic copy (PDF Format) of the proposal in English must be received by confirmed email at jennifer@discoveryroutes.ca no later than **Thursday, July 12, 2018 at 4:00pm EST**. For ease of distribution please ensure proposals do not exceed 5MB.

The subject line must state "Proposal for VVCR Marketing Strategy".

All submissions will become the property of Discovery Routes Trails Organization. Discovery Routes (or its stakeholders) will not be liable for any costs of preparation of proposals.

Late or faxed submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Reserved Rights

Discovery Routes Trails Organization reserves the right to cancel this project at any time, for any reason without compensation to anyone. Discovery Routes Trails Organization is under no obligation to award a contract. Discovery Routes Trails Organization reserves the right to reject any or all proposals. Discovery Routes Trails Organization is not obligated to accept the lowest bidding proposal.