

Discover Halifax
Request for Proposal (RFP)
Halifax Regional Municipality -
Tourism Master Plan

Date Issued:
August 30, 2019

Submission Deadline:
September 13, 2019 at 3:00 pm



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About this Request for Proposals

Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to set forth requirements and seek proposals from potential vendors to develop a Tourism Master Plan for Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM).

This document sets forth the requirements and evaluation criteria for respondents.

Administrative Requirements

For tendering, legal, and billing purposes, the client is Discover Halifax. Submissions in response to this RFP assume acceptance of all the terms described herein.

Eligibility

Vendors must be registered companies, with the legal authorization to conduct business in the Province of Nova Scotia. Vendor consultants, proposed for this project, must be legally entitled to work in Canada.

Project Location

The project will be based at the Discover Halifax offices at 1809 Barrington Street in Halifax. The vendor consultants will be expected to attend meetings as required at this location.

Timeline

RFP release date	Aug. 30, 2019
Proposal submission deadline	Sept. 13, 2019, 3:00 p.m.
Project launch	On or before Oct. 1, 2019
Project completion	On or before Jan. 31, 2020

Enquiries

All enquiries related to this RFP are to be directed to the individual noted in the 'Contact' section at the end of this document. Information obtained from any other source is not official and may be inaccurate. Enquiries and responses may be recorded and may be distributed to all proponents at the option of Discover Halifax.

Conflict of Interest

Respondents must fully disclose, in writing, to the person noted in the Contact section, on or before the closing date of this RFP, the circumstances of any possible conflict of interest or what could be perceived as a possible conflict of interest between the Vendor and Discover Halifax and/or HRM. Discover Halifax may reject any proposal where, in the opinion of Discover Halifax, the Vendor is or could be perceived to be in a conflict of interest.

Background

Discover Halifax is an incorporated company, created in partnership between HRM, the Hotel Association of Nova Scotia and participating industry members. Its mandate is to increase visitor yield to Halifax on a year-round basis. The organization is responsible for promoting both business and leisure travel from external markets. Essentially, Discover Halifax is the destination marketing group for the greater Halifax region.

Discover Halifax has created and supports a Visitor Experience program and resources such as the Official Halifax Visitor Guide, brochures and an in-room hotel visitor channel. As well, Discover Halifax provides a membership program through which advertising and promotion services are offered to subscribing businesses.

Currently, Discover Halifax employs a staff of 13 people with expertise in marketing, sales and general administration. The company is organized into three divisions: Group Sales, Marketing and Visitor Experience and the Senior Leadership Team. Employees work predominantly on-site, in Discover Halifax's offices on Barington Street.

Project Overview

Stretching over 5,500 square kilometers and representing over 210 communities, the area governed by HRM represents almost 50% of the population of Nova Scotia and 54% of the tourism receipts for the province.

As the sole municipal agency charged with the development and oversight of the tourism industry for HRM, Discover Halifax is seeking to develop the region's Tourism Master Plan (TMP). Integral to the development of the TMP will be an engagement process to help support and align the many diverse service delivery agencies, partnerships, regional authorities, and private businesses who collectively comprise the tourism efforts for the region.

The ultimate objective of the project is to assist in the prioritization of efforts and investments which will lead to wealth creation and economic growth from the region's tourism economy. This will be accomplished through the identification and alignment of key stakeholders, current and envisioned projects, and planning efforts for the region.

The outputs of the successful project will include:

- Shared vision for the development of the tourism economy for HRM.
- Definition of the unique regions comprising the HRM including; the Musquodoboit Valley and Eastern Shore Region, Urban and Sub-Urban regions, the Airport Region, and the Peggy's Cove and Coastal Region in the south of HRM.
- Identification of leading opportunities and challenges facing each of the regions.
- Clear articulation and understanding of the unique selling propositions of the regions comprising HRM. This will include mapping of existing and potential tourism assets for each region.
- Identification of priority market segments best aligned with each region's unique selling propositions.
- Identification of prioritized opportunities and investments including but not limited to recommendations for policies, planning frameworks, and infrastructure investments.
- Action plan including defined roles and shared responsibilities for the service delivery agencies, partnerships, and regional authorities who collectively comprise the tourism efforts for the region, including those for sales, marketing, and product development.
- Identification of required resources and defined process for the prioritization of future investments.

In addition to the services described in this RFP, Discover Halifax is engaging a Project Manager (PM) and a Communications Advisor to support the TMP initiative, and will assign other human resources (including executive leadership, agency of record, logistical support, etc.) as required.

Alignment to Business Goals and Objectives

Halifax Economic Growth Plan

The project supports the **Halifax Economic Growth Plan's** stated 5 year goals and objectives:

1. Growing Halifax's GDP to \$22.5 Billion by 2021

The tourism industry in Halifax is estimated at just over \$1 billion annually and the tourism industry has been widely recognized as one of the fastest growing industries globally. Efforts to leverage this growth in HRM should be expected to directly support the goal of growing Halifax's GDP.

2. Attracting and Retaining Talent; Growing Halifax's Labour Force to 271,000 by 2021

With over 4,000 businesses in Halifax directly benefiting from the visitor economy, the tourism industry in the region is estimated to employ over 23,000 people.

Currently in Halifax there are;

- 59 major hotels/accommodations
- 147 additional accommodations + 1,200 AirBNB
- 1,088 restaurants
- 212 businesses tour operators/etc
- 1,428 retail outlets (Stats Canada)

3. Making Halifax a Better place to Live and Work; Growing Halifax's population to 470,000 by 2021

Investments in the tourism industry often provide benefits to the general quality of life for citizens. This includes development of public spaces, parks and community infrastructure, and the attraction of cultural events and activities enjoyed by visitors and citizens.

Additionally, the marketing and promotion of the region to national and global markets as a tourism destination further supports building awareness and consideration within these populations as a place to live, invest, and attend school.

4. Aligning Economic Development

The proposed project specifically identifies the alignment of economic development partners as a key deliverable. Integral to the development of the plan will be an engagement process to help support and align the many diverse service delivery agencies, partnerships, regional authorities, and private businesses who collectively comprise tourism efforts for the region.

Halifax's Economic Growth Plan notes that Halifax is a hub for tourism. Action #25 – “Grow rural economic development by focusing on broadband/cellular infrastructure, tourism, resource extraction, agriculture and business retention and expansion activities” – highlights the particular importance of tourism to rural HRM.

Tourism Nova Scotia Strategic Plan

The strategy will further support the four pillars of **Tourism Nova Scotia's strategy** including:

1. Attract first-time visitors to Nova Scotia.
2. Invest in markets of highest return.
3. Focus on world class experiences.
4. Build Nova Scotia's tourism confidence.

The Report of the Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy

At the provincial level, Goal #14 of the One Nova Scotia strategy is entitled “Tourism Expansion” and states “As Nova Scotia's leading source of service sector exports, gross business revenues from tourism will reach \$4 billion by 2024.” The One Nova Scotia 2017 dashboard notes “Though tourism revenues have grown in each of the last three years, the current pace of growth, though significant, is not enough to meet the target. From the 2010 baseline of \$2.0 billion annually, Nova Scotia tourism revenues have increased by 36.0 per cent to \$2.7 billion in 2017 – significant progress toward the \$4 billion, 2024 goal.”

Looking at Halifax specifically, using the measure of room nights sold, the municipality accounts for more than half (54%) of the provincial tourism sector. When the role of Halifax's airport and cruise ship terminal are included, as well as the many events and attractions that are key to drawing tourists to the province, the city's role becomes all the more prominent.

Atlantic Trade and Investment Growth Strategy

At the federal and regional levels, the Atlantic Trade and Investment Growth Strategy (ATIGS) launched in late 2017 and the Atlantic Growth Strategy launched in 2016 seek to promote export growth and economic development with tourism as a key area of focus. These programs aim to position Atlantic Canada as a top destination in the global tourism sector by promoting the region's tourism offerings in key international markets and preparing Atlantic tourism operators to offer in-demand products and experiences. Among the expectations for the outputs of the new tourism strategy are \$200 million in export revenues for Atlantic tourism businesses over the next three years and growth in the region's tourism sector by 200 small and medium-sized enterprises for a total of 9,800, and by 6,000 jobs, for a total of 63,000.

The project further supports the objectives including:

- Growing the Visitor Economy of HRM
- Strengthening of rural communities and capacities
- Extending the season for key market segments

Role and Reporting

The role of the vendor consultants is to:

1. Prepare the **base-line research** as identified.
2. Prepare an **asset map** of the tourism ecosystem in HRM.
3. Provide resources to complete **stakeholder consultations**.
4. Undertake the **synthesis and analysis** phases.
5. Prepare **the strategic plan** and **final deliverables** of the project.
6. Participate in **presentations** of findings as required.

Through the PM, the vendor consulting team will liaise with the project governance structure and will collaborate with other Discover Halifax resources assigned to this initiative i.e., communications, research, executive leadership, agency of record, etc.

Scope of Work

Respondents are expected to put forward proposals which fulfill anticipated key requirements for this project:

Baseline Research:

1. **Destination Current State Assessment:** Comprehensive assessment of the HRM region as a visitor destination including a review of the region's current key demand generators, regional differences and dependencies, and a review of current services, agencies, and structures, designed to support the industry's growth.
2. **Market Based Opportunities Assessment:** Includes analysis of visitation levels and travel habits to Halifax as well as in-transit visits between regions beyond HRM into Nova Scotia and the Maritimes. This market-based review will explore opportunities for growth in existing segments as well as untapped markets.
3. **General Opportunities Assessment:** Review opportunities and obstacles facing the industry. This review is envisioned to be undertaken at the regional level, within specific domains of the industry, and at the cross-industry level. Output will be a clear articulation and understanding of the unique selling propositions of the regions comprising HRM. Opportunities identified in the Market Based Opportunities assessment stage should be explored in the general opportunity's assessment stage.

Asset Mapping:

1. Prepare an asset map of the complete tourism ecosystem in HRM. The map should include physical and organizational assets as well as services and programmatic resources.

Stakeholder Consultations:

1. **Prepare Stakeholder Consultation Plan**, including the objectives and framework for group consultations.
2. **Provide advice and feedback on Stakeholder Consultation invitation list** (to be developed by Discover Halifax).
3. Provide **facilitation** of group stakeholder consultation meetings (12-15 sessions).
4. Prepare a **discussion guide** for on-on-one consultation meetings to be undertaken by Discover Halifax.
5. Capture **findings** of stakeholder consultation meetings.

Note: Discover Halifax will administer invitations and handle facility arrangements for consultation sessions.

Synthesis and Analysis:

1. Prepare a complete synthesis and analysis of the findings of the research, asset mapping and consultation phases.

Strategic Planning:

1. **Development of Destination Vision and Strategic Goals:** The vendor consulting team will draft a vision and a set of strategic goals aimed at uniting stakeholders toward a shared vision for growth. The strategic goals will support future investment and policy decisions as well as the development of specific actions for the 5-year implementation plan.

2. **Client Workshop:** The vendor consulting team will lead the client through a workshop aimed at confirming the vision and strategic goals. Workshop participants to be identified by Discover Halifax.
3. **Development of 5-year Implementation Plan:** The vendor consulting team will create an action plan including defined roles and shared responsibilities for the service delivery agencies, partnerships, and regional authorities who collectively comprise the tourism efforts for the region, including those for sales, marketing, and product development. It is envisioned the action plan will include the identification of priority investments in infrastructure, policies, and services required to support the vision. The action plan should identify where existing resources and services may support actions and where new resources or structures may be required.
4. **Development of Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** The vendor consulting team will create a monitoring and evaluation plan to ensure the action plan's implementation. This should include specific goals and measures as well as a defined process for renewing and updating the plan as future opportunities and issues present.

Reports:

1. The vendor consulting team will write the final detailed and summary reports including presentation versions of each.

Submission Requirements

The following information should be provided in each proposal:

Methodology

Clear articulation of the proposed work plan in order to achieve the Scope of Work.

Team Competence & Resources

Description of the capability of the proposed consultants to meet the requirements described in the Scope of Work and the relative level of effort each will apply to the project.

Include related experience of the firm, including the past three similar jobs that have been completed with the company name, contact person and phone number that may be contacted for a reference.

Schedule and Availability

The project is scheduled to start as soon as possible but no later than October 1, 2019, and be completed by January 31, 2020. Respondents should confirm the availability of their proposed project team to meet these scheduling objectives.

Fees and Expenses

Total project costs will not exceed \$110,000 (including expenses).

Proposals should include a breakdown of the respondent's fees and disbursements in completing the project. The respondent agrees to invoice Discover Halifax based on progress completion of the services. All pre-approved expenses and disbursements are to be invoiced as they are incurred together with a monthly progress billing.

Fee and expense information should be supplied including a breakdown of costs by major work plan tasks:

- Per Diem rates.
- Travel, if required.
- Administration overhead.
- Phone, fax, courier, printing, etc.
- Sundry and contingency overhead rates.
- Software costs, data information, or research.

Closing Date

Two (2) complete copies of each proposal must be received by 3:00 pm, local time, on September 13, 2019. Proposals and their envelopes should be clearly marked with the name and address of the client ("Discover Halifax - Attention: Angela Petry"), and the project title ("HRM Tourism Master Plan").

Late proposals will not be accepted and will be returned to the proponent unopened.

Addendum or modifications can be made before the Closing Date, but will not be accepted after that date.

Proposals may be withdrawn by respondents at any time after submission.

Evaluation of Proposals and Notification of Proponents

Evaluation Criteria

Discover Halifax will review all submitted proposals and reject those which do not meet submission requirements. Non-compliant respondents will be notified at that time. Non-compliant proposals will not be returned.

Once it has been confirmed that the respondent's proposal has met the submission requirements, it will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- A demonstrated understanding of the project and favourable project approach.
- Thoroughness of the proposal.
- Knowledge, experience and professional standing of key personnel.
- Availability of key personnel and demonstrated ability to meet proposed work schedule.
- Cost of services to be performed.
- Performance history on past projects for tourism and/or economic development clients including, but not limited to, quality of work, ability to meet schedules, cost control and working relationship with clients, advisory groups and the public.

At Discover Halifax's sole discretion, a winning proposal will be selected and the submitting respondent will be invited to participate in contract negotiations and finalization.

Note that while pricing is an important factor, the lowest price bid will not necessarily determine the winning proposal nor is Discover Halifax obligated to award this project to a respondent.

Discover Halifax may contact individual respondents during this process to for clarification or elaboration of proposal elements. Selected proponents may also be expected to meet with Discover Halifax and orally present their proposals.

Contract

The winning respondent will be invited to participate in contract negotiations, starting with the RFP submission.

In the event that a contract agreement cannot be successfully reached, then Discover Halifax reserves the right to cease discussions with the winning respondent then either choose another respondent or pursue another avenue to fulfill the requirements.

No Further Contract or Liability Arising from RFP Process

By submitting a proposal, the respondent agrees and acknowledges that:

- Nothing in this RFP, nor the submission of the proposal, nor the review and consideration of the proposal by Discover Halifax, nor any communication between the parties in relation to the RFP, obligate any party to enter into any further business relationship with the other party and, in particular, if Discover Halifax decides to engage the respondent in connection with the subject matter of the RFP then such engagement may only occur pursuant to a written agreement that has been signed by both parties and, absent such written agreement, Discover Halifax will have no further liability or obligation to the respondent in connection with the subject matter of the RFP;

- The respondent is participating in this RFP process at its sole risk and expense, and Discover Halifax will not be liable to the respondent for any costs, expenses or liabilities incurred by the respondent in any way arising in connection with the respondent's participation;
- Discover Halifax has made no representations other than those expressly stated in this RFP.

Discover Halifax has the right to cancel this RFP at any time and to reissue it for any reason whatsoever or decide not to reissue it for any reason, without incurring any liability and no vendor will have any claim against Discover Halifax as a consequence; and the proposal and any accompanying documentation submitted by the respondent will become the property of the Discover Halifax and will not be returned.

Contact Information for Submissions

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