

Request for Proposal

Grow Your Region Web Portal Project

**Issued by Verona Thibault, Executive Director
Saskatchewan Economic Development Association**

Issue Date: May 31, 2010

Closing Date: June 15, 2010 5:00 p.m. Local Saskatchewan Time



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I. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to identify and select the most qualified proponent(s) to develop an inaugural brand and web portal for Grow Your Region (GYR) as outlined in this RFP.

Consultants should specialize in creative design and website development. To be eligible to respond to this RFP, consultants must demonstrate that they are a firm with significant experience in branding and website development. The consultant must demonstrate that they, or those assigned to the project, have successfully completed services, similar to those specified in the Project Scope section of this RFP.

This is an open and competitive process. SEDA desires to issue a contract to a single qualified consultant to lead the Project.

II. Organizational Overview

The Saskatchewan Economic Development Association (SEDA) is the *Pathfinder for Pathfinders*. We are a network and information provider linking all facets of community and economic development. SEDA assists communities to grow and direct their economic future via management and delivery of province wide programs and services.

Formed in 1983, the Association is a provincial not-for-profit organization governed by a volunteer board of ten directors. SEDA maintains offices in Saskatoon and is supported by an Executive Director and four contracted staff.

SEDA serves the following clients directly:

- Community and economic development practitioners, volunteers and their organizations;
- Private sector and industry;
- Municipal, provincial and federal governments;
- Participants in education delivery and conferences;
- Funding and strategic partners.

Indirectly, we aim to assist all residents of Saskatchewan as we work to fulfill our mandate.

III. Project Description and Goals

SEDA is the lead agency tasked to develop and implement the *Grow Your Region* web portal. We are seeking a vendor to develop the inaugural brand and web framework for this product. Grow Your

Region is a provincial web portal designed to assist community and economic development practitioners, all levels of government, institutions and community leaders in creating forward-thinking community and economic plans, and to illustrate mechanisms for leveraging regional assets to enhance the competitiveness of their communities.

The website will include a variety of data indices, calculators, best practices, curriculum, online forums and multimedia resources(live and recorded). The web portal will allow users to source information by region as well as provide information applicable to the province at large. Ecommerce and online advertising options will also be incorporated into this portal.

Specific Project Goals:

- a) Provide a comprehensive and accessible package of data, strategies and tools to support community and economic development;
- b) Provide a highly utilized gateway and information resource;
- c) Promote capacity building via identification and linking of regional networks (we will map the organizational assets of each of the sixteen enterprise regions and feature their coordinates online);
- d) To support enhanced collaboration between communities and regional stakeholders;
- e) To encourage and promote community and economic literacy;
- f) To promote economic prosperity within the communities and regions of Saskatchewan;
- g) To engage public, private and non-governmental partners in the development and maintenance of *Grow Your Region*.

Defining Project Success:

- a) The end product will be a high quality online vehicle that engages and retains visitors;
- b) We will meet our targeted Phase I timeline to market;
- c) The project will remain on budget.

IV. Scope of Work and Deliverables

1. Branding and Marketing Requirements

This website will be the first touchpoint for a new entity. Thus the initial step will be a Brand Design Program. The vendor must:

- a) Deliver an Analogous Brands Audit of the brands of existing organizations in a similar market space;
- b) Use existing data to develop a Brand Brief including a Positioning Strategy which will align the Grow Your Region vision with the end users' experience;

- c) Design the key elements of the brand for meaning, differentiation, flexibility & durability. Elements designed with the Content Framework in mind need strong cross-media compatibility; considering print, video and environmental touchpoints:
 - o Develop a Color Palette including reasonable RGB, CMYK and Spot compatibility;
 - o Propose Naming of elements, services, tools and programs to support the brand identity;
 - o Design Brand Mark(s): Logo(s), Wordmark(s) and/or Signature(s) as appropriate;
- d) Produce a Style Guide to give direction to subsequent in-house work and brand management follow-through;

2. Content Requirements

Our goal is to create a dynamic and visually appealing site that fully sells the brand and value proposition. User engagement is key to the success of this website with fast and friendly navigation capability.

This web portal will feature a high volume of content and data. Content will be new and not exportable from another online vehicle. Content will be provided to the vendor by SEDA most often in excel and/or word formats. Multimedia (including flash, audio, video) will be incorporated into the site. The vendor may be required to provide stock photography.

Post launch, ongoing content and database updates will be conducted by SEDA staff and as such, the vendor must provide documentation and training to SEDA staff for this function.

3. Functional Requirements

Web Content Framework

- Determine the main technological route, web technologies, methodologies and phases of work;
- Browser-based, user-friendly, secure CMS (Content Management System);
- While preference will be given to an Integrated Solution, responses involving Application Bridging will be considered;
- Develop an online planning tool , which takes the user through a set of questions, explanations and helps over several pages, providing updated progress feedback with each successive page, and resulting in a detailed, editable, customized and professionally designed document;
- Ready the framework for Social Media Integration;
- Public areas and Registered Member Areas(with self identified user registration and login capability);
- ACL (Access Control Lists);
- Implement Structured, Organized, Searchable Document Handling;

- Develop comprehensive, consistent Information Architecture to make content easier for visitors and content managers to find and use, improving transparency and information management;
- Design for rich content integration;
- Employ UCD (User-Centered Design) practices to develop an engaging UX (user experience);
- Client Training for CMS usage including follow-ups during months one and three after launch;
- Handle Search Engines Submission;
- Perform basic SEO (Search Engine Optimization).

Hosting and Maintenance

- We will be seeking a host for the portal;
- SEDA staff will assume responsibility for ongoing maintenance. Vendor must provide training and appropriate documentation to SEDA staff for this function.

Special Features

- GIF or Flash Banner Ads with usage tracking capability;
- Customized databases and associated data browsers;
- Real time and recorded tutorials and webinars.
- A range of software applications including page turning software; email marketing capability; database searches; list creation; forum functionality; online event registration; ecommerce; and social media.
- Provide necessary software and licenses to maintain the site internally or externally, as decided by SEDA.

Upon completion of site enhancements, SEDA will assume full responsibility for website content maintenance and administration. All content, coding and graphics will become the sole property of SEDA.

V. Websites Illustrating Functionality

The following websites illustrate one or more aspects of the functionality we are looking for in this project. Please note that these examples do not necessarily demonstrate the desired use of creative or engagement tools compatible with our project.

- a) **The Community Toolbox:** Functional navigation using plain language suitable for the general public <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/Default.htm>
 - o We like the use of interactive diagrams on the page *Use Promising Approaches*
 - o We like *Connect With Others – with Ask an Advisor (we would like this in real time chat as well)*
- b) **Know Your Region:** Live and recorded tutorials and videos; worksheets that can be utilized by website users <http://knowyourregion.wcu.edu/>

- c) **Innovation in American Regions:** Illustrates indices and databases similar to what Grow Your Region will be featuring <http://www.statsamerica.org/innovation/>
- d) **Community Information Database:** Census based data. Grow Your Region will link to this and other online databases <http://www.cid-bdc.ca/>

VI. Timeline

RFP Release Date: May 31, 2010

RFP Deadline for Submissions: June 15, 2010

RFP Interviews : June 18-29, 2010

RFP Award Contract (Approx): June 30, 2010

Branding development completed by July 30, 2010

Phase I Web Portal Live By: October 30, 2010***

NOTE: Some data collection will still be underway in fall of 2010 and we anticipate that certain functions of the portal may be phased in through to January 2011.

VII. Submission Deadline and Inquiry Contact

Please submit two (2) copies of your proposal along with one electronic copy in PDF format to the following attention prior to **June 15, 2010 by 5:00 p.m. Local Saskatchewan Time:**

Verona Thibault, Executive Director SEDA

Box 113 Saskatoon SK S7K 3K1

BY COURIER TO: 107-105 North Road Saskatoon SK S7N 4L5

Tel: 306-384-5817 Email: verona.thibault@seda.sk.ca

If you require further information about this RFP please contact Verona Thibault (above). Respondents are encouraged to obtain a clear understanding of the requirements, prior to completing submissions.

SEDA assumes no responsibility or liability arising from information obtained in a means other than those prescribed in this RFP.

VIII. Proposal Response Guidelines

To ensure your proposal is considered for evaluation, please include the following:

1. FIRM BACKGROUND

This section must include a brief description and history of each consultant's firm.

2. THE TEAM

This section must include a bio from each professional from the consultant's firm involved in the project. Bios should include relevant educational background and experience. The role of each member of the team should be outlined in detail, including a description of the expected time commitment of each member of the team.

3. RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Submissions must include a listing, description and samples of similar projects completed by the consultant's firm (and team if possible). The description must outline the goals of the project, a synopsis of the work completed by the consultant and an evaluation of the success of the project.

4. REFERENCES

Submissions should provide at least three references, including current contact information. References should include clients involved in website development projects.

IX. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed and the top three rankings will be contacted for an interview. The RFP will be awarded prior to June 30, 2010.

Key evaluation criteria will include:

- a. The experience and professional qualifications of the team members including related project experience, specifically with projects demanding technological requirements ;
 - b. Quality of submission. Demonstrated understanding of the project and ability to meet project goals and requirements;
 - c. Demonstrated ability to meet the project timeline;
 - d. Cost of services to be provided;
 - e. Other supportive considerations as documented by the firm submitting the proposal.
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X. Assumptions and Agreements

SEDA reserves the right to accept or reject any submissions and in addition, reserves the right to seek clarification from and to negotiate with any or all respondents regarding their submission.

All terms and conditions of this RFP are deemed to be accepted by the responding consultant and incorporated by reference in its submission.

SEDA will appoint one person, with decision making authority, to serve as a project manager.

SEDA will provide the required data and information for the successful completion of the project. Vendor may require to provide stock images as required.

A project plan to include key timelines and associated deliverables will be developed as part of the contractual agreement with the vendor. The contract will also stipulate the process for billing.

The vendor shall warrant that on delivery, all media are free of material faults and processing errors.

At the conclusion of the project, all materials developed by the project team will become the exclusive property of SEDA. In addition, any and all work sheets and other working documentation will also become the property of SEDA.
