

Frequently Asked Questions eTravel Services (eTS)

1. If my agency has followed the menu ordering procedures and we are ready to place a task order, may we also include “tailored” Contract Line Item Numbers (CLINs) just in case we may need them in future?

Response: Pursuant to the ordering procedures contained within the eTS master contracts, if an agency anticipates using tailored CLINs, they must include those anticipated requirements within the scope of its fair opportunity review, and comply with the tailored ordering procedures. Therefore, it is important for an agency to have crafted a solid acquisition strategy prior to beginning the ordering process.

2. As the agency Contracting Officer, my requirements include “tailored” CLINs. I performed due diligence by reviewing each of the three eTS contractors’ information contained in the GSA Library and viewed demonstrations by each of the three contractors. May I then rank the three contractors technically, establish a competitive range, and only issue the Request for Quotations to one or two contractors within the competitive range?

Response: Pursuant to the tailored ordering procedures contained within the eTS master contracts, “the agency will submit a written request for quote to all qualified contractors.” Qualified contractors are identified as CW Government Travel, Inc., Northrop Grumman Mission Systems, and Electronic Data Systems. Therefore, the agency must issue the request for quote to all three eTS master contractors under tailored ordering procedures.

3. My agency has decentralized funding. Is the agency’s procurement office allowed to place a Basic Ordering Agreement (BOA) or Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) with one of the eTS contractors?

Response: BOAs and BPAs are not authorized under the eTS Master Contracts. However, the master contract ordering procedures state under paragraph D.17(b)(2), “Each Head of the Agency , or designee (s), will be responsible for making the decision on how the agency will place a task order for his/her agency. While the Head of the Agency, or designee (s), may allow various organizational elements to place their task order directly with the contractor or may ask GSA’s eTravel PMO to do so on their behalf, one agency-wide task order maximizes the efficiencies that the eTS delivers and optimizes the agency’s cost savings. This strategy is consistent with industry best practices and affords agencies the greatest opportunity to standardize business processes across the agency and provide a uniform set of services from the eTS vendor of their choice.”

Additionally, paragraphs D.17(d)(6)(A)(ii) and D.17(d)(7)(H)(ii) indicate that an agency’s task order shall include, at a minimum, “the names of the activity or activities authorized to issue orders against the task order (e.g., for USDA it may be Forest Service,

Food Service, etc). Therefore, an agency task order may be placed that identifies authorized users who will place orders against the agency task order. Language that indicates that funding will be provided by the authorized users at the time an order is placed under the agency task order may be added.

4. Can my agency include a requirement for interface services to my existing financial and business systems in my eTS task order?

Response: Yes. However, eTS Contractors are not required to provide interface services other than those identified as mandatory requirements in GSA's original Statement of Objectives. That does not preclude them from offering expanded interface services as stipulated in their Statements of Work under the Implementation Services CLIN (0006) or as supplemental services under CLIN 0009. Value-added expanded interface services may be considered a differentiator by the customer agency.

However, if an eTS contractor offers development of detailed data mapping between an agency's data format and the eTS standardized data input/output and implementation of the agency's side of the interface, they must perform the work under agency oversight and in coordination with agency personnel. Ordering agencies will want to include these two requirements in their task order.

Finally, agencies requiring interface services must ensure that the Privacy Act systems of records for their financial and business systems authorize release of Privacy Act data to the eTS system.

5. Is my agency required to notify or debrief unsuccessful eTS contractors after we have placed our task order?

Response: The mandatory requirement for a debriefing prescribed in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 15 does not apply to orders placed under the eTS Master Contract. However, the eTS Ordering Guide recommends that unsuccessful offerors be notified of their status and that debriefings are granted upon request. It is suggested that these actions be undertaken as a common business courtesy and should be undertaken informally.

6. Can you confirm that task orders awarded under the eTS Master Contracts may not be protested?

Response: Pursuant to the Ordering Procedures contained within the eTS Master Contracts, a protest is not authorized in connection with the issuance or proposed issuance of a task order except for a protest on the ground that the task order increases the scope, period, or maximum value of the contract under which the order is issued.

7. My organization currently receives On-Line Booking Engine (OBE) services through the GSA Travel Management Center (TMC) master contract. When that contract expires in February 2005, may I continue to receive OBE services from my existing TMC?

Response: There are a number of options available to you after your current TMC task order expires. If you have not yet awarded a task order under GSA's eTS Master Contracts, you may procure OBE services from the GSA Travel Services Solution (TSS) Federal Supply Schedule in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation Subpart 8.4 to cover just the interim period until you fully deploy eTS.

Alternatively, you may elect to award your eTS task order as soon as possible and require the eTS vendor to provide travel agent and OBE services as of the date that your current TMC expires.

8. My organization does not currently use an OBE. We are not scheduled to change over to eTS until late fiscal year 05 or 06. How can we obtain OBE services prior to migration to eTS?

Response: The easiest way to obtain OBE services prior to full migration to eTS is to negotiate the use of an eTS vendor's OBE to cover the interim period, if possible. Alternatively, you may elect to procure OBE services from a TSS contractor during the interim period. If you elect the latter option, be advised that as organizational elements implement eTS, they must also transition to the eTS OBE.

9. My organization uses FedTrip, a commercial contract provided by Department of Transportation (DOT), but the contract expires in September 2004. May DOT continue to provide FedTrip after 2004?

Response: The FedTrip contract may, at DOT election, be extended for one six month option only.

10. The same firm that provides FedTrip also offers two commercial OBE versions, ResAssist and ResX. May my organization use either of the commercial OBEs instead of FedTrip?

Response: It is worth investigating the firms awarded GSA Travel Services Solution Schedule contracts to see if they have a licensing agreement with TRX and offer ResAssist or ResX under their contract. Agencies may only use TSS OBE support until they migrate to eTS. During migration, as organizational elements implement eTS, they must also transition to the eTS OBE.

11. When must my organization use the eTS OBE?

Response: As your organization migrates to eTS, you are required to use your eTS vendor's OBE. During migration, as organizational elements implement eTS, they must also transition to the eTS OBE.

12. May my organization use the eTS OBE prior to beginning migration to using eTS?

Response: An eTS vendor may agree to provide OBE services during the interim period. If your organization chooses this solution, this agreement should be negotiated as part of your agency's eTS task order.