**Visit Kent – Project Brief**

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| Project Title: | Interreg Experience – Campaigns and targeted activity 2022 |
| Budget: | **£75,000 (incl. VAT)**  This budget covers media spend and management fees, and also 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. |

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| Brief Owner: | Jim Dawson, Head of Creative, Digital and Marketing |
| Brief Director: | Hollie Coffey, Destinations and Marketing Partnerships Director |

**Project Overview:**

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| **Summary:**  In light of the Covid-19 crisis, 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 have been forced to re-examine business operations and products and respond to changing consumer behaviour. To survive, businesses are adapting existing products, collaborating with others in and out of the sector, and redefining their audiences. 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 and to deliver more year-round jobs. The pandemic has also significantly hit consumer confidence reducing the propensity for consumers to book overseas trips. This presents a significant opportunity for domestic travel throughout 2022.  Our campaign/targeted activity throughout the year will aim to:   * Promote the experiential product created as part of the EXPERIENCE project. * Support the immediate recovery by driving year-round domestic visits and off-season visits. * Promote the Lonely Planet Best in travel accolade <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/best-in-travel/regions>. * Provide consumer insights which will inform the development of new product and develop our understanding of the consumer decision making process.   Destination Awareness  There is a need to build consumer confidence and drive domestic visits to the county throughout the year by showcasing product that will extend the season for businesses. We know that 57% of domestic visitors choose their destination based on where they can find a specific activity or experience rather than the other way around. In order to compete with destinations around the country, Kent needs to better showcase authentic experiences based around the natural environment and local culture.  Campaign and content delivery  Two previous campaigns have been delivered in support of this project over the last year. Informed by other activity we have delivered over the last 2 years, we have devised an approach to campaign delivery that is audience led, flexible and enables us to build upon our strengths and expertise.  Our insights inform us that not everybody takes a trip at the same time and that across the year our audiences are at different points in the decision-making process. We must flex our messaging and targeting to inspire and encourage different visitors at different times. We will not be delivering a single campaign within a fixed timescale. We are proposing to work with an agency that can offer a flexible model. Amplifying our different messages to our different audience segments across the most appropriate channels at the most appropriate times. Our comprehensive programme of content creation will provide a rich target for visitors, this includes editorially rich feature content across the website, video, our Instagram channel, and influencer activity. Our own “always on activity” will establish a foundation from which the contracted agency will then deliver the right content to the right people at the right time. |
| **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 is creating a new tourism strategy to shift from a ‘destination’ to an ‘experiential’ tourism approach.  **Sustainable and accessible tourism**  The EXPERIENCE approach is based on the principles of sustainable and accessible 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 EXPERIENCE 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 to work with businesses to ensure accessibility information is accurate and available. EXPERIENCE places great importance on the inclusivity of individuals and communities. * Ensure activities are demand-driven so that off-season growth in visitors is sustainable.   **Product Development**  As part of the Interreg Channel EXPERIENCE project, Visit Kent has run the Experience Development Programme which has worked with 125 organisations from across Kent and Medway to help them develop new experiential tourism products for the off-season.  The programme offers successful applicants a package of support to develop their product concept and take it to market. The support delivered through the programme includes 1:1 business consultation, product testing, content development, product photography, inclusion in B2C campaigns and B2B distribution through travel trade partners.  More details available at <https://visitkentbusiness.co.uk/get-involved/experience-taking-your-ideas-to-market/experience-development-programme/>  Examples of experiences developed include:   * Gin and Steam - A gin tasting experience taking place on a train hauled by a fabulous Steam Locomotive * Upcycling workshops including accommodation all set within a timber framed farmhouse * Join a paranormal investigation team at haunted locations across Kent |
| **Identifying the audience:**  We have invested significant time researching and defining our audiences, in so doing the following core descriptors have been created:  **Social contemporary seekers**   * Predominantly the millennial market comprising of couples and small groups of friends pre-children or couples with very young children. * 18-34   **Changing family dynamic**   * Families with children of different ages, including more intergenerational members and single-parent or blended families   **Green spacers**   * Older couples of different ages, interested in the outdoors, with either more traditional or cultural experiences * Older couples   **Hyper local**   * This includes local Kent residents, encouraging them to explore their local area for a day trip or short break * Families and VFR (Visiting friends and relatives)   A more detailed portrait of these audiences is available in the supporting tender documentation.  The Chart below indicates when the audiences generally make a trip (green) and when they are making decisions (orange). |

**Key objectives of our campaigns and targeted activity.**

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| * To create awareness of experiential off-season destination products in target markets. * To drive recovery across the sector especially through off-season domestic visits. * To highlight the inclusion of Kent’s Heritage Coast in Lonely Planet’s best in Travel 2022. * To establish ***Must*** Visit Kent as a key message and core campaign strand. * To build consumer confidence and the perception that Kent is a safe destination. * To create awareness of Kent’s ambitions to become established as a sustainable travel destination, encouraging consumers to make small changes whilst visiting the destination * To gather insights to inform our understanding of the user journey and visitor decision making process. * To drive traffic to the Visit Kent website, in particular the Your Kent Experience and ***Must*** Visit Kent landing pages <https://www.visitkent.co.uk/your-kent-experience/> (MVK is currently in development) * To increase newsletter sign ups, and grow our Social Media Engagement. * Visit Kent will be responsible for the delivery of all organic content (web and social media) in support of the campaigns and activity.   **Respondents should note that we have submitted additional applications for funding. If these are successful further tenders/RFQs will be issued. The contracted agency will be invited to submit responses for this additional work.** |

**Requirements.**

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| **Mandatory Requirements:**   * To deliver campaigns and targeted activity across the appropriate channels (Paid Social, PPC, Display ad networks, etc..) as required throughout 2022 until March 2023. * To develop ad copy and creative that will achieve the aims and objectives. * Activity and campaigns will align with our influencer marketing strategy. * Careful monitoring of media spend and adjustment to maximise the effectiveness of the spending. * All delivered activity must provide thorough and comprehensive analytics. * Regular update meetings to plan activity and discuss results. * Monthly activity reports * Activity must align with Visit Kent’s Visitor First Strategy ([Access our Visitor First Brand Guide](https://hub.visitkent.co.uk/media/7849/visitor-first-brand-guide-2.pdf)) * All activity must be GDPR compliant. |
| **Additional Requirements:**   * Activity should ideally be targeted to consumers living within a 2-3 hour drive of Kent.   + However we also know that there are pockets outside of this broad circle which could also be targeted. * Creative to include key Visit Kent partners and businesses where appropriate to reflect their involvement in ***Must*** Visit Kent and the Lonely Planet amplification * Activity should provide insights into:   + Deepening an understanding of who the audience is?   + How we reach them?   + When they make decisions?   + What tourism product themes engage them?   + What messaging engages?   + What messaging will enable us to improve both sustainability and accessibility? * Activity should use both video and still imagery (to be provided by Visit Kent). * Activity should build upon the foundations set by our previous campaign activity the Secret Garden of England Campaign, https://www.visitkent.co.uk/secret-garden-of-england/ |

**Project Deliverables**

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| * A detailed creative proposal * Activity plans including media spend breakdown and clear KPI’s and metrics * Campaign and targeted activity delivered across appropriate channels through the contracted period * Monthly monitoring reports * 1 x final report including insights and recommendations |

**Project Specifics**

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| **Project Timelines**  The following deadlines are based on the Experience Development Programme application deadlines and wider activity that will be delivered as part of the EXPERIENCE project.   * 11/03/22 Deadline for responses * 18/03/2022 Successful Applicant approved * 21/03/2022 Contract award date. * W/C 21/03/2022 Kick-off meeting, agree KPI’s and set project framework   **Reports**   * Monthly activity reports * An end of campaign report |

**Project Considerations/ Important Notes**

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| * 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. * Visit Kent has conducted a product gap analysis as part of this project to identify strengths and opportunities. Wider destination and consumer research is also available. * Interreg Experience will measure the economic, social and environmental impact of the project and the visitor economy in the pilot areas. * Further product testing will take place with travel trade and digital product testing will be conducted by the University of Surrey. * Visit Kent are working closely with VisitEngland on encouraging businesses to sign up to their TXGB distribution system, are working with Airbnb Experiences and have established relationships with travel trade and MICE distributers. * Developing the accessibility of Experiential tourism product is a key element of the project, therefore thought should be given to consumers with accessibility needs, potentially as a separate customer segment |

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| 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 the activity 2. Experience in delivering tourism specific multi-platform marketing campaigns at a DMO level. 3. Your understanding of the aims and objectives and the wider context of this project. 4. Your approach to constructing compelling messaging. 5. Your approach to segmenting and targeting the audience. 6. Your approach to adjusting messaging and targeting to align with audience needs and seasonality 7. An overview of the channels you would suggest for delivery. 8. Your approach to research and analysis before, during, and after delivering activity. 9. Experience in producing research/insight reports including recommendations. 10. The level of reporting we can expect during the campaign. 11. Capacity to manage the project across the year – demonstrate how would you deliver the project and key personnel. 12. Costs – showing breakdown of costs including expected number of days to be spent on each activity. 13. 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: 11/03/22 - All tenders must be received by 18:30  Contract award: 21/03/22  Contract start date: 21/03/22  During the tender evaluation period Visit Kent mayshortlist 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, the response submission form, tender questionnaire and any supporting documentation.  The response to brief **must** be no longer than 6 x A4 pages. Directly emailed submissions **must** be less than 10mb in size and receipt will be acknowledged. Larger files may be submitted via Wetransfer. If you do not receive confirmation of receipt within 2 working days please email [Jim.Dawson@visitkent.co.uk](mailto:Jim.Dawson@visitkent.co.uk)    Responses must be received by the return date and time stated above via email to [Jim.Dawson@visitkent.co.uk](mailto:Jim.Dawson@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)  **Quality - 70%**   * Criteria 1 – Company Experience * 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 | **30%**    15% 10% 15%  10%  20% |   Each of the Quality sections within this submission will be scored based on the method detailed below:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | 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 |   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. 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 Jim Dawson.  E-mail: [jim.dawson@visitkent.co.uk](mailto:jim.dawson@visitkent.co.uk)  Any questions relating to the services must be raised via e-mail. |