

Provision of Business Travel Services for ICMPD

PUBLICATION REFERENCE: ICMPD/25.052/SER/OSP/BTS-R1/HQ

CLARIFICATION N° 1

Updated on 03/06/2025

The following questions have been raised in the course of the tender procedure:

Question 1:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "General Scope and Expectations": Can ICMPD provide additional detail or clarification on the expected travel volume (e.g., number of bookings per month or year)?

Answer 1:

Expected Travel Volume: A conservative forecast of ICMPD's anticipated travel volume is reflected in the Model Financial Offer template for the period 2026–2028. These figures should serve as the primary reference for bidders when estimating resource requirements and associated service capacity.

Question 2:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "General Scope and Expectations": Is there a preferred or mandated GDS (Global Distribution System) or travel booking platform currently in use or required?

Answer 2:

Preferred or Mandated GDS/Platform: No specific Global Distribution System (GDS) or travel booking platform is mandated by ICMPD. Bidders are free to propose a solution that ensures broad content access, cost-effective pricing, and full policy compliance.

Question 3:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "General Scope and Expectations": Are there any specific travel destinations or regions that are considered high-risk and need special procedures?

Answer 3:

High-Risk Destinations: Yes, ICMPD maintains an evolving list of high-risk destinations. This list is based on continuous assessments by ICMPD's Security and Safety Team and its designated travel risk management provider. Please note that these classifications are subject to change depending on global developments and risk advisories.

Question 4:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "General Scope and Expectations": Does ICMPD have a preferred or existing Online Booking Tool (OBT), or is the bidder expected to propose one from scratch?

Answer 4:

Online Booking Tool (OBT): ICMPD does not currently have an existing Online Booking Tool. It is therefore expected that the bidder proposes an appropriate OBT solution as part of their offer. This tool must be operational by 30 June 2026, in line with the requirements outlined in the Terms of Reference, and capable of supporting intuitive booking, policy enforcement, and user-specific functionality.

Question 5:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "Technical and Systems Integration": Can ICMPD share more details or specifications for integration with SAP and reporting platforms?

Answer 5:

Integration with SAP and Reporting Platforms: ICMPD expects the Travel Management Company (TMC) to support structured and secure data exchange with ICMPD's SAP ERP and internal reporting tools. While full system integration is not mandatory, the ability to interface through standardised export formats (e.g. XML, CSV) and to support automated or semi-automated processes for invoicing and reporting is highly desirable.

To assist bidders in assessing compatibility, generic integrated import files have been provided in Annex III to the ToR- Generic integrated import file for the SAP_ERP. These serve as an indicative reference for the types of data fields and structures expected by ICMPD. Bidders are invited to describe how their systems can accommodate such formats or suggest equivalent export options.

The final technical setup - including data exchange methods, file structures, and transmission frequency - will be jointly defined during the transition phase in close coordination with ICMPD's ICT and Finance teams. Please note that while the TMC will not be responsible for designing internal audit reports, the data delivered should be compatible with ICMPD's internal reporting and control requirements.

Question 6:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "Technical and Systems Integration": What level of access will the travel provider have to ICMPD's SAP system, if any?

Answer 6:

SAP System Access: The TMC will not be granted direct access to ICMPD's SAP system. Data compatibility will be ensured through structured file exchange and appropriate interfacing, as defined during implementation. All access remains strictly controlled and managed by ICMPD's internal systems.

Question 7:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "Technical and Systems Integration": Is there a preferred method or format for electronic invoicing (e.g., PEPPOL, PDF, XML)?

Answer 7:

Preferred Format for Electronic Invoicing: There is no fixed requirement for a specific e-invoicing format. However, the proposed invoicing approach must be fully compatible with ICMPD's internal financial workflows and SAP system. Bidders should indicate the formats supported by their systems (e.g. XML, PDF, CSV) and how these formats meet compliance, reconciliation, and data security needs. Compatibility with the AirPlus Travel Account is essential. While PEPPOL is not currently used, future readiness may be considered beneficial.

Question 8:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "Implementation and Transition": Can you clarify what specific data migration activities are expected, and will ICMPD provide data templates or migration support?

Answer 8:

Data Migration Activities and Support: ICMPD expects the selected Travel Management Company (TMC) to support the migration of relevant traveller data, including traveller profiles (staff and external participants), historical booking patterns (if applicable), and any other operationally necessary data required for system setup and testing.

ICMPD will provide standardised data templates and reasonable support throughout the migration process. This includes the provision of available source data in structured formats and the identification of focal points from relevant departments (e.g. ICT, Travel, and Finance) to facilitate a smooth and secure data transfer. All data handling must comply with ICMPD's Data Protection Policy and GDPR requirements.

Question 9:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "Implementation and Transition": What are the expectations regarding the number and profile of staff to be trained during the onboarding phase?

Answer 9:

Training Expectations: As outlined in Section 11 of the Terms of Reference (TOR), the TMC is expected to deliver comprehensive training during the onboarding phase. This will include:

- Approximately 150 designated Travel Organisers across HQ, Brussels, and field offices,
- Approximately 10 ICMPD Administrators, including representatives from the Travel Focal Point, ICT, Finance, and system administration teams.

Training formats should be tailored (e.g. online, in-person, or hybrid), and must include user manuals, system access guidance, and Q&A sessions to ensure readiness prior to go-live.

Question 10:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "Implementation and Transition": Can ICMPD confirm the expected timeline for the onboarding phase before the operational go-live on 1 January 2026?

Answer 10:

Onboarding Timeline: The onboarding and system readiness activities are expected to be completed no later than 15 December 2025, in accordance with Section 11 of the TOR. This includes finalising system configuration, completing training, and conducting readiness checks. While ICMPD has established this deadline, bidders are expected to propose a detailed and realistic implementation and onboarding timeline as part of their submission under Annex II – Organisation and Methodology, ensuring that full operational readiness is achieved by 1 January 2026.

Question 11:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "Service Coverage and Requirements": Are there minimum service levels (SLAs) ICMPD requires, especially for 24/7 and off-peak support?

Answer 11:

Minimum Service Levels (SLAs): Yes, ICMPD has defined minimum service level expectations, including for 24/7 and off-peak support. These are detailed in Section 5 of the Terms of Reference (TOR) and include, among others:

- Response time for urgent requests: Within 30 minutes (acknowledgement) and 2 hours (response) during off-hours;
 - Ticket issuance: Within 3 business hours for standard requests during business hours;
 - Emergency hotline support: Calls must be answered by an agent within 8 minutes;
 - All emergency support outside of business hours must be available without interruption.
- Bidders are expected to adhere to these standards and outline their internal mechanisms to meet or exceed these requirements.

Question 12:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "Service Coverage and Requirements": there a required language proficiency for all support staff, or only for key account roles?

Answer 12:

Language Proficiency Requirements: As ICMPD's working language is English, all TMC staff-whether part of the general support team, key account roles, or group travel coordination - must possess full professional proficiency in English, both spoken and written. Additional language capabilities (e.g. French, Arabic, Russian, or Turkish) are considered an asset, particularly for regional support and field office coordination.

Question 13:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "Service Coverage and Requirements": Can ICMPD clarify the definition and scope of "value-added services" – e.g., whether third-party costs (hotel, car rental) are to be passed through or managed differently?

Answer 13:

Value-Added Services and Cost Treatment: Value-added services are defined as optional services offered by the TMC that go beyond the core service requirements - such as extended support hours, hotel booking facilitation, or car rental arrangements. ICMPD expects that any third-party costs (e.g. hotel or car rental charges) be passed through transparently at actual cost, without hidden markups. Where the TMC applies a service fee for facilitating these arrangements, this must be clearly stated and integrated into the financial offer. These services will be evaluated for added operational value but are not mandatory for tender participation.

Question 14:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "Compliance and Risk": Are there any existing policies or frameworks ICMPD expects the bidder's risk mitigation plan to align with (e.g., data protection standards, emergency response protocols)?

Answer 14:

Alignment with Policies and Frameworks: Yes, ICMPD requires the selected Travel Management Company (TMC) to align its risk mitigation planning and service delivery with existing ICMPD policies and frameworks. These include, but are not limited to:

- ICMPD Travel Rules and Travel Procedures;
- ICMPD's Data Protection Policy, which reflects GDPR requirements;
- ICMPD's internal Risk Management Framework, including protocols related to emergency response and security.

These documents will be shared with the awarded TMC upon contract signature to support a smooth and compliant start to the transition period.

Question 15:

Based on the document "2.2.2 Annex II – Organisation and Methodology," please clarify on "Compliance and Risk": Can ICMPD confirm what level of documentation will be required for regular audits and how frequently these are expected?

Answer 15:

Audit Documentation and Reporting Requirements: The documentation and reporting requirements, including indicative content and submission timelines, are detailed in Sections 8.1 and 8.2 of the Terms of Reference (TOR). These include regular reporting obligations such as inception reports, pre-trip reports, biannual performance reviews, and annual service summaries. While the TOR outlines a standard reporting structure, the specific format, content depth, and frequency of additional audit-related documentation will be finalised jointly with the selected TMC during the transition phase, based on operational requirements and audit readiness standards.

Question 16:

Could you please clarify, what kind of process do you have in mind for the traveler profile management, if you indicate in tender specifications document that you would like, that external participants should be also able to manage their profiles independently?

How can you guarantee that they will provide their profile information in a timely manner and in correct way?

As it's important for your organization and the travel agency that all passenger data would be comprehensive and correct, leaving this as a liability of external participants seems too risky as then they are responsible for the data and this may cause major obstacles and delays in the booking/ticketing process and incomplete/incorrect data may also lead to denied boardings etc and that will cause extra financial burden to your organization. This solution would work with the employees of your organization, but the risk seems to be big with the external participants.

What concerns external participants, our proposal would be that their profile data should be coordinated/inserted to HR tool by ICMPD's travel managers or by someone dedicated responsible for the passenger data. Travel agency can also not validate participants and verify their data and take responsibility for this.

Answer 16:

ICMPD's intention in allowing external participants to manage their profiles independently is to streamline the process and reduce administrative overhead, particularly for high-volume events such as conferences, training missions, or stakeholder visits. However, we fully acknowledge the inherent risks of inaccurate or incomplete profile data, especially when it concerns critical travel information.

To address this concern, ICMPD proposes a **dual-layer approach** as a **suggested baseline**, which may be refined further in collaboration with the selected TMC:

Initial Data Collection: For external participants, ICMPD will coordinate the initial collection of mandatory travel profile data (e.g. full legal name, passport details, contact information) through internal focal points or designated Travel Organisers. This data may be input either by ICMPD directly or pre-uploaded into the traveller profile system by the TMC, depending on the agreed workflow.

Profile Access and Validation: Once the profile has been created, the external participant shall be given secure access to verify and update their information directly – e.g. emergency contacts, travel preferences etc.. This allows for personal data checks and preference updates, while ICMPD maintains overall responsibility for ensuring data completeness and compliance.

This model is intended to ensure that the TMC is not overburdened with responsibilities that fall outside its operational remit - such as validating the accuracy of third-party data. ICMPD will remain accountable for the completeness and correctness of external participant data.

That said, ICMPD is **open to alternative workflows or mitigation measures** proposed by the bidders that would help ensure the secure, timely, and accurate setup of external travellers while maintaining operational efficiency and compliance. The final configuration of this process will be jointly agreed during the transition phase.

We fully agree that the TMC cannot and should not bear the responsibility for verifying or guaranteeing the accuracy of data submitted by third-party participants.

Question 17:

Could you please clarify the following requirement from TS: ICMPD expects the TMC to operate in full alignment with international risk management protocols, providing relevant traveller safety updates, real-time alerts, and itinerary-specific risk guidance.

Do we understand correctly that in addition to the service of International SOS, you would like the travel agency to provide relevant traveller safety updates, real-time alerts, and itinerary-specific risk guidance directly to ICMPD?

Answer 17:

Yes, your understanding is correct. In addition to ICMPD's designated travel risk management provider (e.g. International SOS), the Travel Management Company (TMC) is expected to contribute to traveller safety by providing itinerary-specific updates, real-time alerts, and relevant notifications - particularly for high-risk destinations as identified by ICMPD.

This does not require the TMC to deliver a comprehensive risk management service. However, basic situational awareness - such as airspace closures, significant disruptions, or destination-specific alerts - should be integrated into the service offering and updated accordingly. The practical implementation and scope of such alerts will be defined jointly during the transition phase, ensuring alignment with ICMPD's internal risk protocols.

Question 18:

Would it be possible also to add additional optional fields to the Model Financial Offer, where it would be possible to also add optional fees for some technical integrations? For example some advanced online tool related integrations (MFA, SSO etc) are for additional cost as the OBT provider does not do these integrations for free.

Answer 18:

ICMPD's expectation is that all costs - whether related to development, technical integration, or personnel - are to be fully integrated into the financial proposal submitted via the Model Financial Offer. This includes any foreseeable expenses associated with the implementation and operation of systems such as Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA), Single Sign-On (SSO), or other advanced online tool integrations.

In line with standard procurement practice, ICMPD does not foresee the introduction of optional fields for separately quoted fees. The tendering principle of full-cost transparency requires that all such potential costs be anticipated and reflected within the proposed fee structure.

Should there be technical requirements that may result in additional complexity or cost, bidders are encouraged to factor these into their financial offer accordingly.

Question 19:

Could you please kindly clarify what do you exactly mean by "allow for intuitive booking" under the section of Travel Management System in TS document?

Answer 19:

By "intuitive booking" under the Travel Management System section of the Technical Specifications, ICMPD refers to a booking process that is user-friendly, logically structured, and easy to navigate for end-users with varying levels of technical proficiency.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- A clear and streamlined user interface;
- Logical booking workflows that minimise the number of steps required;
- Intelligent search functionalities and filtering options;
- Easy comparison of travel options (e.g. by price, duration, carrier);
- Seamless transition between booking segments (flight, hotel, car, etc.);
- Minimal need for user training or technical support.

The overarching aim is to ensure that the system facilitates efficient, error-free bookings and contributes to a positive user experience across the organisation.

Question 20:

You require integration with ICMPD's SAP and reporting platforms. How specific technical details would you like to get, such as data formats (e.g., EDIFACT, XML) and/or API documentation, data exchange frequency, security protocols, or just a general overview of opportunities?

Answer 20:

While direct access to ICMPD's SAP system will *not* be granted to the selected Travel Management Company (TMC), integration remains a key expectation in terms of structured data exchange and compatibility. The TMC is expected to support the automated or semi-automated transmission of invoicing and reporting data in formats that align with ICMPD's internal processing needs.

At this stage, bidders are invited to provide a general overview of their available technical options for data exchange – such as standard export formats (e.g. XML, CSV), interfacing capabilities (e.g. API endpoints or batch file generation), and any relevant security features (e.g. encryption, authentication protocols). These should support ICMPD's capacity to process data into SAP and internal reporting platforms effectively.

Further technical specifications, including format mapping and exchange frequency, will be refined during the transition phase in coordination with ICMPD's ICT and Finance teams.

Reports, particularly those required for audit or internal control purposes, must be adaptable to internal standards as defined by ICMPD's reporting units.