

Pre-Bid Queries Response

Expression of Interest (EOI) for Selection of Strategic Implementation Partner(s) for Establishment, Operationalization and Long-Term Management of the Artificial Intelligence Centre of Excellence (AI-CoE) under the IndiaAI Mission (EOI Reference No. DIT/AI-CoE/EOI/2026-27/376)

SI No.	Suggested Clarification/Queries	Response/Clarification
1	The EOI requires multilingual support including Bhutia and Lepcha. Kindly confirm whether Bhashini currently provides ASR, TTS and machine translation models for Bhutia and Lepcha. If not, kindly clarify whether corpus creation, data annotation and custom model development for these languages falls within the scope of the Implementation Partner, and whether a separate budget provision exists.	Whatever available in Bhashini with respect to Sikkim may be considered.
2	Kindly confirm whether all functional areas (Innovation Lab, Experience Centre, Training Academy, Research Centre, Startup Incubation Centre, Command & Analytics Centre) are to be co-located at a single site or distributed across multiple locations.	Depends on proposed solutions
3	Kindly confirm whether the Government intends to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) following this EOI, and the indicative timeline for its release after declaration of the shortlist on 16.09.2026.	Already mentioned in the EOI. .
4	Kindly confirm whether participation in the subsequent RFP will be restricted to organisations shortlisted through this EOI, or whether the RFP will be open to all eligible bidders.	As per EOI
5	Clause 14.3 permits a maximum of three consortium members with the Lead Member holding a minimum 51% stake. Kindly confirm whether these limits will be retained in the subsequent RFP, and whether academic/research institutions are counted towards the three-member cap (e.g can the consortium be say 'four' member consortium instead of three and can the lead member hold less than 51% stake). Such flexibility could allow the best of members to come together in the consortium and deliver a world class AI solution	As per EOI, should be limited to 3 members
6	Clause 14.3 states that no organisation shall participate in more than one proposal. Kindly clarify whether this restriction extends to sub-contractors and technology/OEM partners who are not consortium members.	As per EOI

7	Clause 10.19 defers IP ownership to the subsequent RFP. Kindly indicate the Government's intended position on ownership of foreground IP created under the project, and confirm whether pre-existing (background) IP and proprietary platforms may be licensed to the Government rather than assigned.	Ownership lies with DIT, Govt of Sikkim
8	Kindly confirm whether the five-year O&M period commences from the date of Go-Live / commissioning of the AI-CoE, or from the contract effective date, and whether the implementation period runs concurrently with or prior to the O&M term.	The AI Centre of Excellence (CoE) will be established over a four-year period (48 months) through a structured implementation plan designed to ensure the phased and scalable deployment of AI technology
9	Clause 7.14 and 11.5 require a minimum of 20 AI use cases while Clause 11.5 lists 30 illustrative examples. Kindly confirm the committed minimum for the RFP, and whether use cases will be selected by the Government from the bidder's catalogue or jointly agreed post-award.	Minimum 20
10	Phase IV specifies AI Readiness Assessments for at least 20 Departments, 20 use cases identified, 10 PoCs and 5 pilot implementations in the first year. Kindly confirm whether departmental participation and data availability will be assured by the Government, as these commitments depend on departmental readiness.	Department will support in administrative coordination.
11	Clause 11.16 indicates a target of 5,00,000+ citizens benefiting from AI-enabled services. Kindly clarify the measurement methodology and whether this is a contractual KPI or an indicative outcome.	As per EOI
12	Kindly clarify the minimum number of key personnel required to be deployed on-site at Gangtok on a full-time basis versus those permitted to operate from offshore/remote delivery centres.	Operational resources on site, may propose mix model
13	Clause 12.10 specifies user support availability of 8x6 minimum. Kindly confirm whether 24x7 support is expected for the AI Command & Analytics Centre or for any disaster-management use cases such as landslide early warning.	24x7 to be proposed.
14	Clause 8.13 requires integration with existing departmental applications. Kindly confirm whether these systems currently expose documented APIs, and whether the Implementation Partner is expected to develop integration interfaces on legacy systems where APIs do not exist.	clarified

15	Kindly confirm whether Sikkim-specific datasets (land records, health, agriculture, disaster, tourism) are currently available on AIKosh, or whether data collection, digitisation and curation form part of the Implementation Partner's scope.	clarified
16	Kindly confirm whether AI-CoE Facility Management under Clause 12.3 includes housekeeping, security manpower, utilities and consumables, or is limited to ICT and AV infrastructure maintenance.	As per EOI
17	Clause 14.8 provides a Presentation Evaluation Matrix totalling 50 marks, whereas Annexure-XX provides a Technical Presentation Evaluation Sheet totalling 60 marks with different parameters. Kindly confirm which matrix will apply.	14.8 will be considered.
18	The contact email, telephone and website fields in Clause 12 of Section 1 and Clause 15.21 are blank in the EOI document. Kindly confirm the official address for all EOI-related correspondence and submission.	contact email: dit-sik@nic.in , website: sikkim.gov.in , Address: Department of Information Technology, Sonam Tshering Marg, Top Floor, Annexe-I, secretariate, Gangtok
19	The abbreviation list at Clause 3.2 defines SLM as 'Service Level Management', while Clause 8.9 uses SLM in the sense of 'Small Language Model'. Kindly confirm the intended meaning in Clause 8.9.	As per EOI
20	The Corrigendum dated 30.07.2026 modifies Clause 10 of Section 1 to require submission in electronic/soft copy format only. Kindly confirm that this supersedes the sealed-envelope physical submission provisions of Clause 15.8, and specify the portal, email address or file-transfer mechanism, along with any file size or format restrictions.	Bid submission only by softcopy on dit-sik@nic.in
21	Kindly confirm whether any page limit applies to the Technical Proposal (Part B), and the acceptable file formats and maximum file size for electronic submission.	No
22	Clause 14.4 requires a total of 10 points. The Lead Bidder will qualify for the same. Can the other members of the Consortium Submit their Certificate of incorporation/ Firm Registration, PAN and GST as the main documents will be of the Lead Bidder	yes, clarified.

23	We respectfully request that the turnover criterion be: (a) EXEMPTED for Udyam-registered MSMEs and DPIIT-recognized startups, in line with the Public Procurement Policy for Micro & Small Enterprises Order 2012 and the DPIIT/Startup India public-procurement notifications; OR, in the alternative, (b) REDUCED from ₹50 Crore to ₹3 Crore average annual turnover for such MSME/startup respondents.	As per EOI
24	Kindly permit Udyam-registered MSMEs and DPIIT-recognized startups to participate individually and/or as Lead Member of a consortium, subject to the relaxed / exempted turnover criterion, and confirm that the relaxation extends to the Lead Member where such Lead Member is an MSME/startup.	As per EOI
25	The milestone table indicates that the AI-CoE is to be made fully functional within 1 year, followed by 5 years of O&M. Please clarify the overall engagement timeline, including the implementation period, O&M period, and whether the 5-year O&M period will commence from contract signing, commissioning, go-live, or final acceptance of the AI-CoE.	Total project duration is 4 years inclusive of O&M and delivery
26	Could you please clarify the minimum experience and qualification requirements expected for the all the resources proposed.	It is part of the Bid Document
27	The EOI does not clarify whether bidders may propose a combination of OEM products, open-source components and proprietary accelerators, or whether any specific technology stack or Government cloud marketplace restrictions apply. Please confirm technology neutrality, subject to open standards, security and interoperability, and allow equivalent or superior solutions. At a minimum, kindly confirm the guiding principles for the EOI; detailed terms may be addressed in the RFP.	Is part of proposed solution
28	Considering the large team size, it is requested to kindly specify the key and non-key personnel and minimum deployment period for these. Alternatively, if detailed specifications are to be finalized at the RFP stage, kindly confirm that bidders may proceed with stated assumptions for the EOI.	Is part of proposed solution
29	Considering the large and diverse team composition, we request that the RFP document allow a minimum of 60 days for the deployment of key personnel following the issuance of the LoI or Award of Contract, whichever occurs earlier.	Is part of proposed solution

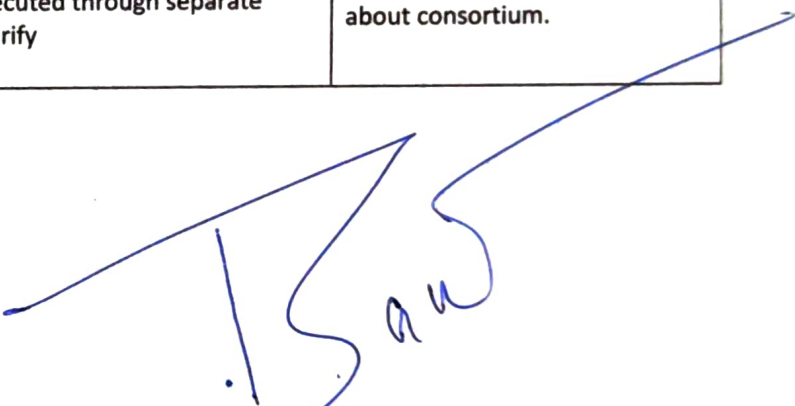
30	The EOI does not define the measurement window, exclusions, severity definitions, service credits/penalties or dependencies applicable to these SLAs, including treatment of outages of IndiaAI Compute and Government networks. Please provide detailed SLA definitions and exclude planned maintenance and failures attributable to Government or third-party platforms from partner-controlled SLA calculations. Alternatively, if detailed specifications are to be finalized at the RFP stage, kindly confirm that bidders may proceed with stated assumptions for the EOI.	Is part of proposed solution
31	Please specify the scope of Financial utilization report	Is part of proposed solution
32	Clauses 12.16 and 13.13 require transfer of source code, configurations and repositories "as applicable" upon exit or termination. Please limit transfer to project-specific deliverables and Government- owned data/configurations, while preserving ownership of pre-existing IP, third-party products and generic know-how, with suitable usage licences where required. Alternatively, if detailed specifications are to be finalized at the RFP stage, kindly confirm that bidders may proceed with stated assumptions for the EOI.	Is part of proposed solution
33	Please confirm that background IP remains with the originating party and that ownership/licensing of project-specific foreground IP will be clearly defined in the RFP, including startup/research-partner rights. At a minimum, kindly confirm the guiding principles for the EOI; detailed terms may be addressed in the RFP.	Is part of proposed solution
34	Please provide indicative policy boundaries or confirm that bidders may submit conceptual options without binding financial commitments at the EOI stage. Alternatively, if detailed specifications are to be finalized at the RFP stage, kindly confirm that bidders may proceed with stated assumptions for the EOI.	Is part of proposed solution
35	Please allow an unincorporated consortium through a legally binding MoU/consortium agreement, with the Lead Member holding at least 51% participation/share of responsibility.	As per EOI

36	Please delete the placeholder text and confirm the final threshold and the exact three financial years to be considered.	As per EOI
37	Please provide a criterion-wise consortium compliance matrix identifying requirements for the Lead Member, each member and the consortium collectively.	As per EOI
38	Please define the applicable look-back period i.e. the last five years	5 years preceding 2025-26
39	Please publish a detailed sub-criteria matrix with mark bands, documentary evidence, cut-off dates and rules for consortium credential aggregation.	Please refer clause 14.3 of EOI, credential presented any member of the consortium shall be treated as the credential by the Lead Bidder.
40	Please issue one authoritative presentation matrix and explain the final composite technical scoring and shortlisting methodology.	QCBS methodology will be adopted and the weightage shall be published in the RFP
41	We understand that this clause is applicable for both ongoing as well as Completed projects. Please confirm. Also specify the acceptable experience evidences for completed and ongoing projects e.g. contracts/work orders plus invoices, Go-live certificates or client confirmations where completion certificates are unavailable.	As per EOI
42	Clause 14.7A assigns marks for partnerships with global AI technology providers, universities or research institutions. The EOI does not specify whether non-exclusive alliances, certifications, MoUs and project-specific teaming arrangements are eligible, or whether partnerships of consortium members may be counted. Please specify eligible partnership types, validity as on submission date and documentary evidence.	QCBS methodology will be adopted and the weightage shall be published in the RFP

43	It is requested to clarify whether the RFP will be issued only to bidders shortlisted through the EOI (Closed Tender Inquiry) or opened to all bidders as an Open Tender Inquiry.	As per the EOI, "It is not a request for financial proposal, nor does it constitute a commitment by the Government to award any contract."
44	Please provide standard annexure templates to ensure uniform submission of the required details by all bidders	Please refer 15.7
45	We request department to provide format for Letter of Submission.	Please refer Section 16
46	We request the department to allow the submission of the latest Board Resolution as an alternative to the Power of Attorney.	Allowed
47	Since this is the EOI stage, we kindly request relaxing the requirements for sharing the names and submitting CVs of the proposed staff. Instead, please limit the requirements to providing the qualifications and experience of the key personnel only	Will clarify in RFP
48	Please confirm whether a physical command centre/video wall, LAN facility is required and provide indicative sizing requirements.	Depends on proposed solution
49	Kindly provide specifications and quantities for LED walls, smart displays, projectors, VC systems and smart classroom infrastructure expected under the project.	Depends on proposed solution
50	Are Microsoft Teams/O365 or equivalent enterprise collaboration licenses available with Government or to be provisioned by the bidder?	Depends on proposed solution

51	Please specify expected quantity of end-user devices, smart classroom systems, kiosks and training machines to be managed by the selected bidder.	Depends on proposed solution
52	Kindly clarify ownership of all infrastructure assets procured under the project during and after the O&M period.	Department of IT, Government of Sikkim
53	Please confirm whether OEM support/subscription renewals during the O&M period shall be funded separately by the Department or included within bidder responsibilities.	Depends on proposed solution
54	Please confirm whether downtime attributable to IndiaAI Compute, AIKosh, Bhashini or external Government systems shall be excluded from SLA calculations.	Depends on proposed solution
55	Kindly confirm the expected helpdesk support model, number of users, language requirements, and whether onsite resources are mandatory.	Depends on proposed solution
56	Please provide the number of departmental applications anticipated for integration during Phase-I and the expected integration roadmap.	As per scope of the project
57	Is API enablement of legacy departmental applications within bidder scope or will respective departments provide standard APIs?	As per scope of the project
58	Please specify whether departments will provide cleansed and digitized datasets, or whether data digitization, cleansing and preparation are also in bidder scope.	As per scope of the project

59	Kindly share the indicative list of departments proposed to be onboarded under the project to assess effort and integration complexity.	As per scope of the project
60	Please clarify whether civil works, electrical works, UPS systems, HVAC modifications and interior fit-outs are part of bidder scope.	As per scope of the project
61	Please provide the approved DPR, facility location details, floor plans and infrastructure readiness status for accurate assessment of implementation effort.	Internal document
62	Following the completion of the EOI process, will a closed/limited tender (RFP) be issued only to the shortlisted applicants who qualify through the EOI? Kindly clarify the proposed procurement process and subsequent stages of bidder selection	As per the EOI, "It is not a request for financial proposal, nor does it constitute a commitment by the Government to award any contract."
63	Can the civil works, procurement, and establishment/setup activities be delinked from the service delivery scope and executed through separate contracts/agencies? Kindly clarify	This is a turnkey project. However, EOI clearly mentions about consortium.


 Director
 Dept. of Information Technology
 Government of Sikkim