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EUROPEAN UNION FOR ARMENIA

EU4Business

Գերմանական
համագործակցություն
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

implemented by
giz

Programme:	Private Sector Development and TVET South Caucasus EU4Business "Innovative Tourism and Technology Development for Armenia"
PN:	**16.2179.6-009.00**
Activity:	Design, development and maintenance of an Armenia destination website for the RA Tourism Committee
Duration:	**1. Design and development** – 25 weeks after contract signing estimated 17.05.-07.11.2021 **2. Maintenance and support** - 12 month after handover of the software estimated 08.11.2021-07.11.2022

1. Brief Introduction

The EU4Business "Innovative Tourism and Technology Development for Armenia" project started in November 2019 and will run until April 2023. It is co-funded by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and is being implemented by German Development Cooperation GIZ under the umbrella of the Private Sector Development and TVET South Caucasus Programme. The project is part of the EU4Business initiative (www.eu4business.eu) of the European Union. The EU4Business "Innovative Tourism and Technology Development for Armenia" project has an overall objective to foster shared and balanced inclusive growth in tourism and innovative industries. This will be achieved through a) transformative, innovative tourism ventures in the Northern regions of Armenia, b) support to high tech and innovative entrepreneurs, c) international knowledge exchanges for high tech researchers and entrepreneurs as well as tech start-up institutions and 4) networks for the benefit of entrepreneurship culture for students and general population groups.

The EU4Business "Innovative Tourism and Technology Development for Armenia" project targets two main directions: development of innovative tourism and of start-ups and existing investable and innovative technology ventures. Methods used will be competitions for grants, technical assistance by experts, community and stakeholder participation, and the entrepreneurial eco-system development.

The **first component** is focused on the **development of enhanced tourism offerings**, especially in the Northern regions leading to good jobs, sustainable businesses and responsible tourism value added. It foresees the conceptualization and implementation of three grant schemes focusing on tourism ventures. Furthermore, it includes the strengthening of the RA Tourism Committee, including supporting data driven tourism marketing activities.

The **second component** of the project is focused on **transformative creation and development of SMEs to enable diversification of economic growth**. It will also support the entrepreneurship ecosystem, as well as technology ventures through a grant scheme approach as well as through innovation partnerships between science, education and businesses, including innovative youth at universities and aiming at an increased participation in Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe grants.

2. Context and current situation in the field of assignment

The tourism component's **specific goal is the development** of an enhanced tourism offer leading to good jobs and sustainable businesses for a transformative and inclusive growth in the three northern regions of Armenia. **Under tourism sub-component 1.2, Pillar 2 -** Capacity development of tourism stakeholders and development of a strategic marketing framework - the project, among other things, plans to **support the RA Tourism Committee in the design and development of a new destination website, replacing the current www.armenia.travel,** which will serve as the RA TC's official communication channel to promote the uniqueness of Armenia in a creative, attractive and interactive way.

In this context and to thoroughly support the design, development and hosting of a new official tourism portal and plan according activities **the Project aims to commission a web development, hosting and maintenance assignment.**

The newly designed website should:
- Increase overall awareness of the destination Armenia on international markets
- Provide relevant information for international visitors to get interested in Armenia as a touristic destination and plan and/ or book a trip to Armenia
  (Convert website visitors into customers)
- Increase the overall average length of stay of visitors in Armenia

The new website should be well designed and user-friendly, comply with latest trends in user interface design and functionality and consider all special requirements of a tourism destination portal on national level. It is expected that the new website will become not only the virtual business card of Armenia but will also showcase Armenia in the best possible way to all interested parties.

It is not planned to sell tourism products directly via the website. Instead, it should inspire visitors start planning their trip to Armenia. Thus, the website should provide a satisfying user experience that will address the needs of any individual visitor to find relevant information about the destination. The website is, thus, expected to answer informational needs of various target groups – prospective and previous international visitors, domestic travellers, tour operators, travel agents, bloggers, media representatives and any other interested intentional and random visitor of the website.

3. Conditions of the assignment

3.1 Objective and tasks

- Develop an online platform, which can effectively position Armenia as a desirable place to visit, live, work and study through showcasing tourism destination Armenia's unique touristic assets
- Create a positive user experience, making it simple for website visitors to find and share information, encourage engagement between visitor and site, increase the number of repeat visits, drive lead generation and increase overall site traffic
- Deliver a comprehensive user-friendly website with advanced search functionality, that is adaptable in an ever-evolving global tourism industry and provides innovative tools that will allow Armenia to effectively compete with other tourism destinations in an increasingly digitalized world.

- Develop a website that can easily be viewed on different browsers and on all types of smartphones, tablets, desktop computers etc. Features of the website should include a responsive design, an easy-to-read experience, ability to play videos, fast download speed, sharing capabilities with social media sites, and menu access from any page.

Key website concepts/ requirements

- Clean, contemporary design
- Advanced user friendliness / enhanced user experience
- Excellent search engine properties on the site incl. incorporated search engine optimization (SEO) to assure high rankings in search engines
- Excellent navigation system / intuitive navigation
- Supports unobstructed play of high-resolution media (images and video)
- Optimized for all existing types of mobile devices
- responsive design
- Data driven
- Security measures in place
- Optimized to fast-load pages (4 seconds or less on an average computer)
- Prepared to incorporate minimum 6 languages

In line with the objectives and key website concepts/ requirements outlined above the EU4Business "Innovative Tourism and Technology Development for Armenia" project seeks to contract a qualified Armenia registered company to design and develop a new tourism destination website for Armenia. Draft and final versions of the offer must be provided in English.

Carrying out the job the contractor will be supposed to closely cooperate with a parallelly contracted creative agency to incorporate the developed brand identity elements (logo, color palette, fonts, etc.) into the look and feel of the website.

3.2 Target audiences

The new website will need to appeal to the following audiences with key audience objectives:

Target Audience	Objective	Positioning Goal
1. **New visitors**	Attract more visits, provide information, create interest	Great place to visit year-round
2. **Repeat Visitors**	New reasons to visit, repeat visits, lengthen time of staying	What else to see/do
3. **Visitors staying in Armenia**	Practical information on tourist attractions, authentic experiences nearby, health or emergency etc.	Trusted advisor

4.	**International visitors staying in Georgia or other neighboring countries**	Communicate the position of Armenia in proximity to Georgia/ neighboring country	All in one: easy reach, diverse experience, comfortable and budget accommodation, diverse kitchen, authentic experience
5.	**Domestic segments**	Unleash the hidden treasures	Armenia is a great place to live. And to explore.
6.	**Tour agencies, group travel organizers**	Inspire to include Armenia's existing and new tourism offerings in itineraries	Affordable, diverse experience
7.	**Long-term visitors (travel to work, travel to study, freelancers/ digital nomads etc.)**	Practical information on living (working, education, etc.) Co-working experiences in Yerevan and other regions	Great place to stay long-time and work, affordable, comfortable, different and beautiful

3.3 User Types

The website should be prepared for 4 types of users that are supposed to be able to operate the portal:

1. **Administrator** (Internal): has maximum authorization to modify the portal's content, granting/ revoking access to any other type of users.
2. **Publisher** (Internal): in charge of content creation and adjustments, other functionalities could be added to this user's authorization based on the website owner's requirements. This type of user would be managed by the Administrator for their rights.
3. **Media Repository user** (external): This user would be able to sign-up in the portal to be able to utilize materials in the Media Repository for marketing/ research purposes. The user should be able to sign-in with his/her own credentials and by stipulating the purpose of using the assets in the repository and by accepting terms and conditions. The user generation should be automated, and no mediation/approval would be needed.
4. **Blog author** (external): This user would be able to sign up into the portal to be able to publish a blog post that must be first approved by the Administrator/Publisher to go public.

3.4 Desired Functionality

- Multilingual. Website should support multiple languages
- Easy-to-use content management system (CMS)
- Analytics. Website should be able to integrate with analytics packages like Google Analytics
- Search. Website should have built-in search
- SEO optimized: Website to be based on SEO needs and rank top
- Security. Captcha, file upload and download sanitations
- Social media integration
- Functionality to support slideshows and carousels
- Ability to schedule time-sensitive content (events, calendar)
- "Add to my favorite" function
- Functionality to support and manage user generated content. The platform to integrate content and the pages to integrate with should be proposed by the Vendor. The client would have the final decision on these.
- Newsletter Subscription
- Interactive Map: An Interactive map should be integrated in the platform pages, be mobile adaptive. The best solution for the Interactive Map should be proposed by the Vendor.
- Integration should be done with TripAdvisor and/or any other relevant travel platform, such as Crowdriff, etc. The platform to integrate content and the pages to integrate with should be proposed by the Vendor. Client would have the final decision on these.
- Registered access to Digital Media Library (Video/photo stock with public copyright license) The licensing terms and conditions for each asset should be indexed in the Repository. Assets should be categorized based on the criteria and tags requested by the client besides their licensing terms.

The website draft architecture
Recommendations on the Website Layout should be proposed by Vendor.

Visual Content
- Interactive Tourist Attraction Map
- Stock images/video clips (downloadable)
- Videos
- Places of interests
- History
- Culture
- Travel Guidelines
- Events
- Authentic Travel Experiences (arts/crafts, food, dances, master classes)

Other
- Accommodation
- User generated content (Integrated third-party services)
- Blogging platform
- News and Updates

3.5   Deliverables and resources

The website structure should be user-centric, aim to be inclusive to all users, bearing in mind the wide range of visitors' interests and informational needs. The website must contain well-developed menus, descriptive, clear, and correctly located links.
The deliverables should include recommendations and suggestions on:

1.   Platform Strategy (recommendation on what technology to be implement based on website needs-assessment, third party integration, and technical capability. Recommendations on the best hosting opportunities).
2.   SEO strategy (set of technical recommendations about how to rank top)
3.   Maintenance and Support Strategy (set of preliminary maintenance recommendations)
4.   Project plan, including timeline for the entire scope of work. Methodology and planning process.

The selected company must ensure to show the work in progress to the responsible EU4Business ITTD team member and incorporate any changes as requested.

3.6   Scope of work

The scope of work (SOW) with detailed technical specifications shall be presented as Annex #1 which is an integral part to this Terms of Reference.

3.7   Website design

The newly developed website should follow latest trends in destination website design, without losing Armenia's unique personality. The website design should not be simple avoiding unnecessary design elements making the site difficult to navigate and understand. The look and feel should be consistent and uniform throughout the entire website. The user should be able to find the necessary and wanted information in maximum 3-4 clicks.

Tourism Destination websites considered good examples

- Finland - www.visitfinland.com/
- Iceland – www.visiticeland.com/
- Lithuania - www.lithuania.travel/en/
- Switzerland - www.myswitzerland.com
- Sweden - www.visitsweden.com/
- Laplandia - www.lapland.fi

3.8   Testing and Acceptance

All modules, layout and assets should be tested for functioning as per requirements in this Terms of Reference upon request anytime during the development phase. Security should be tested to detect and prevent backdoors, injection penetration, or other vulnerabilities.

3.9 Training and User Guide/ Manual

The vendor shall provide a training to a minimum three team members of the RA Tourism Committee to enable them to operate and update the website. The vendor shall develop a user guide/ manual for the website for all level of users.

3.10 Maintenance and Support

Bidders are requested to provide confirmation of their ability to provide ongoing maintenance and support and the costs associated with this for a period of 12-month from the date of official handover of the software.

3.11 Copyright and property rights

The RA Tourism Committee shall be entitled to all intellectual property and other proprietary rights including, but not limited to codes, documents and other materials which the Service Provider has developed under the Contract and which bear a direct relation to or are produced during the course of the performance of the Contract. The Service Provider shall take all necessary steps in transferring intellectual property (codes, documents, etc.) to the RA Tourism Committee.

3.12 Timetable

The contract period for the design and development of the destination website will be 6 months. Offers sent in after the deadline will not be accepted.

After a first round of evaluation shortlisted Bidders will be invited for a pitching session to introduce their approach, methodology and preliminary action plan (40min presentation + 20min Q&A per invited bidder) before the final decision is made.

Tasks & Deliverables	Number of Expert Days	Timeline deliverable
Preparation: preparatory meeting with EU4Business "Innovative Tourism and Technology Development for Armenia" project team and RA Tourism Committee team to study relevant background information, issue and handover outstanding information or documents **Deliverable**: Detailed Action Plan including detailed implementation schedule and activity plan, testing and acceptance plan, installation and implementation plan and training plan • Final technical requirements of the web-portal • Visual and Experience Design • Site map detailing • Prototyping	35	1st to 6th week
Implementation: Demo link for the results of the development **Deliverable:** Report on second stage	50	7th to 16th week
Implementation: scoping session **Deliverable:** reviewed and confirmed mockups, layouts	5	17th week
Implementation: Source codes. SSL certificates, installer package, testing and acceptance **Deliverable:** The final version of the web portal, migrated data, software package (including all source codes), all sub-systems, installer packages, configuration files, and all those components which are necessary for the system installation and operation (final tested and corrected version). Test report	30	18th to 23rd
Implementation: Content developer's manual, System administrator's manual and other documentation. Staff and web admins trainings **Deliverable**: workshop and training handouts, user manuals	5	24th week
Handover: Presentation of the website to the EU4Business "Innovative Tourism and Technology Development for Armenia" project team and Tourism Committee of Armenia **Deliverable**: ppt presentation	5	25th week
Implementation: maintenance and support contract signed[1] **Deliverable**: fully functional websites The bidder should quote a 12-month maintenance offer	5	25th week
Total	135	

4. Conditions and payment terms

The contractor's offer needs to include:

- The **Financial offer** requires the contractor to submit for consideration a summary of costs with respect to the above sections.
- The **Technical offer** requires the contractor to include (but not limited to):
  - Company profile
  - Sample of previous experience, clients and products
  - Timeline of products delivery
  - Solution architecture
  - System features and functionalities
  - Work plan approach, project development methodologies
  - Company staffing

No financial information should be contained in the Technical Proposal.

4.1 Payment terms:

- Interim payment
- Final payment upon satisfactory fulfilment of the contract

Payments for maintenance services will be done based on the Contract in equal amounts quarterly for a 12-month period. The invoice for maintenance services (plus the one-off migration cost) will therefore be due 3 months after the date of signing the Service Contract.

5. Coordination and communication

The Contractor reports to the Tourism Component Lead of the EU4Business "Innovative Tourism and Technology Development for Armenia" project and closely collaborates with the responsible Project Expert and the administrative support team within the project.

5.1 Submission Requirements and Required Credentials

The Bidder should possess and make available a good mix of experts and sufficient resources for the provision of the service with effectiveness, efficiency, quality, and professionalism. The Bidder's team should comprise an appropriate number of professionals with adequate experience and professional qualifications for the assignment. The Service Provider should demonstrate:

-good project management capability, accountability
-administration, and effective reporting
-flexibility and readiness to make adaptations/changes upon request

-proficiency in English (written and spoken)
-minimum of 5 years' experience in IT with a focus on the website and web-portals development
-workforce with related qualifications, as per Key personnel qualification requirements
-case studies of previous projects that are in support of the requirements of this project
-proven success in provision of innovative solutions to other clients (including international and/or state and governmental systems)
The details on required skill sets and desired team composition shall be presented in Annex #1 SOW which is an integral part of this Terms of Reference. Bidders shall be ready to allocate excessive resources (in addition to requirements) for quality excellency. The Bidder should provide client portfolio and a minimum of three references that proof the Bidder's expertise and experience

Note:

If restrictions are introduced to combat coronavirus/COVID-19 (restrictions on air travel and travel in general, entry restrictions, quarantine measures, etc.), GIZ and the contractor are obliged to make adjustments to their contractual services to reflect the changed circumstances on the basis of good faith; this may involve changes to the service delivery period, the services to be delivered and, if necessary, to the remuneration.