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# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## B2B promotion at an established luxury travel trade event in the US market “Alps – Adriatic – Amazing”

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<b>Award entity</b>	European Travel Commission
<b>Issuance date</b>	27/06/2024
<b>Deadline for applications</b>	11/07/2024
<b>Estimated starting date</b>	09/2024
<b>Estimated duration</b>	3 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 Union (EU) to the European Travel Commission (ETC) with the aim to support the promotion of thematic trans-European tourism products in third countries.

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

The European Travel Commission is an international non-profit 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](http://www.etc-corporate.org).

## 2. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

### 2.1. Project overview

ETC intends to contract a service provider, hereinafter referred to as the **contractor**, with expertise in event management and specialised knowledge of the US travel trade.

The purpose of this project is to organise a **B2B collaborative joint promotion at an established travel trade event in the US** (hereinafter referred to as *the project*) targeting US luxury independent travel agencies and advisors.

The project is part of the 2024 overall “Alps – Adriatic – Amazing” joint co-branding promotional campaign implemented by ETC in partnership with the **Croatian National Tourist Board (CNTB)**, the **Slovenian Tourist Board (STB)** and the **Austrian Tourist Office (ANTO)** (hereinafter referred to as *the consortium*).

The project aims to increase and boost the visibility of Croatia, Slovenia, and Austria in the United States of America. It will promote those countries as year-round travel destinations, enticing discerning travellers to explore the diversity of Europe in every season while promoting sustainable and inclusive travel practices.

Centred around the theme of **Nature & Outdoors**, the project aims to unveil a plethora of experiences rooted in the natural heritage of all three countries. Aligned with the slow adventure concept, activities like hiking, cycling, birdwatching, mountaineering, and kayaking become gateways to not just environmental understanding but also to the rich local culture, cuisine, people, and traditions.

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

## **2.2. Objectives**

The objectives of the project are as follows:

- Increase the visibility of Croatia, Austria and Slovenia as already-known European destinations in the US market, highlighting sustainable, local and authentic luxury experiences.
- Enhance Europe's brand, solidifying its status as a leading global destination.
- Strengthen the perception of Europe, Croatia, Slovenia, and Austria as sustainable and inclusive travel destinations, encourage responsible travel, and promote lesser-known destinations.
- Showcase each country as a holistic tourist destination, filled with diverse experiences, framed primarily around nature & outdoors but also related to the local culture, cuisine, lifestyle and traditions.
- Inform highly relevant US luxury travel agents and advisors about Europe and Croatia, Slovenia and Austria to expand the sales network to relevant travellers in the US.
- Increase the product range of Croatia, Slovenia and Austria travels / tours in the US, primarily focused on nature & outdoors, alongside gastronomy, culture & cities, lifestyle and sustainable related experiences and tourism offers.

- Establish and increase contacts with representatives of US travel agencies and advisors from the luxury travel segment.

### 2.3. Target group

The audience of the established event must be US luxury independent travel agencies and advisors with a focus on sustainable and inclusive travel experiences.

Ultimately, the project must target high-net-worth Free Independent Traveller or Fully Independent Traveller (FITs), with more than \$200,000 household income (HHI) from the United States of America.

A FIT is an individual or a small group (<10) of individuals who travel independently (not in an organised group). They book individual products and services arranged by a tour operator or advisor for use by independent travellers.

The target group tends to travel outside peak season and is nature-driven with a desire to enjoy authentic local experiences at a slower pace. They are also dynamic, and keen to immerse into the local communities and learn about the traditions and lifestyle. Their motivation to travel is to experience new adventures and live unique experiences. They are willing to pay much more than the average traveller for premium and authentic experiences. The niche demographics targeted by the campaign are FITs in their 30s and 40s, and the "empty nesters".

## 3. REQUIREMENTS AND DELIVERABLES

The contractor is required to deliver the minimum requirements described in the sections below. Any item that is essential for the smooth running of the project even though not specified, shall be read as included in the list of minimum requirements.

Proposals must:

- be quoted in **EURO**;
- **not exceed** the contracting authority's budget indicated in *4. Budget and terms of payment*.

Note that all potential contractors shall submit only **one proposal** per RFP. An economic operator who submits more than one proposal will cause all the economic operator's bids to be rejected.

A proposal not compliant with these requirements will be excluded from further evaluation.

**The contractor must serve as the organiser of an established luxury travel trade event in the US market, which will be the platform for the consortium destinations' joint promotion**

and for creating networking opportunities with US luxury independent travel agencies and advisors.

The contractor is expected to plan and implement a series of **B2B activities as part of a collaborative joint promotion at an established travel trade event in the US** focusing on sustainable and inclusive travel in Croatia, Slovenia and Austria.

### 3.1. General requirements

The contractor is expected to deliver the project in line with the following requirements:

- The B2B activities (see 3.2 B2B activities) must be integrated into an established US luxury travel trade event targeting independent travel agencies and advisors.
- The contractor must demonstrate the ability to attract the participation of a relevant target audience (see 2.3 target group).
- The travel trade event must be organised in the US.
- The B2B activities are anticipated to take place **between September and December 2024**.
- The contractor must foresee the participation of **3 representatives from each of the participating Consortium countries** (a total of 9 delegates) for the duration of the entire event. The participants would be representatives of Croatia, Slovenia and Austria NTOs as well as representatives of destinations and /or private businesses.

### 3.2. B2B activities

The contractor is expected to deliver the following activities:

- The contractor must ensure **a 30-minute slot within the event program for a collaborative presentation** showcasing all three destinations under the theme “Alps – Adriatic - Amazing” to an audience of travel industry partners/travel advisors. At least one representative from each of the participating consortium partners will be at the presentation.
- The contractor must provide the representatives of the consortium countries with the opportunity to **engage in pre-scheduled appointments** with the US travel advisors/travel agents. The representatives from the participating consortium countries will meet the travel advisors/agents during the foreseen pre-scheduled appointments.

### 3.3. KPIs

The proposal should describe and define the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), including but not limited to those listed below, that will be used to measure the project's impact on the target groups and how they will be verified.

- Attendance at the 30-minute slot within the event program for the collaborative “Alps – Adriatic – Amazing” presentation. The minimum attendance to be guaranteed is **100 US luxury travel advisors /travel agents**.
- The number of pre-scheduled meetings that will be guaranteed in the proposal.

### 3.4. Deliverables

The contractor must include in the proposal any estimated project outputs. The contractor must deliver the reports mentioned below:

- A comprehensive final project report within 30 days after the completion of the activity (*see 3.5 Reporting*).
- An activities implementation plan is required if a first instalment not exceeding 25% of the contract value is requested (see 4. Budget and terms of payment).

### 3.5. Reporting

The contractor must inform ETC and Consortium partners about the progress of the project execution regularly via email during the organisation period.

Additionally, the contractor is required to deliver a comprehensive final project report within 30 days after the completion of the activity. The report should encompass a summary of all tasks executed, a description of all project deliverables, a final list of all travel advisors/travel agents with whom the consortium representatives have had appointments (including the advisor's name, company name, travel speciality and email address), images and other proof of promotional materials used during the event (if any).

### 3.6. Project management team

The contractor must have a professional project management and technical team that is able to provide adequate staffing throughout the entire activity period. The contractor should designate at least one staff member to manage the account and all project-related communication, including regular updates to ETC and its partners on the project implementation.

ETC and the Consortium must be involved and consulted at each stage of the project, providing guidance and any other necessary inputs.

### 3.7. Technical requirements

#### Publicity

- The campaigns must clearly showcase the following logos:



The guidelines for the use of these logos will be provided at the kick-off of the project.

- 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



#### 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 and its partners.

#### 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.

### 3.8. Implementation period

The project is expected to take place between **09/2024** and **15/12/2024 at the latest**.

## 4. BUDGET AND TERMS OF PAYMENT

The maximum available budget for this project is **42.000,00 EUR (forty-two thousand euro)**, excluding VAT<sup>1</sup> and including all taxes and costs.

Invoicing will be done in a maximum of two instalments after the submission of the corresponding deliverables and related reports. ETC will first approve the correctness of the deliverables and then request the contractor to submit the corresponding invoice. The payment of the first instalment, which will not exceed 25% of the contract value, can be made after ETC approves an activities implementation plan (*see 3.4 Deliverables*). This plan should include additional information to the submitted proposal that demonstrates progress on the activities' status and any payments to third parties that may have already occurred.

The contractor shall submit a detailed **breakdown of the budget in Euros for each activity**, explicitly specifying the costs associated with third-party services (such as venue, catering, audiovisual equipment, insurance, etc) and any purchase orders incurred on behalf of ETC (including but not limited to all expenses, fees and applicable taxes) and duly justified based on supporting documents (e.g. invoices from third parties; receipts, etc). **ETC reserves the right to ask for further explanations and supporting documents.**

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<sup>1</sup> Please find here the definition of VAT: [https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/what-vat\\_en](https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/what-vat_en).

The payment from ETC to the contractor may be subject to reduction in the event of any breach of the contractor's obligations. Breaches may include but are not limited to failure to deliver the required deliverables, not meeting established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), or incorrect use of the Europe-visiteurope.com logo and the European Union emblem. All payments to the contractor will be made in Euros.

## 5. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals must be **clear, concise** (not exceeding 15 pages in total<sup>2</sup>) and **written in English**, so there can be no doubt as to word meaning and figures.

**Proposals must include:**

- 1) **Brief company profile:** presence on the market, main activities/business approach, connection with luxury travel agents/advisors.
- 2) **A case study referring to a previous experience** in organising a luxury travel trade event within the last three years and the footprint and profile of travel agencies/advisors targeted in the context of the event.
- 3) Description of **team credentials**, and roles of the people involved in the project.
- 4) **Detailed description of the travel trade event the B2B activities (3.2 B2B activities) would be incorporated in:** dates, location, program, estimated number and profile of participating US luxury travel agents and advisors, event's history, etc.
- 5) **The overview of the proposed B2B activities (3.2 B2B activities), which must include:**
  - a. concise and clear description of each proposed activity and its implementation;
  - b. guaranteed number of travel advisors/travel agents attending the "Alps-Adriatic-Amazing" presentation;
  - c. the guaranteed number of pre-scheduled meetings.
- 6) **Timeline** of the project implementation and completion.

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<sup>2</sup> Annexes and other supporting documents do not count towards the page limit.

- 7) Detailed breakdown of the **economic offer** including a budget line for each of the activities part of the proposal. **All prices must be quoted in Euro, exclude VAT and include all taxes, costs and fees.** Please note that any differences in pricing (e.g., exchange rate difference) between the date of the proposal and the end-of-year report are not covered by ETC and the consortium. 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.

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.

### 5.1. Submission modalities and deadline

Proposals must be submitted in electronic format via the following form on the ETC's website <https://etc-corporate.org/requests-for-proposals/submission-form/>, selecting the RFP "B2B promotion - luxury travel trade event - 'Alps – Adriatic – Amazing'".

Proposals must be received by **11/07/2024 at 23:59 (CEST)**.

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

### 5.2. Questions and Answers

Questions can be sent in written form via the contact form on the ETC website (<https://etc-corporate.org/contact/>) with the subject "Questions – RFP B2B promotion - luxury travel trade event - 'Alps – Adriatic – Amazing'" until **04/07/2024 at 14:00 (CEST)**.

ETC will provide the answers to all received questions on this page <https://etc-corporate.org/qa-b2b-promotion-luxury-travel-trade-event-alps-adriatic-amazing/> by **05/07/2024 18:00 (CEST)** at the latest.

## 6. AWARD CRITERIA

Proposals should elaborate on all award criteria to score as many points as possible. The mere repetition of mandatory requirements without going into details will only result in a lower score.

Proposals will be firstly evaluated against the quality criteria and secondly against the financial criteria outlined below. Proposals must achieve a minimum score of 50 out of 100 points in the quality score. Proposals that score below this threshold will be excluded from further evaluation and will not be ranked.

The following formula will be used to calculate the final total score of the proposal:

- Quality criteria: 60% of the total evaluation score
- Financial criterion: 40% of the total evaluation score

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$$\text{Final score} = [(\text{lowest price} / \text{proposal price}) \times 100 \times 0.4] + (\text{quality score} \times 0.6)$$


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In the event of a tie in the final total score, the following tiebreaker criteria apply in order of prevalence:

- proposal with the highest total score obtained in the financial criteria;
- proposal with the highest total score obtained in the quality criteria.

If the tie persists after applying the above tiebreaker criteria between one or more proposals, the proposal selected in a draw will be awarded.

### 6.1. Quality criteria

The quality of the proposal is defined as a minimum set of delivered services as described in section 3. *Requirements and Deliverables*. Each of these criteria and the relative weights assigned to them are described below.

<u>Quality criteria</u>	<u>Weight</u>
<p><b>Company profile and qualifications of the project team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which the degree of specialisation, connection with luxury travel agents/advisors, quality and expertise of the contractor and the proposed project team are relevant and appropriate for the project.</li> <li>• Relevance of the case study referring to comparable activities performed within the last three years.</li> </ul>	40

<p><b>Relevance of the proposed trade event and B2B activities</b></p> <p>The extent to which the proposed solution is appropriate to the scope of work and target groups, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The appropriateness of the proposed format of the travel trade event.</li> <li>• The B2B activities concept.</li> <li>• Well-defined and verifiable KPIs and their expected goals for each project activity.</li> </ul>	45
<p><b>Feasibility and accountability of the proposal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which the proposal would present an accountable, verifiable, being highly valued the overall level of detail, clarity, feasibility, and practicality of the proposed solution.</li> </ul>	15

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.

## **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 the 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, 27/06/2024**

**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)