

**Terms of Reference for the Provision of  
Travel Management Services for UNHCR in Moscow  
RFP 24/RUS/009**

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Scope of the project: UNHCR Moscow is seeking a Travel Agency that would be responsible for the Operation's official travel arrangements, as follows:

- a) Obtaining tickets for all commercial modes of transport (i.e. air, rail, cars, etc.), for UNHCR or other UN workforce and/or family members of its staff to any destination, locally or worldwide, accordingly. Such arrangements shall be to serve UNHCR staff members, its Affiliate Work Force (AWF)] and any other non UNHCR individual, with or without contractual link with UNHCR that may either be invited to travel by the Organization or for which the Organization facilitates travel e.g. speakers to events and/ or other Experts.
- b) Negotiating and concluding – on behalf and for the benefit of UNHCR– discount agreements with major air carriers and/or other transportation companies/agencies.

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

- Official missions of UNHCR staff, Government and counterparts or other entities,
- Statutory travel: such as on appointment, reassignment, repatriation, separation etc. of the workforce and family members (as applicable)
- Entitlement travel: such as home leave, education grant, family leave and other travel etc.

### 1.2 Qualifications and Requirements of Bidders

The successful bidder 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 as well as its staff welfare. The agency is expected to employ well experienced travel agents who possess all adequate skills and competencies to support the official missions of UNHCR Moscow. The continuity of the high level and quality services shall be assured at all times with 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 Moscow on best practices and can draw attention to further cost-saving opportunities. These factors and expected services are detailed in this Terms of Reference.

Bidders must demonstrate that they have in place all equipment, facilities and experienced personnel necessary to carry out professional services for UNHCR.

Travel agencies must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Licensed travel agency in Russian Federation
2. Have a good track record of serving international organizations, embassies, multinational corporations
3. Availability of partnership agreements with air and railway carriers, hotel groups, travel agencies, transport companies, hotel booking operators

4. Financial soundness
5. Good company reputation, with no involvement in or suspicion of corrupt or other malicious practices
6. Employs competent and qualified travel consultants, as evidenced in their Curriculum Vitae
7. Maintains reliable facilities of online bookings / airline reservations (please specify what online reservation systems/platform are in place)
8. Commitment to deliver products and services in accordance to performance standards specified in this TOR

## 2. Requirements

### 2.1 Booking of Tickets/Transportation

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

The Agency shall confirm what reservation systems/platform are in place.

Fares should comply with UNHCR policies and mission requirements. Current air travel policy requires the agency in all cases to research and book the lowest available fares and to research alternate itineraries in order to provide the lowest appropriate fares, which satisfy the travel policies and mission requirements. UNHCR travel expert shall confirm the type of travel when setting up the booking request and provide unique UNHCR mission request ID of the travel. UNHCR shall make the booking request via Contractor's booking online platform, and additional or further clarification on the travel shall be communicated via email. The online booking platform should allow to enter the following details of the travel: traveller name, travel document data, route, dates, UNHCR mission request ID, Cost Centre 21121 or 96505/DAFI; Admin or Programme budget, various tariff options, seats (indication of direction in case of trains), comments, select personal or official ticket, select type of travel. The online booking platform should allow manage (change, cancel) all previously entered travels and issued tickets. It is important that the online booking platform allows to save and manage travellers' profiles containing personal data of travellers for reference when making travel arrangements.

The UNHCR Travel Policy generally embodies the following basic principles:

- Whenever available and not leading to travel exceeding 5 hours, rail is the preferred mode of transportation, even if more expensive than travel by air.
- For authorized travel by train, staff members will be provided with regular first class or equivalent standard

Air tickets rules:

- a) Selection of class of air ticket shall depend on types of travel as follows:
  - ✓ training (participant) – economy;
  - ✓ official business- business when the total travel time of the journey is 10 hours or more;
  - ✓ training (facilitator)- business when the total travel time of the journey is 10 hours or more;
  - ✓ combined mission with training (participant) - economy;
  - ✓ HR travel – normally business when the total travel time of the journey is 10 hours or more.;
  - ✓ non-UNHCR participants- economy;
  - ✓ eligible family members – for HR travel normally business when the total travel time of the journey is 10 hours or more;

- ✓ private ticket – all classes, to be selected by staff member;
- ✓ other - class of travel will be confirmed by UNHCR travel expert;
- b) when non-stop flights are available, the least expensive fare on a direct service will normally be used;
- c) when non-stop flights are not available, the least expensive fare on an indirect service will be used, provided that the selected itinerary does not exceed the route with the shortest travel time by 4 hours or more. A tolerance of US\$150 per entire journey will be applied for the determination of compliant travel options.
- d) In case of a of multi-leg trip and when the stopover exceeds 12 hours, the travel time of each leg is calculated independently.
- e) Tickets can be combined in any form in order to fulfil the most economical criteria (return tickets, combination of one-way tickets, regular airline combined with low cost carrier, multi-destination ticket combined with one way ticket etc.);
- f) In general, UNHCR accepts low cost transportation.
- g) For local air travel in Russia Aeroflot airlines is an authorized carrier, all other carriers need to be confirmed separately

In specific, apart from providing offers and issuing the tickets in accordance with the UNHCR travel Policy, the Agency will also be requested to:

- reconfirm and revalidate airline tickets, re-issue tickets which are returned as a result of changed routing or fare structures and printed itineraries;
- promptly issue and forward the tickets in the electronic format with detailed itineraries showing the accurate status of the airline on all segments of the travel;
- in case the ticket is not electronic, it shall be delivered to the requester's office free of charge to UNHCR premises;
- provide reservations and tickets to requestor as and when needed;
- for waiting-list bookings, provide regular feedback on status of the flight;
- provide related info for entry at destination for travellers as applicable to the time of entry (e.g visa, vaccination, other requirements etc)

The Agency must be knowledgeable of and prepare their offers in accordance with the UNHCR travel policy (UNHCR travel experts will keep the contractor updated on UNHCR travel rules): 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 exclusive approval of authorized UNHCR personnel. Only authorized UNHCR staff will be designated to arrange/order travel management services. The Agency shall always provide all available options taking the Policy into consideration for the specific requested itinerary or as specified by the UNHCR designated personnel.

For all flight offers sent and/or provisional reservations made, the travel agent(s) shall clearly indicate the expiration time or ticketing issuance deadline, in order to avoid changes of fares. All flight offers shall clearly specify the type and size of luggage allowed, meals on board, etc.

The travel agent(s) shall provide travelers with relevant information on official destinations, e.g. visa requirements, security procedures, airport transfers and transportation facilities, local points of interest, currency restrictions/regulations, health precautions, weather conditions, access measures, etc. Moreover, the travel agent(s) shall promptly notify travel arrangers/administrators/assigned UNHCR f/p or as instructed of airport closures, delayed or cancelled flights, as well as other changes that might affect or would require preparations from travellers, sufficiently before the departure time.

The travel agent(s) shall advise market practices and trends that could result in further savings for UNHCR, including the use of corporate travel booking tools, group discounts, etc.

The travel agency shall process duly authorized flight changes/cancellations when and as required; it shall immediately process airline refunds for cancelled travel requirements, unutilized pre-paid tickets and credit these to UNHCR as expeditiously as possible.

## **2.2 Transportation Services**

Upon request, the Agency shall provide rented vehicle/s with a driver and transfer services for the workforce, their dependants, official visitors and other designated individuals. The drivers to be assigned for transfer services shall have at least basic knowledge of English (ability to communicate) and carry a nametag with UNCHR logo on it in order to be identified by the travellers, when required so.

Transfer services may include all types of vehicles (bus, mini van, car etc) and may be needed by various locations. The speed limits and all other traffic laws enforced by the local legislation shall be strictly adhered to by the drivers providing airport or other transfer services.

## **2.3 Hotel Booking Services**

The Agency shall:

- Provide lowest hotel rate options using the negotiated hotel rates of UN, Agency or lowest market available.
- Offer negotiated hotel rates in Russia and worldwide based on UNHCR communication, preferably standard rate throughout the year for specific hotels.
- Provide hotel itinerary including arrival dates, confirmation number, hotel rate secured, guaranteed reservation information, time limit and cost (if applicable) required for cancellation, penalties for changes, contact addresses/phone numbers.

## **2.4 Other requested ground services/services as applicable**

Such services may include, but not be limited to, arrangements for group activities/visits to local points of interest. UNHCR will only occasionally request these services and when so, nature and quantity will differ from case to case.

Upon UNHCR's request, the travel agent(s) will identify and submit to UNHCR at least three suitable offers, meeting UNHCR's needs and requirements.

## **2.5 Reporting Requirements**

The Agency shall provide WEEKLY, MONTHLY, QUARTERLY and YEARLY management reports to UNHCR including the following information:

- Reflecting the total charges, volume, number and category of the transactions made
- The total volume and number of tickets/reservations issued
- Breakdown of ticketing, UNHCR mission requests IDs, destinations and travellers
- Breakdown of ticketing and other services by arrangers

Especially, for the monthly reporting, the following consolidated reports are required in excel format:

- Details of transactions per month including mission requests IDs, travellers and destinations
- Cost per traveller per month
- Number of tickets issued per month.
- Number of tickets issued per traveller per month

UNHCR Moscow may request reports on an ad hoc basis.

The Agency shall be able to reconcile the payments received from UNHCR into their bank account. A designated focal point for the payments/financial reporting shall be assigned for UNHCR.

## **2.6 Special Requirements and Conditions**

All communication between UNHCR and the agent shall be in Russian or in English and written. UNHCR reserves the right not to proceed with the agent's offer, if better fares than those quoted are found by UNHCR.

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.

The Agency must provide 24/7 support and emergency services available out of office hours, weekends and public holidays.

As response time is very crucial for the booking of tickets and other services, the Agency shall be able to respond within maximum 1 ½ hours (or less), following the receipt of the request from UNHCR, confirmed by the time of sent from UNHCR to the agency. The requests will be made by email and exceptionally by phone and the Agency shall be able to respond also always by email, providing the necessary information.

The Frame Agreement(s) and related Purchase Orders will be managed by a Senior Manager that will be assigned by the successful bidder(s). The Senior Manager will have a supervisory role; she/he will monitor all services provided to UNHCR, will respond to any performance related questions and provide quantitative/qualitative reports. The Senior Manager will have at least minimum 3 years of previous experience in a reputable travel agency and will have a good working knowledge of English.

In addition, the travel agency shall have a contingency replacement plan during periods of vacations and/or illness of the focal point(s) and Senior Manager assigned to UNHCR. In case of emergency (e.g. natural disasters, war), the travel agency should have a business continuity plan enabling it to support UNHCR operations and evacuations of staff, if needed.

The travel agent shall provide minimum three offers for all the above requested services, whenever possible, and the provision of offers should be free of charge.

The Agency shall provide the ability to UNHCR to collect miles or other related benefits and redeem them for the services of the workforce.

In case of any flights or other transportation means' tickets cancellation/ changes, the Agency shall provide timely and accurate information to the UNHCR designated travel arrangers via email as well as via SMS to mobile telephone numbers to be provided by UNHCR.

## **2.7 Invoicing and Payment Instructions**

Upon confirmation of each booking, except personal bookings of Staff Members, the Contractor shall invoice UNHCR to the Finance Unit of UNHCR, and a tabulation in excel format as well, noting that these above requirements/documents to be shared may change/adjusted according to needs and shall be communicated by UNHCR to the Agency.

All invoices should be free of errors and should reach UNHCR on time.

The invoice should reflect the following:

- Mission Request Number entered and/or provided by UNHCR in online contractor's booking system
- Name of arranger
- UNHCR budget type
- Name of traveller
- Cost centre
- Admin or Programme budget
- Itinerary/Service
- Dates
- Transaction fee separately
- VAT separately

The excel report should include the same data. A template may be provided by UNHCR following the award of the contract.

UNHCR shall, on the fulfilment of the delivery terms and following receipt of satisfactory services, unless otherwise is provided in the Contract or Purchase Order, make payment by bank transfer within 30 days of receipt of the contractor's invoice for the services and copies of any other documentation specified in the Contract.

UNHCR does not do advance payment; therefore, no upfront payment shall be allowed.

## **2.8 Commission/ transaction fee**

The commission/ transaction fee will be paid after a booking has been performed and completed, reflected on the relevant invoice. Please state all applicable commission and cancellation policy requirements, and fees, without mentioning any prices in the Technical Proposal. Prices should only be stated in the Financial Proposal.

## **2.9 VAT**

UNHCR is exempt from paying VAT in accordance with article 7 and para 12 of the article 165 of the Tax Code of the Russian Federation and para 2 of the Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation no.455 dated 22 July 2006, on use of zero VAT and Resolution dated 24 March 2014, listing the international organizations exempt from paying VAT. In view of the above your organization is requested to submit your firm commercial offer without VAT.

## **2.10 Quality Control**

- Have in place internal quality control, corporate standards and workflow related to travels, ticketing, reservations, travel document services, car rental and, hotel arrangements
- Designate a focal point for the management of UNHCR contract, accepting also complains or suggestions and addressing immediately remedial course of action; being able to respond at all times
- Designate a quality representative for each service who will act as a focal point of UNHCR

### **2.11 Performance Evaluation/Key Performance Indicators**

UNHCR expects to monitor the performance of the selected supplier via Key Performance indicators:

- Compliance with response time: All the requested offers/responses are received within the timeframe of maximum 1 ½ hours;
  - The start time for evaluation is when the email is sent to the travel agent
- Accurate Responsiveness to UNHCR requirements of requested services as per UNHCR Policy and specific requests;
- Capacity to successfully handle at least five requests per day;
- Travel experts in UNHCR shall not find cheaper flight option(s) for the communicated mission (travel) requirements (dates and times). This is regularly monitored by UNHCR Moscow through internet research;
- Compliance with reporting requirements: Requested and scheduled reports are received on time and without errors;
- Travel industry bulletin is being sent regularly;
- Phone calls are attended. No complaints received from travel expert;
- Ability to provide sufficient 24/7 services: Emergency service is available and accessible in the time of need;
- Satisfactory provision of services: Number of complaints received from travel experts (arrangers) and travellers in the Agencies for low quality services (low number means good performance);
- Ability to cross-check and reconcile payments received from UNHCR in an accurate and timely manner.