



29 January 2014

Clarification No 1

Reference: Open call for tenders No EEA/ADS/13/002

Title: Framework contract for the provision of travel arrangement services for the European Environment Agency (EEA)

Question 1

Are you able to provide transaction volumes for air bookings, accommodation bookings, car hire bookings?

Answer 1

Based on figures from 2013, the number of transactions for all travel and accommodation bookings will vary greatly between 5000-5500.

The use of car hire is limited therefore the estimated number of transaction for these booking would be under 10 per year.

Question 2

The estimated annual travel budget is €1,200,000. Section 7 of the tender specifications states that 'the value of the contract is estimated at a total of €5,800,000 over a maximum period of 48 months'. Can you please clarify the difference between the 2 figures?

Answer 2

With reference to section 6 of the tender specifications (page 5 of 16) the estimated yearly travelling budget amounts to EUR 1,200,000. This amount is an estimation based on previous years.

With reference to section 7 of the tender specifications (page 10 of 16) the estimated budget of EUR 5,800,000 indicates future travel budget estimation over a maximum period of 48 months taking e.g. price index into consideration.

The EEA confirms that the total estimated budget for this contract is EUR 5.800.000 over a maximum period of 48 months as specified in section II.1.4 of the contract notice 2013/S 249-433889 of 24.12.2013.

Question 3

Is the EEA currently using a self-booking solution? If they are what is this solution and what is the current adoption rate?

Answer 3

Please refer to section 6.2.1.1 of the tender specifications (page 7 of 16) where it is stated that the EEA is currently in a process of developing an in-house IT system for mission and it may envisaged for the future the use of a self-booking solution to complement its mission system.

Question 4

Does EEA currently have any preferred hotel or airfares with suppliers? If so can you supply a list of these?

Answer 4

The EEA prefers to use “green” suppliers- those who are environmentally conscious and those who are able to offer a reduced rate. The EEA is not able to favour a particular airline or accommodation supplier, however in light of sound financial management, the most economical and efficient option should always be chosen.

Question 5

Form of Payment – does the EEA issue individuals a corporate credit card or provide the travel agency a lodge card to pay for airfares?

Answer 5

Please refer to section 6.1 (3) of the tender specifications (page 5 of 16) where it is stated ‘The travel agency’s corporate credit card is to be used – against a separate fee – when or if the airliner needs a credit card number in order to confirm the reservation’. The EEA does not issue corporate credit cards. The travel agency pays for the services and issues the EEA with invoices at the time of booking. Please refer to section 6.1 of the tender specifications, PAYMENTS (page 6 of 16) where it is stated ‘on a monthly basis, an overview of the electronic invoice summary shall be provided as EXCEL spreadsheet, stating the references specified by EEA and the price of each separate booking’....

Question 6

Is an out of hour’s service required? If so are we able to provide a fee for this service?

Answer 6

The specific requirements are mentioned in the tender specifications. It is entirely up to the tenderers to decide on the range of services they can offer for the prices quoted bearing in mind that their tender will be assessed in terms of their understanding and appreciation of the scope of and the level of services to be provided, in pursuance with the detailed award criteria specified under section 9.3.1 of the tender specifications.

Question 7

In the tender specifications, section 8, Price must be quoted as a 'Fee per booking' – is this fee per booking per individual or can there be per multiple travellers on a one booking? If so what is the average number of travellers on one booking?

Answer 7

The EEA usually have individual bookings and rarely multiple travelers on one booking. It is entirely up to the tenderers to decide on the range of services they can offer for the prices quoted.

Question 8

Can we differentiate between online booking fees and personal service booking fees?

Answer 8

Please refer to section 8 of the tender specifications (page 10 of 16) where it is stated that prices must be quoted as a fee per booking. It is entirely up to the tenderers to decide on the range of services they can offer for the prices quoted bearing in mind that their tender will be assessed in terms of their understanding and appreciation of the scope of and the level of services to be provided, in pursuance with the detailed award criteria specified under section 9.3.1 of the tender specifications. As stated under section 9.3.2 of the tender specifications, tenderers are required to submit their financial offer according to the template provided in annex 5 to the tender specifications. In doing so, tenderers shall bear in mind that all fields are compulsory and non-compliance will lead to exclusion of the tender from the award process.

Question 9

Does the EEA require integration between the travel agencies online booking tool? Which system is EEA's development based on?

Answer 9

With reference to section 6.2.1.1 of the tender specifications (page 7 of 16) the EEA is in a process of developing an in-house IT system for mission. At this point in time the EEA is unable to give exact information on the IT details. This is meant as an internal tool which, on the basis of an assessment of the needs and functionalities offered, may be complemented in the future with an external online booking tool.

Question 10

Does the EEA require the ability to track travellers?

Answer 10

The specific requirements are mentioned in the tender specifications. It is entirely up to the tenderers to decide on the range of services they can offer for the prices quoted bearing in mind that their tender will be assessed in terms of their understanding and appreciation of the scope of and the level of services to be provided, in pursuance with the detailed award criteria specified under section 9.3.1 of the tender specifications.

Question 11

Commission – will the travel supplier be allowed to retain commissions?

Answer 11

Please refer to section 8 of the tender specifications, where it is stated that the prices to be quoted must be all-inclusive (i.e. the entire service provider's costs including postage, management and administrative costs) and that no additional expenses incurred in the performance of the services will be reimbursed separately by the EEA.

Question 12

Will EEA require a service for passports and visas?

Answer 12

The specific requirements are mentioned in the tender specifications. It is entirely up to the tenderers to decide on the range of services they can offer for the prices quoted bearing in mind that their tender will be assessed in terms of their understanding and appreciation of the scope of and the level of services to be provided, in pursuance with the detailed award criteria specified under section 9.3.1 of the tender specifications

Question 13

Pre-paid tickets (PTA) – can you please define what your requirements are here and also your definition of a PTA? Since the introduction of e-ticketing by all airlines there is no longer the requirement to provide PTA's by airlines.

Answer 13

A pre-paid ticket (PTA's) is the EEA term for tickets paid by the EEA to be provided by the travel agency to the traveller in advance of the travel itself. We also refer to section 6.1 (page 5 of 16) and section 8 (page 10 of 16) of the tender specifications

Question 14

Accommodation reservation fees – is this to be a fee per booking per traveller?

Answer 14

With reference to sections 6.2.1.2, 6.2.1.4, and 9.3.2 of the tender specifications (pages 8 and 14 of 16), the fee to be specified is per request for quotation, i.e. one fee per booking/per traveller. However, it is entirely up to the tenderers to decide on the range of services they can offer for the prices quoted.

Question 15

Accommodation reservation fee – is this fee to include the bill back fee for providing credit and settlement of the hotel bill on behalf of EEA?

Answer 15

Yes

Question 16

Car reservation fees – is this to be a fee per individual car booking? Does EEA require the travel agency to pay for this on their behalf and invoice them the travel charge with the fee?

Answer 16

With reference to section 8 of the tender specifications (page 10 of 16) the car reservation fee is to be specified as a separate fee per individual booking. The travel agency pays for the services and issues the EEA with invoices as with other travel arrangement (please refer to question/answer No 5 above). However, it is entirely up to the tenderers to decide on the range of services they can offer for the prices quoted.

Question 17

Fees per participant for arranging travel and accommodation – will all airfare bookings include a hotel booking? If not what is the percentage that requires a hotel and air compared to the % that just requires an air booking and those that just require a hotel booking?

Answer 17

All bookings are considered separate. Past experience shows that approximately 15% of travel does not require a hotel booking and that it is extremely rare (perhaps 1%) to receive a hotel booking without travel included.

Question 18

Fees for arranging booking of meeting room/facilities and catering – are we allowed to submit a fee per delegate or provide the fee as a % of the overall meeting spend?

Answer 18

For the purpose of a meaningful comparison, the EEA prefers to receive quotes based on the overall cost of the meeting. However, it is entirely up to the tenderers to decide on the range of services they can offer for the prices quoted.

Question 19

Fee charged for the off-setting of CO₂ per full booking – can you clarify this fee is a payment for the administration for running a program that off-sets all of the EEA's travel costs?

Answer 19

The specific requirements are mentioned in the tender specifications. It is entirely up to the tenderers to decide on the range of services they can offer for the prices quoted bearing in mind that their tender will be assessed in terms of their understanding and appreciation of the scope of and the level of services to be provided, in pursuance with the detailed award criteria specified under section 9.3.1 of the tender specifications. Please refer as well to section 9.3.2 of the tender specifications, third bullet point, pursuant to which tenderers are required to quote all-inclusive prices (i.e. including management and administrative costs)

Question 20

Environmental considerations – you strongly recommend double-sided printing. Within 9.3 Award Criteria you provide a maximum number of A4 pages allowed per question answered i.e. No 1. max 5 A4 pages. If using double sided printing would this mean 10 sides of print, allowing for printing on both sides?

Answer 20

Double-sided printing allows you to print content on both sides of a page, reducing a 5 page document to only 2.5 pages.

Question 21

Terms of payment

Please specify if EEA will accept payment with a Credit Card Business Travel Account, a lodge card, often called a ghost card, where all travel related costs including agencies fees can be charged. The Credit Card Business Travel Account is a corporate card, and you need only one card to cover the entire travel expenditure of your organization. EEA will then pay the credit card company, who will reimburse the travel agency for its fees.

Answer 21

Please refer to Question/Answer 5 above.

Question 22

Environmental considerations

Please provide a list of current projects, and please evaluate each of the items, ranking 1 to 5, where 1 is lowest of interest to EEA

Answer 22

The EEA is not in a position to provide a list of current projects. EEA gives the preference to projects which are compliant with the Gold standard or the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) under the UNFCCC. Within these high quality standards the EEA looks for projects with the highest benefits for the socio-economic development of populations in need and for important benefits to sustainable development.

Question 23

Individual travellers vs groups

Please specify the split in percentage of the annually cost €1,200,000 between individual travellers and groups.

Answer 23

The EEA does in general not have any requirements as to a group of individuals travelling together. The main costs are related to individual travelers.

Question 24

Size of contract

In Annex 1 – Tender Specifications on page 5, last paragraph in section 6, you have stated “The total yearly travel budget amounts to approx. EUR 1,200,000...” If you summarize this for 48 months the amount would be EUR 4,800,000. In same document section 7, the total contract value for 48 months has been calculated to EUR 5,800,000. Please explain the difference between the two amounts, value €1,000,000.

Answer 24

Please refer to Question/Answer 2 above.

Question 25

Definition of the expression “Pre-paid ticketing”

In Annex 1 – Tender Specifications on page 10, section 8, second paragraph you use the expression “Pre-paid ticketing” which within the airline industry is an expression for a ticket which will be picked up at the airport as the ticket has not been issued before departure. I guess you mean a full service consultancy fee per ticket instead, but please specify.

Answer 25

Please refer to Question/Answer 13 above.

Question 26

Pre-paid ticketing advice fees – is this charge to be per ticket or per amendment?

Answer 26

Please refer to section 9.3.2 of the tender specifications where it is stated that fees shall apply for each request for quotation. However, it is entirely up to the tenderers to decide on the range of services they can offer for the prices quoted.

Question 27

Fees for the use of the travel agency’s corporate credit card – is this fee to be per used as in per swipe of the card (each time it is used)? Can you please provide a definition?

Answer 27

Please refer to Question/Answer 5 above.

Question 28

Fees per participant for arranging travel and accommodation – would EEA be able to provide an example of the type of trip that this fee would be applicable to i.e. would it be for a conference attendee?

Answer 28

Please refer to section 6.2.1.4 of the tender specifications (page 8 of 16) and to Question/Answer 17 above.

Question 29

We are having some issues trying to fulfil Annex 5 about price quotation. Would you please give us an example of how it works between commission and tax fee and the percentage you present in the table?

Answer 29

Please refer to section 8 of the tender specifications, where it is stated that the prices to be quoted must be all-inclusive (i.e. the entire service provider's costs including postage, management and administrative costs) and that no additional expenses incurred in the performance of the services will be reimbursed separately by the EEA.

The weighting percentage indicated in the last column of the table in Annex 5 to the tender specifications are meant for evaluation purposes, in order to establish the financial value of the tender according to the formula specified in section 9.3.2 of the tender specifications.

Question 30

In envelope No 2 – Technical offer:

Do you wish us to provide commentary on all mandatory requirements in section 6.1 within the max. 5 page answer or is it satisfactory to state that we comply to all requirements?

Answer 30

As stated in the tender specifications under section 2, the technical offer shall provide all information requested under sections 6 and 9.3.1, hence tenderers are required to elaborate on all points addressed by the tender specifications. Please bear in mind that the maximum page indication is related to the individual Award Criteria according to section 9.3.1 of the tender specifications (page 13-14 of 16). It is in your interest to keep your tender concise and well structured.

Question 31

In Annex 5 – Price Quotation: P5 – Fees per participant for arranging travel and accommodation. Is this fee per participant as part of a Meetings and Events/ Group travel arrangement?

Answer 31

This fee applies to travel arrangement services for external participants invited to attend meetings and/or events organised by the EEA as specified under section 6.2.1.4 of the tender specifications. Please refer to Questions/ Answers 14 and 17 above.