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No. GOS/PDD/SI-WBP/11/EEPF/2023/33

Dated:25/04/2025

Clarifications to queries/suggestions received for RFP – For Hiring a 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-393632-CS-QCBS)

S. No.	Query / Suggestions from the Prospective Consultants	Clause / Reference of RFP	Page Number	Content of Para / Clause under Reference as per RFP	Response/Clarifications
1	<p>(a) Request to clarify if the Power of Attorney needs to be notarized or giving a PoA on the official letter head would do.</p> <p>(b) While the RFP outlines the procedure for marking the original and copies of the proposal in sealed envelopes, we note that the submission is being done through the Sikkim eProcurement Portal. We request confirmation on whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is any requirement to submit a physical (hard copy) of the proposal in sealed envelopes, in addition to the online submission, or • The online submission alone is deemed sufficient and complete for evaluation purposes. 	Section 2 –Instructions to Consultants and Data Sheet (C. Submission, Opening and Evaluation)	Pg No 17	<p>Checklist of required forms & Submission Procedure:</p> <p>Power of Attorney: A Proposal submitted by a Joint Venture shall be signed by all members so as to be legally binding on all members, or by an authorized representative who has a written power of attorney signed by each member’s authorized representative.</p> <p>Submission of Proposal: The signed Proposal shall be marked “ORIGINAL” and its copies marked “COPY” as appropriate. The number of copies is indicated in the Data Sheet. All copies shall be made from the signed original. If there are discrepancies between the original and the copies, the original shall prevail. • If the envelopes and packages with the Proposal are not sealed and marked as required,</p>	<p>(a) Power of Attorney on the official letter head would be sufficient, please follow the instructions mentioned in RFP.</p> <p>(b) Online submission only</p>

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				the Client will assume no responsibility for the misplacement, loss, or premature opening of the Proposal.	
2	<p>As per the RFP, the bidder is required to submit Forms FIN-1 to FIN-4 as part of the Financial Proposal, duly signed by the authorized representative of the firm.</p> <p>In this regard, we would be grateful if you could clarify the following:</p> <p>(a) Should all four forms (FIN-1 to FIN-4) be compiled into a single PDF document and uploaded under the financial bid section of the e-Procurement portal?</p> <p>(b) Alternatively, is there a specific BoQ format (e.g., Excel sheet template) that needs to be filled in and uploaded separately on the portal as part of the Financial Proposal?</p>	Financial Proposal Submission Procedure		The RFP document specifies that the Financial Proposal should consist of four forms (FIN-1 to FIN-4), which are to be duly filled in and signed by the authorized representative of the bidder. These forms are required to be submitted along with the Technical Proposal as part of the complete bid submission.	<p>(a) Yes, compiled into a single PDF document.</p> <p>(b) No</p>
3	<p>We request the client to kindly clarify the following:</p> <p>(a) What is the definition or scope of “financial and non-financial partnerships” in the context of this assignment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this include partnerships established with government agencies, private sector entities, donor organizations, or community-based institutions? If anything else, please specify <p>(b) Would projects involving the facilitation or coordination of MoUs, joint ventures, CSR collaborations,</p>	Section 21.1: Evaluation of Technical Proposal (Under Part B: Evaluation Criteria)	Pg 34	Under this RFP, as per Part B: Evaluation Criteria of the RFP, under the section "Specific Experience of the Consultant relevant to the Assignment" (total 10 marks), one of the sub-criteria allocates 3 marks for demonstrating experience in establishing financial and non-financial partnerships over the last 5 years, with a distribution of 1 mark for each eligible project	<p>(a) Yes - government agencies, private sector entities, donor organizations, or community-based institutions</p> <p>(b) Yes – MoUs, joint ventures, CSR collaborations, or technical knowledgesharing partnerships</p> <p>(c) Query is not clear. However, experience in establishment of non-financial partnerships will be considered, as mentioned</p>

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	<p>or technical knowledgesharing partnerships be considered valid under this category?</p> <p>(c) Are institutional strengthening projects, public-private partnerships (PPP), or capacity building programs involving multiple stakeholders eligible, even if they did not involve direct financial transactions?</p> <p>(d) What kind of documentation is required to establish the claim for each partnership—will MoUs, work orders, client certificates, or partnership agreements be acceptable as proof?</p>				<p>in the RFP.</p> <p>(d) Yes.</p>
4	<p>(a) We seek clarification regarding the expected level of effort for each key expert position on a month-wise basis across the three-year duration of the project. While the RFP provides the total number of months each expert is required to be involved during Part A and Part B, it does not specify whether there is a defined number of working days per month or any standard input requirement (e.g., full-time or parttime engagement) for each expert.</p> <p>(b) Additionally, we would like to understand whether the Client will provide a detailed resource deployment schedule or indicative work plan after the project is awarded, outlining when each expert's input will be required</p>	Section 21.1: Evaluation of Technical Proposal (Under Part B: Evaluation Criteria)	Pg 34	<p>The RFP outlines the required involvement of key experts across the two phases of the assignment—Part A (21 months) and Part B (15 months). Out of the total eight expert positions, two key experts—namely the Team Leader and the Institutional Development and Capacity Building Expert—are expected to be engaged for 12 months during Part A and 10 months during Part B. Additionally, five other expert positions—namely the Public Policy Expert, Skill Development Expert, Thematic Expert – Investment Promotion, Thematic Expert – Employment Promotion, and Thematic Expert –</p>	<p>(a) The deployment plan needs to be proposed by the agency as per their understanding of the scope of work and their delivery plan.</p> <p>(b) Agency needs to prepare deployment plan as per the client needs and also needs to be approved by the client.</p>

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	<p>across the timeline of the assignment. This will help in planning the availability and allocation of experts more effectively throughout the project period. A clarification on these aspects—monthly input expectations and scheduling of expert involvement—would be highly helpful for accurate resource planning and costing.</p>			<p>Entrepreneurship Promotion—are each required to be involved for 11 months during Part A and 10 months during Part B. Additionally, five other expert positions—namely the Public Policy Expert, Skill Development Expert, Thematic Expert – Investment Promotion, Thematic Expert – Employment Promotion, and Thematic Expert – Entrepreneurship Promotion—are each required to be involved for 11 months during Part A and 10 months during Part B.</p>	
5	<p>(a) In view of the priority sectors identified under INSPIRES—such as tourism, IT/ITES, renewable energy, creative design, care economy, hospitality, and wellness— request you to include qualifications in the CVs of the sector specialists for sector-relevant disciplines such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postgraduate degree in Tourism Management / Travel & Hospitality Management • Postgraduate degree in Information Technology / Computer Applications / MCA • Postgraduate degree in Health and Social Care / Nursing / Public Health / Social Work/MSW • Postgraduate degree in 	Section 7: Terms of Reference (Qualification and Experience of Key Positions)	Pg 80	<p>As per the RFP, The Skill Development Expert is expected to hold a Master’s degree in fields such as Education, Human Resource Development, Vocational Training, Business Administration, or other relevant disciplines, demonstrating a strong academic background aligned with workforce and skill development themes.</p> <p>As per the RFP, the Thematic Expert – Entrepreneurship</p>	<p>(a) As per RFP. No change.</p> <p>(b) As per RFP. No change.</p>

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	<p>Hospitality Administration / Hotel Management.</p> <p>(b) Similarly, Given the priority sector and the competitive advantage of Sikkim related to farm and non-farm sector, we request you to include following degrees for Thematic Expert – Entrepreneurship Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postgraduate degree in Agri-Business Management / Rural Management • Postgraduate degree in Healthcare Management / Wellness • Post graduate in Development Studies 			<p>Promotion should possess a Master’s degree in Entrepreneurship, Business Administration, or a closely related field, reflecting expertise in enterprise development, entrepreneurial ecosystem building, and business support services.</p>	
6	<p>we would like to request the client to consider revising the evaluation method to a 70:30 ratio (Technical: Financial), which is more commonly adopted in gover A 70:30 ratio promotes a more balanced approach, ensuring that both quality and cost are adequately factored into the selection processment tenders and public procurement processes (including The World Bank Funded projects in other states)</p>	<p>Section 26.1: Evaluation of Technical Proposal (Under Part B: Evaluation Criteria QCBS)</p>	Pg 37	<p>The RFP outlines that the evaluation of proposals will follow a 90:10 weighting, with 90% weightage assigned to the Technical Proposal (T) and 10% to the Financial Proposal (P).</p>	As per RFP. No change.
7	<p>Given the requirement of a detailed documentation and preparation of both technical and financial proposals as per the RFP requirements, we kindly request to consider granting an extension of two weeks to the current submission deadline. This additional time will ensure</p>	<p>Section 17.4 : Submission Deadline (C. Submission, Opening and Evaluation)</p>	Pg No 31	<p>As per the RFP, all proposals must be submitted by uploading them on the e-procurement portal specified in ITC 1(m) no later than 15:00 hours (local time) on 9th May 2025.</p>	<p>There shall be no change to the last date for submission of proposals.</p>

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	the preparation of a comprehensive and high-quality proposal that fully aligns with the objectives and expectations of the assignment.				
8	Request you to please consider that our liability for any direct loss or damage to be limited to the fee paid to us for the engagement by the department	II. General Conditions of Contract (Under E. OBLIGATIONS OF THE CLIENT)	Pg 156	The Client warrants that the Consultant shall have, free of charge, unimpeded access to the project site in respect of which access is required for the performance of the Services. The Client will be responsible for any damage to the project site or any property thereon resulting from such access and will indemnify the Consultant and each of the experts in respect of liability for any such damage, unless such damage is caused by the willful default or negligence of the Consultant or any Sub-consultants or the Experts of either of them.	As per RFP. No change.
9	Given that the duration of this assignment is 36 months , and in line with the World Bank’s standard practice of allowing price adjustments for long-term assignments, we kindly request reconsideration of this clause. Including a price adjustment provision would ensure financial sustainability and fairness over the full project duration	Data Sheet Clause 16.2	Pg 29	As per Data Sheet Clause 16.2, it is stated that “ <i>A price adjustment provision applies to remuneration rates: No</i> ”- However, the General Conditions Clause 16.2 specifies that “ <i>For assignments with a duration exceeding 18 months, a price adjustment provision for foreign and/or local inflation for remuneration rates applies if so stated in the Data Sheet.</i> ”	As per RFP. No change.

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10	<p>Request for Clarification on GST Reimbursement – Clause 16.3</p> <p>We kindly request clarification on the GST reimbursement process, as the current provision is not entirely clear. We would appreciate your detailed guidance on this matter to ensure compliance and accurate financial planning.</p>	Clause 16.3	Pg 29	<p>As per Data Sheet Clause 16.3, it is stated that: “Consultants and their Sub-consultants and Experts are responsible for payment of all taxes as applicable in India. The Client will, however, reimburse on proof of submission with relevant Government Authority, the Goods & Services Tax (GST) payable on the contract value by the consultant, as per Applicable Law in India. Statutory deductions of taxes at source (TDS), however, shall be made as applicable.”</p>	As per RFP. No change.
11	<p>We kindly request clarification regarding the application of eligibility and evaluation criteria as outlined in Data Sheet Clause 21.1, specifically with reference to Part A: Mandatory Criteria and Part B: Evaluation Criteria. In the case of a consortium structured as a Joint Venture (JV), please clarify whether all consortium partners are required to individually meet both the mandatory and evaluation criteria in full or in part, or whether the combined qualifications of the JV partners will be considered collectively, with the lead firm meeting the majority of the requirements. This clarification will help us ensure our proposal is fully</p>	Clause 21.1	Pg 33	<p>Data sheet, clause 21.1 Part A: Mandatory Criteria and Part B: Evaluation Criteria</p>	<p>(a) The Lead Partner of the Joint Venture / consortium needs to meet the Part A: Mandatory Criteria, and (b) Part B: Evaluation Criteria may be jointly met by the one or more partners of the Joint Venture / consortium.</p>

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	compliant with the RFP provisions				
12	We kindly request that the requirement for experience in the non-profit sector be relaxed for the Team Leader position. We believe that substantial experience in engaging with public and private stakeholders, particularly in similar assignments, should suffice to demonstrate the necessary capabilities for this role.	4.2.2. PART B: End-to-end Implementation Support Activity 8: support to operationalize EEPF	Page 80	Indicative Team structure – Page 80 for the Team Leader position in the experience it is specified that the experts should have experience in stakeholder engagement and partnership development with public, private and non-profit sectors	As per RFP. No change.
13	Clarification on key milestones: While the overall time mentioned for Part A is 21 months, and there are a set of activities mentioned under Part A, we want to understand if there are any external milestones / timelines that we must keep in mind. As a result of this, if there are any activities under Part A that we should cover earlier than other activities, kindly let us know.	4.2.2. PART B: End-to-end Implementation Support VI. PAYMENT	Pg 88	PART A: 1. The payments will be made based on the submission and approval of deliverables as per the signed contract. 2. Payment will be made only on acceptance of the following deliverables ...	As per RFP. No change.
15	As per our understanding, the proposal is to be submitted online on the specified procurement website. However, in some places, it is mentioned that the proposals should be submitted in the sealed envelopes. We kindly request clarification on whether the submission should be entirely online or if physical copies are also required.	Section 2, Instructions to Consultants, ITC reference clause 1(m) Clause C, submission, opening and evaluation, sub clause 17.7	Pg 25, 15	Electronic–Procurement System https://sikkimtender.gov.in The electronic-procurement system shall be used to manage the following part of the RFP process: • Issue of RFP • Submission of Proposals (Technical and Financial) Opening of Technical and financial proposals. The sealed envelopes containing the Technical and Financial Proposals	Proposals are to be submitted online only

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				shall be placed into one outer envelope and sealed. This outer envelope shall be addressed to the Client and bear the submission address, RFP reference number, the name of the assignment, the Consultant's name and the address, and shall be clearly marked "Do Not Open Before [insert the time and date of the submission deadline indicated in the Data Sheet]".	
16	We seek clarification on whether the same projects can be placed under for one than one criteria specified in the RFP.	Section 2, Instructions to Consultants, ITC reference clause 21.1, Part B: Evaluation Criteria	Pg 34	(i) Specific experience of the Consultant (as a firm) relevant to the Assignment: [10] a) Experience in establishing financial and non-financial partnerships in the last 5 years [3 – 1 mark for each project]	No.
17	Kindly clarify regarding the allocation of marks for staffing as per the A&M criteria. Specifically, is the consultant required to name and highlight non-key staff as part of the proposal?	Section 2, Instructions to Consultants, ITC reference clause 21.1, Part B: Evaluation Criteria	Pg 34	(ii) Adequacy and quality of the proposed methodology, and work plan in responding to the Terms of Reference (TORs): [50] The score is subdivided as follows: a) Clear methodology: [40] (Approach and Methodology – 25 marks, Work plan – 7.5 marks, Staffing – 7.5 marks) b) Responsiveness to the ToR: [10]	As per RFP. No change.
18	It is requested to modify the clause as follows: 1. List only previous similar assignments successfully completed/ongoing in the last [.....] years. Since	Form Tech- 2. Consultant's Organization and Experience, BConsultant's Experience	Pg 43	1. List only previous similar assignments successfully completed in the last [.....] years.	May be read as last 5 years.

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	Government projects often involve multi-year engagements, it is suggested to include ongoing assignments as well.				
20	We would like to seek clarification regarding the deployment of the proposed key experts for this project. Please provide information whether the deployment of the team will be online (remote), offline (onsite) or if a hybrid approach (combination of online and offline deployment) is being considered. Also, if you could specify the expected timeframes for onsite, offsite or hybrid work for the key experts throughout the assignment.	Indicative team structure:	Pg 80	Indicative team structure: An indicative list of the positions of the key professional staff/experts who will be evaluated during the technical evaluation process for the assignments is given in the table below. The Consultant must propose suitable individuals as experts in these key positions to carry out the assignment in conformity with the scope of services.	The deployment plan needs to be proposed by the agency as per their understanding of the scope of work and their delivery plan.
21	We request the authority to kindly reconsider the limitation of liability clause and provide more clarity on the following points: 1. We request clarification on the specific scope of "damage to third parties" and whether it includes both direct and indirect damage caused by the Consultant's actions.	23.1 "Limitation of the Consultant's Liability towards the Client:	Pg 164	Limitation of the Consultant's Liability towards the Client: a) Except in the case of gross negligence or wilful misconduct on the part of the Consultant or on the part of any person or a firm acting on behalf of the Consultant in carrying out the Services, the Consultant, with respect to damage caused by the Consultant to the Client's property, shall not be liable to the Client:	As per RFP. No change.
22	What is the existing organizational constitution and legal form of the EEPF as outlined in Notification No. 01/PDD dated January 30, 2024	Section III. EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROMOTION FACILITY	Pg 68	The GoS has established the EEPF via Notification NO. 01/PDD on January 30, 2024. The EEPF is anchored under the PDD while the Program Governing Committee of	Beyond the scope of RFP

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				INSPIRES acts as the governing body for the initial start-up period	
23	Over the past few decades, entrepreneurship programs have been developed and implemented extensively within the rural development sector. Experts from the social sector have been engaged at various levels, possessing relevant experience and skill sets as outlined in the RFP evaluation criteria. We propose that educational qualifications such as a Master's/Postgraduate degree in Social Work, Rural Development, Economics, or other relevant disciplines from the social sector be considered eligible under the academic qualification requirements	Section 7 – Terms of Reference, V. Implementation Arrangements: Indicative team structure	Pg 86	Thematic Expert – Entrepreneurship Promotion Qualifications: Master's degree in Entrepreneurship, Business Administration, or a related field.	As per RFP. No change.