

**Request for Proposal for Outsourcing of Consular Services  
at Embassy of India, Madrid, Spain  
(Published on 18 January 2016)**

**Questions asked by Prospective Bidders**

S.N.	Question	Answer
1.	Kindly provide details of venue and time for pre bid conference.	Pre-bid Conference is scheduled in the premises of Indian Embassy, Avenida Pio XII, 30-32, 28016. Madrid at 11:00 AM on February 3, 2016.
2.	We would like to know when the actual service provider terminates his contract with the Mission.	Incumbent service provider will terminate its services when new service provider starts working.
3.	When does the new Service provider have to begin at the latest?	New service provider is expected to start working in the first week of June, 2016.
4.	As per our knowledge there is a decrease of a 30% in Visas due to the E-Visa, how much more decrease do you expect in the following two years?	Total number of visas issued in last 3 years is 137020. Total number of e-visa issued in last 4 months is 5165. Month-wise break-up of E-visa issued in 2015: September.        1062 October            1429 November         1309 December         1365  (E-visa service for Spain and Andorra was implemented on August 16, 2015).  No data on further anticipated decrease is available.
5.	We believe as per the tender, The NIC will provide all the software programs for all the work been assigned to the service provider, can you please re-confirm?	All software programs to be provided by NIC are given in RFP. Only these specific programs will be provided by NIC.
6.	Ref to page 20 – IX – Bank guarantees – As per our knowledge in las 15 days there are	Provision regarding Bid Security is laid out in RFP. Eligibility criteria and the Bank

	<p>5-6 New Bids and in all Bids the bank guarantees are 3 days collection which is more or less 35.000€ for Spain. But in this bid of Spain you are asking for 150.000€ which is more or less around 13days collection.</p> <p>Can you please advise if it can be revised to 3 days collection as per present contract and similar bids for other countries?</p>	<p>Guarantee amount for all types of companies have been specified in the RFP after giving due consideration to all aspects. The point to note is that the same yardstick is applicable for all the bidders.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Page 22 – Section X – Value added services.</p> <p>For Islands – Ceuta &amp; Melilla – Andorra, these are islands or out Spain.</p> <p>Next day courier service is very difficult to guarantee and if it is guaranteed it is very expensive. Can you please refer in these cases as 2 working days?</p> <p>And as per Mainland it should be referred as Next working day, Not counting weekends and holidays.</p> <p>You have quoted as maximum price 4.75€ which maybe below cost with any reliable courier company. Even in the normal postal express envelope is 7.5€</p> <p>In all latest 15days tenders the minimum is 9.00€ in Netherlands per passport. Is there any possibility in reconsidering this?</p> <p>Also in the documents that you ask to be returned in one envelope without any extra charges up to 1kg, we believe it should be reconsidered per passport, not per packet as in case of loss we have to compensate to the customer with the total number of passports. Also we believe it creates a confusion “family “as there can be groups, travel agents or families.</p>	<p>Next day may be read as next working day.</p> <p>Charges for courier services have been fixed after market research based on quotations from reputed companies. Taking into account concerns expressed by prospective bidders, some of the courier charges are being revisited. Changes, if any, will be published after pre-bid conference.</p> <p>For courier service purposes, family may be considered as husband, wife, children, parents and other blood relatives with same postal address. Family members and close blood relatives may bring applications with proper authority letters.</p> <p>Embassy does not entertain applications from third party.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Can service provider return the passport freight payable by the client with clients own risk and cost at their own choice for courier service?</p>	<p>Yes</p>

<p>9.</p>	<p>In page 3 – Introduction</p> <p>You mention to open up 3 centers. Madrid – Barcelona &amp; Seville.</p> <p>As per our knowledge, hardly there are 50 visas in a year and not more than 10 Indian related services in a year. And if we include the nearby cities maybe to the maximum double. Is there any way to reconsider this center as Seville with Malaga/ Valencia or Tenerife Islands? We believe in these last 2 places given must be 10 times more applications. Or we suggest you to drop the 3 center for this period of tender to unnecessarily increase the costs for bidders.</p>	<p>Selection of locations for service centres intends to cover whole geographical area of Spain. The concern has, however, been noted and changes, if any, will be published after pre-bid conference.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Is it necessary for Visas services to have Indian language speaking staff or only for the Indian services as it is not necessary and difficult to find staff in Spain with these 3 speaking languages and basic education.</p>	<p>This RFP intends to outsource all consular services therefore provisions of RFP regarding language proficiency of staff should be followed.</p> <p>It is expected that all members of the staff should be proficient in English and Spanish.</p> <p>Two members of the staff in the centres in Madrid and Barcelona should know Hindi while at least one staff member in the third centre should know Hindi.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Page 20 – Facilities at the IVAC app. V)</p> <p>As per the Spain syndicate legal laws for offices we are supposed to work 35 hours maximum in a week. You ask us to work 45 hours in a week, can you please reconsider it as it may increase the cost for the bidders and which is not really necessary to work 45 hours.</p>	<p>It may be noted that minimum office working hours for IVAC is 45 hours per week with minimum 9 hours per day.</p> <p>While minimum submission hours per week of 5 working days have been mentioned as 33 hrs- with minimum 6½ hours per day.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>What is the month wise application count for last 3 years?</p>	<p>Total applications in last 3 years are 171,220.</p> <p>Month –wise application count is not maintained.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>What is the break-up of applications, service type – Passport, Visa and Consular</p>	<p>Passport: 4809, Visa: 43991, Consular: 3506 (data for 2015)</p>

	Service?	
14.	What is the break-up of the applications, location wise – Madrid, Barcelona and Seville?	Such data is not available.
15.	What is the percentage of postal applications?	Approximately, 35% personally - 65% via post
16.	The break-up of walk-in applications at each proposed IVAC is required to determine the carpet area of the premises and requirement of number of counters & staff.	No concrete data is available. However, it is expected that majority of applications in Barcelona may be of “walk-in” type.
17.	Will the IVAC at Seville to be launched simultaneously with Madrid and Barcelona?	Yes
18.	To which consulate will the applications received at Seville – IVAC will be sent for processing?	Embassy of India, Madrid.
19.	Is ISO 23026-2015(or equivalent) for website quality certification is mandatory during bid submission or it can be acquired during the implementation process?	The service provider should provide the certification at the time of submission of technical bid. Please refer RFP Para XI.14.k
20.	What will be impact on visa volume with introduction of e-visa?	No such data is maintained. Please refer observation in S.N.4.
21.	What is the volume of incoming calls per day?	No such data is maintained
22.	What is the volume of email per day?	No such data is maintained.
23.	Whether RFP states about any mandatory SMS services to applicants without any additional charges.	Service provider will mandatorily provide 4 SMS update as mentioned in RFP for free. Currently, Embassy follows the same practice.

24.	Is there any provision for SMS service under VAS which can be charged to applicant?	No
25.	The RFP states that the term of the contract is 2 years. Would the Embassy of India consider extending the term of the contract to 3-5 years as a shorter contract term will impact pricing?	No. This decision has been taken after considering all aspects in order to streamline outsourcing services in the Mission/Posts.
26.	Please clarify on the point in page number 2 – “The documents of a family may be returned in one envelope without extra charges up to 1 Kg. “ How many such cases usually occur per day?	Approximately 5 cases per day.
27.	Please confirm, the digitization process for the new service provider will start only with the new applications accepted as per new contract. Will all application accepted prior to the new contract will be digitised by the mission and new service provider will not be obliged to cover any backlog.	New service provider will be responsible for digitization of all data related with the applications received by it.  Yes.
28.	Pl confirm when biometrics is introduced for applicants by the Embassy all applicants will be required to visit the centres in person and no applications will be acceptable by post. Please confirm.	IVAC must have facility for capturing and registering of biometric data from the first day of its operation for visa applications.  If an applicant for visa visits IVAC in person, his biometric data should be captured and registered.  As and when government makes capturing of biometric data mandatory for passport and other consular services also, no application will be accepted by post for those services. Mission will provide enough notice as and when a decision is taken in this regard, so that the service provider can prepare accordingly.
29.	We would need further details to elaborate how long would the drop in	Number of visas issued in year 2015 are 43,991.

	<p>applications as per RFP due to e-visas have to continue before a change in the service fee can be applied for and how long after would a decision be made? Will the mission provide us the month wise number of e-visas as applicable for comparison?</p>	<p>Please refer the observation in S.N.4</p>
30.	<p>Please confirm if the contract duration and the formula should be 2 years. On page 4 the duration of the contract is given as two years with the possibility of a one year extension but in the Annexure C, Section B the formula for Expenditure (D+E) is multiplied by four years.</p>	<p>Duration of the contract is for two year.</p> <p>“Total Expenditure for the entire contract period of 4 years (D+E) x 4”</p> <p>may be read as</p> <p>“Total Expenditure for the entire contract period of 2 years (D+E) x 2”.</p> <p>Calculations may be made accordingly.</p>
31.	<p>Please confirm if the net worth of USD 5 Million applies at time of bid or for all of the last 3 years financial statements and is it the same for the partner company as well?</p>	<p>Please refer RFP Paras IV.6.and Para V.8. for clarification.</p>
32.	<p>We assume for the purpose of the bank guarantee for premature termination, we will consider the service fee at which we bid to arrive at the calculation.</p>	<p>Yes as provided under RFP Para IX.12.</p>
33.	<p>Even if visa fee is transferred on the same day, it gets credited in Embassy account next day by the bank, we assume this is justified.</p> <p>Service provider is expected to transfer money to the government account at the end of the working hours.</p>	<p>Fee should be transferred at the end of the same working day.</p>
34	<p>As per local country laws we will require to have an accounting and a HR person associated with operation please confirm if we need to add the cost part of the service fees?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
35.	<p>Will the service providers required to provide the website in both English and Spanish language?</p>	<p>Main website should be maintained in English while sections related to Visa should be maintained in English and Spanish.</p>

36.	When the mandatory biometrics process (facial capture and fingerprints) is introduced to applicants, will the mission allow introducing mandatory appointment system in all centres for visa applicants?	Service provider may introduce appointment system for biometric process but "walk in" applicant should also be given hassle free services as mentioned in RFP.
37.	What is daily volume of urgent visa processed by the mission? Will the service provider be allowed to charge separate service fee for Urgent category?	Urgent visas are occasionally issued.  Mission has separately prescribed fee for Urgent visa category. Service provider may charge urgent visa fee along with regular visa service fee.
38.	Will the technical scores be considered in final decision to award the contract or it is just a qualifying criteria for financial bid stage, irrespective of the technical bid scores, i.e above 70%?	Scores of technical evaluation will be used for qualifying the technical bid. Scores of technical bid may be taken into account only when financial bid scores of two bidders are equal.  As mentioned in RFP.
39.	Please intimate in whose name the draft for security deposit of Euro 50,000 is to be made. Please give full details in this regard.	Demand draft should be made in favour of "Embassy of India, Madrid."
40.	Para VIII 11 j (iii), Kindly elaborate procedure for turn-around time of 60 minutes.	From the time of token generation to the time of generation of payment receipt. This will include the time taken for biometric enrolment as and when it is commenced.
41.	Para XI 12 a (10), kindly clarify about the special arrangement to deal with emergency calls outside office hours and on holidays.	Emergency calls have to be attended to and queries/messages be passed on to the Embassy.
42.	As regards clause XIV -penalties, there are certain superfluous clauses which need to be rationalized as the same are difficult to be strictly implemented and monitored.	All penalty provisions have been arrived at after due consideration of all aspects.
43.	Para XVII 22 (i) d When will the details of evaluation of technical bid be intimated to participated companies? Will it be at the time of opening of financial bid or prior to	Details of evaluation of technical bids will be intimated to the participating companies prior to opening of financial

	opening of financial bid?	bid.
44.	Whether viability of services fee will be examined prior to opening of financial bid. If so will it not compromise the confidentiality of service fee quoted in the financial bid?	It will be examined after opening of financial bid.
45.	<p>Annexure-‘C’ at page 52 of the RFP stipulates “Mission has the right to disqualify the bidders in the financial bid stage if the costing details are not commercially viable and found to be unsustainable, treating the bid as unresponsive.”</p> <p>I. There is no definition provided in the RFP of words “commercially viable”. Besides there is no parameter or criteria w.r.t. the same. While for the bidder a financial bid can be commercial viable, it may not be so for the Mission. Thus the said decision is highly subjective and needs clarification and necessary amendment providing the complete parameters and criteria as to when a particular financial bid can be termed as commercially viable and commercially not viable.</p> <p>II. Besides there is no definition of the word unsustainable i.e. it needs to be clarified as to when the costing details can be termed as unsustainable. The said parameters must be provided in the RFP so as to enable the bidders to be vigilant in providing their costing details so that the same can be termed as commercially viable and sustainable.</p>	Evaluation of the Bids will be done as per provisions laid out in the RFP. This is explained under Annexure C. Obviously, any proposition where the total expenditure is more than the total income is a loss making proposition which will only lead to manipulation and result in poor quality of services.
46.	Annexure D Serial No. II (4) whether company is required to submit insurance cover in the form of certificate from the insurance company or copy of Insurance policy.	The insurance policy may be submitted.
47.	Annexure ‘E’ of the RFP provides criteria for evaluation of technical bids. The	Evaluation of the Bids will be done as per provisions laid out in the RFP. It is clearly

	<p>remarks column in all the criteria from 1 to 9 provides that “Marks to be awarded as per Mission’s Judgment.” It is nowhere either explained or clarified as to what would be the basis and /or parameter for the Mission to pass a judgment on the concerned criteria. Besides, the said judgment by the Mission will be highly subjective. This criteria of evaluation is not transparent evaluation criteria as per normal guidance of Government of India, should be transparent and predefined and not to be arbitrary.</p>	<p>indicated that the best ranked will be given 10 marks and the others will be proportionately reduced.</p>
48.	<p>Criteria No. 9 provides that marks will be awarded as per Mission’s judgment on the basis of number of memorandums /show cause notices etc. It further provides that the first time bidder is to be given a neutral evaluation for purpose of ranking i.e. 5 marks, the said criteria favor inexperience bidder while the service providers who has experience and who has already provided services and successfully completed the contract will be given a symbolic mark more than zero. These criteria in itself appears to be discriminatory. While the first timers have been given exemplary good mark i.e. 5 marks, the experienced ones are given less marks than the first timers.</p>	<p>This is a neutral marking to avoid undue advantage or disadvantage to first time participants. Only those bidders who have a negative record of past performance will be graded below 5. Bidders with a good record have nothing to worry about.</p>
49.	<p>Besides, it is stated in the said remark that the marks will be reduced depending upon the number of show cause notices etc. It is requested to appreciate that the issuance of show cause notice to any service provider in no way can be termed as cognizable or any stigma attached to the said service provider. Mere issuing show cause notice cannot be taken as negative point as it is unfair and discriminatory. Thus the said method of marking in criteria 9 needs to be rectified and explained as the same is highly discriminatory. Criteria No. 10 As verdict is vague and unclear it doesn’t specify who</p>	<p>The matter will be considered in totality, i.e in conjunction with the Show Cause Notice and the satisfactory response and improvements made by the Service provider.</p>

	not Government of India client is and how would quality being ascertained has not been mentioned. Further these criteria also favoured non-Indian Companies who may have more experience with non-Government of India clients.	
50.	Para XVII 22 (i) d When will the details of evaluation of technical bid be intimated to participated companies? Will it be at the time of opening of financial bid or prior to opening of financial bid?	Details of evaluation of technical bids will be intimated to the participating companies prior to opening of financial bid.
51.	Submission of Proposal – 23 Feb Bid Evaluation – 2-3 weeks i.e. March 2 <sup>nd</sup> week Operations start date: within 3 months from contract signing. What is Contract Signing date?	The contract will be signed in the second half of March, 2016.
52.	There is no mention of the word transition in the entire document.  Failure on the part of the incumbent service provider has not been addressed at all in the RFP. Detailed information is solicited as far as transition is concerned to ensure that a process is defined to ensure accountability. Below is a sample of questions that need clarification: i) When will the incumbent service provider end accepting applications? ii) When will the contact centre of the incumbent service provider discontinue its operations? iii) Will the applications that were processed by incumbent be handled? iv) How will the handover of the unprocessed applications, courier labels, passports, etc. be implemented? v) Will the new service provider charge their service fee for handling applications handed over by incumbent service provider?	New service provider will be responsible for all cases taken up by it starting on its first day of functioning.  Mechanism of transition will be detailed at the time of contract signing.

	Due to poor transition, there are disastrous consequences and can cause major inconvenience to the applicant community & reputation of the Indian Mission abroad.	
53.	Kindly provide the details on number of calls and emails received from the applicants at the current service centres.	No such data is maintained.
54.	RFP states the call centre time to be 9 AM to 7 PM on all working days. We request the Embassy to consider a time period of 9 AM to 6 PM to coincide with the IVAC working hours and also taking into account any possible staff security issues arising out the time taken by staff to reach home in the night.	Call centre timings may be co-terminus with IVAC working hours.  RFP para VIII.11.a.ix "9AM to 7 PM" may be read as "9AM to 6PM"
55.	Annexure D Number of staff specifying nature of work to be handled ( to be specified by Mission)  Could you please let us know if there is any threshold on the number of staff?	Minimum staff expected is as follows: Madrid: 8 Barcelona: 7 Seville: 4
56.	The Bidding Company should have ISO-9001-2008(or equivalent) certification for quality management and ISO-27001-2013(or equivalent) certification for IT related services and ISO 23026-2015(or equivalent) for website quality certification.  What would be the likely date of implementation of biometric data capture?	IVAC must have facility for capturing and registering of biometric data from the first day of its operation for visa applications.  As and when government makes capturing of biometric data mandatory for passport and other consular services also, the mission will provide enough notice so that the service provider can prepare accordingly.
57.	In the case of Countries where the Ministry decides there will be two Service Providers operating simultaneously, both L1 and L2 will be asked to operate at the L1 price	This RFP is intended for one service provider only.

58.	<p>ISO 23026 for Website Quality Mgmt defines system engineering and standards to ensure features such as secure information transfer, transactions, payment gateway etc. are functional as per the standard guidelines. If these guidelines are for the new website, service provider will only be able to submit the certificate until the new website is operational i.e. post award of contract.</p> <p>Even for our other operational website we do not have this standard mandatory. Hence we request the Mission to allow the service provider to submit this certificate post award of contract. Kindly advice?</p>	At the time of submission of the tender, the latest version must be submitted. The certification must be continuously upgraded during the period of Contract as provided for in the ISO process.
59.	Will the Mission consider the RFP response and relevant Annexure including the Financial Bid to be signed by a senior person authorized by the Board of Directors of the company?	Please strictly follow RFP guidelines.
60.	We have experienced applicants contacting the new service provider for applications submitted at the previous service provider. In this event, the current service provider should be asked to continue their telephone and email helpdesk for at least two weeks after the last date of their contract.	<p>Please refer to observation on S.N.52.</p> <p>This suggestion will be given due consideration at the time of finalizing transition during contact signing.</p>
61.	<p>Postal applications processing centre</p> <p>Since there is only one mission/post in Spain, serviceprovider should be allowed to accept postal applications for at central processing VAC in Madrid. This will also save applicant's time as they will be able to send the application directly to the main processing centre. Also the processed applications will be directly couriered (if opted by the applicant) to their home address.</p>	Depending on convenience of applicants, they can apply at any of the three centres.
62.	<p>Postal Applications- Incomplete Documents.</p> <p>Service provider should be allowed to return the applications that do not have</p>	Service provider must keep the incomplete applications for 15 days and give applicants enough time to complete their incomplete forms. Only service fee may be retained in such cases.

	all the mandatory documents in the postal package received after deducting the service provider fee and the return courier charges.	
63.	Ref- Profit Margin & Reasonable rate of return. What might be reasonable for one service provider might not be reasonable for another. Please specify a range which Embassy feels is reasonable.	Interested bidders are expected to make their own judgment regarding this.
64.	VIII. 11. (a) VI- Post/Courier applications received should be brought into the system on the same day of the receipt.  Scrutiny of these applications may take some time post the postal/courier company delivers the applications to the VAC, and this could delay the upload into the main system to the next day. Hence, embassy should approve the flexibility of one business day for such applications to be brought into the system.	RFP offers such flexible time only for late receipt of applications.
65.	XII- Service fee can be retained by the service provider.  Since the courier company will charge a fee for return of incomplete documents, such charges should be deducted from the refund as per the VAS schedule along with the service provider service fee.	Refer relevant provisions of RFP and observation on S.N.62.  Deductions from application fee are not allowed without consultation with Mission.
66.	The service provider should provide a monthly certification that it does not hold any personal records of applicants beyond the stated limit.  Please define the "stated" limit.	Please refer RFP Para VIII.2.b
67.	iii- A penalty of 0.5% per day.  "per day" should be replaced with "per business day"	For the said clause, "per day" cannot be replaced by "per business day".
68.	C-Operational Penalties.  "per day" should be replaced with "per business day" in the relevant clauses under this section.	For the said clause, "per day" cannot be replaced by "per business day".
69.	XII-C- Minimum Graduate Qualification. Please specify the equivalent qualification level of Spain.	Equivalent level of qualification for Spain too is Graduation.

70.	<p>j- CCTV System with recording.</p> <p>Please specify for how long the recordings should be stored.</p>	For a period of 3 months.
71.	<p>The Bidding Company must provide certification that its operations are compliant with local labour laws and relevant tax regimes.</p> <p>This certification can only be provided after the operations have begun and taxes are filed at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> financial year. Please confirm if our understanding is correct.</p>	<p>Certification has to be submitted with the bid.</p> <p>Please refer RFP Para V.8.I.</p>
72.	<p>Dealing with applicants and agents. Please provide list of agents approved by the Mission.</p>	Mission does not entertain applications from agents.