

Request for Proposals (RFP): Marketing and Branding Services

Issued By:

Celtic Business Development Corporation (CBDC Celtic)

Project: Irish Loop Tourism Development Initiative (2025–2028) – Phase 1

RFP Release Date: Friday August 22nd, 2025

Submission Deadline: September 30th, 2025

Contact Email: genevieve.mccorquodale@cbdc.ca

1. Introduction

CBDC Celtic, in partnership with the Irish Loop Regional Steering Committee (ILRSC), is seeking proposals from qualified marketing firms or consultants to lead the development and implementation of a comprehensive marketing and branding strategy for the Irish Loop Tourism Development Initiative – Phase one.

This initiative aims to position the Irish Loop as a premier, sustainable, year-round tourism destination aligned with Newfoundland and Labrador's Vision 2026.

2. Project Background

The Irish Loop region is rich in cultural heritage, natural beauty, and untapped tourism potential. The 3-year development initiative (2025–2028) is designed to enhance visitor experiences, strengthen regional branding, and support the local economy. The project is grounded in recommendations from a 2023 Visitor Journey Assessment and informed by extensive stakeholder engagement. A full-time project manager has been hired to coordinate implementation across key areas.

3. Scope of Work

The selected consultant/firm will be responsible for:

Immersion and Discovery

1. The Region & Context

- Identify what makes the Irish Loop unique.
- Analyze the region's physical, cultural, economic, and emotional attributes.
- Understand who visits, who lives here, and what they value, seek, and find challenging.

2. Stakeholder Engagement

- Collaborate closely with tourism operators, municipalities, and community partners to ensure alignment around the regional brand vision.
- Participate in regional capacity-building efforts by attending training sessions and workshops facilitated by the project manager.
- Listen to the perspectives of local operators, municipalities, residents, and the steering committee to ensure the strategy reflects community voices.
- Assess existing perceptions of the region and explore aspirations for its future positioning.

3. Competitive & Brand Landscape

- Evaluate how the Irish Loop is currently represented across marketing channels.
- Compare the region's positioning with similar destinations in Newfoundland and Labrador and Atlantic Canada.
- Identify brand gaps and opportunities for differentiation.
- Design a cohesive, compelling brand identity that aligns with the broader Newfoundland and Labrador tourism brand while highlighting the Irish Loop's unique strengths.
- Develop comprehensive brand guidelines, including visual elements (logo, colour palette, typography) and messaging frameworks.

4. Visitor Journey + Research Integration

- Review insights from the 2023 Visitor Journey Assessment and assess progress since its publication.
- Map the visitor experience from initial awareness through arrival, exploration, and post-visit sharing, identifying opportunities to enhance each stage of the journey.

5. Brand Strategy Development

▪ Marketing Plan Creation

- Develop a phase-one marketing strategy that incorporates digital and print media with a focus on experiential tourism on the Irish Loop.
- Define clear key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure success and track engagement, and actively monitor, analyze, and report on these metrics for the duration of the firm's engagement.

▪ Digital Asset Development

- Develop a comprehensive asset map that is optimized for digital viewing and ready for print.
- Develop branded templates for social media posts and event flyers.

▪ Wayfinding & Signage Conceptualization

- **Gateway Signage Design**
 - Develop creative concepts for two primary gateway entrance signs that establish a strong sense of arrival and reflect the Irish Loop brand.
- **Regional Wayfinding System**

- Design a comprehensive wayfinding signage framework to guide visitors seamlessly across communities and tourism assets on the Irish Loop.
 - Prioritize user-friendly navigation, accessibility, and alignment with sustainability best practices.
 - Integrate the brand identity into all design elements, including typography, iconography, and messaging.
 - **Community & Stakeholder Input**
 - Collaborate with the Department of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Recreation, any other relevant government departments, municipalities, tourism operators, and local stakeholders to ensure signage locations, messaging, and aesthetics align with both community priorities and visitor needs.
 - **Deliverable Assets**
 - Provide scalable design files, specifications, and production-ready templates for gateway signs and the core wayfinding system.
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4. Deliverables

Irish Loop Tourism Development Initiative – Phase 1

The selected firm will be responsible for the delivery of the following:

Research & Insights Package

- **Deliverable:**
 - Regional Context & Insights Report, combining:
 - Visitor profile analysis
 - Competitive positioning matrix
 - Brand perception audit
 - Gap analysis against the 2023 Visitor Journey Assessment

Format: PDF report and presentation

Brand Platform & Visual Identity

- **Deliverable:**

- Brand Positioning Framework (vision, values, and differentiators)
- Visual Identity Toolkit (logo suite, colour palette, typography)
- Messaging Framework (taglines, tone of voice, sample campaign copy)
- Brand Guidelines Document (ready-to-use by local operators)

Format: Interactive PDF + editable templates

Multi-Channel Marketing Playbook

- **Deliverable:**
 - Marketing Strategy Document, including:
 - Seasonal campaign calendar
 - Recommended content themes
 - Digital-first media plan (SEO, social, paid ads)
 - Offline strategy for festivals, events, and experiential tourism
 - Template Library for social posts, ads, and flyers

Format: PDF + Canva templates

Digital Asset Ecosystem

- **Deliverable:**
 - Interactive Digital Tourism Map (HTML or embeddable PDF)
 - Recommendation on the sustainability of a dedicated social media presence.
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Visitor Experience Infrastructure Package

- **Deliverable:**

- Gateway Signage Concepts (2–3 creative options)
- Wayfinding Master Plan (map of signage locations, accessibility considerations, and sustainability integrations)
- Production-Ready Signage Design Files

Format: PDF + CAD/AI-ready design files

Final Impact Report & Measurement Dashboard

- **Deliverable:**
 - Evaluation Report summarizing KPIs, successes, and lessons
 - Interactive dashboard template to track ongoing campaign and tourism metrics of which ownership will be transferred from firm/consultant to CBDC Celtic upon completion of project.
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5. Timeline

The Irish Loop Regional Tourism Project commenced in June and will run through Spring 2026.

Proponents must include a detailed timeline aligned with key milestones for the deliverables.

6. Budget

A total budget of \$70,000 has been allocated for this component of the Irish Loop Regional Tourism Project. Proposals should include a detailed budget with costs broken down by:

- Personnel/Consulting Fees
- Design & Creative Development
- Campaign Management & Advertising
- Travel/Meetings
- Other (please specify)

Note: All budgets must be inclusive of HST.

7. Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include the following:

- Cover letter and executive summary
 - Firm/consultant profile, qualifications, and relevant experience
 - Work samples from similar projects (minimum 3)
 - Work plan with timelines and methodology
 - Detailed budget and cost breakdown
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8. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

Criteria	Weight
Relevant Experience and Portfolio	25%
Project Understanding & Methodology	25%
Work Plan & Timeline	20%
NL Regional/Tourism Knowledge	20%
Budget and Cost-effectiveness	10%

9. Submission Instructions

Submit your full proposal in PDF format by **September 30th, 2025** to:

CBDC Celtic – Irish Loop Regional Tourism Project

Email: Genevieve.McCorquodale@cbdc.ca

Subject Line: *RFP Submission – Irish Loop Marketing*

Late or incomplete submissions may not be considered.

10. Additional Information

- This pilot project on asset-based community development will center on the greatest resource the Irish Loop has to offer: its people. By engaging directly with tourism operators and residents, we will build a brand story that reflects their voices, experiences, and vision for the region. Their knowledge, pride, and hospitality are the foundation of this project and the key to shaping a vibrant and authentic identity for the Irish Loop.
- The successful firm/consultant will work in close collaboration with the Project Manager and the Irish Loop Regional Steering Committee (ILRSC).

- The project is funded through partnerships with CBDC Celtic, ACOA, and other government and community stakeholders.
- CBDC Celtic reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or to cancel this RFP at any time.