



Lac La Biche County
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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
“Lac La Biche County Visitor Information
Centre Service Agreement”
RFP No. EC-64-2020-01

Issue Date: September 15, 2020

Proposal Submission Deadline:
October 8, 2020
4:00 PM local time

Lac La Biche County
Economic Development Department
Attn: Jana Rowe, EDO

McArthur Place, Second Floor
10307 100 St
P.O. Box 1679
Lac La Biche, AB T0A 2C0
Email: ecdev@laclabichecounty.com
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Section A – General Information

1. Definitions

“CONTRACTOR or CONSULTANT” – the Proponent whose Proposal has been accepted by Lac La Biche County and is awarded a contract to carry out the work.

“the County” – refers to Lac La Biche County

“Proponent” – means the responder to the RFP

“Proposal” – means the proposal submitted by the Proponent in response to the RFP

“RFP” – means this Request for Proposal

“VIC” – means Visitor Information Centre

“Work” – means and includes anything and everything required to be done for the fulfillment and completion of the service agreement in accordance with this RFP and Proposal.

2. Overview and Background

Lac La Biche County has historically contracted out the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) with a term from May to May. In 2020 for the first time, this was changed to be from January first to December thirty-first. January 1 - December 31 will continue to remain the contract and operational period for the VIC service agreement. The role of the Visitor Information Centre is to carry out the tourism marketing for the region (beyond the municipal boundaries) in the form of visitor information delivery. The County has four guiding strategies and documents that highlight the importance of tourism as an economic contributor and the need to further build the industry to support the diversification of Lac La Biche County’s economy. These documents include *Council’s Strategic Plan*, the *Visitor Friendliness Assessment and Action Plan*, the *Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan*, and the *Economic Development Strategy*.

Lac La Biche County’s VIC is part of the Alberta Visitor Information Providers Program through the Government of Alberta. The VIC provides visitor information and contributes to visitor experiences. The VIC provides visitors with information about accommodations, experiences/things to do, and travel information locally, regionally, and provincially. A VIC is a concierge service to tourists and visitors coming to or inquiring about Lac La Biche Region, making bookings, calling for pricing, selling giftware, providing recommendations, ensuring frequently requested information is readily available, or working with stakeholders to create packages that support growth of the tourism economy.

3. Scope of Work

This RFP is intended to solicit proposals for a three-year service agreement to manage the Lac La Biche County Visitor Information Centre starting January 1, 2021 and ending December 31, 2023. The County anticipates the following to be the scope for the Visitor Information Centre Service Agreement. However, submitted proposals may suggest a lesser or greater scope of work depending on the Proponents' understanding of the service and region's needs.

- The Proponent will be responsible for all costs associated with mailing out Visitor Guides and other relevant visitor information, all transportation costs associated with providing visitor information and promotion, staffing, and other similar costs. Additional operational costs that the Proponent must be expected to pay include internet, phonelines, and office supplies. All other costs will be negotiated with the successful Proponent;
- The successful Proponent will be required to provide a summer season summary (by October 31st), and an annual report (by February 15). This report will need to include statistical data, year over year analytics, challenges, suggestions for change, "what we heard" report, and an updated plan for the following year; and
- Additionally, the proponent will provide monthly visitor information data reports including postal codes, demographics, numbers of visitors and inquiries, and marketing content.

i. Objectives

The Visitor Information Centre is a one-stop shop for visitors to know all that they need and want to know about not only Lac La Biche Region, but also the surrounding area and travel routes to and from the region. The employees of the Visitor Information Centre are ambassadors for Lac La Biche Region and Alberta.

Below outlines Lac La Biche County's minimum standards of delivery however if there is alternative suggestions and/or creative approaches, they will be considered as alternatives, providing the objectives below will be met.

The main objectives will focus on:

- Creating visitor information;
- Providing visitor concierge service;
- Developing visitor packaging with businesses and operators;
- Supporting events that have a tourism focus to be successful in Lac La Biche Region
- Submitting promotional content for official Lac La Biche Region advertising and promotion initiatives including social media channels;
- Collecting and share data and feedback about visitor needs and requests;
- Being an active participant in tourism development and support the efforts of Lac La Biche County Economic Development department; and



- Planning and hosting events, contests, promotions, and other initiatives as deemed relevant and in consultation with the tourism development team of Lac La Biche County.

The daily and seasonal objectives are:

- Record keeping and reporting of data where visitors are traveling to the region from (postal code collection and analysis);
- Preparing visitor information and tour packages;
- Coordinating with accommodation and experience providers to ensure accurate information is available;
- Ensuring the remote VIC kiosks are kept stocked with information that is relevant to what visitors need;
- Staffing the Visitor Information Centre and manage the day to day operations. This would include remote VIC's for events, and operational hours that are conducive to accommodate travellers needs (high traffic time is between 12noon-6pm during the summer season, however year-round operations is required), etc.; and
- Committed to providing services year-round, with extended hours during high season, shoulder season, and some winter events. These hours may include weekends and evenings.

ii. Outcome and Results

The Lac La Biche Regional Visitor Information Centre is intended to be the first-place visitors go when planning their trips in and around Lac La Biche Region. The growth of the Visitor Information Centre needs to support the goals and strategies of the Lac La Biche County Economic Development Department in building and growing a tourism economy.

iii. Service Proposal Audience

Lac La Biche County is seeking service proposals for an operator of the Visitor Information Centre hosted at 9910 101 Avenue, Lac La Biche (Jubilee Hall). Proposals will be reviewed by the Lac La Biche County Administration committee.

4. Budget

The County is asking Proponents to submit Proposal budgets that are reflective of the outlined plan to fulfill the services of this RFP and therefore will look at all responses remuneration comparable to the Proposals provided. Prospective Proponents should identify their evaluated costs associated with the Scope of Work for the proposed service agreement and submit a fair and reasonable offer to be considered in the 2021 fiscal budget of the County. Justification should be provided by the prospective proponent on all costs and scope changes beyond the identified scope of work for this project.



5. Questions and Clarification

Proponents should familiarize themselves with the document(s) relevant to the RFP. If there is any further clarification, questions, or if they feel there are any errors, omissions or discrepancies, requests must be submitted in writing referencing RFP number EC-64-2020-01 to:

- i) The Economic Development Officer, Jana Rowe, at jana.rowe@laclabichecounty.com.
- ii) Questions shall be submitted by no later than 12:00 pm (noon) MST on **September 25, 2020**.
- iii) Answers to all submitted questions and clarification requests will be posted on Alberta Purchasing Connection and the Lac La Biche County websites by **September 30, 2020** no later than 1:00 pm MST, and will be considered an addendum, becoming part of the official RFP documents.



Section B – Proposal Submission Requirements

1. Submissions of Proposals

The Proposals should be clearly marked with the name and address of the Proponent and the RFP program title and number. Electronic submissions should be addressed to the following:

Jana Rowe, Economic Development Officer
Email: ecdev@laclabichedcounty.com

The proposal should be received on or before the **Closing Time** of:

TIME: 4:00 p.m. local time
DATE: Thursday, October 8, 2020

It is the Proponent's responsibility to ensure the proposal has been received at the above address by the indicated closing time. Proponents wishing to make changes to their proposals after submission but prior to the closing time may do so by submitting the revisions via email (evdev@laclabichedcounty.com). Proposals received after the closing time will not be accepted or considered.

Submissions must include:

- Corporate profile – This may include profiles of staff that will be dedicated to this service agreement;
- Sample of potential tourism package development plans;
- Three (3) references for similar or relevant services or projects;
- A thorough explanation of how the operations of the Visitor Information Centre compliment your existing operations, and your overall approach to fulfilling the proposed service agreement;
- Proof of professional and general liability insurance, (Lac La Biche County will need to be named as an additional insured on the general liability insurance should the proposal be awarded to the proponent);
- Proposed plan including timelines of services to be provided;
- Assessment and breakdown of costs (may include qualifiers, conditions and assumptions in Canadian dollars). Identify expected staffing required to operate the VIC and if these will be performed by existing resources within the Proponents organization or if additional staffing will be included in the Proposal's cost, i.e. Will there be a dedicated staff person fulfilling the VIC requirements or will the requirements be distributed by existing staff?; and
- Clearly outline proposed hours of operations, and how the operations will be carried out.



2. Proposal Preparation Cost

All expenses incurred by the Proponent in preparation and submission of this proposal are the cost of the Proponent, with the express understanding that no claims for reimbursements against the County will be accepted. The County shall not be responsible for any costs involved in or associated with any meetings, discussion or negotiation following submission that could lead to acceptance of the proposal and award of a contract.

3. Proposal Evaluation

The County recognizes that “Best Value” is the essential part of purchasing a product and/or service and therefore the County may prefer a proposal with a higher price, if it offers greater value and better serves the County’s interests, as determined by the County, over a proposal with a lower price. Proposal submissions will be evaluated based on criteria including; experience, qualifications, proposed sample of the package development plan, complimentary operational objectives, references, and cost.

The County may choose to request an interview or an oral presentation from Proponents at its discretion.

a. Evaluation Criteria

EVALUATION CRITERIA
Background, Profile and Operations (10)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background, history and philosophy • Accreditation(s) and expertise • Success track record
Agency Resources and Expertise (30)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated ability to manage a service agreement of this size • Knowledge of Alberta’s Tourism Market, and Accredited Visitor Information Centre Program • Related prior experience • Experience developing and packaging for paid tourism experiences • Knowledge and experience working with regional businesses and tourism operators • Agency Resources and Expertise in relation to tourism: Team overview
Innovative Approach to Operational and Delivery Approach (10)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative approach to the operational objectives (physical location will remain at Jubilee Hall) • Unique and innovative approach to delivery of visitor information and services as required in this request
Service Understanding, Methodology and Approach (30)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate knowledge of Lac La Biche Region as a tourism offering • Highlight service deliverables and proposed tactics to achieve them • Sample of tourism packaging plan
Capacity (10)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed outline of proposed timelines to deliver specifics as related to the services outlined in the scope of work. • Experience and ability to carry out a service of this nature
Agency Remuneration (10)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline of fees, expenses, payment schedule.



Proposals submitted should have enough detail to allow the County to determine the proponent's qualifications and capabilities from the documents received, as well as unique solutions and approaches to delivering the services of the VIC. Every effort should be made to include the complete details of the proposed work.

The County, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals in whole or in part;
- Reject any proposal it considers not in its best interests;
- Waive any minor irregularity or insufficiency in the proposal submitted;
- Not be liable for misunderstandings or errors in the Request for Proposals;
- Issue addenda to the Request for Proposals;
- Contact references provided by the Proponents;
- Retain independent persons or contractors for assistance in evaluating proposals;
- Request points of clarification to assist the County in evaluating proposals;
- Negotiate changes with the successful proponent; and
- Withdraw the Request for Proposal.

b. Awarding Committee

Evaluation committee will consist of representation from the following county departments/representatives; Economic Development (2); and Senior Management (1).

c. Ownership of Material

Once submitted all proposals become the property of the County. Proposals will remain confidential and copies will only be made for review internally, and by any financial, legal and technical agencies the County works with.

d. General Terms and Conditions

The following terms apply to this RFP and to any subsequent contract(s). Submission of a proposal in response to this RFP indicates acceptance of the terms and conditions contained in the RFP.

e. Acceptance of Proposals

This RFP should not be considered as an agreement to purchase goods or services. The County is not bound to accept the lowest price or any proposal submitted.

Proposals will be assessed based on the evaluation criteria. The County will be under no obligation to receive further information, whether written or oral, from any proponent.

Neither acceptance of a proposal nor execution of a contract will constitute approval of any activity or development contemplated in any proposal that requires any approval, permit or license pursuant to any federal, provincial, regional district or municipal statute, regulation or bylaw.

f. Definition of Contract

Only the full execution of a written contract will constitute a contract for the services, and no proponent will acquire any legal or equitable rights or privileges relative to the services until this occurs.

g. Right to Accept or Reject Proposals

The County reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals in whole or in part. Only the full execution of a written contract will constitute a contract for the services, and no proponent will acquire any legal or equitable rights or privileges relative to the services until this occurs.

h. Use of a Request for Proposal

This document, or any portion thereof, may not be used for any purpose other than the submission of proposals.

i. Modification of Terms

The County reserves the right to modify the terms of the solicitation at any time at its sole discretion prior to and including the closing date of the competition.

j. Inquiries

Note that all inquiries will be compiled, answered and posted as part of the RFP to ensure that all proponents are provided the same information.

k. Submission of Proposals

By submission of a clear and detailed written notice, the proponent may amend or withdraw its proposal **prior to the closing date and time**. Upon closing time, all proposals become irrevocable. By submission of a proposal, the proponent agrees that, should its proposal be successful, the proponent will enter into a contract with the County. Proposals will not be returned. Submitted proposals become the property of the County.

l. Delay in Negotiating a Contract

If a written contract cannot be negotiated within a reasonable period of time with the successful proponent, the County may, at its sole discretion at any time thereafter, terminate negotiations with the proponent and either negotiate a contract with the next qualified proponent or choose to terminate the solicitation process and not enter into a contract with any of the proponents.



m. Successful Proposal

By submission of a proposal, the proponent agrees that should its proposal be deemed successful, the proponent would enter into a contract with the County.

n. Governing Legislation

This Request for Proposal is subject to all applicable legislation including the *Municipal Government Act*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the bylaws and policies of the County, and all other relevant governing legislation.

4. Additional Information Available

- Visitor Friendliness Study
- Tourism Stakeholder Report
- Lac La Biche County Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan
- Lac La Biche County Recreation Master Plan
- Lac La Biche County Economic Development Strategy

Visit <http://laclabichecounty.com> for full documents.