

**BRIEFING SESSION-DIRCO-TRAVEL MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR A PERIOD
OF 36 MONTHS**

12 JANUARY 2026

MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAM

**DIRCO 08-2025/2026: REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR TRAVEL MANAGEMENT COMPANY/S
TO PROVIDE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR THE PERIOD OF 36 MONTHS**

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No	1. OPENING AND WELCOME	The Chairperson opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present.	Chairperson
1.	ATTENDANCE	Chairperson Mr. N Socikwa Director Supply Chain Management Secretariat Ms Mphahlele, Ms Mazibuko, Mr Rakhoale and Ms Moroke SCM / Travel Office-End user Ms M Maphuruma Mr J Thobejane Ms M Makgato	ALL
2.	APOLOGIES	No apologies	
3.	ADOPTION OF AGENDA	Agenda was adopted by all members	ALL
4	MATTERS OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING	N/A	
5.	MATTERS ARISING	N/A	
Matters for discussion			

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5.1	REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR TRAVEL MANAGEMENT COMPANY/S TO PROVIDE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR THE PERIOD OF 36 MONTHS	<u>Opening Remarks</u> The Chairperson: Mr. N Socikwa opened the meeting at 11:00 AM and apologized for the initial confusion regarding the start time, noting that some participants had connected at 10:00 AM as per the advert in Departmental website, while the advert in the National Treasury Tender Portal and the Bid Documents reflected 11:00 AM. He clarified that this was a non-compulsory briefing session and that non-attendance would not affect bidders' ability to submit proposals. The Chairperson requested the DIRCO team to introduce themselves and confirmed that the meeting was being recorded. Mr. Socikwa provided a brief background on the Bid document indicating that Supply Chain Management (SCM), Travel office within the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) is responsible for the administration of travel management service through the Travel Management Company (TMC) and the purpose of the briefing session is to allow potential service providers an opportunity to engage with responsible officials on the terms of reference and further explained that the session would cover a summary of the scope of work and the evaluation methodology, with the assumption that potential service providers had already reviewed the detailed tender documents. <u>Presentation by Ms M Maphuruma- SCM Travel office End user: Scope of Work:</u> Ms. Maphuruma presented the Terms of Reference for Travel Management Services, beginning with Section 5 of the document. She emphasized that while the document is comprehensive, it reflects standard industry practices for travel management companies. The Supply Chain Management Office of DIRCO's Travel Office is responsible for air travel, accommodation, ground transport, venue hiring, and related services for the department's head office. The appointed Travel Management Company (TMC) will be required to provide these services in the most cost-effective manner. Currently, DIRCO uses a TMC for travel requisition and expense processes within the travel management lifecycle, operating off-site with a manual requisition process.
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	DIRCO's primary objectives in issuing these terms of reference are to enter into an agreement with successful bidder/s who will provide consistent and reliable travel management services, maintain high traveller satisfaction levels in line with service level agreements, achieve significant cost savings without compromising service standards, and appropriately contain risks for both DIRCO and its travellers. Travel Volumes Ms. Maphuruma presented estimated transaction volumes for the 2024-2025 financial year, emphasizing that these figures are projections and may vary. The estimates included: 1,241 domestic air travel transactions, 1,117 international air travel transactions, 514 regional air travel transactions, 1,434 accommodation bookings, 457 vehicle hire/self-drive bookings, 1,307 shuttle service/chauffeur drive bookings, 5 coach/bus bookings, 8 packing services, 2 domestic and international train bookings, and 75 venue hiring and related services including conference facilities, ICT equipment, and catering. The total after-hours services amounted to 292 transactions during that period. Service Requirements Under general service requirements, the successful bidder will provide travel management services to all DIRCO travellers, including employees, contractors, consultants, and clients where DIRCO is responsible for travel arrangements and costs. Services must be provided during normal office hours (Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM) with after-hours and emergency services available as stipulated in the contract. Ms. Maphuruma particularly emphasized that the 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM timeframe should be considered normal operating hours, not after-hours, for DIRCO's purposes. She stressed the importance of effective after-hours service, noting that DIRCO's travel office also operates outside standard hours and requires consultants who can attend to requests promptly, not just skeleton staff.	
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The TMC must familiarize itself with DIRCO's travel business processes and travel policy, implementing controls to ensure compliance. Any penalties incurred due to inefficiency or fault of the travel consultant will be charged to the TMC's account. The service provider must provide facilities for DIRCO to update travellers' profiles and facilitate bookings generated through their own or third-party online booking tools where implemented.

Ms. Maphuruma highlighted that DIRCO wishes to implement an online booking tool and that training for this tool must be provided by the TMC at no additional cost. She also noted that negotiated airline fares, accommodation rates, and other rates established directly by National Treasury or DIRCO are non-commissionable, and any commissions earned on DIRCO bookings should be retained and returned to DIRCO on a quarterly basis.

Reservations

The TMC will receive travel requests from travellers or travel bookers and respond with quotations and availability. Upon receipt of relevant approvals, the travel agent must issue required e-tickets or vouchers immediately and send them to the travel booker and travellers via agreed communication media. Ms. Maphuruma emphasized that the TMC must provide a minimum of three price quotations for all travel requests where routing or destination permits, allowing travellers to choose from options. If only one quotation is available, this must be clearly indicated with reasons, and the department will make decisions accordingly.

She particularly noted that requests submitted late in the day (between 2:00 PM and 5:00 PM) should receive responses before the end of normal business hours to avoid after-hours complications. The TMC must facilitate group bookings for meetings, conferences, and events, and issue all necessary travel documents, itineraries, and vouchers to travellers prior to departure dates and times. Where visas are required, the TMC must share this information promptly so travellers can obtain necessary documentation. The TMC will not be responsible for visa applications except where specifically requested by DIRCO, but relevant information must be supplied to travellers.

	Air Travel The TMC must be able to book both full-service carriers and low-cost carriers, booking the most cost-effective fares where possible for domestic travel. Ms. Maphuruma emphasized the importance of tracking and managing unused e-tickets as per agreement with the institution, providing monthly reports on refund management. Accommodation For accommodation services, the TMC will obtain price quotations within maximum allowable rates as per DIRCO's travel policy. Accommodation vouchers must be issued to all DIRCO travellers for accommodation bookings and invoiced to DIRCO as per arrangement between DIRCO and the TMC rather than directly with hotels. Cancellation of accommodation bookings must be done promptly to guard against no-show and late cancellation fees. Ms. Maphuruma requested that cancellation policies be clearly shared with DIRCO to avoid confusion regarding timeframes (24 hours, 48 hours, or longer notice periods). Car Rental and Shuttle Services The TMC will book approved category vehicles in accordance with DIRCO's travel policy with appointed car rental service providers from the closest rental location. Ms. Maphuruma emphasized the importance of proximity, requesting that vehicles be sourced from nearby locations rather than distant ones that would incur additional charges. Bus/Coach Services For bus/coach services, the TMC must ensure bookings align with DIRCO's travel policy. The service provider may offer alternative ground transportation for travellers including rail, buses, and transfers for international travel where applicable, booking transfers in line with DIRCO's travel policy with appointed or alternative service providers.	
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	After-Hours and Emergency Services The TMC must provide consultants or teams of consultants to assist travellers with after-hours and emergency reservations and changes to travel plans. Ms. Maphuruma strongly emphasized the importance of this service, noting current challenges and requesting that the service provider ensure availability to avoid frustrating travellers. Online Booking Tool (OBT) Currently, DIRCO does not utilize an online booking tool, but the department expects the TMC to provide training without cost if and when they transition to full or partial OBT implementation. The service provider should be available and ready to support this transition. Communication and Training The TMC may be requested to conduct workshops and training sessions for travel bookers within DIRCO, whether for traditional or online booking methods, covering all department personnel who facilitate bookings. Financial Management The TMC must implement rates negotiated by DIRCO with travel service providers or discounted fares, not exceeding what DIRCO has agreed upon (or going below based on negotiated discounts). The service provider must consolidate travel supplier bill-back invoices rather than providing individual invoices. Management Information and Reporting The TMC must have capability to consolidate all management information related to travel expenses into a single source document with automated reporting tools. Ms. Maphuruma emphasized that reports should not come in pieces but should provide all information relating to travel expenses (accommodation, fares, domestic, international, discounts, etc.) in one reporting tool.	
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	The TMC will be required to provide DIRCO with required monthly reports as agreed in line with the Service Level Agreement at no cost. These reports are detailed in sections 5.6 through 5.6.7 of the tender documents. Account Management An account management structure should be put in place to respond to DIRCO's needs and requirements, acting as liaison for handling all matters regarding service delivery in terms of the contract. During reviews, comprehensive reports on travel spend and performance in terms of the SLA must be presented, with the department monitoring the service provider's performance based on the signed service level agreement. Value-Added Services The TMC must provide value-added services including destination information for domestic and international destinations, health warnings (to be provided ahead of travel), weather forecasts, places of interest, and visa information. Ms. Maphuruma noted that while additional value-added services are listed in the document, the first four mentioned are particularly important. Cost Management The National Treasury Cost Containment Initiatives and DIRCO's Travel Policy establish a basis for a cost-saving culture. Ms. Maphuruma reminded participants that DIRCO must adhere to cost containment initiatives as part of National Treasury's requirements for all departments. The TMC should have in-depth knowledge of relevant suppliers' products to provide the best options and alternatives in accordance with DIRCO's travel policy, ensuring travellers reach destinations safely, in reasonable comfort, with minimum disruption, cost-effectively, and in time to carry out business. Quarterly and Annual Travel Reviews Quarterly reviews are required to be presented by the TMC on all DIRCO travel activities in the previous three-month period. Ms. Maphuruma emphasized the need for constant	
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	communication to address problems or issues promptly, requiring a dedicated contact person for the department who can communicate and respond in a timely manner. Human Resource Requirements To ensure high-quality service delivery to DIRCO travellers, the TMC is required to provide highly skilled and qualified human resources in the following roles (not limited to): senior consultant, intermediate consultants, junior consultants, travel managers, operational financial manager, branch accountant, admin/back office, strategic account manager, and system administrator. Ms. Maphuruma strongly emphasized the importance of appointing skilled and qualified personnel to avoid issues such as booking flights for incorrect travellers. Off-Site Facilities DIRCO uses an off-site TMC, meaning all required services must be provided from the service provider's office rather than on-site at DIRCO facilities. Ms. Maphuruma concluded her presentation of the scope of work, indicating that further questions could be raised during the question period. The Chairperson Mr. Socikwa thanked Ms. Maphuruma for her detailed presentation and re-emphasized to potential bidders that while the scope of work is detailed, it falls within normal daily operations for travel management companies. He explained that these requirements form the basis of the service level agreement to be signed with the successful bidder, ensuring no new elements are introduced at the SLA stage. He encouraged bidders to thoroughly review the document before submitting proposals to demonstrate understanding of requirements. Presentation by SCM Bid office: Evaluation Methodology. Ms. Mazibuko introduced Mr. Rakhoale to present the evaluation methodology.	
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	Mr. Rakhoale presented Section 7, explaining that the department has set minimum standards consisting of three (3) phases that bidders must meet to be evaluated and selected as successful bidders. Phase One: Responsive Criteria Mr Rakhoale Indicated that phase one (1) of the evaluation methodology is an administrative criterion that required potential service providers to submit mandatory bid documentation, Bidders must submit all documents outlined in Table 1. Only bidders complying with all criteria will proceed to Phase Two. Compulsory documents include: • Invitation to Bid (SBD1): Compulsory document; bidders failing to submit a proposal time will be allowed to submit within three days, with failure resulting in disqualification • Pricing schedules (SBD 3.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4): All SBD 3.1 forms must be completed, initialled, and signed, confirming quotation as per requirements; failure to submit leads to disqualification • Declaration of Interest (SBD4) • Preference Points (SBD 6.1): Not compulsory, but advisable to submit; failure to submit within three days of request will not disqualify but will result in bidder forfeiting preferential points Companies must be registered on the Central Supplier Database (CSD) with positive tax status. The IATA license certificate is particularly important: bidders must submit their International Air Transport Association license or certificate as a certified copy. Where a bidding company uses a third-party IATA license, proof of agreement must be attached with the certificate. Mr Rakhoale concluded the phase 1 by indicating that any service provider that fails to comply with any of the above-mentioned minimum requirements will be regarded as submitting a non-responsive bid and will not proceed to Phase Two. Phase Two: Technical Evaluation Criteria	
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	Phase Two carries a total weight of 100 points (50 points for Part One, 50 points for Part Two), with a minimum threshold of 60% required on each part. Part One: Desktop Technical Evaluation (50 points total) Mr Rakhoale indicated that phase 2 of the evaluation deals with assessing the bidder's capacity to deliver /render the services, he went through the section and highlighted the importance of submitting an all-inclusive proposal that will have all the headings as indicated in the criteria, he further highlighted the weight on each criteria and explained the evaluation matrix that will be used to allocate points. Mr Rakhoale concluded phase 2 by indicating that service providers who scored less than 60% on phase 2 of the functionality criteria will not be considered for site inspection and will be deemed as submitting a non-responsive bid. Part Two: Presentation and Site Visit (50 points total) Mr Rakhoale presented the Part two of the phase two of the evaluation criteria based on presentation and site visit, highlighting the matrix to allocate points and the total weight for each criteria on the sit visit, he further urged the bidders to ensure that they provide the correct address in their proposals and they must ensure that all requirements that have been indicated in the site inspection criteria are available at the recommended site/address on the required site inspection date. Furthermore, Mr Rakhoale concluded phase two (2) by indicating that service providers who score less than 60% on site inspection will not proceed to phase three (3). Bidders scoring less than 60% on phase Two will be viewed as submitting a non-responsive bid and will not be considered for Phase Three. Phase Three: Price and Preference Criteria The tender uses an 80/20 system with 80 points for price and 20 points for preference based on DIRCO's prescribed goals: HDI ownership, women ownership, youth ownership, and disability ownership. Points are claimed through SBD 6.1 forms and verified through CSD. In conclusion to his presentation, Bidders were urged to submit an all-inclusive proposal with clear headings to ensure that the evaluation team can properly assess and allocate points effectively and efficiently.	
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The chairperson thanked both presenters and opened the floor for question-and-answer session

Questions and Answers Session.

Mr. Socikwa opened the floor for questions, emphasizing that the document has been carefully prepared to be as clear as possible despite its detail, and encouraging bidders to seek clarification before submitting proposals.

Question1: Evaluation Criteria (Reference letters and CV of personnel

- Regarding technical evaluation criteria for reference letters, does the letter need to bear a specific date or can it be signed anytime within the past three years?
- how many travel coordinators' CVs must be submitted, especially in relation to staff complement requirement?

Response: For references, the requirement is simply within the past three years from bid submission time—no specific date check required. For the travel coordinator, the criteria measure the experience of one travel coordinator, so bidders should submit one CV that will be measured against the experience requirements.

Question 2 : Online Booking

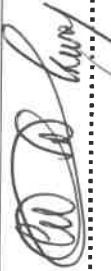
- Regarding the potential move to an online booking tool, is this just investigative or is there a directive to move to online booking?

Response: The intention is to move to an online booking tool. The requirement is for service providers who can assist with implementation when DIRCO is ready. Implementation will not occur at the contract's beginning; rather, the department will establish a relationship with the service provider, begin service delivery, then plan for the online booking tool transition. The requirement is that bidders must indicate ability to help DIRCO transition to an online booking tool.

	<u>Question 3: Travel Lodge Card</u> - Does DIRCO have a travel lodge card for this tender? Response: Yes, DIRCO currently has a large card with the Diners Club. <u>Question 4: IATA and ASATA Certificate</u> - Clarification requested regarding ASATA certificate versus IATA certificate. Response: IATA is a mandatory document under responsive criteria that must be submitted to proceed to Phase Two. ASATA is in Phase Two of evaluation, not compulsory but carries 10 points. Both documents are required in the bid. <u>Question 5: Number of TMCs</u> - How many TMCs is DIRCO planning to appoint? Response: The plan is to appoint one TMC, but there is provision to appoint more than one if needed. The tender document refers to appointing "a service provider/s," leaving the decision open to the department depending on proposals received. <u>Closing Remarks</u> The Chairperson Mr. Socikwa emphasized the importance of thoroughly reviewing requirements before submission to ensure comprehensive proposals. He noted that unclear proposals create evaluation challenges, as the evaluation committee cannot assess what they do not understand. He encouraged bidders to be clear and precise, structuring proposals according to the requirements, especially regarding evaluation methodology criteria. The bid closes on 30 January 2026, providing just over two weeks for preparation. The department intends to finalize the process within two months to award the bid, making clarity in proposals essential for fast-tracking the appointment.	
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		Mr. Socikwa thanked all participants for attending and wished them well with their bid submissions, noting they would meet again when successful service provider/s is/are appointed for the three-year contract period.	
CLOSURE		Meeting adjourned	12:30

Signature by Chairperson:  Date: 2026/01/19

Signature by Secretariate:  Date: 19/01/26