



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Coastal Alabama Regional
Branding & Marketing Program**

**RFP #1 –
Ecotourism Consulting & Branding
Project Scope Parts A & B**

Coastal Alabama Partnership (CAP), a not-for-profit organization of regional business and non-profit leaders in Baldwin and Mobile Counties, seeks a team of experienced destination marketing, specifically ecotourism, consultants to lead CAP and its partners in a process to assess our regions ecotourism product and to develop a brand showcasing the Gulf Coast and its potential for ecotourism.

The project will identify and develop an online resource directory with a list of ecotourism destinations in the two county Gulf Coast region. The program will also advertise and publicize the “brand” developed by the program utilizing signage, online marketing and paid advertising to increase tourism in the region.

Our Region:

Baldwin and Mobile Counties, in Alabama’s southwest corner, account for the state’s entire Gulf Coast. Their combined 600,000-plus population represents more than 12 percent of the state’s residents. Taken together, the two counties’ GDP output would rank second among Alabama’s MSAs, with the Port of Mobile and the region’s shipbuilding and aerospace industries serving global markets and seasonal visitors crowding Baldwin County’s beaches.

In the City of Mobile, Coastal Alabama has an historic city that predates the founding of America. In Baldwin County, there’s everything Gulf Coast visitors desire in recreation, seafood and just hanging out on the beaches. Between Pensacola, Florida, to the east and the Texas coast to the far west, there’s no comparable combination of history, culture, industry and beaches on the northern Gulf Coast.

Yet with all their collective assets, Baldwin and Mobile Counties and the municipalities within them have more often acted more as a collection of independent, sometime rival, jurisdictions than as a region. The divide is historic, with cultural and social dimensions as well as economic ones. It’s beach and city, tourism and industrial port, urban and suburban.

Our Partnership:

The Alabama Gulf Coast region is comprised of two counties (Baldwin and Mobile) which has over 2300 square miles of land and 24 different municipalities. There are 3 metropolitan planning organizations, 2 economic development entities, 10 chambers of commerce, multiple utility providers and literally hundreds of plans as to how best to foster economic development in the region.

Coastal Alabama Partnership (CAP) is a non-profit organization comprised of members from these various public and private entities that serve as a sounding board and a resource for the Gulf Coast region. CAP allows a coordinated effort among these various stakeholders to better develop a coordinated and effective response to challenges facing the citizens and visitors of the Gulf Coast region. The genesis of CAP began following the BP Oil Spill in 2010

and the call by former Governor Bob Riley of Alabama for Mobile and Baldwin counties to work together as a region to develop the Coastal Recovery Commission (CRC) Report. CAP was created in 2012 to focus on bringing the region together on five main initiatives: Infrastructure, Insurance, Seafood, Tourism and Policy and Planning.

Coastal Alabama Partnership's Regional Strategic Plan was developed by its stakeholders to respond to those challenges and to create a blueprint for development for the Gulf Coast region. For a look at CAP's goals, leadership and current initiatives:

www.coastalalabama.org/overview/

Project Need:

Coastal Alabama Partnership's Regional Strategic Plan is divided into three phases: the first and second phases included the participation of stakeholders from the two Alabama Gulf Coast counties of Mobile and Baldwin. The first phase utilized research conducted on the Gulf Coast region, with a comparison of the area to two other southeastern US port cities. The research, which included broad input from hundreds of public and private stakeholders, identified opportunities in the region that would strengthen and diversify our local economy.

The second phase of the Regional Strategic Plan was carried out with the help of consultants who are knowledgeable in the regional planning process. The public and private stakeholders were engaged, and an action plan was developed to address the identified priorities for the region. The third phase will allow the stakeholders to implement the recommendations of the plan and to further develop priorities, timeframes, target dates, and critical milestones of the plan, while assessing resource implications and assigning responsibilities. These stakeholders which included regional leaders, Government, private industry, non-profit, and philanthropic organizations held conversations about the regions shared values.

Using these values, the Regional Strategic Plan developed five strategy themes---

- Prosper: Advance economic opportunity
- Place: Strengthen the quality of place
- Promote: Tell the Authentic Story
- Protect: Be stewards of the natural assets
- Partner: Collaborate across the region

Building on these five themes the Regional Strategic Plan included a series of eight "Big Ideas", six of which specifically addressed ecotourism and promoting the brand of the region. They included.

- *Expand Eco-tourism and Reinforce Educational Opportunities*
 - o Coordinate existing individual eco-tourism initiatives from across the region as a branded eco-tourism destination.

- Identify opportunities for expansion of eco-tourism activities in the region.
 - Foster the development of an organization to promote access in the delta and awareness of natural assets.
 - Pursue new and appropriate points of access into the delta and connectivity across the delta.
 - Develop a regional education project around ecology, anthropology, and archeology of the Mobile-Tensaw Region.
- *Great Places Inventory for ‘Place- Based’ Tourism*
 - Create an eco-tourism marketing campaign to promote access in the region and awareness of natural assets.
 - Enhance existing tourism opportunities by providing an inventory of unique places, communities, downtowns, etc.
- *Collaborative Branding Campaign*
 - Market the Coastal Alabama region externally to foster continued growth in tourism opportunities.
 - Create a unique brand which can be adopted and integrated across multiple organizations and platforms.
 - Foster a ‘Coastal Alabama’ brand that should tell the authentic story and reflect the natural and cultural assets of the region.
- *Creative Economy Initiative*
 - Promote the natural assets of the region as a tool to recruit a creative workforce.
- *Improving Regional Connectivity and Mobility*
 - Support the development of a multi-use trails in the region.
- *Culinary Arts Initiative*
 - Promote locations within the region that provide a unique culinary experience.
 - Foster a food-scene ecosystem that directly draws tourist.

Each step of the Regional Strategic Plan built upon earlier work and involved a significant investment of time, money, and other resources. Through the efforts of the first and second phases of the plan, CAP identified ecotourism as a major resource that would foster further economic growth and diversification in the Gulf Coast region. Mobile and Baldwin Counties have developed tourism industries related to classic ventures such as conventions, major sports tournaments and single events, the beaches, and historic homes and gardens, to name a few.

One major relatively undeveloped tourism venue, however, is the Mobile Tensaw Delta and its inclusion in a robust region-wide ecotourism industry.

The major challenge in developing a regional ecotourism industry that includes the Mobile-Tensaw Delta is not the creation of venues and activities that would appeal to Gulf Coast tourists, but rather packaging the venues and activities presently available under one management umbrella. The single management concept is important for the creation of a robust branding and marketing campaign for ecotourism that dovetails with existing tourism campaigns in place for Mobile and Baldwin Counties.

As an example, the current Mobile Convention and Visitors Bureau (<http://www.mobile.org>) has a section on OUTDOORS. *“With so many options, it may be hard to decide how to spend a day in Mobile’s great outdoors. The area is home to the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, the largest river delta and wetland in Alabama and one of the largest in the country. In fact, there are not many places in the world that hold the eco-diversity of the bayous, bays, and beaches of Mobile. From kayaks and canoes to airboats and fishing tours, there are numerous ways to roam this wilderness.”*

CAP’s planning efforts have not identified a singular entity or service that inventories these numerous ways to enjoy the Mobile-Tensaw Delta or the many other ecotourism opportunities in Alabama’s Gulf Coast region and allows a centralized system for its citizens and visitors to identify which venue they wish to enjoy.

The development and implementation of a branding and marketing plan by the stakeholders of the Gulf Coast region that emphasizes the region’s natural resources and cultural diversity will allow a concerted effort by the stakeholders to educate the public about south Alabama’s abundant natural resources while simultaneously increasing the public’s awareness of the importance of preserving those resources through stewardship activities.

In addition, the Mobile-Tensaw Delta region represents a tremendous, untapped opportunity for developing a new ecotourism market that will complement and enhance the region’s other ecotourism venues. This project will create a blueprint for the stakeholders to develop, diversify, and enhance the economy of the Gulf Coast region by emphasizing the biodiversity of the Gulf Coast region in Mobile and Baldwin Counties.

The goals and objectives of this project are:

- Objective #1---Inventory and assess the two-county region for ecotourism opportunities, including identifying potential voids in the market and create a database of ecotourism assets.
- Objective #2-- Develop a collaborative branding campaign which can be adopted and integrated across multiple organizations and platforms.
- Objective #3--- Develop a marketing campaign to advertise and publicize the “brand” developed by the project utilizing (but not limited to) signage, online marketing, and paid advertising.

The Scope of Services will include assisting CAP with the implementation of a RESTORE Act Oil Spill Impact Component project funded via a Subrecipient Grant Agreement from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR). CAP is soliciting proposals from qualified firms and individuals interested in performing the scope of services described herein in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws, codes, regulations, ordinances, etc., including, but not limited to all executive orders (EO), Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requirements, and U.S. Department of the Treasury Regulations.

CAP is an Equal Opportunity Employer and requires that all contractors comply with the Equal Employment Opportunity laws and the provisions of the Contract Documents in this regard. CAP also encourages and supports the utilization of Minority Business Enterprises on this and all public proposals. All procurement actions will be conducted in a manner consistent with the Federal Award, the Sub-Recipient Agreement between ADCNR and CAP Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, and all applicable federal, state, and local requirements including, but not limited to, provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200, including Appendix II to 2 CFR Part 200. Furthermore, applicable clauses set forth pursuant to 2 C.F.R. Part 200 will be included in all purchase orders, contracts, and agreements. "Applicants or bidders for a lower tier covered transaction (except procurement contracts for goods and services under \$25,000 not requiring the consent of a Treasury official) are subject to 2 C.F.R. Part 180, "OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement)." In addition, applicants or bidders for a lower tier covered transaction for a subaward, contract, or subcontract greater than \$100,000 of Federal funds at any tier are subject to relevant statutes, including among others, the provisions of 31 U.S.C. 1352, as well as the common rule, "New Restrictions on Lobbying," published at 55 FR 6736 (February 26, 1990), including definitions, and the Office of Management and Budget "Governmentwide Guidance for New Restrictions on Lobbying," and notices published at 54 FR 52306 (December 20, 1989), 55 FR 24540 (June 15, 1990), 57 FR 1772 (January 15, 1992), and 61 FR 1412 (January 19, 1996)."

Project Scope:

Implement the recommendations of the Strategic Planning process of CAP, including Objectives 1 & 2 above that results in the following deliverables:

Part A - Inventory and assess the two-county region for ecotourism opportunities, including identifying potential voids in the market.

- a. Identifies access points in the delta and region.
- b. Coordinates existing eco-tourism initiatives from across the region.
- c. Identifies opportunities for expansion of eco-tourism activities in the region.
- d. Creates a database of ecotourism assets throughout the region.

Part B - Develop a collaborative branding campaign which can be adopted and integrated across multiple organizations and platforms.

- a. Markets the Coastal Alabama region externally to foster continued growth in tourism opportunities.
- b. Creates a unique brand which can be adopted and integrated across multiple

- organizations and platforms.
- c. Fosters a 'Coastal Alabama' brand that should tell the authentic story and reflect the natural and cultural assets of the region.

Project Deliverables:

Part A

- 1) Conduct research utilizing stakeholder interviews, case study research of similar coastal destinations, and preliminary video production of the final product.
- 2) Developing an ecotourism visitor profile and brand perception research. The profile will be developed using focus groups, online visitor surveys and brand perception surveys.
- 3) Develop capital plan utilizing asset inventory, stakeholder feedback and research from market surveys.
- 4) Develop an online directory that showcases all the ecotourism attractions in the Alabama Gulf Coast region.

Part B

- 1) Conduct brand research and incorporate all research performed to date among consumers and stakeholders into actionable findings and observations.
- 2) Develop overall brand, logo, tagline and key marketing messages for region that can be utilized and incorporated across platforms and organizations.
- 3) Develop design templates for electronic and printed media, billboard advertising mockups, and a draft marketing plan.

Submittal Information:

Proposals should be no more than 12 pages, excluding appendices with examples of previous projects, references and other support material.

Format, using this order of components:

1. A brief summary of your understanding of the project. If appropriate, you might suggest corrections and refinements to our assumptions, given our goals and your experience.
2. A description of your team, key personnel, their experience in relevant projects. Proposals should include the DUNS number for the firm proposing.

3. An outline of your suggested approach, deliverables and project phases within a six-month timeline.
4. A cost proposal with sufficient detail to help us understand key cost drivers.
5. Appendices with related work examples and references. Examples should demonstrate formats that you recommend for organizing and presenting actionable plans accessible to a broad range of stakeholders.

Proposals should be submitted via email to Andrew@coastalalabama.org and three hard copies should be mailed to PO Box 881 Mobile, AL 36602 to be received by Monday, July 27th. Envelopes containing proposals must be sealed and labeled on the outside as follows: "Proposal for Ecotourism Consulting and Branding". All proposals shall contain original signatures. Proposal must be received no later than **4:00 p.m. on July 27, 2020**. Firms submitting proposals are solely responsible for meeting submittal deadlines. Proposals received after the stated deadline will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered for any contract awarded as a result of this solicitation. Proposals deemed responsive will be evaluated and an award decision will be made by CAP's RESTORE Act Grant Contract Procurement Steering Committee consisting of the Coastal Alabama Partnership Executive Committee and Two founding entity members. CAP is an Equal Opportunity Employer. A contract will be awarded to the qualified applicant whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to CAP. CAP reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, and to waive any irregularities or informalities in the proposal process.

Anticipated Period of Performance:

The anticipated period of performance for this contract is 23 months.

Selection Criteria:

1. Team's grasp of project goals (20%)
2. Personnel choices in line with project goals (20%)
3. Project approach (30%)
4. Nationally recognized success with regional strategic plans in similar contexts (20%)
5. Budget and cost proposal with sufficient detail of key cost allocation drivers (10%)

Request for Proposal Timeline:

- June 25 – Publish and Distribute the RFP
- July 27 – RFP Responses Due
- July 27 – September 15 – Interviews, Questions, Presentations
- September 23 – Announce Project Partner(s) Selection

Evaluation

Each element of the proposal will be evaluated by each member of the selection committee and assigned a score. A Respondent's final score will be determined by averaging the total ranking assigned from all selection committee members to each Respondent.

Miscellaneous

1. This RFP is not to be construed as a contract or a commitment of any kind, nor does it commit CAP to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation of a submission or of any costs incurred prior to the execution of a formal contract.
2. In the event that a mutually agreeable contract cannot be negotiated between the consultant and CAP, CAP reserves the right to select an alternate consultant.
3. CAP reserves the sole right to (1) evaluate submittals; (2) waive any irregularities therein; (3) select candidates for selection interviews; (4) request supplemental or additional information as deemed necessary; (5) contact others to verify information provided in the submittal; or (6) reject any and all submittal(s), should it be deemed in the best interest of CAP.
4. Proposals are being requested in accordance with Item (d) of 2 C. F. R. §200.320 “Methods of procurement.”
5. The prime contractor must comply with federal regulations regarding procurement of recovered materials found at 2 CFR §200.322. 2 CFR §200.322 requires the Project Owner and its contractors to comply with section 6002 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. The requirements of Section 6002 include procuring only items designated in guidelines of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at 40 CFR Part 247 that contain the highest percentage of recovered materials practicable, consistent with maintaining a satisfactory level of competition, where the purchase price of the item exceeds \$10,000 or the value of the quantity acquired during the preceding fiscal year exceeded \$10,000; procuring solid waste management services in a manner that maximizes energy and resource recovery; and establishing an affirmative procurement program for procurement of recovered materials identified in the EPA guidelines.

Warranties

By responding to this RFP, firms/individuals submitting proposals warrant and represent the following:

1. The firm/individual does not have a judgment lien against the its property for a debt to the United States.
2. The firm/individual has a valid DUNS number and active registration with the General Services Administration’s, government-wide System for Award Management Exclusions (SAM exclusions). The SAM Exclusions can be found at

<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>.

Any contract awarded must comply with the Minority Business Enterprise and Women Business Enterprise contracting requirements outlined in “Attachment A” to this solicitation. MBE and/or WBE individuals/firms are encouraged to respond to this solicitation.

Project Contact:

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VP Policy & Projects

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ATTACHMENT A
CONTRACTING WITH SMALL AND MINORITY BUSINESSES, WOMEN'S BUSINESS
ENTERPRISES, AND LABOR SURPLUS AREA FIRMS

Documentation of compliance with the following requirements is a matter of contractor responsibility. When subcontracting, the contractor must submit documentation of good faith efforts to meet the project's MBE/WBE requirements before contracted work can commence. (MBE/WBE requirements are outlined below and can be found at 2 C. F. R. §200.321.) Failure on the part of the contractor to submit proper documentation may cause the Owner not to execute or to terminate the contract.

(a) The prime contractor must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible.

(b) Affirmative steps must include:

- (1) Placing qualified small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises on solicitation lists;
- (2) Assuring that small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises are solicited whenever they are potential sources;
- (3) Dividing total requirements, when economically feasible, into smaller tasks or quantities to permit maximum participation by small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises;
- (4) Establishing delivery schedules, where the requirement permits, which encourage participation by small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises; and,
- (5) Using the services and assistance, as appropriate, of such organizations as the Small Business Administration and the Minority Business Development Agency of the Department of Commerce.

The prime contractor should note that this requirement mandates two responsibilities. Separate solicitations must be made of minority **and** women's business enterprises.

SUBMITTAL OF MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISE AND WOMEN'S BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (MBE/WBE) DOCUMENTATION

Prior to contract execution, the prime contractor must submit:

- A written certification that no subcontracts will be issued.
- OR -
- The Subcontractor Listing Form detailing all subcontractors from whom quotes were received including name, contact person, address, phone, and status (MBE, WBE or Non).

If subcontractors will be utilized, the prime contractor must submit the following for subcontracts proposed to be awarded to MBE/WBE enterprises:

- A certification from each MBE and/or WBE firm declaring its status as a MBE or WBE firm. A self-certification is acceptable, if the certification specifies the basis for MBE/WBE designation (e.g., the business is 51% owned and daily operation is controlled by one or more women or minority owners).

If subcontractors will be utilized, the prime contractor must submit the following for subcontracts proposed to be awarded to Non-MBE/WBE:

- For all subcontracts for which there are capable certified MBE/WBE firms existing to potentially perform the work, letters transmitted to MBE and WBE firms requesting quotes or proposals for specific subcontracting opportunities and encouraging inquiries for further details. Solicitations should have been sent in a timely manner, including allowed response time.
- A listing of certified MBE and WBE firms from whom quotes or proposals were received, if any, who were not awarded subcontracts.
- Evidence that each Non-MBE/WBE subcontractor selected for the scope of work, was lower in price than each MBE/WBE proposal (or that there is some other acceptable reason to select the Non-MBE/WBE) and that the scope of work was the same for both the MBE/WBE and Non-MBE/WBE.