

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

### **1. Introduction.**

The objective of this Request For Proposal (RFP) is to select a reliable and experienced outsourcing agency to contract with the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv to provide visa support services at the Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa and Beer Sheva.

It is estimated that in **2012 & 2013** the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv will receive approximately **70,000 (Seventy Thousand)** visa applications. This is, however, only an estimate and Embassy of India does not guarantee this number. The applications are received from applicants in person as well as by post/courier. The Embassy of India is looking for an outsourcing agency to collect and collate these applications along with passports of the applicants on its behalf, deliver them to the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv and subsequently return the passports to the applicants in an expeditious and secured manner.

### **2. Request for Proposal**

Bidders are invited to submit a priced proposal for the delivery of visa support services in accordance with this RFP. The proposal would be valid for a period of 3 months after the RFP closing date. The selected Contract will be signed for a period of three years with review of operations after every year. The Service providers will be required to start partial operations within 3 months of signing the Contract and full operations within one month of starting partial

operations. Operations, whether partial or full, can start only after Embassy of India, Tel Aviv conveys its satisfaction with the arrangements made by the Service provider. Either party may terminate the contract by giving two months advance notice of being unable to carry on the services any longer. In such circumstances, the process of smooth takeover of services will deem to begin from the date of receipt of the notice by the other party or from the date as stated in the notice, whichever is later and the process of termination/smooth takeover will be completed in a reasonable period of time of not more than two months.

## **2(A) Eligibility**

**Only Indian/Indian origin companies with or without a local partner either of Indian/foreign origin are eligible to apply.**

### **3. Clarification/ Additional Information required:**

- i) Requests for further information must be in writing and be sent to the contact person mentioned in this document;
- ii) Only communications that are in writing from the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv may be considered as properly authorized expressions on the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv's behalf;
- iii) The Embassy of India, Tel Aviv shall provide a copy of all questions and answers provided during the tendering process to all bidders. The source of questions will not be divulged;

- iv) Questions from bidders will be accepted until **23/04/2012**, five working days before the Pre-bid conference. The Pre-bid conference will be held 09 days before the RFP closing date. Questions /Queries shall be sent to [indpoltel@indembassy.co.il](mailto:indpoltel@indembassy.co.il).
- v) Each bidder shall provide the name and contact details of an individual to act as a point of contact during the tender process. That person may be asked to clarify the bid to provide additional information during the evaluation process.

#### **4. Proposed Programme for the RFP Process**

Closure of bidders questions **April 23, 2012**

Pre-bid conference **May 1, 2012**

Deadline for Submission of Proposals **May 10, 2012** i.e. RFP closing date

#### **5. Statement of Service Requirements**

The Service Provider shall establish Visa Application Centres adhering to good industry practice standards in **Israel** in the following cities in **Israel** following a timetable of openings agreed with the **Embassy of India, Tel Aviv**. The **Embassy of India, Tel Aviv** will enter into full consultation and planning with the Service Provider in such cases.

**Tel Aviv**

**Jerusalem**

**Haifa**

**Be'er Sheva**

**6. Scope of Work and Deliverables Required**

a. The Service Provider shall ensure that Visa Application Centers are situated in the premises easily accessible to members of the public. The Centers shall have sufficient space in terms of waiting area, application counters and processing area. (Mission/Post can indicate some standards such as seating arrangements, number of counters, provision of drinking water, newspapers, TV, lighting arrangements, washrooms etc.) Each Centre will have appropriate facilities and conveniences for the applicants while endeavoring to minimize waiting time. The Centres shall be open from **08.00 am** to **04:00 pm** on all days, including weekends, except public holidays in Israel.

b. The Service Provider shall be responsible for ensuring that wherever an application is made, the Service Provider should undertake all of the following functions for the Mission/Post:

i) Distribute Visa Application Forms. The Service Provider will arrange to print Visa Application Forms at his own cost in the format prescribed by the Mission/Post from time to time.

ii) Assist applicants in completion of forms and provide factual information on the various categories of visa available and the application process.

iii) Accept visa applications, including those received by post, together with applicant's passport, visa fee, Service Provider's service fee (equal to the Contract Price) and supporting documents from applicants and agents, if any, approved by the Mission/Post. Accept additional documents requested by the Mission/Post from existing applicants. Fee will be accepted in all manners of payment generally used in **Israel** including credit cards and debit cards. However, any bank/agency charges levied on such transactions will be borne by the applicants.

iv) Bank agency charges to be collected from applicants must be on actual basis as charged by the banks/agencies and should not become a source of income for the Service Provider. For this, the Service Provider should prominently display, both in the Centre and website, various such charges applicable for the benefit of applicants.

v) Accept such fees and pay the fees due to the Mission i.e., fees excluding the Service Provider's service fee, in Mission's bank account on the day of receipt. Clear and transparent audit trails of fees taken will be supplied at the time the relevant applications are submitted in a format to be

agreed between the Mission and Service Provider. The service Provider shall provide a Bank Guarantee amounting to **NIS 97680/- (NIS Ninety Seven Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Only)** for the government funds held by it temporarily and for the safety of documents.

vi) The Embassy of India, Tel Aviv will not pay for the services rendered by the Service Provider. The Service Provider will charge fee, per visa application, denominated in **New Israeli Shekels (NIS)**. **The fee per visa application should be quoted inclusive of any local taxes and VAT** currently applicable in Israel. This fee will remain fixed during the term of Contract and can be revised upwards during this period, rounded off to the next higher denomination, only if there is cumulative rise in the local cost of living as per UN CPI, rate of local taxes and/or VAT by more than 25%.

vii) The Service Provider's Service Fee (SF) would not be changed on account of inflation, changes in number of visa applications and fluctuations in rate of exchange. Any change is possible on account of changes in VAT/ local taxes to the tune exceeding 25%. The rounding off must be done in two halves, i.e less than half would be reduced to the previous lower denomination; and half and above would be

rounded off to the next higher denomination taking in to account the practicability of implementation.

viii) Provide a bar-coded receipt to each applicant showing the service fee paid to the Service provider, the visa fee or any other fee, the category of visa applied for and the date of payment. A copy of the bar coded receipt is to be enclosed with the application.

ix) Electronic data entry of visa applications in a format prescribed by the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv and transfer this data physically to the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv **twice each working day (the timings and manner of which will be determined by the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv.**

x) On receipt of applications, scrutinize the various documents and forms to ensure they are properly completed and ensure that each visa application form has clear audit information on it to allow easy identification of the fee paid, type of visa required and date of payment. Application documents along with passports to be forwarded to the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv securely and in a timely manner twice each working day (the timings and manner of which will be determined by the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv.

xi) Collect from the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv processed applications and passports, **twice each working day.**

xii) Return passports to applicants in a timely, orderly and secured fashion and provide those, who are required to go to the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv for interview, with the date & time of interview in consultation with the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv.

xiii) Delivery of applications and collection of passports will be done twice each working day (the timings and number of which will be determined by the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv. Handing / Taking over of applications and passports will take place at the premises of the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv.

xiv) Publish and distribute an official leaflet explaining clearly how to apply for an Indian visa, complete with relevant guidance.

xv) Maintain proper records of every application received, cross-referenced to individual fees taken on databases and systems, and in accordance with practices to be prescribed by the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv

xvi) Maintain proper accounts of all the visa fees received by individual subhead.

xvii) Have in place an efficient system for scheduling appointments for applicants requiring an interview.



xviii) Have in place a reliable quality control system that maintains continuous surveillance on service standards.

xix) The Service Provider should have appropriate certification from a reputed agency of the country where the services are provided wherever feasible.

xx) Put in place a viable and effective security and vigilance system.

xxii) Operate an e-mail, tele-enquiry facility, SMS, electronic display and online facility in order that applicants can track the progress of their applications

xxiii) Put in place a system where telephone, email and SMS enquiries are to be answered promptly and postal letters are to be replied to within 2 working days of receipt.

xxiv) Issue news releases as and when required by the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv

xxv) Carry out any other related activities as instructed by the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv

xxvi) Have in place an adequate contingency plan, prior to operation of the agreement, to maintain an acceptable level of service if the operation of any/all Visa Application Centres is interrupted for any reason.

## **7. Facilities**

The Service Provider shall be required to have the following facilities at each Visa Application Centre:

(a) Effective systems and processes to recruit and train staff who can explain clearly and accurately the visa application process and the details of which documents must be submitted with the application.

(b) An IT system which will allow the entire Service Provider's visa service network access to any centrally based appointment system. The IT service provided must be in accordance with standards prescribed by India's National Informatics Centre (NIC), as determined by the Mission.

(c) The ability to computerize operations related to data capture and scanning of applications and photographs on behalf of the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv.

(d) The ability to computerize operations related to the accounting of fee collection.

(e) The ability to computerize operations related to the tracking of passport movement from receipt to delivery.

(f) A security system for the control of access of applicants and safe custody of documentation collected, including information held on IT systems.

(g) An effective quality control system.

(h) Adequate infrastructure (including furniture, water dispenser, air conditioning etc) to hold atleast 50 visa applicants at any given time in VAC.

(i) The Service Provider will maintain records and statistics in the format required by the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv.

(j) The Service Provider will be allowed to charge Visa Service Fee (SF), equal to the Contract Price, from all individuals who make a visa application. This fee will be collected by the Service provider from applicants at the time of receiving the application and visa fees (VF). Documents relating to collection of the service fee (receipt books etc.) will be properly maintained and made available for inspection by the designated officer of the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv.

(k) The Service provider may secure additional sources of revenue through advertising subject to the agreement of the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv and subject to the terms and conditions of local laws, if there is no conflict of interest. The decision of the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv will be final in this case.

(l) The service provider will ensure that turn around time for visa applicants applying for visas will not be more than 30 minutes. Machine generated tickets should be given to visa applicants, which

will indicate date and time of entry and of exit from the collection centre.

(m)The Service provider can also introduce value-added services for the benefit of visa applicants and offer these services for a charge if there is no conflict of interest. Introduction of these value-added services is subject to the prior written approval of the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv and subject to the local laws.

(n)The Service provider shall not receive any payments from the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv for setting up these offices, nor for providing services for visa applicants. The Embassy of India, Tel Aviv shall entertain no claim for expenses or liability for loss of passports or documents. The Service provider shall indemnify the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv in the event of any claim made by any applicant and it shall be the Service provider's responsibility to compensate applicants if such losses occur.

(o) The Service Provider will establish and operate a website on behalf of the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv in **English and Hebrew**, which will contain all information relevant and useful to visa applicants. All information posted on the website will be agreed in advance with the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv.

(p) The Service Provider shall ensure complete confidentiality of the information provided by visa seekers and will further ensure that it is used for no purpose other than processing of visa. The service provider shall indemnify the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv in the event of

any leakage of such information and a consequential claim made by a visa applicant/applicants.

(q) The Service Provider will ensure access of authorized officials from the Mission/Post to its premises and documents.

(r) The Service Provider will effect and maintain adequate insurance to cover its obligations under the Agreement, including those obligations which survive the expiration or termination of the Agreement/Contract.

(s) The Service Provider will not represent itself and will ensure that its officials and sub-contractors do not represent themselves as an official or agency or organ of the Mission/Post or of the Govt. of India.

(t) The Service Provider should be prepared to agree to pay such penalty as may be determined in terms of the Contract, for violating the term(s) and condition(s) of the Contract.

(u) The Service Provider will not assign in whole or in part its rights or obligations under this Agreement without the prior written approval of the Mission /Post. The Service Provider will not consult with any other person or body for the purposes of entering into an arrangement which will require notation of the Agreement without first consulting the Mission /Post.

(v) The Service Provider should have feed back from the applicants regarding the quality of service rendered by them at the time of

returning the passport by means of an objective feed back form. The feedback should be constantly watched and measures taken to overcome any defects noticed during the feed back. A summary of the feedback should be sent to Mission on a monthly basis and any serious complaints should be brought to the notice of the Mission immediately.

## **8. Service Standards**

- i) The Service Provider shall ensure a high level of service standard with regard to the facilities and amenities in the Visa Application Centre, efficient processing of cases so that waiting time is minimal and customer satisfaction is high.
- ii) There will be a provision for review one year after commencement of full operations in terms of service standards and thereafter at the end of every subsequent year.
- iii) There will be at least two counters for attending the visa applicants in each IVAC.
- iv) The Service Provider should ensure that the staff of the IVAC be courteous and helpful and should not indulge in unpleasant arguments or use of foul language. The Service Provider should ensure strict discipline, punctuality and decorum of office amongst the staff of the centre.

## **9. Guide to Bidders**

i) It is essential that other criteria such as organization profile, experience, method statement and standards are also met. The bidding company and its sister company or subsidiary should not bid separately in the same bid. A certificate to this effect should be given by the bidding company at the time of bidding.

ii) The Embassy of India, Tel Aviv will take all reasonable steps to maintain the confidentiality of any of the bidders' information, which is clearly marked 'confidential'. However, the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv is subject to the Right to Information Act 2005 of Govt. of India and it may be required to release information supplied in this RFP in accordance with that Act.

iii) The information in this RFP, or otherwise supplied by the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv or any of its representatives, is to be kept confidential except to the extent already publicly available or authorized by the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv. In case of any damage either direct or indirect including any legal action filed by any individual, in respect of the RFP the vendor shall be solely responsible and the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv will not be liable.

iv) The bidders shall not at any time make any public statements in relation to this RFP or any proposal without obtaining prior written approval from the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv contact person. All material supplied to the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv in relation to the bidder's proposal becomes the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv's property and may not be returned to the bidder, unless

requested in writing beforehand or agreed to by the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv.

v) The bidders should note that in the event of Contract having been awarded, the Service Provider will not assign in whole or in part its rights or obligations without the prior approval of the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv.

vi) The Embassy of India, Tel Aviv will not be liable to contract and tort (including negligence), equity or any other cause of action for any direct or indirect damage, loss or cost (including legal and lawyer/client costs) to the bidders or other persons in respect of this RFP.

vii) This RFP will be governed by the law currently in force in India. The concerned party/parties shall submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Indian courts any dispute or difference of any kind that may arise concerning this RFP or any related contract.

viii) In submitting a proposal to the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv, the bidder will be deemed to have understood this RFP, obtained all requisite information and verified the correctness of any information to be relied upon, as may be necessary to prepare the proposal and for any subsequent negotiations with the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv.



ix) In submitting a proposal to the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv, the bidder will be deemed to be fully informed and to have accepted the terms and conditions outlined in this request for proposals.

x) The cost of preparing and submitting the proposal shall be borne by the bidders.

xi) The Embassy of India, Tel Aviv shall arrange a pre-bid conference for bidders about the project under consideration, about 15 days prior to the last date for submission of bids.

xii) The Embassy of India, Tel Aviv reserves the right to accept or reject any, or all Proposal(s) and to annul the proposal process, at any time, thereby rejecting all proposals, prior to any Contract being awarded.

## **10. Response to the RFP**

### **a) Contract Price**

- i. The Embassy of India, Tel Aviv will not pay for the services rendered by the Service Provider. The Service Provider will charge fee, per visa application, denominated in ***New Israeli Shekels***. The fee per visa application should be quoted inclusive of any local taxes and VAT currently applicable in the **Israel**. Any changes to the Visa Service Fee would be in accordance with para 6(b)(vi) *ibid*. For an increase under this

clause, The Service Provider should make a formal request to the Mission with supporting documents.

- ii. The applicable law in respect of the RFP is Indian laws and the contract is subject to Indian Courts' jurisdiction.

**b) Organisation Profile:**

Please provide an organization profile as also the following information:

- i. Full Legal name;
- ii. Complete address, including registered office of company;
- iii. Contact person;
- iv. Telephone, facsimile and email contact details and website address(es);
- v. Summary of locations and number of staff in the **Israel** and any other neighbouring country(ies);
- vi. Summary of services provided in the **Israel** and any other neighbouring country(ies);
- vii. Number of years that the organization has been providing visa outsourcing services;
- viii. Company ownership, structure and location of ultimate Holding Company;

- ix. Company Head office location, and branch office locations;
- x) The Bidding company should be free from any legal, administrative cases and cases related to human trafficking, Hawala etc. The Bidding Company should be free from any anti India activities. If it was found at a later stage that such information was hidden from the Mission, the bidding company would become ineligible to take part in the process. If during the contract period such information came to light, the contract would be liable to be terminated immediately and all costs on such a termination should be borne by the Company

**c) References.**

Provide information on work that has been undertaken for similar sized organizations. At least three referees are required. The bidders must provide the following information:

- i. The name, business and location of the organization;
- ii. The name and contact phone number of a referee at the organization;
- iii. Date on which the work was undertaken and the length of time involved;

- iv. Brief description of the products or services provided;
- v. Website address of any website currently operating for that service.

The referees may be advised that the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv or the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi may contact them. A latest certificate in original from the foreign Mission(s) concerned regarding visa outsourcing services and length of service should be provided at the time of bidding.

**d) Method Statement**

The purpose of the Method Statement is to enable the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv to evaluate bidder's understanding of the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv's requirements and the quality of bidder's proposals for meeting them. Bidder's method statement should describe clearly how he/she will provide each of the main requirements indicated in the Statement of Service Requirements. Explanation may be given under the following headings and order. Particular questions to be addressed in bidder's response are given below:

**e) Professional Plan**

1. Describe organization's experience in the areas relating to this Proposal. This must be substantiated adequately by supporting documents and presentation by the bidder.

2. Describe capacity for flexibility in service provision - e.g. a sudden increase in demand.
3. Describe proposals for monitoring and evaluating service usage.
4. Describe proposals for innovative web-site design and online development.
5. Describe proposals for managing risks and contingencies.

**f) Resource Plan**

1. Give details of the resources expected to be used to service the Contract, including the number of staff expected to be employed for providing the service. Also include an organizational chart indicating responsibilities and reporting lines in respect of this proposal.
2. Indicate in each case whether the Staff is expected to be drawn from within service providers' organization or to be newly recruited and where staff will not be employed full time on this Contract.
3. Explain plan for the training of Staff to be employed on the Contract.
4. Please give names and position held of Key Staff who will be responsible for the management of the contract.

5. Please provide curriculum vitae for each member of Key Staff.

6. The detailed sub-contract plan, if any.

**g) Quality Plan**

The Service Provider should give details as to how it will ensure that a high quality Service is maintained and that any performance targets mentioned in the Statement of Service Requirements will be met in respect of the following

1. The monitoring and reporting on the quality of the Services delivered including the performance checks that it will perform, their frequency and scope, and who will perform them.
2. The proposed contract management and supervisory systems.
3. The proposed customer liaison arrangements including procedures for dealing with complaints and problems.
4. The Service Provider should have a system of feedback proforma to be filled by the applicants at the time of receiving the passport with visa. The comments both appreciation and criticism should be closely watched and appropriate steps taken as necessary. A monthly report to the Mission should

be sent regularly. Any serious complaints should be brought to the notice of the Mission immediately for further instructions from the Mission.

#### **h. Additional Information**

The Bidding Company should give any additional information that it thinks would be useful in support of its proposal, including any additional facilities not included in the Statement of Service Requirements that will make the Service more customer-friendly.

#### **11. Submission Requirements:**

l) The bidders should submit “two envelope” bids – technical and financial separately. The technical bid should contain all the information sought as per the preceding paragraphs of this RFP. In order to qualify technically, a bidder must fulfill all the following requirements:-

**(a) A confirmation to comply fully and without any reserve with the scope of work and deliverables included in this RFP.**

**(b) The bidder must have experience of operating a Centre for Visa Services on behalf of a Diplomatic Mission or Missions for at least one year; dealing with at least 150 applications per day on an annual-average basis, with electronic data entry.**

- (c) The bidder must confirm his willingness to provide facilities of good industry practice standards of visa applicants.**
- II) (a) In the first stage only the technical bids, in presence of the bidding companies on the appointed date and time, will be opened and examined as per the above criteria and only the bidders fulfilling all of the three criteria mentioned at (a), (b) and (c) above will be selected for opening the financial bids. Any remaining bids will not be processed further. Financial bids of companies which qualify on the basis of technical evaluation will be opened in the next stage and the Contract Price will be the criterion for selecting the successful Service Provider.
- (b) There will be a minimum gap of three to five working days for consideration of the technical bids by the Mission and the companies selected will be called to be present on the date and time fixed by the Mission and the financial bids will be opened in their presence. Contract Price will be the criterion for selecting the successful Service Provider which will be announced at the meeting.
- III) (i) The proposal should be addressed by name to “Head of Chancery, Embassy of India, Tel Aviv” and sent so as to reach by before the due date. RFP must be submitted in a secure package containing:



- a. A signed original
  - b. Four copies of the original proposal.
  - c. A CD copy of the proposal in Microsoft Word
- ii. Faxed or e-mailed proposals will not be accepted. The envelopes should be super scribed 'Visa Outsourcing'.
  - iii. The proposal must contain the information required by the RFP, as sought in Para 10 above along with the RFP Form duly completed and signed by the authorized representative of the bidder.
  - iv. The original must be signed by an authorized representative of the bidder. This copy is deemed to be the master copy.
  - v. The proposal must be received by **1200 hours** on **10.05.2012**. The Technical bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representative (limited to one person only) at the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv at **1500 hours** on the same day i.e. **10.05.2012**. The process of awarding of Contract will be as explained in para 11 (ii)
  - vi. The receipt of the proposal will be duly acknowledged as and when received.
  - vii. The Embassy of India, Tel Aviv may accept or reject any proposals submitted late for consideration.
  - viii. The name, title, profile, address, phone and fax numbers, website and e-mail address of the bidder in respect of this RFP

must be provided to the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv in the proposal. This must be sent to the Mission immediately for pre-verification of antecedents.

- ix. **The Embassy of India, Tel Aviv reserves the right to negotiate without restriction with bidders after the close of proposals on any matter contained in the proposal, without disclosing this to any other person.**
- x. The bidder's proposal will constitute an offer to develop a contract based on the terms and conditions stated in this RFP. The proposal may form part of the final contractual documentation, if the bidder is invited by the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv to enter into a contract. The contract will also include provisions for the Service Provider to adhere to all local laws applicable to the operation of the outsourcing centre, including on employment of staff, banking operations, environment, safety, insurance, privacy and payment of local taxes etc.. Matters regarding dispute resolution between the Service Provider and the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv will be under the jurisdiction of Indian Courts. The contract will also include provisions of *Force Majeure*, termination of contract, consequences of termination and re-tendering after termination of contract.

**IV) RFP Form to be sent to the following address:**

**HEAD OF CHANCERY  
EMBASSY OF INDIA, TEL AVIV  
140, Hayarkon Street,  
PO Box 3368,  
Tel Aviv-61033.**

**Any queries regarding the RFP or the Visa outsourcing process shall be sent to [indpoltel@indembassy.co.il](mailto:indpoltel@indembassy.co.il)**

The bidder's response is submitted with this RFP Form and it is confirmed that he has read, understood and complied with all the conditions as indicated in the RFP document.

It is acknowledged that the proposal remains open for three months following the Closing Date of the RFP.

Bidder \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_

In the capacity of \_\_\_\_\_

Witness (es): \_\_\_\_\_

\* \* \* \* \*