

# .LONDON

request for proposals  
for the development of theatre.london



LONDON™  
& PARTNERS

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# INTRODUCTION

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London is one of the most vibrant cities on Earth - every year the city attracts more people to visit and more businesses to make London their home.

Many are attracted by the capital's dazzling culture and its unparalleled heritage while others are drawn to London's constantly changing physical and economic landscape.

With more than 200 festivals a year, 35,000 theatrical performances, nearly 250 free attractions and more hotel rooms than either Paris or New York, it is no wonder London is consistently ranked the best place to visit by international tourists.

London is a city that likes to lead the way. Whether it's the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the first truly digital Games, or London's burgeoning tech scene giving the city one of the world's most innovative technology clusters, London is at the heart of where great things start.

And now once again London is at the forefront of innovation by becoming one of the first cities in the world to launch its own top level domain name – Dot London.

We are inviting you to be part of this internet revolution and start a unique association with the best big city on the planet.

**“** London & Partners are seeking proposals from potential partners for the development of theatre.london **”**

## 1. BACKGROUND

### LONDON & PARTNERS

London & Partners is the official promotional company for London. We promote London and attract businesses, events, congresses, students and visitors to the capital. Our aims are to build London's international reputation and attract investment and visitor spend, which create jobs and growth. We are a not-for-profit public-private partnership, funded by the Mayor of London and a network of commercial partners.

We work to maintain and strengthen London's position as one of the most popular visitor destinations in the world. We run marketing and PR campaigns domestically and internationally to encourage prospective visitors to book a trip, as well as managing our flagship website visitlondon.com and a host of supporting digital channels.

**Find out more at [londonandpartners.com](http://londonandpartners.com)**

### LONDON & PARTNERS COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

London & Partners has a network of commercial partners from the tourism industry, including within the London theatre space. Our partners join London & Partners and receive a variety of benefits including enhanced promotion on the official tourism website for London, visitlondon.com, business referrals from our convention bureau team and access to our events, research and wider business network.

We welcome any proposal which would take into account our current partnership model and consider what impact and added benefits could be attributed to a partner within the theatre industry.

**Find out more about our partnership at [londonandpartners.com/partners](http://londonandpartners.com/partners)**



## GENERIC TOP LEVEL DOMAINS (gTLDs)

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has a mission to ensure a stable and unified global Internet. Until late 2013, there were only 22 generic Top Level Domains (gTLD) on the Internet. Examples of gTLDs include .com, .org, .net, and .gov. In June 2011, ICANN's Board of Directors authorised the launch of the New gTLD Program. An application window opened on 12th January 2012 and ICANN received 1,930 applications for new gTLDs.

Applications were received for new gTLD's from major brands, (e.g. .bmw, .microsoft); cities and regions (e.g. .london, .paris, .nyc) and for generic terms (e.g. .luxury, .online). The first new gTLDs went live in October 2013 and sales of new domains commenced in November 2013. Dot London is part of the first wave of new top-level domains which will change the naming system of the Internet forever.

## **DOT LONDON**

With the support of the Mayor's office and the UK government, London & Partners is operating a new generic Top Level Domain (gTLD) Dot London on behalf of London. We aim to create a world-class, innovative and trusted top-level domain for London that will be operated for the benefit of Londoners and London businesses.

Dot London Domains Ltd (DLD) is a wholly owned subsidiary of London & Partners created specifically for the management of Dot London. It has its own Board chaired by a non-executive member of the London & Partners Board. DLD has entered into a contract with the ICANN to be the Registry Operator for Dot London.

The announcement of Dot London has received extensive media coverage since November 2013.

The launch period for Dot London ran between 29th April and 31st July 2014. During this time London based entities receive priority status to apply for domain names. A media and advertising campaign ran throughout this period to raise awareness amongst London businesses and encourage registrations.

As of February 2015, over 55,000 Dot London domain names have been registered.

Leading businesses and international brands are among those that have applied for Dot London domain names during the initial phase. They include The Landmark Hotel, The Royal College of Art, ZSL London Zoo, Cath Kidston and many more. They will join Dot London pioneers such as Fortnum & Mason, the London Symphony Orchestra and Metro Bank as some of the first business to secure a Dot London address.

For more information about Dot London please visit:

**[dotlondondomains.london](http://dotlondondomains.london)**

## **PREMIUM DOT LONDON DOMAINS**

In addition to establishing the new Dot London registry and making domains available for registration London & Partners has retained a number of key domains which can bring value to the city. These include a number of generic terms associated with the tourism industry of which theatre.london is one.

London & Partners has already issued a request for proposals for hotels.london which closed at the beginning of September 2014.

Theatre.london is a tender that is being released at the same time as tickets.london. Applicants can tender for one or both of these premium domains. These tenders were issued at the same time as participants may feel both domains offer synergies if operated together.

We would like participants to consider the wider impact on the premium domain family and the interaction with visitlondon.com. We do not have a fixed solution for how these domain could work together and are looking for a partner who can propose an innovative and commercially beneficial solution.

## **2. OPERATION OF THEATRE.LONDON**

### **LONDON & PARTNERS IS SEEKING PROPOSALS FROM POTENTIAL PARTNERS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEATRE.LONDON**

#### **MARKET OPPORTUNITY**

The West End (42 theatres in Westminster and Camden with more than 42,500 seats) accounts for more than a third of London's theatre capacity.

In 2012/13, London theatre took £618.5 million at the box office.

- London theatre is growing – both admissions and box office were up in 2012/13 on 2011/12. Box office was up 1.6% and attendances 5.5% year on year from 2011/12 to 2012/13
- In 2012/13, more than 22 million people attended London theatre performances, this makes London the biggest theatre city in the world. The commercial West End accounted for 50% of the attendance. London theatre is better attended than Premier League football and takes more at the box office than London's cinemas
- West End theatre attendances outstrip Broadway attendance by 20%
- 24% of holiday visitors who stay in London will go to the theatre. It is estimated that around 3 in 10 West End audience members come from overseas
- There are a huge range of different sized theatres in Inner London, ranging from the Hammersmith Apollo with 3,600 seats down to the Lord Stanley Pub with only 30 seats

While many different sites already exist to serve this market, we believe there is an opportunity to gain significant share from launching a service on a premium domain with a clear and focused remit to promote and sell London's theatre tickets. We further believe that there is scope for innovative business models and service offerings around theatre.london.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives for the venture are:

- Generate significant revenue for London & Partners (to then reinvest in the promotion of London) and the chosen partner
- Market and promote theatre.london and add value to the London entertainment scene
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of the Dot London top level domain and how London is leading the way in this internet revolution
- Offer an online service that has a clear and official connection with London and is relevant and trusted by the end user when searching for theatre events in the city

#### **OPERATING MODEL**

We are open to considering a range of operating models. A site where users can search and book theatre tickets is the most obvious application of theatre.london. However, we are also seeking innovative ideas from partners in terms of customer journeys, products and services that can be offered on a site primarily focused on selling theatre tickets in London. We are particularly interested in ideas that can utilise not only the domain but the other assets of London & Partners (see below).

### 3. LONDON & PARTNERS ASSETS

#### OFFICIAL STATUS

We believe that there is value in adopting the official London logo. There is also the opportunity to claim 'official' status on the platform and in marketing campaigns to demonstrate an association with the city. This will not only give the site relevance to the end user but will also give it unique positioning in the market. The official London logo can be seen on the websites we operate: visitlondon.com, londonandpartners.com and dotlondondomains.london. As part of your proposal we would like your view on how theatre.london could align with the official nature of these other sites.

#### VISIT LONDON

London & Partners operates visitlondon.com, London's official tourism website, which has more than 2million unique visitors per month and has seen 20% growth in visitors year on year. It is the pre-eminent source of visitor information for those seeking to and those visiting London.

Site visitors already have the potential to book tickets through the site. We are open to proposals that consider how to get the most out of the existing visitlondon.com traffic to deliver the maximum overall revenue to the partnership.

#### VISIT.LONDON FAST FACTS



#### NETWORK OF PARTNERS

We have a network of partners in the tourism industry in London due to our status as the capital's official tourism body. These include many entertainment venues, theatres and production companies in the capital.

## 4. WHAT WE ARE SEEKING

### OPERATING PARTNER

We are seeking a partner with significant experience in the field to work with us to develop theatre.london. The partner should have proven:

- Capability and capacity to run a substantial and profitable e-commerce business on the domain theatre.london
- Technical systems or know how to support such a venture, or the ability to demonstrate relevant innovation.
- Existing, or the ability to rapidly develop, commercial relationships with a wide range of theatre providers.

### INVESTMENT

We believe significant investment will be required to develop and market theatre.london in order to deliver a substantial ongoing revenue stream.

We would prefer to choose a single operating partner who is willing to commit the appropriate funds and resources required to achieve this. However, we are open to seeking a significant third party investment into the venture.

## 5. CONTRACTING/ STRUCTURAL OPTIONS

### COMMERCIAL OPTIONS

We are open to proposals regarding how the commercial operation of theatre.london may be structured. Options may include:

- A fully independent joint venture business
- A revenue share arrangement
- A commission based arrangement
- A fixed fee lease of theatre.london
- Guaranteed levels of income to London & Partners

The term of any agreement is expected to be up to five years, though this would be subject to discussion with the preferred partner.

Proposals should clearly detail all options you would consider and make clear your preferred structure, together with details of how you see the arrangements working.

## 6. CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In order to submit a proposal you should be a legally constituted entity with a minimum of three years filed accounts. For shortlisted entities we will undertake a financial assessment which would include reviewing filed accounts and a credit score.

The following is the timetable for this call for proposals and expected timetable for selection and contracting:

ACTIVITY	FIRM TIMETABLE	ESTIMATED TIMETABLE
Issue of Call for Proposals	05/02/15	
Registration of Interest and intent to respond	20/02/15	
Question and Answer webinars	02/03/15 - 13/03/15	
Proposals due	02/04/15	
Evaluation of responses		07/04/15 - 24/04/15
Discussions with shortlisted parties		04/05/15 - 22/05/15
Negotiations and contracting with preferred party		01/06/15 - 03/07/15

### SUBMISSION PROCESS

This RFP can be found online at: londonandpartners.com/tenders. Please register your interest in this RFP by emailing [tenders@londonandpartners.com](mailto:tenders@londonandpartners.com) no later than 20<sup>th</sup> February 2015. You will then have the chance to ask questions before submitting your proposals.

If you have any questions regarding this RFP you can contact David McKie at [tenders@londonandpartners.com](mailto:tenders@londonandpartners.com)

### EVALUATION CRITERIA

The criteria we will use to evaluate the proposals are:

- Commercial offer and potential to generate substantial revenue over the medium term fit with our objectives and strategic fit between the organisations
- Innovation
- Credentials and experience of partner organisation

### LEGAL / DISCLAIMERS

London & Partners reserves the right to reject one, some or all of the responses submitted in response to this request for proposal. London & Partners reserves the right to take the responses it regards as most favourable as a basis for further negotiation with the respondent.

The respondent and London & Partners (each a "Party") agrees that it will not at any time, either during or after the process, without prior agreement, divulge any information in relation to all or any of the other party's affairs or businesses or any fact or matter relating to this proposal process and each of the parties shall use its best endeavours to prevent the publication or disclosure of any information concerning the business of the other party or any of their dealings, transactions or affairs. Neither this Request for Proposals nor any response is intended to constitute an offer to any party. There shall be no contract between London & Partners and any respondent unless and until a separate written legally binding agreement is executed by both parties.

London & Partners shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by respondents in complying with this Request for Proposals or in any subsequent discussions or negotiations.

# 7. PROPOSAL DOCUMENTATION

## GUIDE TO STRUCTURE OF PROPOSALS

The below is a guide setting out what we believe would be useful for you to include in your proposal.

### 1. Details of applying entity

- Company details, parent company if applicable, details of similar activities, key roles, any potential conflicts of interest

### 2. Operating model

- Proposals for operating theatre.london
- Service and technological innovation
- Plans to maximise the opportunities presented by London & Partners assets

### 3. Marketing

- Description of approach to marketing theatre.london

### 4. Schedule

- Indication of the expected timeframes from agreement to operation of theatre.london
- Key milestones

### 5. Commercial

- Structural / contacting options and preferred option
- Indications of revenue/equity share or other commercial proposals

### 6. Financial

- Initial projections for potential turnover and profits for first three years
- Indication of investment that partner will make into marketing the domain and/or potential views on raising third party investment

### 7. Risks

- An assessment of the risks associated with launching the domain and any plans for how to mitigate these



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