

### Response to Queries reg. Evaluation of Urea Subsidy and NBS Schemes

S.No.	Section/Clause	Queries	DMEO Response
1.	<p>4. Criteria for Evaluation 4.1.3 The scoring criteria to be used for evaluation shall be as follows</p> <p>Maximum 10 assignments can be submitted by the applicant. * (a) Sample size of eligible assignments of the applicant (10 marks). The marks will be allocated based on the following: Each eligible assignment with survey sample size of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1000 to 1500 respondents: 0.5 mark</li> <li>● &gt;1500 to 2000 respondents: 0.7 mark</li> <li>● &gt;2000 respondents: 1 mark</li> </ul>	<p>We kindly request to consider the following criteria for each eligible assignment with survey sample size.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 500 to 1000 respondents: 0.7 mark</li> <li>• &gt;1000 to 2000 respondents: 0.9 mark</li> <li>• &gt;2000 respondents: 1 mark</li> </ul>	No change is contemplated
2.	<p>4. Criteria for Evaluation 4.1.3 The scoring criteria to be used for evaluation shall be as follows</p> <p>Experience of Proposed Key Personnel of the Applicant</p>	<p>Marks have been assigned in this section based on years of experience. However, in Annexure-A (Minimum Education Qualification &amp; Experience for Consultancy Team), the required experience is slightly different. For example, the Team Leader gets full marks (8) for having more than 9 years of experience, but Annexure-A mentions a minimum of 15 years. Kindly confirm which criteria should be followed</p>	<p>Marks have been assigned based on experience in relevant projects only. Refer to Clause 4.1.3, Page 29</p>

3.	Annexure-A  Economist/Statistician/Data Analytics Expert Minimum Length of Professional Experience: 8 years	We request to relax the minimum length of experience to 5 years and above.	No change is contemplated
4.	Timeline for Project Execution  The total duration of the evaluation study is 5 months (150 days), wherein the inception report is to be submitted by the consultant within 15 days from signing of the contract	Considering the scope and geographical spread of the survey, we kindly request that the duration of the evaluation study be extended to 8 months	No change is contemplated
5.	2.7. Proposal Due Date (PDD)/Last date  22nd September 2025 – Time 17:00 Hrs	Kindly consider the proposal due date as 26th September 2025.	No change is contemplated
6.	Confidentiality	Bidder propose additional language as follows: "The Bidder may retain such portion of the Confidential Information including its working papers that is required for compliance with its statutory, regulatory or professional conduct obligations"	No change is contemplated
7.	Limit of Liability	Clause 3.3 caps the Consultant's indemnity liability to the Authority at the contract value. Could the Authority please confirm: (a) that this cap represents the Consultant's total	No change is contemplated

		<p>aggregate liability under the contract for all claims, and</p> <p>(b) that all indirect, consequential, special, and punitive losses are excluded from the scope of the Consultant's liability?</p>	
8.	Disclaimer (Clause viii)	<p>Clause (viii) of the Disclaimer refers to the "Manual for Procurement of Consultancy and Other Services, June 2022" for the applicable dispute settlement mechanisms. Could the Authority please provide access to this manual or direct us to where it can be obtained?</p>	<a href="https://doe.gov.in/files/manuals_documents/Manual_for_Procurement_of_Consultancy_%26_Other_Services_Updated%20June%2C%202022_1.pdf">https://doe.gov.in/files/manuals_documents/Manual_for_Procurement_of_Consultancy_%26_Other_Services_Updated%20June%2C%202022_1.pdf</a>
9.	Rate escalation	<p>Clause 1.15.6 states that rates shall be firm throughout the performance period. In the event of a delay in the project timeline for reasons not attributable to the Consultant (e.g., delays in receiving data or approvals from the Authority), will a provision for time extension and associated cost escalation be considered?</p>	<p>No change is contemplated</p>
10.	Penalties	<p>The RFP outlines several penalties for personnel substitution, quality compromises, and delays without a clear aggregate cap. Page 26 Page 39 Page 53 This creates significant and unquantifiable financial risk for bidders. For commercial predictability, we request the Authority to confirm that the total cumulative liability arising from all such penalties and/or liquidated damages will be capped at 10% of the total Agreement Value.</p>	<p>No change is contemplated.</p>

11.	Sub-contracting	We request that bidders be allowed the option to form consortia or engage sub-contractors for specific components of the project.	Please refer Clause 1.2.1 and Clause 1.2.4 of the RFP
12.	<p>4. Criteria for evaluation - Clause 4.2</p> <p>Scope of Eligible Assignments</p>	<p>As per Clause 4.2 of the RFP, Eligible Assignments are defined as:  “Assessment/research/evaluation study in social inclusion/equity/justice/law &amp; order/justice delivery sector 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 1000.”</p> <p>However, considering that this RFP pertains to the evaluation of schemes in the agriculture sector (Urea and Nutrient Based Subsidy Schemes), we seek clarification on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will evaluation assignments related to agriculture or agricultural schemes implemented by the Government of India also be considered eligible under Clause 4.2?</li> <li>• Or is it mandatory that eligible assignments must strictly fall within the themes of social inclusion, equity, justice, law &amp; order, or justice delivery as mentioned?</li> </ul> <p>Kindly confirm whether agriculture-related evaluation studies—especially those involving large-scale surveys and implemented for central/state government agencies—will be accepted as Eligible</p>	<p>Evaluation assignments related to agriculture/horticulture/rural development/crop science/agri value chain/agricultural economics/social inclusion and allied sectors conducted for Union/State Government/ regulatory commission/ tribunal/bilateral agencies/ multilateral agencies/ statutory authorities/ public sector entities in India will be considered</p>

		Assignments for the purpose of technical evaluation.	
13.	<p>Schedule 2 – Clause 3.4</p> <p>Liability of Consultant</p>	<p>As per Clause 3.4 (Schedule 2) defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“3.4.1 The Consultant's aggregate liability under this Agreement shall be limited to the Agreement value, determined by the Applicable Laws and subject to the provisions hereof.</i></li> <li>• <i>3.4.2 The Consultant shall, subject to the limitation specified in Clause 3.4.3, be liable to the Authority for any direct loss or damage accrued or likely to accrue due to deficiency in Services rendered by it.</i></li> <li>• <i>3.4.3 The Parties here to agree that incase of negligence or willful misconduct on the part of the Consultant or on the part of any person or firm acting on behalf of the Consultant in carrying out the Services, the Consultant, with respect to damage caused to the Authority's property, shall not be liable to the Authority:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. for any indirect or consequential loss or damage;</i></li> <li><i>and</i></li> <li><i>ii. for any direct loss or damage that exceeds (a) the Agreement Value set forth in Clause 6.1.2 of this Agreement or (b) the proceeds the Consultant may be entitled to receive from any insurance maintained by the Consultant to cover such a liability in accordance with Clause 3.5.1, whichever of (a) or (b) is higher.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>3.4.4 This limitation of liability specified in Clause 3.4.3 shall not affect the Consultant's liability, if any, for damage to Third Parties caused by the</i></li> </ul>	No change is contemplated

		<p><i>Consultant or any person or firm acting on behalf of the Consultant in carrying out the Services subject, however, to a limit equal to 3(three) times the Agreement Value.”</i></p> <p>Kindly confirm if the above changes can be considered.</p>	
14.	<p>Schedule 2 – Clause 3.6</p> <p>Audit Rights</p>	<p>As per Clause 3.6 - Accounting, inspection and auditing (Schedule 2) defined as: The Consultant shall: (a) keep accurate and systematic accounts and records in respect of the Services provided under this Agreement, in accordance with internationally accepted accounting principles and in such form and detail as will clearly identify all relevant time charges and cost, and the basis thereof (including the basis of the Consultant’s costs and charges); and (b) permit the Authority or its designated representative periodically, and up to one year from the expiration or termination of this Agreement, to inspect the same and make copies thereof as well as to have them audited by auditors appointed by the Authority.</p> <p>Kindly consider if the below point can be included – “Any audit shall be subject to the following: (i) the audit shall be restricted to the engagement and shall be conducted with prior reasonable notice (ii) Authority or its authorized representatives shall execute a Non-Disclosure Agreement before such audit which shall govern the conduct of the audit and any results thereof; (iii) the auditors or</p>	No change is contemplated

		<i>the representatives of the Authority for the audit shall not be the Consultant's competitors; (iv) the audit shall not be conducted more than once in a calendar year and twice in entirety; and (v) any findings during the audit, shall be shared with the Consultant and be discussed and agreed mutually between the Authority and the Consultant for its closure."</i>	
15.		Please confirm if the deliverables be branded with the Consultant's name/logo? If yes, whether they will be shared with any third party beyond the Authority. If yes, then who will be the third parties?	Not Applicable
16.	Experience of Proposed Key Personnel of the Applicant - Marks shall be awarded for the relevant experience based on the years of relevant experience	We request clarification on the term "relevant experience" based on the years of relevant experience" as mentioned in the RfP . Kindly specify what type of assignments/engagements will be considered under relevant experience for the purpose of evaluation.	Marks will be given for relevant experience out of the total minimum experience
17.	6.3 Sampling Plan Minimum number of samples to be covered under Farmer Survey, FGDs, and KIIs are as follows: Farmer Survey • Number of Districts: 3 districts will be selected from each State based on fertilizer consumption pattern • Number of Blocks: 2 blocks will be sampled from each selected district	We understand that the Niti Aayog team will provide the fertilizer consumption pattern basis which state and district selection will be conducted by the selected agency. Kindly confirm.	This will be discussed after onboarding the agency

	<p>based on fertilizer consumption pattern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Villages: 3 villages will be selected per block</li> </ul>		
18.	<p>6.4 Secondary Research</p> <p>The reference period for secondary research is since the inception of the schemes.</p> <p>The evaluation will emphasize secondary research based on an extensive literature review of documents and data collated from relevant sources. The primary data collected through farmers' surveys, KIIs and FGDs will be considered as an input for triangulation with the secondary findings. The agency will share a detailed analysis plan for secondary data with the Authority and undertake the analysis to answer the primary objectives of the evaluation study and the objectives of the scheme. The data and methods for secondary research will involve a review, collation, and analysis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Urea Subsidy and NBS official guidelines and relevant scheme documents.</li> <li>ii. Monitoring Information System (MIS) data/dashboards/administrative data.</li> </ul>	<p>We understand that the Niti Aayog team will provide the required documents to the selected agency for the purpose of secondary Research. Please confirm on the same.</p>	<p>As per Schedule 1, Page 49 (Measures to be taken by the consultant before, during, and after the fieldwork)</p>



	<p>iii. Financial data on allocation and expenditures pertaining to Urea Subsidy and NBS.</p> <p>iv. Annual reports and implementation documents to assess the institutional arrangements.</p>		
19.	<p>RFP Clause: Scope of Proposal; sub-point 1.2.4 Page no. 13</p> <p>Sub-Contracting by the applicant is not permitted. However, for conducting field surveys the applicant may engage field investigators or field survey firms. The responsibility to maintain the highest quality of data collected from this study lies with the applicant. <b>The applicant shall submit the credentials of the survey firms proposed for conducting the field survey in the inception reports.</b></p>	Request you to please clarify the kind of credentials required for survey firms	As per RFP
20.	<p>Tender / TIS TIS – Critical Dates (Page 9)</p> <p>Proposal Due Date / Pre-Proposal queries / Pre-Proposal Conference dates and timelines</p>	Request your kind clarification on whether the Authority is open to extending the Proposal Due Date by at least two weeks from the date of response to pre-bid queries to enable incorporation of clarifications into our methodology and sampling approach.	No change is contemplated

21.	<p>1.3 Key Personnel Clause 1.3 (Page 13)</p> <p>Minimum Key Personnel &amp; required roles</p>	Request your kind clarification on whether short-term specialist inputs (e.g., GIS specialist) can be proposed as non-key/support personnel. Kindly confirm whether any role may be shared across personnel and how such sharing will be evaluated.	As per RFP - minimum required manpower to be achieved and marks would be given accordingly
22.	<p>1.16 Bid Security (EMD) Clause 1.16.1-1.16.3 (Page 21)</p> <p>Bid Security INR 5 Lakh; MSE/Udyam exemption; universities may submit Bid Security Declaration</p>	Request your kind clarification on: (a) whether a scanned copy of the Bank Guarantee uploaded in the bid system is sufficient at submission stage (subject to later hard copy submission); (b) confirm the list of acceptable issuing banks/entities for BGs (scheduled commercial banks, public sector banks, etc.);	Please refer to Clause 1.12.3 and Clause 1.16 of the RFP
23.	<p>1.17 Performance Security Clause 1.17.2-1.17.4 (Page 22-23)</p> <p>Performance Security = 3% of Agreement Value; forms allowed; forfeiture conditions</p>	Request your kind clarification on (a) timing for submission of Performance Security (e.g., within 7 days of LoA or before signing of Agreement); (b) whether Authority will provide a standard BG template (request upload if available); and (c) clarify basis for calculation of Agreement Value for Performance Security (is it total bid amount or fee excluding taxes?).	<p>a) Within 7 days of signing of agreement</p> <p>b) Please refer to Annex-6 (Bank Guarantee for Performance Security) of Schedule 2</p> <p>c) As per RFP Clause 1.17</p>
24.	<p>2 Evaluation Process Clause 2.1.6 (Page 23-24)</p> <p>Shortlisting: list of pre-qualified and short-listed Applicants will be announced and technical scores will be</p>	Request your kind clarification on the expected date/time window between technical evaluation outcome (shortlisting) and opening of financial proposals, and whether unsuccessful bidders will receive debriefs or detailed evaluation comments upon request.	Please refer to Clause 2.1.6 (Page no. 24) of the RFP

	read out prior to opening financial proposals		
25.	<p>3.2 Substitution of Key Personnel Clause 3.2.1 &amp; 3.2.2 (Page 26)</p> <p>Substitution rules: substitution only for compelling reasons; deduction of 10% of remuneration for first replacement, 20% for second; substitution of Team Leader discouraged</p>	Request your kind clarification on operationalisation of substitution deduction: (a) confirm whether the 10%/20% deduction applies to the replaced individual's remaining contract remuneration only or to the entire contract value; (b) confirm whether substitution during pre-award/negotiation stage is governed by the same deduction; and (c) clarify whether short-term leaves (e.g., up to 30 calendar days) require formal substitution or can be accommodated with interims without penalty.	Please refer to Clause 3.1.1 and Clause 3.2.1 of the RFP
26.	<p>4 Criteria for Evaluation Clause 4.1.1 &amp; 4.1.3 (Page 27-29)</p> <p>Technical qualifying score 70/100; scoring breakdown for experience, methodology &amp; work plan, key personnel; technical marks for 'eligible assignments' consider only first 10</p>	Request your kind clarification on: (a) whether ongoing assignments (not yet completed) can be included and how their quantum/scope will be considered;	Please refer to Clause 4.2 of the RFP
27.	<p>4.1 Evaluation Criteria Clause 4.1.3 (a) (Page 28)</p> <p>Marks for eligible assignments based</p>	We request if marks against project with sample size more than 2000 be increased 2 marks. This would ensure that bidder is marked in line with expected survey size in the project (nearly 3000).	No change is contemplated

	on sample size categories (1000-1500:0.5; >1500-2000:0.7; >2000:1 mark each) and max 10 assignments considered		
28.	<p>4.1 Evaluation Criteria Clause 4.1.3 (a) (Page 28)</p> <p>Marks for eligible assignments based on sample size categories (1000-1500:0.5; &gt;1500-2000:0.7; &gt;2000:1 mark each) and max 10 assignments considered</p>	We request if minimum sample size in project be kept at 500 instead of 1,000 as proposed.	No change is contemplated
29.	<p>4.1 Evaluation Criteria Clause 4.1.3 (a) (Page 28)</p> <p>Marks for eligible assignments based on sample size categories (1000-1500:0.5; &gt;1500-2000:0.7; &gt;2000:1 mark each) and max 10 assignments considered</p>	We request that assignments delivered outside India are also considered for evaluation purpose.	Refer to RFP Clause 4.2, Page 30
30.	<p>4.1 Evaluation Criteria Clause 4.1.3 (a) (Page 28)</p> <p>Marks for eligible assignments based on sample size categories (1000-1500:0.5; &gt;1500-2000:0.7;</p>	Request your kind clarification on whether mixed-method assignments that include multiple survey waves or sub-samples (which cumulatively exceed sample thresholds) can be aggregated for sample-size-based marking.	Please refer to Clause 4.1.3, Point 1 of the RFP

	>2000:1 mark each) and max 10 assignments considered		
31.	<p>5 Fraud &amp; Corrupt Practices Section 5 (Page 31-33)</p> <p>Prohibitions on corrupt / fraudulent / anti-competitive / coercive practices and associated consequences (forfeiture, debarment for 2 years)</p>	Request your kind clarification on the redressal process in case of allegations raised during project execution—please confirm the procedural steps, opportunity to respond and appeal mechanism, and whether suspension pending investigation is contemplated.	As per Clause 9 of Schedule 2
32.	<p>6.2 Indicative Sampling Frame Table 2 &amp; Narrative (Page 46-47)</p> <p>List of 13 selected states and selection rationale (consumption per hectare); 6 zones and 8 soil types mapping</p>	Request your kind clarification on whether the listed 13 states are final for primary fieldwork or indicative; if indicative, kindly provide the final list and confirm whether the Authority will provide state-level contacts or district-level fertilizer consumption lists to support district selection.	The sampling list is indicative. Details related to state-level contacts or district-level fertilizer consumption lists to support district selection shall be discussed after onboarding the agency.
33.	<p>6.3 Sampling Plan Section 6.3 (Page 47-48)</p> <p>District/Block/Village selection: 3 districts per state, 2 blocks per district, 3 villages per block; 12 farmers per village; total 2,808 farmers</p>	Request your kind clarification on: (a) whether the sample design requires quotas by farm-size (marginal/small/medium/large), crop type and irrigation status and if so, the required proportions; (b) whether the Authority can provide or endorse district/block lists for selection based on fertilizer consumption; and (c) whether the 12-farmer-per-village sample must be randomly selected or quota-based to ensure	Sample should be representative. District/block lists for selection based on fertilizer consumption shall be discussed after onboarding the agency.

		representativeness.	
34.	<p>6.3 KIIs, FGDs &amp; Value Chain Contacts Tables 4 &amp; 5 (Page 49-50)</p> <p>Indicative counts for KIIs: national (6), state (26), district (117), manufacturing units (48), dealers (78), retailers/FPO/cooperatives (156), importers (10); FGDs: 69 at block level</p>	<p>Request your kind clarification on whether the indicated counts for KIIs/FGDs/value chain actors are mandatory minimums or indicative targets; and request confirmation if the Authority can assist with introductions or provide contact lists for central/state stakeholders (e.g., Department of Fertilizers, state agriculture departments, major manufacturers). Kindly confirm that the 48 KIIs under the “Manufacturing Unit” category refer to stakeholders across different fertilizer manufacturing companies.</p>	<p>The indicated counts given in the RFP are mandatory minimums to be achieved. Details regarding introductions or provide contact lists for central/state Stakeholders shall be discussed after onboarding the agency. 48 KIIs across different fertilizer manufacturing companies.</p>
35.	<p>6.3 Field Operations &amp; Tools Section 6.3 (Page 48-50)</p> <p>Requirements: CAPI/mobile geo-tagged data collection, pre-testing 2% pilot, 2-step training, 100% data validation and 5% back-checks</p>	<p>Request your kind clarification on: (a) whether the Authority has a preferred CAPI platform or will accept any standard platform (please confirm required data export formats and metadata); (b) confirm whether raw geo-tagged data, anonymised respondent identifiers and transcripts need to be handed over in a specific format; and (c) whether the 2% pilot is mandatory prior to wider field rollout and the expected review/approval turnaround on pilot outputs.</p>	<p>As per schedule 1, page 49 (Measures to be taken by the consultant before, during, and after the fieldwork) 2% pilot is mandatory prior to wider field rollout.</p>
36.	<p>6.4 Secondary Research &amp; Data Access Section 6.4 &amp; 6.5</p>	<p>Request your kind clarification on whether the Authority will provide access (or facilitate access) to administrative datasets (e.g., iFMS transaction-level data, DBT/MIS dashboards,</p>	<p>This will be discussed after onboarding the agency</p>

	<p>(Page 50)</p> <p>Extensive use of secondary data: iFMS, MIS dashboards, financial allocation &amp; expenditure data, previous evaluation reports</p>	<p>production/import statistics) and the expected timeline/process to obtain such datasets including confidentiality/data-sharing protocols and redaction expectations.</p>	
37.	<p>7 Deliverables &amp; Timelines Table 6 &amp; Section 7 (Page 51)</p> <p>Deliverables include Inception Report (T+21days), Mid-term report (T+75), Draft (T+130), Final (T+150); hard copy (5) &amp; soft copy, raw data transfer; quality expectations (plagiarism &lt;20%)</p>	<p>Request your kind clarification on: (a) turnaround times for Authority review comments for each deliverable and maximum number of revision iterations included in the contract; (b) confirm plagiarism threshold — is 'less than 20%' similarity acceptable including quotations/references, and whether a Turnitin or similar report is required; and (c) confirm electronic file formats and whether editable working files (raw data, codebooks, analysis scripts) are to be submitted.</p>	Not Applicable
38.	<p>8 Timeline for Project Execution Clause 8 (Page 52-53)</p> <p>Project duration: 5 months; inception report due in 15 days from contract signing (T+21 in table); penalties for delay referenced elsewhere</p>	<p>Request your kind clarification on the Authority's policy on time extensions in the event of legitimate delays (e.g., delayed data access, stakeholder unavailability, Force Majeure), and request illustrative examples of acceptable grounds and the process to apply for extensions without levy of Liquidated Damages. Can we also propose a timeline we believe will be optimal for the delivery of the assignment?</p>	As per RFP

39.	<p>8.4 Award / Contract Terms (GEM/ATC &amp; RFP)</p> <p>Various Clauses (Pages ~26-31)</p> <p>Liability, IP, indemnity and LD provisions</p>	<p>Request your kind clarification on contract clauses (standardization and negotiation): (a) confirm Authority's position on capping consultant liability (for example, to the professional fees or an agreed multiple); (b) request confirmation whether consultant may retain pre-existing IP and be granted a license to the Authority for deliverable use; (c) request that indemnity obligations be subject to final determination by competent court/arbitral award and the standard procedure for claim notification and defense; and (d) request confirmation that Liquidated Damages will be invoked only for delays solely attributable to the consultant and not for client/third-party delays.</p>	As per RFP
40.	<p>Section 1.4.2 – C (pg. 14) - Conditions of Minimum Eligibility of Applicants</p>	<p>The minimum eligibility criterion under financial capacity states that the Total Revenue must be Rs. 5 crore or more. However, in Section 4.1.3. (pg. 28), the criterion is mentioned as "Average" Annual Total Revenue. Could you please clarify whether the requirement is for a cumulative total revenue of Rs. 5 crore over a specified period, or for an average annual revenue of Rs. 5 crore in each of the specified financial years?</p>	<p>The Applicant should have a minimum annual turnover of Rs 5 Cr each year in each of the preceding 3 financial years</p>