

File No.: I-19014/24/2025-DMEO-Part(1)
Government of India
NITI Aayog
Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office

Dated: 29th September 2025

Subject: Response to queries received on the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the evaluation of Atal Bhujal Yojana by DMEO, NITI Aayog – reg.

Following the publication of the RFP on 8th September 2025 and the pre-proposal conference on 23rd September 2025, queries received on the RFPs were examined and responses to such queries are given below. The general clarification is in the following paragraphs and specific query-wise response is in Table 1.

2. Some general clarification are given below:

a. Scoring of relevant experience of the applicant:

i. With respect to the Scoring Criteria mentioned in Clause 4.1.3 (1 (a) and 1 (c)), it is clarified that while considering the 10 eligible assignments the relevant experience of all the members of the consortium including the Lead Member would be considered for scoring. However, the Lead Member must fulfill a minimum of 40 percent of the total number of eligible assignments submitted by the Consortium (details to be filled at Appendix I Form 8 of the RFP), and the remaining can come from one or more of the other consortium members.

ii. To avoid ambiguity, the Scoring Criteria mentioned in Clause 4.1.3 (1 (b)), in case of a consortium, will consider the annual revenue of the Lead Member only (details to be filled at Appendix I Form 5 of the RFP) for scoring.

b. Number of Consortium Members: It is also clarified that for consortium, a maximum of four (4) consortium members (including the Lead Member) are allowed.

3. All the terms and conditions of the RFP shall remain unaffected.

4. For queries/technical issues related to GeM portal, please contact the GeM help desk at helpdesk-gem@gov.in and 1800-419-3436 / 1800-102-3436.

Table 1

DEVELOPMENT MONITORING EVALUATION OFFICE (DMEO)			
Response to Queries on RFP for Evaluation of Atal Bhujal Yojana			
S. No.	RFP Clause	Query	Response
1.	Section 4.2 (b)	Could you please clarify whether, under the "other relevant sectors" provision, assignments conducted with Government entities in any thematic sector would be considered eligible, or if only those that are sector-specific to groundwater resource management and its closely related domains would qualify?	Under the "other relevant sectors" provision, only those assignments undertaken with Government entities that are relevant to the groundwater sector and its closely related domains will be considered eligible.
2.	-	Certificate for Number of Resources on Payroll by Authorized Signatory: Could you please provide more details on the specific content and format required for this certificate? We would like to understand what information needs to be included beyond just the number of employees, and whether a specific template or pro forma is available.	This is not mentioned in the RFP or any accompanying documents.
3.	-	Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA): Our query pertains to the requirement for an NDA. We would like to confirm if a general declaration, signed by an authorized signatory, stating that we have read and will abide by the non-disclosure clause of the tender document, would be considered a valid substitute for a separate NDA form.	This is not mentioned in the RFP or any accompanying documents.
4.	Clause 6.2 and Clause 7	Indicative timeline for the submission of inception report is mentioned as 15 days on pg. 30 and 21 days on pg. 31 of the RfP.	The Consultant is expected to submit the inception report within 21 days of Award of Contract
5.	Appendix I, Pt 7 (c)	The point number 7 on conflict of interest in Form 1 of Appendix 1 refers to a Clause No. 5.3 of the RfP. However, clause 5 seems to end at 5.2 in the RfP.	It is a Typo error. Form 1 Point 7 requires bidders to confirm that they have not engaged in any corrupt practice, fraudulent practice, anti-competitive practice, coercive practice, conflict of interest,

			obstructive practice. These practices have been defined in Clause 5.2 of the RFP document which is self explanatory.
6.	Clause 6 of Schedule I (Terms of Reference)	The sample districts for the study are already mentioned in the RfP. However, slightly different criteria for Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra are mentioned in pg 45 (majority classified as semi-critical and safe), and pg 60 (excluded all assessment units classified as safe). Which one of the criteria is it	<p>It is a typo error.</p> <p>In Madhya Pradesh, since none of the assessment units falls under the critical and over-exploited category, assessment units falling under safe and semi-critical categories were considered for sampling. Among these, all the assessment units of three districts were categorized as safe. These three districts were not considered for the sampling and randomization was applied in the remaining districts.</p> <p>Whereas, in Maharashtra most of the assessment units falls under the safe and semi-critical categories. Randomization was applied in these units and two districts were selected.</p>
7.	Clause 6 of Schedule I (Terms of Reference)	Sampling of Blocks: pg 45 mentions that the blocks need to be classified into the 4 groundwater categories. However, the table mentions one 'aspirational block' to be covered under each district if available. Thereby, in addition to the 'aspirational block' criteria, should the groundwater classification also be a criteria for sampling?	<p>Please refer to Clause 6 of the Terms of Reference:</p> <p>Within each district, blocks should be classified into the four groundwater categories based on the degree of exploitation. Aspirational blocks, when included, must be selected from within these categories and are not to be treated as a separate sampling criterion</p>
8.	Clause 6 of Schedule I (Terms of Reference)	Should the aspirational blocks be identified from the Aspirational Blocks Programme	<p>Please refer to Clause 6 of the Terms of Reference which is self explanatory. Aspirational blocks are defined as those blocks that are covered in the Aspirational Blocks Programme.</p>
9.	Clause 6 of Schedule I (Terms of Reference)	Stakeholders for KIIs: Pg 46 mentions the number of KIIs at state level for NGO representatives is for implementing states only. Hence, will the sample size be only 7 and not 9 as mentioned in the document	Sampling in the ToR is indicative. No changes contemplated.

10.	Clause 6 of Schedule I (Terms of Reference)	Do all the 12 beneficiaries come from the same village OR different villages under the same GP	Sampling in the ToR is indicative. No changes contemplated.
11.	Appendix 1 Form 5	Form 5 of Appendix 1 appears twice. Which one do we consider?	Both forms are the same. Either one may be used for submitting the proposal.
12.	Clause 4 of Schedule I (Terms of Reference)	Is programme harmonisation also one of the objectives of the study?	Please refer to Schedule 1 Clause 4 of the RFP which is self explanatory
13.	Annexure A of the RFP	What all sectoral experiences are needed for a Team Leader?	Please refer to Annexure A of the RFP which is self explanatory
14.		Some of the forms which weren't applicable for us, do we need to submit them?"	Please refer to Appendix I of the RFP. In case any form is not applicable to you, you are still required to submit the form and clearly state within it that it is 'Not Applicable' to you.
15.	Section 4.2 Eligible Assignments, Page 28	Content of RFP Requiring Clarification: Assessment/research/evaluation study in groundwater resource management and related sectors conducted for Union/State Government/ regulatory commission/ tribunal/ bilateral agencies/ multilateral agencies/ statutory authorities/ public sector entities in India covering a minimum sample size of 500 respondents. Change Requested/ Clarification: We request DMEO to elaborate/clarify on what would be considered as "related sectors" for eligible assignment	Please refer to Section 4.2 of the RFP which is self explanatory. Under the "other relevant sectors" provision, only those assignments undertaken with Government entities that are relevant to the groundwater sector and its closely related domains will be considered eligible.
16.	Section 6 Timeline for Project Execution, Page 30	S. No. Deliverables Timeline 1 Signing of Contract T 2 Inception Report T+21 days 3 Mid-term Evaluation Report T+75 days 4 Draft Evaluation Report T+130 days 5 Final Evaluation Report T+150 days Change Requested/ Clarification: Basis past experience in similar	DMEO endeavors to facilitate access to data from government entities, if such support is required to expedite the data collection process including arranging for KIs with Government Officials. However, the initiative and ultimate responsibility for ensuring complete data collection for a comprehensive analysis rests with the consultant. Additionally, these are issues that could

		<p>projects carried out for DMEO and other clients, coordinating with stakeholders (i.e., senior government officials at Centre and State levels, sector experts, key stakeholders, etc. to refine the investigative instruments and gain insights about the scheme) and getting appointments for various KILs (which is a part of this assignment) from National, State and District Level Stakeholder takes time and is contingent on their availability, which impacts the committed timelines for the agency as per the contract. Hence, we would request DMEO to help facilitate the agency in scheduling appointments or in case of any delay's due no availability or delayed appointments from the stakeholders then the same should be accommodated for justifiable reasons with extension of timelines and no levy of penalties.</p>	<p>be discussed post-award of contract and a mutually agreed upon solution could be arrived at on a case-to-case basis.</p>
17.	General	<p>Change Requested/ Clarification: If an agency is applying for two or three DMEO bids, it is suggested that the CVs of the experts maybe same or similar and in case the agency wins two bids then the CVs can be replaced (this should be allowed). Restricting the agency to submit unique CVs in all the bids when the probability to win all the bids isn't the same. This impacts the opportunity for the agency hence request you to allow the same.</p>	<p>No changes contemplated.</p>
18.	Clause 4.2. of RFP	<p>Would request you to please clarify what all are included in the "related area" for eligible assignment</p>	<p>Under the "other relevant sectors" provision, only those assignments undertaken with Government entities that are relevant to the groundwater sector and its closely related domains will be considered eligible.</p>
19.	Clause 1.2.4 of RFP	<p>Can personnel be hired for conducting field survey or does all work pertaining to the evaluation need to be</p>	<p>Please refer to Clause 1.2.4 of the RFP, which is self-explanatory.</p>

		completed by the Key Personnel.	
20.	Clause 1.4.4 of RFP	Does power of attorney is applicable for Gov. institutions?	Please refer to Clause 1.4.4 of the RFP. The Applicant should submit a Power of Attorney (POA) as per the format of Appendix-1, Form-4 (as provided on DMEO website). However, that such Power of Attorney would not be required if the Application is signed by a partner in case the Applicant is a partnership firm or limited liability partnership. In the case of government owned academic institutions in lieu of POA, a letter of authorization duly signed by the competent authority such as Head of the Department, Dean, Registrar, Director etc. should be submitted.
21.	General	EMD Submission Requirement- SR Asia has a formal MoU with ICCW, IIT Madras, and we will be bidding as a joint partner where ICCW will act as the primary bidder for this tender. Kindly confirm if ICCW is fully exempted from paying the EMD	Lead partner being an Academic institution could submit a Bid Security Declaration as for all purposes DMEO would be engaging with the Lead Partner for all administrative matters.
22.	Clause 4.1.3 (2)	Academic Collaboration- In the evaluation criteria, there is a mention of additional marks for "Collaboration/Consortium/Partnership with Academic Institutions. Could you please clarify as ICCW, IIT Madras is lead partner so what document is required to prove this collaboration.	In case the lead partner is an Academic institution, then 4 marks are awarded to the bidder.
23.	Appendix I Form 7	What exactly are you looking for in the technical part of the evaluation in methodology and work plan?	Please refer to Form 7 of the Appendix I of the RFP which is self explanatory. This was also elaborately explained during the pre-bid meeting.
24.	Schedule 3: Guidance Note on Conflict of Interest	Since QCI is an on-ground third party verification partner for Atal Bhujal and has conducted various impact evaluations for the scheme, will this be considered a conflict of interest?	Please refer to Schedule 3 : Guidance Note on Conflict of Interest of the RFP which is self explanatory.
