

File No.: I-19014/23/2025
Government of India
NITI Aayog
Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office

Dated: 29th September 2025

Subject: Response to queries received on the Request for Proposals (RFPs) for the evaluation study of Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Protsahan (PM USP) Scheme of DMEO, NITI Aayog – reg.

Following the publication of the RFP on 9th September 2025 and the pre-proposal conference on 24th 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 the specific query-wise response is in Table 1.

2. Some general clarifications are given below:

a. Extension of Proposal due date (PDD) to 14th October 2025.

b. Annexure A: Details of the minimum Education qualification required from the Consultancy Team

S. No	Key Personnel	Minimum Educational Qualification
5.	Banking for Education Sector Specialist	Postgraduate degree (or equivalent) in Development Economics/Public Economics/Public Administration

c. Scoring criteria to be used for evaluation (RfP Pg. 26):

S. No	Parameter	Criteria
1	Relevant Experience of the applicant	(b) Average annual total revenue/turnover of the applicant (10 marks) <ul style="list-style-type: none">● ₹3 crore to ₹ 7 crores: 8 marks● > ₹7 crore to ₹ 10 crores: 9 marks● > ₹ 10 crores: 10 marks

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

Responses to Queries of Bidders		
S. No.	Queries	DMEO Response
1	<p>Assessment/research/evaluation study in higher education 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 800. We request the authority to kindly modify the clause; it enables participation from highly capable consulting firms that have a strong presence in the government consulting ecosystem. Changing the clause will allow more companies to compete fairly.</p> <p>After modification the clause may be read as: Assessment/research/evaluation study in skill/education sector conducted for Union/State Government/ regulatory commission/ tribunal/ bilateral agencies/ multilateral agencies/ statutory authorities/ public sector entities/NGO/Society etc. in India covering a minimum sample size of 800.</p>	No change is contemplated.
2	How to fetch the data of the beneficiaries of the scheme?	All publicly available data needs to be gathered by the Applicant. DMEO will facilitate the collection of additional data by writing to the relevant authorities.
3	The Tender Information Summary (TIS) explicitly specifies "MSE Exemption for Years of Experience and Turnover: No". Given that the bidder must meet a minimum average annual turnover of ₹3 crore [47(C), 212] and 7 years of past experience, which is generally restrictive to MSMEs, can the Authority provide the specific justification for overriding standard government MSME policy regarding turnover and experience exemptions?	Please refer to Clause 1.16.1 of the RFP document, which is self-explanatory.
4	For the evaluation criteria concerning Eligible Assignments [47(B), 123], the minimum value for each eligible assignment is specified as ₹10 Lakhs [124(d)]. If an MSME has completed several relevant projects that collectively demonstrate the required experience (e.g., meeting the minimum sample size of 800) but are individually valued slightly below ₹10 Lakhs, will the Authority consider allowing the aggregation of similar, smaller projects to meet the financial threshold of ₹10 Lakhs per assignment?	Please refer to Clause 4.2 of the RFP document, which is self-explanatory.
5	The Terms of Reference (TOR) mandates primary data collection, including a minimum sample size of 2,640 beneficiary interviews, with the expectation that a minimum of 600 samples be covered for each of the 4 sub-components. Does the Authority interpret this as a definitive requirement for 2,400 samples (4 x 600) being the minimum disaggregated sample size, with the remainder making up the total of 2,640, or is the total of	The sampling is indicative. Please refer to Section 4 of Schedule 1- Terms of Reference in its entirety; it is self-explanatory.

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	2,640 flexible based on the ability to achieve the minimum of 600 per component?	
6	Regarding the Bid Security (EMD) of ₹4,50,000, MSMEs registered on the Udyam Portal are exempted, subject to compulsory submission of the Udyam Certification. Will the Authority confirm that the submission of the MSME Udyam Certificate as per Appendix I, Form-11 is the only required documentation to avail the EMD exemption, and no other form of security or guarantee is needed?	Please refer to Clause 1.16.1 of the RFP document; it is self-explanatory.
7	The contract is structured as a lump sum contract. Since the methodology requires mandatory face-to-face interviews for currently enrolled students and Institutional Surveys across a minimum of 6 selected states, can the Authority confirm that all costs associated with domestic travel, accommodation, and subsistence for the survey teams must be entirely absorbed within the lump sum amount, as stated in Clause 1.14.2 (i)?	Please refer to Clause 1.14.2 of the RFP document; it is self-explanatory.
8	The evaluation requires an assessment of the scheme's coherence (Coherence) with other similar government scholarship and employment schemes (MoSJE, MoTA, MoSDE, MoMSME, etc.). Does DMEO possess readily available secondary data or administrative datasets concerning these external schemes that can be shared with the Consultant to facilitate the mandated secondary analysis since inception and reduce the need for extensive external data collection?	All publicly available data needs to be gathered by the Applicant. DMEO will facilitate the collection of additional data after the agency has been onboarded.
9	Is it mandatory to open an office in NCR/ Delhi area?	Please refer to Appendix – I, Form 2 of Technical Proposal; it is self-explanatory.
10	Does every document need to be digitally signed, even if it is physically signed?	Please refer to Clause 1.12.3 of the RFP document; it is self-explanatory.
11	Is it mandatory for the consultant to work at the authority's office	Please refer to Section 10 of the Schedule 1 – Terms of Reference; it is self-explanatory.
12	We are a government institute, so the statutory auditor is the government auditor. Is it ok if our accounts or senior officer signs the documents?	Please refer to Appendix-1 Form-5; it is self-explanatory.
13	If we are a government educational institute, should we collaborate with other institutes?	Please refer to Clause 1.2.1. of the RFP document, it is self-explanatory.
14	As per the ToR, the minimum educational qualification for key personnel positions has been specified as a Master's degree (or equivalent). We seek your kind clarification on the following point: Would candidates possessing a Master's in Library and Information Science (MLIS) or a Master's in Rural Management, along with the requisite relevant professional experience, be considered eligible for the roles of Team Leader, M&E Specialist, and Education Sector Specialist under this assignment?	Please refer to Annexure A of RFP, which is self-explanatory.

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	Your guidance on this matter will help us ensure appropriate nomination of qualified personnel in line with the ToR requirements.	
15	<p>Clause 4.2- Eligible Assignments Assessment/research/evaluation study in higher education 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 800 Clarification Required- Since not many studies have been commissioned only in higher education sector, we request that assessment/research/evaluation study in higher education sector may cover education sector including school education, higher education, and vocational education/ skill development</p>	No change is contemplated.
16	<p>Clause 4.1.3- Relevant Experience of the Applicant Sample size of eligible assignments of the applicant (max 10 marks)</p> <p>Each eligible assignment with survey sample size of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 800 – 1500 respondents: 0.5 mark ● >1500 to 2200 respondents: 0.7 mark ● >2200 respondents: 1 mark <p>Request you consider revising the scoring criteria to below:</p> <p>§ Sample Size of survey 500 – 800: 0.5 mark § Sample Size of survey 801 – 1100: 0.7 mark Sample Size of survey 1101 and above: 1 mark</p>	No change is contemplated.
17	<p>Details of minimum Education qualification & Experience required from the Consultancy Team Junior Researcher – Since Master’s degree in Higher Education is not offered in India, please clarify whether related fields mentioned in the minimum qualification will include masters in any education and not specifically higher education. Request you to revise the qualification to Master’s degree (or equivalent) in education or related fields.</p>	No changes contemplated.
18	Do we have to present the PPT along with the technical proposal?	Please refer to Clause 1.15 of the RFP document; it is self-explanatory.
19	Do we have to submit bid security in hard copy also?	Please refer to Clause 1.12.3 of the RFP document.
20	As the evaluation study tools include CAPI and CATI, is there any proportion that is expected from the authority?	The sampling is indicative. Please refer to Section 4 of Schedule 1 – Terms of Reference in its entirety; it is self-explanatory.
21	The total sample size is 3185 for all four sub-schemes. So, what is the expectation regarding the qualitative study to be met by the applicant?	The sampling is indicative. Please refer to Section 4 of Schedule 1 – Terms of Reference in its entirety; it is self-explanatory.

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22	Is there any stipulated timeline for the Primary survey to be conducted?	Please refer to Schedule 1 – Terms of Reference, of the RFP document.
23	Whether a PowerPoint presentation (PPT) need to be uploaded along with the technical proposal submission on the GeM portal?	Please refer to Clause 1.15 of the RFP document; it is self-explanatory.
24	In case a PPT is not required at the submission stage, please confirm whether there are any marks allocated for this criterion at the time of bid submission, as it is included in the marking criteria (40 marks)	Please refer to Clause 2.1 of the RFP document; it is self-explanatory.
25	Whether 6 States to be selected for study subcomponent-wise shall be identified by DMEO, OR the Evaluation Agency shall identify themselves?	The sampling is indicative. Please refer to Section 4 of Schedule 1 – Terms of Reference in its entirety; it is self-explanatory.
26	What proportion of the study to be done through CAPI and CATI tools, if sample size is 3185 nos.	The sampling is indicative. Please refer to Section 4 of Schedule 1 – Terms of Reference in its entirety; it is self-explanatory.
27	The total sample is 3185 (including 6 stakeholders), hence: 1. What will be the percentage (%) of the pilot study out of the total samples of 3185 nos.? 2. Whether the Pilot Study will be comprised of samples from 6 States viz a viz all the 4 SubSectors? OR To be an indicative representation of any key stakeholders?	The sampling is indicative. Please refer to Section 4 of Schedule 1 – Terms of Reference in its entirety; it is self-explanatory.
28	Details of the Previous Experience of the academic institution- Please clarify whether projects to be submitted have to be in a specific sector – the education sector, social sector, etc.	Please refer to APPENDIX I: Form 12, Collaboration with Academic Institutions.
29	Please clarify whether technical collaboration is allowed with reputed institutions/ research centres that may not be recognised by the University Grants Commission but are recognised by government ministries/ entities, such NITI Aayog, Indian Council of Social Sciences Research, etc	Please refer to Clause 1.16.2 of the RFP document; it is self-explanatory.
30	With respect to the Eligible Assignments, If we are having a consortium with other institutes, so- a. Only the Lead applicant should meet the criteria? OR b. Do all the applicants should be meeting the criteria?	Consortium partner's experience will be considered. 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, available online on DMEO website), and the remaining

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		<p>can come from one or more of the other consortium members.</p> <p>b. Number of Consortium Members: It is also clarified that for consortium, a maximum of four (4) consortium members (including the Lead Member) is allowed.</p>