

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

For
Engagement of Consulting and Advisory Entity

Under
APEDA's Start-up and Export Support Program

Issued by:
Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)
Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India,
3rd Floor, NCUI Building, Siri Institutional Area,
August Kranti Marg, New Delhi - 110 016

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Disclaimer

1. This Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India.
2. The information contained in this RFP or subsequently provided to bidders, whether verbally or in documentary or any other form by or on behalf of APEDA or any of its representatives or advisors, is provided on the terms and conditions set out in this RFP.
3. This RFP is not a contract and is not an offer by APEDA, to the prospective bidders or any other person. The purpose of this RFP is to provide interested parties with information that may be useful to them in the formulation of their proposals pursuant to this RFP. This RFP includes statements, which reflect various assumptions and assessments arrived at by APEDA concerning the project. Such assumptions, assessments and statements do not purport to contain all the information that each bidder may require. This RFP may not be appropriate for all persons, and it is not possible for APEDA, its employees or advisors to consider the objectives, technical expertise and particular needs of each party, who reads or uses this RFP. The assumptions, assessments, statements and information contained in this RFP may not be complete, accurate, adequate or correct. Each bidder should, therefore, conduct its own Investigations and analysis and should check the accuracy, adequacy, correctness, reliability and completeness of the assumptions, assessments and information contained in this RFP and obtain independent advice from appropriate sources.
4. Information provided in this RFP to the bidders is on a wide range of matters and is not an exhaustive account of statutory requirements and should not be regarded as a complete or authoritative statement of law. APEDA, accepts no responsibility for the accuracy or otherwise for any interpretation or opinion on the laws expressed herein. APEDA, its employees and advisors make no representation or warranties and shall have no liability to any person including any bidder under any law, statute, rules or regulations or tort, principles of restitution or unjust enrichment or otherwise for any loss, claims, damages, cost or expense which may arise from or be incurred or suffered on account of anything contained in this RFP or otherwise, including the accuracy, adequacy, correctness, reliability or completeness of the RFP and any assessment, assumption, statement or information contained herein or deemed to form part of this RFP or arising in any way in this selection process. APEDA, accepts no liability of any nature, whether resulting from negligence or otherwise, however, caused, arising from reliance of any bidder upon the statements contained in this RFP.
5. APEDA, is entitled, in its absolute discretion, but without being under any obligation, to update, amend or supplement the information, assessment or assumption contained in this RFP. The issue of this RFP does not imply that APEDA, is bound to select a bidder or to appoint the selected bidder for this project and APEDA, reserves the right to reject all or any of the proposals of any bidder, without assigning any reason whatsoever.
6. APEDA, or its authorized officers/representatives/advisors reserve the right, without prior notice, to change the procedure for the selection of the selected bidder or terminate discussions and the delivery of information at any time before the signing of any agreement for the project, without assigning reasons thereof.

7. The RFP does not address concerns relating to diverse Investment objectives, financial situation, and particular needs of any party. The RFP is not intended to provide the basis for any Investment decision and each bidder must make its / their own independent assessment in respect of various aspects of the techno-economic feasibilities of the project. No person has been authorized by APEDA to give any information or to make any representation not contained in the RFP.
8. APEDA, may terminate the bid process at any time and without assigning any reason and makes no commitments, express or implied, that this process will result in a business transaction with anyone.

SECTION 1: Letter of Invitation

Request for Proposal (RFP) for Engagement of Consulting and Advisory Entity by APEDA under APEDA's Start-up and Export Support Program, uploaded on Official Website of APEDA on <21st April 2025>

The last date of submission of proposals is <05th May 2025> which may extended up to 7 days on discretion of APEDA, if it is found that sufficient number of proposal has not been received.

It is further informed that the technical proposal received for the said scope of work will be opened in the presence of the duly constituted evaluation cum selection committee. Technical proposal shall include a detailed technical presentation and the technical evaluation shall be done by duly constituted Evaluation cum selection committee.

A bidder will be selected under the Combined Quality cum Cost Based Selection method (QCBS) with weightages of 60:40 (60% for technical proposal and 40% for financial proposal). The technical evaluation of 60 marks shall include 20 marks for technical presentation and the remaining 40 marks as per technical evaluation criteria.

As the proposed assignment necessitates a methodical and structured approach, with the caliber of execution being a paramount consideration, the engagement of highly qualified and seasoned professionals is imperative. Consequently, substantial emphasis is accorded to the technical presentation. Hence, Minimum Qualifying marks in the technical Presentation would be 10 out of 20. The proposals of the bidders who fail to qualify the technical presentation stage shall not be considered for further evaluation.

APEDA reserves the right to update, amend and supplement the information in this document including the qualification process before the last date and time of receipt of bids, bidders are requested to visit APEDA website for Tender Document, corrigendum's, updates or any information related to the said tender under form the Website <https://apeda.gov.in/tenders>.

The bids/applications indicating less than the minimum financial quotation of Rs.45,00,000/- (excluding GST) shall be out-rightly rejected.

The applicants to the proposal may present themselves during the process of opening of document.

SECTION 2: Instruction to Bidders

Preface

1. The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is a statutory body established by the Government of India under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act passed by the Parliament in December 1985. APEDA is a nodal body and government agency focused on facilitating export of various food and organic products with quality assurance as per prescribed procedure with involvement of its members, exporters and other stakeholders like state horticulture department, laboratories, processing units, certification bodies, producers/ manufacturers and traders etc. towards its main objective of promotion of agricultural and processed food exports from India.
2. APEDA aims to identify and support high-potential early stage and start-up ventures in agriculture, food and organic product, assess their readiness for investment and export, and provide structured support through a targeted acceleration program.

The support shall be provided to the organisations which are engaged in the products and services related to APEDA scheduled products. Out of these, preferences shall be given to startups involved in product innovation and technology intervention such as quality control, packaging, testing and inspection, sea protocols, shelf life enhancement, post harvest management, cold chain, logistics, branding and marketing etc. to boost exports of scheduled products including organic products.

Products innovation and technology hereby meant that of introduction of use of new cutting edge technology under a **“Make in India for the World”** theme.

3. APEDA intends to engage an experienced consulting and advisory entity for providing support in evaluation, categorization, and acceleration to agri start-ups and enterprises under APEDA’s Start-up and Export Support Program.
4. The detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) may be seen at **Section – 3** at page No. 25.
5. Joint Venture/ Consortiums are not allowed under this assignment.
6. The bidder will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) Method procedures set out in the General Financial Rules (GFR) 2017 and Manual for Procurement of Consultancy & Other Services 2017 of Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

Important Dates

RFP Issue Date	<21 st April 2025>
Pre-Bid Meeting	<28 th April 2025 4:00PM>
Last Date for Query Submission	<02 nd May 2025>
Response to Query Submission	<06 th May 2025>
Last Date for Bid Submission & Time	<12 th May 2025 5:00PM>
Technical Proposal Opening	<15 th May 2025 2:00PM>
Technical Presentation of the bidders qualifying eligibility criteria	<19 th May 2025 >
Financial Bid Evaluation	<to be notified>
Results	<to be notified>

Note:

- Please note that the above-mentioned dates are tentative in nature and may change. Please visit the Tenders page on **APEDA** website for the latest updated information regarding the schedule and the corrigendum <https://apeda.gov.in/tenders>.
- In the event of any date indicated above being declared a holiday, the next working day shall become operative for the respective purpose mentioned above, in all events, APEDA shall communicate to all bidders in advance in electronic communication mode.

2.1 Data Sheet (Tender Ref. No. APEDA/SES/2025-26-0001)

1.	Name of the Organization:	Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)
2.	Method of selection & Minimum Qualifying Marks	<p>Three Stage Process (Technical Presentation, Technical evaluation and Financial evaluation) Combined Quality cum Cost Based Selection (QCBS).</p> <p>a) Weightages of 60:40 (60% for technical proposal and 40% for financial proposal)</p> <p>b) Minimum Qualifying marks in the technical Presentation would be 10 out of 20.</p> <p>c) Total qualifying marks in technical evaluation and presentation 60% i.e 36 out of 60.</p>
3.	Documents part of RFP	<p>The RFP consists of the following:</p> <p>Section 1 - The Letter of Invitation</p> <p>Section 2 - Instructions to Bidders</p> <p>Section3 - Terms of Reference</p>
4.	Pre-Qualification Criteria	<p>As per clause 2.2 of the RFP.</p> <p>Documentary proof with respect to the pre-qualification criteria is essential without which the proposal will be rejected. Technical and Financial evaluation will be done only for the bidders satisfying the pre-qualification criteria</p>
5.	Mode of Tender	Mode of tender: Offline
6.	Processing Fee	The Bidder must furnish a non-refundable Application cum processing fee of INR 20,000/- (Rupees Twenty thousand only, including GST) in Indian Rupees in the form of bankers cheque or demand draft favoring: Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, Delhi.
7.	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	<p>Interest-free EMD in the form of DD for Rs. 2,00,000/- (Rupees Two Lakhs) drawn in favor of "APEDA" payable at New Delhi.</p> <p>The EMD received from unsuccessful bidder will be returned after the selection process is complete. [Exemption from submission of EMD to NSIC & MSME registered agency will be applicable as per Govt. rules]</p>

8.	Technical and Financial Proposals requested:	As per Clause 2.3 and Clause 2.4 of the RFP, respectively.
9.	Name, objectives, and description of the assignment:	As detailed in Terms of Reference (SECTION 3: Terms of Reference)
10.	Pre-bid conference:	Refer: Important Dates page no. 8
11.	Clauses on fraud and corruption in the contract:	Refer Clause 2.11 of Section 2 page no. 18
12.	Address for requesting clarification and submission of any other information in accordance with the terms of the RFP	Dr. Sudhanshu Secretary 3rd Floor, NCUI Building 3, Siri Institutional Area, August Kranti Marg, (Opp.Asiad Village), New Delhi - 110 016 Email:- sudhanshu[AT]apeda[DOT]gov[DOT]in Phone:- +91- 011- 41486017
13.	Address to submit the proposal by the service provider is:	The envelope containing bid documents should include 3 separate sealed covers meant for 1. eligibility and Technical Presentation Password, 2. Technical Proposal 3. Financial Proposal Address: To The Secretary Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), 3rd Floor, NCUI Building, Siri Institutional Area, August Kranti Marg, New Delhi – 110016
14.	Language(s) of the submitted proposals:	English The Contract to be signed with the successful Agency shall be written in the English language, which shall be the language that shall govern the contractual relations between APEDA and the successful Agency.
15.	Taxes:	As per Clause 2.34.2 of Section 2 Fee payable by APEDA to the selected bidder under the Contract shall be inclusive of all taxes and duties, as more particularly set out under the terms of the Contract.
16.	Bidder to state cost in the national currency	Cost to be stated in Indian Rupees
17.	Proposals must remain valid until:	60 days from last date of bid submission
18.	Tender Cycle	Please refer for all Important Dates Section as well as visit APEDA website (https://apeda.gov.in/tenders) for time to time updates related to this tender.
19.	Period of Engagement	Till satisfactory completion of the assignment

2.2 Pre-Qualification Criteria

A pre-qualification criterion will be applied to short-list the bidders for technical and financial evaluation. The criteria along with the supporting documents required are listed below:

Sl. No	Pre-Qualification Criteria (cutoff date would be 31.03.2025 for all experience calculations)
1.	The applicant must be an Indian legal entity (Proprietorship, Partnership Firm or Company) having its registered office in India and must be in existence for a minimum of two years.
2.	The Entity Must have a valid GST registration in India.
3.	The entity must be regular in filing of its return of income.
4.	At least one of the Key leaderships (partners/proprietor/directors) should individually have minimum 15 years of industry experience.
5.	The entity must have an average annual turnover of at least Rs.1 crore in the last two financial years.
6.	The entity should possess domain experience in two or more of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business advisory• Investment banking• Sales and marketing• Mergers & Acquisitions• Export enablement• Incubation and acceleration programs
7.	The entity should have worked with at least three start-ups, supporting them in growth, scaling, process improvement, or fundraising.
8.	The entity should demonstrate experience working with innovative start-ups or those with intellectual property (IP).
9.	The entity should have a proven track record of engagement with investors, including venture capital and private equity funds and must have arranged capital of at least rupees ten crores per startup.
10.	The entity should not have been suspended/ debarred/ blacklisted by APEDA or by any Department/Organization/Public Sector Undertakings on the date of opening of RFP.
11.	No Undisputed statutory demand should be pending against the entity.

12.	APEDA has estimated a total minimum cost of assignments ranging between Rs. 45,00,000/- to 50,00,000/-. Accordingly APEDA is of the view that the applicant quoting a fee of less than the lower ceiling of the range of estimate shall be outrightly rejected. However the normalization of financial bids shall be made on the basis of upper ceiling of the range i.e Rs.50,00,000/- (Fifty Lakhs only) . The fee mentioned here is the base fee and GST shall be paid in addition to the fee.
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The documentary evidence must be submitted with respect to each criterion. The eligibility of the entity will be decided on the basis of the documents submitted by the entity. If the required documents are not submitted by the bidders, the bids submitted by the bidder concerned will be rejected and not processed further.

2.3 Technical Evaluation

- a) The appointment methodology comprises a three-stage process, involving technical presentation, technical evaluation and financial bidding.
- b) The first stage of technical evaluation will involve assessing the eligible bidders based on a comprehensive presentation detailing their approach to evaluation, categorization, and acceleration support for agri start-ups and enterprises under APEDA's Start-up and Export Support Program. The presentation should highlight the entity's relevant experience, leadership capabilities, and track record in similar initiatives. This stage shall carry 20 marks, out of total 60 marks assigned for technical evaluation. To qualify for the next stage, the bidders must obtain 10 out of 20 marks. The bidders have to submit a detailed presentation covering the standing of the organization including but not limited to its experience, manpower and other aspects. Furthermore, a PPT containing the proposed methodology. The presentation is required to be forwarded through password protected email on the email ID mentioned in the data sheet above, the password to open the mail is to be mentioned in the envelope containing the documents in support of eligibility criteria. The evaluation committee, after evaluating the presentation, will select such number of bidders as it deems for presentation and interview for awarding the score out of 20 marks reserved for presentation stage.
- c) The second stage of technical evaluation shall involve the allocation of marks on the following basis:

S. No.	Parameters	Score	Max Marks
1	Existence of the Entity - No. of years		10
	• less than two years	Disqualified	
	• 02 years	05	
	• Above 02 years	10	
2	Number of Key leadership (partners/proprietor/directors) individually having minimum 15 years of industry experience		5
	• Less than 1 individual	Disqualified	
	• 1 individual	3	
	• More than 1 individual	5	
3	Experience of the Entity		
	a) <u>Domain experience</u>		5
	• Less than 02 nos	Disqualified	
	• 02 nos	2	
	• More than 02 nos. (1 points each for each experience , maximum 3 points)	3	
	b) Experience of working with startups		5
	• Less than 3 assignments	Disqualified	
	• 03 assignments	3	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 03 assignments (1 points each for each experience , maximum 2 points) 	2	
4	Average Turnover of the Entity (Annual Average for last 2 Years)		15
	Turnover less than 100 Lakhs	0	
	Turnover between 100 Lakhs to 150 Lakhs	10	
	Turnover more than 150 lakhs	15	
	Maximum Marks		40

- d) Firms securing 36 or more marks (out of total 60 i.e 20+40) in technical bid only will be eligible for the next stage of financial evaluation.
- e) Technical Bids of applicants will be evaluated based on the eligibility criteria as mentioned earlier, after scrutinizing all the relevant documents as sought from the bidders and as per the methodology given below.
- f) Quality, competence, and reliability of the entity is of paramount importance in this assignment. The APEDA shall notify those bidders whose proposals do not meet the minimum qualifying criteria or were considered non-responsive to the tender conditions. The APEDA shall simultaneously notify the bidders who have secured the minimum qualifying marks, indicating the date and time set for opening of the financial bids. The notification will be sent by electronic mail.
- g) Other Conditions
- The proposal should be signed & properly Indexed with heading & page numbering and supporting documents should be attached as annexures except Financial Bid. An authorized representative of the bidder shall sign the original submission letters in the required format and shall initial all pages. The authorization shall be in the form of a written power of attorney.
 - Falsification/suppression of information shall lead to disqualification of the bidder/cancellation of contract ever after award of work during the tenure of the contract.
 - Canvassing or offer of an advantage or any other inducement by any person with a view to influencing acceptance of a bid will be an offer under relevant laws as applicable in the matter. Such action will result in the rejection of bid, in addition to other punitive measures.
 - APEDA is not bound to accept the lowest bidder tender and reserves the right to accept either in full or in part any tender or to reject any or all the tenders received without assigning any reason thereof.
 - Conditional tenders will not be accepted and will be summarily rejected.

2.4 Financial Evaluation & Combined Scores

Financial Evaluation:

1. Public Opening and Evaluation of Financial Proposals: After the technical evaluation is completed, the bidders shall be informed in writing (The notification will be sent by electronic mail) about the opening of Financial Proposals.
2. The financial bids shall be opened publicly in the presence of the bidders representatives who choose to attend (only one representative per bidder). The name of the bidder, the quality score and the offered prices shall be read aloud and recorded when the financial bids are opened.
3. The name of the bidders whose technical proposal is found responsive (i.e. identified bench mark) shall be read out. The Financial Proposal of the bidders who meet the minimum qualifying mark will then be inspected to confirm that they have remained sealed and unopened.
4. These Financial Proposals of the bidders who meet the qualifying mark as indicated in the Data Sheet shall be then opened, and the prices read aloud and recorded.
5. Financial proposals of only those bidders will be evaluated, who secure a minimum of 60% marks in the technical evaluation. The proposal with the lowest total bid value (Part A and Part B) shall be given a financial score of 100 and other proposals given financial scores that are inversely proportional to their total bid value.
6. 100 Points will be awarded to the bidder with the Lowest Total Financial Bid Quotation (LTFBQ) and the rest of the bidders will be awarded points inversely proportional to the LTFBQ.

Formula: - $(LTFBQ/TFBQ) * 100$

LTFBQ: Lowest Total Financial Bid Quotation ; TFBQ: Total Financial Bid Quotation
7. The bidder with total highest score shall be awarded with the contract.
8. In the event of Tie, the decision of the APEDA shall be final and binding.

2.5 Combined Evaluation

Evaluation of Bids shall be done under Combined Quality-cum-Cost Based System (QCBS). Under this system, the Technical Bid evaluation, i.e. Part-I, shall be allotted weightage of 60% while the Price (Financial) Bid evaluation shall be allotted the weightage of 40%. The bidder scoring the highest combined score will be declared H-1. The detailed methodology is described below.

The evaluation committee ("Evaluation Committee") appointed by **APEDA**, will carry out the technical evaluation of proposals based on the evaluation criteria as per para 2.3. Evaluators of Technical Proposals shall have no access to the financial Proposals until technical evaluation is concluded. Each evaluated proposal will be given a technical score.

The minimum criteria for technical qualification would be as follows

- a) Minimum qualifying technical marks to be obtained: 36 marks out of 60 marks as detailed above with atleast 10 marks in technical presentation stage of 20 marks. The bidders scoring less than 10 marks shall not be considered for further evaluation.
- b) Financial bid shall be opened for Technically qualified bidders who score 36 out of 60 marks above.

2.6 Financial Bid

The Price Bid shall be opened for technically qualified bidders only. The following methodology shall be adopted for evaluation of quoted price of Bidders who qualify in the technical bid evaluation.

2.7 Normalization of financial bid scores

The minimum quoted price among the technically qualified bids will be taken as base/reference rate for arriving at the evaluated marks for each qualified bidder. The evaluated marks for the lowest priced Bidder in Price Bid shall be 40. The following example illustrates the proposed methodology for arriving at the Financial Score of the Bidders:

Bidder	Quoted Amount in Rs. (assumed)	Financial Scores
A	100	$40 \times 50 / 100 = 20.00$
B	75	$40 \times 50 / 75 = 26.66$
C	65	$40 \times 50 / 65 = 30.76$
D	55	$40 \times 50 / 55 = 36.36$
E	45-50 Lakhs	$40 \times 50 / 50 = 40.00$

2.8 Final Score

The sum of the Technical Score and the normalized Financial Score as detailed above shall be the Total score for the bidders. The bidder with the highest Total Score shall be declared H1.

In the combined evaluation, thereafter, the evaluation committee will calculate the combined technical and financial score as under:

Bidder			Total (C=A+B)	Rank
	Technical Score (A)	Normalised Financial Scores (B)		
A	60.00	20.00	80.00	H5
B	55.00	26.66	81.66	H2
C	50.00	30.76	80.76	H4
D	45.00	36.36	81.36	H3
E	42.00	40.00	82.00	H1

2.9 Terms/ Detailed introduction of terms of Data Sheet

The selection of the bidder shall be made in accordance with the method of selection specified in the Data Sheet.

The bidders who found themselves eligible are invited to submit a proposal in two parts - the technical part and the financial part sealed separately, as specified in the Data Sheet, for services required for the assignment named in the Data Sheet. Late bids i.e., bids received after the specified date in the datasheet will not be considered. The Proposals submitted will be the basis for signing the contract with the selected bidder.

The bidders are required to submit a third sealed envelope marked as “Documents containing - Eligibility Criteria” containing a declaration about qualifying the eligibility criteria with supporting documentation and a banker’s cheque or demand draft of Rs. 20,000/- (Twenty thousand only, inclusive of GST) for processing fee to prove his eligibility to participate for the first stage of technical evaluation. The envelope must contain the password of the email containing the detailed presentation.

The Bidders are required to familiarize themselves with the local conditions and take them into account while preparing their proposals. To obtain first-hand information on the assignment and local conditions, bidders are advised to attend a pre-bid conference as specified in the Data Sheet (Point No. 17). Attending the pre-bid conference is optional. Bidders should contact APEDA representative named in the Data Sheet (Point 11) to obtain additional information on the pre-bid conference.

Bidders shall bear all costs in connection with the preparation and submission of their proposals, attending the pre-bid conference, etc.

APEDA may accept or reject any proposal at its discretion and may ask for any additional information or vary its requirements, add to, or amend the terms, procedure and protocol set out in RFP for

bonafide reasons, which will be notified to all the Bidders invited to tender.

Further, APEDA hereby reserves its right to annul the selection process at any time before the contract award without incurring any liability towards the Tenderers.

2.10 Documents part of RFP

The Request for Proposal (RFP) document for the project consists of the following sections:

SECTION 1: Letter of Invitation

SECTION 2: Instruction to Bidders

SECTION 3: Terms of Reference

The prospective bidders are expected to examine all instructions, forms, terms, requirements, and other information in the RFP documents. Failure to furnish all information required as mentioned in the RFP documents or submission of a proposal not substantially responsive to the RFP documents in every respect will be at the prospective bidder's risk and may result in rejection of the proposal.

2.11 Fraud / Corruption and Proposal Details

The Bidders and their respective officers, employees, agents and advisers shall observe the highest standard of ethics during the Bidding Process and during the subsistence of the contract. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained herein, or in the contract, the APEDA may reject a Bid, or terminate the Contract, as the case may be, without being liable in any manner whatsoever to the Bidder, if it determines that the Bidder has, directly or indirectly or through an agent, engaged in corrupt practice, fraudulent practice, coercive practice, undesirable practice or restrictive practice in the Bidding Process. In such an event, the APEDA shall be entitled to take an appropriate action, as the case may be, as Damages, without prejudice to any other right or remedy that maybe available to the APEDA under the Bidding Documents and/ or the Contract, or otherwise. Without prejudice to the rights of the APEDA herein above and the rights and remedies which the APEDA may have under the contract, or otherwise if a Bidder is found by the APEDA to have directly or indirectly or through an agent, engaged or indulged in any corrupt practice, fraudulent practice, coercive practice, undesirable practice or restrictive practice during the Bidding Process, or during the execution of the Contract, such Bidder shall not be eligible to participate in any tender or RFQ / RFP CUM-RFP issued by the APEDA during a period of 2 (two) years from the date such Bidder is found by the APEDA to have directly or indirectly or through an agent, engaged or indulged in any corrupt practice, fraudulent practice, coercive practice, undesirable practice or restrictive practices, as the case maybe.

- a) "corrupt practice" means the offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting, directly or indirectly, of anything of value to influence the actions of any person connected with the Bidding Process (for avoidance of doubt, offering of employment to or employing or engaging in any manner whatsoever, directly or indirectly, any official of the APEDA who is or has been associated in any manner, directly or indirectly, with the Bidding Process or has dealt with matters concerning the contract or arising therefrom, before or after the execution thereof, at any time prior to the expiry of one year from the date such official resigns or retires from or otherwise ceases to be in the service of the APEDA, shall be deemed to constitute influencing the actions of a person connected with the bidding process.

- b) "fraudulent practice" means a misrepresentation or omission of facts or suppression of facts or disclosure of incomplete facts, in order to influence the Bidding Process;
- c) "coercive practice" means impairing or harming, or threatening to impair or harm, directly or indirectly, any person or property to influence any person's participation or action in the Bidding Process;
- d) "undesirable practice" means
 - (i) establishing contact with any person connected with or employed or engaged by the APEDA with the objective of canvassing, lobbying or in any manner influencing or attempting to influence the Bidding Process; or
 - (ii) having a Conflict of Interest; and
- e) "Restrictive Practice" means forming a cartel or arriving at any understanding or arrangement among Bidders with the objective of restricting or manipulating a full and fair competition in the Bidding Process.

2.12 Only one Proposal

Bidders will submit only one proposal. If a Bidder submits or participates in more than one proposal, all such proposals shall be disqualified. Joint venture or Consortium strictly not allowed.

2.13 Use of name, logo or official seal of APEDA

The Successful Bidder shall not advertise or otherwise make public the fact that it is a service provider to the APEDA, nor shall the Successful Bidder, in any manner whatsoever use the name, logo or official seal of APEDA, or any abbreviation of the name of APEDA or the in connection with its business or otherwise.

2.14 Proposal Validity

The Data Sheet (Point No. 16) indicates how long Bidders' proposals must remain valid after the submission date. During this period, Bidders shall ensure the availability of professional staff nominated in the proposal. Should the need arise, APEDA may request Bidders to extend the validity period of their proposal. Bidders who agree to such extension shall confirm that they maintain the availability of the professional staff nominated in the Proposal, or their confirmation of the extension of validity of the Proposal, Bidders could submit new staff in replacement, which would be considered in the final evaluation for Contract award. Bidders, who do not agree, have the right to refuse to extend the validity of their proposals.

2.15 Law Governing Services

The Successful Bidder shall perform the Services in accordance with the Applicable Law and shall take all practicable steps to ensure the deliverables as per the scope of Work, at any stage subletting the work or engagement of Sub-consultants are strictly prohibited.

2.16 Preparation of Proposals

The Proposal as well as all related correspondence exchanged by the bidders and APEDA, shall be written in the language (s) specified in the Data Sheet (Point No. 13).

In preparing the Proposal, bidders are expected to examine in detail all the documents comprising the RFP. Material deficiencies in providing the information requested may result in rejection of a Proposal.

Language: Documents to be issued by the bidders, as part of this assignment must be in English.

The Bid may be signed either by the Principal Officer of the Agency or his duly Authorized Representative, in which case the bid shall be accompanied by a certificate of authority. A bid which does not fulfill this criterion will be treated as non-est and will be liable to be rejected.

2.17 Reporting Arrangements

The Successful Bidder shall neither seek nor accept instructions from any authority external to the APEDA in connection with the performance of services under the Contract.

2.18 Clarification and Amendment of RFP Documents

Bidders may request for clarifications on any part of the RFP documents up to the number of days indicated in the Data Sheet before the proposal submission date. Any request for clarification must be sent in writing, or by standard electronic means to APEDA's address indicated in the Data Sheet. APEDA will respond in writing, or by standard electronic means and will send written copies of the response (including an explanation of the query but without identifying the source of inquiry) to all Bidders. Should APEDA deem it necessary to amend the RFP as a result of a clarification, it shall do so by the following procedure.

At any time before the submission of Proposals, APEDA may amend the RFP by issuing an addendum in writing or by standard electronic means. The addendum shall be uploaded on the APEDA website and will be binding on them. To give Bidders reasonable time in which to take an amendment into account in their Proposals, APEDA may, if the amendment is substantial, extend the deadline for the submission of Proposals.

Pre-bid conference: Pre-bid conference will be held as specified in the Data Sheet for clarifying issues and doubts, if any, concerning the subject matter of study. Inputs from the prospective bidders will also be sought if considered necessary.

2.19 Technical Proposal

Bidders are required to submit an original Full Technical Proposal to APEDA office on or before bid submission date with the subject "Technical Bid - *AGENCY NAME* - RFP Engagement of consulting and Advisory Firms"

Submission of the wrong type of Technical Proposal will result in the Proposal being deemed non-responsive.

Format of the letter to be submitted by the Bidder along with the Proposal

A brief description of the Bidders' organization and an outline of recent experience of the Bidder, assignments of a similar nature are required. For the assignment, the outline should indicate the names of Professional staff who participated, duration of the assignment, Contract amount, and bidder's involvement. Information should be provided only for those assignments for which the bidder was earlier awarded Contract as an individual Agency. Assignments completed by individual Professional staff working privately or through other Companies / Firms cannot be claimed as the experience of the bidder, or that of the Agency's associates, but can be claimed by the Professional staff themselves in their CVs. Bidders should be prepared to substantiate the claimed experience, if so, requested by APEDA.

The team composition by area of expertise, the position that would be assigned to each staff team member, and their tasks, if any

Information on conflicting activities, if any, should be given separately.

The Technical Proposal shall NOT include any financial information. A Technical Proposal containing financial information shall be declared non-responsive and will be rejected.

2.20 Financial Proposals

The bidder should submit the financial bid in a separate envelope (Sealed).

Financial Bids sharing /Unsealed submission shall be considered as unresponsive to the said RFP and shall not be considered for tech/financial evaluation, APEDA shall not bear any responsibility for damage of covers during the transit till submission to APEDA Office.

The quote should be in Indian Rupees and should be Inclusive of all taxes as applicable.

2.21 Conflict of Interest

APEDA's policy requires that bidders should provide professional, objective, and impartial advice and at all times hold APEDA's interest's paramount and strictly avoid conflicts with other assignments or their own corporate interests.

Without limitation on the generality of the foregoing, Companies, and any of their affiliates, shall be considered to have a conflict of interest and shall not be recruited, under any of the circumstances.

2.22 Conflicting activities

A entity that has been engaged to provide goods, works, or services for a project, and each of its affiliates, shall be disqualified from providing services related to those goods, works or services. Conversely, an entity hired to provide services for the project, and each of its affiliates, shall be disqualified from subsequently providing goods, works or services for such preparation or implementation.

2.23 Conflicting assignments

Neither consultants (including their personnel and sub-consultants) nor any of their affiliates shall be

hired for any assignment that, by its nature, may be in conflict with another assignment of the consultants. As an example, consultants hired to prepare engineering design for an infrastructure project shall not be engaged to prepare an independent environmental assessment for the same project, and consultants assisting a client in the privatization of public assets shall neither purchase nor advise purchasers of, such assets. Similarly, consultants hired to prepare Terms of Reference (TOR) for an assignment shall not be hired for the assignment in question.

2.24 Conflicting relationships

The bidder (including its personnel) that has a business or family relationship with any member of APEDA staff who is directly or indirectly involved in any part of (i) the preparation of the Terms of Reference of the assignment, (ii) the selection process for such assignment, or (iii) supervision of the Contract, may not be awarded a Contract, unless the conflict stemming from this relationship has been resolved in a manner acceptable to APEDA throughout the selection process and execution of the Contract.

Bidders have an obligation to disclose any situation of actual or potential conflict that impacts their capacity to serve the best interest of APEDA, or that may reasonably be perceived as having this effect. Failure to disclose the said situations may lead to the disqualification of the bidder or the termination of its Contract.

2.25 Termination Clause

If at any time, APEDA is not satisfied with the services provided by the firm, APEDA may terminate the contract after giving a reasonable notice and reasons of termination. The entity, if it wishes to terminate the services, had to provide two months' notice in advance with refund of the amount received till the date of termination. Both communications should be in writing by its authorized signatories (from both sides)

2.26 Confidentiality

Information relating to evaluation of Proposals and recommendations concerning awards shall not be disclosed to the bidders who submitted the Proposals or to other persons not officially concerned with the process. The undue use by any bidder of confidential information related to the process may result in rejection of its Proposal and adversely affect its future prospects.

The selected entity shall not disclose directly or indirectly any information's, materials and other details of the APEDA's infrastructure / systems / working methods or any, which may come to the possession or knowledge of the selected entity during the course of discharging contractual obligations in connection with this agreement / contract to any third party and shall at all times hold the same strictest confidence. The selected bidder shall treat the details of the contracts as private and confidential, except to the extent necessary to carry out the obligations under the contract or to comply with applicable laws. The selected bidder shall not publish, permit to be published, or disclose any particulars of the works in any trade or technical paper or elsewhere without the written consent of the APEDA.

Failure to observe the above shall be treated as breach of contract on the part of the firm and the APEDA shall take all appropriate actions, as required, to ensure that the obligations of non-disclosure of confidential information under this agreement are fully satisfied. The selected bidder obligations with respect to non-disclosure and confidentiality will survive the expiry or termination of the

agreement for whatever reason.

2.27 Authorization of signatory:

The Bid may be signed either by the Principal Officer of the Agency or his duly Authorized Representative, in which case he/she shall submit a certificate of authority. All certificates and documents (including any clarifications sought and any subsequent correspondences) received hereby, shall, as far as possible, be furnished and signed by the Representative or the Principal Officer. The Principal Officer/ authorized representative of the Agency shall sign the proposal and also initial all pages of the original Technical and Financial Proposals. The authorization shall be in the form of a written power of attorney accompanying the Proposal or in any other form demonstrating that the representative has been duly authorized to sign. The power or authorization, or any other document consisting of adequate proof of the ability of the signatory to bind the Bidder shall be annexed to the Bid.

2.28 Submission, Receipt, and Opening of Proposals

The original proposals need to be submitted to **APEDA** Office on or before bid submission date & time, Address as given below.

Address:

Agriculture and Processed Food Export Development Authority
3 rd Floor , NCUI Building, Siri Institutional Area,
August Kranti Marg, New Delhi 110016

It is proposed to have the following 2 bid System for this bid:

- a) Sealed Cover 1. Documents in support of Qualifying Criteria and Processing Fee
- b) Sealed Cover -2: Technical Bid/Proposal
- c) Sealed Cover -3: Financial Bid

The bid will be rejected if the financial bid is NOT sealed.

2.29 Proposal Evaluation

From the time the Proposals are opened and up to the time the contract is awarded, the bidders shall not contact APEDA on any matter related to its Technical and/or Financial Proposal. Any effort by bidder to influence APEDA in the examination, evaluation, ranking of Proposals, canvassing in any form or recommendation for award of Contract, may result in the rejection of the bidder's proposal.

Evaluators of Technical Proposals shall have no access to the Financial Proposals until the technical evaluation is concluded.

2.30 Evaluation of Technical Proposals

The Evaluation Committee shall evaluate the technical proposals only for those bidders who satisfy the pre-qualification criteria as referred in section 2.2. The technical proposals will be evaluated on the basis of their responses to the Terms of Reference, applying the evaluation criteria, sub-criteria, and point system. Evaluations will be based on two stages comprising of technical presentation and

documentary evidence submitted by the bidder with respect to technical evaluation criteria.

Each responsive proposal will be given a technical score (Ts). A Proposal shall be rejected at this stage if it does not respond to important aspects of the RFP, and particularly the Terms of Reference or if it fails to achieve the minimum technical score indicated in the Data Sheet. The Technical proposals which are unsigned, and incomplete shall not be evaluated.

The proposal shall be rejected if bidder does not fulfill the eligibility criteria, or the validity period of the proposal is less than 60 days.

2.31 Evaluation of Financial Proposals & Combined Scores.

Please refer section 2.4: Financial Evaluation & Combined Scores on Page 15

2.31.1 Information

Information relating to evaluation of Proposals and recommendations concerning awards shall not be disclosed to the bidders who submitted the Proposals or to other persons not officially concerned with the process. The undue use by any bidders of confidential information related to the process may result in the rejection of its Proposal and may adversely affect its future prospects.

2.31.2 Taxes

The bidder shall include in Bid Price all local taxes and duties as applicable on amounts payable by the Agency under the Contract. All taxes, duties, and other impositions as applicable in India shall always be deemed to be included in the Financial Proposal.

The Financial Proposal shall include all commercial implications and all applicable taxes should be included in the Financial Proposal

2.31.3 Award of Contract

The bidder securing the highest score in the Interview (Post completion of Technical & Financial rounds) will be considered for award of Contract.

APEDA shall award the Contract to the selected bidder by issue of Letter of Award (LOA) and notify the same on the website.

The selected bidder is expected to commence the assignment on the date and at the location specified in the LOA/ Contract/ Work Order. If the selected bidder does not sign the Contract within the stipulated period or does not submit the Performance Guarantee within time, the LOA/work order may be cancelled and EMD of bidder shall be forfeited and /or bidder may be debarred from any future participation with APEDA.

SECTION 3: Terms of Reference

3.1 Introduction

Background

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is a Statutory Authority established by the Government of India under the APEDA Act passed in December 1985. As the nodal agency for promoting agricultural and processed food exports from India, APEDA works with exporters, certification bodies, laboratories, producers, and trade stakeholders to ensure quality compliance and enable global market access for India's agricultural products.

To further this objective, APEDA is launching a Start-up and Export Support Program to identify, evaluate, and accelerate promising agri start-ups, and hereby invites Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified consulting and advisory firms to implement this initiative.

3.2 Objective and scope of the Assignment

APEDA along with DPIIT started with 7895 registered startups in the Agri and Processed Food products sector and established communication with all of them to associate with APEDA for Agri exports, for this purpose a detailed questionnaire was shared with all these startups of which around 930 responded back. All these were categorized RO wise and ROs of APEDA thereafter interacted with all these startups in Physical/Virtual mode. After interaction with APEDA ROs around 310 startups were shortlisted for further engagement on the basis of their export preparedness, profile, uniqueness of the idea, etc.

The key objective of this initiative is to evaluate approximately 500 startups and to identify a cohort of 50 potential agri start-ups and finally to 25 high-potential agri start-ups that can be made investment-ready and export-ready through a structured intervention.

Start-ups aligned with the following areas will be prioritized:

- Innovation and technology interventions in:
 - Quality control
 - Packaging, testing, and inspection
 - Sea protocols
 - Shelf-life enhancement
 - Post-harvest management
 - Cold chain and logistics
 - Blockchain, IoT, and Analytics in agriculture
 - New Product Development
 - Branding and marketing
- Export potential of APEDA-scheduled products
- Solutions that align with the “Make in India for the World” vision

The selected consulting entity will support APEDA in identifying, through a rigorous selection process, and enabling these start-ups to strengthen their business models, offerings, and readiness for scale, export, and funding.

In case sufficient suitable startups could not be identified from this list of 500 listed startups, APEDA will be at liberty to seek profiles of additional startups which after initial scrutiny will be shared with the selected entity.

3.1.1 Reports

The entity is required to submit regular reports in the format and in the interval as prescribed by the APEDA.

3.3 Payment Terms-

The payment would be as per the satisfactory submission of deliverables by the bidder duly approved APEDA.

Milestone	Performance Criteria	Payment Terms
Milestone 1: Initial Assessment and Planning	Submission of a detailed project plan, including timelines and initial assessment of the startups profile. The plan should outline the methodology for evaluation and categorization of startups and approach to create the cohort of 25 start-ups from the list of applications received by APEDA	20% of the contract
Milestone 2: Preliminary Evaluation and Shortlisting	Completion of the preliminary evaluation process for the startups and submitting the final shortlisted 50 potential agri start-ups to APEDA. The report should include a justification for the selection.	Next 20% of the contract, to make it 40%
Milestone 3: In-Depth Assessment and Final Selection	Conducting an in-depth assessment of the 50 shortlisted startups and finalizing the selection of 25 high-potential agri start-ups. Submission of a detailed report on the assessment process, including individual startup profiles, strengths, weaknesses, and their export readiness.	Next 20% of the contract, to make it 60%
Milestone 4: Development of Support Plan and Implementation	Development and submission of a structured intervention plan for the 25 selected startups, followed by the implementation of the support strategies. The plan should include tailored support strategies for business model enhancement, export readiness, and funding preparation.	Next 20% of the contract, to make it 80%

Milestone 5: Final Report and Recommendations	Submission of a final report detailing the outcomes, progress of the startups, and recommendations for future support. The report should include feedback from the startups.	Final 20% of the contract, to make it 100%
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1. The fee quoted in the financial bids shall be considered for undertaking the assignment for APEDA.
2. Taxes shall be leviable at the prevailing rates in accordance with applicable laws.
3. The fee specified in the financial bid would be applicable for the entire assignment covered under the present RFP.
4. TDS shall be deducted on applicable rates as per the prevailing laws i.e Income tax and GST.
5. The Quoted fee shall be final and irreversible. The payment shall be made electronically within a reasonable period after submission of bill / invoice by the firm. APEDA shall not be liable for any penalty for delay in payments for reasons beyond its control.
6. The GST component shall be paid as applicable and as per actual. For facilitating electronic transfer for funds, the service provider/selected bidder will be required to indicate the name of the Bank and branch, account number (i.e., bank names, IFSC Code and Bank A/c No.) and forward a cheque leaf duly cancelled to verify the details furnished. These details should also be furnished on the body of every bill submitted for payments by the service provider/selected bidder.

