

European Stability Mechanism 
Request for Proposal
Ref. No.: PRC0003600
Provision of Travel Management Services
19/06/2026

Contents

2	Introduction	4
2.2	The European Stability Mechanism	4
2.3	Overview of this RFP	4
2.4	Overview of the Procurement Requirement	4
3	RFP Content	5
4	The RFP Process	5
4.2	Type of Procurement Procedure.....	5
4.3	Eligibility, Exclusion, Selection and Award Criteria	6
4.4	Itinerary Test.....	87
4.5	The ESM Contact Details	8
4.6	Clarifications of the RFP	8
4.7	Presentations	98
4.8	Due Diligence Elements	9
4.9	Negotiations.....	9
4.10	Notification of the ESM’s decision	109
4.11	Contract Terms and Conditions	10
5	Terms and Conditions of the RFP.....	10
5.2	Rights of the ESM.....	10
5.3	Cost of Participating in the Procurement Process	11
5.4	Materials and Documents.....	11
5.5	Validity of the Proposal.....	11
5.6	Compliance with Law	11
5.7	Trade Name, Logo and Marks.....	1211
5.8	Confidentiality.....	12
5.9	Involvement of/Reliance on Third Parties	12
5.10	Transfer of Undertakings	13
5.11	Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Systems/Models.....	14
6	Structure of the Proposal.....	14
7	Submission of the Proposal.....	16
	Annex 1 Terms of Reference.....	17
	Annex A to the Terms of Reference.....	34
	Annex 2 Eligibility, Exclusion Criteria, and other required information and documents (including the Self-Attestation).....	37
	Annex 3 Selection and Award criteria.....	38
	SECTION 1	38
	Selection Criteria.....	38

Technical and professional ability.....	38
Authorisation and suitability to carry out the relevant professional activity.....	40
SECTION 2	41
Award Criteria	41
Annex 4 Commercial Response Annex	44
Annex 5 Draft Agreement	44

2 Introduction

2.2 The European Stability Mechanism

The European Stability Mechanism (“**ESM**”) is a permanent crisis resolution mechanism established by the euro area Member States as an intergovernmental organisation under public international law. Its purpose is to ensure the financial stability of the euro area as a whole, and of its Member States experiencing severe financing problems, by providing financial assistance through a number of instruments.

More background information about the ESM may be found on the website: www.esm.europa.eu.

Neither Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 nor Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 (as amended) apply to the ESM. The ESM procures supplies, services and works on its own behalf and for its own account pursuant to the ESM Procurement Policy as published on the ESM website. Please refer to the ESM website for more information.

2.3 Overview of this RFP

This Request for Proposal (“**RFP**”) sets out the procurement requirement and procurement process of the ESM that parties are invited to respond to. The agreement to be awarded as a result of this procurement process (“**Agreement**” or “**Contract**”) will be awarded to the Candidate whose Proposal best meets the award criteria. The Agreement will include the requirements and obligations set out in the Terms of Reference, enclosed as Annex 1, and those set out in Annex 4 of this RFP as potentially adapted and agreed, if required, between the selected Candidate and the ESM during the course of this procurement procedure.

For the purposes of this RFP, candidates who wish to participate in this procurement process are referred to as “**Candidate**” or “**Candidates**” and their response is referred to as a “**Proposal**” or “**Proposals**”.

Unless otherwise defined in this RFP, all capitalised terms used in this RFP have the meanings ascribed to them in the ESM Procurement Policy.

2.4 Overview of the Procurement Requirement

The ESM intends to conclude a single Agreement for the provision of the services with a single service provider (“**Service Provider**”) to support the service needs of the ESM as further detailed in the Terms of Reference provided in Annex 1 of this RFP (“**Services**”).

The ESM’s official working language is English and the Services must be provided in English.

The Agreement will be awarded for a five (5) year term.

3 RFP Content

The RFP package consists of the following documents:

No.	Document Title	Comment
1.	Request for Proposal – Core Document	This document
Annexes		
2.	Annex 1 – Terms of Reference (Including Annex A to the Terms of Reference)	This document
3.	Annex 2 – Section 1: Declaration on Eligibility / Annex 2 – Section 2: Non-Collusion Declaration, Section 3: Cover Certification Form / Consortium Declaration / Subcontractor Commitment letter Section 4 - Self-attestation	Attached
4.	Annex 3 – Selection and Award Criteria and response elements	This document
5.	Annex 4 – Commercial Response	Attached
6.	Annex 5 – ESM Draft Contract	Attached
7.	Annex 6 - Service Level Agreement (SLA)	Attached
8.	Annex 7 - Mandatory Response Template (to be completed by all participating candidates)	Attached

4 The RFP Process

4.2 Type of Procurement Procedure

This procurement process is carried out by the ESM under a Negotiated Procedure with Full Publication in accordance with Article 9.1 (3) and Article 3 (6) of Annex 4 of the ESM Procurement Policy and is referred to in this RFP as a procurement process or a procurement procedure. Procurement Process Steps and Timelines

The ESM plans to carry out the procurement process in accordance with the steps defined in the table below. The ESM reserves, at its sole discretion, the right to vary the steps and timelines.

No.	Procurement Process Steps	Timeline
a)	Publication of the Contract Notice and the RFP	19/06/2026

No.	Procurement Process Steps	Timeline
b)	Deadline for submission of clarifications/questions on the Contract Notice and the RFP (via the ESM Procurement tool)	15/07/2026 <u>29/07/2026</u> 11:00 hrs (local Luxembourg time)
c)	Response to the clarifications/questions on the Contract Notice and the RFP (via the ESM Procurement tool)	Regularly
d)	Deadline for submission of Proposals (via the ESM Procurement tool)	24/07/2026 <u>07/08/2026</u> 11:00 hrs (local Luxembourg time)
e)	Itinerary test	September 2026 (exact date to be confirmed with the candidates)
f)	Presentations by Candidates	September 2026 (exact dates to be confirmed)
g)	Target notification date of the ESM's decision to advance/not advance the Candidate's Proposal	30/10/2026
h)	Negotiations completed (if applicable)	30/11/2026
i)	Agreement's target commencement date	01/03/2027

4.3 Eligibility, Exclusion, Selection and Award Criteria

In order to be eligible to participate in this procurement process, Candidates must be natural or legal persons and state that they are not subject to any of the exclusion situations listed in the declaration included in Annex 2 Section 1. If such circumstances arise in the course of the procurement process, the Candidate concerned must inform the ESM without undue delay.

Candidates may submit, and if requested by the ESM will submit, evidence to demonstrate their eligibility despite the existence of grounds for exclusion. The ESM may, in its sole discretion, decide whether such evidence is satisfactory.

Candidates must comply with all eligibility and exclusion criteria to be assessed further.

ELIGIBILITY AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA – elements of the evaluation		
Eligibility and Exclusion Criteria	Duly executed declarations as requested in Annex 2 Sections 1-3	Pass / Fail

In order to assess a Candidate's capacity to perform the contract the ESM will apply the following selection criteria (full information can be found in Annex 3 Section 1).

In the event that the Candidate submits a Proposal together with a third party/-ies and/or with sub-contractor(s), the combined capacities of the Candidate and all such third party/-ies and/or subcontractor(s) will be assessed for the purpose of meeting the selection criteria.

SELECTION CRITERIA – elements of the evaluation		
Selection Criteria	Technical or professional ability	Pass / Fail
	Authorisation and suitability to carry out the relevant professional activity	Pass / Fail

Candidates must achieve “pass” for all “pass/fail” criteria and must comply with all eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria to be assessed further.

The Proposals submitted by the Candidates will be evaluated, in accordance with the following Award Criteria (further detailed in [Annex 3 section 2](#) and [Annex 4](#)) **using both the written proposals and the presentation.**

AWARD CRITERIA	
	Score
QUALITY	70%
1. Service Delivery, Execution of Service, Operational Approach and Itinerary Test	40%
2. Implementation, Account Management and Governance	10%
3. Systems, Reporting and Data Capabilities	20%
PRICE	30%
Total Score	100%

Candidates must achieve at least 50% of the maximum score for each individual award criterion

The Candidates' Commercial response will be evaluated according to the following formula:

$$\text{Candidate's Price score (i.e. 30) Commercial Score} = \frac{\text{Lowest offered Estimated total cost}}{\text{Candidate's Proposed Estimated total cost}} * \text{Maximum}$$

To determine the final score, the Candidates' score for quality will be combined with their respective score for their Commercial Response (Annex 4) and the Contract will be awarded to the Candidate whose Proposal best meets the quality/price ratio.

Candidates are requested to complete Annex 4. For detailed instructions please refer to Annex 4.

Fees must be expressed exclusive of taxes **in Euros.**

Fees must be provided for the entire five (5) year Contract term.

4.4 Itinerary Test

The itinerary test forms part of Award Criterion 1 – *Service Delivery, Execution of Service and Itinerary Test*. It is intended to assess the Candidate's practical ability to deliver the Services described in the Terms of Reference. The results of the itinerary test will be taken into account together with the Candidate's written technical proposal when evaluating Award Criterion 1.

The itinerary test will assess the Candidate's ability to prepare complete, accurate and practical travel solutions for representative ESM travel scenarios. Evaluation will consider the quality and clarity of the proposed itinerary, compliance with the ESM Travel Policy, cost-effectiveness, suitability of hotels and transfers, visa/entry and security information, sustainability considerations, and the rationale for the proposed solution.

Only Candidates meeting the eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria will be invited to participate. The itinerary test instructions and scenarios will not form part of the RFP documentation and will be provided to shortlisted Candidates as per the Timelines provided.

Detailed instructions regarding the test timing, format of the response, submission method and any practical arrangements will be communicated to shortlisted Candidates in advance of the test.

The test will be conducted remotely on a fixed date and time, which will be identical for all Candidates. The test scenarios will be issued simultaneously to all invited Candidates. Candidates will be required to submit their response within a two (2) hour time window from receipt. Late submissions may not be considered.

4.5 The ESM Contact Details

All communications must be done via the [ESM Procurement tool](#). Only in case **the ESM Procurement tool** does not work, candidates will be allowed to contact ESM directly via the following email address: procurement@esm.europa.eu
Attention: Kallirroï Kapetanaki

The ESM will not be bound by and the Candidate agrees not to rely upon any written or verbal statements or representations of any other persons, whether employed by the ESM or not.

4.6 Clarifications of the RFP

The process for clarifications pertaining to this RFP will be as follows:

- a) Queries can be raised via the [ESM Procurement tool](#).
- b) Queries can be raised on any matter in this RFP, including the Annexes. However, the ESM reserves the right not to answer any particular query.
- c) The ESM will endeavour to respond to all queries and issue responses in a timely and professional manner. The ESM reserves the right not to answer any queries received after the deadline for submission of the queries has passed.
- d) Subject to point e) below, responses to the queries will be published on the [ESM Procurement tool](#) if they are of relevance to all of Candidates.
- e) If the ESM receives a query from a Candidate which, in the sole discretion of the ESM, constitutes a query relevant to that Candidate only, the ESM will provide response to that Candidate only.

4.7 Presentations

The Candidates meeting the eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria will be invited to present their proposal to the ESM.

The ESM will coordinate the schedule of presentations following the evaluation of the written Proposals. Presentations will be conducted remotely via videoconference (MS Teams). Candidates must ensure that **appropriately qualified personnel** are available to present their Proposal and respond to questions from the ESM. Each presentation is expected to last approximately **90 minutes**.

The ESM envisages scheduling the presentations during the **first half of September 2026 (indicative agenda)**. The ESM will contact the shortlisted Candidates to arrange the exact date and time and provide further detailed information regarding specific agenda content and timings required for each topic.

At a high level, presentations must cover the following topics:

- Offline service proposal, service configuration, SLA
- Account Management & reporting capabilities
- Technology live demonstrations – OBT, reporting tool, travel apps
- Overall key benefits for the ESM

The presentations will form part of the evaluation of the Quality award criteria (as described in Annex 3) and will be taken into account by the ESM when assigning the final quality scores.

Note that no pricing information can be disclosed or discussed during the presentations.

4.8 Due Diligence Elements

In order to further ascertain the viability and acceptability of the proposal and of the Candidate, the ESM, in its sole discretion acting reasonably, reserves the right to request the preferred Candidate, and in responding to this RFP the Candidates agree to provide, make available, or facilitate verification of any information certified by the Candidate and any information the ESM deems necessary to assess any potential risks related to data protection, data location, IT security, information security and legal and regulatory matters. The ESM will review this information and assess its correctness and level of risk. In case the ESM deems, in its sole discretion acting reasonably, the level of risk as too high, the Candidate will be excluded from the procurement procedure.

4.9 Negotiations

The ESM conducts negotiations in accordance with the ESM Procurement Policy, ensuring equal treatment of all Candidates invited to participate in the negotiations.

By submitting a written proposal to this Request for Proposal, the Candidates commit themselves to respond in a timely manner to any negotiation request made by the ESM, ensure any new Proposal submitted during negotiations is more beneficial to the ESM than the previous one and acknowledge that any new Proposal submitted is legally binding for the Candidate the same as the original Proposal submitted in response to this Request for Proposal. At a minimum, for all Candidates advancing to the final evaluation stage, the ESM will request a best and final Commercial Response before determining the Candidate whose Proposal has the best price-quality ratio.

4.10 Notification of the ESM's decision

The ESM will notify in writing via the [ESM Procurement tool](#) its decision to advance or not advance the Candidate's Proposal. The notification is sent by electronic means at least fifteen (15) business days prior to the signing of the Agreement by the ESM. The Candidates whose Proposal did not advance can request, in accordance with the ESM Procurement Policy and timelines set within and in the ESM notification, a de-brief addressing the reasons for not advancing their Proposal. The de-brief will be limited to the reasons related to the unsuccessful Candidate's Proposal and will not cover any information about other Candidates' Proposals.

4.11 Contract Terms and Conditions

The ESM agreement enclosed as **Annex 5** to this RFP ("**ESM Agreement**") will form the agreement between the ESM and the selected Candidate. The ESM views the ESM Agreement to be fair and balanced and expects that Candidates will agree to it without reservation. By submitting a Proposal, Candidates accept the ESM Agreement without reservation and acknowledge that none of their own agreements, contracts or terms and conditions will apply.

If Candidates would like to propose any changes to the ESM Agreement they must provide, for each proposed change, a counter-proposal and a clear explanation why they consider the proposed change necessary as part of their Proposal by the deadline for the submission of Proposals. The ESM will not accept any change requests received after the deadline for submission of Proposals. The ESM will also not accept any substantial revisions/redrafting of the ESM Agreement. Any potential changes to the ESM Agreement, if at all possible and agreeable to the ESM, will be minimal in order to ensure equal treatment of all Candidates. For the avoidance of doubt, the ESM is not obliged to make any changes to the ESM Draft Agreement. In case the ESM deems, in its sole discretion acting reasonably, that the Candidate's change requests are not acceptable and the contract negotiations have failed, the Candidate will be excluded from the procurement procedure.

5 Terms and Conditions of the RFP

5.2 Rights of the ESM

By submitting a Proposal, Candidates confirm that they have taken note and accepted all terms and conditions of this RFP.

The ESM reserves the right, at its sole discretion and in exceptional circumstances, to accept Proposals received after the deadline for submission of Proposals.

After the ESM opens Proposals, it may request Candidates to submit, supplement, clarify or complete information or documentation which is or appears missing, incomplete, inconsistent or erroneous within an appropriate time limit. The ESM reserves the right at its sole discretion to reject from further consideration any such Proposal.

The ESM reserves the right to request that Candidates provide documentary evidence in support of the statements made in their Proposal.

Any effort by the Candidate to influence the ESM in the process of examination, evaluation and comparison of Proposals may result in the rejection of the Candidate's Proposal.

The ESM may decide, at its sole discretion while respecting the general principles set forth in the ESM Procurement Policy, to cancel this procurement process in whole or in part at any time before the Agreement is signed. The cancellation does not give rise to any form of compensation for Candidates.

The ESM will ensure that the information provided by Candidates is treated and stored in accordance with the principles of confidentiality and integrity.

The ESM reserves the right at its sole discretion to disclose the contents of Proposals to its third party advisors (if applicable) who are bound by the same confidentiality and integrity obligations as the ESM.

If the ESM discovers, before the expiry of the deadline for submissions of Proposals, a lack of precision, an omission or any other type of error in this RFP, it will rectify the error and inform all Candidates in writing via the [ESM Procurement tool](#).

5.3 Cost of Participating in the Procurement Process

All costs relating to the participation in this procurement process, including in particular any costs in relation to the attendance at Presentations and of any other documents requested by the ESM and any subsequent follow-up will be borne exclusively by Candidates.

5.4 Materials and Documents

All materials and documents provided by the ESM during this procurement process will remain the ESM's property. Nothing in this RFP or in any other document issued by the ESM in connection therewith will be construed as to grant Candidates any right or license to use these documents for any purpose, except the right to use them in as much as necessary to prepare their Proposals.

All materials and documents prepared by the Candidate, once submitted to the ESM in response to this procurement process, will become the property of the ESM and, irrespective of the outcome of the procurement process, may be retained by the ESM, and, in any case, the ESM will have the right to use any concept or ideas contained therein without incurring any costs or expenses or any liability whatsoever.

5.5 Validity of the Proposal

By submitting a Proposal, Candidates acknowledge and agree that their Proposal will remain valid and legally binding for a period of 180 calendar days from the deadline for submission of Proposals.

5.6 Compliance with Law

Candidates are invited, but not bound to participate in this procurement process. Yet, the participation in this procurement process following the receipt of the RFP from the ESM implies the acceptance of the terms and conditions of the RFP and any other provisions of the RFP and any breach of these will be subject to appropriate remedies under the applicable law.

Before the Agreement enters into force, the successful Candidate undertakes to comply with all applicable laws and regulations and to obtain all relevant authorisations, permits and certificates required to provide the services described in this RFP.

Nothing in this RFP will be construed as implying a waiver, renunciation or modification by the ESM of any rights, privileges, immunities or exemptions from which ESM may benefit under the Treaty establishing the ESM or any applicable laws.

5.7 Trade Name, Logo and Marks

The ESM logo, covers, page headers, custom graphics, icons, other design elements and other words or symbols used to identify the description of the procurement requirement described are either trademarks, trade names or service marks of the ESM and its licensors, or are the property of their respective owners. These marks may not be copied, imitated or used, in whole or in part, without the explicit prior written consent of the ESM.

5.8 Confidentiality

All documents and information provided by the ESM in connection with this RFP constitute Confidential Information within the meaning of this section.

If the Candidate considers that any part of its Proposal or other documents/information submitted to the ESM include Confidential Information within the meaning of this section it must clearly mark such parts of Proposal or other documents/information as 'confidential'.

Candidates are advised that their participation in this procurement process constitutes Confidential Information except for the announcement by the ESM of the successful Candidate on the ESM website in accordance with Article 9.17 (3) of the Procurement Policy.

Except if required in a judicial or administrative proceeding, or if it is otherwise required to be disclosed by any law or regulation, or where information is already in the public domain, the ESM or the Candidate will (a) not disclose the Confidential Information, (b) take all reasonable measures to preserve the confidentiality and avoid disclosure, dissemination or unauthorised use of Confidential Information, and (c) not use such Confidential Information for any purpose other than as is necessary in connection with this RFP. Confidential Information does not include information which (a) was known to the ESM or the Candidate prior to receiving the information from the Candidate or the ESM; (b) becomes rightfully known to the ESM or the Candidate from a 3rd-party source not known to the ESM or the Candidate (after diligent inquiry) to be under an obligation to the Candidate or the ESM to maintain confidentiality; (c) is or becomes publicly available through no fault of or failure to act by the ESM or the Candidate; or (d) has been developed independently by the ESM or the Candidate or authorised to be disclosed by the Candidate or the ESM. Confidential Information may only be shared with third parties (e.g. contractors) that have a need to know the Confidential Information in relation to this procurement process and provided that such third parties comply with the confidentiality obligations provided in this section.

In addition, if the Candidate has signed an ESM confidentiality undertaking the Candidate agrees to comply with all obligations set forth in such confidentiality undertaking. If there is a conflict between such confidentiality undertaking and this RFP, the confidentiality undertaking will prevail.

5.9 Involvement of/Reliance on Third Parties

If the Candidate intends to involve a third party in the supply of the services offered to the ESM the Candidate has to ensure that any such third party is bound by the requirements set forth in this RFP.

If a Candidate submits its Proposal as part of a consortium with a third party/third parties, such Candidate must provide as part of its Proposal:

- a) a clear description of the proposed consortium, its organisational hierarchy and structure, the names of all consortium members and the roles, activities and responsibilities of the consortium leader and each consortium member;

- b) a document authorising the consortium leader to act on behalf of the consortium member(s) (consortium declaration);
- c) a written undertaking from the consortium member(s) confirming that it/they will place, at the consortium leader's disposal, the resources necessary for the performance of the Contract. The written undertaking must be signed by an authorised representative of each such consortium member; and
- d) information on whether the consortium will form a legal entity and if yes, details of the actual or proposed percentage shareholding within such legal entity and other official documents confirming existence of such legal entity. If not, full details of the proposed consortium arrangement including submission of an executed consortium agreement.

If a Contract is awarded to a consortium, all consortium members will be jointly and severally liable towards the ESM for all obligations arising of or resulting from the Contract.

If a Candidate considers any changes in the consortium structure it must immediately notify the ESM in writing via the [ESM Procurement tool](#). The composition of a consortium (including the roles, activities and responsibilities of the consortium leader and each consortium member) cannot be modified or members of the consortium cannot be exchanged, whether during the course of this procurement process or during the term of the Contract, without the prior written consent of the ESM.

If a Candidate intends to subcontract some of the services offered to the ESM to a third party, the Candidate must provide as part of its Proposal:

- a) a clear description of the proposed subcontracting arrangement, in particular which tasks the Candidate intends to subcontract and their volume or proportion, the name(s) of the proposed subcontractor(s) and its/their roles, activities and responsibilities; and
- b) a document signed by a subcontractor stating its intention to collaborate with the Candidate should the Candidate be awarded a Contract.

If a Candidate subcontracts some of the services under the Contract to subcontractors, it will nevertheless remain fully liable towards the ESM for the performance of such services and responsible for the Contract as a whole. The ESM will have no direct legal commitments with the subcontractor(s).

Where the information provided to the ESM indicates that subcontractor(s) is/are to play a significant role in delivering the services offered to the ESM, any changes to the proposed subcontractors must be notified immediately to the ESM. Candidates cannot exchange or replace the subcontractors or modify the nature of the subcontracting arrangement (including the subcontracted tasks, their volume or proportion), whether during the course of this procurement procedure or during the term of the Contract, without the prior written consent of the ESM.

Moreover, any additional subcontractor(s) which was/were not assessed by the ESM during this procurement procedure may only be appointed if the ESM's has given its prior written consent.

5.10 Transfer of Undertakings

The Candidates acknowledge and accept the possibility that if they are awarded the Contract, the Contract may in some cases trigger the application of the relevant provisions of Luxembourg law or of a collective labour agreement regarding transfers of undertakings, in particular, but not limited to, Articles L.127- 1 to L.127-6 of the Luxembourg Labour Code as amended from time to time (collectively the "Regulations"). Consequently, the Candidates acknowledge and accept the possibility that if they are awarded a Contract the staff employed by the existing service provider performing the services to

the ESM (the “Employees”) may, if necessary, be taken over and/or transferred automatically, by the virtue of the Regulations.

The Candidates are therefore invited, if deemed appropriate and if not already included in the procurement documents, to request the ESM to provide any necessary information regarding the Employees. The ESM reserves the right to answer questions at a later stage of the procurement procedure if deemed appropriate in the ESM’s sole discretion.

Should the Regulations be applicable, the existing service provider and the successful Candidate will fully comply with all of their obligations under the Regulations and will take all necessary steps to facilitate the takeover and/or transfer of the Employees. Any discussions regarding potential takeover and/or transfer of the Employees will be directly between the existing service provider and the successful Candidate. All the costs incurred by the successful Candidate in relation to the application of the Regulations will be borne solely by such Candidate and will not give rise to any financial compensation from the ESM and will not affect in any way the financial proposal submitted by the successful Candidate.

5.11 Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Systems/Models

If the Candidate intends to use the artificial intelligence (AI) systems/models in the supply of the services offered to the ESM, the Candidate must ensure that such use complies with all applicable laws and that the quality of outsourced outputs or deliverables is not compromised by the use of AI technologies.

To that end, the technical proposal must specify the following:

- The purpose of the use of AI system/model;
- At which stage / for which service AI system/model is to be used;
- The risks linked with the use of AI system/model and the mitigating measures put in place by the tenderer;
- The indication on how the human oversight and quality validation will be guaranteed.

If the technical Proposal does not include any reference to the use of AI systems/models, the ESM will assume that such technologies will not be used in the delivery of services. Any subsequent use of AI systems/models after the award of the contract will be subject to prior approval by the ESM. This approval will be based on the provision of the information outlined above.

The ESM reserves the right to refuse any request by the Service Provider to use AI systems/models beyond those already mentioned in its proposal.

6 Structure of the Proposal

When preparing Proposals, Candidates should observe the following:

- All documents must be submitted in English.
- Answers should be as concise as possible, complete and comprehensive.
- The ESM does not wish to receive any marketing or other promotional materials.

Proposal Structure			
#	Section	Template and instructions	Document format
1.	Cover Certification Form	Upload in the ESM Procurement tool under: TECHNICAL ENVELOPE . Candidates are requested to provide completed, dated and signed by a duly authorised representative Annex 2 Section 3.1 – “Cover Certification Form”	Fully scanned copy with signature in PDF
2.	Declaration on Eligibility	Upload in the ESM Procurement tool under: TECHNICAL ENVELOPE . Candidates are requested to submit a completed, dated and signed Annex 2 Section 1	Fully scanned copy with signature in PDF
3.	Non-Collusion Declaration	Upload in the ESM Procurement tool under: TECHNICAL ENVELOPE . Candidates are requested to submit a completed, dated and signed Annex 2 Section 2 – “Non-Collusion Declaration”.	Fully scanned copy with signature in PDF
4.	Technical Response	Upload in the ESM Procurement tool under: TECHNICAL ENVELOPE . Candidates are requested to address the requirements under the Award criteria listed in Annex 3 Section 2 using the Annex 7 Mandatory Response Template provided by the ESM. Candidates are allowed to also submit further documentation as annexes to the response template.	Completed Annex 7 Mandatory Response Template in editable Excel format (.xlsx). Any additional annexes may be submitted in PDF or other standard formats.
5.	Commercial Proposal	Upload in the ESM Procurement tool under: FINANCIAL ENVELOPE and must <u>not be included in the TECHNICAL ENVELOPE</u> Candidates are requested to address the requirements under the price award criteria listed in Annex 4 in compliance with the Terms of Reference provided in Annex 1.	A completed writable Excel version of Annex 4 Commercial Response

Forms to fill in	Candidate (including Consortium Lead)	Consortium members	Key Subcontractors
Declaration on Eligibility Annex 2 1.1	To be completed	To be completed	N/A
Declaration of Non-Collusion Annex 2 1.2	To be completed	To be completed	N/A

Cover Certification form Annex 2 2.1	To be completed	N/A	N/A
Consortium declaration Annex 2 2.2	To be completed	To be completed	N/A
Subcontractor commitment letter Annex 2 2.3	N/A	N/A	To be completed

7 Submission of the Proposal

Proposals must be submitted in the [ESM Procurement tool](#) no later than by the “**Deadline for submission of Proposals**” specified at point No. 4 of the **Procurement Process Steps and Timelines** table in Section 4.2 of this RFP.

Only Proposals received through these means will be accepted.

Annex 1 Terms of Reference

Background and Overview

The ESM intends to establish a contract for the provision of travel management services with a single travel service provider to support the business travel needs of the ESM as described in these Terms of Reference.

The Contract will be for a five-year term.

The ESM has a staff of approximately 230, including a core group of frequent ESM Travellers who travel to various destinations throughout the world on a planned and unplanned basis. In general, business travel is an essential component of the ESM's ability to execute its operational mandate and accordingly, the travel management services required to facilitate it are a critical service demanding seamless, flawless, efficient, effective, professional, reliable, responsive, and flexible execution.

ESM Board members are frequent travellers who often undertake complex, back-to-back journeys. As such, their travel arrangements require a higher level of attention and diligence. While a dedicated executive service (VIP-style service) is not currently mandated, the option to provide VIP-level support should remain available to accommodate the specific needs and expectations of these key individuals. This approach should equally apply to important named guests travelling on behalf of the ESM.

ESM staff travel primarily to cities within Europe and to a lesser extent to a small number of cities in the United States, Asia and Latin America.

1. Description of the Services

The Travel Services to be supplied by the Service Provider will be on an “as and when” required basis in accordance with the requirements set out in these Terms of Reference.

The Service Provider will provide both offline and online booking channels.

Services will be performed in accordance with the rules and guidance of the ESM Travel Policy and other relevant internal guidance documents and only in relation to work related missions. The Service Provider may be asked to arrange Services for non-ESM staff, e.g., seminar guests, secondees, external consultants working at the ESM premises or other ESM visitors.

In general, the ESM Travel Policy directs for travel to be conducted using the most direct and cost-effective routes and fares.

ESM travel volumes may fluctuate annually, as they are influenced by evolving business requirements and are also subject to geopolitical circumstances. Despite these variations, the ESM requires consistent availability of the ESM Service Delivery Team to ensure seamless coverage and service continuity at all times.

The Services to be performed by the Service Provider shall be as set out below:

2.1 General Service Quality Expectations & Service Level Agreement

2.1.1. General Service Quality Expectations

The Service Provider will:

- i. Consistently and continuously apply business travel industry expertise and best practices to service the travel requirements of the ESM.
- ii. Provide all Services, tools/systems and products as described in these Terms of Reference, in line with the Service Level Agreement.
- iii. Leverage industry knowledge, expertise, purchasing power, networks, systems and tools to address all ESM service requests.
- iv. Provide responses to all service requests with timely, relevant, accurate, cost effective and cost competitive travel solutions and information.

- v. Always offer the most competitive available airfares and other travel supplier rates for all booking requests.
- vi. Agree the terms of a Lowest Fare Guarantee with the ESM, which will include usage of LCCs and NDC content wherever applicable.
- vii. Provide ESM Travellers with access to corporate and/or negotiated rates, including, but not limited to, EPCO and EC negotiated rates, for both online and offline bookings of hotels, as well as air and rail travel (wherever applicable).
- viii. Report all instances of ESM Travel Policy non-compliance to the ESM Main Contact.
- ix. Accurately and consistently report all missed savings opportunities and instances of ESM Travel Policy non-compliance in the monthly travel data reporting by providing accurate savings and missed savings data with the appropriate reason codes in the travel reporting data (see data fields information provided in 4.2).

2.1.2. Service Level Agreement

The contract awarded pursuant to this procurement procedure will include a Service Level Agreement, incorporating service credits, penalties, or other performance management mechanisms to address sub-standard and/or non-compliant contractual performance. The performance of the Services will be evaluated against agreed KPIs and measurement criteria and periods, as set out in the Service Level Agreement (SLA) in Annex 6.

Monitoring of the Service Provider's performance against the agreed KPIs will be the responsibility of the ESM's Main Contact, using agreed monthly performance data provided by the Account Manager. Performance reviews against KPIs will be included as a fixed agenda item in the Business Review meetings.

Under-performance against the tolerance levels for any of the KPIs in this SLA may be considered, in the ESM's sole discretion, a material breach of the contract.

1. The agreed KPIs in the SLA shall be applicable after an initial grace period of 6 months following implementation. In the event the Service Provider fails to meet one or more of the tolerance levels for the KPIs to which a penalty applies, the ESM may in its sole discretion, without limiting the ESM's ability to pursue any other remedies available to it under the Contract, or otherwise, apply the penalties set out in the SLA in respect of the relevant KPIs.
2. For the avoidance of doubt, if the Service Provider fails to meet more than one KPI, all applicable penalties may be applied cumulatively. The application of such penalties is at ESM's sole discretion.
3. In order to reimburse penalties, the Service Provider will issue a credit note to the ESM within 30 days following the conclusion of the measurement period for the respective KPI subject to a penalty.
4. Should the Service Provider's performance drop to a sub-standard level of 80% for the SLA KPIs specifically relating to service response times and satisfaction levels, the ESM will require a performance improvement plan to be instigated including clear practices for swift improvements to revert the service levels back to an acceptable standard.
5. The ESM's failure to monitor, analyse, or enforce the KPIs shall not constitute a waiver of, or otherwise prejudice, its rights in respect of such KPIs.
6. The imposition or payment of penalties shall be without prejudice to any other rights or remedies of ESM, including any claims for damages (including those arising from breaches of KPIs).

The Service Provider is required to maintain a robust complaint management process for complaints raised by ESM, by providing an appropriate tool to facilitate the efficient logging, tracking, and resolution of such complaints.

The Service Provider will take responsibility for the maintenance, version control and continuous updating of the ESM Operations Manual. This document contains all relevant operational information required by the Agents to comply with all requirements of the ESM's travel programme.

2.2 Offline Service – Staffing

2.2.1 Service Centre Location

The Service Provider will deliver the Services from a service location with the ability to deliver expert travel management service for the ESM's Luxembourg-based travellers, including local point-of-sale access, local content and local supplier relationships for travel from Luxembourg.

2.2.2 ESM Service Delivery Team

The Service Provider will deliver the Services using named and designated Agents; all fully trained, highly experienced, competent and service-oriented.

The ESM Service Delivery Team will work offsite at the Service Provider's premises, in accordance with the ESM Usual Working Hours.

The ESM Service Delivery Team is not expected to be 100% dedicated to service ESM's travel requests, however the ESM's requirement is for a small team, ideally consisting of a maximum three (3) named Agents who are all equally trained and capable of delivering the Services to the same level of expertise and capabilities demonstrating full familiarity with ESM's policies, traveller profiles, and operational practices. As an alternative, the Service Provider may propose a team model comprising one primary agent supported by two (2) to three (3) equally trained back-up agents, provided that effective knowledge sharing is ensured and continuity of service is maintained at all times.

The Service Provider must demonstrate that the proposed ESM Service Delivery Team has proven at least five (5) years of experience in managing corporate travel programmes with similar characteristics, including travel originating from Luxembourg or comparable European markets, and is familiar with local carriers, fare structures, and applicable negotiated rates (including EC and EPCO rates where relevant).

The Service Provider shall establish a dedicated email address through which the ESM Service Delivery Team will be contactable by ESM staff.

The Service Provider shall establish and maintain a dedicated direct telephone line ensuring that ESM staff can reach the ESM Service Delivery Team account without routing through general service numbers, call queues, or intermediary redirections.

The Service Provider shall notify the ESM in advance of any permanent replacement of a named member of the ESM Service Delivery Team, except where immediate replacement is required due to unforeseen circumstances. Replacement personnel shall possess qualifications and experience at least equivalent to those of the individual being replaced and shall receive appropriate handover and training before assuming responsibility for the Services.

2.2.3 Out of Hours service

The Service Provider shall ensure that ESM staff have continuous and seamless access to a professionally staffed out-of-hours 24/7 Travel Service Centre. Such service shall be available year-round, twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week, and shall be accessible globally via both telephone and internet-based channels. The Service Provider shall ensure that transitions between standard operating hours and out-of-hours support occur without disruption, enabling ESM Travellers to submit and resolve queries and requests at any time, regardless of their location.

The 24/7 Travel Service Centre will be used when the ESM Service Delivery Team are not accessible and outside of ESM Usual Working Hours and is expected to deliver the same range of Services for air, hotel, rail and ground transportation under the same quality standard as per the standard 'day service'

Agents. Staffing for the 24/7 Travel Service Centre must be dedicated to this service and not an additional responsibility to be delivered by the ESM Service Delivery Team.

The 24/7 Travel Service Centre must have access to all ESM Traveller profiles and reservations and provide full-service assistance to make new reservations as well as to amend existing bookings made by the ESM Service Delivery Team. The 24/7 Travel Service Centre will make reservations in line with the ESM Travel Policy and have access to/be able to book both the ESM and EC/EPCO Negotiated Rates.

2.2.4 Key skills, experience and personal qualities of the Agents

The experience and qualifications of the Agents in the ESM Service Delivery Team must be sufficient to perform all required Services efficiently and professionally, and in compliance with the KPI targets set out in the SLA.

As English is the working language at the ESM it is expected that all Agents in the ESM Service Delivery Team must have a high command of both written and spoken English.

All Agents must have strong prioritisation skills which include the ability to handle multiple and/or urgent queries/requests and prioritise them while in parallel ensuring timely and accurately communication on progress and/or other relevant travel matters to ESM Travellers.

All Agents must be at ease in working with highly demanding ESM Travellers including but not limited to urgent or last-minute arrangements, complex itineraries, multiple changes of existing or new itineraries whether “in travel” or “pre-travel” stages.

All Agents will maintain at all times very good communication and interpersonal relations with the ESM staff, particularly with the ESM personal assistants who are the primary travel bookers.

In addition to the relevant travel industry qualifications and experience, all Agents must possess and maintain a strong working knowledge of the ESM Travel Policy, and the ESM Operations Manual. For the avoidance of doubt, Agents are expected to provide guidance on the following:

- supporting ESM travel bookers in the correct application of the ESM Travel Policy in specific booking situations;
- advising on which travel options are compliant under given circumstances;
- assisting travel bookers in identifying suitable and policy-compliant flight options;
- explaining the requirements and key elements of an appropriate price comparison; and
- ensuring that proposed travel options are aligned with both policy requirements and operational needs.

The purpose of this advisory support is to enhance compliance with the ESM Travel Policy and to ensure consistent, high-quality service delivery.

The ESM will provide the Service Provider with the necessary documentation, guidance materials, and policy updates. The Service Provider shall ensure that its personnel receive appropriate training, where needed, to deliver these advisory services in line with the agreed requirements and in full alignment with the ESM Travel Policy.

The ESM Service Delivery Team must be experienced in booking EC/EPCO Negotiated Rates.

2.3 Offline Service

2.3.1 General scope of Services

The Agents in the ESM Service Delivery Team must:

- i. Promptly and professionally respond with the required information / travel options to all ESM travel requesters’ offline queries/requests (either via email, telephone, booking request form) no later than 2 hours from time of receipt of ESM’s query/request, and interact with ESM staff to seek clarity and discuss travel options as may be appropriate.

Should the necessary research into the ESM travel request be expected to exceed 2 hours, it is the Agent's responsibility to agree an alternative acceptable timeframe with the ESM travel Booker.

Agents should be professionally equipped to offer the ESM all travel products including but not limited to air, rail travel, other ground transportation, hotel accommodation and/or other travel options.

- ii. Provide the required number of travel options for all requested trips including: the price quote, final date of ticket issue, itinerary details (times of departure/arrival), travel class, cancellation/amendment conditions and any related fees.

3 options to be provided for intercontinental trips, and where possible for European trips

Alternative options which do not unduly inconvenience the traveller must be proactively researched and offered - considering the combination of factors such as cost, time and itinerary optimisation in line with ESM's Travel Policy requirements and priorities

Alternative options may include but not limited to: nearby departure/arrival airport, alternative airline, reasonable alternative flight departure/arrival time etc.

A comparative quote must be presented in cases where a trip neither originates from nor terminates in Luxembourg, or where it includes a personal component (see section 2.3.2).

- iii. Arrange and book/change/cancel travel, accommodation and all other related arrangements (i.e. booking of meeting rooms in hotels, airport transfers, etc.) for ESM travellers.
- iv. Hold excellent working knowledge of the ESM Travel Policy, and then utilise this knowledge to deliver consistent and thorough application of the policy rules in the travel options provided – to the highest level possible. The ESM expects the Agents to use the combination of their travel expertise, in conjunction with their detailed knowledge of the ESM Travel Policy and experienced judgement, to always research and deliver the best possible policy-compliant options which match the travellers' requests.

2.3.2 ESM trips including a personal element

The ESM Travel Policy allows for travellers to add personal elements to an official itinerary, with any additional cost payable directly by the traveller to the ESM if the cost exceeds that of the official itinerary. Currently, approximately 40% of trips include a personal element, which can either be extending the trip or departing/arriving from/to another point of origin other than Luxembourg.

The ESM Service Delivery Team will provide 2 quotes for the trip, with and without the personal element, highlighting the price difference and recording the price differential in the Service Provider's reporting.

The Service Provider is responsible for maintaining accurate records of such combined trips and providing comprehensive reports to the ESM. Travel data and reports must identify when a personal element is included in the booking and record the original travel cost and any additional charge for the personal element.

2.4 Online Booking Tool

The Service Provider will supply and implement a fully operational, user-friendly, market relevant, full content online booking tool for use by ESM Travellers.

The ESM implemented Amadeus Cytric OBT in 2025, however the ESM is open to alternative OBT systems as long as all requirements as detailed in these Terms of Reference are met.

The ESM desires for the Service Provider to check all online air bookings made by ESM staff to identify if the best possible travel options and fares have been selected, and if any better travel options or fares/rates within the ESM Travel Policy parameters are identified, the Agents will directly contact and offer them to the ESM Traveller/Booker – with these alternative options being recorded in the Service Provider's reporting. This requirement may be removed over time, dependent on results.

The Service Provider will provide first-level support (for assistance with the use of the OBT) and second-level support (for resolution of technical system issues or errors) for the implemented Online Booking Tool.

At minimum, the online booking tool must have the following functional specifications:

- i. Ability to check availability and book point to point air and rail travel in compliance with the ESM Travel Policy, with clear prioritised preferencing display of ESM preferred air suppliers and contracted rates, displayed in the lowest to highest order.
- ii. Ability to book GDS and non-GDS bookable hotel accommodation, in compliance with the ESM Travel Policy, with clear prioritised preferencing display of ESM preferred hotel properties and contracted rates.
- iii. Ability to book car rental, with all-inclusive rates for all relevant insurances.
- iv. Ability for air availability displays to be searched by both price and schedule.
- v. Ability to search by departure and/or arrival time.
- vi. Ticketing deadline display.
- vii. Book specific seat number from seat maps, airline permitting.
- viii. Ability to view Edifact (GDS), NDC and LCC air fare options in the same availability display, with reservations confirmed in single booking process (without having to move into alternative screens or system).
- ix. Ability to book and pay for LCC baggage, priority boarding, seats, and online check-in.
- x. Ability to arrange pre-payment of hotels using a virtual credit card.
- xi. Clear information provided on the availability screen of the relevant restrictions and penalties applicable to each airfare. User must be able to see pertinent fare restrictions before selecting particular flight. Fare restriction information to be displayed in clearly understandable, non GDS language.
- xii. Ability to make changes / cancellations to air reservations before ticketing with clear processes in place for communication and ticketing fulfilment.
- xiii. Ability to synchronise and upload all reservations made offline into the OBT, and vice versa.
- xiv. Profile changes made by travellers in the OBT must be synchronised across the Travel Service Providers other systems.
- xv. Ability to book travel for guest travellers (non-ESM staff) without a profile, restricted to specifically nominated travel arrangers.
- xvi. Ability for templates to be created for regular trips and requests.
- xvii. Ability to integrate with the travellers' MS Outlook calendar, through downloading itinerary information or the use of an AI assistant functionality.
- xviii. Ability to collaborate with other travellers and arrangers, through sharing of travel options, quotes and confirmed itineraries.
- xix. Connectivity to visa information site, for traveller to determine whether visa is required for destination.
- xx. Ability to include ESM-specific messaging throughout the booking process regarding preferencing of ESM Travel Policy and preferred suppliers, security information, policy, etc.
- xxi. Ability for users to login to the OBT using Single Sign-on (SSO).
- xxii. Available on desktop and mobile devices, with identical functionality and content.
- xxiii. Option for travel approval to be managed through the OBT, as a potential future requirement.

2.5 Executive Travel Service

The ESM has up to 7 (seven) senior managers, whose business trips will often require a VIP-style level of service, including elements such as urgent ticketing, complex itineraries, meet and assist services, lounge access, and excess baggage.

The Executive Travel Service requirements for ESM includes the following mandatory services:

- i. Professional, experienced, high-quality Agents able to provide VIP-style level of service.
- ii. Access to Executive Travel Services during standard working hours and 24/7/365.
- iii. Priority communication channel - email and phone.
- iv. Enhanced traveller profile to include specific VIP-style preferences.
- v. Automatic reconfirmation of travel bookings (such as hotels) when required.
- vi. Proactive travel disruption monitoring and re-booking, itinerary tracking and crisis management support.
- vii. Automatic requests for hotel early check-in/late check-out in line with flight itinerary arrival/departure times.
- viii. Passport and visa services.
- ix. Flight check-in.

In addition, the following Executive Travel services may occasionally be requested but are not mandatory:

- i. Door-to-door travel reservations including ground transportation - taxi/transfers/limousines etc.
- ii. Loyalty programme management.

2.6 General Travel Service requirements

2.6.1 Managing Changes

Service Provider will manage the normal life cycle and evolution of all travel arrangements including any “pre-travel” or “in-travel” troubleshooting, changes, modifications and other matters related to the Travel Services.

In cases of circumstances where changes occur in the travel schedules (e.g., cancellations, strikes, bad weather conditions etc.) the Agents must inform the ESM immediately and provide alternative solutions.

2.6.2 Travel ticketing

Service Provider will provide all tickets and/or other required industry standard documentation relating to the booked travel to ensure safe, smooth and unproblematic travel.

The Service Provider using its industry standard systems and tools will provide all necessary core travel documents such as travel confirmations and tickets for all confirmed itineraries, to enable smooth travel for all ESM travellers.

The Service Provider will issue travel tickets in line with ticketing rules of the airlines/rail companies and agreed with the ESM travel requester.

Where instant ticketing rules do not apply, the Service Provider will delay ticketing and agree a mutually acceptable ticketing date with the ESM travel requester.

2.6.3 Cancellations, refunds

In the event of cancellation, postponement or alteration of a reservation, the ESM will inform the Service Provider immediately by e-mail or by telephone.

In case of cancellation at short notice, the best alternative option to facilitate a mission will be provided. In addition, the Service Provider will endeavour to minimise any penalties incurred by the ESM.

In cases where the Service Provider is required to issue a credit note/refund, due to cancellation or change of reservation, this will be actioned immediately after notification by the ESM.

The Service Provider will manage all cancellations and refunds, providing automated unused ticket tracking so that the ESM benefits from all credits and refunds due.

The Service Provider will provide accurate, up-to-date monthly reporting on the status of all exchanges/refunds/credits, including information whether refunds are fully complete or in progress.

2.6.4 Ability to offer best travel fares/costs and discounted rates

The Service Provider must always offer the most competitive airfares and travel supplier rates to the ESM, including NDC and LCC airline content, access to the EC and EPCO Negotiated Rates, and both GDS and aggregator hotel content (such as Expedia or Booking.com) for hotels. All relevant content must be available for booking through both offline and online booking channels.

The Service Provider will use multiple industry-standard booking channels (including both GDS and non-GDS) to provide lowest airfares using the ESM Travel Policy and booking request parameters.

In addition, the Service Provider will have access to a wide range of their own competitively priced preferential arrangements with international hotel chains around the world and with leading airlines, rail companies, ground transportation and travel system and travel suppliers (amongst others) who provide the ESM's required travel service components and infrastructure.

2.6.4.1 Lowest Fare Guarantee

Should the ESM find a cheaper airfare available for the identical requested itinerary within 2 hours of the original booking request, the Service Provider will book the lower fare found and waive the original transaction fee.

If the lower fare found should no longer be available, the Service Provider will refund the difference between the original fare quote and the cheaper fare found by the ESM staff.

The ESM is responsible to provide documented evidence by means of e.g. a screenshot of the cheaper fare found, including all charges, fare conditions, baggage allowance and other inclusions and taxes and confirming the availability of the fare for booking. If the fare difference is due to a GDS surcharge which an airline does not charge via another booking channel, the Service Provider is not responsible for this fare difference.

2.6.4.2 No mark-up of fares/rates

The Service Provider will not apply any additional margin or mark-up to any 3rd party travel suppliers' airfares, hotel rates, rail fares etc. The Service Provider will ensure full transparency of all pricing components and clearly separate any service fees from 3rd-party supplier costs.

2.6.4.3 Automated re-shopping tools – air and hotel

The Service Provider will provide the ESM with the option of an Automated Airfare Checking System - automated technology system which searches for cheaper airfare and hotel options between the time of booking and the departure date, using pre-agreed parameters. When a cheaper alternative is identified, the ESM travel requester will be notified. The ESM will make the final decision whether to accept any lower fare offer identified (not automatic re-booking).

2.6.5 Air Travel

Agents must:

- i. Propose, whenever available, the required number of travel options (typically 3) in respect to different travel alternatives for the requested trip itinerary: including different time schedules, ticket types (e.g. full economy, semi-flexible, non-flexible etc.) And non-direct routings. Each offer should be accompanied by relevant CO² emission data, enabling the traveller to take environmental impact into account when selecting their preferred option.
- ii. Always offer negotiated rates for air travels, whenever available.

- iii. Manage the ESM Travel Policy rule that no more than 3 staff members from the same division, or no more than 3 management board members, are authorised to travel on the same flight. In addition to the knowledge and expertise of the agents used to manually regulate this rule, it is expected that supplementary daily checks of pre-trip booked travel data will be made. Should these checks result in identification of non-compliance to this rule, the Service Provider is responsible to advise the ESM Main Contact for appropriate action to be taken.
- iv. Only offer airlines which are not included on the IATA or other official body's safety or financial stability blacklist, making them unsuitable for ESM travellers.

2.6.6 Hotel/Accommodation

If requested to do so, the Agents will arrange for accommodation reservations, in line with the ESM Travel Policy and within the city cap price range communicated by the ESM for the major cities visited by ESM travellers. Only the most convenient options at the best possible price will be offered to the ESM. Should the ESM specifically request accommodation outside of the city cap, or if no suitable options are available within the cap, Agents may propose accommodation outside the city cap price range. In all cases, reasonable offers should be submitted for ESM consideration. The Service Provider should also provide the option for serviced apartments as an alternative to hotel accommodation, particularly for stays longer than one week.

The Service Provider will have at its disposal a broad selection of accommodation properties with negotiated discounted rates and benefits, in addition to a list of ESM chosen accommodations with guaranteed rates. This list will be updated from time to time and agreed by the ESM. All staff of the ESM will have access to the list of accommodations.

The Service Provider must always offer EC and EPCO Negotiated Rates for accommodation, whenever available.

The ESM may provide a list of blacklisted hotel chains or properties, which must not be booked. The Service Provider must block or remove these from both online and offline booking platforms, so they cannot be booked.

2.6.6.1 Hotel payment

The Service Provider will supply the ESM with a comprehensive and reliable pre-payment scheme for hotel bookings, covering only the accommodation room rate (including breakfast where included in the room rate) and applicable local taxes only.

For instances where the above pre-payment scheme would not be feasible, the Service Provider must propose an alternative solution.

In addition, ESM Travellers may also decide to directly settle their own hotel bills on departure from the property at the end of their stay.

2.6.7 Rail Travel

Agents must:

- i. Provide reservations, competitive fares and ticketing for rail itineraries requested by the ESM, including both domestic and international rail journeys, in line with the ESM Travel Policy. In particular, the Service Provider must be able to make reservations and issue tickets for rail suppliers such as e.g.: SNCF, SNCB, CFL, Deutsche Bahn, Eurostar.
- ii. Offer rail travel options in comparison to air travel, on the routes where both types of travel are available. Each offer should be accompanied by relevant CO₂ emission data, enabling the traveller to take environmental impact into account when selecting their preferred option.
- iii. Have access and the ability to book and issue tickets using EC Negotiated Rates for rail, whenever available.

2.6.8 Car Rental/Car plus driver

If requested to do so, the Agents will arrange for car rental reservations, within a price range communicated by the ESM and in line with the ESM Travel Policy.

The Service Provider will advise travellers on the relevant insurance required for full coverage and offer relevant car hire rates which have full insurance included.

In addition, the Service Provider must be able to supply the ESM with access to a safe, reputable and reliable limousine (car with driver) service both in Luxembourg and at ESM Travellers' destinations.

2.6.9 Tools & Systems

All travel industry systems and tools the Service Provider will use to render the Services must be in accordance with the current state of technology and be up to date. The Service Provider will evolve such systems and tools as required to ensure that at any time they conform to best industry practices.

To render the Services, the Agents are to be supported by "state-of-the-art" tried, tested and proven travel industry systems and tools including a fully Automated Airfare Checking System - checking the fares for all itineraries.

The Service Provider will fully enable/equip its Agents with all necessary tools to deliver the offline Services to the ESM, including access to GDS allowing transactions with airlines, rail companies, hotels, car rental companies etc. In addition to the GDS, the Agents will be equipped with other relevant travel booking systems/channels for reservations outside of the GDS.

In addition, the Service Provider will provide the following:

- i. A mobile application for itinerary management/travel assistance, which ideally will also include all relevant confirmations/payment mechanism for virtual hotel pre-payments or a separate mobile application for hotel pre-payments.
- ii. An automated ESM Traveller profile solution with easy maintenance.
- iii. An online booking tool for ESM staff to book air, rail, hotel and car hire for themselves, other ESM travellers and guests.
- iv. A complaints log, accessible by both ESM and the Service Provider, maintained by the Service Provider and continuously updated.

2.6.9.1 Automated Quality Control

All bookings made by the Service Provider must be reviewed by an automated quality control system, to ensure booking accuracy and quality and the correct inclusion of all mandatory data for reporting purposes.

2.6.10 Provision of travel visas

At the time of booking, the Agents in the ESM Service Delivery Team will be responsible to proactively provide the ESM travel booker/traveller with all relevant visa information relevant to the itinerary requested, as well as access to an automated system with a reminder for the traveller to independently check for further detailed information.

Where an ESM Traveller by reason of his / her nationality requires a visa for a specified journey, the Service Provider will provide access to a service which manages the end-to-end process to apply for and obtain the relevant visa/permit/documentation which grants legal entry to the relevant transit or destination country. This includes access to and provision of visa application forms, information on all application requirements, support to complete relevant documentation and obtaining the visa on behalf of the traveller.

Such service to obtain travel visas/permits/certificates etc. on behalf of the ESM Traveller may be provided by a 3rd-party specialist company based in Luxembourg or neighbouring countries, with whom the Service Provider has an active sub-contractor agreement which was legally executed before the ESM's tender response closure date. The location of the Service Provider's visa service solution is important because this service usually requires physical presence in Luxembourg or the neighbouring

countries hosting the embassies/consulates in case personal delivery/collection/visits are needed. Personal documents of travellers may need to be transported by the Service Provider, so a reliable, secure and fast delivery is needed.

The Service Provider will be responsible to directly invoice the ESM for all relevant charges related to obtaining visas for ESM travellers, including those of any 3rd-party service provider.

2.6.11 Additional Services

The Service Provider may also be requested from time to time to provide the following services:

- i. Provision of assistance with travel bookings for groups of people through a meetings and events service.
- ii. Supply of any other travel related service within capability of the Service Provider on an ad-hoc basis, in accordance with the ESM Procurement Policy. Examples of such services could include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Airport lounge access,
 - b. Travel insurance,
 - c. Venue finding service,
 - d. Booking meeting rooms etc.

2.7 Travel Approvals

All ESM travel bookings follow a strict travel authorisation workflow, managed internally within the ESM. No tickets may be issued by the Service Provider without the ESM's formal approval. A confirmation of the approved travel authorisation (e.g. screenshot from the ESM's HR system) will be sent to the Agent before any booking can be made.

Additionally, the ESM may consider implementing a unique code for each travel booking. This code should be referenced in the travel approval request and serve as a clear identifier for the booking throughout the authorisation and ticketing process.

In case a ticket is issued without formal approval from the ESM, no cost related to the issued ticket will be invoiced to, or paid by, the ESM.

3. Account Management

The Service Provider will designate at least one person who will be the main contact point for the ESM to provide account management services, and who will knowledgeably and competently provide account management expertise representing both the strategic and operational elements of the management of the ESM travel programme. The Account Manager must have a minimum of 3 years of experience in a similar position.

The Account Manager is to be fully responsible for monitoring and reporting on the performance of the operational service delivery. In addition, the Account Manager will proactively support the ESM in the management of the travel programme. This includes identification of new opportunities for improvement and providing support to negotiate supplier discounts when requested, by maintaining contact with airlines who operate routes frequently used by the ESM.

The Account Manager will conduct formal Business Review meetings with the ESM Main Contact at least twice per year. Quarterly meetings will take place upon the request of the ESM. All business review meetings will include a summary of all Travel Services conducted to date, reporting review, spend and cost review, trend analysis, overview of system usage and performance of all systems provided in scope of the Contract, opportunity analysis and provision of new initiatives and systems which may be of benefit to the ESM. The Service Provider will inform the ESM, as soon as possible, about any new operating carriers, as well as about any particular discounts or offers proposed by carriers with a view to ensuring the Travel Services and/or the ESM Traveller's experience remain efficient and effective. In addition, the Service Provider shall inform ESM of any significant changes in the travel industry that may affect service delivery, such as the bankruptcy of an airline used by

ESM, major operational disruptions, or supply-related difficulties. Such updates may be communicated through regular newsletters and ad-hoc alerts.

3.1 Executive Sponsor/Escalation point

In addition to the Account Manager, the Service Provider will nominate an Executive Sponsor for the ESM - Travel Service Provider relationship, who will hold ultimate responsibility for the delivery of all contractual obligations and be the senior management contact for the ESM Main Contact, as well as the escalation point for any unresolved issues. The Executive Sponsor is expected to attend a formal annual Business Review Meeting held in Q1 of each calendar year.

4. Data & Reporting

The Service Provider will provide access to a reporting portal, holding all travel data related to ESM Travellers – both pre-trip/booked and ticketed data, regardless of the booking channel (GDS/non-GDS). Reporting portal access will be granted to nominated ESM users. Maintenance and training for the reporting portal is the responsibility of the Service Provider. The portal must provide the ability to interrogate, extract and download data for analysis by ESM, as well the ability to build customised reports which can be saved for automatic future scheduling.

In addition to the reporting portal, detailed written monthly reports will be delivered to the ESM by the 10th working day of the month following the monthly reporting period. Those reports will detail activities undertaken in the applicable month and on a cumulative basis over the term of the Contract in the form of graphs and supporting commentary by the Account Manager, setting out the key ESM travel data (spend, transactions and trends, KPIs,) and any other elements as may be agreed with the ESM. Content and format of the reports will be as agreed between the ESM and the Service Provider (monthly transactional data reporting). In addition, the Service Provider will provide the following travel data reporting:

- i. Carbon emission CO² reporting as standard for all types of travel, so that the ESM can analyse and report on travel emissions and change behaviours to improve sustainability measures as and when appropriate.
- ii. Specific, customised reporting to be provided on monthly basis containing information regarding both pending and processed travel ticket refunds. All customised reporting to be set in pre-agreed, user-friendly format.
- iii. Identify, collate and report bookings which are part of the same trip, even if separate transactions and/or invoices.

4.1 Data handoff to travel risk management 3rd party provider

The Service Provider will set up, run, and maintain an automated data transfer of all booking data (including both GDS booked and non-GDS) content to the ESM's 3rd-party travel risk provider. This data transfer process should be fully automated, requiring no manual intervention.

4.2 Data handoff to 3rd party travel data management provider

Where the reporting provided by the Service Provider does not meet ESM's expectations in terms of the functionality, visual presentation, user-friendliness etc., ESM may consider purchasing access to a reporting solution that is more convenient for its needs, from a 3rd party travel data provider. In such cases, the Service Provider will provide a regular, automated data feed to the relevant system with complete and accurate travel data.

4.3 Reporting data fields

All data fields as per the table below must be captured in travel bookings and reported in the monthly transactional data reporting.

Travel Data fields		ESM Customer Reference Fields
Invoice Number	Carrier Code	Project Code
Invoice Date	Supplier Name	GL Account
Product Type (Air/Hotel/Fees, etc)	Booking Source (e.g. GDS/Web/NDC)	Out of Policy reason code
Invoice Type (Sale/Refund/Exch)	Class of Travel	Missed Savings reason code
First Name	Booking Class Code	Hotel reason code
Last Name	Itinerary	Employee/Guest
Origin Name	Haul Type	Incl. personal trip extension? (Y/N)
Origin City	Air Kilometres	Missed Savings due to Carbon emissions
Origin Country	CO ² Emissions (Kg)	Travel Approval Reference Number
Origin Continent	Record Locator	
Destination Name	Hotel Local Currency Code	
Destination City	Transaction Count	
Destination Country	Number of Changes	
Destination Continent	Gross Amount	
Booking Date	VAT	
Travel Booker	Fare Amount	
Advanced Purchase days	Fee Amount	
Online/Offline	Savings	
Departure date	Reason (savings)	
Return/Checkout Date	Lost Savings	
Nights	Reason (lost savings)	
In/Out of Policy	Fare Basis	
OOP Justification code	Ticket Number	
Fare Type (Flexible/Restricted/Nego)	Routing (IATA)	

5. Sustainability / Carbon Emissions

- The Travel Service Provider will provide DEFRA carbon emission data relating to all travel options and travel bookings, including air, rail and hotel bookings – both at the time of reservation to allow the ESM travel booker to consider the environmental impact of their travel request and alternative more sustainable methods of travel, as well as being contained within the Service Provider's post-trip travel data reporting.
- automatically transfer raw travel data to the 3rd party responsible to calculate the ESM's annual carbon footprint, if requested by the ESM.

6. Language

The ESM's official working language is English. All Travel Services including any tools are to be rendered in English. It is also to be noted that all business exchanges (requests, tickets, bookings, reservations) and all administrative matters with the Service Provider, including but not limited to the

Contract and any orders issued under the Contract, invoicing, account management, and reporting will also be conducted in English.

7. Pricing Overarching Principle

The Service Provider will not apply their own additional margin or 'mark-up' to any 3rd party travel suppliers such as airfares, hotel rates, rail fares etc.

To this end, throughout the term of the Contract, the Service Provider will offer cost effective, transparent, and competitive pricing for:

- a) the service fees it charges the ESM; and
- b) all travel products including but not limited to air, ground transportation and accommodation and/or other travel options that the ESM will require. The detailed pricing model is included in the Commercial Response template (Annex 4) to these Terms of Reference.

8. Invoicing Requirements

The Services Provider's invoices must be sent to the ESM in a timely manner, on the same day as the ticket/invoice charge is issued. The Service Provider must invoice the ESM for all 3rd party travel services and payments (such as airline and rail tickets / hotel and car rental reservations), as well as the Service Provider's fees.

Mandatory invoice requirements include, but are not limited to :

Name and address of Service Provider	ESM address	Invoice Number
Invoice date	Traveller Name	Guest Traveller identifier
Travel Requester name	Travel Supplier name	Service Description
Travel date	GL Account Number	Department
Project Code	Employee ID	Missed Savings (if applicable)
Chargeable amount in Euro	Travel Service Provider transaction fee (if applicable)	VAT

Such information will be provided to the ESM either during the travel request process, the travel authorisation or contained within the traveller profile.

ESM invoicing requirements may change as necessary during the term of the Contract, for which the Service Provider will be advised with reasonable notice to make the necessary adaptations.

9. Payment for travel

The ESM primary payment mechanism will be an ESM corporate lodge card account for air and rail tickets, as well as for the Service Provider's transactional service fees.

The primary payment method for hotel bills is for the Service Provider to facilitate and arrange hotel pre-payments which are ultimately charged to the ESM's lodge card account. Such pre-payments include the cost of the room rate (breakfast, if included in the room rate) plus local taxes. Arrangement of hotel pre-payments must be automated in the OBT, so that all online hotel bookings have pre-payment arranged. Where hotel pre-payment is applied, the Service Provider will support the ESM in the collection of hotel invoices.

For offline hotel reservations, the ESM traveller may opt to settle their own bill directly with the hotel on departure.

For any travel payments not settled by a credit card or corporate lodge account, invoicing will be as stated above in section 8, with an accurate monthly invoice fully supported by all relevant travel details and approvals and including all detailed cost elements.

The Service Provider is responsible to provide the ESM with a monthly summary statement report of all transaction fees charged per month.

9.1 Lodge Card Reconciliation

The ESM may also choose to implement any additional optional services offered by the Service Provider that support the reconciliation and matching of data between supplier invoices and the corporate lodge card account; in particular, solutions that facilitate automated or streamlined matching and improve data accuracy and auditability.

10. Services Transition

ESM currently engages a 3rd-party travel service provider to deliver travel services. In the event that a transition to a new Service Provider becomes necessary, such transition shall be carried out in a professional, well-planned, coordinated, and risk-mitigated manner. The newly contracted Service Provider will assume the lead role in facilitating all relevant activities and resolving any issues to ensure a seamless transition, in accordance with a transition plan to be provided to and agreed with ESM.

To support the success of any required transition, the ESM recommends that forward travel bookings are not transferred between travel service providers, with a clearly communicated cut-off date respected by all parties. However, the exact details of a transition plan will be discussed and agreed as required.

Once the contract starts, a transition period of maximum ten (10) weeks will take place. The incumbent and the new Service Provider will work together to transition the services smoothly to the new Service Provider.

11. Services Evolution

While the functional requirements described are to be viewed as comprehensive, there is also a possibility that during the lifetime of the Contract the ESM may have a requirement to expand, adjust and/or modify the Services to encompass any new or additional requirements or modifications to the Services which may be necessary for the ESM's evolving operational needs. Any such new or additional requirements or modifications to the Services may be considered at the ESM's sole discretion in compliance with the ESM Procurement Policy.

At the end of the Service Provider's contractual term, the requirements for handover to any new Service Provider will be finalised including the right for ESM data and traveller profiles to be migrated if requested.

Definitions:

For the purposes of these Terms of Reference, the definitions set out below shall apply throughout this document and shall be interpreted consistently wherever used.

"24/7 Travel Service Centre" means the dedicated service delivery operation of the Service Provider used outside of ESM Usual Working Hours for cases of urgent and emergency travel requests.

"Account Manager" means the Service Provider's employee who has been appointed to manage the Contract.

"Agent(s)" means a collective term for all front-line servicing staff of the Service Provider, including the ESM Service Delivery Team and 24/7 Service Centre Agents.

"Automated Airfare Checking System" means an automated solution which automatically scans all air and hotel bookings between the time of booking and date of departure, searching for lower airfares/hotel rates using pre-agreed search parameters. This system can be either proprietary or sub-contracted through a named 3rd party.

"ESM Main Contact" means the person nominated at the ESM who is responsible for the management of the Contract, and who will oversee the general performance of the ESM travel programme.

"ESM Operations Manual" means a detailed workbook which includes important and bespoke operational information, processes, policies and procedures relating to the ESM's travel programme requirements; for use by the Agents.

“ESM Service Delivery Team” means the small team (maximum 3) of named Agents employed by the Service Provider who are designated to provide all Services to ESM.

“ESM Traveller” – ESM staff travelling on behalf of the ESM.

“ESM Travel Booker”– ESM staff, team assistant or other designated person, who will request the booking on behalf of the ESM Traveller.

“ESM Usual Working Hours” means the standard working time of the ESM staff which is usually 08:30 to 17:30 hrs Monday to Friday except during ESM holidays.

“EC Negotiated Rates” means the discounted airfares, hotel rates and rail fares which are centrally negotiated by the European Commission and made available to travellers of EU institutions and agencies.

“EPCO Negotiated Rates” means the discounted hotel rates negotiated by the Eurosystem Procurement Coordination Office (EPCO) and made available to travellers for institutions such as, and including the ESM.

“GDS” means the Global Distribution System, a computerised network system that enables transactions between travel industry service providers and travel agencies.

“KPI” means key performance indicator which is a measurement that provides essential information about the required performance standard of Services delivery. KPIs are set in Annex 6 (SLA) to these Terms of Reference.

“LCC” is an industry-standard abbreviation of the term Low-Cost Carrier, meaning an airline which operates with a high emphasis on minimizing operating costs and without some of the traditional services and amenities included in the published fare.

“Lowest Fare Guarantee” means a price promise that the Travel Service Provider will always offer the lowest air and rail fares available for all trip requests; and that a lower fare cannot be found from any other travel booking source using the same criteria.

“NDC” is an industry-standard abbreviation of the term New Distribution Capability, which is a standardised new booking channel for airlines to provide additional fares and content outside of the traditional GDS booking channel.

“OBT” is an industry-standard abbreviation of the term Online Booking Tool, meaning a corporate booking tool allowing for clients to research and self-book their travel requirements.

“Offline Service” means the Service Provider’s travel booking and ticketing service, when the means of contact with the ESM travel requester is by telephone, email or other communication channel excluding an online booking tool (OBT).

“Online Service” means the Service Provider’s travel booking and ticketing service, when the means of contact and booking by the ESM travel requester is through the OBT.

“Out of Hours Service” – Services performed outside of the usual ESM working hours (usually 08:30 to 17:30 hrs Monday to Friday except during ESM holidays).

“PNR” is the industry-standard abbreviation of the term Passenger Name Record, meaning a traveller’s reservation/booking confirmation made in the GDS.

“Business Review” means a formal review meeting with a fixed agenda between the Service Provider’s Account Manager and the ESM Main Contact, to monitor the service performance against contract expectations, identify spend and travel pattern spends, resolve any service issues and identify future opportunities to improve the ESM travel programme.

“Services” means the services to be furnished by the Service Provider as further described in Section 2 of these Terms of Reference.

“Service Level Agreement” or (**“SLA”**) means the agreement between the ESM and the Service Provider on performance, measurement and conditions of service delivery with respect to the Service levels applicable.

“Travel Services” means the Services to be furnished by the Travel Services Provider as set forth in this Terms of Reference and included in the scope of the Contract.

“Service Provider” means the candidate who has been awarded the Contract.

“Work Related Missions” means travel on professional grounds (missions, business conferences, seminars, trainings etc.) undertaken by staff of the ESM for the account of the ESM.

Annex A to the Terms of Reference

The purpose of this Annex is to provide further background information and important high-level travel data relating to the ESM's travel programme. This Annex also includes extracts from the ESM travel policy.

The data and information included in this Annex are provided for information purposes only and do not constitute any commitment, representation, or guarantee regarding future travel volumes. ESM Travel Programme background information – historical and projected

ESM staff travel primarily to cities within Europe and to a lesser extent to a small number of cities in the United States, Asia and Latin America.

The ESM indicative annual travel volumes for 2023-2025 is set out below.

2023: EUR 1,016,730

2024: EUR 954,072

2025: EUR 1,034,589 (detailed breakdown provided below)

2025 ESM travel spend and transaction volumes

	Air	Rail	Hotel	Rental Car	Other	TOTAL
Spend	€ 694,929	€ 22,995	€ 299,766	€ 874	€ 16,025	€ 1,034,589
Transactions	690	267	837	3	48	1,845
Refunds	60	29	282	0	2	373

Additional 2025 travel information

- number of air ticket exchanges = 63
- bookings made, but no ticket issued = approximately 10% of transactions
- 36% of air tickets issued in business class (78% of spend), 63% of air tickets issued in economy class (21% of spend). 1% of air tickets issued in premium economy class.
- Online booking tool adoption is currently 54% of eligible trips, 25% of total trips. All online air bookings are manually checked by the offline service team. Rail and Hotel bookings are 'touchless'.
- Number of trips booked for external guest travellers = 284
- Approximately 13% of Hotel bookings are made at same time as an associated Air/Rail booking (bundled)
- Current payment cards: AirPlus lodge account and Conferma for hotel pre-payments

2025 Top 10 Airlines	
Market share by number of tickets issued	
Luxair	30%
Lufthansa	25%

Swiss International	9%
KLM	7%
Aegean Airlines	4%
Scandinavian	2%
LOT Polish Airlines	2%
Ryanair	2%
British Airways	2%
Turkish Airlines	2%

2025 Top 10 Destinations Market share by number of tickets issued	
London	10.8%
Paris	7.5%
Brussels	6.0%
Frankfurt	5.5%
Washington	4.4%
Luxembourg	4.3%
Athens	4.1%
Florence	3.4%
Dublin	3.1%
Copenhagen	2.8%

The ESM has local airline agreements in place with LHG, AF/KL and LG. The ESM is entitled to use the EC and EPCO negotiated rates for hotels.

ESM Travel Policy (extract)

The general principle of the ESM Travel Policy guidelines is to use the most direct and cost-effective routes, considering use of restricted tickets and advance purchase recommendations.

Further extracts of specific ESM policy information is provided below:

“Members of staff should normally use the most efficient and cost-effective way to travel in line with the guidance provided in this policy, taking into consideration the time constraints for the missions”.

“Members of staff are encouraged to consider the environmental impact of their work-related travel and to voluntarily pursue travel arrangements with lower emissions where possible, e.g., direct flights, economy class air travel within Europe, sharing of cars, rail travel or public transport. Whenever compatible with business interests, staff should also consider alternatives to travel, including teleconferencing and videoconferencing”.

Air:

“Members of staff travel economy class in Europe if the shortest available flight route is less than three hours long (from departure airport to final destination airport), otherwise they travel business class. In order to reduce travel related carbon emissions, members of staff are encouraged to consider voluntarily travelling economy class in Europe even if the shortest available flight route is more than three hours”.

“The booking of flexible tickets must be considered with due care in view of the higher rates applied. In general, flexible tickets can be booked for work-related travel if in line with the ESM business interest (e.g., high probability of modifications, cancellations or other work-related circumstances which might arise). For members of staff attending a training or conference, normally non-flexible tickets are booked”.

“For travel arrangements that are organised well in advance and are unlikely to be cancelled, members of staff must book their tickets at the earliest opportunity in order to take advantage of the best rates offered by the travel agent. As a matter of recommendation, all missions must be booked whenever possible at least seven calendar days before the mission starts and at least 21 calendar days in advance, in the cases of training courses or conferences”.

“For business continuity reasons, no more than three members of the Management Board or three members of staff from the same division can fly on the same aircraft, unless approved otherwise by the Managing Director or the respective member of the Management Board”.

Rail:

“All members of staff are entitled to travel by rail in first class”.

“Members of staff are eligible for individual sleeping car supplement if the train journey takes place between 23h00 and 6h00”.

Accommodation:

“Members of staff should stay at hotels well suited to the work-related mission requirements, offering an adequate level of comfort and security (normally 4-star or equivalent)”.

“The use of 5-star hotels is permitted, provided that no 4-star alternative is available that meets the relevant quality parameters, such as safety of the location, distance from the meeting venue or WIFI availability. 5-star hotels must not be used for training purposes to avoid any reputational risk for the ESM”.

“For cities in United States and Asia, a general ceiling of €467 applies– (excluding local taxes, if applicable). For all other cities not listed below* a general ceiling of €355 per night applies (excluding local taxes, if applicable)”.

ESM hotel rate ceiling caps

Destination	Hotel ceiling in €
Amsterdam	287
Athens	250
Barcelona	276
Beijing	389
Berlin	235
Brussels	261
Dublin	318
Frankfurt am Main	256
Hong Kong	512
Lisbon	271
London	444
Madrid	263
New York	507
Nicosia	223
Paris	343
Rome	256
Singapore	359
Stockholm	284
Vienna	271
Washington	501

Annex 2 Eligibility, Exclusion Criteria, and other required information and documents (including the Self-Attestation)

See attached

Annex 3 Selection and Award criteria

SECTION 1

Selection Criteria

As part of their Proposal, Candidates are requested to address each item/question below and supply the requested evidence in the correspondingly named and numbered way.

The selection criteria apply to the Candidate as a whole, i.e. a consolidated assessment of the combined capacities of all involved entities will be carried out.

Please note that for the purpose of the evaluation of the Proposals, the ESM will assess the responses provided to the items set out below in this Section 2.

Technical and professional ability

Candidates must comply with the following selection criteria in order to prove that they have the necessary technical or professional ability to perform the Contract.

Item Number	Selection Criteria	Requirements	Evidence
1.	Relevant experience in Travel Management Services	The Candidate must demonstrate experience in providing corporate travel management services. - The Travel Service Provider shall provide an ESM Service Delivery Team of up to three (3) named Agents who: have a minimum of 5 years' experience in corporate travel management services and professional proficiency in English (written and spoken). - have experience in managing international travel programmes of comparable size and complexity as described in the Terms of Reference (Annex 1)	• A signed self-attestation as provided at the end of Annex 2 (Section 4). a) Provide CVs of the proposed offline service team for the ESM b) Provide a CV for the proposed Account Manager for the ESM

		- have experience with travel originating from Luxembourg or comparable European markets, including regional providers and negotiated rates b) The Travel Service Provider shall appoint an Account Manager who • has a minimum of three (3) years' experience as an Account Manager with experience in managing corporate travel programmes with a similar profile to the ESM, and professional proficiency in English (written and spoken).	
2.	Comparable corporate client portfolio	The Candidate shall demonstrate experience in providing travel management services to corporate, institutional, public sector or international organisation clients with travel management requirements comparable in nature to those described in the Terms of Reference (Annex 1). The Candidate shall demonstrate that it currently provides, or has provided during the last five (5) years, such services to at least three (3) clients. The demonstrated experience should include international travel arrangements, complex itineraries, negotiated rates, reporting obligations and policy-based travel management. Experience supporting of executive travel services (VIP-style support) may be described where applicable.	• A signed self-attestation as provided at the end of Annex 2 (Section 4) Provide three (3) client references including the name of the client organisation, a brief description of the services provided, and the duration of the engagement. The references should relate, where possible, to: – organisations with a travel pattern and size profile comparable to the ESM; and/or – EU institutions or other international or financial organisations.
2.	Operational and technical capacity to perform the Contract	• The Candidate must demonstrate that it has the operational and technical capacity to perform the Contract in accordance with all the requirements set out in Annex 1 (Terms of Reference). • The Candidate shall confirm that it has the capability to provide visa and travel documentation services either directly or through a subcontractor based in Luxembourg or the region areas. Where such services are not provided directly by the Candidate, the	• A signed self-attestation as provided at the end of Annex 2. • A fully-signed subcontractor commitment letter (Annex 2 – Section 3.3)

		Candidate shall confirm that a 3 rd -party provider is already identified and contractually engaged or otherwise formally committed at the time of tender submission.	
--	--	---	--

Authorisation and suitability to carry out the relevant professional activity

Candidates must comply with the following selection criteria in order to prove that they have the necessary authorisation and suitability to perform the Contract.

Item Number	Selection Criteria	Evidence
1)	The Candidate must prove that they have legal capacity to perform the Contract and it is duly enrolled in the relevant trade or professional register of its country of establishment	A signed self-attestation as provided at the end of Annex 2 (Section 4), including the registration number and country of registration

SECTION 2

Award Criteria

Candidates must provide their responses to all Award Criteria using the **Mandatory Response Template** provided by the ESM. This Mandatory Response Template forms the primary technical response to this RFP. Candidates must complete all applicable sections of this template. Additional supporting information may be provided in separate annexes and submitted as part of their Technical Envelope; however, annexes do not replace the requirement to complete this template.

- **Technical Award Criteria**

Quality	70%
1. Service Delivery, Execution of Service, Operational Approach and Itinerary Test	40%
The Candidate shall: • describe the proposed service delivery model, including the organisation and allocation of responsibilities within the ESM Service Delivery Team and its interaction with the 24/7 service • demonstrate how day-to-day service continuity and coverage will be ensured, including handling of peak demand, absences and urgent requests • explain how responsiveness and consistent service quality will be maintained for complex and changing travel requirements • describe how travel solutions will be provided in line with the ESM Travel Policy, and terms of the SLA, including cost-efficiency and appropriate travel options • describe how cost-efficient travel options will be provided, including access to NDC fares, and provide agreement to the Lowest Fare Guarantee • describe the visa service, including details of any sub-contractor's services • describe how effective communication and coordination with travellers and travel bookers will be ensured The Candidate shall demonstrate, through the itinerary test: • The quality of the proposed itineraries, in terms of clear and well-structured information, including all relevant travel components (transport, accommodation and transfers where applicable) and related information such as visa/entry requirements. • The quality and suitability of the travel options proposed, in terms of routes and suppliers, cost, convenience, practicality and compliance with the ESM Travel Policy.	
2. Implementation, Account Management and Governance	10%
The Candidate shall: • describe the proposed implementation and transition approach, including key steps, timelines and responsibilities • demonstrate how service continuity and risk mitigation during transition will be ensured • describe the account management approach, including the role of the Account Manager as the primary interface with the ESM • explain how performance will be monitored, including KPI management, reporting and issue resolution • describe the governance framework, including communication structures, escalation mechanisms, business reviews and continuous improvement	

3. Systems, Reporting and Data Capabilities	20%
The Candidate shall: - describe the proposed systems and tools, including the online booking tool and integration between booking channels - demonstrate access to relevant travel content and support for efficient booking and ticketing processes - describe reporting and data capabilities, including data quality and support for monitoring, compliance and decision-making - demonstrate the availability of CO₂ emissions data and support for identifying more sustainable travel options - Describe the pre-payment solution for hotel reservations	
Price	30%
Total	100%

- Commercial Award Criteria (instructions also included in Annex 4)**

The purpose of this Financial Proposal Worksheet is to enable the ESM to evaluate the pricing of the proposed Travel Management Services (TMS). This includes all applicable fees, charges, systems, tools, implementation costs, and any ancillary products or services required for the full delivery of the services.

The financial evaluation will be conducted based on a standardised **Financial Assessment Scenario** over five (5 years), which reflects forecast ESM travel volumes derived from 2025 baseline data. Candidates must therefore ensure that all pricing is aligned with the provided transaction volumes and fee triggers.

The Financial Assessment Scenario is provided solely for evaluation purposes and does not constitute or imply any commitment by the ESM regarding actual transaction volumes, spend, or contract value during the term of the Contract.

General Completion Principles

- All prices must be provided in **EUR, excluding VAT**. Candidates are expected to account for any anticipated increases in costs, including inflation, salary adjustments, supplier cost increases, exchange rate fluctuations, or any other factors that may affect the cost of service delivery over the duration of the contract, and reflect these in their pricing. **Prices submitted shall be fixed, firm and all-inclusive for the entire duration of the contract and shall not be subject to escalation, indexation, adjustment, surcharge, or any other form of price revision during the contract term.**
- Candidates must complete all relevant fields in **ORANGE** in the worksheet. Where a fee is not applicable, this should be clearly indicated as “€ 0” (not left blank). Where a service or functionality is included within another fee and is not separately charged, Candidates should also indicate “€ 0” in the relevant fee.
- Pricing must be fully loaded, including any costs related to: booking services (online and offline), payment solutions (e.g. Conferma virtual card where applicable), data integration and transfer (e.g. to TRM partner), tools and platforms (e.g. OBT, reporting), support services and service delivery requirements.
- No additional fees/charges will be accepted or paid by ESM for the agreed scope of work in the Terms of Reference. New fees or charges during the contract term will only be accepted should ESM request additional requirements/services.

Structure of the Financial Proposal

Total Cost Overview:

Candidates must ensure that the following summary fields are automatically or manually populated:

Total Recurring Fees per year (€)

→ Calculated based on the forecast transaction volumes and unit fees provided.

One-off Fees (€)

→ Includes all implementation-related costs, such as: onboarding, data migration, OBT setup, integrations (e.g. AirPlus, Conferma, ISOS), training and initial configuration.

For financial evaluation purposes, only recurring service and transaction fees will be included in the financial scoring methodology. These recurring fees will be calculated based on the Financial Assessment Scenario and aggregated over a five (5)-year period.

Annex 4 Commercial Response Annex

See attached

Annex 5 Draft Agreement

See attached