



Interreg EXPERIENCE

Call for Kent Perception Research

Interreg Channel (France England) Programme Request for Quotations

Terms of Reference for Quotations



REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS

Invitation to quote for Kent Perception Research

COMMISSIONING PARTNER: Visit Kent Ltd

Interreg Experience – Kent Perception Research, EXP T4.2.2

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Title:	Interreg Experience – Kent Perception Research
Budget:	£47,000 (incl. VAT) This includes the budget for any travel & subsistence, based on the EU published allowance rates. The Contracting Party reserves the right to vary the budget at any time during the lifetime of the project.

Brief Owner:	Raluca Brebeanu, Head of Insights and Research
Brief Director:	Hollie Coffey, Destinations and Marketing Partnerships Director

Summary:

With the gradual easing of Covid-19 restrictions, the tourism, leisure and hospitality industry is having to re-think how to move forward and rebuild business, demand and revenue. Many organisations, both nationally and locally are being forced to re-examine business operations and products, in order to survive, adhere to guidelines and respond to changing consumer behaviour. To survive, businesses need to adapt existing products, collaborate with others in and out of the sector, and reach out to new audiences to recover and drive business growth. The sector has also been shown to be particularly vulnerable due to the seasonality of the visitor economy demonstrating the need for development of off-season product to make businesses more resilient in the future. The pandemic has also significantly hit consumer confidence, altered perceptions, priorities and influenced consumer behaviour.

Every 4-5 years, Visit Kent carries out a visitor perceptions study to better understand the current and changed perceptions of Kent as a destination, our audiences and their expectations and needs. This research plays a crucial part in informing our strategies, our focus and planned activities and given the current climate, shaped not only by the Covid-19 pandemic, but also the implications of Brexit and the effect these events have on visitor perceptions, the learnings will support our efforts to rebuild the visitor economy and welcome visitors back to Kent safely.

Background:

Visit Kent is one of 14 partners from France and the United Kingdom working together on EXPERIENCE, a €23m project co-funded by the Interreg France (Channel) England Programme, which has committed €16m from the European Regional Development Fund. It is led by Norfolk County Council and runs from September 2019 to June 2023.

EXPERIENCE is a major project to boost visitor numbers in the off-peak season through an innovative tourism strategy. New Autumn and Winter 'experiences' will draw in visitors to six areas across England and France: Norfolk, Kent, Cornwall, Pas-de-Calais, Compiègne and Brittany (Baie de Morlaix and Côtes d'Armor).

Local organisations and businesses will be hands-on in creating unique experiences to attract visitors between October and March, in order to extend the tourist season and bring money into local economies year-round. The project will promote the new experiences as individual activities and as part of themed itineraries in a high-profile campaign using cutting-edge marketing techniques.

‘Experiential’ tourism

Traditionally, the marketing approach for tourism across much of England and France has been centred on promoting mass-market locations during peak season, known as ‘destination tourism’.

But trends show that travellers are increasingly seeking experiences in which they feel a sense of adventure and discovery by immersing themselves in new cultures and exploring local foods, activities and arts - known as ‘experiential tourism’.

This new demand is the inspiration for EXPERIENCE, which will create a new tourism strategy to shift from a ‘destination’ to ‘experiential’ tourism approach.

Sustainable tourism

The EXPERIENCE approach is based on the principle of sustainable tourism. As well as generating economic prosperity, the project aims to bring benefits to the environment and communities, and to mitigate any impact of increased visitor numbers.

The project will achieve this by enhancing protected habitats, using low-carbon options, e.g. solar and automated lighting and heating, using local suppliers to reduce food miles and opting for recycled materials for signs and surfaces.

Revenue generated in the regions will be fed back into the local economy to protect and maintain its historical and cultural attractions.

The project will:

- Offer training to traditional tourist organisations, alongside people with little experience in the tourist trade to identify unique regional selling points
- Create exciting off-season activities and itineraries for day and overnight visitors, themed by regional selling points that are in keeping with the character of a region.
- Use cutting-edge marketing techniques to promote the experiences on offer across the regions in October-March
- Adapt infrastructure for off-season use, such as adding lighting and signs or improving facilities, and 33% of itineraries will be accessible for people with people with additional physical or sensory requirements. EXPERIENCE also places great importance on the inclusivity of individuals and communities.
- Ensure activities are demand-driven so that off-season growth in visitors is sustainable.

Key Objectives

- Research awareness, image and perception of Kent and nested destinations as day trips and overnight holidays choice
- Refine audiences, visitor profiles and behaviour (e.g. age, gender, interests, mode of transport, party composition, length of stay, accommodation preference)
- Capture destination satisfaction
- Identify shifts in key findings from the previous wave
- Provide consumer insights which will inform the development of future campaigns, products and a year-round visitor offer
- Inform the development of new experiential tourism products and potential audiences
- Compare key perceptions of Kent with competitor destinations, if possible

CONSULTANCY SPECIFICATION

Mandatory Requirements

Data for our previous perception research studies has always been gathered through very robust panel surveys and benchmarking against previous results was a key requirement. This time around we would like to be less prescriptive in terms of the methodology and we expect consultants to recommend their preferred approach to data collection, to ensure we use the most suitable methods, in line the current times.

We anticipate this research to be mainly informed by the views of the domestic market, however we are keen to explore the perceptions of some international markets as well. The successful consultant is expected to recommend the approach to data collection of each of these segments. Some inbound markets we have in mind include France, Italy, Spain, and potentially the USA, and we would be happy with the study to be carried out in two waves - the initial one based on the views of the domestic audience first and the international data collection in the autumn/winter, when hopefully there will be more clarity on inbound travel and confidence to visit.

- Data should be robust and representative and ideally capture the views of previous and potential visitors to Kent, as well as those of latent visitors who are not really intending to re-visit
- The provision of a comprehensive written report, an executive summary containing key take-outs, a visual infographic highlighting the key findings and two presentations (one to the Visit Kent team/board and one to a wider stakeholder group)
- Consultants should familiarise themselves with the Visit Kent Visitor First Strategy ([Access our Visitor First Brand Guide](#))
- All activity must be GDPR compliant

Project Deliverables

- A detailed proposal covering the recommended methodology and reporting structure
- Regular digital updates (frequency and details to be agreed upon appointment)
- Top-line interim progress report (should data collection take place in two waves, over a longer time period) – timescales to be agreed
- Final written report including insights and recommendations
- Executive Summary
- Infographic
- 2 presentations

Project Timelines

The following deadlines are aligned with the timelines of the wider Experience project.

- 09/07/2021 - Successful Applicant approved
- 12/07/2021 - Contract start date
- 12/07/2021 – 15/07/2021 Kick-off meeting, agree approach and timelines
- 15/09/2021 – Interim progress report to provide insights into domestic market for Autumn/Winter campaign (date to be agreed at kick-off meeting)
- 17/01/2022 - All reports complete and evidence provided to Visit Kent.

Project Considerations/ Important Notes

- Visit Kent is working closely with the following Local Authorities that have provided match funding for the project: Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council, Gravesham Borough Council, Medway Council, Thanet District Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Kent County Council has also provided match funding to the project.
- Kent Downs AONB are also a partner in the Interreg Experience project and have a focus on cycling, walking and equine products.
- Several research pieces that might provide useful context to this project have already been carried out. These include a destination product gap analysis, twice-yearly residents research, trade and consumer product testing.

INSTRUCTIONS TO TENDERERS

Tender Documents

The detail of this document is to be treated as private and confidential and for use only in connection with this tender process. Copyright of all tender documents, including any amendments or further instructions, shall remain with Visit Kent.

Preparation of Responses

The information contained within this document should be regarded as a statement of Visit Kent's current position as it is able to determine at this time. Tenderers must carefully examine and consider the brief and satisfy themselves of the appropriateness and validity of any information provided. In submitting a response, tenderers shall be deemed to have read and understood all of the tender documents.

Tenderers are required to provide a complete response to this brief.

Response to brief must demonstrate as a minimum:

1. Your approach to the delivery of this project
2. Experience in delivering tourism specific research and producing compelling insights reports and recommendations



3. Your anticipated timescales and top-line delivery plan
4. How you will prepare a comprehensive research report that will provide excellent insight for us; but that can be easily digested by an external audience.
5. The ability to deliver two report presentations
6. Capacity to manage the project within the timelines set – demonstrate how would you deliver the project and key personnel.
7. Costs – showing breakdown of costs for data gathering and analysis/reporting, including expected number of days to be spent on each activity
8. Copies of your companies accounts from the previous 2 years

Failure to provide complete information may result in your bid being rejected.

Tender Timetable

Tender Submission Date: **5th July 2021** - All tenders must be received by 17:30

Contract award: **9th July 2021**

Contract start date: **12th July 2021**

During the tender evaluation period Visit Kent may shortlist a number of tenderers. Shortlisted tenderers may be asked to attend a virtual interview with the evaluation team and/or deliver a virtual presentation. Tenderers should be prepared to accommodate either or both of these requests. Exact dates will be notified nearer the time if required.

Submission of Response

Tenderers should submit a single copy of their response/proposal, the response submission form, tender questionnaire and supporting documentation.

The response to brief **should** be no longer than 10 x A4 pages. Directly emailed submissions **must** be less than 15mb in size and receipt will be acknowledged.

Responses must be received by the return date and time stated above via email to raluca.brebeanu@visitkent.co.uk

Evaluation procedure

The quotations will be evaluated on the basis of the **economically most advantageous offer**; this allows Visit Kent and partners to take account of various elements such as quality, technical merit and relevant experience.

Submissions from contractors who have not met the requirements in the tender questionnaire will not be considered further.

Returned quotations that have met the requirements in the tender questionnaire will be evaluated based on the criteria set out in the table below:

Cost - 30% (The lowest priced quotation will be awarded maximum points and all other quotations awarded points in proportion)	30%
Quality - 70% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria 1 – Company Experience 	15%



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria 2 - Capacity and ability to deliver the work Criteria 3 - Demonstrable understanding of the aims and objectives of the brief and an appreciation of issues Criteria 4 - Understanding of the wider context of this project Criteria 5 - Recommended approach and quality of offer 	<p>10%</p> <p>15%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>20%</p>										
<p>Each of the Quality sections within this submission will be scored based on the method detailed below:</p> <table> <tr> <td>Exceptional demonstration by the Tenderer of the relevant ability, understanding & skills required to provide the service with evidence to support the response, where appropriate.</td><td>5 – Excellent</td></tr> <tr> <td>Good demonstration by the Tenderer of the relevant ability, understanding & skills required to provide the service with evidence to support the response, where appropriate.</td><td>4-Good</td></tr> <tr> <td>Contains minor shortcomings in the demonstration by the tenderer of the relevant ability, understanding & skills required to provide the services with evidence to support the response, where appropriate and/or is inconsistent or in conflict with other proposals with little or no evidence to support the response.</td><td>3–Minor Reservations</td></tr> <tr> <td>Satisfies the requirement but with considerable reservations of the Tenderer’s relevant ability, understanding & skills required to provide the services, with little or no evidence to support the response.</td><td> 1–Serious Reservations Submissions which receive a ‘1 – serious reservations’ will not be considered further </td></tr> <tr> <td>No response provided.</td><td> 0–no score – Fail Submissions that ‘Fail’ will not be considered further </td></tr> </table>		Exceptional demonstration by the Tenderer of the relevant ability, understanding & skills required to provide the service with evidence to support the response, where appropriate.	5 – Excellent	Good demonstration by the Tenderer of the relevant ability, understanding & skills required to provide the service with evidence to support the response, where appropriate.	4-Good	Contains minor shortcomings in the demonstration by the tenderer of the relevant ability, understanding & skills required to provide the services with evidence to support the response, where appropriate and/or is inconsistent or in conflict with other proposals with little or no evidence to support the response.	3–Minor Reservations	Satisfies the requirement but with considerable reservations of the Tenderer’s relevant ability, understanding & skills required to provide the services, with little or no evidence to support the response.	1–Serious Reservations Submissions which receive a ‘1 – serious reservations’ will not be considered further	No response provided.	0–no score – Fail Submissions that ‘Fail’ will not be considered further
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<p>If there appears to be an arithmetical error in a submission or supporting information, Visit Kent shall, at its discretion, either disregard the quotation or invite the Contractor to amend, confirm or withdraw its bid. Except in the case of arithmetical errors, if any other error is found the Contractor will be invited to either stand by the original uncorrected quotation or to withdraw.</p>											



Visit Kent Not Bound

Visit Kent does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender for all or any part of the requirement and will not accept responsibility for any expense or loss which may be incurred by any tenderer in the preparation of the response.

Any discussions or correspondence between Visit Kent and tenderers shall be conducted without any obligation whatsoever by Visit Kent to enter into or become bound by any contract.

Visit Kent will not be bound by any contract until the Contract is embodied in a formal document and signed by all parties.

Contract Award

Visit Kent may decide at its sole discretion to:

1. Award the contract to more than one supplier if it is felt that this would achieve best value
2. Not to award the contract at all
3. Award only part of the intended contract
4. Discontinue the process at any time without liability

Questions about the brief

If you need any further assistance or have any queries about the process, please contact Raluca Brebeanu or Hollie Coffey.

E-mail: raluca.brebeanu@visitkent.co.uk or hollie.coffey@visitkent.co.uk

Any questions relating to the services must be raised via e-mail.