

# ECP Quick Guide: Working with Your Venue RFP

How to turn confirmed venue requirements into a clear request for proposal - and comparable venue responses.

## WHERE THE VENUE RFP FITS



## Before You Issue the RFP

Start with the event information you have already confirmed. The ECP Venue Requirements tool helps translate the program into venue needs and distinguish between what is essential and what is preferred. The completed Program & Agenda and Venue Requirements can then be used to populate the ECP Venue RFP Template.

|                                             |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Confirm the event overview</b>        | Organization, event name and purpose, preferred date(s), estimated attendance, preferred location and RFP contact.                                                          |
| <b>2. Define program &amp; space needs</b>  | Include the timing, activities, attendance and space needs that are relevant to the venue. Keep detailed operational specifications in the appropriate planning tools.      |
| <b>3. Include guest rooms if applicable</b> | Request rates, fees, concessions, cut-off dates, payment requirements, cancellation terms and attrition terms where accommodation is required.                              |
| <b>4. Ask about in-house services</b>       | Identify whether AV/production, internet, F&B;, security, parking, electrical, rigging, decor, shipping/receiving or other services are mandatory, preferred or restricted. |
| <b>5. Set submission requirements</b>       | Confirm the proposal due date, question deadline, submission contact, requested proposal validity period and whether a site visit is requested.                             |

**ECP principle: Ask venues to respond to the requirements you actually need so that proposals can be compared against the same request.**

## Request Complete Cost Disclosure

Ask the venue to identify all mandatory, potential and conditional costs associated with selecting and using the venue - including costs not included in the quoted total and the circumstances under which additional charges may apply.

Your RFP should request room and F&B; costs, guest-room costs where applicable, required services, additional fees, taxes, deposits and payment schedules, cancellation terms, concessions/inclusions and the total estimated cost where possible.

# After You Receive Venue Proposals

The goal is not simply to identify the lowest quoted price. Compare each proposal against what you requested, clarify gaps and evaluate the total anticipated cost and operational fit.

## REVIEW EACH PROPOSAL AGAINST THE RFP

|                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Requirements</b>                 | Does the proposed space, timing and venue response meet your Must Have and Preferred requirements?                                                                             |
| <b>Costs</b>                        | Record the stated costs separately. Look for service charges, labour, internet, AV, electrical, security, setup/teardown, shipping/storage, parking and other applicable fees. |
| <b>Inclusions &amp; concessions</b> | Record complimentary or negotiated items separately so you can see their effect on the overall proposal.                                                                       |
| <b>Contractual terms</b>            | Review deposits, payment deadlines, cancellation obligations, attrition where applicable, exclusivities, restrictions and other significant financial terms.                   |
| <b>Missing information</b>          | Do not treat an omitted cost or unanswered requirement as zero or as confirmed. Flag it for clarification.                                                                     |
| <b>Operational fit</b>              | Consider accessibility, event flow, required suppliers, policies, restrictions and other factors that could affect delivery.                                                   |

## Use the Proposal & Cost Comparison

Carry forward the important requirements from the Venue Requirements tool and use the issued RFP, each venue proposal and any subsequent clarifications to record comparable responses and costs. Compare the total anticipated cost - not only the headline venue quote - and verify the information against the original proposal before making a recommendation.

**Important: Missing cost information is not a \$0 cost. Clarify it before relying on the comparison.**

## Using AI as an Optional Assistant

AI can help transfer confirmed information into the ECP Venue RFP Template and can help extract and organize venue responses for comparison. It should use only the documents provided, flag missing or inconsistent information, and avoid making assumptions.

| AI CAN ASSIST                                                                                            | PLANNER VERIFIES                                                                                              | PLANNER DECIDES                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Draft from confirmed information; extract and organize proposal responses; flag gaps or inconsistencies. | Check the draft RFP and proposal extraction against the source documents; obtain clarifications where needed. | Final RFP content, negotiations, recommendation and venue selection. |

## Before You Make a Recommendation

- Requirements are compared against the issued RFP.
- Missing or unclear information has been flagged and clarified.
- Mandatory, potential and conditional costs have been considered.
- Concessions and inclusions are recorded separately.
- Contractual and financial concerns have been identified.
- Operational fit has been considered alongside cost.
- The preferred venue recommendation is based on verified information.

**Know the work. Use AI to support the work. Know enough to judge the result.**