



SOUTH OF SCOTLAND DESTINATION ALLIANCE LTD

BRIEF FOR A FREELANCE TRAVEL TRADE SPECIALIST - DELIVERY TENDER OVERVIEW

SSDA is seeking to appoint a freelance travel trade specialist to support the establishment and early delivery of a 5-year work programme. This brief is aimed at suitably qualified freelance individuals who have the capacity, capability, and relevant experience in working with the travel trade and tourism sector in Scotland.

This contract requires a quick if not immediate start and will run for until the end of March 2021 with scope to extend.

SSDA BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

A new industry-based leadership organisation for tourism, marketing and destination development across the South of Scotland has been established to drive growth in the region's visitor economy. The new body – the South of Scotland Destination Alliance Ltd (SSDA) - formally brings together the Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership, Visit South West Scotland and other local tourism focused organisations with the aim of strengthening industry member networks, delivering a clear tourism and destination development strategy from coast to coast and putting the South of Scotland firmly on the tourist map. The organisation is commercially focused and led by a board of directors of industry leaders.

The creation of SSDA is the culmination of two year's work between the two regional tourism organisations, supported by Visit Scotland, Scottish Borders Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council and South of Scotland Economic Partnership. A significant funding package has been established which will allow this new body to start delivering much needed pan South of Scotland destination development support and marketing activity.

'Scotland Starts Here' has been developed by MBTAG as the place brand for the South of Scotland and an app and web presence has been created with marketing activity underway pre Covid19. The plan is the SSH assets will be transferred across to SSDA Ltd later this year and a major focus over the summer will therefore be to gather extensive content across the South of Scotland (notably Dumfries and Galloway) and create new themed packages and itineraries that are easily booked to meet the needs of potential visitors during the recovery phase we are about to enter.

With the region's tourism industry currently facing its biggest ever crisis and an anticipated recovery period of three to five years, SSDA's business plan has been aligned to support the south of Scotland region where and when it is needed most:

- *Supporting the best recovery plan for when lockdown and travel restrictions are lifted*
- *Establishing 'Scotland Starts Here' as the destination brand for the region, developing short and long-term marketing plans targeting both domestic and international visitors and day trippers*
- *Ensuring the South of Scotland experiences are readily found in online searches*
- *Creating a portfolio of easy to book 'Scotland Starts Here' travel packages and experiences*
- *Engaging members on a local level and working closely with the industry on product development, business readiness and collaboration*
- *Strategic destination development planning, focused on understanding the region's longer-term needs and securing further funding for a five-year programme*
- *Working closely with South of Scotland Enterprise and representing the needs of the industry amongst local and national governments*

Significant work has been done to date, by the partners, to establish a plan of work and to secure funding for the first year of a 5-year programme. This work will ultimately be led by a Chief Executive, reporting to the board of directors and a role that will work with the Project Manager.

GENERAL SERVICES

We are looking for an experienced travel trade specialist to:

- Work with the Project Manager, CEO on an ongoing basis.
- Develop and maintain close working relationships with all relevant stakeholders and partners
- Contribute to the setting of priorities for travel trade activity and plan of action building on developments and progress made within Scottish Borders and panning South into Dumfries & Galloway
- Contribute to regular performance reporting as required
- Monthly reports and updates
- Regular contact with VisitScotland / VisitBritain /UK Inbound (and membership)
- Market Research – identifying the key priority markets and what operators are looking for in terms of products and experiences
- Market Segments
- Working with PM on an industry development programme / top up travel trade programme
- Concept Testing
- Trade Sales
- Distribution support – attendance at trade shows
- Trade Education – work with PM on inbound FAM trips
- Must already have experience in working with the travel trade, with strong current contacts
- Understanding itinerary planning/development, requirements/expectation of both travel trade & end consumer and commission/pricing structure

More details

Specialist Travel Trade Support

Market Research

- Following a research report that was created by MBTAG which collated their regions target markets through existing research, VisitScotland and VisitBritain information there is a need to drive this forward to incorporate Dumfries & Galloway. The Travel trade specialist's role would be to target operators in market and use available research to identify the key priority markets to focus on as a destination. This would include a summary of what types of products and experiences that need to be created. It would include telephone interviews / surveys and meetings (building on existing relationships you have as the travel trade specialist and developing new ones to ensure targeting the right audience within target markets, especially in light of the affect Covid-19 has had on the travel industry.

Market Segments

- New pan south themes are being created and developed. Need to ensure the products and experiences are aligned for the campaigns and what the travel trade are looking for.

Concept Testing

- The broad concept of the South of Scotland needs definition and development to articulate where it will be, what it is designed to fulfil, who and how it will attract visitors, its integration into the tourism product, links with the key themes and offer etc. Working with VisitScotland / VisitBritain to user-test the initial concepts in the identified target countries for the experiences developed with potential travel trade buyers. A model of ground handlers / DMCs will be used to package this for the in-country specialist travel agents and tour operators.
- Once the products / experience has been worked up into market propositions they require testing with travel trade operators in identified markets. Project Manager and Travel Trade Specialist will take certain products and experiences to Expo and other key trade shows whether virtually or hybrid events and the Travel Trade Specialist will work to create the new products and experiences that the travel trade are looking for, complete consumer testing required.

Distribution Support and Channels

- Engage with the travel trade to raise awareness and educate travel trade in the new products and experiences
- Work with existing partners to agree the preferred model for distribution in the identified key market segments. The proposal in main, we work with high quality operators with product packaged across our geography acting as DMC's linking them with OTAs in-house country agents and existing relationships with the identified target market segments.

- Travel Trade Specialist to help identify DMC's that would be able to take products to market. See Trade Sales.
- To attend Trade shows – to be identified and defined based on needs and requirements.

Trade Sales

- Once suitable products / experience are tested – the travel trade specialist will be required to do trade sales into the target markets / travel trade to sell.
- Identifying DMCs – time to meet and negotiate, schedule of possible partners etc. to be developed and meetings arranged.

Trade Education and Educational Visits

- Programme of visits to key contacts in target markets, building new relationships (and growing existing) with travel trade operators engaged through regional tourism businesses. Ensuring a market -appropriate mix of both main players and niche operators
- Assist and attend Inbound FAM trip/s organised with Project Manager.
- Market awareness activity with the travel trade to introduce them to the new products/experience offer

This list is not exhaustive, and the contractor will be required to undertake other duties as required. Skills and experience of the travel trade and of packaging and selling experiences is required.

BUDGET

This fee is inclusive of **all** costs to enable the delivery of this service. Time, mileage, expenses, subsistence, and attendance at meetings and presentations, including making final presentations.

Accommodation costs, Flights and other larger costs for trade shows and trade sales can be discussed on an individual basis.

Budget Available:

- **Travel Trade consultant 2 days a week / 8 days a month at £250.00 per day until 31st March 2021 (with further review on extension at a later date) Total = 7 months at 8 days = 56 days (Sept 1st – 31st March 2021) = £14,000.00**

The contractor is required to keep its estimates of the costs of the project under review. If at any time these costs appear likely to be exceeded, they should immediately notify us with an explanation. SSDA shall not be responsible for any fees or expenses in respect of the project more than the amounts of the agreed fee without their prior written approval.

It would be beneficial if the proposal details a work plan along with a breakdown of days/fees and in addition detail of activity as well as proposed activity to be provided.

1.3 Payment & Invoicing

It is proposed that payment is made monthly in arrears on submission of an invoice.

TENDER REQUIREMENTS

A proposal is required indicating your request to be considered, ability to deliver the services and other relevant information to support your tender. The submission should be a maximum of 12 pages in length.

Your proposal should include:

- your proposed approach to undertaking this freelance role setting out any challenges you anticipate and how you would seek to address them.
- a summary CV setting out your training and relevant experience.
- two relevant case studies of recent projects/programmes you have been responsible for showing a synopsis of the brief you were given, how you responded to it and including the various tools and systems you used. This should also set out the deliverables agreed and a summary of the actual results. Please share any insights from these projects relevant to this tender opportunity.
- a schedule of costs and time allocation for seven months either confirming you are tendering in line with our indicative budget and daily allowance or any alternative proposal you consider appropriate. Please note the budget for the seven-month period is capped, although there is scope to extend it to end of March 2021.
- confirm that you are tendering on the basis the daily rate you set out can be extended with no uplift to 31 March 2021 if the Board are so minded.
- Confirm your Professional Indemnity Insurance and include a copy of your insurance certificate
- State your availability to commence this contract and any restrictions on availability during the early stages due to other work commitments.
- Provide the name and contact details for 2 people who know your work experience and approach to project management that we can approach as referees.

The freelance individual will be expected to work from their own base and provide their own equipment (laptop, mobile phone etc).

Meeting rooms and other facilities will be available via SSSA Partners.

TIMESCALES

Expected start date W/C 31st August 2020



Draft Timetable

Key Dates	Action
6 th August	Brief to supplier
12 th August	Clarification Period ends
19 th August	Tender Submission
W/C 24 th August	Zoom Interview
26 th August	Confirmation of appointment
W/C 31 st August	Suggested Start Date

A quick decision is anticipated assuming we receive compliant tenders and contractor(s) able to fulfil our brief. Tenders to be emailed to info@ssdalliance.com

Any queries regarding this tender should be emailed to info@ssdalliance.com and a response will be sent to all tenderers by the end of that week.