



**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM  
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
TASHILING SECRETARIAT, GANGTOK – 737101**

Web: <https://inspires.sikkim.gov.in/>

Email: [procurement.inspires@gmail.com](mailto:procurement.inspires@gmail.com)

No. GOS/PDD/SI-WBP/52/TSA-EEPF/2025/86

Dated: 13.04.2026

Clarifications to queries/suggestions received for Direct RFP – Hiring of Technical Support Agency to support Planning and Development Department, Government of Sikkim on the ‘**Employment and Entrepreneurship Promotion Facility**’ under ‘**Sikkim: Integrated Service Provision and Innovation for Reviving Economies**’ (INSPIRES) Program’ (RFP Ref no. IN-PMU-260320-QCBS-LS-RFP-EEPF-VS)

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|--------|---|------------------------------------|-------------|---|--|
| 1.     | Considering the extensive scope of work, detailed expert deployment requirements, and multiple clarifications being sought, we request the department to kindly consider extending the last date of submission of proposals by two (2) weeks. This will enable bidders to prepare comprehensive and high-quality proposals fully aligned with the RFP requirements. | Section 2 – Data Sheet (Key Dates) | Pg. 2       | The RFP specifies 23/04/2026 (03:00 p.m.) as the last date for submission of proposals.   | The proposal submission date has been extended. Refer Amendment 1 dated 6 <sup>th</sup> April 2026   |
| 2.     | Kindly clarify the correct mode of submission of proposals, i.e., whether proposals are required to be submitted only through the e-procurement portal or through email submission, to avoid any ambiguity or risk of non-compliance.   | Section 1 & Data Sheet             | (Pg 2, 30)  | It is mentioned at Point No. 8 states that the “last date for submission of proposals is 23/04/2026 by 03:00 p.m. to <a href="mailto:procurement.inspires@gmail.com">procurement.inspires@gmail.com</a> However, Point No. 9 of the Data Sheet that “the Technical Proposal will be opened on the e-procurement portal by the Evaluation Committee on 23/04/2026 at 03:30 p.m.” | The Technical Proposal shall be submitted by the bidder only through the e-Procurement Portal, in accordance with the provisions outlined in Point No. 9 of the Data Sheet.<br><br>For submission of hard copies please refer to amendment 1 dated 6 <sup>th</sup> April 2026. |

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|        |  |   |              |  | In case of discrepancy in the versions submitted through e Procurement portal and hard copies, the version submitted on eProcurement portal would prevail. |
| 3.     | Allow bidders to upload a scanned copy of the DD instrument on the e-procurement portal by the submission deadline, with the original DD to be physically delivered to the Tender Issuing Authority within 5 working days thereafter.  | Data Sheet ITC 17 Submission Process  | (Page 35–36) | The RFP requires physical delivery of the original EMD and Tender Fee DDs to the Tender Issuing Authority in Gangtok by the bid submission deadline. Courier transit from major cities (Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi) to Gangtok routinely takes 3–5 days, making same-deadline physical delivery operationally risky for non-local firms. | Allowed.<br><br>All other provisions of RFP shall remain unchanged   |
| 4.     | Considering the scale, strategic importance, and complexity of the assignment, we request the department to consider increasing the minimum turnover requirement to <b>INR 50 Crores</b> . This will help ensure participation from consulting firms with adequate financial strength and demonstrated capacity to undertake large-scale, multi-stakeholder advisory engagements of this nature. | Section 2 – Data Sheet, Technical Evaluation – Mandatory Criteria                 | (Pg. 38)     | The RFP specifies that the bidding entity should have a minimum annual turnover of INR 1.5 Crores from consulting services for any three years out of the last five financial years.   | Please refer to amendment 2 dated 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2026  |
| 5.     | Kindly clarify whether a single assignment/project that demonstrably covers multiple aspects—such as financial and non-financial partnerships, employment promotion, entrepreneurship promotion, and investment facilitation— may be considered uniquely under each applicable criterion, provided adequate documentary evidence is submitted.   | Section 2 – Data Sheet, Technical Evaluation Criteria, Part B – Firm’s Experience | (Pg. 39–40)  | The technical evaluation criteria award separate marks for the firm’s experience in: (a) establishing financial and non-financial partnerships; (b) promoting employment; (c) promoting entrepreneurship; and (d) promoting investment, with marks assigned on a per-project basis for each criterion.                                 | The existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged.   |

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| 6.     | Kindly clarify whether a single assignment/project that demonstrably covers multiple aspects—such as financial and non-financial partnerships, employment promotion, entrepreneurship promotion, and investment facilitation— may be considered uniquely under each applicable criterion, provided adequate documentary evidence is submitted.   | Section 2 – Data Sheet, Technical Evaluation Criteria, Part B – Firm’s Experience | (Pg. 39–40)         | The technical evaluation criteria award separate marks for the firm’s experience in: (a) establishing financial and non-financial partnerships; (b) promoting employment; (c) promoting entrepreneurship; and (d) promoting investment, with marks assigned on a per-project basis for each criterion. | The existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged.   |
| 7.     | <p>Considering the strategic, advisory, and outcome-oriented nature of the assignment, we request the Department to revise and rationalize the marking criteria as follows:</p> <p>a) Firm’s Experience – 10 Marks</p> <p>b) Technical Approach:<br/>Clear Methodology – 40 Marks<br/>Responsiveness to the TOR – 10 Marks</p> <p>c) CVs of Key Experts – 40 Marks</p> <p>This distribution places greater emphasis on the quality of methodology and strategic approach, while retaining adequate weightage for firm experience and expert credentials.</p> | Section 2 – Data Sheet, Technical Evaluation Criteria, Part B                     | (Pg. 39-41)         | The RFP specifies the technical evaluation criteria with marks allocated across firm experience (10), methodology and work plan (40), responsiveness to TOR, and Key Experts’ CVs (50).  | The existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged.   |
| 8.     | Kindly confirm the correct engagement duration for the Team Lead / Lead Policy & Strategy Expert. We understand the intended deployment to be 9 months, aligned with the overall assignment duration.  | Section 8 – TOR, Proposed Team and Deployment Plan; Technical Evaluation Table    | (Pg. 40, Pg. 88–94) | The RFP indicates differing input requirements for the Team Lead / Lead Policy & Strategy Expert, where in some sections the engagement appears to be 6 months (Pg. 40), while elsewhere it is specified as 9 months (Pg. 88)  | The man-months for the Team Lead / Lead Policy & Strategy Expert shall be read as 9 (nine) months at all places in the RFP |

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| 9.     | Kindly clarify the number of Sectoral Expert CVs required to be submitted as part of the Technical Proposal along with other key experts and indicate which specific sectoral domains (from the indicative list) should be covered through CV submissions at this stage. Additionally, please confirm whether remaining Sectoral Expert CVs may be proposed subsequently, based on project needs, and submitted for the Client's review prior to deployment. | Section 3 – Technical Proposal (TECH-6);<br>Section 8 – TOR, Proposed Team and Deployment Plan – Sectoral Experts (Limited Pool) | (Pg. 40, Pg. 92–93)         | The RFP specifies a limited pool of Sectoral Experts with a combined input of up to 15 person-months, covering multiple indicative sectors, but does not clearly specify the number of Sectoral Expert CVs to be submitted or which sector-specific CVs are required at the proposal stage.   | The consultant is free to choose as many experts' CVs from the Limited pool of 15 indicative sectors as per their approach and methodology and work plan to achieve the expected outcomes as long as the total person months collectively doesn't exceed the number mentioned in the RFP |
| 10.    | Considering the specialized nature of expert resources, requirement for mobilization, logistics, and availability of Key Experts, we request the department to consider extending the timeline for commencement of services to forty-five (45) days from the issuance of the Client's notice. This will allow adequate time for smooth mobilization and effective deployment of the expert team.   | Section 2 – Data Sheet, Clause 30.2;   | Pg. 44                      | The RFP specifies that the commencement of services shall be not later than one (1) month from issuance of the Client's notice instructing the consultant to begin carrying out the services at Gangtok, Sikkim.  | The existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged.   |
| 11.    | Kindly clarify whether submission of an ESMP is mandatory for this advisory assignment, or whether the ESMP requirement is intended to apply only to downstream implementation activities or civil works under the INSPIRES Program. If ESMP submission is mandatory, we request further guidance on the expected scope, level of detail, and applicability of the ESMP for a non-implementation, policy-oriented consultancy.                               | Section 3 – TECH-4; Section 7 – E&S Reporting Format; Section 4 – FIN-2  | (Pg. 52, Pg. 72–75, Pg. 62) | The RFP requires submission of an Environmental & Social Management Plan (ESMP) as part of the Technical Proposal and inclusion of ESMP costs in the Financial Proposal, despite the assignment being primarily strategic, analytical, and advisory in nature, with no direct civil works or physical interventions under the consultant's scope. | As per the requirements of the RFP, submission of the ESMP is mandatory.<br>Hence, the existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged   |
| 12.    | Please clarify the governance mechanism for approving scope refinements or prioritization changes, if required during implementation, without impacting contractual timelines or deliverables.   | Section 8 – Change Management During Assignment  | (Pg. 87)                    | The TOR allows for iterative refinement of outputs based on stakeholder feedback.   | The existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged.   |

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| 13.    | <p>With reference to the RFP for the assignment, we note that the current duration specified is 9 months. Considering the extensive scope of work outlined in the RFP, which requires substantial time, diverse skill sets, and detailed execution, we respectfully request that the duration of the assignment be extended to a minimum of 18 months. This extension will help ensure that the deliverables are completed effectively and in alignment with the expectations and requirements set forth in the RFP. We kindly request you to consider this extension to facilitate comprehensive and high-quality implementation of the assignment</p> | Clause V: of ToR - Implementation of Arrangements | Page 87     | Duration of the Assignment: The total duration of the assignment is 9 months. | The existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged. |

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| 14.    | <p>Given that this is the position requiring full-time deployment and to enable wider participation without compromising quality, we request the department to relax the minimum experience requirement from 15 years to 12 years, with the following qualifications and experience:</p> <p><b>Qualifications:</b> Master’s degree in public policy, Economics, Development Studies, Business Administration, or related discipline.</p> <p><b>Experience:</b> Minimum 12 years of professional experience in: (i) leading large-scale policy, strategy, or visioning assignments for Government or multilateral agencies; (ii) advising state or national governments on systemic governance or development transformations; (iii) managing multidisciplinary advisory teams and complex stakeholder processes; (iv) high-level stakeholder engagement across government, private sector, academia, and civil society; and (v) development of medium- to long-term development strategies or vision documents. Prior experience with World Bank, Central Government, State Government, or other multilateral-funded assignments may remain desirable.</p> | Section 8 – TOR, Proposed Team and Deployment Plan, Team Leader / Lead Policy & Strategy Expert | (Pg. 88 89) | The RFP specifies that the Team Leader / Lead Policy & Strategy Expert must have a minimum of 15 years of professional experience, and this position requires full-time deployment (9 months). | The existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged. |

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| 15.    | <p>Considering the advisory scope and limited deployment (3 person-months), we request the department to relax the minimum experience requirement from 12 years to 10 years, and to allow:</p> <p><b>Qualifications:</b> • Postgraduate degree in Economics, Finance, or Public Policy or related fields.</p> <p><b>Experience</b> • Minimum 10 years of experience in: o State- or national-level economic analysis and modelling; o Growth diagnostics, sectoral transformation, and employment trends; o High-level fiscal and public expenditure analysis (excluding</p>                   | Section 8 – TOR, Proposed Team and Deployment Plan,        | (Pg. 89–90) | The RFP specifies one (1) Macroeconomist & State Development / Fiscal Expert with a minimum experience requirement of 12 years and qualification of Postgraduate degree in Economics, Finance, or Public Policy. | The existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged. |
| 16.    | <p>Considering the advisory scope and limited deployment (3 person-months), we request the department to relax the minimum experience requirement from 10 years to 8 years, and to allow:</p> <p><b>Qualifications</b> • master’s degree in economics, Labour Studies, Public Policy, Development Studies, or related fields.</p> <p><b>Experience</b> • Minimum 8 years of experience in: o Employment or workforce development; o Gender- and youth-focused economic inclusion analysis; o Policy- or systems-level advisory work linking skills, employment, and private sector demand.</p> | Section 8 – TOR, Proposed Team and Deployment Plan, Expert | (Pg. 90–91) | The RFP specifies one (1) Inclusive Growth Expert with minimum 10 years of experience and qualification of master’s degree in economics, Labour Studies, Public Policy, or Development Studies.                  | The existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged. |

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| 17.    | <p>Considering the advisory scope and limited deployment (4 person-months), we request the department to relax the minimum experience requirement from 10 years to 8 years, and to allow:</p> <p><b>Qualifications</b> • master’s degree in public administration, Public Policy, Development Studies, Economics, or related fields.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional certifications in capacity building, organizational development, or training and development would be advantageous.</li> </ul> <p><b>Experience</b> • Minimum 8 years of experience in institutional development, organizational design, capacity building, organizational development, or human resource development, with a focus on: o Designing and establishing new institutions and governance frameworks, including experience in setting up startups, nonprofits, government bodies, or leadership roles in large organizations; o Establishment or reform of public institutions, societies, trusts, SPVs, or similar entities; o Designing mandates, accountability mechanisms, and inter-institutional interfaces.</p> <p><b>Additional Preference</b> • Experience in the North-Eastern Region of India is preferred.</p> <p><b>Skills</b> • Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills; • Effective communication and interpersonal skills; • Strong documentation and stakeholder engagement skills</p> | Section 8 – TOR, Proposed Team and Deployment Plan, | (Pg. 91–92) | The RFP specifies one (1) Governance and Institutional Development Expert with minimum 10 years of experience and qualification of master’s degree in public administration, Public Policy, Development Studies, or Economics. | The existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged. |

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| 18.    | <p>Considering the advisory scope and limited deployment (need based), we request the department to relax the minimum experience requirement from 12 years to 10 years, and to allow:</p> <p><b>Sectoral experts</b> (Limited Pool) – (Input – Up to 15 person-months combined)</p> <p>Indicative Sectors: Agriculture; Education &amp; Skills; Health and Nutrition; Industry &amp; MSME; Tourism; Digital and Innovation; Green Economy; Care Economy; Transport, Connectivity and Infrastructure; Rural Development; Urban Development; Energy &amp; Environment; Hospitality and Wellness; Creative Economy; Labor Market Systems.</p> <p><b>Qualifications</b> • Postgraduate degree in the relevant sectoral discipline or related fields.</p> <p><b>Experience</b> • Minimum 10 years of experience in: o Sector policy, strategy, or ecosystem development; o Advisory roles to government or development agencies.</p> | Section 8 – TOR, Proposed Team and Deployment Plan, | (Pg. 92–93) | The RFP specifies Sectoral Experts with minimum 12 years of experience and qualification of Postgraduate degree in the relevant sectoral discipline.  | The existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged.             |
| 19.    | As per Bar Council of India (BCI) — a statutory body established under the Advocates Act, 1961, Non-advocates (including consulting firms) cannot provide legal service in India. Legal practice is restricted, and only advocates enrolled with BCI may provide legal services. Hence, we request to allow consortium with the legal firm to provide legal expert.   | Section 8 – TOR, Proposed Team and Deployment Plan  | (Pg. 93–94) | The RFP specifies one (1) Legal Expert as a Key Expert with an input requirement of 3 person-months, responsible for advisory support including legal structuring options and drafting indicative/model legal instruments for the EEPF. | Allowed.<br>The existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged. |
| 20.    | Considering the advisory scope and limited deployment (3 person-months), we request the department to relax   | Section 8 – TOR, Proposed Team                      | (Pg. 93)    | The RFP specifies one (1) Financial Sustainability & Institutional Finance Expert   | The existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged.             |

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|        | the minimum experience requirement from 12 years to 10 years, and to allow:<br><b>Qualifications</b> • Chartered Accountant (CA), MBA (Finance), Post-Graduate in Finance, or related fields.<br><b>Experience</b> • Minimum 10 years of experience in: o Institutional finance and sustainability models; o Public or quasi-public entity financing frameworks; o Advisory work related to donor, government, or blended finance. | and Deployment Plan,                        |             | with minimum 12 years of experience and qualifications of CA or MBA (Finance).  |  |
| 21.    | Kindly indicate tentative timelines for review and approval of draft and final deliverables to ensure adherence to the overall 9-month schedule.   | Section 8 – Deliverables and Review Process | (Pg. 95)    | Payments are linked to acceptance of deliverables, but review timelines are not specified.  | The existing provisions of the RFP shall remain unchanged. |
| 22.    | Introduce a mobilisation advance of 20% of the contract value, payable against a bank guarantee of equivalent value within 30 days of contract signing. The advance should be adjusted from the first deliverable payment. This is consistent with standard World Bank lump-sum contract practice.   | TOR, Section VII; Payment Schedule          | (Page 95)   | The first payment (10% of contract value) is linked to the Inception Report, approved at T+1 month. There is no provision for a mobilisation advance. Pre-mobilisation costs — team travel to Sikkim, office set-up, stakeholder mapping — are typically incurred before the first deliverable is accepted. | The existing provision of RFP shall remain unchanged       |