

# REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS

## PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES TO PROMOTE ARMENIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM

### I. BACKGROUND

Solimar International (contracting agency) is a sustainable tourism consulting and marketing firm with the mission of helping businesses, travelers, and destinations develop and connect to sustainable tourism experiences that support environmental conservation, preserve cultural heritage, and enhance the lives of local residents.

Solimar is working for Smithsonian Institution to implement the My Armenia Program, a joint partnership between USAID and the Smithsonian Institution to harness the power of research, documentation, and storytelling to strengthen cultural sustainability through community-based tourism development. The primary goals of this five-year program are to build cultural heritage tourism in Armenia so as to increase the number of tourist visits, increase spending and days stayed per tourist with an emphasis outside of the capital, and create new job opportunities for Armenians.

### II. DESCRIPTION OF REQUIRED SERVICES

In June and July 2018, Smithsonian's annual Folklife Festival on the National Mall in Washington, DC will showcase Armenian cultural heritage as part of a larger program featuring additional countries and world regions ([festival.si.edu](http://festival.si.edu)). The Festival is expected to attract up to 1 million visitors who will have an opportunity to explore Armenian culture through food and feasting, craft, music and other festivities. The main objectives of the required services is to leverage the Folklife Festival and related events in order to:

1. **Increase awareness** of Armenian cultural heritage and tourism experiences by leveraging the story of the 2018 Smithsonian Folklife Festival
2. **Generate demand, interest and media coverage** for Armenia's cultural heritage and tourism offer among target travel markets
3. **Create sales linkages** between Armenian and US tour operators

Additional details can be found in Attachment A: Scope of Work.

### III. TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

Date	Activity	Deliverable
April 16	Agency contracted	Inception meeting
May 1	Target participants identified for business-to-business (B2B) sales events in DC, NY and LA and shared with Solimar	List of tour operators to be invited to B2B events in DC, NY and LA
May 1	Target participants identified for media events in NY and LA and shared with Solimar	List of press representatives to be invited to media events in NY and LA
May 15	Influencers recruited by PR Agency	Influencer biographies and Scope of work (Solimar will contract Influencers)
May 15	Venues identified for NY and LA events	Service agreements with event venues
June 11 - June 15	Influencer trip	Influencer impact report
June 26	B2B sales event, NYC	Event summary report
June 27	Media event, NYC	Event summary report
June 29	B2B sales event, DC	Event summary report
July 2	B2B sales event, LA (morning)	Event summary report
July 2	Media event, LA, (evening)	Event summary report
September 3	Media follow-up completed	Earned media impact report
September 3	Tour operator follow-up completed	Tour operator outreach report
October 15 <sup>th</sup>	Compile report on all earned media resulting from the campaign	Final Impact Media Report

### IV. AGENCY QUALIFICATIONS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

The assignment is available to agencies with the following minimum capabilities:

1. **Relevant Experience/Past Performance.** The contractor must have demonstrated success developing and managing a public relations and influencer campaign on behalf of a tourism destination or travel brand; demonstrated ability to organize travel trade events; positive working relationship with consumer travel press as demonstrated through success generating earned media in a major travel media

outlet for a tourism destination or travel brand (provide examples); and deep familiarity with the international tourism industry.

2. **Key Personnel.** Provide resumes of the primary individuals that will be assigned to this project.
3. **Technical Competence.** Applicants must provide a brief proposal narrative explaining the Agency's approach to satisfying the requirements of the SOW within this timeframe as well as plan for tracking travel trade and earned media impacts.
4. **Price.** Bidders should provide agency fees to implement SOW, including a list of staff assigned to the project. Bidders should also include a detailed travel budget for travel to New York, Washington DC and Los Angeles as applicable.

## V. QUOTATION FORMAT

To ensure timely and fair consideration of responses, respondents are asked to adhere to the following response format:

Quotation section	Content/deliverables
1. Executive summary	High-level summary of the most important aspects of your approach, including a short explanation as to your qualifications.
2. Table of contents	
3. Agency overview	Provide staff bios or CV's and locations for team members who would support this account; indicate number of years and nature of agency's experience in the tourism industry.
4. Agency experience	Provide no fewer than four examples of successful work generating earned media on behalf of tourism destination or travel brand; provide example of ability to implement an influencer campaign; provide example of ability to stage media and travel trade events.
5. Budget	Provide agency fees to implement scope of work, including list of staff assigned to account, rates and level of effort. Budget should include travel for required agency staff to participate in sales and media events in Los Angeles, Washington DC and New York. Events will take place over a 2-day period in New York and LA and one day in Washington DC (only the B2B event).

Quotations should be submitted by email in PDF format to [recruitment@solimarinternational.com](mailto:recruitment@solimarinternational.com). Proposal files that exceed 25 MB will not be accepted.

## **VI. DUE DATE**

Proposals are due by close of business on April 2, 2018. Questions can be submitted by email to [recruitment@solimarinternational.com](mailto:recruitment@solimarinternational.com) until March 27. Answers to all questions will have a response by March 29<sup>th</sup>. Questions and responses will be disseminated openly to all interested parties by this date. To receive responses please email the above email address stating that you are interested in receiving the responses to questions.

## **VII. CONTRACT**

A contract will be customized through negotiations. The scope of work will include specific performance standards.

## **ATTACHMENT A**

### **SCOPE OF WORK**

The Contractor will implement activities as detailed in the following Scope of Work in order to achieve three main objectives.

#### **Detailed Activities per Objective**

##### **1. Increase awareness of Armenian cultural heritage and tourism experiences by leveraging the story of the 2018 Smithsonian Folklife Festival**

With direction from Solimar International, the Agency will be expected to plan and execute a social media influencer campaign to raise awareness about Armenian cultural heritage and tourism offer as well as the Smithsonian Folklife Festival's. Influencers will create and distribute content showcasing Armenian cultural heritage tourism to encourage followers to learn more about travel to Armenia, including Armenian travel websites, website of Armenian tour operators, and social media campaign landing pages. Specific activities include but are not limited to:

- a. Identify and recommend to Solimar 3-5 key influencers to participate in a trip to Armenia with Smithsonian curators as they prepare for the Folklife Festival. Recommended influencers should have an extensive reach in cultural traveler and/or Armenian diaspora markets;
- b. In partnership with Solimar, develop a scope of work for these influencers that should include requirements on a minimum number of posts or pieces of content developed. Solimar will contract the influencers and pay for travel logistics, however the Agency will be responsible for supervising their work and ensuring satisfactory completion of the scopes of work;
- c. Develop communications guidelines and key messages for social media content, and distribute them to influencers;
- d. Track key metrics and report impact of influencers' work as defined in the contract terms, to ensure they are achieving the objective of increasing awareness of Armenian cultural heritage tourism.

##### **2. Generate demand, interest and media coverage for Armenia's cultural heritage and tourism offer among target travel markets**

Leading up to and during the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in June and July 2018, the agency will work with Solimar to generate story concepts about Armenian cultural heritage and tourism experiences in the country. The agency will then proactively pitch story ideas about Armenian cultural heritage and tourism to key contacts in the travel and Armenian Diaspora media to garner earned media in both traditional and non-traditional outlets. Activities include but are not limited to:

- a. Develop and maintain a database of relevant media contacts to target for story pitches and media events;
- b. Organize and manage trips for a delegation of Armenian tour operators and other representatives to New York City and Los Angeles where the Agency will:
  - i. Coordinate desk-side meetings between members of the travel media, and representatives of the Armenian tourism industry in both cities;
  - ii. Plan and execute a media event for consumer travel media and travel industry media,
- c. Prepare and distribute a press release following each of the two media events in NYC and LA, after review and approval from Solimar;
- d. Following the media events, agency will conduct follow-up meetings and phone calls with media representatives to encourage them to pursue stories about Armenian tourism and cultural heritage;
- e. Note that no media event is required in Washington DC.

### **3. Create sales linkages between Armenian and US tour operators**

With direction from Solimar International, the Agency will be expected to plan and execute three B2B sales and networking events, one in New York City, one in Washington DC and another in Los Angeles, for members of Armenia's inbound tourism industry to travel to these events and meet tour operators, travel agents, and other relevant members of the US outbound travel industry. Activities include but are not limited to:

- a. Organize all logistics related for a delegation of Armenian tour operators to participate in both sales B2B and media events. Participating tour operators will be responsible for the cost of their own travel.
- b. Develop and maintain a database of relevant travel trade contacts in these three target destinations (NYC, DC and LA);
- c. Find an appropriate venue for B2B events in each city, and ensure that necessary audio-visual and other equipment is available;
- d. Identify target contacts to participate in events and distribute invitations, following up directly as necessary to ensure attendance of a target of at least 35 qualified travel trade representatives at each event;
- e. Submit brief summary report of B2B events.

### **Solimar International Responsibilities**

Solimar will be responsible for the following activities as they relate to the above SOW:

- a. Contracting Influencers and organizing travel logistics to and within Armenia (Agency is responsible for recruiting and managing Influencers)
- b. Recruiting Armenian inbound tour operators to attend events in NYC, DC and LA, including their travel logistics
- c. Travel logistics for its own staff to these events outlined in this SOW
- d. Working with Agency on story pitches

- e. Approving press releases and other publicly disseminated information

### **Administrative and Account Management Responsibilities**

As part of the overall scope of work, the Agency will be expected to:

- a. Provide a mailing address, email address and phone number to perform the contracted functions. Individual or agency will be expected to provide a computer and all other office equipment necessary to perform contracted functions;
- b. Communicate with contracting agency to provide account management needed to fulfill contract functions;
- c. Represent contracting agency in communications with members of the consumer travel media, travel trade media, and social media influencers;
- d. During the contract period, prepare brief monthly updates as well as a final report with a summary of all work completed and the impact thereof. The report should include a recap of earned media results with copies of clips generated as well as an impact report of social media reach, impressions, and other relevant metrics;
- e. Provide brief monthly report on media impacts from the work conducted during the contract period. The reports should include a recap of earned media results with copies of clips generated as well as an impact report of social media reach, impressions, and other relevant metrics for the quarter.