



Visit Kent – Project Brief

Project Title:	Interreg Experience - Product Development Business Consultations
Budget:	£90,000 - £110,000 (incl. VAT) This includes the budget for 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:	Hollie Coffey, Destinations and Marketing Partnerships Director
Brief Director:	Deirdre Wells, CEO

Project Overview:

Summary:

In light of the current 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 will be forced to re-examine business operations and products, in order to adhere to social distancing measures and respond to changing consumer behaviour. To survive, businesses will 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 and to deliver more year-round jobs.

As part of the Interreg Channel EXPERIENCE project, Visit Kent has launched the [Experience Development Programme](#) which will work with 125 organisations from across Kent and Medway to help them develop new experiential tourism products for the off-season. We have received over 70 applications for the first round of the programme from a range of businesses including traditional tourism businesses, individuals with a skill they'd like to turn into a new business and businesses from other sectors looking to diversify. Applications are still open for the second round of the programme until the end of December 2020 and will be informed if they have been approved by the end of January 2021.

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.

Visit Kent are looking for a provider to deliver 1:1 business coaching for the 125 businesses who successfully apply for the programme. The consultations will need to be tailored to the specific needs of each organisation depending on where they are in the process of developing the product and therefore the provider will need access to a range of business support expertise. We anticipate that each business on the programme will receive at least one face to face coaching session and at least one follow up call within six months of starting the programme.

**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

- To support businesses to develop concepts into market-ready off season experiential products for visitors.
- To help businesses and the visitor economy to become more resilient through a stronger off-season product offer.
- To help businesses adapt and diversify their product offering or market in response the changes in consumer behaviour as a result of covid-19.
- To help drive a strong more sustainable recovery for the Kent visitor economy and protect jobs in the sector.

Mandatory Requirements

- Each business must be matched to an appropriate expert to provide business coaching.
- Each business must receive at least one 1:1 face to face* coaching session and one follow up call within six months of beginning the programme.
- A simple business coaching report detailing recommendations discussed and advice provided to each business must be provided as evidence.
- A signed meeting attendance form by all attendees must be completed as evidence for the project.

*Alternative virtual arrangements should be proposed in case restrictions mean face-face meetings are not possible.

Project Deliverables

- 125 x 1:1 consultation sessions with relevant business support experts.
- 125 x follow up calls.
- 125 x business coaching reports plus follow up call actions.
- 5 x case studies.
- A framework for delivering the product development 1:1 support which can be shared as best practice with EXPERIENCE project partners.
- 1 x presentation / workshop with stakeholders to share best practice from the project.

Project Specifics

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. All work needs to be completed by 31st August 2021.



- 30/09/2020 Successful Round 1 applicants are approved.
- 21/10/2020 Contract start date.
- 21/10/2020 – 31/10/2020 Kick-off meeting, agree framework and begin introduction of businesses.
- 31/12/2020 Deadline for Round 2 applications.
- 31/01/2021 1:1 meetings with Round 1 businesses complete.
- 31/01/2021 Successful Round 1 applicants are approved.
- 01/02/2021 – 12/02/2021 Mid-term contract meeting to discuss progress with Round 1 and kick-off for Round 2.
- 30/04/2021 Follow up calls with Round 1 businesses complete
- 30/04/2021 1:1 meetings with Round 2 businesses complete.
- 31/07/2021 Follow up calls with Round 2 businesses complete.
- 31/08/2021 All reports complete and evidence provided to Visit Kent.

Consultations

- Each business should receive a minimum of one face to face meeting and one follow up call as part of the coaching process. You should detail your approach to the business planning process, how support will be delivered and the number of hours of support businesses will receive.
- Businesses will need different types of support depending on how established they are and the type of product they are developing. An initial assessment of needs will be conducted by Visit Kent but you should explain how they will match the business to the most appropriate consultant.
- The types of expertise we anticipate businesses requiring are:
 - Business planning
 - Digital platforms and presence
 - Understanding of key markets
 - Maximising revenue and financial modelling
 - Operational delivery and quality
 - Diversification from another sector
 - Marketing and distribution

Reports

- A report should be completed following each 1:1 session detailing recommendations made, actions agreed and advice provided. A simple format for this should be suggested by the provider.
- Updates should be added to this report following the follow up call.
- Five case studies should be developed based on some of the most interesting examples.
- A monthly progress update should be provided to Visit Kent.

Project Considerations/ Important Notes

- Visit Kent will approve applications to the programme in two rounds: the first at the end of September 2020 and the second at the end of January 2021.
- Products need to be ready for launch within 16 months.
- The Experience Development Programme doesn't provide cash grants to the businesses but delivers a package of support to take the product to market. However, businesses may need advice on access to funding to develop the product further.



- Visit Kent will allocate an account manager to each successful applicant who will introduce the business to the consultation provider, provide an overview of the application and identified support needs.
- You will need to show how you will best match the business with the most appropriate consultant based on their product concept and support needs.
- You should consider grouping business visits within areas to reduce travel costs and environmental impact.
- Visit Kent is working closely with the following Local Authorities that have provided match funding for the project and businesses from these areas have been prioritised in the programme: 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.
- Businesses are required to provide Visit Kent with measurement data, participate in case studies and host familiarisation / press trips as part of the project requirements and evaluation.
- Interreg Experience will measure the economic, social and environmental impact of the project and the visitor economy in the pilot areas.
- Product testing will take place with consumers, travel trade and digital product testing will take place as part of the project and feedback will be provided to the businesses on the programme.
- 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 distributors.
- Visit Kent will deliver photography for participating businesses and will include the product in B2C campaigns and B2B distribution activity through the project.
- A wider training programme and collaboration workshops will also be delivered through the project and businesses will be encouraged to participate.



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. Experience in delivering business planning/coaching and product development consultations with SMEs to support adaptation and diversification.
2. Access to a range of business support specialists with expertise which includes the areas outlined in the brief.
3. An understanding of the current challenges faced by businesses in the visitor economy as a result of Covid-19.
4. Connections to the Kent business community.
5. A clear approach to the proposed business planning process including a proposed framework, how support will be delivered and the number of hours of support businesses will receive.
6. The ability to deliver at least one face to face consultation per business with the option to move to virtual delivery if required.
7. Capacity to manage the project within the timelines set – demonstrate how would you deliver the project and key personnel.
8. Costs – showing breakdown of costs including expected number of days to be spent on each activity

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

Tender Timetable

Tender Submission Date: 7th October 2020 - All tenders must be received by 18:30

Contract award: 16th October 2020

Contract start date: 21st October 2020

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, the response submission form, tender questionnaire and supporting documentation.



The response to brief **must** be no longer than 4 x A4 pages. Directly emailed submissions **must** be less than 10mb in size and receipt will be acknowledged.

Responses must be received by the return date and time stated above via email to hollie.coffey@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:

<p>Cost - 30% (The lowest priced quotation will be awarded maximum points and all other quotations awarded points in proportion)</p>	<p>30%</p>
<p>Quality – 70%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria 1 – Experience and access to required expertise • 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 - Recommended approach and quality of offer to businesses • Criteria 5 - Provision of a top-line plan of action for each part of the above-mentioned assignment and a timetable • Criteria 6 – Connections to the Kent business community 	<p style="text-align: center;">10%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">15%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">20%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5%</p>

Each of the Quality sections within this submission will be scored based on the method detailed below:

<p>Exceptional demonstration by the Tenderer of the relevant ability, understanding & skills required to provide the service with evidence to support the response, where appropriate.</p>	<p>5 – Excellent</p>
<p>Good demonstration by the Tenderer of the relevant ability, understanding & skills required to provide the service with evidence to support the response, where appropriate.</p>	<p>4-Good</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>3–Minor Reservations</p>



conflict with other proposals with little or no evidence to support the response.	
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 Hollie Coffey.

Tel: +44 (0)1227 812900

E-mail: hollie.coffey@visitkent.co.uk

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