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### Questions on FY18-FY19 Ad Agency RFP for Tourism:

- Is preference given to Alabama-based agencies or is it a requirement to have an office in Alabama?
  - It is not a requirement of the RFP to have an office in Alabama, but “headquarters address and other offices” is a required question on page 1 of the RFP and location is factored into the overall scoring of each proposal.
- Is 'Sweet Home Alabama' a mandate for brand and creative strategy?
  - This is a directive from the Director of Tourism and is not negotiable.
- Do you have an internal creative team for execution, especially for international endeavors?
  - We do have an internal creative team of several employees that works closely with the Agency of Record (AOR) while also fully managing select marketing communications projects. Creative services in support of paid, earned and owned media content and advertising is primarily within scope of AOR.
- What plans are already underway for the bicentennial celebration that affects this assignment?
  - There is a Bicentennial Commission that Tourism works with to help achieve their goals but the purpose of this RFP is for Tourism and the plans already in place should not have a major impact on this request.
  
- What is the average annual media spend?
  - This fluctuates depending on funding authority granted by the legislature but averages between \$3-6 million over the course of the 2-year contract.
- In the hypothetical 11,000 hours provided is the ask for the agency blended rate prior to negotiation?
  - The rate/fees are non-negotiable. Rates/fees supplied in the RFP comprise 30% of scoring for final selection.

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- Can you expand on the role of shopper marketing in ATD’s marketing efforts?
    - Shopper marketing is primarily a tool to understand consumer purchase behavior and factored into marketing communications strategy.
  - Can you provide a range or an average media spend for the last three years?
    - This fluctuates depending on funding authority granted by the legislature but averages between \$3-6 million over the course of the 2-year contract.
  - I realize you are looking for a blended hourly rate in section 5. However, can you provide any kind of average breakout between media and creative hours in section 5.1 and 5.3?
    - Media hours are referenced in 5.1. Creative services for traditional paid media are entirely contained in 5.1. Ultimately, all creative and media services are dependent on strategy and the ultimate allocation among digital and non-digital channels.
  - What are the ADT’s top feeder markets?

- While primarily the southeastern states, Alabama attracts visitors from all over the world. Strategy will ultimately determine media distribution.
  - What are the ADT's top international markets? Is there media spend in any of those markets?
    - The UK and Europe are largest markets but Alabama attracts visitors from all over the world. Strategy will ultimately determine media distribution.
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- Can you provide examples of previous international marketing endeavors?
    - Much of our international marketing efforts are tied to Alabama's cooperative involvement with Travel South, which is an organization of the southeastern United States that creates trade missions to foreign countries. Whoever wins this RFP will work with us to select marketing reps to be used in key international markets like the UK and Germany.
  - How have you used Shopper Marketing in the past?
    - Shopper marketing is primarily a tool to understand consumer purchase behavior and factored into marketing communications strategy.
  - What is the forecasted advertising budget for year one of the contract?
    - This fluctuates depending on funding authority granted by the legislature but averages between \$3-6 million over the course of the 2-year contract.
  - What CMS system are you using?
    - Custom CMS.
  - To what extent do you envision redesigning the website – holistic redesign or just page updates?
    - This is a great question and is to be decided later depending upon overall strategy and approval of Agency Director.
  - In section 5.1, it's noted that hard cost services (filming, editing, sound, etc.) will be competitively bid with no markup from the agency. Since we have our own in-house production services for video, how do we handle that?
    - The main purpose for this clause is to keep a level playing field and to prevent an organization from bidding lower than the profits can sustain with the hopes of making money on the markup of other services. Making sure there is no markup on the services, whether bid or handled in-house is the key, we do not have a preference one way or the other and section 3 of the RFP helps us to determine the capabilities of each organization.
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- Is the RFP open to all qualified bidders?
  - RFP is open to all qualified bidders, but the winning bidder must be setup to work in Alabama and be registered in the State's new STAARS accounting system. That can be done at this site - <https://procurement.staars.alabama.gov/>
- Is the RFP posted anywhere other than STAARS Vendor Self Service portal?

- The RFP is posted on the State’s vendor Self Service Portal as well as our website - <http://tourism.alabama.gov/forms/request-for-proposals/>
- Who is the incumbent agency of record, and are they eligible to respond?
  - The incumbent is the Intermark Group based in Birmingham and yes they are eligible to respond.
- Per section 7: After the question deadline has passed, where on your website will the Q&A be posted? Or will it be posted on the STAARS website?
  - The responses to questions will be included in one document and then emailed to all who posed the questions. The questions and answers will then be loaded to the STAARS site (<https://procurement.staars.alabama.gov/>) as well as Tourism’s website (<http://tourism.alabama.gov/forms/request-for-proposals/>).
- Per question 2.h and 2.i: Does handling out-of-state city DMOs present a conflict?
  - Other state, regional, and city DMO and major attractions in other state or cities could constitute conflict and should be listed but will be weighed into the evaluation process scoring.
- Per question 3.f: Mobile – Are you referring to mobile optimization for websites?
  - Mobile deals with all things related to mobile devices and can include optimization for websites or app development.
- Per question 3.k: Shopper marketing – Can you please clarify what you mean by “shopper marketing?”
  - Shopper marketing is primarily a tool to understand consumer purchase behavior and factored into marketing communications strategy.

- As they oftentimes contain trade secrets, are the cost proposals to be submitted separately and sealed?
  - All submissions should include the cost proposals in the format the RFP specifies and are considered the property of the organization who submits it. Tourism will rate each proposal based on the scoring on page 4 of the RFP. Any trade secrets or proprietary information needs to be disclaimed both before it and after it in the proposal to ensure there is no confusion in the event of litigation.
- Is there a page limit on the proposal?
  - There is no page limit to the RFP submission.
- What formatting does the department of tourism prefer (font size, spacing etc)?
  - There is no preference to formatting; the only point that will be mentioned here is on page 5 of the RFP form and states “Please respond to all questions and provide all information in the order requested. Proposals with missing information will not be considered.”
- Are there any Disadvantaged Business Entity (DBE) requirements?
  - There are no Disadvantaged Business Entity (DBE) requirements.
- Will preference points be awarded to the proposal for partnering with a DBE?
  - There are no Disadvantaged Business Entity (DBE) preference points.
- Would the contract function on fixed prices or are time and materials under consideration?

- This contract is a fixed price contract and the rates are being set for the work that will be done based on the hours (11,000) estimated in the RFP. Overages must be estimated and approved or disallowed in advance. Out of scope projects, if approved, will be paid at contract fee rate.
  - In order to monitor the campaign as it matures, are there any requirements for peer review or focus testing?
    - Pre- and post-campaign research against established KPIs may be considered within AOR scope.
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- Would please confirm what the annual budget is?
    - The cap on the RFP budget will be \$18 Million for FY18-FY19 (up to \$9 million per year). This is dependent on legislative funding requirements as well as tax collection so the actual amount could be far less, this is the cap for the contract term.
  - How would I get my hands on the winning bid (response and price) from the last RFP?
    - The bid responses are the property of those who submit them.
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- Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this (like, from India or Canada)?
    - We did not limit location of the company in the RFP document.
  - Whether we need to come over there for meetings?
    - We would only need to meet if you are selected or there is a tie that needs to be decided by a panel which has happened in the past, but only once in the last 14 years that I am aware of.
  - Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA (like, from India or Canada)?
    - There is a lot of coordination with Tourism's staff so it is possible but unlikely.
  - Can we submit the proposals via email?
    - I am sorry but no. The last page of the RFP requires an original and 3 duplicated to be sent to us.
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- Is it possible to get a list of who was invited to orals for the previous RFP released, as well as a copy of their responses?
    - There were no orals for the last RFP and the responses are the property of those who submitted them.
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- As a leader in the digital media travel space we work with State Tourism Boards throughout the country, I was under the impression that you all just secured Intermark in Birmingham as your

AOR last year. In fact, I did a Lunch and Learn with the team last fall. Is this still the case or are you all actually reassessing things?

- You are correct, we did just shift from Luckie to Intermark in FY16 but the State requires us to put out an RFP every two years so it is that time again since our Fiscal year is October to September.

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- can you let me know if this search is only limited to Alabama-based agencies or are you open to work with agencies from other states?
    - The RFP is a public document that seeks qualified professional services regardless of where their organizations are based.

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- Is there a more detailed outline for what the proposals should entail?
    - There were two documents released when the RFP went public. One document was the RFP document that was 5 pages long entitled "FY18-FY19 RFP for Ad Agency" and the second one was 4 pages entitled "Final\_RFP\_332\_C8332011\_1\_SO\_FORM\_PDF" which is the standard legal paperwork from the State of Alabama.

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- Can you please let me know who the incumbent is for this solicitation as well as budget information?
    - The incumbent is The Intermark Group based out of Birmingham. The historic budget has been \$14 million for two years, although the actual spending is based on the spending authority from the Legislature each year.

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- Are there any limitations or requirements regarding out-of-state agencies?
    - The RFP is a public document that seeks qualified professional services regardless of where their organizations are based.
  - Has Alabama Tourism Department ever utilized an out-of-state agency on the account?
    - Alabama Tourism has never utilized an agency that did not have an office in Alabama.
  - How do the hours listed (11,000 annual projected hours) compare to actual hours utilized and/or paid for by AL Tourism the last two years?
    - Projects deemed within scope should be managed within budgeted fee. Overages must be estimated and approved or disallowed in advance. Out of scope projects, if approved, will be paid at contract fee rate.