



**UNHCR**

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

## Annex A (a): Terms of Reference

Travel Management Services

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

**UNHCR – Regional Representation for European Affairs (RREUA)** based in Brussels are looking for a travel agent (or agency) located in Belgium for carrying out travel management services.

UNHCR RREUA is composed of over 70 staff who go on around 500 missions (trips) per year. Such missions are undertaken mainly by air and rail with 75%-25% ratio for European and Intercontinental flights.

## **1.2 Statement of Purpose & Objectives**

The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to find a suitable travel agency for delivering travel management services for UNHCR. The candidate is expected to provide professional services, considering numerous factors when making offers and taking related actions. The travel agency shall be well established and the services shall be performed in the most cost-effective manner considering UNHCR's interest as well as its staff welfare.

The suitable candidate is expected to employ well experienced travel agents who possess all adequate skills and competencies to support the official missions of UNHCR staff. The continuity of the high level and quality services shall be assured at all times with a well-designed back-up system. The competent travel agent is pro-active, diligent and is always on stand-by mode. It can also advise UNHCR on best practices and can draw attention to further cost saving opportunities. These factors and expected services are detailed in this Terms of Reference.

### **1.2.1 The travel agency's core functions**

The travel agency would be responsible for:

- a) obtaining tickets for all commercial modes of transport (i.e., air, rail, bus and ship) for UNHCR staff members and/or family members of its staff to any destination worldwide;
- b) negotiating and concluding – on behalf and for the benefit of UNHCR – discount agreements with major air carriers

### **1.2.2 Description of official travel**

The official travels include, but are not limited to the following:

- a) official missions of UNHCR staff, Government and counterparts or other entities,
- b) appointment and repatriation of staff and family members,
- c) home leaves and educational leaves and other travel defined as "entitlement travel"

The agency shall not favour any particular carrier when making reservations unless otherwise specifically agreed in writing by UNHCR.

## **2 Responsibilities of the Travel Agency**

### **2.1 Core requirements**

- a) The Travel Agency is an **accredited IATA Travel Agency** and shall:
- b) **make reservations**, issue and deliver tickets for all commercial modes of transportation (i.e., air, rail, bus) from/to Brussels (Zaventem, Brussels train stations etc)
- c) make bids and prepare **appropriate itineraries and formal quotes** within a reasonable timeframe based on the lowest fare and the most direct and convenient routing in accordance with entitlements described in the below mentioned Travel Policy extract (low cost, special fares, restricted fares, discount fares, and bulk fares for use whenever appropriate). In the event that required travel arrangement cannot be confirmed, notify the requestor of the problem and present alternative routings/quotations for consideration;
- d) provide at least **three options** for European and intercontinental destinations. These offers should be free of charge;
- e) **pre-book** the suggested seats mentioned in the formal quotation for a specified duration. This will allow passengers to review the offer, and ensure the seat is still available upon confirmation of preferred route.
- f) accurately advise the requestor of **ticketing deadlines** and other relevant information every time reservations are made in order to avoid cancellations of bookings;
- g) **promptly issue and forward all tickets** in electronic format with detailed itineraries including carrier(s), flight numbers, departure and arrival times for each segment of the trip;
- h) **inform travellers**, upon booking confirmation, of flight/ticket restrictions, involuntary stop-over, hidden stops, and other inconveniences of the itinerary and provide required documentation for travels;
- i) **handle complaints** in a timely manner on behalf of UNHCR on flight problems, cancellations, delays etc;
- j) **reconfirm** and revalidate airline tickets, re-issue tickets which are returned as a result of changed routing or fare structures and printed itineraries;
- k) process duly authorized travel (flight, train etc) changes or cancellations as required;
- l) process immediately and report on refunds for unused tickets for fares, and credit them to UNHCR;
- m) provide regular travel services on each working day from 09:00am to 18:00pm.

### **2.2 Other complementary services required**

The travel agent shall:

- a) promptly notify travellers of airport closures, strikes, delayed or cancelled flights/trains, or any other changes that might affect the travellers;
- b) All tickets shall be issued in electronic format. When an electronic format is not available, any paper version shall be delivered to UNHCR's office free of charge;

- c) The agent provides 24 hours a day emergency service - including reservation and ticketing services - outside of office hours and on weekends with duly communicated contact telephone number(s);
- d) The agent will keep a file on all UNHCR travellers containing their full names, passport numbers, preferred seating etc to facilitate bookings;
- e) The travel agency shall submit statistical reports at the request of UNHCR;
- f) The travel agency shall submit an individual or consolidated report at the request of UNHCR;
- g) The travel agency will ensure the confidentiality of information and documents concerning UNHCR;
- h) The travel agency shall undertake the recovery procedure on behalf of UNHCR for circumstances outside of UNHCR's control (cancellations, strikes etc) and refund the unused/cancelled tickets as soon as possible to UNHCR;

### **2.3 Billing and Invoice**

The travel agency shall send an official invoice to UNHCR for the purchase of each ticket. The invoice will include the name of the passenger, dates of travel and destination.

The travel agency will be required to send original invoices to UNHCR within 30 business days after services have been rendered.

The travel agency shall be requested, if necessary, to provide monthly statements of paid and unpaid invoices for reconciliation and monitoring purposes.

The travel agency must ensure that the tickets issued and the bill are in accordance with the request from the UNHCR travel focal points.

### **2.4 Responsibilities of UNHCR**

UNHCR to provide:

- Clear, comprehensive request for flight quotation in order to allow agency to provide best fares
- One focal point will be appointed in each division of UNHCR Brussels to liaise with the travel agent
- UNHCR, in accordance with the standard terms of payment, undertakes to pay the travel agency any authorized charge within thirty days of receipt of original invoices. It is understood that UNHCR will decline their responsibilities in the event of a trip undertaken without authorization and / or that does not comply with the regulations of UN agencies.

### **2.5 Special conditions and requirements**

#### **2.5.1 Travel Policy**

The agency shall fully adhere to the current Travel Policy detailed below:

Current air travel policy requires the agency in all cases to research and book the lowest available fares and to research alternate itineraries (at least three options, if available) in order to provide the lowest appropriate fares, which satisfy the travel policies and mission requirements. Our travel policies embody the following basic principles:

- a) Use of lowest applicable fare (most economical option) according to specified requirements;
- b) Use low cost carriers where possible;
- c) Full economy fares may be used only if no appropriate reduced fares are available;
- d) While the most economical route should be prioritised, the total time of the journey should not exceed the most direct route by 4 hours or more
- e) When the total additional time is less than 4 hours, a more expensive direct route can be chosen, provided the cost does not exceed USD 150 per leg (USD 300 both ways)
- f) Business class travel or equivalent may be applicable only in limited situations: either for a direct flight over 9 hours, or for over 11 hours of a multi leg journey with a max of 2 hours transit included in the calculation of the duration of the journey;
- g) Travel regulations prohibit first-class air travel except for a few specific categories;
- h) Travel by train - first class is accepted;
- i) Tickets can be combined in any form in order to fulfil the most economical criteria (combination of one-way tickets, with fictional return, including return flight to fictional destination, regular airline combined with low cost carrier, multi-destination ticket combined with one way ticket etc.).

The agency must be knowledgeable of and prepare to offer in accordance with the established travel policy: special fares, restricted fares, discount fares, and bulk fares for use whenever appropriate. Fares which entail restrictive conditions (such as penalties or stay over), however, shall only be booked with the express approval of authorized UNHCR personnel.

#### 2.5.2 Other special conditions

- a) UNHCR reserves the right to interview and to refuse to work with the selected, assigned travel consultant.
- b) All written communication between the requestor and the agent shall be in English or French.
- c) The travel agent shall provide the above mentioned services both for official missions and for private requests of staff members. The private request will have to be invoiced to the staff members. If the cost of a ticket is to be shared by the office and the staff member, the agent is required to issue two separate invoices. UNHCR will not be liable for the cost of the private portion requested by the staff member.

#### 2.5.3 Reporting Requirements

The agency and UNHCR shall meet every 6 months to review the working relationship and business volume per UNHCR unit.

### **3 Content of the Technical Offer**

Your Technical proposal should be concisely presented and structured in the following order to include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following information:

#### **3.1 Company Qualifications**

- A description of your company with evidence of your company's capacity to perform the services required, including:
- Company profile and the last three annual financial statements
- Accredited IATA Travel Agency certification
- Annual average yearly turnover is more than 100,000 USD as supported by the annual financial statement
- If a multi-location company, please specify the location of the company's headquarters, and the branches that will be involved in the project work with founding dates
- Travel Agent shall have representation office in Belgium as supported by the address of local branch
- Three or more letters of reference, with contact information

#### **3.2 Proposed Services**

- The agent makes bids, prepare appropriate itineraries and formal quotations, refreshes prices in a reasonable timeframe
- Provide example of offers as criteria set out in Annex B (a)
- The agent offers regular travel services on each working day from 09:00am to 18:00pm
- The agent provides 24 hours a day emergency service - including the reservation and ticketing services - outside of office hours and on weekends with duly communicated contact telephone number(s)

#### **3.3 Personnel Qualifications**

- The travel agent employs competent and experienced travel consultants, especially who are participating in ticketing and fare computations
- The agent is required to assign sufficient number of qualified travel consultants to serve the UNHCR contract in order to meet deadlines;
- The agency shall have back up staff to maintain full service to UNHCR at all times even during the absence of the UNHCR appointed focal point in the travel agency
- The assigned UNHCR focal point at the travel agency will have strong adaptability and reactivity skills: last minute requests, urgent requests, ticket changes, force majeure etc

#### **3.4 Vendor Registration Form**

Your company is not registered with UNHCR. Please complete, sign, and submit the "Vendor Registration Form" (Annex C) with your Technical Proposal.

#### **3.5 Applicable General Conditions**

Please indicate your acknowledgement of the UNHCR General Conditions of Contract for the Provision of Services by **signing this document (Annex D) and including it in your submitted Technical Proposal.**

## 4 Evaluation

### 4.1 Technical Evaluation

The Technical offer will be evaluated using inter alia the following criteria and percentage distribution: **60% from the total score.**

#### Company Qualifications

- Accredited IATA Travel Agency
- Average yearly turnover is more than 100,000 USD
- Travel agent has representation office in Belgium
- At least three reference letters have been provided

#### Proposed Services

- Travel agent provides 24/7 emergency services
- Travel agent is able to pre-book seats
- Offered opening hours are from 09:00 – 18:00
- Suggested timeframe within which the travel agency will provide quotes
- Travel agent can issue tickets in electronic format
- Travel agent can submit one electronic invoice per ticket issued
- Travel agent will handle all complaints on behalf of UNHCR (refunds, cancellations etc)

#### Personnel Qualifications

- Number of employed travel agents with more than 1 year of experience in using travel reservation system
- Considering 500 missions (travels) per year with 75-25% ratio for European and Intercontinental flights, how many full time travel agent will be dedicated to the UNHCR contract (pro rate increase or decrease) – The following tasks when allocating resource shall be considered: answering quote requests in e-mail, attending phone calls, answering price refresh questions, routing alterations, ticket changes, dealing with refunds, cancellations and complaints.
- Staff appointed to handle UNHCR requests will be bilingual with a strong command of English
- Evaluation of the submitted CVs (at least three) of proposed travel agents for the UNHCR contract

Some technical criteria will be subject to minimum passing scores; if a bid does not meet these minimums it will be deemed technically non-compliant and will not proceed to the financial evaluation.



## **5 Key Performance Indicators**

### **5.1 Performance Evaluation**

UNHCR will monitor the performance of the selected travel agency through the following criteria:

- a) All the requested quotes are received within the agreed timeframe.
- b) Seats are pre-booked
- c) All the tickets are issued electronically (when possible)
- d) Phone calls are attended.
- e) Urgent cases (next day travels, emergency missions or urgent ticket changes) are prioritized
- f) Emergency service is available and accessible when necessary
- g) Feedback from the UNHCR travel focal points and travel agency focal points