



INVITATION TO BID
Long Term Agreement for Travel Management Services
ITB-ARK-LTA-24-ARKAE1219

To: Bidder
From: ARK Group
ITB Reference: ITB-ARK-LTA-24-ARKAE1219
ITB Issue date: 23 April 2024
ITB Closing date: 20 May 2024
ITB Closing time: 19:00 Gulf Standard Time (GST)

1. Purpose

ARK Group DMCC (ARK) is seeking proposals to establish a Long Term Agreement (LTA) with a qualified Travel Agent for its business travel requirements. ARK is registered in the UAE with its head office in Dubai, and branch offices in Beirut, Amman and London. Travel services are required across all our regions of operation which include the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Americas.

2. Requirement

ARK's travel management service is provided by a travel agency based in Dubai with the current agreement ending in May 2024. The travel booking platform is powered by Neo, which is customised to ARK's travel policy and procedures including internal approvals which enables transparency on travel cost and journey choice. Each trip booked on the online travel booking tool is recorded with an audit log showing the itinerary, budget code, trip objective, approvals, and total cost. The travel agency also provides dedicated support for offline bookings (specifically for ticket changes, cancellations, and complex itinerary bookings, Fly America Act flight bookings and group bookings), and a 24/7 out of office contact centre for emergency bookings.

This ITB is for the re-tender of the above-mentioned travel management services. Travel Management Services shall include, but are not limited to: a custom-built online travel booking tool, airline ticketing, short-term accommodation in hotels and/or apartment hotels, hire of conference facilities, train ticketing, car and coach hire and advice on visa requirements and/or facilitation of visa applications. The ITB may result in one or more travel agents being awarded an LTA.

Detailed requirements are provided in **Annex 1 Terms of Reference**.

3. Description of ARK

ARK is a stabilisation and development company committed to empowering local communities and beneficiaries in conflict, post-conflict, and fragile areas through the provision of evidence-based programmatic interventions, policy recommendations, research, and capacity-building. Working with local communities, it seeks to understand and then mitigate the negative effects of conflict and instability, enhancing social cohesion and resilience whilst promoting human security, development, and economic opportunity.

4. Instructions for Submitting Proposals

- a) The ITB consists of this letter of invitation with submission instructions and evaluation criteria, and the following annexes:
- Annex 1: Terms of Reference (TOR) for Travel Management Services
 - Annex 2: Proposal Declaration Form



- Annex 3: Technical Proposal Form
 - Annex 4: Price Proposal Form
- b) Your proposal should be submitted via email to procurement@arkgroupdmcc.com adhering to the following instructions:
- The technical and price proposals will be submitted in two separate documents.
 - The first email shall be marked "[Your Company Name] - ITB-ARK-LTA-24-ARKAE1219 Technical Proposal" and contain: the (1) Proposal Declaration Form, (2) A copy of your company registration certificate and (3) the Technical Proposal Form. **The technical proposal must not make reference to cost or pricing information at any point.**
 - The second email shall be marked "[Your Company Name] - ITB-ARK-LTA-24-ARKAE1219 Price Proposal" and include your Price Proposal only.
 - Proposals must be received by ARK no later than **20 May 2024, 19:00 GST**. Any proposal received after this date will be rejected. ARK may, at its discretion, extend the deadline for the submission of proposals, by notifying all prospective bidders in writing. The extension of the deadline may accompany a modification of the bid documents prepared by ARK at its own initiative or in response to a clarification requested by a bidder.
 - Requests for clarification should be sent via email to procurement@arkgroupdmcc.com. Clarification questions may be sent until 10 May 2024 (inclusive). Any written reply to a particular question will be shared with all other bidders who have expressed an interest. If you wish to receive answers to clarification questions sent by other bidders, please send an expression of interest to procurement@arkgroupdmcc.com by 10 May 2024.
 - An expression of interest is strongly encouraged as ARK will notify those potential suppliers of any changes to the ITB that take place.
 - The cost of preparing a proposal and negotiating a contract is not reimbursable.
 - ARK is not committed to selecting any of the companies submitting proposals and has the right to reject any/all proposals submitted. This ITB is not to be construed in any way as an offer of contract.

5. Technical Proposal

The technical component of your proposal should be completed following the format provided in Annex 3 - Technical Proposal Form. The technical proposal format may be modified or expanded provided the following information is covered:

Section 1 – Bidder Information

Section 2 – Company Profile and Expertise

Section 3 – Approach and Methodology

Section 4 – Personnel



Section 5 – Travel Booking Platform

Section 6 – Management Reporting

Section 7 – Payment Terms

6. Price Proposal

The price component of your proposal should be completed on the template provided in Annex 4 - Price Proposal Form. The purpose of the price proposal is to evaluate:

- The availability of services provided
- The transaction / reservation costs charged
- Corporate discounts offered
- Menu pricing for the services listed. ***Please note this will only be requested from bidders who qualified through to the financial evaluation following completion of the technical evaluation.***

It should be noted that with the exception of transaction fees and corporate discounts, the bidders are not committed to the prices quoted in the proposal. The menu pricing will be used only as an indication of the competitiveness of prices offered for the purposes of this ITB.

7. Evaluation Criteria

- a) The proposals will be evaluated in two stages; technical and financial evaluation.
- b) All potential suppliers must pass the mandatory criteria. **Proposals failing to meet the mandatory requirements will be disqualified from the evaluation process.**
- c) The technical evaluation will be completed before the financial evaluation. The maximum score for the Technical Proposal is **120 points** and **140 points** for the Price Proposal.
- d) The final score for the bidders will be the sum of the technical and price proposals. The maximum total score is **260 points**.
- e) A minimum threshold of **96 points (80%)** must be achieved in the technical evaluation to qualify for price proposal evaluation.
- f) **Mandatory Criteria:**

Inclusion of a confirmation statement that the following mandatory criteria are met:

- Availability of the following services:
 - Air travel
 - Hotel accommodation
 - Meeting room hire
 - Train ticketing in UK and Europe
 - Online booking platform customisable to meet ARK's requirements.

- g) **Technical Evaluation and Scoring:**

- Section 1: Bidder information: **Not scored**
- Section 2: Company profile and expertise: **15 points**
- Section 3: Approach and methodology: **35 points**
- Section 4: Personnel: **15 points**



The personnel section will be scored as per the following breakdown:

- Management structure: **5 points**
- Proposed team structure: **5 points**
- Qualifications of key personnel **5 points**
- Section 5: Travel booking platform: **35 points**
- Section 6: Management reporting: **10 points**
- Section 7: Payment Terms: **10 points**

This will be scored based on favourable payment terms for length and size of credit facility. Supplier who can provide the longest and highest credit facility will be awarded full marks.

h) Financial Evaluation and Scoring:

- Only bidders meeting the minimum threshold of 96 points in the technical evaluation will be taken forward to the financial evaluation.
- The maximum number of points for the Price Proposal is **140**.
- The Price Proposal is broken down into the following evaluation criteria:

▪ **Section 1. Air Travel (45 points)**

Section 1.1 Transaction Fees: 30 points. The maximum points will be awarded to the lowest price. Proportional scores will be allocated to the remaining proposals. This section will be scored as per the following breakdown:

- Online booking fee: **5 points**
- Offline booking fee: **5 points**
- Out of hours booking fee: **5 points**
- Transaction fee for ticket change: **5 points**
- Transaction fee for ticket cancellation: **5 points**
- Transaction fee for processing refund: **5 points**

Section 1.2 Menu Pricing: 15 points.

Following evaluation of technical proposals, those bidders who have qualified for price evaluation stage, will be requested to provide quotes for real time flight itineraries. ARK will contact the bidders separately on this. No submission is required with the price proposal response at this stage (**15 points**).

This will be scored as per the following breakdown:

Lowest overall economy fare total price for all itineraries quoted: **10 points**.

Lowest overall business fare total price for all itineraries quoted: **5 points**.

The maximum number of points will be allocated to the lowest menu pricing. Proportional scores will be allocated to the remaining proposals.

▪ **Section 2. Hotel Accommodation (35 points)**

Section 2.1 Transaction Fees: 20 points. The maximum points will be awarded to the lowest price. Proportional scores will be allocated to the remaining proposals.

- Online booking fee: **4 points**
- Offline booking fee: **4 points**
- Out of hours booking fee: **4 points**
- Transaction fee for reservation change: **3 points**
- Transaction fee for reservation cancellation: **3 points**
- Transaction fee for processing refund: **2 points**

Section 2.2 Hotel Menu Pricing: 15 points.



Following evaluation of technical proposals, those bidders who have qualified for price evaluation stage, will be requested to provide quotes for real time room rates from specific hotels. ARK will contact the bidders separately on this. No submission is required with the price proposal response at this stage **(15 points)**.

This will be scored as per the following breakdown:

Lowest overall room total price for all specified hotels quoted: **15 points**.

The maximum number of points will be allocated to the lowest menu pricing. Proportional scores will be allocated to the remaining proposals.

▪ **Section 3. Meeting Room Hire (15 points)**

Section 3.1 Transaction Fees: 15 points. The maximum points will be awarded to the lowest price. Proportional scores will be allocated to the remaining proposals.

- Standard booking fee: **3 points**
- Out of hours booking fee: **3 points**
- Transaction fee for reservation change: **3 points**
- Transaction fee for reservation cancellation: **2 points**
- Transaction fee for processing refund; **2 points**
- Other additional charges not mentioned above: **2 points**

▪ **Section 4. Travel Booking Platform (35 points)**

Section 4.1 Fees: 35 points. The maximum points will be awarded to the lowest price. Proportional scores will be allocated to the remaining proposals.

- Travel booking tool implementation / set up: **15 points**
- Annual fee: **20 points**

▪ **Section 5. Corporate discounts (10 points)**

The maximum number of points will be allocated to the highest / most advantageous discount scheme offered. Proportional scores will be allocated to the remaining proposals.

8. Award of Contract and Timeline

Please note that ARK is not committed to select any of the companies submitting proposals. This ITB is not to be construed in any way as an offer of contract. This ITB may also result in LTAs with several companies based on the outcome of the evaluation.

We look forward to receiving your proposal.

Yours faithfully,

ARK Group DMCC