

Provision of Travel Agency and Related Services (Framework Agreement)

Award entity	European Travel Commission
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Estimated duration	3 years

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1. Introduction

This Request for Proposals (RfP) is launched in the framework of an ad-hoc grant of the European Commission (EC) to the European Travel Commission (ETC) with the aim of supporting the promotion of thematic trans-European tourism products in third countries.

The present document is intended as a guideline based on ETC's goals and requirements. A clear understanding of these goals and requirements should be reflected in the proposal. Applicants are asked to interpret all aspects of this document carefully yet creatively, using their business intelligence, market experience and expertise to propose the best possible solution for the project. Additional ideas and suggestions that contribute to achieving the objectives of the project are welcome and should be clearly outlined in the proposal.

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1.1 About the European Travel Commission (ETC)

The European Travel Commission (ETC) is an international non-profit making association of official National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) in Europe. The organisation was established in 1948 and is headquartered in Brussels (Belgium).

ETC empowers its members, stakeholders, and the wider industry to shape the future of tourism in Europe for the benefit of all. It offers its members a comprehensive portfolio of services in knowledge sharing, destination marketing, and advocacy, while fostering collaboration and the exchange of best practices. ETC is established as a private non-profit association (AISBL) under Belgian law.

In line with its mission, ETC works closely with the European Union on initiatives that advance Europe's status as the world's most competitive, sustainable and inclusive travel destination.

Further information about ETC can be found on the website europeantravelcommission.com.

2. Information about the project

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RfP) is to conclude a Framework Service Agreement with an experienced travel agency (hereinafter referred to as the contractor) to provide travel arrangements and services for the trips and events organised by the European Travel Commission.

Part of the activities covered by this Request for Proposals are subject to co-funding from the European Union.

2.1 Project overview

Within the scope of its activities, ETC, in coordination with its member National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and local partners, organises a series of **familiarisation (FAM) trips** for travel wholesalers from long-haul markets, including but not limited to Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Japan and the USA. ETC also organises individual trips for global influencers, such as Key Opinion Leaders, bloggers, journalists and freelancers with a strong digital footprint.

The purpose of these trips is to educate and familiarise travel operators and influencers with new destinations and thematic pan-European tourism products and experiences. Participants may travel individually or in groups of ten or more and will follow trans-European itineraries covering at least two different European countries. Programmes may include learning or business sessions designed to facilitate meetings between international buyers and local stakeholders, including DMOs, SMEs and other suppliers. These sessions may form part of the itinerary or take place separately, as agreed with the host destination.

In addition to FAM trips, ETC organises **events and individual or group trips** for its staff, members and partners for meetings taking place either within or outside Europe.

Under this framework agreement, the selected contractor will be responsible for organising and booking travel-related services for trips and events of ETC. These services include, but are not limited to, long-haul and intra-European air travel, rail travel and other relevant transportation, as well as accommodation.

Where required, ETC may also request additional arrangements such as reservations of meeting and events facilities; guided excursions, visits to monuments, museums or other cultural and touristic sites. The specific scope of services will be defined in each corresponding purchase order.

3. Requirements and deliverables

The contractor is expected to deliver the minimum and technical requirements described in the sections below. Proposals which are not compliant with these requirements will be excluded from further evaluation.

1. Travel Arrangement Services

The contractor shall provide travel and related arrangement services for trips and events of ETC. These services shall include, but not be limited to, intermediation between ETC and final suppliers; reservations and bookings; ticket issuance; amendments and cancellations; and the timely delivery of all relevant travel and service documentation.

For the purpose of this framework agreement, services are divided into **Core Travel Services** and **Additional Travel and Event Services**, as described below.

A. Core Travel Services

Core Travel Services constitute the primary scope of the framework agreement and shall be prioritised in terms of responsiveness, accuracy, and service quality. These services include:

- Flights (long-haul and intra-European).
- Accommodation.

The contractor shall ensure the efficient planning and execution of all Core Travel Services, including:

- Providing suitable routing options and accommodation solutions aligned with ETC's operational needs.
- Ensuring bookings are made efficiently and at the best available market conditions.
- Informing ETC in advance of schedules, most suitable routes, baggage allowance, ticket flexibility, cancellation policies, deadlines, and other relevant considerations.
- Favouring direct flights where feasible in order to minimise stopovers, CO₂ emissions, and overall travel time.

B. Additional Travel and Event Services

ETC may request Additional Travel and Event Services where required for the organisation of trips, meetings, or events. These services include:

- Rail travel and other transport, where applicable.
- Experiences and leisure activities (e.g., guided excursions, visits to cultural sites or museums).
- Venue rental for meetings, workshops, or business sessions.

The scope and requirements for Additional Travel and Event Services shall be defined in each corresponding purchase order.

2. Quotations

- The contractor shall provide cost-effective quotations based on economy class or equivalent rates for air and rail travel, and standard or equivalent categories for accommodation, activities, and venue services, unless otherwise requested by ETC.
- All applicable taxes, fees, and service charges must be included in the quotation price.
- The contractor shall provide at least two comparative quotations for each request, where feasible. These may include alternative routes, transport options (air or rail), accommodation solutions, venues, or service providers, unless only one suitable option is available.
- The contractor shall take into account the level of flexibility required for bookings, recognising its direct impact on pricing and operational requirements. Where appropriate, the contractor shall negotiate with airlines, rail operators, hotels, venues, activity providers, or other relevant suppliers to secure preferential conditions, special fares, or added-value services that reduce overall costs or provide tangible benefits for ETC.
- Service fees must be clearly specified in the quotation for each type of booking (see Annex 2).

3. Changes and Cancellations

- The contractor shall aim to minimise penalties in the event of changes or cancellations.
- No penalties resulting from the contractor's fault will be accepted.
- ETC shall be informed immediately of changes in flight or train schedules, strikes, or other events that may affect travel plans.

4. Working Hours and Response Times

- The contractor shall ensure the availability of services during standard working hours, defined as Monday to Friday, from 09:00 to 18:00 CET. During these hours, the contractor shall be reachable and able to process requests.
- Quotations and confirmed bookings shall be provided within a maximum of 24 hours or one working day from the receipt of ETC's request, unless otherwise agreed due to the complexity of the request or market constraints.
- Where permitted by suppliers, the contractor shall be able to hold reservations for air and rail transport, accommodation, and activities pending ETC's approval or final confirmation for a minimum period of 24 hours or one working day. Where holding options are not possible due to supplier conditions, the contractor shall inform ETC accordingly and propose suitable alternatives.

5. Emergency Support

The contractor shall provide **24/7 emergency support** for all trips and events under the framework agreement, including:

- Immediate assistance for urgent changes such as flight delays or cancellations, missed connections, or unforeseen logistical issues.
- Rapid coordination with ETC staff and participants via direct phone lines and email contacts.
- Practical solutions to minimise disruption and ensure continuity of the trip.

6. Sustainability Advisory

The contractor shall support ETC's sustainability objectives by:

- Identifying low-carbon transport options for flights, trains, and intra-European travel.
- Recommending eco-friendly accommodations and sustainable venue options.
- Integrating responsible practices into itineraries and activities, including excursions and cultural visits.
- Providing carbon footprint estimations for trips and related services, based on requirements and methodology provided by ETC.

7. Account Management

- The contractor shall assign a dedicated account manager as a single point of contact. All project-related communication by email and phone between ETC and the contractor must be in English.
- A back-up staff member must be designated in case of absence.

- The services of the contractor will be requested exclusively by the means, form and staff determined by ETC, not being responsible for services requested by other means or people other than those determined by ETC.
- All personnel handling ETC requests must demonstrate the necessary knowledge and expertise to provide services at the highest professional standard.
- The contractor shall organise and participate in a performance review meeting with ETC at the end of each calendar year throughout the duration of the framework agreement. The meeting shall review service performance against agreed requirements, operational issues, contract implementation, and identify corrective actions or improvements where necessary.

8. Experience

- The contractor must have a proven track record of a minimum of 5 years on the market and relevant experience in the services required under this RfP.

9. GDPR Compliance

- The contractor shall comply with all applicable data protection legislation and ensure the secure handling of personal data.

10. Type of Agreement and Order Placement

- The contract between ETC and the contractor will be a framework agreement whose implementation is only carried out through separate purchase orders placed by ETC according to actual needs.
- Each purchase order is issued by ETC to the contractor via email or an equivalent written format, using a template agreed between the parties. Upon receipt of the purchase order, the contractor shall proceed with the execution of the requested services in accordance with the terms and conditions established under the framework agreement.
- The contractor shall maintain an up-to-date register of all purchase orders issued by ETC under the framework agreement. The register shall include, at a minimum, the purchase order reference number, a description of the services provided, the value of each purchase order, and the cumulative total value of all purchase orders executed under the contract. The contractor shall invoice ETC for the services provided in accordance with the applicable purchase orders and agreed invoicing procedures.
- The register shall be made available to ETC upon request at any time during the duration of the contract and shall be maintained in a format that allows for monitoring, verification, and audit purposes.

11. Duration

- The framework agreement has an **initial estimated duration of 3 years** from the signing date of the framework agreement between ETC and the contractor, with the possibility of extension upon mutual agreement.
- The duration of the framework agreement is independent of the duration of each individual purchase order, which should include a specific start and end date.

4. Budget and terms of payment

The total maximum contract value for this project is **144,000 EUR** (one hundred forty-four thousand euros), excluding VAT and including any other applicable taxes.

The above value is indicative and not binding on ETC in any way. It represents the maximum possible expenditure for the given scope of the project, its requirements and deliverables.

The total amount of the purchase orders placed by ETC may not necessarily correspond to the above-stated value. The actual amount is therefore only determined when the individual purchase orders are placed. The actually performed and accepted work will determine the amount due by ETC to the contractor. Invoicing will be done on a purchase order basis after submission of all the corresponding deliverables and, if applicable, a statement report of the actual expenses incurred on behalf of ETC (including all expenses, fees and applicable taxes) and duly justified based on supporting documents.

ETC will first approve that the deliverables are correct and ask the contractor to submit the corresponding invoice. All payments to the contractor will be made in Euros.

5. Award criteria

Proposals should elaborate on all award criteria in order to score as many points as possible. The mere repetition of mandatory requirements without going into details will only result in a low score. The criteria for awarding this RfP consist of two parts:

- **Quality criteria:** 30% of the total evaluation score
- **Financial criteria:** 70% of the total evaluation score

Applications will first be assessed against the quality criteria and secondly against the financial criteria described below.

To have a minimum guarantee of qualitative performance of the contract, proposals must achieve a score of at least 50 out of 100 points on the total weighted score for quality. For this reason, a proposal that achieves a lower score will be excluded from further evaluation and will not be ranked (regardless of the position in the ranking it would otherwise occupy).

The following formula will be used to calculate the final total score of the proposal:

$$\text{Final score} = \left(\frac{\text{lowest price}^1}{\text{proposal price}} \times 100 \times 0.7 \right) + (\text{quality score} \times 0.3)$$

On the basis of the final total score (taking into account the precondition regarding the minimum score for the quality criteria), the contract will be awarded to the contractor with the highest total score (out of 100).

In the event of a tie in the final total score, the following tiebreaker criteria apply in order of prevalence:

1. proposal with the highest total score obtained in the quality criteria.
2. proposal with the highest total score obtained in the financial criteria.

¹ Lowest price among all proposals evaluated in the financial assessment stage.

3. proposal with the highest score obtained in the sustainability quality criteria.

If the tie persists after applying the above tiebreaker criteria between one or more proposals, the proposal selected in a draw will be awarded.

5.1 Quality criteria

The quality of the proposal is defined as a minimum set of delivered services as described in section 3. Requirements and deliverables. Each of these criteria and the relative weights assigned to them are described below.

Quality criteria	Weight
Methodology The methodology used by the contractor in executing the work, including clearly established workflows, service organisation, tools and quality control systems. The extent to which fast and timely deliveries can be guaranteed. Delivery time refers to the period that runs from the day that an order is placed to the day on which the order is delivered to ETC.	60%
Sustainability approach The extent to which the contractor demonstrates a clear, practical, and structured approach to environmental sustainability in the planning and delivery of travel and related services.	15%
Profile, experience and qualifications of the project team The extent to which the contractor's organisational profile, relevant experience, and the qualifications and roles of the proposed project team demonstrate the capacity to successfully deliver the services required under this framework agreement. The proposed account management approach, including communication procedures, responsiveness, and quality assurance mechanisms.	15%
Added value The extent to which the proposal offers services and/or deliverables that add value to the minimum requirements, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing assistance in obtaining visas or any other necessary documentation • Holding flight tickets pending approval for more than 24 hours • Complimentary travel insurance or other additional guarantees • Reporting and analytics • Other added value 	10%

Each quality criterion will be given a score in a range from 0 (zero) points to 10 (ten) points in accordance with the following scale:

0 Not available/not provided	The application fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
1-2 Poor	The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

3-4 Fair	The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
5-6 Good	The application addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
7-8 Very good	The application addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
9-10 Excellent	The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

5.2 Financial criteria

The contractor is expected to present a detailed breakdown of the budget for different services as explained below. All prices should be quoted in Euros and exclude VAT and other taxes, which may be recoverable by ETC (being a private VAT-registered entity based in Belgium). Any item that is essential for the smooth running of the project, as indicated within this document, even though not specified, shall be read as included in the list of requirements.

The contractor shall provide a **fixed service fee per type of booking**, as specified in Annex 2, covering the following categories: long-haul flight booking (outside of Europe), short-haul flight booking (intra-European), accommodation booking, rail ticket booking, leisure activity booking, and venue rental for meetings, workshops, or events. The fixed service fee should cover all costs related to the contractor's services within the scope of this framework agreement, including administration, booking management, amendments, coordination with suppliers, and any other service-related costs necessary for the execution of the booking.

For the avoidance of doubt, the fixed service fee applies exclusively to the contractor's service provision. The cost of third-party services (including, but not limited to, airfares, rail fares, accommodation rates, venue rental fees, or activity costs) shall be charged and invoiced at cost without additional margin.

Upon request, the contractor shall provide supporting documentation demonstrating the original supplier price (such as supplier invoices, booking confirmations, or equivalent evidence) to enable verification of costs for monitoring, reporting, or audit purposes, including where activities are co-funded by the European Union.

Any rebates, commissions, or financial incentives received from suppliers in relation to ETC bookings shall be disclosed to ETC and reflected in the final price charged.

For the purpose of comparing the financial offers received, ETC will apply the relative weights indicated below to calculate and evaluate the contractor's financial offer.

Service	Weight
Long-haul flights	40%
Short-haul flights	25%
Accommodation	20%
Others (rail, leisure activities, venues)	15%

6. Submission of proposals

Proposals must be **clear, concise** (not exceeding 20 pages in total) and **written in English**. The proposal structure is open, but it must provide all information relevant to the assessment of the proposal by elaborating on each of the award criteria (see 5. *Award Criteria*) and include, at least, the following:

- 1) Brief **company profile** describing the type of services (see 3. Requirements and Deliverables) that the company provides.
- 2) **Description of team credentials**, field of expertise and roles of the people involved in the project.
- 3) **Methodology** for delivering the services, including estimated delivery times and project management procedures for the provision of services to guarantee high quality, efficiency and timely delivery.
- 4) At least **three proven references** to relevant experience in delivering comparable work as outlined in 3. Requirements and Deliverables. The contractor should use the template part of Annex 1 submitted in a different format or partially providing the information requested in Annex 1 will receive a lower score.
- 5) **Economic offer**. The template provided as Annex 2 must be used and filled in to present a detailed breakdown of the budget specifying the contractor's fixed service fees for each booking type, including: long-haul flight bookings, short-haul flight bookings, accommodation booking, rail ticket bookings, leisure activity bookings (e.g., guided excursions, cultural visits), and venue rental for meetings, workshops, or events; as explained in 5.2 Financial Criteria. All prices should be quoted in Euro and exclude VAT (being ETC a private VAT-registered entity based in Belgium) and include any other taxes if applicable. Any special offers or discounts where applicable shall be mentioned in the written proposal.

If any work for the project is to be subcontracted to a third party, the contractor must clearly identify the subcontractor in its proposal and specify all tasks, services and deliverables that are to be outsourced. Any costs related to outsourcing shall be borne by the contractor. The contractor will be the sole responsible party for the delivery of the outsourced work.

6.1 Use of Artificial Intelligence

The contractor is allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) in both the preparation of the proposal and, if awarded, the execution of the project. However, any use of AI must be clearly disclosed as part of the proposal submission. This disclosure must include:

- A description of the AI tools or technologies used or intended to be used.
- Identification of the specific areas of the proposal where AI was applied.
- A preliminary outline of the tasks, processes, or deliverables during contract execution where AI is expected to be employed.

AI outputs remain the contractor's responsibility.

6.2 Submission modalities and deadline

Proposals must be submitted in electronic format via the submission form on ETC's website: <https://etc-corporate.org/procurement/submission-form/>, selecting the RfP **“Provision of Travel Agency and Related Services (Framework Agreement)”**.

Proposals must be received by **4 March 2026 at 16:00 (CET)**. Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered. ETC recommends that contractors avoid submitting their proposals in the final hours before the deadline to ensure ample time to resolve any technical issues that may arise.

The proposal and prices quoted in it must be valid for at least three months after the submission deadline.

A contractor may submit one proposal only. Any contractor who submits multiple proposals will have all of their proposals rejected.

6.3 Questions and answers

Questions about this Request for Proposal must be sent in writing via the contact form on the ETC website <https://etc-corporate.org/contact/> with the subject **“Questions on RfP: Provision of Travel Agency and Related Services (Framework Agreement)”** until **26 February 2026 at 16:00 (CET)**.

ETC will publish the answers to all the questions received in due course on this page <https://etc-corporate.org/rfp-provision-of-travel-agency-services-qa/> by **27 February 2026 at 16:00 (CET)**.

7. Final provisions

This Request for Proposals is in no way binding on the European Travel Commission, nor any of the European Union institutions. Any contractual obligation commences only upon the signature of the particular agreement between ETC and the contractor.

ETC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this Request for Proposals, as well as to cancel this project, either partially or totally. In the event of cancellation of this Request for Proposals, this should not entail any financial obligation from ETC towards any applicant. Any costs incurred during the preparation and submission of proposals are to be borne by the applicant contractor.

Submission of a proposal implies acceptance of the terms and conditions set out in this document.

We thank you in advance for your time and interest in working with ETC.

Brussels, 18 February 2026

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Annex 1 – Reference form

Name of the project:	
Scope and objectives of the project:	
Total value of the contract (in euros):	
Period of execution:	
Place of execution:	
Description of the work performed by the contractor and main results:	
Client	
Name:	
Registered address:	
Website:	
Attached certificate of good execution:	YES / NO
Contact person at the client	
Name:	
Position:	
Phone:	
E-mail:	

* All fields in the form are required.

Annex 2 – Economic offer form

This form is for illustrative purposes only. Please use the form in .xls format provided as a separate file with the documents of this procedure.

In the table below, please enter in the right-hand column the standard fixed unit price exclusive of VAT in Euro for booking the service mentioned in the left-hand column.

Service	Fixed unit service fee excl. VAT
Long-haul flight booking	€
Short-haul flight booking	€
Accommodation booking	€
Rail ticket booking	€
Leisure activity booking	€
Venue rental for meetings, workshops, or events (per reservation)	€