



USAID | **JORDAN**
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Building Economic Sustainability through Tourism Project (BEST)

Request for Applications for Cooperative Marketing

TOURISM PARTNERSHIP FUND GRANTS PROGRAM

February 2016 – December 2016

Contract No. AID-278-C-15-00010

USAID Economic Sustainability Through Tourism Project (BEST)

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Request for Applications: Cooperative Marketing

Issuance Date: December 1, 2015

Application Deadline: December 30, 2015

Pre-application or concept papers awareness workshop

Monday, December 7, 2015 at 3:00 p.m.

Venue will be announced to registered applicants

Submit Concept Papers to: MarketingRFA@siyaha.org

COOPERATIVE MARKETING TO SCALE UP MARKET REACH AND DRIVE BOOKINGS

The USAID-funded Building Economic Sustainability through Tourism (BEST) Project is excited to announce this Request for Applications (RFA) for interested Jordanian inbound tour operators to be considered for receiving **one of ten available grants** for their cooperative marketing plans during the period of February 2016 – December 2016.

BACKGROUND

In the ever-competitive global tourism industry, developing and promoting customized customer-centric and experience-based packages is increasingly challenging. Visitor behavior in researching, considering, and booking trips is evolving quickly. Social media is taking over traditional ways of planning travel and bookings. Meanwhile, source market tour operators are developing sophisticated marketing techniques for segment and lifestyle groups. All this means that Jordan must employ equally sophisticated tourism marketing and communication strategies and techniques.

OVERALL USAID/BEST PROJECT APPROACH TO IMPROVING DESTINATION MARKETING

For Jordan to succeed in the competitive international tourism marketplace, it must increase demand by positioning itself as attractive, stable, and high value destination. BEST is working with the JTB and the tourism trade to implement modern marketing strategies, build internal market research, planning, entry and expansion strategies and utilize modern media and expanded cooperative marketing approaches. Furthermore, capacity to target specific high value segments, such as MICE (meetings and events), need to be built to capitalize on recent momentum in this area. The ultimate goal is to increase visitor arrivals and spending, reduce seasonality and expand visitations outside the capital. BEST will focus on activities that contribute to rebuilding market confidence in Jordan and attracting new visitors. Our approach focuses on supporting achievements of goals along the following five main areas:

- A. Improving Jordan's global image as a tourism destination to return to growth.

- B. Working with the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB) and the industry to increase demand from existing markets showing resilience and potential, and re-engaging in sensitive markets to improve perceptions and rebound arrivals.
- C. Supporting the industry to improve capacity in destination marketing and sales.
- D. Strengthening travel research capabilities of JTB and the industry through systems development, technical assistance and procurement of research from leading international sources
- E. Promoting new themed tourism experiences and activities.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Against a challenging backdrop of international tourism market for Jordan, innovative cooperative marketing and sales initiatives are needed. Through effective use of such cooperative marketing, Jordan can multiply the reach and impact of individual marketing efforts, and incentivize source market tour operators to co-invest with Jordan in promotional and sales campaigns. This collective approach must be designed to yield increased demand for the industry as a whole by positioning Jordan as an attractive, stable, and high value destination.

PURPOSE OF THE REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

BEST is seeking interest from inbound tour operators to apply to receive grants in order to co-fund, **up to 35% or JD 25,000 (whichever is lower)**, of their cooperative marketing or sales-mission activities in selected source markets that satisfies **all** of the following objectives:

- Increase awareness and consideration of the tourism experiences and products available in Jordan by promising source markets and rising market niches;
- Boost demand for targeted market segments and niches by travelers considering visits to Jordan;
- Provide compelling reasons for target audiences to come to Jordanian destinations and undertake the experiences and products featured;
- Offer a clear “Call for Action” process and platform to enable consumers to convert their interest into direct bookings.
- Strengthen relationships with Jordan’s key source markets, including strengthening and expanding network of source market tour operators and travel agents

INNOVATION IN APPROACH

USAID/BEST encourages innovation in approach. Demonstrating innovation in approach can earn applicants up to **10 points** in their overall evaluation score.

Examples of innovative approaches and tactics can include, but are not limited to, those that:

1. Utilize digital and social media to increase reach and conversion
2. Find new ways to engage and capitalize on networks of influencers in target source markets
3. Effectively use high-traffic public areas in source markets to conduct promotional activities that can produce viral content
4. Create unique local content that has high propensity to go viral in multiple source markets

5. Forge partnerships among several Jordanian and foreign tourism trade actors that result in enhanced marketing of Jordan for generating sales and increased arrivals

APPLYING AND CONSIDERATION

We encourage all inbound tour operators to participate either individually or as part of a consortia. Such consortia may include 1) two or more local inbound tour operators, 2) local inbound tour operator(s) and hotel(s), 3) inbound tour operator(s), hotel(s) and airline(s), 4) inbound tour operators and outbound tour operators in source markets, or others.

Interested inbound tour operators and/or consortia are required to complete and send their application in **hard and soft (electronic) copies**. BEST anticipates awarding up to **ten grants** for the **February - December 2016** period. Applications will be considered on a first come, first served basis. Amendments to rounds and/or number of grants solicited and/or awarded may be done at the discretion of the BEST Project.

The following are eligibility and consideration conditions for applicants:

- Active membership with the Jordan Tourism Board;
- Proof of partnership-readiness between applicant, international counterparts in the source market, or other local tourism service provider(s), as applicable, that clearly defines the scope and financial contribution/commitment of each party;
- Proven experience and/or previous participation in sales missions with at least one local partner, or in cooperative marketing with at least one international tour operator;
- Must have successfully produced no less than **7000** room nights in 2014;
- Demonstrate an ethical approach to business. USAID BEST highly values ethical approach in doing business. As such, applicants must adequately demonstrate that the international tour operator(s)/agents targeted in the proposed plan are either new i.e. selling Jordan for the first time, or an already existing partner. This is designed to ensure the activity(ies) supported are not designed to replace one Jordanian DMC or tour operator with another.
- Must submit a comprehensive proposal that includes all the required information, and in the correct order, as requested in the following section

Failing to abide by all the previous conditions will automatically disqualify the application. The applicant will be notified as such.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS AND AWARD

The applications will be reviewed by a panel comprised of BEST staff members, which may also include external expertise. Only eligible applications will be assessed for their technical and financial soundness. The applications that score highest may be considered for award and a resulting grant agreement can be signed detailing the process and procedure for dispensing the grant funds and/or support. This solicitation may be cancelled at any time without stating the reason for doing so, and the BEST Project assumes no responsibility for burden or costs incurred by applicants or prospective applicants in preparing their projects or applications.

Grantee will be reimbursed upon achievement of an agreed set of milestones. Please see annex for a description of these grants.

A. Grant Application Processing Information

Applicants must propose strategies for the implementation of the program described above, introducing cooperative marketing techniques that are appropriate to their organizational strengths. This is a one-stage application process requiring a submittal of a complete grant application. The application shall be comprised of an applicant's submittal of the following information, provided in clearly marked sections:

Part I: Information on Planned Activity

1. Planned Activity:

- Type of activity; cooperative marketing or sales mission.
- Overview of the activity, indicating innovation in approach
- Target source market(s)
- Planned start and duration
- Number of overnight visitors from the targeted source market(s) expected.
- Planned activity(s), anticipated to reach and target audiences under the coop/sales mission: (e.g. utilizing printed brochure, email campaign, social media campaign, special promotions, B2B function with source market agents, etc.)
- Anticipated increase in bed nights in the first year of implementation
- Anticipated increase in long term staff employed by the applicant as a result of anticipated increase in demand

2. Partnerships

- Identify local and/or international partner(s) as applicable, and provide a brief summary about their business/operations. Summaries must indicate: previous cooperative marketing or sales partnerships and their results, types of services provided, years in business, destination/source market they have marketed to/from, number of travelers per year targeted through campaigns, experience in specific niches, segments, and number bed nights hosted in Jordan over the past 5 years.

3. Financial Investment

- Amount and type of investment by each partner (cash, in-kind). In-kind contributions pertain to investments made by partners or other consortium members.
- Breakdown of the investment made by each partner

4. Measuring results:

- Suggested method the applicant is planning to use to measure, document and report back the increase in bed nights during the first two years after implementing the activity.
- Suggested method the applicant is planning to use to measure, document and report back the increase in employment during the first two years after implementing the activity.
- Signed document confirming the applicant's willingness and commitment to providing USAID BEST with such information on quarterly basis

Part II: Information on Applicant

1. Applicant Profile:

- Date of establishment
- Location(s) of offices
- Registration papers to be attached
- Number of full time staff
- Unique selling proposition
- Source markets targeted
- Niches and market segments targeted within source markets

2. Past Performance/Experience:

- Number of overall bed nights produced in the last five years, where applicable
- Details pertaining to previous cooperative marketing programs initiated. For each cooperative marketing activity completed, please include the following: year, source market, partner(s), investment made by you and partner(s), results achieved.
- Details pertaining to previous sales mission programs initiated. For each sales mission completed, please include the following: year, source market, partner(s), investment made by you and partner(s), results achieved.

B. Submission Information

- Applications shall be submitted in English or Arabic and may not be more than five pages.
- Applications must demonstrate how they contribute to achieving project objectives listed in above.
- Applications (technical and budget proposals and supporting documentation) should be submitted in electronic AND/OR hard copy to USAID Building Economic Sustainability through Tourism Project (BEST) Shmeisani – 66 Nasser bin Jameel Street – Fax 06-5200556, MarketingRFA@siyaha.org.
- The BEST Project offices at the address above and should reference “RFA: Cooperative Marketing”.

INQUIRIES AND CLARIFICATIONS

USAID/BEST and JTB will hold a briefing seminar on **December 7, 2015 at 3:00 p.m.** to provide a wider overview on the RFA and respond to questions and inquiries. All applicants interested in attending this seminar should send an email to MarketingRFA@siyaha.org by no later than **December 3, 2015** to confirm their attendance. Venue will be advised. A recap of the questions and answers will be shared with attendees. Should interested applicants not be able to attend the seminar, questions can be submitted to the same email address in accordance with the **RFA Timeline** below. No phone calls will be entertained.

RFA TIMELINE

RFA Released.....	December 1, 2015
RFA seminar.....	December 7, 2015
Deadline for written questions submitted.....	December 14, 2015
Answers to submitted questions.....	December 21, 2015
Applications due.....	January 15, 2016

EVALUATION CRITERIA

At the discretion of JTB and BEST, the following criteria will be used to assess the viability of the applications. Full documentation is required to prove and ascertain the provided numbers.

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Points</i>
<i>Applicant Credentials and Past Performance</i>	20
Proven past experience in cooperative marketing and/or sales missions	10
Number of bed nights produced in Jordan by the applicant (or consortia of applicants) in the past 5 years	10
<i>Feasibility of Design and Technical Approach</i>	35
The viability of the proposed campaign and appropriateness of the proposed methodology. I.e., the proposed technical approach can reasonably be expected to produce the intended outcomes	25
Innovation in approach	10
<i>Results</i>	25
Impact and reach to target audience	5
Number of expected bed nights achieved as a result of campaign implementation	15
Expected increase in job/employment opportunities as a result of campaign implementation over next two years after implementation	5
<i>Cost Effectiveness</i>	20
Planned cash or in-kind investment by applicant (or consortia of applicants)	20
<i>TOTAL</i>	100

These merit review criteria elements are described more fully below.

A. Applicant Credentials and Past Performance.

1. *Previous or ongoing experience implementing cooperative marketing and/or sales missions.* Evidence of the capability to undertake and accomplish the proposed activities and positively influence an increase in number of bed nights produced by cooperative marketing campaigns or sales missions. The application should demonstrate the organization's effectiveness in terms of internal structure, technical capacity, and key personnel in meeting past marketing goals from cooperative marketing and/or sales missions. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability. **(10 points)**
2. *Number of bed nights produced by the applicant (or consortia of applicants) in Jordan in the past 5 years.* This examines an Applicant's experience, measured by proof of ability to generate bed-nights over the past 5 years, which is a critical factor in assessing the capacity of the inbound tour operator organization to implement the activity. **(10 Points)**

B. Feasibility of Design & Technical Approach.

1. *The viability of the proposed campaign and appropriateness of the proposed methodology.* This assesses the quality and feasibility of the application in terms of whether the proposed technical approach can reasonably be expected to produce the intended outcomes, appropriateness of the proposed methodology, and the work plan for achieving project objectives to offer significant impacts on number of bed-nights in response to proposed campaigns and sales missions. The technical approach must directly contribute to the achievement of the BEST Program's expected results and performance under the activity, and must be measurable under one or more of the BEST Program's indicators for destination marketing. **(25 points)**
2. *Innovation in approach.* Evaluation of the applications use of innovative approaches, which may include new or untried approaches with promise. Innovative approaches may also include deployment of modern marketing techniques that have proven to be effective but will achieve scaled up impacts, such as reach and prominence. **(10 points)**

C. Results.

1. *Impact and reach to target audience.* The extent to which the proposed activity corresponds to effective messages reaching the target group(s) and the degree to which it will directly or indirectly stimulate multiple impressions. **(5 points)**
2. *Number of expected bed nights achieved during the campaign implementation and 12 months after conclusion.* Based on number of bed nights proposed resulting from the activity and validated by the technical approach. **(15 points)**
3. *Expected increase in job/employment opportunities over next two years after implementation.* Based on number of jobs proposed resulting from the activity and validated by the technical approach. **(5 points).**

D. Cost Effectiveness.

1. *Planned cash or in-kind investment by applicant (or consortia of applicants).* Based on amount of funds leveraged resulting from the activity and validated by the technical approach. Also measures the degree to which budgeting is clear and reasonable and reflects best use of organizational and grant resources. **(20 points)**

ANNOUNCEMENT

BEST anticipates around two weeks for proposals reviewing process. Based on the final score, shortlisted applicants with highest overall score will be contacted for a discussion of the proposed plan to a panel which may consist of USAID, USAID BEST Project and other relevant partners, as may be determined. Based on the application and presentation, a decision will be made and applicant awarded. Anticipated awarding time is end of February 2016. Changes to the anticipated timeline will be announced on our website.