
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Virtual B2B Matchmaking Event in China

Award entity	European Travel Commission
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Estimated duration	2 months

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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" 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.

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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.

2. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

2.1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

ETC intends to commission an agency (hereinafter referred to as *the contractor*) for the development and execution of a virtual B2B matchmaking event in China, connecting European DMOs and their local partners with potential buyers in China. The virtual event is meant to educate

and establish meaningful partnerships with the Chinese travel trade regarding European destinations and experiences, showcase Europe's readiness to welcome Chinese travellers back when the time is right and highlight the European tourism industry's commitment to health and safety protocols.

This project is implemented by ETC in cooperation with its member National Tourism Organisations¹.

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

2.2. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the project is to:

- Restore confidence among the travel trade in China to stimulate sustainable demand for future travel to and around Europe, encouraging regional dispersal, length of stay and expenditure.
- Increase awareness of extraordinary travel experiences in lesser-known European destinations fostering their inclusion or extension in the operators existing travel offer.
- Help build a distinctive image of Europe by broadening perceptions of what the continent has to offer as a destination.
- Align European destinations and the industry with the Horizon 2022 strategy and the Experience Europe brand purpose and values.
- Leverage promotional efforts of European Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) and the industry.

2.3. TARGET GROUPS

The project is targeted towards Chinese **tour operators, travel wholesalers** and other members of the **travel trade**. Special focus should be placed on operators targeting **(semi-)Free Independent Travellers²** (FITs) from urban "melting pots" travelling for leisure and whose main motivation to travel to a certain place is to enjoy extraordinary experiences framed around a specific interest or passion point.

Specifically, the project must place emphasis on showcasing extraordinary experiences in Europe based on the following passions or themes:

¹ Full list of member NTOs can be found on the ETC website: <https://etc-corporate.org/our-members/>

² A Free Independent Travellers (FITs) is an individual or a small group (<10) of individuals who travel independently, not in a group. FITs plan and arrange their travel online by themselves. However, it should be noted that long-haul FITs are still likely to contact a tour operator or agent - which has previously arranged individual products and services for use by individual travellers - to book their trip given the particular knowledge, time and confidence required for planning a holiday to an overseas destination (semi-FITs).

- A. Nature and the Outdoors:** Inspiring experiences and stories 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.

This interest connects with the community of **Immersive Explorers**⁴; those who find togetherness in the wilderness and enjoy experiencing nature at their own pace. They want to learn about new cultures, experience new adventures and expand their perspectives from what they learn when travelling.

- B. Creative Cities:** Inspiring experiences and stories framed around the local cultural scene and lifestyle (contemporary arts, architecture and design, fashion, music, street and performing arts) of small or medium-size urban areas.

This interest connects with the community of **City Life Enthusiasts**⁵; those who swap landmarks for local life, trade the well-worn path for a secret side street and crave a culture of creative contrast and artistic reinvention. They want to “live like a local” while developing their own creativity and put emphasis on the atmosphere of the places they visit.

- C. History and Ancestry:** Ancestry and heritage-related experiences and stories in connection with historical places and events (places of memory, contemplation and commemoration) which exerted an influence in world history.

This passion connects with the community of **Explorers of Cultural Identity and Roots**⁶; those who step beyond borders into the theatre of world history, learning from the stories of yesterday with a desire to discover their own roots.

3. DELIVERABLES AND REQUIREMENTS

Proposed actions which are not compliant with requirements below will be excluded from further evaluation.

The contractor is expected to deliver the following minimum and technical requirements:

3.1. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The contractor is expected to take care of all related technical and practical aspects to implement and manage the project. This includes but is not limited to the following services:

³ Please see the Slow Adventure Guide for a detailed overview of the ethos of the Slow Adventure movement: https://etc-corporate.org/uploads/2020/03/The_Slow_Adventure_Guide_compressed.pdf

⁴ For further information on the profile the community of Immersive Explorers see <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/tourism-passion-communities-immersive-explorers/>

⁵ For further information on the profile the community of City Life Enthusiasts see <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/tourism-passion-communities-city-life-enthusiasts/>

⁶ For further information on the profile the community of Explorers of Cultural Identity and Roots see <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/tourism-passion-communities-explorers-of-cultural-identity-and-roots/>

1) Timing, event format and creative work

The contractor shall propose to ETC the best format and timing for delivering the virtual B2B matchmaking event. This includes inter alia: date, time, duration, bespoke format, programme and digital platform (software) of the event. ETC envisages the online event to last approximately one (1) to three (3) days. The contractor shall also be responsible for all communication and promotion of the event including all necessary creative design work and any related ad specs.

The proposed solution must be user-friendly and optimized for both European and Chinese participants, bilingual (Mandarin Chinese-English) and present a tailored approach to the Chinese travel trade, focusing on the editorial themes and passions mentioned in *2.3 Target groups*. Participants must have the ability to showcase digital profiles and organisation-specific branding to suit their needs. Libraries may be provided for participants for the duration of the event, where they can store their materials such as brochures, presentations or videos that they can use during one-on-one meetings. The contractor may repurpose content provided by ETC and its partners to engage the travel trade, in particular the [Europe reassurance video](#)⁷.

The project must be completed by **31 March 2021**⁸.

2) Recruitment and management of Chinese buyers and European participants

The contractor shall be responsible for promoting the online event to both Chinese buyers and European participants.

The contractor is expected to:

- Identify and recruit buyers from the Chinese market focusing on selling travel experiences that target the audience as described in article 2.3 *Target Groups*. The minimum amount of recruited Chinese buyers should be equal or exceed the amount of European participants engaged in the virtual event.
- Send targeted invitations to the identified buyers promoting and encouraging participation in the virtual event with the call-to-action to apply for participation.
- Manage and filter the buyer applications. Participating buyers should be identified and duly justified by the contractor and presented to ETC for final approval.
- Manage any necessary material collection from buyers for the smooth running of the event.
- Maximise buyer satisfaction level and likelihood to recommend travel to Europe to customers.

⁷ Please watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKBM-J6qrHw>

⁸ Subject to change depending on the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Additionally, the contractor shall assist ETC in the recruitment of European participants and is expected to:

- Develop a virtual event format that is able to accommodate **a minimum of fifty (50)** European partners located in at least three (3) different ETC or EU Member states. All confirmed participants may participate **free of charge**.
- Manage the European applications. ETC Members and NTOs of EU Member States shall have guaranteed participation. Participating NTOs must be able to extend the invitation to their local industry partners (DMCs, airlines, tourism boards, hotels, etc.) in Europe willing to engage in the Chinese market. Participation slots for these local partners shall be allocated based on the availability of slots and geographical balance. The number of participation slots per country shall be defined in agreement with ETC and each applicant must be approved by ETC prior to its participation.
- Manage any necessary material collection from European participants for the smooth running of the event.
- Provide guidance and logistical assistance to participants to ensure maximum buyer satisfaction impact, desirability and commercial viability.
- Offer interpretation and language assistance if requested by participants.

3) Monitoring and reporting

The contractor shall monitor metrics throughout the project to ensure maximum impact and effectiveness. The contractor is expected to produce a final report analysing all results of the event. This final report must include the following:

- A list of participants with contact details.
- Quantitative data of the virtual B2B matchmaking event with detailed breakdowns. This data may include, but is not limited to analytics tracking the number of unique attendees and activity between European participants and Chinese buyers, e.g. number of meetings, exchanges of contacts, etc.
- A post-event evaluation survey regarding the buyer's satisfaction level and their likelihood to recommend to customers and intention to expand their offer to the destinations present in the virtual event.
- Recommendations for future online activities, based on the data compiled.

3.2. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- **Publicity**

- The campaign must clearly acknowledge ETC's and the European Union's financial contribution. In this respect, the contractor will be required to give prominence to the following logos on communication materials (videos, posters, publications, etc) produced in the framework of the co-branded campaign:

Logo of Europe-visiteurope.com.cn



Name and emblem of the European Union

Co-funded by
the European Union



The guidelines for the use of the Europe-visiteurope.com logo and the EU emblem as well as the respective graphic files are available for download at the following link:

<https://etc-corporate.org/publicity-guidelines/>

- **Style**

All deliverables need to be in line with the style guidelines provided by ETC.

In addition, ETC may request the use of specific visuals, hashtags and/or handles on communication materials in order to maximize cross-promotion and leveraging opportunities with ETC's umbrella promotional campaign **"Europe invites the Curious"**.

- **Assignment of rights**

The contractor shall explicitly provide ETC and its partners with a worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive, perpetual (for the duration of the applicable copyright) license to exercise the Intellectual Property Rights in the Campaign Material (created for or in the course of the campaign) as stated below:

- a) to reproduce the Campaign Material or incorporate the Campaign Material into other material, and to reproduce the Campaign Material as incorporated in such other material;
- b) to create and reproduce derivative works from the Campaign Material;
- c) to distribute copies and display publicly the Campaign Material, whether independently or as part of other material;
- d) to distribute copies and display publicly derivative works from the Campaign Material

- **Reporting**

Regular written progress reports must be provided to ETC.

3.3. DELIVERABLES

- A detailed execution plan and retroplanning.
- Recruitment of Chinese buyers and European participants.
- Organisation and completion of a virtual B2B matchmaking event lasting between 1-3 days, connecting European exhibitors and Chinese buyers.
- Report comprising a list of the participants, quantitative data and future recommendations
- Post-event evaluation survey among Chinese travel trade participants.

3.4. IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The implementation period of the project is expected to start in **02/2021** and shall not extend beyond **31/03/2021**⁹.

4. BUDGET

The maximum available budget for this project is **EUR 70,000** (seventy thousand euros) excluding VAT and including other taxes, if applicable. This figure is indicative and in no way binding. The total contract value shall be defined on a proportional basis to the number of participants engaged in the project. The total contract value is inclusive of all expenses that may be incurred throughout the project. The contractor shall not exceed the maximum allocated budget. All payments are to be made by electronic bank transfer in Euros, so the contractor is required to have a bank account in Euros.

The payment will be made upon submission of an invoice. ETC will first approve that the deliverables are correct and ask the contractor to submit an invoice and statement of the actual expenses incurred and duly justified based on the supporting documents. The contractor must submit the final report, including a list of the participants, quantitative data and the post-event evaluation survey with the information required in article 3.1 *Minimum Requirements*.

⁹ Subject to change depending on the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic.

5. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals must be **clear, concise** (not exceeding 20 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) **Detailed description of the proposed solution and the methodology** used for the execution of the work described in section 3.1 *Minimum requirements*, including a description of the proposed event format, tactics for recruitment of participants, estimated number of European participants, the number of Chinese buyers that each European participant will have the opportunity to meet, communication plan and an explanation of how the work will be organised in order to guarantee high quality, efficiency and timely provision of the services. The proposal must also include details on the technical aspects and functionalities of the proposed solution and how it will accommodate participants accessing the virtual event from different bandwidths and internet speeds.
- 3) **References** to relevant experience in delivering comparable work as outlined in 3.1. Minimum Requirements (i.e. case studies or reference list - including project goals, processes, dates and verifiable deliverables).
- 4) **Retroplanning and timeline** for the completion of the project.
- 5) Description of **team credentials**, field of expertise and roles of the people involved in the project.
- 6) Detailed **economic offer** which shows the price per European participant and a breakdown of this price. The price per European participant should include all costs following the scope of work of the project (including third party costs if any and recruitment of Chinese buyers). 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. 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).

If any work for the project is to be subcontracted to a third party, the contractor must clearly specify in its proposal all tasks and deliverables that are to be outsourced. Any costs related to outsourcing shall be borne by the contractor. The contractor will be the sole responsible party for the delivery of the outsourced work.

Proposals must be submitted in electronic format, in Word or PDF 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 **27/01/2021** at 18:00 pm (CET).

The proposals must be valid for at least 3 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/virtual-b2b-matchmaking-event-in-china/>) with the subject “Virtual B2B Matchmaking Event in China” until **21/01/2021** at 18:00pm (CET).

ETC will provide the answers to all received questions by **22/01/2021** 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:** 70% of the total evaluation score
- **Financial criteria:** 30% of the total evaluation score

Final score = (quality score x 0.7) + [(lowest price / proposal price) x 100 x 0.3]

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.

Quality criteria	Weight
<p>Relevance of the proposed solution. The extent to which the proposed approach and solution are appropriate to the scope of work and target groups, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the proposed solution will contribute to achieve the project objectives; • The extent to which the proposal meets or exceeds the set of minimum requirements of the project; • The proper thematic approach on the 3 passions or themes; • The overall level of detail, feasibility and practicality of the proposed solution; 	60

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall level of creativity, innovation and originality of the proposed solution; • The extent to which the proposal demonstrates the capacity to provide virtual events and ensure networking and attendee engagement. 	
<p>Project management and methodology. The extent to which the proposed methodology for executing, managing and monitoring the work will successfully ensure high quality, timely delivery and achievement of campaign objectives, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the proposed methodology will successfully ensure high participation of niche buyers in China specialising in thematic travel experiences. • The effectiveness of the processes for managing and monitoring the project implementation. • The ability of the contractor to provide technical and logistical assistance and customer service to attendees before and during the event. • The level of detail and coherence in the project timeline. • The level and detail and coherence of the economic offer, minimising any fees or other agency production costs. 	30
<p>Company profile, experience and qualifications of the project team The extent to which the credentials of the applicant and qualifications, fields of expertise, roles and responsibilities of the proposed project team are suitable for the execution of virtual B2B matchmaking events and organizing travel trade between Europe and China.</p>	10

Each quality criterion will be given a score in a range from 0 (zero) points to 10 (ten) points in accordance with the following scale:

0 Not available/not provided	The application fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
1-2 Poor	The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
3-4 Fair	The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
5-6 Good	The application addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
7-8 Very good	The application addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
9-10 Excellent	The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

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, nor 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.

Brussels, 13/01/2021

European Travel Commission

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