REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Travel Agency Services

for

Nordic Spiritual DNA 2020 Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award entity</th>
<th>European Travel Commission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issuance date</td>
<td>10/03/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for applications</td>
<td>24/03/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated starting date</td>
<td>04/2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................... 3
   1.1. ABOUT THE EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION (ETC) .................................................. 3
2. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT ..................................................................................... 4
   2.1. PURPOSE ............................................................................................................................... 4
   2.2. PROJECT OVERVIEW ......................................................................................................... 4
3. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS ......................................................................................................... 5
   3.1. IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD ............................................................................................... 7
5.1. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION ............................................................................................... 8
5.2. QUESTIONS ........................................................................................................................... 8
6. AWARD CRITERIA ....................................................................................................................... 9
   6.1. QUALITY CRITERIA ............................................................................................................. 9
7. FINAL PROVISIONS .................................................................................................................. 10
8. ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION .................................................................................... 11

ANNEX 1 – THE SLOW ADVENTURE THEME .................................................................................. 11
1. INTRODUCTION

This Request for Proposals (RfP) is launched in the framework of an ad-hoc grant of the European Commission (EC) to the European Travel Commission (ETC) with the aim to support the promotion of thematic trans-European tourism products in third countries.

This RfP contributes to the implementation of ETC’s marketing strategy “Horizon 2022”1 which aims to build a distinctive image of Europe as a travel destination in long-haul markets, maintain its market share and better disperse travellers flows (in terms of geography and seasons) while taking into account residents’ aspirations for sustainable tourism growth.

The present document is intended as a guideline based on ETC’s goals and requirements. A clear understanding of these goals and requirements should be reflected in the proposal. Applicants are asked to interpret all aspects of this document carefully yet creatively, using their business intelligence, market experience and expertise to propose the best possible solution for the project. Additional ideas and suggestions that contribute to achieving the objectives of the project are welcome and should be clearly outlined in the proposal.

CONFIDENTIAL: The information in this document may not be used for any purpose other than to respond to this Request for Proposal. This document is and will remain at all times, the property of ETC.

1.1. ABOUT THE EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION (ETC)

The European Travel Commission (ETC) is an international non-profit making association of official National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) in Europe. The organisation was established in 1948 and is headquartered in Brussels (Belgium).

ETC’s mission is to support the promotion of Europe as a tourist destination in major long-haul markets. For its member NTOs, ETC also provides a broad portfolio of market intelligence services and encourages the sharing of best practices. ETC is established as a private body (AISBL) under the law of Belgium.

Moreover, within the scope of its mission, ETC works regularly with the European Commission on a series of initiatives aimed at maintaining Europe’s position as the world’s leading travel destination.

Further information about ETC can be found on the website www.etc-corporate.org.

1 https://etc-corporate.org/our-campaigns/horizon-2022/
2. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

2.1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to conclude a service agreement with an experienced travel agency (hereinafter referred to as “contractor”), able to provide air travel and land arrangement services for a high-level influencer trip organized by ETC within the “Nordic Spiritual DNA 2020 Project”.

The project is implemented by ETC in partnership with the consortium “Nordic Tourism in China” consisting of VisitDenmark, VisitSweden, Innovation Norway and VisitFinland.

- VisitDenmark markets Denmark as a tourism destination for international tourists (leisure and business tourists);
- VisitSweden is the Swedish government’s and Swedish tourism industry’s marketing company;
- Innovation Norway is the Norwegian Government’s most important instrument for innovation and development of Norwegian enterprises and industry, including tourism.
- VisitFinland works to develop Finland’s travel destination brand, market Finland to travellers abroad and help companies in the travel industry go global.

The activities subject of this Request for Proposals are co-financed by the European Union.

2.2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

During the year 2020, ETC intends to implement a digital promotional campaign in China in partnership with the consortium “Nordic Tourism in China”. The objective of this campaign is to promote tourism to Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden under the European umbrella and more specifically under the consumer branding project “Nordic Spiritual DNA 2020”. As part of this campaign, an influencer trip will be organized to shoot promotional materials [e.g. video, photography] in the four Nordic countries mentioned above. The trip is expected to last 10 days and have 9-12 participants, including a high-level Chinese influencer and a Chinese content production team. The participants in this trip are to be selected and communicated with by the marketing agency responsible for the development of the promotional campaign and collection of promotional materials on site.
The contractor is expected to take care of organizing and booking long-haul air travel tickets as well as intra-European air travel tickets (if required depending on the final itinerary), accommodation, meals and transportation services for all participants. The itinerary of the influencer trip will be decided upon in collaboration with the consortium parties and will be designed to showcase thematic experiences and products within the slow adventure passion theme (see ANNEX 1).

3. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The contractor is expected to comply with the following minimum requirements throughout the duration of the contract.

a) Air travel arrangement services. The contractor will provide the necessary reservations for the services requested and also issue, modify, as appropriate, and deliver the corresponding travel documents as well as any other relevant information to ensure the smooth running of the trip. The contractor must book travel services as efficiently as possible at the best conditions available on the market. In this regard, the contractor will previously inform ETC and the consortium parties about the best conditions for the trip: schedules, most suitable routes, baggage allowance, deadline for issuing the ticket, information on ticket flexibility as well as any other relevant consideration for the best decision making. As a general rule, direct flights are favoured. The contractor shall find the most convenient travel option to minimise the number of flight legs and time of stopovers, when applicable.

b) Land arrangement services. The contractor will organise necessary accommodation, meal and local transportation services as efficiently as possible at the best conditions available on the market. Accommodation services include planning, booking, confirming and amending of accommodation with any establishment (hotel group, private hotel, guest house or Bed & Breakfast). Transportation services may include, but are not limited to, bus or coach bookings, taxi services, shuttle services and (inter)national train travel. The contractor must provide the most appropriate and cost-effective means of transportation. Meal arrangements (e.g. at hotels and restaurants or through catering services) should be made with flexibility in mind.

c) Quotations. The contractor shall find the most economic rate for flights based on economy class or equivalent class rates, unless specifically requested otherwise. The contractor shall provide at least two comparison quotes with either the same or different route options, unless only one suitable option is available. For accommodation, the contractor will find the best value for money, based on standard room rates, unless specifically requested otherwise. The contractor shall ensure that all taxes are included in the quotation price. The contractor shall also pay attention to the degree of flexibility required for air tickets, local transportation or accommodation booked in view of the direct bearing this has on the rates applied. If necessary, the contractor shall negotiate
with service providers in order to obtain agreements in special fares which would reduce the costs of travel or result in other tangible benefits for ETC. All costs applied by the contractor should be clear and auditable for ETC.

d) **Changes and cancellations.** In the event of a change or cancellation of a booked service, the contractor will endeavour to minimize any penalties to be incurred by ETC. No penalties attributable to a fault of the contractor will be accepted by ETC. The contractor shall inform ETC immediately of any upcoming changes in scheduled flights or any other booked services, planned strikes or any other events which may affect scheduled flights. In the event of a cancellation of travel or accommodation, participants will need to be fully supported by the contractor.

e) **Visas.** The contractor will be expected to provide assistance in obtaining visas or any other necessary documentation in due time before the journey if required and upon request.

f) **Working hours and response times.** The contractor must be able to provide services during regular working hours (Monday to Friday from 9:00am to 5:30pm). Requests for quotations and subsequent booking confirmations shall be delivered electronically within 24 hours or one working day upon request. The contractor must be able to hold flights for travellers pending approval or final confirmation of their itinerary for at least 48 hours or two working days. The contractor must issue all necessary travel documents, itineraries and vouchers timeously to traveller[s] prior to departure dates and times. The contractor must provide a consultant to assist with after hours and emergency reservations and changes to travel plans. An after hours contact number should be available so that when required, unexpected changes to travel plans can be made and emergency bookings attended to.

g) **Account manager.** The contractor is expected to allocate an account manager to provide ETC and the marketing agency [mentioned in 2.2] a single point of contact. All communication between the ETC, the marketing agency and the contractor must be in English. The contractor should designate at least one English-speaking staff member to manage the ETC account and all project-related communication by email and phone as required. The services of the contractor will be requested exclusively by the means, form and staff determined by ETC, not being responsible for services requested by other means or people other than those determined by ETC. The contractor shall ensure that any member of its staff dealing with the project has the necessary knowledge and expertise to render the services at the highest professional standards.

h) **Experience.** The contractor must have proven track record of minimum 5 years on the market and relevant experience in delivering the services required under this Request for Proposals, and in particular in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden). The contractor should demonstrate the ability to handle group bookings.
i) **Communication.** The contractor must ensure sound communication with all stakeholders (ETC, its Partners and any other appointed coordinator) in one smooth continuous workflow.

j) **GDPR.** The contractor must be fully GDPR compliant.

### 3.1. IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The implementation period of the project is expected to take place between 04/2020 and 09/2020 and it shall not extend beyond this date.

### 4. BUDGET AND TERMS OF PAYMENT

The estimated total maximum contract value for the entire lifetime of the contract, **including the contractor’s management fee**, is 58 185 EUR (fifty-eight thousand hundred and eighty-five). This figure is indicative and is not in any way binding on ETC, it represents the **maximum possible expenditure**.

The contractor shall purchase travel tickets and land arrangements, make payments and cover all costs incurred in connection with the reservations requested by ETC or the marketing agency. ETC shall reimburse all costs incurred by the contractor in connection with arrangements actually made and the fees in accordance with the contractor’s economic offer.

Invoicing will be done on a project basis upon submission of an invoice and statement of the actual expenses incurred and duly justified based on the supporting documents, which must provide complete details of the expenses incurred on behalf of ETC. ETC will first approve that the deliverables are correct and ask the contractor to submit an invoice.

### 5. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals must be **clear, concise** (not exceeding 15 pages in total) and **written in English**, so there can be no doubt as to word meaning and figures.

Proposals should include:

1) **Brief company profile**

2) **An overview of the execution plan and explanation of the methodology** used for the work described in section 3. Minimum Requirements, including an explanation of how the work will be organised in order to guarantee high quality, efficiency and time of the provision of services.

3) **Description of the project team, roles and functions of each person involved in the project.**
4) **List of accreditations** or any other valid evidence that the tenderer is a registered travel agent with access to airline booking systems and with rights to issue airline tickets.

5) **Proven references** to relevant experience in delivering comparable work related to the Nordic countries.

6) Detailed breakdown of the **economic offer** which should include a detailed breakdown of the contractor’s management fee and an estimation of the costs of the trip as well as any other related costs, special offers or discounts applicable. All prices should be quoted in Euro and exclude VAT and other taxes which may be recoverable by ETC (being a private VAT-registered entity based in Belgium). The economic offer should include all costs following the scope of work of the project [including third party costs if any]. Any item that is essential for the smooth running of the project, as indicated within this document, even though not specified, shall be read as included in the list of requirements.

Proposals must be submitted in electronic format, to the person listed below:

**Project Manager:**

Ms Yasemin Volders, ETC Executive Unit, Brussels: yasemin.volders@visiteurope.com

**5.1. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION**

Proposals must be received by **24/03/2020** at 23:59pm (CET).

The proposals must be valid for at least 6 months after the submission deadline.

**5.2. QUESTIONS**

Questions can be sent in written form via the contact form on the ETC website ([https://etc-corporate.org/rfp-travel-agency-services-nordic-spiritual-dna-2020-project/](https://etc-corporate.org/rfp-travel-agency-services-nordic-spiritual-dna-2020-project/)) with the subject “Nordic Tourism in China – Travel Agency Services” until **17/03/2020** at 14:00pm (CET).

ETC will provide the answers to all received questions by **19/03/2020** 18:00pm (CET) at the latest.
6. AWARD CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed against firstly the quality criteria and secondly against the financial criteria. The relative weights assigned to each of them are described below.

- **Quality criteria**: 20% of the total evaluation score
- **Financial criteria**: 80% of the total evaluation score

\[
\text{Final score} = \left( \frac{\text{lowest price / proposal price}}{100} \right) \times 0.8 + \text{quality score} \times 0.2
\]

6.1 QUALITY CRITERIA

The quality of the proposal is defined as a minimum set of delivered services as described in section "3.1 Minimum Requirements". Each of these criteria and the relative weights assigned to them are described below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality criteria</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methodology</strong>&lt;br&gt;The methodology used by the contractor in executing the work, including clearly established workflows (booking, confirmation, invoicing, booking changes, account management, etc.) and quality control systems.</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profile, experience and qualifications of the project team</strong>&lt;br&gt;The extent to which the tenderer’s profile, proven relevant experience and roles and responsibilities of the proposed project team are suitable for the execution of the project. The extent to which the tenderer has knowledge of the Nordic market and experience in providing travel agency services in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden).</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Added value</strong>&lt;br&gt;The extent to which the proposal offers services and/or deliverables that add value to the minimum requirements, in particular:&lt;br&gt;  - Provide assistance in any other necessary documentation, e.g. filming permissions (5%)&lt;br&gt;  - Hold flights pending approval for more than 48 hours (5%)&lt;br&gt;  - Complimentary travel insurance or additional guarantees, e.g. (5%)&lt;br&gt;  - Other added value (5%)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\footnote{The extent to which the proposal offers services and/or deliverables that add value to requirements and outcomes at no additional cost}
Each quality criterion will be given a score in a range from 0 (zero) points to 100 (one hundred) points in accordance with the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0- Not available/not provided</td>
<td>The application fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-20 Poor</td>
<td>The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40 Fair</td>
<td>The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-60 Good</td>
<td>The application addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-80 Very good</td>
<td>The application addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-100 Excellent</td>
<td>The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proposals scoring less than 50 points in the total weighted points for quality criteria will be excluded from the rest of the evaluation procedure.

7. FINAL PROVISIONS

This Request for Proposals is in no way binding on the European Travel Commission, its partners or any of the European Union institutions. Any contractual obligation commences only upon signature of the particular agreement between ETC and the contractor.

ETC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this Request for Proposals as well as to cancel this project, either partially or totally. In the event of cancellation of this Request for Proposals, this should not entail any financial obligation from ETC towards any applicant.

Submission of a proposal implies acceptance of the terms and conditions set out in this document.
8. ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION

ANNEX 1 – THE SLOW ADVENTURE THEME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>SLOW ADVENTURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PASSION POINT</td>
<td>Nature and outdoor activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROFILE OF THE TARGET GROUP</td>
<td>Community of immersive explorers(^3) who believes in the importance of making time to spend in nature and is most often activity driven. Nature is an important element in their lives. They have a strong desire to connect more with nature, but their working pattern and urban lives often prohibits this. They seek to fulfil their connection with nature through tourism and recreational experiences. They favour slow, immersive journeys through wild places and natural spaces in search for health and well-being. In a globalised world where people feel they have seen everything, they value original nature, clean environments, unbuilt landscapes and quietness. They are early adopters which means they are generally more willing to try new destinations, activities, and travel products. A large proportion of this community are high-value customers who are willing to pay a premium for exciting and authentic experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRATEGIC RELEVANCE</td>
<td>The adventure travel market is one of the fastest growing niches of the tourism industry worth USD263 billion per year(^4). Research(^5) shows that adventure travel attracts high-value customers, supports local economies (it is estimated that 67% of the trip cost per guest remains in the local region) and encourages sustainable practices. Operators are also seeing growing interest in adventure travel as customers are seeking out alternatives to the traditional destinations. For companies and destinations, adventure travel attracts visitors outside peak seasons, highlights the natural and cultural values of a destination, thereby promoting its preservation, and creates resilient and committed travellers. The expansion of adventure tourism creates new opportunities, particularly in remote areas where it can be developed without extensive new infrastructure, and thus generating income and employment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| HORIZON 2022 GOALS | • Build brand recognition. Position Europe as the home of the emerging slow adventure movement  
• Increase dispersal of tourist flows (place and time) to lesser known destinations  
• Connect visitors with local communities of like-minded adventure seekers  
• Increase loyalty and repeat visitation |
| EXPERIENCES | Experiences framed around human- or nature powered journeys that connect with the outdoors, the local culture, food and people in rural areas in line with the ethos of the Slow Adventure movement. |

\(^3\) European Travel Commission (2019). Tourism Passion Communities  
\(^5\) ibid
| KEY MESSAGE | Shift away from ‘what there is in Europe to do’ to ‘how it makes you feel’. Relax, live life at a slower pace and get closer to seldom seen natural areas in Europe. Get involved in unique educational and nature-focused experiences and explore local culture in special sites that are far enough to be uncrowded. Forge deeper connections with the people and the traditions of the places you visit and broaden your perspective on the world. |

**Brussels, 10/03/2020**

**European Travel Commission**  
Rue du Marché aux Herbes 61  
1000 Brussels - Belgium  
Tel: +32 (0)2 - 548 9000  
[www.etc-corporate.org](http://www.etc-corporate.org)