

Virginia Tourism Corporation

Non-Competitive Award Justification

Revision May 2025

NOTE: This form shall be used for all purchases of goods and non-professional services \$15,001 or more that are not being competed or do not fit under one of the other procurement methods outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual. It is also required for Non-Competitive Award Marketing Exception Awards for goods and non-professional services when the dollar amount is \$200,000 or more, and professional services or non-transportational related construction is \$80,000 or more.

To: Procurement Office

Date Request Submitted: **May 30, 2025**

Name of Person Submitting Request: **Heidi Johannesen**

OVERVIEW

VTC's Policies and Procedures Manual recognizes several procurement methods, one of which is a Non-Competitive Award. (See Section 4.8 of VTC's Purchasing Policies and Procedures Manual.) A purchase of goods or services may be considered for a Non-Competitive Award if there is one source more feasible to meet VTC's immediate needs, even if there are multiple sources available. Authorization of a Non-Competitive Award indicates that in management's judgment, the chosen vendor best meets VTC's needs to supply the required good or service and in a timely manner.

A non-competitive award procurement is based on the need to procure a unique good or service and that unique good or service is not widely available, or has limited availability, or is essential to meet VTC's requirements. As a result, a non-competitive award procurement represents a unique exception to the requirements for competition. Completion of this form is intended to document, affirm, and justify the need for this product or service to be provided by a specific vendor in order to meet VTC's essential requirements.

Please note:

- Non-competitive awards are subject to VTC policy, audit, FOIA, and public review.
- Vendors are **not** permitted to complete this form on behalf of VTC.
- Price and delivery are **not** factors determining if a product/service is a non-competitive award.
- The final determination of non-competitive award justification validity will be made by the VP of Operations and Finance.
- Submission of this form constitutes acknowledgement the requester, or any VTC staff, has no personal, financial, or fiduciary relationship with the recommended vendor.

Pursuant to Section 4.8 of the VTC Purchasing Policies and Procedures Manual, this is a request to award the goods and services listed below to the vendor listed below without competition as justified below.

DOCUMENTATION

Proposed Vendor to Receive Award: **Claasen Communication GmbH**

Vendor Point of Contact (name and email): **Maria Greiner, maria.greiner@claasen.de**

Detailed Description of Product/Services: **Claasen Communication will provide Virginia Tourism Corporation with full-service representation in the German-speaking market, covering trade, public relations, and social media. Their services include organizing sales and media missions, handling tour operator campaigns and media relations, managing VTC's German-language Facebook page, and initiating over 200 targeted trade and media engagements annually. These integrated efforts are designed to position Virginia as a premier, year-round U.S. destination, leveraging Claasen's market expertise and established industry relationships to increase visibility, spending, and visitation**

Expected/Approximate date of Award. If services, duration/period of performance: **July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026 with four options to renew.**

Anticipated Value of Award. Note: If it is for a one-year period with optional one-year renewal periods, provide details on the anticipated initial dollar amount along with costs for renewals and how many. The initial period is not to exceed one year with no more than 4 one-year renewal options, unless otherwise approved by the VP of Operations and Finance. Automatic renewals are not allowed:

The contract is for a one-year term, with four optional one-year renewals. The base amount is \$74,400 per year, for an estimated total of \$372,000 over five years, excluding expenses. Additional costs may include advertising, media monitoring, travel, campaign support, conferences, familiarization tours, events, meetings, and media engagements.

1. Please provide a brief background summary for why you need the product/services. Why is the requested product/services the only one that can satisfy your requirements? Provide specific details on any unique features of the product/services that are not available in any other product/services and are essential to your required minimum performance.

Claasen Communication is uniquely positioned to meet VTC's PR, trade, and social media needs in the German-speaking markets due to its proven success and deep understanding of Virginia's tourism product. Their integrated approach combines tourism representation, media outreach, tour operator campaigns, and localized social media management in a coordinated and tailored manner. The creation and management of a dedicated German-language Facebook page, direct trade

relationships, and hands-on support for media and sales missions are essential to increasing Virginia's visibility in the German-speaking markets. With their extensive relationship with VTC and the Virginia suppliers, along with their customized approach, they provide the ideal services for advancing Virginia's position and brand in German-speaking markets.

2. Why is this vendor the most feasible available source from which to obtain this product/service? Provide specific details on the expertise, experience and/or capabilities that support why the requested vendor is the most feasible, unique, and best choice without seeking competition to provide the required product/service that best meets VTC's needs. Note that if this product/service is available through multiple distributors, then provide specific details on why this product/service should not be competed.

Claasen Communications has represented Virginia Tourism Corporation in the German-speaking markets for over a decade, delivering consistent results through their deep understanding of Virginia's tourism offerings and strong relationships with our industry partners. Over the years, Claasen has played a key role in supporting Governor Missions, launching integrated marketing campaigns, and coordinating major trade and media events, demonstrating both operational excellence and a deep familiarity with Virginia's brand. Claasen Communication leverages established connections within the German-speaking travel industry, media, and consumer sectors, providing direct access to key stakeholders and partners. Its range of independent contracting and management of multi-layered campaigns, which encompass content creation, event organization, and influencer management, provides operational effectiveness and consistency in messages across all tourism channels. Expertise in localized user behavior across social platforms, combined with the presence of the company's in-market office, enables it to develop relevant campaigns that build awareness and drive conversion for Virginia in a competitive marketplace.

3. Alternative vendors and products/services should be researched to substantiate why this is the most feasible source. What are the names of the vendors and products/services that were researched? What were the specific performance requirements that could not be met to make conducting a formal solicitation unnecessary or not in the best interest of VTC.

Other vendors were not considered, as no alternative firm offers the same level of expertise, established industry relationships, and in-depth knowledge of Virginia's tourism product as Claasen Communications. Their longstanding experience, proven track record, and unique ability to effectively position Virginia in the German-speaking market make them the most qualified choice for this work.

4. If no other vendors were considered, please denote **at least** one of the following:

☐ Exclusive distribution

- ☐ Integral part or accessory compatible with existing equipment
- ☐ Maintenance service for existing equipment
- ☐ Renewal License to existing software/services
- ☐ Upgrade or maintenance for existing software
- ☐ Used in research and is required to provide continuity of results
- ☐ Copyrighted or patented and only available from the recommended source
- ☒ Considerable re-orientation and training would be required
- ☐ Vendor specifically named in a grant and/or grant proposal
- ☐ Other **Click or tap here to enter text.**

5. Will this purchase obligate the VTC to this vendor for future purchases (e.g., annual support/maintenance and/or future upgrade requirements)? If yes, provide details regarding the duration of any potential commitments as well as the estimated costs for such commitments.

No

6. Based on my professional experience and knowledge of the marketplace, submission of this document constitutes acknowledgment that the price offered is considered to be fair and reasonable based on **at least** one of the following:

- ☐ Prices charged for similar items
- ☐ Prices paid by other customers
- ☐ A Public price list or public catalog
- ☒ Historical/past pricing
- ☐ Other/stakeholder justification: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

7. In certain circumstances negotiations may have already taken place. Has the department already negotiated with the vendor or secured discounts? If so, please provide additional details.

No

8. Additional Information not already provided above.

N/A

If purchase request above is for goods or non-professional services under \$200,000 or professional services or non-transportational related construction under \$80,000, skip to approval section below.

If purchase request above is for goods or non-professional services of \$200,000 or more or for professional services or non-transportation-related construction of \$80,000 or more, and not already addressed elsewhere in the policies and procedures, then in addition to completing the

requested information above, please provide the information requested below in items 9., 10., and 11, along with the approval section.

Pursuant to Section 4.15 of the VTC Purchasing Policies and Procedures Manual, for purchases of goods or nonprofessional services of \$200,000 or more or for professional services or non-transportation-related construction of \$80,000 or more, not already addressed elsewhere in these policies and procedures, VTC shall not be required to seek competition or competitive negotiations if VTC determines in writing that such purchase contributes to the public purpose and mission of the VTC as described in §2.2-2315. VTC shall state in such writing (a) an explanation of such determination, (b) that which is being purchased, (c) the contractor selected for such purchase, (d) the date of the award of such contract and (e) the relationship of such purchase to the public purpose and mission of the Authority. The determination and justification shall be approved by the VP of Operations and Finance prior to any such purchase taking place. Such notice shall be posted for a period of one year on VTC's website (vatc.org) on the day the VTC awards or announces its decision to award such contract, whichever occurs first.

9. Please provide an explanation of the determination that such purchase contributes to the public purpose and mission of the VTC as described in §2.2-2315.

By retaining Claasen Communication as the official tourism representative of the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) in Germany, VTC supports its public mission to expand international inbound travel and generate economic benefits for the Commonwealth. Claasen's scope of work directly aligns with VTC's strategic goals and marketing plan, which include amplifying global awareness of the Virginia is for Lovers brand, increasing visitation from key international markets, and boosting tourism-related revenue and employment in Virginia.

10. Please provide the relationship of such purchase to the public purpose and mission of the VTC.

The services and experience offered from Claasen Communication supports the VTC's mission to increase international tourism growth by leveraging localized expertise and in-market representation. Claasen's role facilitates deeper engagement with German-speaking travelers through customized strategies that VTC could not execute from the U.S. Claasen's integrated approach, which combines trade promotion, media relations, and social media, aligns with VTC's global strategy and helps raise international visibility for Virginia's tourism partners. By securing travel trade awareness, media coverage and digital engagement, this work drives interest and visitor traffic to attractions, hotels, restaurants, and other local experiences across the state.

11. Additional Information not already provided above.

N/A

Department Approval:

I am the authorized approver of my department and on behalf of my department, I certify that the information submitted is accurate and complete. I understand that this document is subject to VTC policy, audit, foia, and public review.

Department: **International Marketing**

Name: **Heidi Johanesen**

Signature: Heidi Johannessen

Date: **May 30, 2025**

Appropriate VP Approval: _____

Final Approval of VP of Operations and Finance is required below in order to proceed.

VP of Operations and Finance

☐ Approved: _____

☐ Not Approved: _____

Comments: **Click or tap here to enter text.**