

Annexure A

Queries /Questions for the project Provision of Services to Manage “Ignite National Incubation Center Karachi”

1. Section 2, Page 3: Is the mandatory checklist of documents only applicable to the lead bidder or all consortium partners?

Ans: This is explained under the heading of “Mandatory Eligibility Criteria Checklist” (In case a bid is being submitted as Consortium/Joint Venture (JV), Lead Bidder’s documents will be evaluated against Mandatory Eligibility Criteria.)

2. Are all consortium partners required to sign a JV/ consortium agreement or a consent letter from each partner is sufficient?

Ans: Please refer to point 5 of “Mandatory Eligibility Criteria” of published RFP

3. Are all consortium partners required to execute the following legal documents?
 - a. Affidavit – Insolvent, bankrupt and blacklisted
 - b. Affidavit – Taxpayer
 - c. Consortium agreement
 - d. Power of Authority

Ans: Point (a) & (b) above please refer to answer of questions #1. Point (c) & (d) have not been asked for by Ignite.

4. Section 2, Page 4 Point 14: LMKT is running and managing NIC Peshawar and Karachi as lead bidder. NIC Karachi’s term concludes on 11th March. Is LMKT eligible to apply as a lead partner?

Ans: As per clause 23.3, NICK current contract is expiring on 11th March, therefore, the bidder may calculate its timelines accordingly.

5. How does the Ignite differentiate between a consortium partner and a support partner. If a company is already providing services for more than 3 NICs as a support partner, can the same company provide services for this project as a support partner?

Ans: Point 14 under the “Mandatory Eligibility Criteria” are only related to lead bidders and JV/Consortium partners that were part of previous proposal as JV/Consortium partners. A consortium partner as a key managerial entity actively involved in running the consortium and is a signatory on the consortium letter submitted by the bidder. In contrast, a support partner is not a signatory on the consortium letter but provides support services. If a company has already served as a support partner for more than three National Incubation Centers (NICs), it can still offer its services as a support partner for this project, adhering to the defined roles without direct involvement in the consortium’s management.

6. Section 13 Evaluation Criteria S. No 1: We understand the minimum net worth of the lead bidder must be 200 million, however for the score in the financial strength net worth of all JV/ consortium partners will be evaluated collectively? Or this is solely based on the net worth of the lead bidder

Ans: Please refer to clause 13.1, 13.2, 13.3 of the RFP. Section 13 – Evaluation Criteria S.No.1 refers to the Profile of the Lead Bidder only and hence the scoring will be base on the financial position of the Lead Bidder only. Sections 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3 of the RFP also refer to the financing capacity of the Lead Bidder.

7. Section 13 Evaluation Criteria S. No 2-6: Experience and expertise of consortium partners will be considered or the experience of other support partners will be taken into consideration?

Ans: Yes, Section 13 Evaluation Criteria S. No. 2 is related to the proposed Physical Infrastructure of the NIC. Similarly, Section 13 Evaluation Criteria S.No. 4 and 5 refer to the proposed methodology and Proposed Curriculum and does not award marks on the basis of past experience (whether consortium partners or lead bidder). For Section 13 S. No. 3, experience and expertise of consortium partner will be considered. Similarly, Section 13. S. No 6 is related to proposed team to run the operations of NIC.

8. Incubators and Accelerators are interchangeable terms. What is the company's exact definition of an Incubator and Accelerator for better understanding of the assignment?

Ans:

Incubators provide a nurturing environment for early-stage startups to develop over a longer period. They offer mentorship, office space, and access to a network of investors and experts. The emphasis is on building a strong foundation for the business, helping startups refine their ideas, develop a business model, and become self-sustainable. As per published RFP the duration for Incubation will be one year.

Accelerators, on the other hand, focus on scaling up businesses that have a defined product and market. They run for a fixed, short-term period, often involving intensive mentoring and training programs. Accelerators culminate in a demo day, where startups pitch to investors. They aim to accelerate growth, help startups secure funding, and expand their market presence rapidly. As per the published RFP, the duration of acceleration program will be 4 months.

9. Section 6.2 Page 6: Due to unstable PKR parity, would it be possible to propose some cost heads as USD, since these payments will be made to international partners/service providers?

Ans: As per clause 6.2 of the published RFP, *"All prices shall be quoted in Pakistani Rupees (PKR) and all payments will be made in Pakistani Rupees (PKR.)"*

10. 10. What verification sources would be considered while evaluating investments and revenues of startups?

Ans: As per forms C4-3 and C4-4 of the published RFP, *“Only those investments will be evaluated whose documentary evidence is submitted i.e. affidavit from startups on their letter head signed term sheet, press release, etc”*

11. Section 13 Evaluation Criteria: Can part time members be part of other projects funded by Ignite?

Ans: Yes, Individuals participating in other projects funded by Ignite may contribute to this proposal, provided they submit a conflict of interest declaration form, referred to as 'Annexure B' in the RFP documentation.

12. Can the 30% contribution come from various consortium and support partners in the form of services?

Ans: Yes, contributions are accepted from various consortiums and support partners in the form of tangible and verifiable services. Also, please note that as per clause 24.10 *“Bidders must submit their quarterly expense invoices along with supporting documents, encompassing 100% CAPEX and 100% OPEX. It's important to note that a 30% deduction, representing the bidder's share of OPEX, will be applied to each submitted invoice.”*

13. Can startups be directly inducted in the acceleration program or is it mandatory to qualify startups from the incubation program?

Ans: Annually, up to 10 of the incubated startups are advanced to the acceleration program. In case target of 10 startup cannot be met from the incubated startups then remaining startups may be directly inducted through a transparent selection process as outlined in the bidder's proposal.

14. If startups are only to be promoted from the incubation program then during the first year only one cohort of the acceleration program will be run? The total number of Acceleration cohorts would be 8, while incubation would be 10

Ans: The acceleration program will consist of nine cohorts: two cohorts annually from the first to the fourth year, and a single cohort in the fifth year. For detailed information, please consult clauses 24.4.3 (iv) through 24.4.3 (viii) in the RFP document.

15. If the duration of incubation program is 12 months, does this mean that at a some point of time after the induction of 2nd cohort, 3 cohorts would be active; 1st cohort in scale mode, 2nd cohort just inducted and 5 startups from 1st cohort being accelerated?

Ans: Yes

16. For investor summits, can foreign investors participate virtually or is it supposed to be in-person?

Ans: Yes, foreign investors may participate virtually in investor summits.

17. Section 12.1, page 82: Kindly confirm the duration of Year-0. Is it for 2 months or 3 months? At page 57 of the RFP, project duration mentioned is 5 year and 3 months whereas at page 58, year 0 duration mentioned is 2 months. At page 82 "Term", project duration mentioned is five years and 2 months.

Ans: Year-0 is 2 months and the total duration of the project will be 5 years and 2 months. At page 57 of the RFP, there is a typing mistake. It should be read, 5 years & 2 months

18. Section 24.5.1, page 29: (Provision of Funds) of the RFP, bidder have to contribute 30% OPEX.

a) Kindly share the rationale/purpose of this requirement.

Ans: It is within the exclusive rights of the bidding organization considering the long term objectives of its funded projects; consequently, Ignite has issued an RFP containing the specified requirements.

b) The 30% OPEX share of the bidder has to be incorporated into the project budgets/financial proposal and the head wise budget variance will be checked against total budget amounts which consists of 70% Ignite OPEX share and 30% bidder share. Kindly confirm this understanding.

Ans: As per clause 24.10 *"Bidders must submit their quarterly expense invoices along with supporting documents, encompassing 100% CAPEX and 100% OPEX. It's important to note that a 30% deduction, representing the bidder's share of OPEX, will be applied to each submitted invoice."*

c) Can the bidder contribute its 30% of the annual OPEX share from specific budget heads or it has to be contributed from each budget head? Further, please also specify can it be contributed in different percentages from different heads. For instance, 40% is contributed from budget head A while 20% is contributed from budget head B, meeting in total 60% requirement for 2 heads. Moreover, can the bidder contribute its 30% annual OPEX requirement or some of its amount from "management fee/profit" budget head?

Ans: The manner in which a bidder chooses to allocate their 30% contribution towards Operational Expenditure (OPEX) is at their discretion. This contribution may be distributed across a single budget head or multiple budget heads.

d) How would this requirement apply on the "Management fee/profit" head? We understand that 100% management fee is chargeable to Ignite. If yes then how this

should be presented on page 57 form C2.-summary of cost. Should this be added in row2 (70 % OPEX Ignite's Share) or should it be presented as a separate/additional line item on Form C2?

Ans: As per published RFP, successful bidder will contribute 30% towards the overall Operational Expenses (OPEX) of the project, while Ignite will cover the remaining 70% of the Operational Expenses (OPEX) and 100% Capital Expenditure (CAPEX). In accordance with the RFP terms, the 'Management Fee' is included under operational expenses. Consequently, it should be allocated between the bidder's share (30%) and Ignite's share (70%).

19. With reference to Page 62 of the RFP: C5. – ALL OPERATIONAL EXPENSES (ITEMIZED LIST): A list of expense sub heads / nature of expenses to be charged under each budget head will be sufficient to avoid misclassification issue or the budget amounts will also be required to be mentioned for each sub head/nature of expense? There is no table/yearly budget amounts format given on page 62 therefore we understand that only descriptive expense list is required. Kindly clarify.

Ans: It is explicitly stated in Form C-5 that *"Please provide detailed itemized breakup (including what kind of expenses will be charged to each sub head to avoid any kind of misclassification issues) of each CAPEX and OPEX head as mentioned in Form C-3."* Therefore, bidders are encouraged to provide detail of sub-heads for each budget item listed in Form C-3. For example, under the 'Utilities' budget head, bidders can present the information either in a descriptive format or in a table.

20. With reference to Page 59 of the RFP: kindly clarify the term "Communication staff"?

Ans: "Communication staff" refers to personnel involved in marketing and outreach activities for induction of startups in 1st cohort.

21. With reference to page 28 of the RFP: "At least 5 startups will be selected in an international incubator/accelerator every year." Is the bidder responsible to arrange international travel, boarding, lodging expenses as well for the selected startups? Kindly clarify so that it can be accounted for in the project budgets.

Ans: Yes, the bidder is obligated to cover international travel, accommodation, and boarding expenses for the selected startups. These costs may be incorporated into the bidder's budget.

22. With reference to page 23 clause 24.4.1of the RFP: Names of management team which are shared by bidder in the proposal must stay with the project for at least two years. Can bidder request ignite for approval in case of any deviation or it will be treated as a breach of the agreement. How can the bidder ensure compliance with this requirement? This may be against the labor laws of Pakistan. Kindly elaborate.

Ans: Ignite emphasizes the requirement for you to retain the allocated resources, as outlined in your bid, for a minimum period of two year. These resources will be evaluated

and graded as part of the "Proposed Project Team" section in Form B7. Furthermore, the bidder may seek approval from Ignite to change staff, provided they furnish a valid justification.

23. With reference to page 61 of the RFP: if the bidder has not shortlisted an employee for a specific position then what should be mentioned under "employee name" in the form C4. – BREAKDOWN OF REMUNERATION OF PROPOSED TEAM MEMBERS (REGULAR & PART TIME/ON CALL)? Further, there may be a long list of mentors/trainers/coaches which bidder plan to engage, how should their names be presented in C4 in the first "Names" column?

Ans: Bidders are required to list their team members on Technical Form C7 and ensure that these individuals are also mentioned on Financial Form C4, as each team member will be subject to evaluation. For roles such as On-call Consultants, Mentors, Trainers, and Coaches, bidders should specify the sector in the position column and must include both the duration and rate for each role.

24. There is a requirement to provide undertaking that the proposed staff will be retained for at least 2 years. As per labor laws of Pakistan, an employer cannot force employees not to leave the company. How can we provide this undertaking which is against the law?

Ans: Please see above answer no. 22.

25. With reference to Page 29 of the RFP clause 24.5.1 (Provision of Funds): "Ignite will assume direct responsibility for covering the building rent costs by paying the building owner directly. As a result, bidders should not incorporate the building rent amount in their financial proposals." The existing NED rent agreement encompasses facility rent, utilities (electricity, gas, water), and internet costs. Could you please confirm whether bidders are required to allocate a budget for utilities and internet (provided by NED) in their proposals, or if these costs will be included as part of the NED rent agreement with Ignite?

Ans: Ignite will directly remit payment for the building's rent only to the owner. It is the responsibility of the bidder to incorporate all additional cost of utilities and services, including electricity, gas, water, internet, and waste disposal, into their proposal.

26. With reference to page 61 of the RFP: The year 1 gross salary of all the project employees is required in form C4. There is a need for clarification on whether a comprehensive breakdown (designation wise) of employee gross salaries for the entire project duration (5 years and 2 months) is also necessary. If such information is indeed required, please specify whether it should be submitted as an annexure to form C4 or in a designated section of the proposal. Please also clarify the same query regarding employee benefits.

Ans: On Form C4, bidders are required to provide the gross salary for project employees for the first year only, ensuring it corresponds with the salary details outlined in Form C4.

Any salary increments beyond the first year will be administered according to the successful bidder's HR policy or manual.

27. It's mentioned that 8 months of incubation program then 4 months of acceleration program but at one point it's mentioned that the acceleration program will be provided to only 5 selected startups out of the incubation program. So, is the incubation period of the rest of the 20 startups end after 8 months? it is mentioned that the startups will be evaluated after 6 months of the incubation period to be evaluated for selection in the acceleration program. Need clarity on the exact time period of the incubation cycle?

Ans: please see clause 24.4.3 (iv) to 24.4.3 (viii) of the published RFP.

28. It is requested to provide a minimum of 4 weeks' time after Ignite has provided clarification on these questions, as legal documentation involving multiple partners will require time.

Ans: Extension in submission deadline is not possible.