



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**FOR THE PROVISION OF EVALUATING MANITOBA'S  
PROVINCIAL PARKS**

**To**

***Travel Manitoba***

**21 Forks Market Road  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3C 4T7**

**October 2020**

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

### **Evaluating Manitoba's Provincial Parks**

Travel Manitoba is a Crown Corporation responsible for stimulating innovative, sustainable tourism growth in Manitoba's tourism industry. In partnership with the tourism industry, Travel Manitoba is responsible for tourism marketing, visitor information services, research and public information.

This project is funded and managed by Travel Manitoba in partnership with the Parks and Resource Protection Division (PRPD) of Manitoba Conservation and Climate.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

The primary objective of the study is to develop the business case for a new Manitoba Provincial Parks' organizational model in satisfying the department's provincial park mandate: "*Renew the provincial parks strategy to enhance visitor experience, modernize funding mechanisms for park services, and identify opportunities to attract private and philanthropic investment to upgrade facilities.*" The study will evaluate the potential to improve visitor satisfaction and increase visitor spending while achieving greater financial sustainability.

More specifically the study will:

- Evaluate the visitor experience in Manitoba Provincial Parks to identify opportunities for increased visitation and visitor spending;
- Evaluate perceptions of Manitoba Provincial Park users (E.g. cottage owners, commercial business owners, campers, day users, etc.) on facilities, fee structures, investment opportunities and acceptance of organizational changes;
- Investigate best practices in other jurisdictions regarding visitor experience, facilities/amenities and services;
- Investigate park funding, management and cost recovery models in other jurisdictions;
- Evaluate all 76 operational provincial parks in Manitoba to identify/rank the top 15 parks from a business feasibility perspective. Identify parks that have the most potential to generate significant tourism business, generate revenue and recover costs;
- Summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Manitoba's provincial parks;
- Provide recommendations and next steps for:
  - A new business model for Manitoba Provincial Parks that increases visitor spending, revenues and cost recovery.
  - Investment and divestment requirements for existing infrastructure assets.
  - Investment requirements in visitor programming that meets visitor expectations.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Manitoba provincial parks system includes 92 provincial parks designated under [The Provincial Parks Act](#), 76 of which are considered operational parks with developed infrastructure. According to the Act, the three main purposes of the provincial park system are to (1) conserve ecosystems and maintain biodiversity, (2) preserve unique and representative natural, cultural and heritage resources, and (3) to provide outdoor recreational and educational opportunities and experiences in a natural setting.

The Parks and Resource Protection Division (PRPD) has identified a number of challenges currently facing Manitoba Provincial Parks, including:

- The aged state of park infrastructure much of which was developed 40-50 years ago;
- Broad scope of program delivery to 76 operational parks and the largest provincial park based cottage community in Canada;

- Financial sustainability challenges with all park revenue consolidated to General Revenue and limited cost recovery opportunities;
- Limited cost analysis tools and no asset management system; and
- Lack of quality data to understand demand and market potential.

Travel Manitoba collaborated with the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce and the Manitoba Government to launch the [Provincial Tourism Strategy for Manitoba](#) in April 2019. The strategy identifies a number of initiatives that directly or indirectly relate to Provincial Parks, including:

- Facilitating sensitive, incremental, appropriate and sustainable tourism development in Manitoba's provincial and national parks year-round;
- Expanding park operating seasons, and enable sustainable development and expansion of parks-based facilities and amenities;
- Expanding a whole-of-government approach to tourism as a key economic sector, and maximize alignment between all provincial government departments and agencies; and
- Fostering and expanding Manitoba's demand-generating experiences and attractions including unique winter, Indigenous and water based experiences.

The strategy identifies significant potential to develop transformational experiences based on increased park-based investments and extended visitor seasons, as well as further support of paddling and fishing assets. The strategy also identifies Manitoba's winter season as a unique global differentiator in its own right that presents an array of compelling and authentic experiences and adventures in demand by many visitor market segments worldwide.

This study will lay the foundation to achieve the significant potential for Manitoba Provincial Parks, while addressing challenges and weaknesses.

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

In addition to regularly scheduled status/update calls, the consultant will be required to participate in three virtual meetings:

- Orientation meeting at beginning of project to receive background information and refine project plan.
  - Interim report presentation after completion of sections 1, 2, and 3 below.
  - Create and present a final report to the project steering committee.
1. Evaluate the visitor and user experience in Manitoba Provincial Parks by developing and executing a survey as outlined below. The research should address the following key questions:
    - Who exactly are park users and visitors and what brings them to parks?
    - How do we attract more park users and visitors, and increase their spending to generate sustainable revenue?
    - What prevents or limits people from accessing parks?
    - Are existing visitor programs and facilities meeting expectations?
    - What is the potential for expanding season/winter usage?
    - What is the potential for developing new tourism attractions including adventure/sport (i.e. paddling, snowmobiling), cultural (i.e., Indigenous), family (water park, amusement park) and luxury (i.e., culinary, spa, accommodation)?
- Design and execute a survey of Manitobans focused on:
    - Demographics and psychographics of park users versus non-users (broken down for campers, day users, cottagers and accommodation users (resort, hotel, short-term rental)
    - Geographic distribution – distance travelled to visit parks
    - Barriers to park use or more frequent park use

- Visitation and use data (what parks, how often, what are they doing in parks)
  - Motivation for park use
  - Perception of parks and overall experience including impression of services, amenities, facilities, natural assets
  - Future visitation intent
  - Spending in parks
  - Potential for unique winter, water based, Indigenous, etc. experiences/facilities
  - Accommodation interests and expectations
  - Motivation for camping in provincial parks versus private/municipal/national parks
  - Evaluation of Fees (cottage, park pass, campground)
  - Evaluation of perceived value of parks to visitors and users
  - Regional or park specific comparisons
  - Evaluation of website and reservation system
2. Design and execute surveys with park based business owners and Special Consideration Organizations:
- Identify key challenges and opportunities
  - Gather perceptions of existing infrastructure, facilities, programs and fees
  - Gather perceptions of leisure experiences within parks and potential to attract more visitors
  - Determine cottage and business acceptance of potential new organizational models and fee structures
  - Gather information on the tourism services and assets of business owners by park
3. Investigate other jurisdictions through secondary research and interviews with key regional, provincial, state and national parks to identify best practises in visitor experience, facilities/amenities and services as well as park revenue, management and cost recovery models. Focus on jurisdictions that have equivalent/similar natural assets and visitation trends so that conclusions and recommendations will be realistic and relevant for Manitoba. The research should address the following questions:
- How are other provincial and state park agencies organized and how do they approach program delivery? What works, what doesn't and why?
  - What structural models and budgetary approaches are successful at increasing visitor satisfaction, visitor spending and cost recovery?
  - What innovative and successful revenue generating initiatives are currently being used by parks?
  - How are parks attracting private and philanthropic investment to upgrade facilities or initiate innovative programming?
  - What trends are impacting rural parks globally?
4. Evaluate all 76 operational Provincial Parks in Manitoba to identify/rank the top 15 parks from a business feasibility perspective. Identify parks that have the most potential to generate significant tourism business, generate revenue and recover costs.
- What are the gaps in services, amenities and infrastructure?
  - What investment (public and private) is needed to make the top five parks viable?
  - Assess options for existing and potential revenue streams including cottage fees, business fees, park passes, campground fees, service fees, special events, etc.
  - What assets should be divested?
  - Identify partnership and P3 investment opportunities with the private sector, municipalities and First Nations to improve park infrastructure/services or decommission/transition parks to other models (i.e. other groups operate or own parks to service their local community).

5. Summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Manitoba Provincial Parks in light of trends as well as data and insights gathered through the project.
6. Provide recommendations and next steps for:
  - A new business model for Manitoba Provincial Parks that increases visitor spending, revenues and cost recovery.
  - Investment and divestment requirements for existing infrastructure assets.
  - Investment requirements in visitor programming that meets visitor expectations.

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

A maximum total budget of \$200,000 CAD is anticipated for this project. All meetings and consultations are assumed to be virtual (video or phone based). Should inter-provincial travel be feasible during the course of the project, travel to attend meetings in-person can be negotiated with Travel Manitoba and reimbursed at cost (economy fare rates).

### **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

The proposal submission must include:

- Names, functions and experience of staff assigned to the project;
- Name of the primary contact person;
- Proposed methodologies and detailed timeframe for all project elements;
- Proposed plan for communicating progress and receiving guidance on an ongoing basis throughout the project, including consideration of period conference calls and email updates;
- Budget with breakdown of costs for deliverable outlined in the Scope of Services; and
- Company profile including qualifications, relevant experience, list of current references and examples of similar work where possible.

All materials provided in the submission will become the property of Travel Manitoba.

### **EVALUATION**

Evaluation of submissions will be based on the following criteria:

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Previous experience   | 40%  |
| Ability to fulfill mandate/technical requirements             | 30%  |
| Creativity and uniqueness in approach & quality of submission | 20%  |
| Proposed Fee for Services                                     | 10%  |
| Total   | 100% |

Travel Manitoba reserves the right to reject all or any proposals.

**DELIVERABLES AND PROPOSED TIMELINES**

| <b>Deliverable</b>                 | <b>Timeline</b>          |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| RFP issued                         | October 13, 2020         |
| Question submission deadline       | October 22, 2020         |
| Proposal Deadline                  | October 26, 2020         |
| Anticipated contract start date    | November 9, 2020         |
| Orientation Meeting (virtual)      | Week of November 9, 2020 |
| Interim Report                     | January 29, 2021         |
| Interim Report Presentation        | February, 2021           |
| Final Report                       | March 31, 2021           |
| Presentation to Steering Committee | April, 2021              |

- Any questions or requests for clarification should be submitted via email to: Jackie Tenuta, Director of Strategy and Development at [jtenuta@travelmanitoba.com](mailto:jtenuta@travelmanitoba.com). Questions and responses will only be provided by email and will be anonymously shared with all bidders to ensure all have the same information.
- Proposals must be received by October 26, 2020.
- Please submit your proposal by email to: Jackie Tenuta, Director of Strategy and Development, Travel Manitoba at [jtenuta@travelmanitoba.com](mailto:jtenuta@travelmanitoba.com).