



# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**

**THE PROVISION OF TRAVEL AGENCY SERVICES**

Date: 14/09/2017

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This Request for Proposal (RFP) has been prepared by London & Partners Ltd (London & Partners).

The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to seek offers to supply travel agency services.

Persons to whom this Request for Proposal is of interest are invited to submit such offers in accordance with Section 4. Statement of Requirements contained within this Request for Proposal.

This document:

- (a) States the conditions which govern the Request for Proposal process (section 2).
- (b) Provides background information about London & Partners (section 3).
- (c) Describes the services which London & Partners seeks (section 4) and special information to be supplied by Respondents (section 5).

## **2 SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF RFP**

### **2.1 Closing Date**

RFP Responses will be received by email 5pm, on **Friday 29 September 2017**. No extensions will be issued.

### **2.2 Lodging of Request for Proposal Responses**

Submissions should be addressed to Priscilla Padroni at  
[MIBPprocurement@londonandpartners.com](mailto:MIBPprocurement@londonandpartners.com)

Any hard copy supporting information if applicable can be sent in duplicate to

Priscilla Padroni  
London & Partners  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
2 More London  
London  
SE1 2RR

Please name the subject of your email: MIBP Travel Agency.

### **2.3 Information to be provided with Request for Proposal**

RFP Respondents shall ensure that all information specific in this document is supplied. Failure to provide all the information asked for may render the RFP invalid at the discretion of London & Partners.

### **2.4 Presentation**

RFP submissions that meet the requirements stated in section 4 may be invited to provide a presentation of their proposed service(s).

### **2.5 Further Information**

RFP respondents seeking further information regarding this Request for Proposal may do so in writing. The following email address will be the main contact source for all RFP respondents: [MIBPprocurement@londonandpartners.com](mailto:MIBPprocurement@londonandpartners.com)

### **2.6 Notice of Intention / Request for Further Information**

RFP respondents should notify the contact source above of their intention to make a submission by Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017 so that all notifications and amendments can be forwarded. Failure to notify London & Partners will not eliminate the respondent from submitting a response but may result in the respondent having inaccurate information.

Additional information provided in response to an enquiry and which, in the opinion of the London & Partners, may affect all RFP respondents, will be provided to all RFP respondents in writing.

All questions by respondents should be asked in a generic fashion, thus enabling London & Partners to provide a response that can be distributed to all RFP respondents.

## **2.7 Late or Non-compliant Request for Proposal Responses**

Late or non-compliant RFP responses may not be considered by London & Partners.

## **2.8 Authority**

RFP responses shall be accompanied by a cover letter executed by a signatory with the authority, on behalf of the respondent, to negotiate terms and conditions, consult with London & Partners, and execute any contracts related to this Request for Proposal.

## **2.9 Alterations, Erasures or Illegibility**

RFP responses having alterations or erasures therein and in which prices are not legibly stated are liable to rejection at the discretion of London & Partners.

## **2.10 Collusion/ Joint Request for Proposal**

RFP respondents will not approach or otherwise communicate with any other RFP respondent in relation to any RFP without the full knowledge of and prior written authorisation from London & Partners. A single joint RFP submitted to London & Partners by two or more RFP respondents is permitted at the discretion and written permission of London & Partners.

## **2.11 Corrections and Addenda to the Request for Proposal**

Corrections and addenda to this Request for Proposal will be provided to all RFP respondents and will form part of this Request for Proposal. RFP respondents must acknowledge in writing receipt of corrections and addenda to this Request for Proposal.

## **2.12 Negotiations and further submissions**

London & Partners may invite one or more of the RFP respondents to negotiate or make further submissions if deemed to be necessary.

## **2.13 Notification**

Each RFP respondent will be notified in writing from London & Partners of the success or failure of their response.

## **2.14 Value Added Tax (VAT)**

All prices quoted should be inclusive of VAT and clearly stated as such. RFP respondents must provide their Business Registration Number (Companies House Registration number) or provide a reason as to why one cannot be supplied.

## **2.15 Standard of Responses**

The specifications contained herein are indicative of London & Partners' requirements and any services offered should be of at least the same standard and potential.

Respondents submitting alternative offers are advised also to submit a RFP in accordance with the specifications wherever possible.

### **2.16 Withdrawal of the Request for Proposal**

London & Partners reserves the right to withdraw this Request for Proposal, or any part or parts of this Request for Proposal, at any time without giving reasons.

### **2.17 Statement of Compliance**

Where an RFP respondent believes that it can offer an alternative which would have benefits for London & Partners, it is at liberty to do so. Such alternatives should be fully described and the advantages stated. Although the RFP respondent may offer an alternative, it will be in their interest to also submit a RFP against the requirements as presently defined in the Request for Proposal.

Responses must be concise and clear.

### **2.18 Confidentiality**

The RFP respondent and London & Partners (each a “Party”) agrees that it will not at any time, either during or after the RFP process 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 RFP 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.

### **2.19 General Conditions of Contract**

RFP Respondents should present their standard form of contract.

London & Partners reserves the right to vary the terms on which it will contract with the successful respondent, it reserves the right to terminate the contract.

### **2.20 No contract**

Neither this Request for Proposal nor any response is intended to constitute an offer to any party. There shall be no contract between London & Partners and any respondent to the RFP unless and until a separate written legally binding agreement is executed by both parties.

### **2.21 Request for Proposal Costs**

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

## **3 COMPANY BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **3.1 General**

London & Partners is a private company limited by guarantee. It is a not-for-profit public private partnership, funded by the Mayor of London and our network of commercial partners.

We work in partnership with organisations in London and across the world to deliver our vision and mission.

Our remit is to drive leisure and business visitors to London as well as bidding to secure major events in the capital, attract new foreign businesses (Foreign Direct Investment) and help existing foreign owned companies to expand. We also promote the capital's universities to international students.

London & Partners employs approximately 190 staff in total with around 15 staff being situated overseas.

London & Partners has gained funding for **£1,638,922** from European Regional Development Fund programme (ERDF) to deliver the “Mayor’s International Business Programme” (**MIBP**).

This project aims to support London SMEs to expand internationally over a 3-year period. One of the main activities is International Trade Missions which connect the high-growth cohort companies with potential customers and partners across the world.

The project started in September 2015 and ends in December 2018.

For more information visit our website <http://gotogrow.london>

### **3.2 Independence and Integrity**

London & Partners is prohibited from accepting the performance of any service, or the provision of any facility, where it is likely that the independence or integrity of London & Partners would be affected.



## 4 TENDER BRIEF

### 4.1 Overview

The MIBP aims to support London SMEs to expand internationally over a 3-year period. One of the main activities is International Trade Missions which connect the high-growth cohort companies with potential customers and partners across the world.

The purpose of this call for tender is to seek a competitive price for travel agency services for 13 months, commencing November 2017.

As a guide, and with no obligation on the part of MIBP staff as to the actual volume over the period of execution of the contract, the table below shows the number of bookings made over the last two years and the forecast ones for 2017 & 2018.

Year	Flights	Hotels	In-market support
2018 (forecast)	13 missions x 2 delegates	13 missions x 12 delegates x 3 days	Coaches or bus transfer or car services or internal transport by train or plane x 12 delegates x 13 missions
2017 (forecast)	2 missions x 2 delegates	2 missions x 12 delegates x 3 days	Coaches or bus transfer or car services or internal transport by train or plane x 12 delegates x 2 missions
2017	8 missions x 2 delegates	8 missions x 12 delegates x 3 days	Coaches or bus transfer or car services or internal transport by train or plane x 12 delegates x 8 missions
2016	8 missions x 2 delegates	8 missions x 12 delegates x 3 days	Coaches or bus transfer or car services or internal transport by train or plane x 12 delegates x 8 missions

## **4.2 Scope of the Services**

The travel agency shall be able to find and present various travel options/routes, connection flights to a requested destination, hotel options including venue hire for events and meetings, logistic management including in market support on specific missions. The travel agency shall find the cheapest options based on the Economy Class rates unless otherwise instructed by MIBP staff (combining the most direct and least expensive routes to achieve cost effectiveness). Premium Class rates shall be quoted if the journey includes at least one segment involving at least four hours of continuous flying time. Business Class rates shall be quoted if the journey includes at least one segment involving at least eight hours of continuous flying time.

The travel agency shall ensure that all fees and taxes are included in the airfare quotation price and that the travel agency fees are clearly specified.

As a rule, the travel agency shall find the most economic travel option to minimise transit/connection times and stopovers, if applicable.

The travel agency shall also provide at least two comparison quotes with either the same or different route options.

When possible, quotes shall be held for at least three (3) working days.

The travel agency shall reserve and issue tickets for all air, and other travel if requested, upon authorisation to do so by MIBP staff.

Whenever MIBP staff requests a fare quotation for a particular route, the service provider shall be able to present the relevant information by email within 24 hours of MIBP staff's request.

The quotation should clearly mention the following:

- price quotes with reference to the final date of issue (option date)
- mission reference number (to be communicated by MIBP staff inquiring)
- itinerary (detailed flight/train/boat hours of departure and arrival)
- ticket class - economy by default – premium economy/business class ticket can also be issued in compliance with mission rules
- details of accommodation (hotel bookings, additional services provided)
- information on ticket and accommodation flexibility and related costs regarding possible changes or cancellation

- a detailed breakdown of the final cost (e.g. fare cost, service fee applied from airlines companies, hotel bookings, transaction fee applied from Travel Agency etc.).

The Travel agency shall bill promptly within four weeks of all travel. Invoices will not be accepted after this date. Statement to billed and unbilled costs should be available upon request.

#### **4.2.1 Ticket Issue**

The travel tickets will be delivered electronically or physically to the premises of MIBP staff at least 48 hours before the time of departure. No additional charge should be made for this delivery service.

#### **4.2.2 Hotel reservation**

The travel agency shall ensure that hotel reservations are secured ahead of the trip while the delegation is being finalised. The travel agent shall also provide express hotel check-in and other accommodation services if required, with direct communication with individuals joining the delegation last minute.

#### **4.2.3 In-market logistic management, where required**

The service provider shall be able to provide the provision of coaches, bus transfers, car services, internal transport by train or plane, as well as in-market personnel available to facilitate the logistics.

#### **4.2.4 Working Hours**

The service provider must be able to provide services, including ticket delivery, during normal working hours of MIBP staff (Monday to Friday 9:00-18:00 (UK time)). Flexibility during weekends and holidays will be favourably viewed. In particular, the service provider must have a hotline service for urgent requests and assistance required falling outside normal working hours (the name of a contact person and telephone number must be provided).

#### **4.2.5 Cancellation**

In the case of cancellation at short notice, the service provider shall endeavour to minimise any penalties applicable to MIBP staff. Penalties attributable to the fault of the service provider will not be accepted.

#### **4.2.6 Visas**

The travel agency shall notify MIBP staff of all instances where visas must be obtained. If requested to do so, the travel agency shall obtain, pay for and ensure visas are issued prior to travel.

#### **4.2.7 Communication of Interest to MIBP staff**

The travel agent will inform MIBP staff immediately of any changes in scheduled flights and accommodation, including industrial action, natural disaster, political instability or other event, which may affect travelling arrangements for MIBP staff.

In order to facilitate contacts and information exchange between the parties, the travel agency shall be able to process reservation, booking and delivery requests received by phone or by email. To this end, the contractor should have adequately skilled personnel.

### **4.3 Critical Success Factors**

London and Partners will evaluate all quotations on the following criteria:

- Understanding of brief
- Relevant experience
- Value for money.

### **4.4 Breakdown/Phasing**

The procurement timetable is as follows:

- Deadline for receipt of quotations – 5pm on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2017 for hard copies and electronic copy
- Evaluation and selection – 2<sup>nd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> October 2017
- Interview/Presentations – Week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017
- Notification of preferred supplier – 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017
- Standstill period – 10 days
- Indicative start date of contract – 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

## **5 CONTENT**

The quotation should be no more than 4 sides of A4 and should include:

- Examples of recent relevant experience

- Description of service (type of services, timescales, standard fees, visa, cancellation policy, change policy, after-hours request, consular services, etc)
- Information on skills and experience of staff who will undertake the work, in particular the in-market service and support
- Budget with clear explanation of all fees to be charged and an estimate for the period based on activity levels given in section 4.
- Declaration of any (potential) conflicts of interest that may rise through working on this project.

## **5.1 Payment Arrangements**

London & Partners payment terms are 30 days from the receipt of an invoice following receipt of goods or services.

Our preferred frequency of billing is monthly.

All RFP respondents must agree to provide invoices in a format which is suitable for London & Partners. London & Partners will pay by electronic funds transfer (EFT) direct to the nominated bank account of the supplier.

RFP respondents should state any discounts they offer for payments within certain time periods.

Prices provided by RFP Respondents are to be quoted in British Pounds and remain valid over six months. In addition London & Partners reserves the right to purchase extra proposed options over time.

# **6 EVALUATION CRITERIA**

## **6.1 Exclusion Criteria**

Tenderers shall be excluded from participation in a procurement procedure if:

- they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations
- they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata
- they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify
- they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which

they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed

- they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the European Union's financial interests
- following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the European Union budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

## **6.2 Selection Criteria**

Tenderers should have the necessary financial, economic, technical and professional capacity to perform their obligations under the contract.

Documentary evidence of the Tenderers' claims in respect of the below-mentioned criteria is required.

- **Professional Information**

The Tenderer must provide evidence of enrolment (declaration or certificates) in one of the professional or trade registers, in the country of establishment.

It is expected that the tenderer is a registered (IATA or equivalent) travel agent with access to normally obligatory restricted airline and train booking systems.

- **Financial and Economic Capacity**

Evidence of financial and economic standing shall be furnished by the following documents and minimum requirements:

(a) Copy of the financial statements (balance sheets and profit and loss accounts) for the last two (2) financial years for which accounts have been closed, where publication of the accounts is required under the company law of the country in which the economic operator is established.

If the tenderer is not obliged to publish its accounts under the law of the state in which it is established, a copy of audited accounts for the last two (2) financial years should be presented.

(b) A statement of the average turnover of the last two (2) financial years for which accounts have been closed.

- **Technical and professional capacity**

The evidence provided of the relevant background and technical capacity of the Tenderer shall cover the following aspects: a) Report presenting the company and describing its activities b) Good working knowledge of English; c) Tenderer should provide a list of references (minimum 2, public or private) and the main services provided over the last three years for similar contracts including their relevant contact details. d) Tenderer must provide evidence that they are in

possession of a valid IATA License or equivalent accreditation. e) Tenderer should provide a detailed description of the logistical infrastructure and equipment including software available to provide these services.

### 6.3 Award Criteria

#### 1. Quality of the Offer

Once the Tenderer has demonstrated the appropriate capacity to perform the Contract on the grounds of the selection criteria, the offer will be assessed on the basis of the award criteria.

No	Qualitative award criteria			Weighting (max. points)
1	Quality of the contract implementation proposal, assessed on the base of:	<p>How the contract implementation will be organised in order to guarantee efficiency and quality of the services to MIBP in accordance with the requirements listed in the Scope of Service of this document.</p> <p>Ability to proactively provide solutions to optimize travel time and improve cost efficiency.</p> <p>Broad selection of hotels across EU member states and worldwide, and availability of lists of preferred hotels.</p>		30
2	Compliance with the requested services:	<p>Response times (providing quotes, issuing and delivering tickets, booking accommodation).</p> <p>Alert systems for travel disruptions and contingency plans.</p> <p>Services provided outside the normal working hours (out-of-</p>		30

		hours), as well as during weekends and holidays, and in market.		
3	Contract implementation team:	Team size and composition and balance of skill mix of proposed team: profiles, team roles and responsibilities of all team members, including resource back-up.		20
4	Previous relevant experience of travel service provision:	Two examples of recent past experiences in providing travel agency services.		20
Total Qualitative Points (QP)				100

Minimum attainment per criterion: offers scoring less than 50% for any criterion will be deemed to be of insufficient quality and eliminated from further consideration.

Minimum attainment overall: offers scoring less than 60% after the evaluation process will be considered to be of insufficient quality and eliminated from the following phase.

## 2. Price

The offer will be assessed based on the best value for money. The qualitative award criteria points will be weighted at 50% in relation to the price.

## 3. Presentation Stage

The Tenderers representing the top 3 may be invited to present to a panel representing MIBP. The presentations will last up to 60 minutes including time for questions and answers. The presentation team should comprise no more than 4 people, including those who would provide the Services. The presentation will be based upon the Tenderers original response and give the tenderer the opportunity to detail how they will provide the services and give greater clarity to their tender responses. The presentations will take place at the London &



Partners offices in London. The presentation stage contributes to the determination of the final award of contract. The presentation stage shall be scored by the panel and based upon the Tenderer's understanding of the MIBP's needs and the services required, and their overall technical submission. Marks of 0 – 4 will be allocated using the scoring definitions stated below. The total marks received during the tender stage will be adjusted up or down based on the presentation and clarifications. The final ranking will be determined from the final marks allocated following the presentation stage.

Grade	Quality	Description
0	Totally inadequate response	No confidence that the Tenderers can meet the requirement.
1	Poor response	Very limited and or poor quality of evidence provided that supports that the tenderer meets little of the requirement with major concerns that leads to the conclusion of a low level of confidence that the tenderer can meet the requirement.
2	Reasonable response	Evidence provided that supports that the tenderer meets most of the requirement with minor concerns that leads to the conclusion of a mid-level of confidence that the tenderer can meet the requirement.
3	Good response	Evidence provided that supports that the tenderer meets the entire requirement that leads to the conclusion of a mid to high level of confidence that the tenderer can meet the requirement.
4	Excellent response	Comprehensive evidence provided that supports that the tenderer meets all of the requirement that leads to the

		conclusion of a high level of confidence that the tenderer has the required skills, experience or resources required.
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## 7 AWARD OF THE CONTRACT

The contract will be awarded to the offer which is the most cost effective (offers the best value for money) which obtains the highest number of points after the tender evaluation on the basis of the ratio between the quality criteria (50%) and the price (50%)\*, adjusted on the result of the presentation and clarifications.

\*The following formula will be used:

$$TWP = (QP \times 0.5) + (PP \times 0.5)$$

Where;

QP = Qualitative points PP = Weighted price points TWP = Total weighted points score

In case the successful tenderer is unable to sign the contract for any reasons, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to award the contract to other tenderers as per the ranking order established following the evaluation procedure.

## 8 ESTIMATED CONTRACT VALUE

The maximum value for this contract is £300,000 + VAT (including all services provided).