

Question and Queries for Request for Proposal (RFP) Provision of Services to Establish and Manage “Ignite National Incubation Center- Lahore”

1. In the evaluation criteria section page number 11 of the RFP of Profile of lead bidder under the section (a.) in registered age it is mentioned “Each year of experience carries 3 marks. Experience of less than 5 years will carry no marks. Maximum marks = 30”. Please clarify that this section will be marked for registered age of the bidder or relevant experience of the bidder and if it is relevant experience then what is the criteria for that?

Ans: *The 'registered age' section on page 11 of the RFP focuses solely on the bidder's official registration date (SECP Registration), regardless of their specific project experience.*

2. On page 12 of the RFP, the physical infrastructure section, please clarify if bidder has to attach a contract/agreement with the landowner of the location as part of the bid? Further also clarify whether a contract/agreement has to be executed prior to the bid or whether only a proposed location would suffice. Moreover, will Letter of Intent to enter into contract serve the purpose of the bid.

Ans: *While attaching a formal contract/agreement with the landowner isn't mandatory at this stage, we do require a strong demonstration of the arrangement between the bidder and the land owner. Therefore, please include a Letter of Intent (LOI) signed by an authorized representative of the landowner. This LOI should clearly express the landowner's commitment to provide the identified location for the NIC Lahore project till the life of the project, alongside the intended use of the land, timeline for finalizing the contract, and any relevant contingencies. This will allow us to confidently assess your land access feasibility during the bid evaluation process.*

3. On page number 12 of the RFP, in section 3 e, the bidder must propose an incubator and accelerator to get maximum marks because the marks are divided into per incubator and accelerator. Please also clarify that what is the minimum number of international incubators and accelerators need to be provided by the bidder. Also, for the local ecosystem partners, is there any minimum requirement? Moreover what is the threshold for achieving maximum marks in this section?

Ans: *We fully understand that NIC Lahore's dual nature as an incubator and accelerator warrants experience in both areas. This section of the RFP aims to assess your ability to provide the necessary international exposure and connections crucial for incubated/accelerated startups. As the startup ecosystem thrives on global collaboration, we require partnerships with respected international incubators/accelerators who can offer valuable resources and opportunities beyond local boundaries. While we do not specify a minimum number of partnerships, the*

quality and potential impact of these alliances will be heavily weighted in the scoring process. We will be looking for partners with a demonstrated track record of success in supporting startups as incubators or accelerators, especially regarding funding secured, market expansion, and successful exits. Highlighting relevant industry expertise, global reach, and strong investor networks will be beneficial in securing maximum marks. We encourage you to showcase your proposed partnerships in detail, emphasizing the tangible impact they can bring to NIC Lahore's startups.

4. On page 13 of the RFP, in section e ii, it is mentioned that “List of Venture Capitalists, Angel Funding, Private Equity etc. with which the bidder has raised funding in the past” Please clarify that this is referring to the funding which bidder’s incubated startups have raised? What is the threshold and number of VCs required for achieving maximum marks in this section.

Ans: ***The experience of the bidder will be evaluated based on the associations with ventures. This includes startups the bidder has directly funded, incubated, accelerated, or helped raise capital for. A letter verifying your relationship with each startup is required. While volume is not the sole metric, we prioritize collaborations that demonstrate impactful outcomes. This considers the amount of funds raised, the type of support offered (financial, strategic, operational, or fundraising introductions), and the ultimate success of the venture. Essentially, we want to understand your ability to identify and nurture high-growth potential. Focus on showcasing collaborations that best illustrate your value contribution to the startup ecosystem.***

5. On page 21 of the RFP, in section 23.2 it is mentioned that “Potential bidders are expected to contribute 30% towards the overall Operational Expenses (OPEX) of the project, while Ignite will cover the remaining 70% of the Operational Expenses (OPEX), Rent of building and Capital Expenditure (CAPEX)”. Shall the bidder provide the financial bid exclusive of the 30% OPEX which bidder will bear?

Ans: ***We require a financial bid inclusive of the 30% OPEX.***

6. On page 21 of the RFP, in section 23.8 it is mentioned that “At least 5 incubated startups should be selected by international incubators/accelerators every year” Please clarify that these startups can be selected by the international partners who will be proposed in the international partners section or some other international incubators/accelerators?

Ans: ***The startups can be selected by any international incubators/accelerators and not only international partners of the bidder.***

7. On page number 27 of the RFP, in KPIs it is mentioned that “Promotion of startups to acceleration program - Up to 10. If the bidder is able to promote less than 10 startups, then what will be the impact of this specific KPI?”

Ans: *The RFP mentions on Page 27 as a note to “24.4.10 Performance KPIs for National Incubation Center-Lahore Management Team” that the Management fee paid will be proportional to the number/percentage of KPIs achieved every year.*

8. On page number 64 of the RFP, in 26 Annexure B, it is mentioned that “In compliance of the mandatory requirement mentioned in the RFP for ‘Provision of Services to Establish & Manage National Incubation Center-Multan’ published by Ignite National Technology Fund (hereinafter ‘Ignite’ and/or ‘Company’), I hereby confirm” Please clarify if this form is for the NIC-Multan or Lahore? And can we change this text because it is a form to be filled provided in the RFP?”

Ans: *This is a typing mistake. This is for the NIC Lahore and not NIC Multan*

9. On Page 6, Section 5 titled “Bidding Document”. The second paragraph states that, “During negotiations with the Successful Bidder, only minor changes, can be made in the attached agreement.” What is meant by the phrase “minor changes”? Which terms of the draft agreement will be potentially open to change during the negotiations between the successful bidder and the Company?”

Ans: *Under Rule 40 of the PPRA Rules, changes would not alter the cost and scope of work or services, and negotiations may be made with respect to the work or task execution at the time of contract finalization, including the methodology, work plan, staffing and special conditions of the contract.*

10. On Page 6, Section 5 titled “Bidding Document”. The second paragraph states that the “Company reserves the right to make changes to the draft agreement in order to ensure better & smooth implementation of the project.” Is the Company entitled to change any of the terms of the draft agreement or are certain terms fixed and cannot be subsequently changed by the Company? The Company should confirm that as per Rule 40 of the PPRA Rules, the cost and scope of work in the draft agreement will not be subsequently changed.

Ans: *The cost and scope of work in the draft agreement will not be changed as provided in Rule 40 of the PPRA Rules.*

11. On Page 6, Section 5 titled “Bidding Document”. The third paragraph states that the “If successful Bidder is not responsive and does not sign the agreement within a reasonable time, maximum one (1) month after issuance of the letter of acceptance, the Company reserves the right to terminate and nullify the bid award and bid security will be forfeited” The right to terminate, and forfeiture of bid security, should only be exercisable if the delay in signing is due to fault on the part of the successful bidder

Ans: *The Company reserves the right to terminate when the delay in signing the agreement can be attributed to the negligence or lack of responsiveness of the successful bidder. Specifically, this means that if the successful bidder fails to respond to the Company's repeated communications and does not sign the agreement within the stipulated one-month period following the issuance of the letter of acceptance, it would be deemed as non-compliance on the part of the bidder. This provision ensures the commitment and prompt engagement of the successful bidder in finalizing the agreement.*

12. On Page 27, Note states, “The Company will withhold portion of the management fee of the successful bidder if certain KPIs are not achieved in a certain year. Management fees paid will be proportional to the number/percentage of KPIs achieved every year” How exactly will the reduction in Management Fees be calculated in relation to KPIs achieved?

Ans: *The reduction will be carried out according to the percentage of the unachieved KPIs out of the total KPIs.*

13. There is mention of the formation/constitution of a Grievance Redressal Committee (“GRC”) in any clause of the RFP? Has the Company constituted a GRC pursuant to Rule 48(1) of the PPRA Rules? If so, the details of the members of the GRC may kindly be provided.

Ans: *In accordance to PPRA rule 48(1) GRC has been duly formed and uploaded on EPADs system provided by PPRA*

14. On Page 12, Evaluation Criteria 2 – Marks are to be allocated for condition of proposed building, geographical proximity to ICT clusters, accessibility to public transport, layout planning and quality/class of equipment. What is the formula for awarding marks against this criterion? For example, how will the company determine what marks to award if the proposed building is in good condition and how many to award if it is in poor condition? Similarly, how will marks be awarded for the differing levels of proximity, standard of layout and quality of class of equipment?

Ans: *The assessment is based on the overall value and suitability of the location for serving*

as an incubation center. Similarly, accessibility to public transport is a critical factor, as it ensures inclusivity for individuals without private transport, thus widening the pool of potential participants in the incubator/accelerator program. The evaluation is holistic and considers how effectively the location meets the needs of startups and facilitates their growth and networking.

15. On Page 12/13 – Evaluation Criteria 3(e) – Marks are to be awarded for the quality and scale of involvement of an international partner in the execution of a project. What is the formula for awarding marks against this criterion? How will the Company assess quality? How will the Company determine what marks are to be allocated for varying levels of quality?

Ans: ***The evaluation of quality and scale will be based on how significantly and positively this collaboration and activities planned under this collaboration influence the program. The marks awarded will reflect the extent to which the international partner’s level of involvement that contributes to the program’s objectives, with particular focus on the value addition to the Pakistani startup ecosystem.***

16. (a) Page 13-14 - Evaluation Criteria 4 (b) Page 14 - Evaluation Criteria 5(a) to (e) (c) Page 14 - Evaluation Criteria 6. What is the formula/methodology for awarding marks under these clauses of the evaluation criteria? How will the Company determine the number of marks to be awarded for each sub-category?

Ans: ***The evaluation process is primarily based on how well the criteria proposed by the bidder align with the objectives of the center and the overarching goals of Ignite's mandate. The focus is on determining the potential impact of the proposed methodology on both the program and the broader ecosystem in Pakistan. Each sub-category under these criteria will be meticulously assessed based on the aforementioned approach, taking into account its unique contribution and value addition to the project. The aim is to identify and reward proposals that demonstrate a clear understanding of the program's aims and are capable of delivering substantial and meaningful outcomes in line with these objectives. This ensures that the evaluation process remains focused on identifying the most effective and impactful proposals, thereby enhancing the overall success of the program.***

For section 5 (a) to (e) of the evaluation criteria, it is mentioned in the RFP that all points carry equal marks. For section 4(b) and section 6 of the evaluation criteria, individual marks allocated to each sub-section are already mentioned in the RFP.

17. Page 14-15 of the RFP – Clause 14.1 simply requires the Company to “communicate to each Bidder their respective technical score”. The Company is required by Rule 35 of the PPRA Rules to announce the results of the technical qualification in the form of an evaluation report, which ought to be released a reasonable time prior to the financial opening so as to allow bidders to challenge any part of the technical evaluation before

the GRC prior to the opening of the financial proposals. The Company is requested to confirm that it will announce the results of the technical evaluation through an Evaluation Report which will be released a reasonable time (at least 21 days) prior to the opening of the financial proposals.

Ans:

Proviso to Rule 35 of PPRA states that the Technical Evaluation Report shall be announced before opening of the financial proposal. Secondly, 7 days may be considered as a reasonable time [read with Rule 48(3) of PPRA] to open the financial bid after the announcement of the Technical Evaluation Report.

18. The RFP is silent as to whether the Evaluation Committee will award marks to one decimal place (as has been done previously) and how such marks would be treated in the overall mark to be awarded to a bidder. In the event that marks are awarded to bidders to one decimal place, will these be rounded up to the nearest whole number or will exact marks be awarded to bidders?

Ans: *Numbers will be rounded up to the nearest whole number*

19. Page 12-13 - Evaluation Criteria 3 – Marks are awarded for the relevant experience of the firm/bidder. The Company is requested to confirm that the experience (including number of start-ups graduated, investment raised, revenue generated etc.) of JV/Consortium Partners of the lead bidder will be taken into account when awarding marks for this category in the evaluation criteria.

Ans: *The experience metrics, including the number of start-ups graduated, investments raised, and revenue generated, will be considered for both the lead bidder and its consortium partners*

20. Is it mandatory to form a Joint Venture or a consortium agreement would suffice to participate in the bid?

Ans: *A joint venture is not mandatory*

21. How many parties can be the lead bidder? Can we have multiple co-leads?

Ans: *In case of consortium or joint venture, only one bidder can be the lead bidder. The bidders have the flexibility to choose their role. The lead bidder usually takes charge of steering the proposal, negotiations, and interactions, while consortium partners contribute their unique strengths, fostering a collaborative and competitive proposal approach.*

22. Is there a restriction on using an incubator partner that has already partnered with other NICs?

Ans: *There are no limitations, provided that the incubator partner is not concurrently overseeing two or more NIC Programs as the lead bidder or three or more as joint venture/consortium partners. **This requirement is explicitly outlined in the RFP under the 'Mandatory Eligibility Criteria' at item number 13.***

23. Will new companies bidding be at a financial disadvantage against companies re-bidding who have run NICs before as they have already spent a lot of the CAPEX cost?

Ans: *The CAPEX cost in previous instances was covered by Ignite and not by the management partners. Consequently, new companies entering the bidding process will not be at a financial disadvantage relative to those who have previously managed NICs.*

24. Are we limited to verticals for incubating startups?

Ans: *As per clause 24.4.3 – ix, the successful bidder will induct at least 35% startups related to Artificial Intelligence (AI) / Internet of Things (IoT) / ClimateTech / CleanTech in the incubation program. While rest of the 65% startups will be tech-savvy and generic with any verticals.*

25. If we are licensing curriculum through a partner but they are not part of our consortium, does their years of experience still count towards incubator experience?

Ans: *Experience gained through the licensed curriculum program supported by a letter of endorsement from the curriculum owner/partner will be considered in the project's overall qualifications.*