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Planning

## **Accessibility Guides Initiative**

VisitBritain/VisitEngland

F01: Prior information notice

Prior information only

Notice identifier: 2023/S 000-017396

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-03d7a1

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### **Section I: Contracting authority**

#### **I.1) Name and addresses**

VisitBritain/VisitEngland

3 Grosvenor Gardens, Victoria

London

SW1W 0BD

#### **Contact**

Procurement Team

#### **Email**

[Procurement@visitbritain.org](mailto:Procurement@visitbritain.org)

#### **Country**

United Kingdom

#### **Region code**

UKI3 - Inner London – West

**Internet address(es)**

Main address

[www.visitbritain.org](http://www.visitbritain.org)

Buyer's address

[www.visitbritain.org](http://www.visitbritain.org)

**I.3) Communication**

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

Electronic communication requires the use of tools and devices that are not generally available. Unrestricted and full direct access to these tools and devices is possible, free of charge, at

<https://visitbritain.force.com/s/Welcome>

**I.4) Type of the contracting authority**

Body governed by public law

**I.5) Main activity**

Other activity

Tourism

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## **Section II: Object**

### **II.1) Scope of the procurement**

#### **II.1.1) Title**

Accessibility Guides Initiative

Reference number

BTA1919

#### **II.1.2) Main CPV code**

- 75125000 - Administrative services related to tourism affairs

#### **II.1.3) Type of contract**

Services

#### **II.1.4) Short description**

VisitEngland (VE) plays a key role in facilitating an accessible and inclusive tourism industry.

In support of the Government's ambition for the UK to become the most accessible tourism destination in Europe, VE wishes to improve the holiday planning experience for visitors with a wide range of accessibility requirements by advancing a two-part approach to enhancing accessibility information.

Lot One concerns VE's longstanding Accessibility Guides initiative.

VE is seeking to create a partnership with a third-party partner (or supplier) who provides an established and trusted Accessibility Guides service for tourism businesses in England, where VE (and likely key stakeholders including Local Visitor Economy Partnerships) would act as a lead generator for the partner. The co-association of both brands would derive mutual benefit and generate a specific financial, or other, advantage, which is applied for the benefit of both parties.

In addition, VE may provide funding to the third-party partner (or supplier) to enhance the scope of the commercial arrangement, which would result in added value benefits for all.

Lot Two concerns accessibility features data and search filters for tourism distributor websites.

VE is interested in receiving expressions of interest from the market through this PIN process.

### **II.1.5) Estimated total value**

Value excluding VAT: £324,590

### **II.1.6) Information about lots**

This contract is divided into lots: Yes

## **II.2) Description**

### **II.2.1) Title**

Lot 1 - Accessibility Guides Initiative

Lot No

Lot 1

### **II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)**

- 75125000 - Administrative services related to tourism affairs

### **II.2.3) Place of performance**

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

Main site or place of performance

UK

### **II.2.4) Description of the procurement**

51% of adults in England who identify as disabled did not take a holiday in England in the last 12 months, compared to 40% of non-disabled people (Participation Survey 2021/22). Provision of accessibility information is a key barrier to disabled people participating in tourism:

- 91% of disabled people look for accessibility information before visiting somewhere new and
- 58% avoid visiting a venue if it has not shared its accessibility information, assuming it is inaccessible (Euan's Guide Survey 2022).

In response to this barrier, VisitEngland (VE) created a standard approach for tourism venues to provide this information – Accessibility Guides (formerly Access Statements). An Accessibility Guide is a customer-facing marketing document that contains written and visual details of a venue’s accessibility, so that people with accessibility requirements can make an informed decision as to whether it will meet their individual requirements.

VE has made available a free template tool for tourism operators to use to produce their Accessibility Guides since 2007. The current tool, provided in-house (and in-partnership with VisitScotland (VS)) since 2017, is approaching end of life.

Research by VE in 2022 provides strong evidence that the disabled consumer supports the provision of Accessibility Guides. As the market continues to develop its services in this space, VE is gathering information to inform a potential shift from delivering an Accessibility Guide service directly to endorsing an established and trusted Accessibility Guide service/s provider, to reduce duplication and enhance the initiative.

Through the partnership VE seeks to deliver a measurable increase in the provision of quality, publicly available Accessibility Guides for tourism venues of all sizes across England. Of key relevance is that the English tourism industry is dominated by micro, small and medium sized businesses.

Whilst larger and more complex businesses may be suited to a professional on-site surveyor-assessment service, smaller and less complex businesses may benefit from a lighter touch, budget-friendly solution, such as a telephone assessment service or in absence of this a self-survey tool (akin to that currently provided by VE and VS at [www.accessibilityguides.org](http://www.accessibilityguides.org)). It is anticipated that a significant proportion of smaller and less complex businesses would be able to produce an Accessibility Guide at no cost.

The contracting authority specifically requires an established brand and platform that can bring the credibility, visibility and consistency needed by the consumer, reducing duplication by providing a whole-of-industry solution nationwide.

To that end it is expected that the partner will have well-established:

- nationwide on-site surveyor-assessment service, in addition to a telephone assessment service and/or or self-survey assessment tool
- digital platforms providing a strong consumer presence (offering all participating businesses a route to a significant audience),
- direct links with disabled people to understand their evolving information needs (for ongoing dialogue and feedback to inform enhancements) and
- quality assurance processes underpinned by a robust and comprehensive approach to accessibility data management (e.g. processes and quality procedures accredited to ISO9001 and annual independent audits)

Whilst the expected default contract value with VE is nil; an indicative commercial value (assuming that smaller venues can receive a guide at no cost), is an estimated maximum

of £185,115 for 3 years and £324,590 for 5 years

## **II.2) Description**

### **II.2.1) Title**

Lot 2 - Accessibility features question set

Lot No

Lot 2

### **II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)**

- 75125000 - Administrative services related to tourism affairs

### **II.2.3) Place of performance**

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

Main site or place of performance

UK

### **II.2.4) Description of the procurement**

VE is seeking feedback from the market on the requirements detailed under this Lot Two. Suppliers should note that VE consider this Lot to be an optional Lot and will review the responses to the PIN to determine whether Lot Two is procured alongside Lot One or procured as a separate requirement.

Research by VE in 2022 found that trip-planning and booking behaviour is broadly similar for people with and without accessibility needs. Search is predominantly done online, with main search engines, online travel agents/aggregators and review sites and people are looking for information on accessibility features. However, accessibility features data and search filters on tourism distributor websites lack quality and consistency.

Lot two of VE's approach to enhancing accessibility information involves facilitating a more consistent approach to how online travel agents, Local Visitor Economy Partnerships and other distribution websites describe key venue accessibility information when promoting their products. VE requires a supplier to develop a new 'top accessibility features' question set for adoption by tourism product distributors to use on their websites.

This question set is the first piece of the jigsaw to help people filter and identify lists of potentially suitable places to stay and visit. Accessibility Guides are the second piece of the information jigsaw, providing the full detailed access information needed by many to

make the final choice of venue. There should be a question on the availability of an Accessibility Guide and a field for a link to an Accessibility Guide (if available) in the top accessibility features question set.

Potential activities to deliver the requirement could include:

- A review of different websites that list tourism products such as accommodation listing websites, OTAs for the presence of accessibility feature filters and information
- Where possible, source and analyse data on the usage levels of accessibility feature filters and search terms
- Identification of similar initiatives in Europe and abroad that have developed accessibility feature question sets
- Liaison with organisations that represent people with impairments and accessibility requirements to understand the most important accessibility features to inform trip-taking (VE can utilise relations with the Government's Disability Unit to make connections with the Disability Charities Consortium, Disabled People's Organisations Forum, Regional Stakeholder Networks and The Richmond Group)
- Identification of and liaison with tourism distributors that provide websites listing tourism products

The estimated value for this option Lot Two service requirement is not expected to exceed £25,000 and be completed by March 2024.

This approach to enhancing accessibility information would form a key action in support of the Government's ambition to make the UK the most accessible tourism destination in Europe by 2025, by delivering a step change in how the industry tackles a key barrier to disabled people participating in tourism.

### **II.3) Estimated date of publication of contract notice**

21 July 2023

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## **Section IV. Procedure**

### **IV.1) Description**

#### **IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)**

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: No

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## Section VI. Complementary information

### VI.3) Additional information

VE is proposing to enhance the availability and quality of accessibility information for tourism businesses in England, through two initiatives:

Lot One: A new Accessibility Guides preferred partner

Lot Two: The production of an accessibility features question set

It is anticipated that following the closure of the PIN and the review of the market testing questionnaires, the contracting authority may seek to publish an FTS Contracts Notice in July 2023. Any Contract awarded under the proposed procurement process will operate for a three (3) year term subject to extension up to a further two (2) years.

If you have recently registered on the Atamis eProcurement portal for another VisitBritain requirement, you can use the same account. If not, you will first need to register your organisation on the portal.

To register, you will need to:

1. Go to the URL: <https://visitbritain.force.com/s/Welcome>
2. Select 'Click here to register!'
3. Read and agree to the portal user agreement
4. Complete the registration form, providing information including:
  - The full legal name of your organisation,
  - Your company registration number,
  - Your DUNS number-a unique nine-digit number provided to organisations free of charge by Dun & Bradstreet.
  - Whether your organisation is a Small –Medium Sized Enterprise (SME)
  - User and contact details.

Once you have registered on the Atamis eProcurement system, you will be able to express your interest in this process.

To participate in this PIN process, suppliers should complete and return the PIN Market Testing Questionnaire no later than: 12 noon on Friday 7th July 2023.