

DESAFIA SCIENCE 2026

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Questions & Answers - Request for Proposals

This Annex compiles the questions and queries submitted by potential bidders in relation to the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the management of the DESAFÍA SCIENCE 2026 programme, together with the official responses provided by ICEX.

The purpose of this document is to ensure equal access to information and transparency for all interested bidders.

1. ELIGIBILITY AND LOCATION

1.1 We are not in London - is that an issue?

Being based in London is not a requirement. Bidders may be established anywhere in the UK, provided they are able to deliver the programme in full compliance with the specifications set out in the tender documentation.

2. TEAM COMPOSITION

2.1 How big can the team before becoming unreasonable?

The minimum requirement is a team of three: one Project Manager plus two team members. Any additional team members are at the bidder's discretion, provided the proposal remains proportionate and justified.

3. PROGRAMME DELIVERY AND FINAL REPORTING

3.1 Our understanding is that winning bidder will be expected to organise daily activities (workshops, visits, individual meetings, networking activities, etc.) for around for half day over the two weeks programme so that participants have the other half day available to manage their own businesses/ organise their own meetings- is this correct?

Your understanding broadly reflects how previous editions of other DESAFÍA programmes have been structured, where activities were typically organised for approximately half a day, leaving participants with time to focus on their own companies, hold independent meetings or manage ongoing responsibilities.

However, this should be taken as guidance only. There is no rigid rule or fixed timetable prescribed in this tender. Bidders are invited to propose the structure and intensity of the programme as they consider most appropriate and effective, taking into account the objectives of DESAFÍA SCIENCE and the fact that participants will need sufficient flexibility to continue working on their spin-outs during the immersion period. The key consideration is that the proposed agenda should be coherent, well-justified and aligned with the programme's intended outcomes.

3.2 Can we get more information on the technical report that you need from us after the programme? How long should it be?

Please find below an indicative index of the final report we would expect. This is provided as guidance only:

Indicative index of the final report:

- Executive summary
- Overview of the programme delivered (objectives, structure and methodology)

- Description of activities undertaken during the immersion phase
- Participating companies (profiles and sector focus)
- Mentors, partners and stakeholders involved
- Outcomes and results achieved (qualitative and quantitative KPIs)
- Participant feedback and evaluation
- Media and communication impact (if applicable)
- Follow-up actions and next steps
- Financial summary (in line with the approved budget)
- Annexes (agenda, materials, evidence of activities, etc.)

3.3 Is it permissible to pay third party organisations for the delivery of specific sessions, provided that the contractor retains full contractual responsibility and no formal subcontracting of the contract occurs?

Yes, it is permissible to engage third-party organisations for the delivery of specific sessions, provided that the contractor retains full contractual responsibility for the programme. This must be clearly specified and justified in the proposal submitted. The cost of engaging such third parties must be borne by the contractor and included within the Financial Proposal.

4. PAYMENTS AND FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

4.1 Is any of the funding payable up front or is it all claimable in arrears.

No funding is payable upfront. Payments will be made in accordance with the terms established in the tender documentation, and therefore are not advanced in advance of delivery.

4.2 Can part of the payment be made upfront?

No funding is payable upfront. Payment will be made in one single instalment, against one invoice, after the end of the programme and in accordance with the terms established in the tender documentation. No advance payments will be made prior to delivery.

4.3 Is payment made only upon full completion of the programme, or is any advance or staged payment available to support upfront operational costs such as internal UK travel?

Payment will be made after completion of the programme, in accordance with the terms set out in the tender documentation. No upfront or staged payments are available.

4.4 How much would service fees be allowed to be?

Service fees are to be determined by the bidder and must be clearly included in the breakdown of the Financial Proposal. Please refer to section 7.4 of the RFP (Content of Proposals – Financial Proposals).

4.5 Is there something that you would specifically not fund?

Please refer to the RFP for the applicable provisions regarding eligible and non-eligible costs. In the Financial Proposal, what we are looking to assess is a clear and coherent breakdown of how the total budget will be allocated across the different areas required to deliver the programme.

5. TRAVEL, ACCOMMODATION AND LOGISTICS

5.1 Could we operationally help with the flights to the UK plus the accommodation?

Participants are expected to book and pay for their own flights to the UK, as well as their accommodation, once the final dates, location and other details of the two-week immersion phase have been confirmed. Please refer to section 7.4 of the RFP.

5.2 Does the contractor need to pay for Spanish companies' flight tickets and accommodation for the 2 weeks immersion visit to the UK? Or Spanish companies will spend on flight tickets and accommodation from their own companies' budgets?

Travel expenses between Spain and the UK for the immersion phase, as well as all private travel and accommodation expenses incurred by participating companies during the immersion phase, shall be borne by the participants. So, the Spanish companies will spend on flight tickets and accommodation from their own companies' budgets.

5.3 I note that participant accommodation and international travel are borne by the participants, is the contractor expected to coordinate hotel bookings and daily logistics in the UK (e.g., trains, taxis etc), or will this be managed directly by ICEX?

No, accommodation bookings and international travel arrangements will be managed directly by the participants. Daily logistics such as trains or taxis will also be arranged by participants themselves, except for travel that forms part of the official activities of the immersion programme designed and organised by the contractor.

5.4 Are there any expectations for the contractor to organise or fund group evening meals or catering beyond standard workshop delivery?

Participants are responsible for covering their private meals. There is no requirement for the contractor to organise or fund group evening meals beyond what may be necessary within the framework of standard workshop delivery, if applicable.

6. SUBCONTRACTING AND DELIVERY PARTNERS

6.1 With reference to clause 6.4 of the above-mentioned tender that relates to the prohibition of subcontracting, could you clarify whether this restriction applies to “delivery partners” who would be explicitly named in our tender submission and for whom we as prime would have 100% contractual responsibility and liability? We intend to bid as prime contractor with a defined group of delivery partners to ensure comprehensive service and sector coverage. Would you give prior consent to subcontractors that are vetted and named at the point of submission?

Your interpretation is correct. The restriction on subcontracting set out in clause 6.4 does not apply to delivery partners who are explicitly identified in the bid at the time of submission, provided that the prime contractor retains 100% contractual responsibility and liability for the full delivery of the contract.

Bidders may therefore propose a defined group of delivery partners as part of their tender submission. These partners must be clearly identified, their roles and contributions transparently described, and the overall structure properly justified within the proposal. In all cases, the prime contractor remains solely responsible before the contracting authority for the performance of the contract.