



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR A FULL SERVICE
ADVERTISING AGENCY OF RECORD FOR
TOURISM SAULT STE. MARIE**



TOURISM

Sault Ste. Marie

a division of the SSMEDC

a) **GENERAL INFORMATION TO PROPONENTS**

a. **Inquiries**

Questions related to the intent of the proposed work must be received at least five working days prior to closing and are to be directed in writing to:

Ian McMillan – Executive Director, Tourism Sault Ste. Marie,
i.mcmillan@ssmedc.ca

Any correspondence with regards to this document must be provided in writing. Responses will be provided to all proponents. Any communications not in writing will not be considered valid.

b. **Date and Place for Submitting Proposals**

Proponents must submit five (5) identical sets of their proposal. One (1) original marked as “master” and four (4) copies, sealed and clearly marked as to contents.

Sealed Proposals addressed to **Ian McMillan**, Executive Director, Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, 99 Foster Drive, level 3, Sault Ste. Marie, ON. P6A 5X6 by no later than **4:30 pm Local Time, Monday, October 26, 2009**. Proposals presented after the designated closing time on the due date will not be considered regardless of the circumstances that resulted in the late arrival to the purchasing department. Fax submissions will not be accepted.

c. **Fees Proposal**

The fees proposal will be evaluated on the basis of the Hourly Rate provided in the schedule and submitted in the Proposal. However a final fee structure will be negotiated, with the successful Proponent, depending on the overall scope of work.

d. **RFP Schedule**

The milestones for the project have been set as follows:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Milestone</u>
RFP closes	October 26, 2009 (4:30 pm)
Interviews for Short-listed Proponents	Week of November 2-6, 2009
Report to TSSM/EDC – Award Contract	November 20, 2009
Contract Commencement	January 1, 2010

e. Accuracy of RFP and Related Documents

Tourism Sault Ste. Marie (TSSM) has provided herein information as accurately as possible, but assumes no responsibility whatsoever for the completeness or the accuracy of the information presented in this RFP, or otherwise distributed or made available formally or informally during this procurement process. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, TSSM will not be bound by, or be responsible for, any explanation or interpretation of the proposed documents other than those prepared in writing. In no event shall Proponents rely on any oral statement by the TSSM or its employees, agents, advisors or Consultants.

All the information contained in this document, or from a separate written request from TSSM is subject to the provisions of this section. Unless specifically stated elsewhere to the contrary, this document shall take precedence over any other, if there is any discrepancy between the wording of this and any other documents referred to herein, or which become a part of any resulting contract.

f. Due Diligence

Proponents are solely responsible for conducting their own independent research, due diligence, and any other work or investigations and for seeking any other advice necessary for the preparation of their proposal.

g. Validity

Proposals shall remain valid and open for acceptance by TSSM for a period of ninety (90) days following the due date for receipt of proposals.

h. Conflicts of Interest

TSSM requires a statement from Proponents indicating that no conflicts of interest exist that would interfere with the objective delivery of services.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

a. Background

Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, as a division of the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation, is an organization jointly funded by the City of Sault Ste. Marie and the tourism industry private sector whose mission is to promote and foster tourism in the Sault Ste. Marie and immediate area. TSSM has an annual operating budget of approximately \$ 1.3 million.

In order to promote and fulfill its mission, TSSM undertakes substantial advertising efforts on an annual basis, including the publication of an Annual Visitors Guide, map and lure pieces together with major advertising campaigns.

b. Purpose of the RFP

The purpose and intent of this Request For Proposals is to enter into a contract for a three (3) year term with a qualified, full service advertising agency that can provide a full range of advertising services to support and further the tourism mission of TSSM, including but not limited to the following:

- Conceptual/creative design and layout (collateral materials, advertisements, promotional materials)
- Development of collateral materials and advertisements (up to and including finished film stage)
- Copy writing
- Media product research and analysis
- Media selection and placement
- Supervision of printing of collateral materials
- Development of web sites and other online marketing opportunities
- Public Relations activities

a. Requirements

The Proponent selected must be a full service advertising agency experienced in destination marketing. Interested Proponents must be able to demonstrate measurable success, and proven track record in previous tourism campaigns on behalf of tourist destinations, tourist accommodations and/or tourist attractions etc.

b. Scope of Services

The successful Proponent will develop and execute annual advertising campaigns, both national and international, to attract visitors to Sault Ste. Marie. From time to time, the successful proponent may be asked to conduct conversion studies and research projects. The successful proponent is expected to work in close co-operation with the printer of TSSM's Annual Visitors' Guide and TSSM's internet service provider. The successful proponent will also be expected to provide full creative services for the Annual Visitor's Guide and other publications and will coordinate and manage the annual advertising campaigns with participating partners of TSSM.

The successful proponent must perform all creative, copy writing, media placement, Internet marketing, web site development and maintenance, co-ordination with mail house and consultant services described in this RFP. The successful proponent will arrange and contract for photography, film and television production, printing, display construction and other outside services, when required, with the approval of TSSM.

3. PROPONENT SELECTION PROCEDURE

a. Overview

TSSM will evaluate all Proposals containing the information requested and prepared in the format required by this RFP. Upon evaluation of the Proposals submitted in response to this RFP, TSSM intends to enter into a contract with the Proponent whose Proposal:

- Contains all the information requested by this RFP in the proper organization and format described and,
- Is determined to be the most advantageous to TSSM and best demonstrates experience, qualifications, technical approach, price competitiveness, and other factors as described herein.

a. TSSM's Right's & Options

TSSM reserves, holds, and may exercise, at its sole discretion, the following rights and conditions with regard to this RFP and the procurement process. By submitting a Proposal, the Proponent acknowledges and consents to the following conditions relative to the procurement process and selection of the Proponent.

- TSSM reserves the right to waive any technicalities or immaterial irregularities in the Proposals/Submissions.
- TSSM reserves the right to prepare and issue such amendments and/or addenda to the RFP that may supplement, amend or otherwise modify this RFP, or otherwise request additional information.
- TSSM reserves the right to seek clarifications from any or each of the Proponents in order to fully understand the nature of the submissions and evaluate and rank the Proposals.
- TSSM reserves the right to postpone or change the date for receipt of Proposals or any other deadlines and dates specified in this RFP upon notice to proponents, and a Proponent, by submitting a Proposal, agrees to be bound by any modifications made by TSSM.
- TSSM reserves the right to conduct investigations with respect to the information provided by each Proponent, and to request additional evidence to support the information included in the Proposal.
- TSSM reserves the right to accept or reject, for any reason, at its sole discretion, any and all Proposals and components thereof to eliminate any and all Proponents from further consideration for this procurement; and to abandon this procurement process at TSSM's convenience at any time.
- TSSM reserves the right to discuss different or additional terms to those included in the RFP or received in any Proposal, and to amend or modify any terms of this RFP.
- This RFP does not obligate TSSM to procure or contract for this proposal.

- The Proponent shall bear all costs and expenses associated with the preparation and submission of its Proposal. This includes but is not limited to: site visits and inspections, all information gathering processes, interviews, preparing responses to questions or requests for clarification from TSSM preparation of questions for TSSM, and any contract discussions and negotiations.
- TSSM reserves the right to eliminate any Proponent who submits incomplete or inadequate responses or is not responsive to the requirements of this RFP.
- TSSM may require Proponents to send representatives to TSSM for interviews and presentations.
- TSSM reserves the right to discontinue negotiations with any Proponent.
- All Proposals become the property of TSSM, and will not be returned.
- All activities related to the Project shall be subject to the applicable laws.
- Neither TSSM, its staff, representatives, nor any of its consultants or agents will be liable for any claims or damages resulting from solicitation, collection, review or evaluation of Proposals.
- TSSM (or its representatives) reserves the right to visit and examine any of the facilities referenced by the Proponents in its Proposal and to observe and investigate the operations of such facilities.
- TSSM reserves all rights with respect to the evaluation, clarification and selection processes set forth in this RFP.

a. Confidentiality

Confidentiality of records and information relating to this work must be maintained at all times.

All correspondence, documentation and information provided by TSSM staff to any Proponent in connection with, or arising out of this RFP or the acceptance of any proposal:

- Remains the property of the TSSM;
- must be treated as confidential;
- must not be used for any purpose other than for replying to this RFP, and for fulfillment of any related subsequent contract.

Proponents are advised to identify in their Proposal material any technical, commercial, proprietary or similar confidential information, the disclosure of which could cause them injury.

Any information in the Proposal material which is not specifically identified as confidential will be treated as public information.

All correspondence, documentation and information provided to TSSM may be reproduced for the purposes of evaluating the Proponent's submissions to this RFP.

a. Disqualification

i) Proposal Submission Deadline

Proposals that are received after the proposal submission deadline, as recorded by TSSM on the date, time and place will not be considered. Proponents are solely responsible for ensuring that Proposals are delivered as required. Delays caused by any delivery service, including Canada Post, will not be grounds for an extension of the Proposal Submission deadline. Faxed or electronic transmissions, or other forms of unsealed proposals will not be considered.

ii) Collusion

Should the Proponent give or offer any gratuity to or attempt to bribe any employee of TSSM, or to commit fraud, TSSM shall be at liberty to cancel the Proponent Document Submission or the Contract forthwith, and to rely upon the sureties as provided for.

The Proponent shall ensure that no member of the TSSM Management Committee and no officer or employee of TSSM is, will be, or has become interested, directly or indirectly, as a contracting party, partner, stockholder, surety or otherwise howsoever in the performance of the Contract or in the supplies, work or business in connection with the said Contract, or in any portion of the profits thereof, or in any monies to be derived there from. For the purposes of this provision stockholders shall not include a person who holds publicly trade shares of the Proponent.

The Proponent declares that the Proponent document Submission is not made in collusion with any other Proponent making a Proponent Document Submission for the same goods and services and is, in all respects, fair and without fraud.

3. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

a. Proposal Content

The Proposal must be signed by a signing officer of the Proponent or by another individual with the authority to commit the organization to the performance of the Contract Services in accordance with the terms of this RFP. Unsigned Proposals will be rejected.

The Proponents shall organize the information requested in this RFP in the same order shown below, under the following headings. Appendices for certain technical information such as corporate material, team resumes, and project sheets may be used to facilitate Proposal preparation.

b. Executive Summary

The Proponent shall submit a summary briefly describing the key aspects of the Proposal. This section should include a clear statement of the Proponent's understanding of the RFP, the major project participants and their respective roles for the duration of the contemplated contract, key steps in the approach to the contract and a time-line for year one of the contract.

c. Project Team

Proponents shall submit an organization chart describing the name, responsibility, function and reporting structure for all key members of the proposed team. Proposed team descriptions will include education and experience of team members. Part of the evaluation will be based on the composition of the project team, and as a result changes in team composition will not be allowed without prior written approval from TSSM. In addition, Proponents are to include Resumes/Bios of personnel who will work on this assignment. The Proposed Team will be evaluated based on the following:

- Experience, knowledge and leadership qualities of the Project Manager
- Overall team experience
- Capacity of the Proponent to undertake the work
- Availability of key Project staff

a. Understanding the Project

Proponents shall demonstrate their understanding of the key issues associated with the assignment and this RFP and shall describe the Proponent's general approach to delivering services.

b. Questions

Proponents shall provide the answers to the following questions:

1. Do you currently represent a Convention & Visitors Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, or other tourism related organization within the Province? If yes, please name the entity/entities and describe how you would handle that account together with the CVB's.
2. Do you currently represent a company involved in the travel and tourism industry located within Sault Ste. Marie (ie. Hotel, motel, resort, restaurant, attraction, car rental). If yes, please name the company/companies.
3. What expertise does your agency possess that makes you the best qualified company to handle this account?
4. Do you consider yourself a full service advertising agency? Please provide detail.
5. What market research has been conducted, or would you be willing to conduct, to better position Sault Ste. Marie as a desirable tourism destination?
6. What experience have you had in placing ads and positioning Canadian products/services in overseas markets?
7. What experience have you had in web site development, Internet marketing and placement on Internet travel sites?
8. Based on your knowledge, what is there about our community that makes Sault Ste. Marie stand out as a tourist destination compared to other communities in the Province?
9. Please provide a description of the firm's marketing philosophy, current techniques and use of available technology.

a. Relevant Experience

Proponents shall indicate relevant experience on at least two (2) projects of similar type and scope. Project descriptions shall include a summary of Proponent's scope of work, project start and end dates, contract values (if not deemed confidential), and project references (including contact names and phone numbers).

b. Project Approach/Methodology

This section of the Proposal presents the methodology of the Proponent's plan. This section should describe in detail how the Proponent proposes to undertake the assignment.

c. Schedule

The Proponent is to provide, for demonstrative purposes, a typical project schedule with respect to an annual advertising campaign of the type and size described in this RFP. The sample schedule shall encompass all aspects of a typical advertising campaign, including all stages as well as stakeholder participation.

The schedule should be submitted in the form of a Gantt Chart. The chart shall show all Activities/Tasks with the names and man-hours of the staff assigned to it and the duration of each task relative to the timeline. Provide summary of man-hours by Activities/Tasks. As a minimum, the schedule should depict the following information:

- Level of detail, breakdown of components into tasks, start/end of each task
- Manpower involvement in stages
- Time to complete
- Realism and Flexibility of schedule

a. Fee Proposal

The remuneration will be based on an agreed upon hourly rate, to be negotiated with the successful Proponent and will reflect the overall scope of work

3. GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR CONSULTING SERVICES

a. Agreement

Upon selection, TSSM intends to enter into a contract with the successful proponent. Services to be provided by the Proponent are as set forth in this document, and the Proposal. In addition to the requirements set out above, the following sections detail additional requirements to be incorporated into a Contract with the Proponent.

b. Suspension or Termination

TSSM reserves the right to terminate this Contract without penalty for non-compliance with the terms set out herein, health and safety regulations, associated regulations and other applicable legislation.

TSSM may at any time by notice in writing to the Proponent suspend or terminate the Services or any portion thereof at any stage of the undertaking, and the Proponent shall thereupon be entitled to payment for any of the Proponent's staff employed directly thereon together with such expenses and disbursements allowed under this Agreement. Upon receipt of such written notice, the Proponent shall perform no further Services other than those reasonably necessary to close out the Services.

Upon written notice of suspension or termination, or upon a written demand by TSSM at any time during the term of this Agreement, TSSM shall be given and have the right to take possession of and use any completed or partially completed drawings, documents, software, equipment and other information prepared or to be supplied by the Proponent.

If the Proponent is practicing as an individual and dies or becomes incapacitated before the Services have been completed, this Agreement shall terminate as of the date of death, or incapacity, as applicable, and TSSM shall pay for the Services rendered and disbursements incurred by the Proponent to the date of such termination.

c. Indemnification

The Proponent shall indemnify and save harmless TSSM from and against all claims, actions, losses, expenses, costs or damages of every nature and kind whatsoever which TSSM, its employees, officers or agents may suffer as a result of the negligence of the Proponent, its employees, officers or agents in the performance of this Agreement.

d. Assignment, Successors and Assigns

Neither TSSM nor the Proponent may assign an Agreement or any portion thereof without the prior consent in writing of the other. The Agreement shall enure to the benefit of, and shall be binding upon, the successors and permitted assignees of TSSM and of the Proponent.

e. Publication

The Proponent shall obtain the consent in writing of TSSM before publishing or issuing any information regarding this project.

f. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

TSSM is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, with respect to, and protection of, information under its custody and control. Accordingly, all documents provided to TSSM in response to this Request for Proposal may be available to the public unless the party submitting the information requests that it be treated as confidential.

g. Document Ownership

All documents or copies thereof required for the Project shall be exchanged between the parties on a reciprocal basis. Drawings and documents, including all drawings and documents delivered in an electronic, digital or other than paper format, prepared by the Proponent for TSSM shall be the property of TSSM free of all claims by the Proponent of any nature and kind whatsoever. The Proponent shall be entitled to retain a copy of all documents for record keeping purposes only at its own expense.

Following receipt, all digital files shall be reviewed by TSSM for compliance with the appropriate standards. In the event that any digital files shall be deemed to not comply, such files shall be returned to the Proponent for modification to bring them into compliance with the standards at no extra cost to TSSM.

h. Records & Audit

TSSM reserves the right to inspect and audit the successful Proponent's records, before, during and up to 18 months after completion of this contract.

In order to provide data for the calculation of fees on a time basis, the Proponent shall keep a detailed record of the hours worked by and salaries paid to its staff in the performance of the Services.

TSSM may inspect and audit the books, payrolls, accounts and records of the Proponent at any time during the Proponent's normal business hours, with respect to any item for which the Proponent is seeking compensation from TSSM.

The Proponent, when requested by the City, shall provide copies of receipts with respect to any disbursement for which the Proponent claims compensation from TSSM.

i. Progress Reporting

At the sole discretion of TSSM, the Proponent at any time may be requested to furnish a progress report with regards to the Work as prescribed in this Document and the Successful Proponent's submission as accepted and amended by TSSM.

j. TSSM Changes

TSSM may order in writing, at any time before or after the commencement of the Work, alteration of the Work to be done, provided that such extension or increase or alteration is within the reasonable competence of the Proponent to perform. If an alteration order increases or decreases the cost of the Work, the Proponent shall notify TSSM by fax within 24 hours of notice of the alteration. The Proponent and TSSM shall agree on the increase or decrease in price to be made to the contract and the impact on the schedule, prior to the alteration work commencing.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following criteria that will be used for the technical evaluation of the proposals are presented below:

- Corporate Qualifications
 - Corporate team
 - Corporate experience on similar projects
- Project Team
 - Project Manager – qualifications and experience
 - Project Team member qualifications
 - Sub consultants
- Understanding of the project
- Project Approach / Methodology - Creativity and Originality
- Proposed Schedule