



Visit Kent – Project Brief

Project Title:	Interreg EXPERIENCE – Website development
Budget:	€51,000 (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:	Jim Dawson, Head of Creative, Digital and Marketing
Brief Director:	Hollie Coffey, Destinations and Marketing Partnerships Director

Project Overview:

Introduction:

Visit Kent, the designated destination management organisation for Kent and Medway, is a partner in an exciting project titled EXPERIENCE. Budget is available which will enable us to complete a programme of website development between now and the end of the product development and testing phase early in 2022. This development will ensure the successful delivery of the project aims.

Visit Kent is looking to appoint an agency who will work with us and alongside our contracted web development agency to deliver a suite of enhancements and new functionality for our web platform. We have an established website built on the Umbraco platform.

Summary:

EXPERIENCE aims to capitalise on the emerging global trend for personalised and local tourism experiences which increasingly provide the all-important reasons to visit. In particular, from Autumn 2020, Visit Kent, working with its local authority partners, will be looking to engage both tourism and non-traditional tourism actors across Kent in an innovative Product Development Programme.

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 development will have a dual purpose to:

- Present experiential tourism products to consumers online in the most effective way
- Support the immediate recovery by encouraging and driving off-season visits

We are planning to conduct three phases of development. The first short iteration to take place before February 2021 followed by two further rounds later in the year and into the early part of 2022.



We will be appointing an agency to help us identify, specify and build new functionality for our web platform. This new functionality will present users with inspirational and practical information about experiential tourism products, it will provide the ability to search for relevant experiences, and also connect experiences with wider content across our website, this includes other products (attractions, accommodation and events), editorial features, campaigns and itineraries. We will be looking to improve cross sell opportunities and provide virtual experiences.

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.

Background to the EXPERIENCE project:

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 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 of the Web/CMS development work required

- Enable the storage of experiential tourism product information, organising data in the most efficient and user friendly way.
- Enable the surfacing of experiential off-season destination products across our web estate through the development of new templates.
- Allow the presentation of experiences in a user friendly, inspirational and intuitive way.
- Deliver optimisation for mobile devices, improving page load speeds
- Improve opportunities to link experiences to other tourism product held within our system to facilitate cross-sell.
- Design and implement a categorisation system across the platform to unify experiences, products and editorial content, including options for filtering by sustainability, accessibility and seasonal factors.
- Improve the ability to surface experiential tourism product across our organic campaign content.
- Offer itinerary building tools.
- Sharing of itineraries and experiential tourism product information to 3rd party websites.
- Facilitate integration of booking platforms, especially TXGB.
- Improve our understanding of the customer journey to, through and from our website
- Streamline the user journey and devise a set of KPIs relating to dwell time and booking conversions
- Improve asset sharing and reporting opportunities with partners
- Improve the performance of the website
- Improve site accessibility

Mandatory Requirements

- Creation of an Installation familiarisation plan
- Creation of a delivery plan for the agreed developments
- Full specification documentation
- Provision of a suite of development recommendations and creative ideas to enhance the website and achieve the key objectives
- Deliver mobile optimisation and speed improvement, achieving a score of 90+ on the Google PageSpeed test.
- Implementation of WCAG 2.1 guidelines
- Ability to work seamlessly alongside our contracted web agency
- Development of CMS and front-end web components which integrate seamlessly with our existing CMS install.



- Implementation of a rigorous testing framework, to ensure all new development integrates with our existing platform
- Implementation of comprehensive source control policy and procedures
- Integration with the TXGB API

Additional Requirements

- Contribution to the identification and implementation of analytical goals and targets
- Enable the incorporation of data feeds from other 3rd party websites
- Feedback obtained and collated from EXPERIENCE project partners
- Improved reporting opportunities generated within the CMS

Deliverables

- Recommendations and creative solutions
 - Developed via workshops, documented and presented appropriately
- Detailed development proposals for each phase, including:
 - Document type specifications
 - Template wireframes and mock ups
 - UAT plan
 - Deployment notes
- Creation of new document types, grid modules and templates as required
- Testing and deployment plan

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.

- 13/01/2021 Successful Applicant approved
- 14/01/2021 Contract start date.
- 15/01/2021 – 19/01/2021 Kick-off meeting, agree KPI's and determine content of initial development iteration
- 26/02/2021 – Delivery of initial suite of development for testing

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. A number of these partners also have websites delivered by the Visit Kent platform, any features developed will need to be deployed across all sites across the platform.
- The contracted agency will be expected to complete work to familiarise themselves with our installation and set out a framework for working alongside our existing technical partners
- As a result of this procurement the successful supplier may be offered related work with additional budget to meet future requirements
- Visit Kent are working closely with VisitEngland on encouraging businesses to sign up to the TXGB distribution system, development to integrate with this system will be undertaken.
- 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 the required development
2. Experience of Umbraco and front end development
3. Experience of delivering DMO/tourism web solutions
4. Your approach to creating innovative user centred solutions
5. Your approach to working alongside our current contracted web development partner.
6. Capacity to manage the project within the timelines set – demonstrate how you would deliver the project and key personnel.
7. Costs – showing breakdown of costs including expected number of days to be spent on each activity, this should be broken down to include install familiarisation, solution identification, and development day rates. Note that the budget for this work is in euros and includes VAT.
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: 11th January 2021 - All tenders must be received by 18:30

Contract award: 13th January 2021

Contract start date: 14th January 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, 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.



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>	30%
<p>Quality - 70%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>15%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>15%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>20%</p>

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,	1–Serious Reservations



understanding & skills required to provide the services, with little or no evidence to support the response.	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
5. Reduce or increase the budget, redefining deliverables accordingly

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

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