



Request for Proposals

Outdoor Recreation Industry Growth Strategy

Description

The Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development (CUPPAD) Regional Commission and Innovate Marquette (IMQT) are seeking proposals for a strategy consultant project leader capable of developing a regional *Outdoor Recreation Industry Growth Strategy*, focused on innovative and electrified outdoor recreation technology and mobility. This is the primary project component of a recently funded grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to support industry diversification efforts which have been driven by recent coal fired power plant closures. In the relatively recent past, the region, which is comprised of on the counties of Alger, Delta, Dickinson, Marquette, Menominee, and Schoolcraft, went through the process of developing economic resilience strategies, which pointed to outdoor recreation as both an area of strength, and a target for future growth.

The Outdoor Recreation Innovation Action Network (ORIAN) is a recently appointed public-private body that will serve as the steering committee for this project, offering advisory support and decision making when needed by the strategy development consultant. The ORIAN committee will be organized and led by a separate, locally based consultant facilitator. This facilitator will serve as the strategy consultant's local point of contact throughout the project.

CUPPAD and IMQT are seeking a planning or economic development consulting firm who would be capable of conducting a series of engagement meetings both virtually and in-person throughout 2024-2025 for the purpose of developing the *Outdoor Recreation Industry Growth Strategy*. The consultant will study the region and its assets, aided by an inventory of assets that the ORIAN committee will assemble, and work toward building a comprehensive strategy focused on the specific actions public leaders can undertake to support outdoor recreation business growth which will spur innovative technologies and electrified product development.

Proposals should demonstrate knowledge of the Central Upper Peninsula of Michigan, demonstrated economic development expertise, strong connections to outdoor innovation, broad familiarity with electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and outdoor recreation mobility.

Background

CUPPAD, a regional planning organization, is the U.S. EDA's designated Economic Development District for the central upper peninsula's six-county region. As part of that role, CUPPAD maintains a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which describes general priorities and development projects of the region and is one factor in enabling local partners to be eligible for federal funding. Two key priorities discussed in the CEDS include the need for greater economic diversification and supporting the transition away to more sustainable sources of energy. In 2019, the Presque Isle Power plant, located in Marquette County ceased operations while

taking approximately 70 jobs with it, enabling the region to become eligible for *Assistance to Coal Communities funding*, which this project is primarily funded by.

Recent economic planning has pointed to the outdoor recreation sector as a key regional strength which presents new unique opportunities for the Upper Peninsula as we begin to see the emergence of electrified vehicles. By developing a growth strategy that analyzes this emerging industry and provides detailed insights on the environment of the region, the region can learn what actions government and economic leaders can take to build the foundations that support growth and educate decision-makers about electrified mobility as it relates to outdoor recreation.

Innovate Marquette offers access to critical resources, mentorship, funding, talent and network collaboration to entrepreneurs, existing businesses and startups. As one of 20 SmartZones designated by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Innovate Marquette works with partners to create a thriving local entrepreneurial ecosystem. With an emphasis on technology-focused ventures in outdoor innovation, creative technology, and sustainable technology, Innovate Marquette aims to draw economic opportunity to the region and sustain an inclusive and approachable business community. Through a customized innovation journey and partnerships with the MEDC, City of Marquette, Northern Michigan University and other local economic development organizations, Innovate Marquette helps create a comprehensive network to support current and future economic development in the region.

Expectations

The selected consultant will be responsible for the development of the Outdoor Recreation Industry Growth Strategy. Over the course of this project, the consultant should make connections with industry leaders to gain their perspectives on the future of outdoor recreation in the Upper Peninsula. Proposals should address how they plan to incorporate guiding principles, such as environmental stewardship, cultural sustainability, and multi-modal connectivity into the formation of the plan. The consultant should plan on using a variety of engagement styles, offering both virtual and in-person options for meetings and stakeholder interviews.

Upon completion of the final draft, the consultant will provide a final presentation to regional stakeholders at an Outdoor Recreation Summit taking place during Q2 2025.

This is a work for hire project. All materials prepared by the contractor for this package of services will be the property of the funders.

Goals

- Work with the ORIAN facilitator to develop an asset inventory and map. In this case, we define assets broadly, encompassing the human capital, businesses, institutional resources, place-based assets, and infrastructure across our region.
- Collect data on regional economic conditions and the outdoor recreation industry, including assembling a focus group of industry representatives,
- Analyze trends and make projections regarding the region's growth, gaps, and opportunities relative to other specific geographies,
- Develop messaging for outreach and asset development efforts,
- Develop a baseline economic impact of outdoor recreation businesses,
- Provide a set of metrics to track growth in the industry,
- Develop goals, strategies, and recommended actions, and showcase case studies, and
- Recommend priority projects of the region.

Deliverables

- Draft and finalize an Outdoor Recreation Industry Growth Strategy
- Final slide deck presentation for the Outdoor Recreation Summit

Timeline

Timeline is estimated and deliverable focused. The project timeline is expected to be an approximately 10-month program taking place between the dates of July 2024 through May 2025.

- ORIAN collaborative formed: May 15, 2024
- Inaugural ORIAN meeting: May 29, 2024
- RFP Released: June 19, 2024
- RFP closes: July 12, 2024
- Consultant selections made and applicants informed: July 19, 2024

Budget

This project is financed with funds provided through the U.S. EDA. The contract for this project may be subject to approval by the U.S. EDA. CUPPAD and IMQT have budgeted \$275,000 for this component of the project.

Please be sure to include a basic outline of the program budget in the Cost Proposals section of the proposal.

Proposal Submission

CUPPAD will accept submissions from contractors who demonstrate a clear understanding of the proposed project in the context the Central U.P.

A complete proposal packet should include the following headings:

1. **Organization Overview/ Summary:** General information about your organization, including legal name, year of establishment, number of employees, and organizational experience and success directly related to the RFP content.
 - **Project Staff:** Identify the lead contact person for project implementation and including their applicable skills. Acknowledge that key staffing changes must be discussed/approved by Ryan Soucy, CUPPAD Senior Planner.
 - **Markets Served:** Description of geographic/industry markets you typically serve.
 - **Services:** Description of your services and core competencies.
 - **Experience Type:** Description of types of experience and how it relates to current project.
 - **Work Samples:** Identify current, relevant projects and samples and how they will enhance the campaign's success.
2. **Project Approach:** Describe how you will operationalize the RFP deliverables and how they directly inform the goals of the project. Describe how you will work with the ORIAN Committee and the committee's facilitator.

3. **Cost Proposal:** Present a draft budget including a breakdown of costs related to the deliverables and project oversight/administration. Budget should be broken down by task.
4. **Schedule and Required Information:** Timetable and information on written questions, contractual obligations and required clauses.

Please submit proposals electronically to Ryan Soucy, Senior Planner at RSOUCY@CUPPAD.ORG. **The deadline for the submission of proposals is Friday, July 12, 2024 at 5:00 PM EST.** If there are any questions regarding this RFP, please contact Ryan Soucy by July 11, 2024. An email confirming receipt of your submission will be sent within 24 hours. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals early to avoid any technical difficulties. Late submissions will not be accepted, no exceptions.

Selection Process and Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated according to the quality of the responses to the sections identified in the Proposal Submission section. Proposals will be evaluated by content addressing our unique regional circumstances, experience of the consultant, and ability to meet project expectations. Please ensure that your proposal is complete.

Proposals will be evaluated among a team of local partners on July 18th. A selected applicant will be contacted on July 19th. Firms not selected will be contacted the following week. Please do not call to check on the status of your proposal.

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

Criteria	Points
General completeness of the proposal relative to this RFP	20
Quality and relevance of work samples in portfolio	10
Consultant’s personnel capacity and experience	20
Expertise related to outdoor recreation and electrified mobility	10
Clarity and focus of project approach relative to deliverables	10
Consultant’s familiarity with the Central Upper Peninsula	10
Attention paid to climate impact and resilience	10
Overall project cost efficiency	10
Total	100