Pre-bid queries on 'RFP for Identification of SP for Supply of Software, Implementation and Support for CAT for Question Bank Creation' by Staff Selection Commission (SSC)

S. No	Bidding Document Section	Bidding Document Reference Page Number	Content of the RFP requiring Clarification	Points of Clarification	Remarks/Suggestion	Comments/ Clarification of the Committee
1	3.4.2	27	The application should have the capability to author different types of questions such as multiple choice, fill in the blanks, Match the following etc.	Does the CAT software required to support question other than MCQ as well, as indicated in the point i.e. "Match the Following". In case it is not required, a suggestion is proposed.	The application should have the capability to author different types of questions such as multiple choice, fill in the blanks etc.	The application should have the capability to author only multiple choice questions including for 'fill in the blanks' questions. **(Corrigendum to be issued).**
2	3.4.2	27	The application should allow to upload questions in bulk including correct answers as well as one by one.	Does the CAA interface is expected to support uploading bulk questions and correct answers? If yes, is it correct to assume that the integration of such bulk load will be done through API and CAT will be limited to exposing such API to CAA service provider.		The bulk upload facility will be a part of CAT software. The format for bulk uploading will be decided mutually by SSC and CAT Service Provider.
3	3.8	36	Third Party Audit and certifications	Is it safe to assume that expense and cost incurred for certification from STQC, CERT IN will be reimbursed by SSC to CAT Vendor.		The cost of third party certification/audit before the '**GO LIVE'** stage will be borne by the vendor.
4	3.2.2.4	17	Question papers when shared with ECA central/local server must follow asymmetric encryption	As per the CAT Technology infrastructure in page 29, section 3.5.1, It is highlighted that 1. Encrypt data [questions/answer key etc..]using symmetric algorithm	Suggested change as follows:Question papers when shared with ECA central server must follow symmetric encryption.	1. Questions will be encrypted as per diagram given in 3.5.1 and explained in 3.2.2.4 in Vault. 2. Once question paper is generated based on the

				2. Encryption of data key used to encrypt data using asymmetric algorithmIn this scope point it is the question paper that is to encrypted using symmetric algorithm. Hence it is suggested to change the asymmetric encryption to symmetric encryption in this scope point.Also, is it correct to assumed that the CAT vendor will interface question paper with ECA central server, as rest of IT infrastructure will be outside the control of CAT vendor and shall be within the control of respective ECA vendor.		blueprint, this question paper will be encrypted using asymmetric encryption. 3. Yes, it is correct to assume that CAT Service Provider will interface with ECA Central Server for Question Paper Transmission. The Role of CAT Service Provider w.r.t. transmission of question paper ends once successfully delivered to ECA Central Server.
5	3.2.2.5	18	Assessment engine must support randomization logic along with the shuffling of answer option (e.g. for a same question the options in one series will be in different order then the other series) as per the SSC guidelines for each series before it is shared by Exam Conducting Agency. This is a futuristic requirement when decryption at candidate terminal is envisaged	Because it is futuristic requirement, is it correct to assume that as part of RFP scope the CAT vendor will share Questions for each shift with ECA central server. Hence, it is ECA responsibility to distribute the questions at candidate terminal as well as any randomization and/or shuffling of answer.		Yes, Understanding is correct.

| 6 | 3.5.4.3 | 30 | 3. Integration standards of question paper Distribution Framework component ofCAT must be shared and familiarized to the CBT SP, for them to integrate with it. Some of the key interfaces, but not limited to are:
a. CAT and CBT SP must define an approach of integration between CAT DFand CBT SP's central/local server as well as candidate terminal clientchanges for successful integration of question paper from vault to candidate terminal.
b. CAT to ensure that the keys for decrypting question paper is shared to CBT SP server after successful authenticate candidate login share by CBT SP server. This must be allowed only at the time of examination. | It is assumed that CAT SP will integrate the DF to ECA Central server and ECA will use its own IT infrastructure to distribute questions at candidate terminal. If this assumption is correct, a change in RFP statement is suggested. | Integration standards of question paper Distribution Framework component ofCAT must be shared and familiarized to the CBT SP, for them to integrate with it. Some of the key interfaces, but not limited to are:a. CAT and CBT SP must define an approach of integration between CAT DF and CBT SP's central/local server.b. CAT to ensure that the key to decrypt question paper is shared with CBT central server. This must be allowed only a predefined time before the examination, as per SSC rule. | Para-3.5.4.3, may be read as follows:

3. Integration standards of question paper Distribution Framework component ofCAT must be shared and familiarized to the CBT SP, for them to integrate with it. Some of the key interfaces, but not limited to are:
a. CAT and CBT SP must define an approach of integration between CAT DF and CBT SP's central/local server.
b. CAT to ensure that the keys for decrypting question paper is shared to CBT SP server. This must be allowed only at a pre-defined time before the examination as per SSC's direction.
(Corrigendum to be issued). |

| 7 | 7.4 | 76 | 1. 20% of One time charge quoted for item 1 of section 7.1.1 will be paid after delivery of Milestone 6. The rest 30% of item 1 of section 7.1.1 will be paid on successful completion of 1st live examination. The remaining 50% will be paid in equal installments on quarterly basis for remaining duration of the contract. | As this project represents a significant transformation, It is kindly requested to reconsider the payment terms and if possible to align it with some of deliverable in accordance with the releases/milestones outlined in section 3.9.2. | It is requested to change the point 1 of section 7.4 to.1. One time charge quoted for item 1 of section 7.1.1 will be paid in following percentage as per the following milestone:a) 20% will be paid on successful completion of Release 1 go-live (Milestone 4).b) 10% will be paid on successful completion of Release 2 go-live (Milestone 5).c) 10% will be paid on successful completion of Release 3 go-live (Milestone 6).d) 20% will be paid on successful completion of 1st live examination.e) 40% will be paid in equal installment on quarterly basis for remaining of contract period. | Contents of Para-7.4.1 may now be read as:

10% on signing of contract against Bank Guarantee, which would be refunded after 1st Live Examination.

15% of One time charge quoted for item 1 of section 7.1.1 will be paid after delivery of **Milestone 6**.

The rest **25%** of item 1 of section 7.1.1 will be paid on successful completion of **1st live examination**.

The remaining **50%** will be paid in **equal installments on quarterly basis** for remaining duration of the contract.
(Corrigendum to be issued). |

8	7.4	76	1. 20% of One time charge quoted for item 1 of section 7.1.1 will be paid after delivery of Milestone 6. The rest 30% of item 1 of section 7.1.1 will be paid on successful completion of 1st live examination. The remaining 50% will be paid in equal instalments on quarterly basis for remaining duration of the contract.	In a scenario where the milestone 6 is reached by CAT SP and from the factors outside the purview of CAT SP, live has prolonged the 1st live examination, it is requested can we cap the payment milestone linked to 1st live examination within a reasonable weeks.		Refer S. No. 7 above.
9	6.4	65	Ref: Point 4 of section 6.4 (Technical Evaluation Criteria with Marks] Net Profit (as % of Turnover) of the Company	RFP has not mentioned which FY year(s) the Net Profit (as % of Turnover) of the Company will be considered for technical scoring for point 4 of section 6.4 (Technical Evaluation Criteria with Marks]		Net Profit for the FY 2022-23. **(Corrigendum to be issued).**
10	6.4	69	Point 8 of section 6.4 (Technical Evaluation Criteria with Marks]Note :1 The features, functions and capabilities demonstrated during this demo will be integral part of bidders proposal and shall be submitted after the completion of the demonstration.	It is requested, if this points can be elaborated. That is what does SSC means by noting it.		Demonstration should cover the Scope of Work.

| 11 | 7.1.1 | 72 | Item No.1 - CAT Software Delivery: Cost of the project to execute and deliver all parts of SOW described in section 30. (excluding O&M scope described in sub-section 3.10) for the complete duration of the project, which is implementation period +five years from the milestone 6. | It is clear the item 1 to include all the costs of the project to execute and deliver till milestone 6. Could you please elaborate what is additional cost one should included for five years as mentioned in the clause, as O&M for five year is taken in Item 2 of section 7.1.1 | | It may now be read as:

CAT Software Delivery: Cost of the project to execute and deliver all parts of **SOW** described in section 3.0 (excluding O&M scope described in sub-section 3.10) up to Milestone 6 and 1st Live examination.
[One Time Charges]

(Corrigendum to be issued). |
| 12 | 7.1.1 | 72 | Item No. 2 - O &M: Services to execute and deliver the scope for O &M described in Section 3.10.

The O&M will start from after successful completion of Milestone 6 and 1st Live examination and price will be applicable for 5 years. [Annual Charges] | As the O&M is starting after Release 3 (Milestone 6), but the partial CAT infrastructure will be live with Release 1 onwards.

How is the O&M during the period between Release 1 and Release 3 is expected to addressed. | | O&M will start only after first live examination. All charges incidental before O&M will be part of One-Time Charge as per Clause 7.1.1 of the RFP. |

| 13 | 7.1.2 | 73 | Lowest Commercial bid will be determined on the basis of total project cost. The total project cost will be calculated based on the amount quoted in column "C" of the Commercial bid. Following will be considered for determining the absolute commercial bid of a bidder [sum of the following item 4(a) to 4(d)]:
a. One-time charges quoted at Item No (1) of Section 7.1.1 (Say P1). Then the bid price for this item will be P1.Annual rates as quoted at Item No (2) of Section 7.1.1 (Say P2) applicable for five years. Then the bid price for these items will be P2*5. | From the context it seems there is typo in this point. | Lowest Commercial bid will be determined on the basis of total project cost. The total project cost will be calculated based on the amount quoted in column "C" of the Commercial bid. Following will be considered for determining the absolute commercial bid of a bidder [sum of the following item 4(a) to 4(b)]:a. One-time charges quoted at Item No (1) of Section 7.1.1 (Say P1). Then the bid price for this item wil be P1.b. *Annual rates as quoted at Item No (2) of Section 7.1.1 (Say P2) applicable for five years. Then the bid price for these items wil be P2*5.* | It may now be read as:

4. Lowest Commercial bid will be determined on the basis of total project cost. The total project cost will be calculated based on the amount quoted in column "**C**" of the Commercial bid. Following will be considered for determining the absolute commercial bid of a bidder [sum of 4(a) and 4(b)]:

a. *One-time charges quoted at Item No (1) of Section 7.1.1 (Say P1). Then the bid price for this item will be **P1.***

b. *Annual rates as quoted at Item No (2) of Section 7.1.1 (Say P2) applicable for three years. Then the bid price for these items will be **P2*3**.*

(Corrigendum to be issued). |
| 14 | 4.4 | 49 | Last date for receipt of proposals in response to RFP Notice | Because the submission date is during the Diwali week and most of the strength off during this week. It is suggest to please extend the submission timeline by 2 weeks. | | No Change |

| 15 | 5.13 | Page 55 of 86 | 1. Bidders shall submit, along with their Bids, EMD of Rs. 25,00,000/- (Rupees Twenty Five Lakhs Only) in the form of a Demand Draft/Bank Guarantee issued by any Scheduled bank in favor of the SSC, payable at New Delhi, valid for a period of 225 days from the last date of the bid submission of the RFP. Format of EMD is provided at Annexure-8.2. Alternatively, in lieu of EMD, the bidders may also submit 'Bid Securing Declaration' accepting that if they withdraw or modify their Bids during the period of validity, or if they are awarded the contract and they fail to sign the contract, or to submit a performance security before the deadline defined in the RFP, they will be suspended for the period of three years from being eligible to submit Bids for contract by Staff Selection Commission. Format of Bid Securing Declaration is available at Annexure- 8.3. | | Can there be a reduction/exemption on the EMD for MSMEs? | This category is not under any MSME listed category. Hence, relaxation cannot be provided. |

16	6.3	Page 63 of 86	The bidder should have successfully completed (until Go-Live Stage) of software development/implementation project within the last three financial years (2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23) in Banking/Financial Services/Fintech/Securities/Communication etc. At least one (1) projects with nature, and complexity similar to the scope of requirements described in Section 3 (Statement of Work). Similar means that the project should meet two or all of the following:	Banking/Financial Services/Fintech/Securities/Communication etc.	Can Edtech/Capacity Building be included in this list	Yes (Edtech/ Capacity Building is included) **(Corrigendum to be issued).**
17	6.3	Page 63 of 86	i. End-to-end project services including architecture design, sizing, installation, solution design, development and testing and commissioning (go-live).ii. Large deployment (minimum 1 Crore plus subscribers/customers or more than 2000 users of the software)		We have successfully completed and Currently underway some Large Country Scale Govt programs satisfying criteria i & ii specially in Edtech domain (e.g. iGOT, Diksha, UPSMF etc.) but its not part of Banking/Financial Services/Fintech/Secuirities/Communication etc. Shall we go ahead and submit the same since it satisfies criteria i and ii?	Yes
18	3.1	Page 39 of 86	The bidder shall prepare a detailed O&M plan		is the support required for O&M 16 X 5, 12 X 5, 12 X 7 or 16 X 7 ?	Normal O&M support will be required in office working hours i.e. from 09:30AM to 06:00PM, on 05 days a week. However, uploading of

						question papers will have to be ensured 30mins to 06 hours before the start of the examination as per the required of the SSC. In addition, uploading of question papers may be required on Saturdays, Sundays, Holidays as per the schedule of the examinations of the Commission. Further, the system must be in working condition all the times. If any issue is there in the system, it has to be attended as and when required.
19	7.2	Page 74 of 86	2. Final Composite Score of the bidder will be calculated as per the following formula: Final Composite Score = TS * 0.70 + FN * 0.30	Final Composite Score = TS * 0.70 + FN * 0.30	Can this be made to Final Composite Score = TS * 0.80 + FN * 0.20	No Change
20	7.4	Page 76 of 86	20% of One time charge quoted for item 1of section 7.1.1 wil be paid after delivery of Milestone 6. The rest 30% of item 1of section 7.1.1 wil be paid on successful completion of 1st live examination. The remaining 50% will be paid in equal instalments on quarterly basis for remaining duration of the contract.	We are a MSME company and cash flow is very important for us to sustain	We propose the following Payment terms for Item 1:- 1. 20% on contract Signing 2. 30% on Release 2 Go Live 3. 30% on Release 3 Go Live 4. 20% on 1st Live Examination	Refer S. No. 7 above.
21	3.1	Page 40 of 86	Bidder shall provide for adequate manpower L1, L2, L3 support of the platform		How many members will depend upon the criticality of the support, Please let us know the support hours that will be required?	Support hours will be as per clarification given at S. No. 18 above.

22	3.1	Page 40 of 86	Bidder shall provide for adequate manpower L1, L2, L3 support of the platform		Would SOC/NOC be required for the upkeep of the infrastructure from the bidder? will it be 24/7?	As per the Statement of Work of RFP.
23	3.2.2.1	Page 14 of 86	Content Authoring Framework		Could you help us explain with identified Assessment Framework for categorizing questions	There is no specific assessment framework. It has to be developed by the service provider as per the requirement of Question Bank. The bidders may go through notice of various examinations of the Commission, to understand the syllabus etc.
24	3.2.2.1	Page 15 of 86	Content Authoring Framework		Could we propose Type of Questions to be supported is only MCQ as mentioned during the pre bid conference?	Only MCQ.
25	3.2.2.1	Page 15 of 86	Content Authoring Framework		Is Language Translation Enablement is core part of this scope or do we need to propose any tools for Translation, this was a question raised during the pre-bid and it was clarified that translation will be done by the authoring agencies, pls confirm in writing	Language translation tool is not in the scope of RFP. However, the software should be able to store the questions in all the languages mentioned in the Schedule-VIII of the Constitution of India.
26	3.2.2.3	Page 16 of 86	C-Vault Deduplication		How Critical it is to support de duplication of Questions with atmost accuracy? It is possible to frame questions of similar intent with different choice of words and illustrations	Deduplication is limited to text in the current scope of work.

27	Technical proposal - other requirements - Final evaluation of bids (section 7.2)	74	Final evaluation of bids	Given the highly complex nature of this assignment, as well as the large scope and the extensive features and functionalities to be considered in the overall system, we would request that evaluation weightages for the technical and commercial aspects be kept as 80:20. This will enable the evaluation to focus on technical responses of the highest quality.		No Change
28	Bid opening and evaluation process - Pre-qualification criteria, S.no 6 (section 6.3)	62	The bidder should have an annual turnover of at least Rs 20 Crore from software development and/or software services in each of the last three financial years (FY 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23).	The project's large scale and scope necessitates that the chosen firm should be able to partner with SSC throughout the 3 years and beyond. Therefore, we would request that the turnover criteria be increased to at least Rs. 500 crores. This will ensure continued financial viability of the chosen partner throughout the course of the mandate.		No change
29	Instructions for submission of the bid (section 5.31)	60	Consortium in any form in not allowed in this bid process and the Service Provider shall not subcontract services.	We would request that subcontracting be allowed so that we are able to bring the best competencies available to ensure the success of the project. Please note that the final responsibility for all deliverables would like on the bidder in case of subcontracting, and SSC will need to coordinate with only one entity (the bidder)		No Change