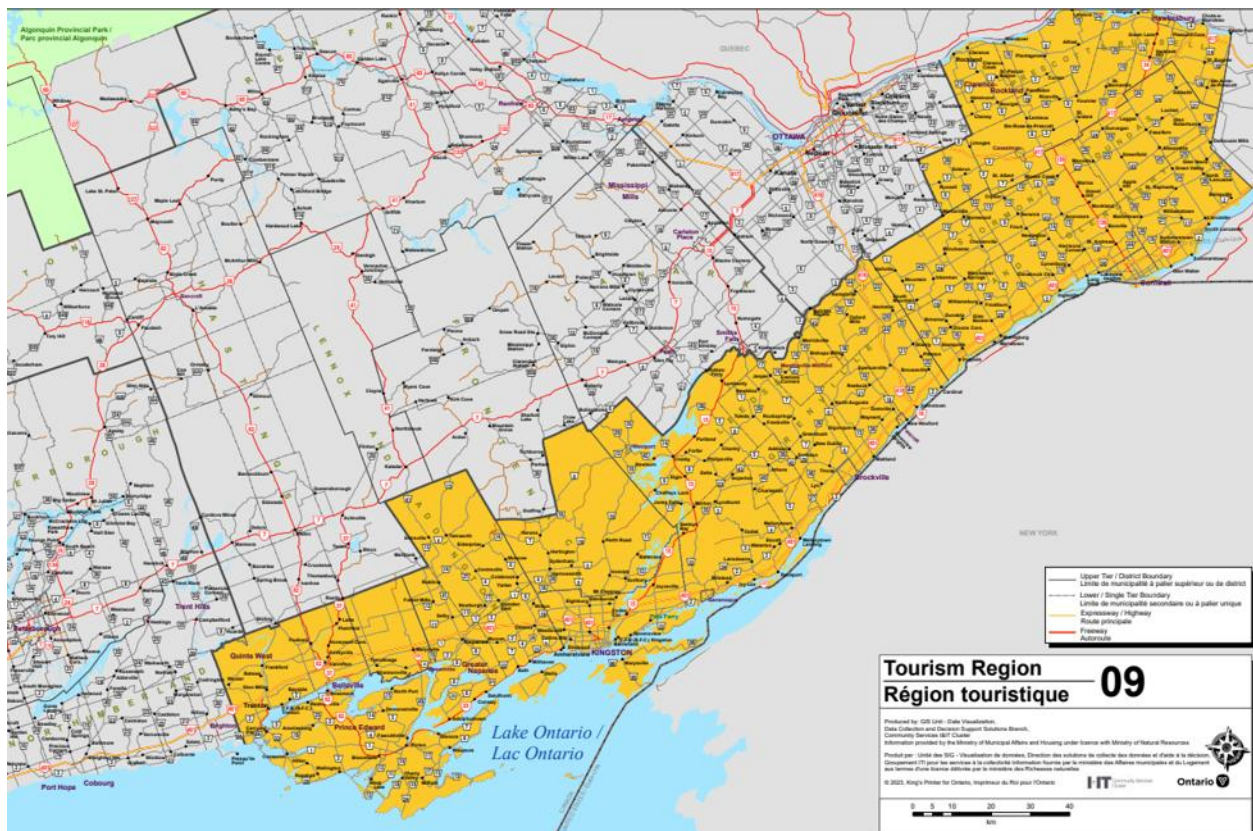


**REGION 9 REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION
RTO 9 - South Eastern Ontario**

Request for Proposal

Cycling Development Project

2026-06-12



Issued: June 12, 2026

Closing: July 3, 2026 @ 4:00pm (ET)



RTO 9
Request for Proposal
Cycling Development Project

Section	Table of Contents	Page
1.0	Project Overview	3
2.0	Background	3
3.0	Geographic Area of Region 9	4
4.0	Project Goals and Objectives	4
5.0	Resources	5
6.0	Deliverables	5
7.0	Process	6
8.0	Proposal Requirements and Submission Conditions	7
9.0	Selection Process	9
10.0	General Terms and Conditions	11

1.0 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Region 9 Regional Tourism Organization (RTO 9), South Eastern Ontario is seeking proposals from experienced consultants to advance the cycling product development and tourism potential in South Eastern Ontario.

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to engage a qualified consultant or firm to develop a comprehensive Cycling Development Strategy for the region. The strategy will assess existing cycling infrastructure, identify opportunities to enhance cycling experiences for residents and visitors, and provide actionable recommendations to strengthen the region's position as a premier cycling destination.

The successful proponent will undertake research, stakeholder engagement, and market analysis to identify priority investments, infrastructure improvements, route development opportunities, product enhancements, and partnership initiatives. The resulting strategy will establish a clear roadmap for growing cycling tourism, increasing visitor spending, supporting local businesses, promoting active transportation, and enhancing the overall quality of life within the region.

This project will focus on the destinations within RTO 9 that were not included in the Destination Canada ON + QC Cycling Corridor Project (Cornwall, SDG Counties & Prescott & Russell), and it will be developed to align with the research, recommendations and outcomes of the corridor project. The project will build upon existing investments and planning efforts, addressing identified gaps while maintaining consistency with established cycling development priorities. The end result will be a comprehensive regional cycling strategy/action plan that provides RTO 9 and their destinations with a framework to guide future cycling opportunities in South Eastern Ontario.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Building on the strategic insights of the 2009 *Discovering Ontario* report, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming moved decisively to operationalize a province-wide network of Regional Tourism Organizations. This marked a pivotal shift toward a more coordinated, market-driven tourism framework.

In fall 2010, Region 9 – Regional Tourism Organization was incorporated as a not-for-profit entity and convened its inaugural Board of Directors. Today, RTO 9 operates as a high-impact regional leader, advancing tourism growth through a focused mandate that includes product development, investment attraction, workforce development, marketing, and strategic partnerships. Through this integrated, regionally anchored approach, RTO 9 continues to strengthen competitiveness and deliver long-term value for the tourism sector.

For more information on RTO 9, please visit our industry website at www.RTO9.ca. Our consumer website is located at www.southeasternontario.ca.

3.0 GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF REGION 9

RTO 9 is in South Eastern Ontario, 2 hours' drive to Toronto in the West and 1 hour to Montreal in the East.

The geographic area of RTO 9 starts at the Quebec/Ontario border in the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry. It encompasses the United Counties of Prescott and Russell as well as the City of Cornwall and Akwesasne, a portion of the Mohawk Nation territory that straddles the intersection of international borders (United States and Canada). It travels westerly along the northern shores of the St. Lawrence Seaway to the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville and the eastern gateway of the 1000 Islands, starting at the City of Brockville, continuing through the Town of Gananoque to the City of Kingston. It encompasses the Township of Frontenac Islands, Township of South Frontenac, Township of Loyalist, Township of Stone Mills, Town of Greater Napanee, Town of Deseronto, Hastings County, located in the Township of Tyendinaga, the Cities of Belleville and Quinte West, and Prince Edward County.

The eleven (11 DMOs) destinations for RTO 9 are:

1. Prince Edward County
2. Bay of Quinte
3. Frontenac County
4. Lennox and Addington
5. Kingston
6. 1000 Islands Gananoque
7. Brockville
8. Cornwall
9. SDG Counties
10. 1000 Islands Rideau Canal Waterways
11. Prescott & Russell

4.0 PROJECT GOALS and OBJECTIVES

This project will support RTO 9's vision and mission statements:

- Vision – Tourism is a sustainable driver of social, economic, and environmental prosperity for the diverse partners working together in South Eastern Ontario.
- Mission – To nurture a regional ecosystem of tourism partners by providing valuable resources and strategic supports.

The goals and objectives are to grow the cycling industry in South Eastern Ontario and make it a destination of choice for tourists and visitors wishing to enjoy a quality cycling experience. It is also the goal of this project to educate the business community as to the economic value of cycling and the spin off benefits to the region.

5.0 RESOURCES

Submitting consultants should avail themselves of all statistical resources and general information about tourism including but not limited to and available at:

- Information about RTO 9 can be found at RTO9.ca and www.southeasternontario.ca
- [Statistics Canada Travel Survey of Residents of Canada \(TSRC\)](#)
- [Statistics Canada International Travel Study \(ITS\)](#)
- [Tourism Industry Association of Ontario \(TIAO\)](#)
- [Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Gaming Industries](#)
- [Destination Ontario](#)
- [Destination Canada](#)

Pertinent studies will be made available to the successful consultant, including:

- Cycle ON + QC Corridor Development Strategy
- Cycle ON + QC Corridor Implementation Plan
- Cycle ON + QC Corridor Investment Plan

6.0 DELIVERABLES

6.1 Situational Analysis and Asset Inventory

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing cycling tourism assets, infrastructure, routes, services, experiences, and supporting amenities across South Eastern Ontario.
- Inventory and assess road cycling, gravel cycling, trail-based cycling, and multi-surface riding opportunities, including opportunities for integrated route development.
- Identify existing and potential multi-day cycling itineraries/experiences, including hub-and-spoke route models and touring experiences.
- Review current market conditions, industry trends, visitor demand, and competitive cycling destinations.
- Identify strengths, gaps, opportunities, and barriers to cycling tourism growth.

6.2 Stakeholder and Industry Engagement

- Develop and implement a stakeholder engagement plan.
- Consult with municipalities, tourism operators, cycling organizations, economic development agencies, businesses, and community partners.
- Facilitate stakeholder workshops, interviews, and/or surveys to gather input and identify priorities.

6.3 Cycling Tourism Development Strategy

- Develop a comprehensive Cycling Tourism Development Strategy for South Eastern Ontario.
- Identify priority cycling tourism products, experiences, and infrastructure investments.
- Recommend initiatives that support increased visitation, visitor spending, overnight stays,

and tourism investment.

- Establish short, medium, and long-term implementation priorities.
- Identify and evaluate opportunities for new cycling tourism products, experiences, events, and infrastructure.
- Develop recommendations for multi-day cycling experiences, including hub-and-spoke touring models, destination loops, and regional route connections.
- Identify opportunities to enhance and promote gravel cycling, trail-based riding, and mixed-surface experiences in addition to traditional paved road cycling.
- Identify priority domestic and international target markets for cycling tourism growth.
- Assess opportunities to work with international tour operators, travel trade partners, receptive operators, and booking agents to increase market access and visitation.
- Recommend strategies to attract public and private sector investment.
- Develop business cases and investment attraction opportunities for priority projects.

6.5 Economic Impact and Business Education

- Prepare materials demonstrating the economic value of cycling tourism and its benefits to local businesses and communities.
- Identify opportunities for businesses to better serve cycling visitors and capitalize on cycling-related tourism spending.
- Develop recommendations for industry education and awareness initiatives.

6.6 Implementation Plan

- Develop an actionable implementation plan outlining recommended projects, timelines, responsibilities, resource requirements, and potential funding sources.
- Include performance measures and key performance indicators to track success and return on investment.
- Prioritize actions that support development of multi-day touring experiences, hub-and-spoke route networks, gravel and trail-based cycling products, and international market readiness.

6.7 Final Report and Presentation

- Submit a comprehensive final report summarizing research findings, stakeholder input, recommendations, and implementation strategies.
- Deliver an executive summary suitable for distribution to stakeholders and funding partners.
- Present the final strategy and recommendations to the RTO 9 Cycling Working Group.
- Include market development recommendations identifying priority domestic and international markets, travel trade opportunities, and strategies for engagement with tour operators and booking agents.

7.0 PROCESS

7.1 Work Plan

Upon awarding the contract, the successful vendor will prepare a detailed methodology which will take the form of a description of the steps to be followed to successfully meet the Project’s requirements and objectives.

The Work Plan will indicate the sequencing and staging of tasks, key decision points, public consultation requirements and expected completion date for each task and the interrelationship between the completion of the tasks and the preparation of the project deliverables. The Work Plan will be subject to approval by RTO 9 prior to the commencement of work.

7.2 Agendas/Minutes

Will be the sole responsibility of the successful consultant to prepare, record and distribute meeting agendas and minutes for all consultation meetings.

7.3 Progress Reports

Prior to commencement of work, a schedule for Progress Reports will be agreed upon by both parties as part of the written Work Plan (7.1). These written reports will highlight activities undertaken; results achieved and outline any unexpected delays or difficulties that arise as the project progresses.

7.4 Draft Reports

The successful consultant will submit electronic versions (MS Word Format) of a draft report for each project phase for circulation at agreed intervals and prior to issuing the final report. Based upon the feedback of the Draft Report, the successful vendor will make the appropriate changes as a result of input received from RTO 9 and incorporate them into subsequent versions.

8.0 PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS AND SUBMISSION CONDITIONS

8.1 Consideration

To be considered complete, RFP submission must be no longer than 15 pages in length, (excluding appendices) and must contain the following components:

- A description of the submitting proponent’s understanding of the assignment, including a description of the overall approach. The Project Plan should also include a detailed methodology, which should take the form of a description of the steps to be followed to successfully meet the project’s goals and objectives. This plan will indicate the sequencing and staging of tasks, key decision points, expected completion date for each task, and the interrelationship between the completion of the task and the preparation of the project deliverables.
- A detailed Work Plan and timing for completion.
- Details must be provided outlining the project management plan, including points of contact and reporting schedule.

- Name and qualifications of the submitting proponent’s Project Manager(s), as well as those for associates who may also be involved in the project.
- A statement indicating a willingness to sign a formal agreement.
- A statement of willingness and ability to complete the project within the time parameters.
- A full budget projection, a requested payment schedule, and a proposed completion schedule.
- Samples of relevant work (in appendices).
- At least three references (recent clients) who could be contacted as references for work of a similar nature (in appendices).
- Description of the project management process.

8.2 Submissions

E-mail submission is the preferred method of submission of proposals. If hard copies are submitted, an electronic version must also be provided. Proposals must be in PDF format when sent electronically. The proposal must be sent to the Executive Director no later than 4:00 PM ET on July 3, 2026. Complete contact information is in section 8.4. All proposals must be marked with the bidder’s name and reference the title of this project. Late submissions will not be considered.

8.3 Inquiries and Questions

Inquiries are welcomed up to and including noon of June 19, 2026. Inquiries should be made to the Executive Director as identified below. Inquiries must be sent by email, and responses will be posted on RTO9.ca by EOD June 23, 2026.

8.4 Project Management

Administration and reporting of the Project will be managed by the RTO 9 Executive Director who is the key contact for the Project.

Bonnie Ruddock, Executive Director
 Region 9 Regional Tourism Organization
 South Eastern Ontario
 829 Norwest Road
 Suite 403
 Kingston, ON K7P 2N3
 Phone: 613.329.2753
bruddock@region9tourism.ca

8.5 Budget

Please submit your budget to be inclusive of all travel costs and related expenses, and inclusive of HST. Any costs outside of this budget must be detailed in the proposal and will be considered through the evaluation process. This budget is for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. The project must be completed by February 1, 2027.

This project is contingent on funding approval from the [Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming](#).

9.0 SELECTION PROCESS

9.1 Mandatory Requirements

The following criteria are mandatory and considered to be prerequisites for prospective submitting consultants intending to respond to this RFP:

- The submitting vendor must be willing to sign a contractual agreement with RTO 9
- The submitting vendor must be willing and capable of meeting time parameters
- The submitting vendor must be willing to provide reports as requested
- All items under 8.0 Proposal Requirements have been met
- The absence of potential conflict of interest on the part of the submitting vendor and as determined solely by RTO 9

9.2 Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used to select a successful vendor:

- Demonstrated knowledge and relevant experience in South Eastern Ontario
- Quality of written proposal and understanding of the assignment
- Organization and adequacy of proposed work plan
- Proposed fees and total cost of proposal
- Extent of work proposed in relation to costs
- Expertise and relevant experience and time contribution of the project team members
- Satisfactory references related to involvement in similar types of projects

Proposals meeting all the mandatory criteria will be further assessed against desirable criteria as follows:

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points
Management Approach Maximum (10)	
Project Management and Communications	5
Quality Control, Assurance and Management	5
Consultant Team Maximum (20)	
Resource Availability	10
Demonstrated Knowledge, References and Relevant Experience	10
Proposal Specifics Maximum (70)	
Understanding of Project	10
Methodology	25
Added Value	5
Costing	15
Schedule, Milestones and Overview of Deliverables	5
Proposal Quality & Clarity	10
Total	/100

Consultants may be invited to interview for this contract if deemed appropriate.

9.3 Key Dates

- June 12, 2026 – RFP Distributed
- June 19, 2026 (noon) – Submission of Questions on the RFP
- June 23, 2026 – Response to Questions (posted on RTO9.ca)
- July 3, 2026, at 4:00pm – Deadline for receipt of submissions
- Week of July 6, 2026 – Proposals Reviewed
- Week of July 13, 2026 – Contract Awarded
- Week of July 20, 2026 – Initial Meeting with Successful Vendor

9.4 Required Information with Submission

Proposals must include:

- ✓ Samples of relevant work
- ✓ A detailed budget
- ✓ A description of the consultant's understanding of the assignment, including a description
 - of the overall approach, methods and techniques, and major information sources that will
 - be used to produce the deliverables
- ✓ A detailed work plan and timing for completion of the project
- ✓ Name and qualifications of the lead consultant for the project as well as those for
 - associates who may also be involved in the project
- ✓ A statement indicating a willingness to sign a formal agreement
- ✓ Names and telephone numbers of at least three recent clients who could be contacted as references for work of similar nature

9.5 Liability and Insurance

The Consultant may be required to secure and maintain during the terms of the Agreement the following:

- Comprehensive general liability insurance on an occurrence basis for an amount not less than two million (\$2,000,000) dollars;
- Automobile Liability Insurance for an amount not less than two million (\$2,000,000) dollars;
- Professional Liability – A Professional Liability Insurance Policy, in an amount not less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000);
- Errors and Omissions Liability Insurance: The Successful Respondent Errors and Omissions Liability Insurance, in the amount not less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000);
- Other Insurance – Any other type, (including special and specific project professional liability insurance) form or as otherwise may be required from time to time.

If the consultant does not have this insurance, they should declare it in the proposal of service.

10. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A) Acceptance of Proposals

This RFP neither expresses nor implies any obligation on the part of Region 9 – Regional Tourism Organization, to enter into a contract with any consultant submitting a proposal.

B) Rejection of Proposals

Region 9 – Regional Tourism Organization reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for failure to fully satisfy the selection team that the specifications and the requirements for the RFP have been adequately met. Any award resulting from this RFP is subject to the successful completion of a contract between the Consultant and Region 9 – Regional Tourism Organization.

C) Right to Amend

Region 9 – Regional Tourism Organization reserves the right to amend or supplement the RFP, giving equal opportunities to all consultants who have been invited to bid, by way of an issued addendum.

D) Acceptance or Non-Acceptance of Proposal

Neither the lowest priced nor any proposal shall necessarily be accepted, and the decision of Region 9 – Regional Tourism Organization is final. If Region 9 – Regional Tourism Organization decides to accept a proposal, then this acceptance and the making of an award will be in writing. Unless and until such written notification has been given, there is no successful consultant, and no award has been made.

E) Associated Costs

There will be no payment to consultants for the work related to and material supplied in the preparation of responses to this RFP.

F) Information

All information collected in report or digital form by the consultant shall be the provided to Region 9 – Regional Tourism Organization and will become the sole property of the Region 9 – Regional Tourism Organization.

G) Previous Communications

This RFP document contains the entire requirements relating to this RFP. Other information or documentation provided to a prospective consultant or obtained by a prospective consultant prior to the release of this RFP or any other time shall not have any force or effect.

H) Conflict of Interest

It is the consultant's responsibility to ensure that no perceived or real conflict of interest exists for any of the company's personnel involved in the study.

I) Cancellation of RFP

Due to unanticipated expenditure constraints, this RFP may be cancelled at any time without liability by Region 9 – Regional Tourism Organization to prospective consultants or to any other entity.

J) Authorization

To be considered a valid response, a consultant’s submission must be completed and signed by an authorized company official.

K) Irrevocable

Bid submissions will be irrevocable for a period of sixty days from the closing date.

L) Canadian Funds

Prices are to be provided in Canadian funds.

RTO 9, its employees, agents and consultants expressly disclaim any and all liability for representations, warranties expressed or implied or contained in, or for omissions from this RFP package or any written or oral information transmitted or made available at any time to a bidder by or on behalf of RTO 9. Nothing in this RFP is intended to relieve bidders from forming their own opinions and conclusions in respect to this RFP.