



SIERRA LEONE ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION PROJECT

**INTERNATIONAL HIRE
CALL FOR PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTANCY FIRM
MARKET REPRESENTATION FOR DESTINATION SIERRA LEONE IN THE
AMERICAS
NTB/PCU/CS/MRFDSL/A/001**

**ISSUANCE DATE
11TH APRIL 2022**

1. Background

Sierra Leone possesses pristine beaches and islands, mountains and rich biodiversity, interesting wildlife, friendliness and rich cultural capital among people and its special place in the world history of anti-slavery movement as ‘the land of the free.’ The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has officially prioritized tourism in the Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019 -2023. The National Tourism Policy states the goal of tourism in Sierra Leone as to “generate foreign exchange, encourage even development, promote tourism-based rural enterprises, generate employment, accelerate rural-urban integration and foster socio-cultural unity among the various regions of the country through the promotion of domestic and international tourism.” (GoSL, 2017). Its National Ecotourism Policy states the goal of receiving 20,000 international and 30,000 domestic ecotourism visits to sites by 2025 (GoSL, 2017).

The World Bank is supporting an Economic Diversification Project, one of the components of which will take an integrated destination approach to improving the performance of Sierra Leone’s tourism sector. This will include facilitating the reduction of barriers to business success, assisting existing tourism providers with market access, and improving the quality of selected tourism products in order to place the country’s tourism sector on a sustainable and inclusive growth trajectory. This will be achieved through a mix of institutional, and policy reforms, market development and national re-branding as well as building B2B linkages and strategically developing tourism products in selected areas.

Sierra Leone is endowed with a rich wildlife biodiversity and is a home to approximately 2090 known higher plant species, 147 known species of mammals, 172 known breeding bird species, 67 known reptile species and 99 known species of fish. Sierra Leone is further a home to 15 identified species of primates, including the bushbaby, monkeys and chimpanzees (the largest primate in the country) with a wildlife population of more than 5500 across the country (according to the 2010 chimpanzee census). This constitutes the second largest population of the endangered subspecies of western chimpanzee, after Guinea, with the largest density in the Loma area (2.69 individuals per km²) and the Outamba – Kilimi National Park (1.21 individuals per km²).

The Government of Sierra Leone has recognised the need for securing market representation to raise the profile of the destination and market demand within its prioritized market segments in its primary source markets. The Sierra Leone National Tourist Board (NTB) secured Journey Tourism Consulting and Marketing and Acorn Tourism Consulting, Inc. to complete a National Marketing and Branding Strategy in 2021, which will be made available upon request. As part of the strategy, core source markets were identified in the Americas (USA and Canada, capitalizing on Sierra Leone diaspora, historical ties and networks) and Europe (UK, Germany, Benelux, France and Scandinavia).

As an emerging nature, adventure and cultural destination, Sierra Leone is poised to attract visitors from these primary source markets, which represent the majority of visitors who travel to the destination annually. Currently, there is a low level of awareness of the country in these international markets and little marketing has been done aside from trade show participation. The National Tourist Board is now seeking to engage intrepid explorers, mature explorers, outdoor adventure and eco enthusiasts, SAVE travelers (Scientific, Academic, Volunteer and Education) and the diaspora from these primary source markets.

NTB is seeking to secure results-oriented market representative agencies that will cover Sierra Leone’s core source markets in the USA and Canada. It is expected that these results-oriented market representative agencies can grow with the organization and destination over time. The selected market representatives will be the ‘face’ of Sierra Leone tourism in the Americas (United States and Canada with an emphasis on Ontario and Nova Scotia) and will be

responsible for managing Sierra Leone's tourism presence in each of these markets. The period of engagement is for one year but may be extended for one or more ensuing years if the desired outcomes are achieved.

NTB is also in the process of securing a digital marketing agency to develop and manage a multifaceted digital strategy and related activities targeting market segments within its primary source markets and the domestic market. In addition, the NTB will continue to lead public relations and other marketing activities. Through this integrated approach, the NTB is focused on promoting Sierra Leone as a preferred tourist destination in order to increase its market share in the global tourism sector.

II. Objective of the assignment

The objective of securing market representation is to build brand and destination awareness and market demand through constant and increasing engagement and building relationships with travel trade and media within Sierra Leone's primary source markets and prioritised market segments, including the diaspora, as measured by an increase in travel trade serving Sierra Leone, earned media and an increase in visitors to Sierra Leone.

III. Scope of Work

The market representative firms that are selected will be responsible for the following activities and prioritising these activities as necessary within the markets they represent to maximise resource efficiencies and the return on investment:

1. Travel Trade Partnerships

- Proactively seek, establish and maintain contacts with travel trade companies on behalf of the NTB;
- Secure partnership(s) focused on cooperative marketing efforts for creative and innovative campaigns/promotions to heighten Sierra Leone's visibility and secure matching funds for these efforts when feasible;
- Create market linkages between the international outbound travel trade and the inbound local travel trade;
- Facilitation, coordination, and participation in road shows and select trade shows with the NTB/MTCA and private sectors (that are approved by NTB) as a representative of destination Sierra Leone;
- Respond to inquiries on Sierra Leone from the travel trade in the primary source market(s) represented with support from NTB
- Provide support to personnel and representatives of the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, NTB and the Sierra Leone travel trade when visiting the primary source markets that the representative firms are representing;
- Conduct research and monitor trends on travel and tourism industry developments that may affect travel to Sierra Leone.

2. Press and Media Relations

- Proactively seek, establish and maintain contacts with media on behalf of the NTB
- Prepare a PR strategy and schedule with support from NTB, track all media mentions and the value of earned media, and digital engagement and plan and issue regular press releases (that are approved by NTB), and social media to heighten Sierra Leone's visibility within the travel trade and consumer marketplace
- Respond promptly to inquiries on Sierra Leone from the media in the primary source market(s) they represent with support from NTB
- Proactively propose media and trade groups for familiarisation tours and organise logistics for travel from the source markets represented to Sierra Leone
- Proactively pitch ideas to the media and negotiate, secure and place promotional features and stories

- Translate existing marketing collateral as necessary and maintain a supply of collateral for media and trade

3. Capacity Building and Training

- Work with NTB and the local travel trade to develop sales manual and guide product development for the specific markets, and support the capacity building of the local trade to increase market readiness and meet the needs of the primary source markets that are represented
- Work with the NTB staff to build their capacity to lead or manage trade and media relations, trade events and road shows, participation in webinars, and content development

4. Product Knowledge and Reporting

- Visit Sierra Leone at least once a year to build relationships with trade, update the local tourism industry about local travel industry trends/developments, experience new products, and create new content (i.e., photographs and video) that can be used for marketing within the markets represented
- Plan 1-2 FAM tours per annum for the travel trade and media from the represented country in coordination with market representatives responsible for other core source markets. NTB's role will be to provide human resource support including helping to facilitate negotiations and logistics coordination with local trade. NTB will not cover any FAM-related expenses.
- Preparation of an annual and monthly promotional and marketing plans and monthly performance reports and status reports inclusive of key performance indicators (KPIs)

IV. Deliverables

An example of the deliverables schedule is as follows. The schedule will be converted into a detailed strategic action plan and a related work plan based upon a results-oriented approach and pre-identified priorities identified between the market representative firm and NTB.

MONTH	TASKS
April 2022	- Complete a detailed strategic action plan, work plan, and implementation schedule
April 2022 – March 2023	- Implementation of a trade and media promotional strategy and campaigns, content development, and webinars; road show and trade show participation; monthly reporting of KPIs; and revision to strategies and tactics as required
March 2023	- Final report

V. Reporting

The market representative firm will report to the General Manager of NTB. NTB will liaise with the selected firms on an ongoing basis and meet at least once a month to track performance and discuss progress on the tasks assigned and work through any issues that are faced by the firm. NTB will provide information to the firm as needed including introductions and referrals to key stakeholders. NTB will also advise the selected firms on new developments in Sierra Leone tourism related to new or enhanced product, inbound trade developments, local news, upcoming shows/events, etc.

NTB will monitor the firm's work output through the monthly reports. The firm will be responsible for preparing monthly reports on the work plan, KPIs, and tasks that are assigned by NTB and sharing this by the 5th of each month with NTB. Monthly reports must be submitted to the Marketing Manager of NTB and carbon copied to the General Manager of NTB who will review monthly reports and assess any recommendations put forward by the firm. Reports will also be submitted to the NTB Board Members and the Director of Tourism for the attention of the Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs for their feedback and assessments. The firm's performance will be assessed against the following core criteria:

- The firm's ability to lead the body of work and efficiently and effectively prioritise activities and manage the budgeted resources with the NTB's support as needed
- The design and execution of travel trade and media engagement activities and strategies geared towards NTB's core source markets and pre-identified market segments
- The ability to tangibly increase awareness, demand and visitation to Sierra Leone as measured by increases in arrivals from primary source markets and the following metrics:

Outputs

- Number of printed and digital articles and features in media highlighting Sierra Leone, the total reach of these articles, and the total earned media value
- Number of social media posts and features and social engagement rates from represented country
- Number of new outbound tour operators and travel agencies trained in the knowledge of the destination and how to sell to their clients
- Number of unique website visitors from source markets represented

Outcomes

- Number of new outbound tour operators and travel agencies featuring Sierra Leone in the destinations they offer
- Monetary match and/or monetary value of cooperative marketing secured from travel trade
- Number of new, pre-qualified trade, media, and consumers added to NTB's database
- Increase in number tourists travelling to Sierra Leone with tour operations and travel agents trained and supported by the representative
- Increase in number of visitors travelling to Sierra Leone from the source markets represented

NTB will provide the market representative firms with collateral materials, video and photography, souvenir items and display props that will be used in promoting Sierra Leone. Representatives will also be provided with branded clothing to be worn when representing Sierra Leone at official events.

NTB will arrange quarterly or bi-annual meetings with all of its market representative firms to share lessons learned, new developments, market trends, and noteworthy results achieved.

At the end of the contract, the firm will prepare a full report on the tasks completed inclusive of performance measurements, positive outcomes, key challenges, and recommendations for improvement.

VI. Criteria for selection

Minimum Requirements

Minimum requirements of the technical and financial proposal include the following in a maximum of 10 pages excluding appendices:

1. Description of the market representative's proposed approach, priorities, and tactical process to learning about and becoming familiar with Sierra Leone's tourism product and executing travel trade and media engagement and relationship building activities and strategies for promoting Sierra Leone within the primary source markets represented;
2. An overview of the dedicated account team including brief bios, tourism-specific experience as applicable;
3. Current client list of the destinations that are represented (and period of engagement) and three references;
4. Experience working in comparable emerging destinations with a similar history as Sierra Leone is desired;
5. Describe experience working with relatively small budgets that will grow over time based on performance;

6. A maximum of two case studies featuring relevant representation and the resultant outcomes. Include campaign samples relevant to the representation (optional). Creative samples can be an appendix to the max 10-page proposal;
7. Must be familiar and understand the dynamics of the particular source markets proposing to represent.

Selection Criteria

Market representative firms will be short-listed and selected on the basis of (but not limited to) the following:

1. Superior qualifications with respect to the overall firm and the individual(s) assigned to work on building brand and destination awareness and market demand through constant and increasing engagement and building relationships with travel trade and media
2. Successful market representation with other comparable destinations with a similar history as destination Sierra Leone.
3. Demonstrated ability to develop and execute effective brand, awareness, and market demand building activities, and travel trade and media engagement and relationship building activities
4. The quality and clarity of response, demonstrating the firm's ability to communicate clearly and creatively, and the identification of clear monthly and annual metrics for the indicators noted above
5. The prioritized market representation activities in each source market proposed and the financial budget proposed, which will be finalized in the negotiation phase prior to contracting

If selected as a finalist, the agency may be asked to meet virtually to present or interview with the selection committee.

Mode of Application

Interested Firms must provide specific information which demonstrates that they are fully qualified to provide the services.

All Proposals should be submitted via email or in writing and addressed to:

The Head of Procurement

Project Fiduciary Management Unit

Ministry of Finance

13a Howe Street Freetown

Tel: +23276672186

or

By E-mail application as attachment (including all supporting documents) to: info@sledp.gov.sl copy osmantommy@sledp.info

Please indicate clearly on the envelop (in the case of hard copy application) or in the email subject heading and attachment (in the case of electronic proposal) the post for which application is made.

Closing Date:

The Closing Date and time for receipt of applications is **25th April 2022.**