



## Visit Kent – Project Brief

Project Title:	Interreg Experience – Consumer Product Testing
Budget:	<b>£40,000 to £45,000 (incl. VAT)</b> 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:	Jim Dawson, Head of Creative, Digital and Marketing
Brief Director:	Hollie Coffey, Destinations and Marketing Partnerships Director

### 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. The pandemic has also significantly hit consumer confidence and the current uncertainty reducing the propensity for domestic visitors to book domestic trips this winter.

The proposed campaign will have a dual purpose to:

- Support the immediate recovery by driving off-season visits
- Provide consumer insights which will inform the development of new experiential products

#### Destination Awareness

There is a need to build consumer confidence and drive domestic visits to the county throughout the autumn and winter by showcasing product that can 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 county, Kent needs to better showcase authentic experiences based around the natural environment and local culture.

#### Product Testing

Data and insights from the campaign will inform the development of new experiential product development and the marketing strategy for the Experience project. The campaign will test off-season product themes, messaging, imagery and calls to action with various audiences to identify best prospect audiences and maximum engagement. This test campaign presents an opportunity for us to understand more about the demographics of our audience, their perceptions post-covid, the channels they favour and the decision-making process they follow.



Working with the selected agency we will develop a number of assumptions we wish to test via the delivery of an A/B campaign. Insights and results gathered throughout the campaign will be shared with businesses on the [Experience Development Programme](#), with this in mind accurate measurement of all activity plus awareness metrics presented in a comprehensive report are key KPIs. This project is to a great extent a research project more than it is a marketing campaign.

A separate project is currently being delivered to obtain images and video assets across priority product themes which will be used as the basis for the campaign creative.

This campaign follows "The Secret Garden of England" a consumer confidence campaign delivered in late August-September. Data acquired during this activity will be available to assist in the campaign planning. <https://www.visitkent.co.uk/secret-garden-of-england/>

### **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.

**Product Development**

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.

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.

Insights from this activity will form part of the product testing process.

More details available at <https://visitkentbusiness.co.uk/get-involved/experience-taking-your-ideas-to-market/experience-development-programme/>

Examples of proposed experiences 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

**Options Analysis**

A product mapping exercise has been conducted to plot the strengths, gaps and opportunities for experiential product development across the seasons and for each location across Kent. The report groups destinations and product themes into the key areas of North, East and West Kent. This analysis is informed by our Visitor First strategy and is set against the backdrop of visitor sentiment and influence.

This report will inform the selection of businesses for the Experience Development Programme but also identifies the priority product themes which need to be tested through this activity.



The full options analysis will be made available to the successful agency, an extract accompanies this document.

## Key Objectives

- To create awareness of experiential off-season destination products in target markets.
- To drive recovery through off-season domestic visits.
- To build consumer confidence and the perception that Kent is a safe destination.
- To gather insights to inform experiential tourism product development with businesses and to help creation of collaborative experiences between partners.
- To gather insights to inform marketing strategy and subsequent campaigns for Visit Kent and partners with third party objectivity.
- To identify new audiences and prove existing audiences
- To develop experiential tourism product that is accessible for all and promotes sustainable tourism

## Mandatory Requirements

- Campaign must raise awareness of the 'off season' (October to March, excluding Christmas and New Year).
- All recommended activity must provide thorough and comprehensive analytics.
- The provision of a comprehensive written report plus at least 2 face to face\* presentations.
- Must comply with Visit Kent's Visitor First Strategy ([Access our Visitor First Brand Guide](#))
- All activity must be GDPR compliant.

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

## Additional Requirements

- Activity should ideally be targeted to consumers living no more than a 2-hour drive of Kent.
- Activity should provide insights into:
  - Who the audience is?
  - How do we reach them?
  - What tourism product themes engage them?
  - What creatives are the most engaging and with who?
  - What messaging engages – what do we say and how?
  - What future campaign activity will work best to reach partner objectives?
  - What messaging will enable us to extend the tourism season and 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 the Secret Garden of England Campaign, <https://www.visitkent.co.uk/secret-garden-of-england/>

## Project Deliverables

- A detailed creative proposal
- A campaign plan including media spend breakdown and clear KPI's and metrics
- At least one targeted multi-channel marketing campaign incorporating comprehensive A/B testing
- Interim progress report (timescale to be agreed)
- Written report including insights and recommendations
- Partner facing report drawing out the key insights for each priority product theme.
- 2 x face to face presentations

## 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.

- 23/10/2020 Successful Applicant approved
- 26/10/2020 Contract start date.
- 28/10/2020 – 3/11/2020 Kick-off meeting, agree KPI's and campaign details
- 25/11/2020 Interim campaign report (date to be agreed at kick-off meeting)
- 15/01/20 All reports complete and evidence provided to Visit Kent.

### Reports

- An Interim campaign report
- An End of campaign report
- A comprehensive research report providing excellent insights and interpretation for Visit Kent; but that can also be easily digested by an external audience.
- A partner facing report detailing key insights for each priority product theme.
- 2 x face to face presentations are to be provided, one to Visit Kent and a second to project partners

## 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.
- 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. Additional feedback will be provided to the businesses from these activities.
- 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.
- 33% of itineraries created through Experience should be 'accessible', therefore thought should be given to consumers with accessibility needs, potentially as a separate customer segment



## 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 campaign
2. Experience in delivering tourism specific multi-platform marketing campaigns at a DMO level.
3. Your approach to constructing compelling messaging and working with the creative that will be developed separately to provide rigorous A/B tests.
4. Experience in digital A/B testing
5. How you will approach segmenting the audience
6. An overview of the channels you would suggest for delivery and an indication of the media spend split
7. Your approach to research and analysis prior to launching the activity
8. Experience in producing research/insight reports including recommendations
9. Your anticipated timescales and a delivery plan
10. The level of reporting we can expect during the campaign
11. 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.
12. The ability to deliver at least two face to face report presentations with the option to move to virtual delivery if required.
13. Capacity to manage the project within the timelines set – demonstrate how would you deliver the project and key personnel.
14. Costs – showing breakdown of costs including expected number of days to be spent on each activity
15. 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: 19th October 2020 - All tenders must be received by 18:30

Contract award: 23<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Contract start date: 26<sup>th</sup> 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 [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:

<p><b>Cost - 30%</b> (The lowest priced quotation will be awarded maximum points and all other quotations awarded points in proportion)</p>	<p><b>30%</b></p>
<p><b>Quality - 70%</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criteria 1 – Company Experience</li> <li>• Criteria 2 - Capacity and ability to deliver the work</li> <li>• Criteria 3 - Demonstrable understanding of the aims and objectives of the brief and an appreciation of issues</li> <li>• Criteria 4 - Understanding of the wider context of this project</li> <li>• Criteria 5 - Recommended approach and quality of offer</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">15%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">15%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">20%</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 &amp; 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 &amp; skills required to</p>	<p>4-Good</p>



provide the service with evidence to support the response, where appropriate.	
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 or Hollie Coffey.

Tel: +44 (0)1227 812900

E-mail: [jim.dawson@visitkent.co.uk](mailto:jim.dawson@visitkent.co.uk) or [hollie.coffey@visitkent.co.uk](mailto:hollie.coffey@visitkent.co.uk)

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

