GUIDELINES FOR INVITING RFP BY UTILITIES FOR SELECTION OF IT CONSULTANTS (ITC) FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PART A OF R-APDRP

1. Purpose

The purpose of these Guidelines is to define the MOP/ PFC's policies and procedures for selecting, contracting, and monitoring consultants required for implementation of IT projects under Part A of R-APDRP that are financed by GOI through Nodal Agency (PFC)

2. Appointment of IT Consultant

The Utility is responsible for preparing and implementing the project, and therefore for selecting the consultant and awarding and subsequently administering the contract. There shall be one consultant for the entire Utility. However, in the States, where multiple distribution utilities exist, the State Government should explore the possibility of engaging a single IT Consultant to optimize the implementation cost, maintain uniformity of approach and interoperability among all the distribution utilities of the State.

The consultant shall be selected through limited competitive bidding process from the list of consultants empanelled by Power Finance Corporation and the list of which is available in PFC website.

Utilities may appoint an IT Consultant from the empanelled list or can themselves undertake the responsibility of IT Consultant, if they have the requisite in-house expertise for studying the Model SRS document, utility's business processes and preparation of project DPRs for Part-A work of R-APDRP. Hiring of IT Consultants is not mandatory. However, PFC shall reimburse the cost of IT Consultant only if it has been appointed through competitive bidding from the empanelled ITCs declared by PFC. Appointment of only one IT Consultant per Utility is permitted under R-APDRP.

Eligibility criteria have been restated in the RFP document which shall form the basis for technical evaluation of bidders. Utility, whatever the case may be, is not allowed to select bidders from outside the empanelled list of IT Consultant if the same is intended to be appointed under R-APDRP.

3. PFC Review, Assistance, and Monitoring

The PFC reserves the right to review the Utility's hiring of consultants to satisfy itself that the selection process is carried out in accordance with the provisions of these Guidelines. Without assuming the responsibilities of the Utility or the consultants, PFC staff shall monitor the work as necessary to satisfy themselves that it is being carried out according to appropriate standards and is based on acceptable data.

4. Creation of an IT Cell

Utility shall create an IT Cell comprising of team of IT experts having relevant qualifications, experience and background in the field of system integration and IT implementation. This team shall be involved from concept to commissioning of the system and shall also be the Nodal Department/Group from the Utility for all issues related to implementation of the project. This team shall closely work with ITC in preparation of DPRs, preparation of ITIA RFP, evaluation of technical bids, monitoring of project execution etc.

5. The Selection Process

The selection of IT consultant shall be through a limited competitive bidding process considering quality and cost based selection among empanelled IT consultants of PFC.

It involves a competitive process among empanelled ITC that takes into account the quality of the proposal and the cost of the services in the selection of the successful ITC. The relative weight shall be given to the quality and cost as per Evaluation Methodology mentioned in RFP.

The selection process shall be completed within 15-25 days. It includes following steps:

(A) Preparation and issuance of the RFP [after customizing the same to include utility specific requirement, description of the project/ assignment];
(B) Receipt of proposals;
(C) Evaluation of technical (about 5 days) & price proposals (1 day)
(D) Award of the contract to the selected firm.

(A) Preparation and Issuance of the Request for Proposals (RFP)

- **RFP Document: -** The Utility shall use the Model Bid Document for appointment of ITC issued by the PFC, which include the Instruction to Bidder, Bid Data Sheet, Scope of Work, Bid Evaluation Methodology, GCC and SCC.

- **Customization of RFP Document:-** The Model Bid Document issued by PFC shall be customized by utility by adding the utility specific information provided in RFP (mentioned in table below) to address utility specific information and details of the state / utility and scheme areas.

Section in Model Bid Document	Details
About the Utility	<Write-up by Utility detailing the Background of the Utility and Context and Situation of the Utility with regard to the present project>
Section-I: Instruction to Bidders	
Clause 2	Name of the Utility
Clause 3	Website of the Utility
Clause 4	Address for Submission of Bids
Clause 5	Venue for Pre-Bid Conference
Clause 9	Number of Copies of RFP
Clause 10	Purchase of RFP
Clause 16	Submission of RFP <Address & place to be specified by the Utility>, <Date to be specified by the Utility>
Section II: Data Sheet	
Clause 1.1	The name of Assignment
Clause 1.2	The name of the Owner
Clause 1.7	The address for submission of bids
Clause 1.8	Bid Security / Earnest Money Deposit (EMD): Only details of drawee bank can be filled. The value of EMD cannot be modified by the Utility.
Clause 1.9	The date and time of submission of Bids
Clause 1.10	Bid Opening Date
Section IV: Scope of Work	
Clause 1	Role of IT Consultant (Only to reduce or elaborate the role)
Clause 2	Physical Area of Work
Section VI: GCC	
Clause 7: location	<area / location to be defined by the Utility>
Clause 13: Governing Law	<City of Head office of the Utility>
Section VII: SCC	
Clause 1.3	Website <to be mentioned by Utility>
Clause 1.5	<Address, Phone, Fax, Email, etc.>
Entire Document	<Utility>, <Name of Utility>, <Utility HQ>
Entire Document	<State>

The Model Bid Document is provided with the exhaustive list of roles to be played by an ITC (Section IV of RFP) in the Utility for executing this program. Utility is not allowed to increase the roles of ITC under this program. However, it can either reduce the roles of ITC for some specific reasons or further elaborate the roles to bring in more clarity in the Model Bid Document.

- **Deviations taken:** The Utility should declare in writing to the Nodal Agency all the deviations taken along with rational for the same. Utility is not required to seek or obtain approval from the Nodal Agency before tendering process. However, Nodal Agency reserves the right to seek clarification from the Utility and take any other action at any stage in case the deviations are not acceptable.

- **Limited Tendering: -** RFPs will be circulated only to the IT Consultants empanelled by Nodal Agency. Communication about the RFP has to be sent to all the empanelled IT Consultants by means of fax, email etc. The RFP document released by the Utility should be placed on Utility's website in PDF format on the date of issue of the RFP as well as forward to PFC for uploading on their Web-site.

- **Single Stage, two Envelope Procedure:** Bidders should submit two sealed envelopes simultaneously, one containing the Technical Proposal and the other the Price Proposal, enclosed together in an outer single envelope. Initially, only the Technical Proposals are opened at the date and time advised in the Bidding Document. The Price Proposals remain sealed and are held in custody by the utility. The Technical Proposals shall be evaluated by the utility. No amendments or changes to the Technical Proposals are permitted. The objective of the exercise is to allow the utility to evaluate the Technical Proposals without reference to price for transparency.

- **Corrigendum:** Utility can only issue corrigendum to amend RFP document related to the information mentioned in (A) above.

(B) Receipt of Proposals

Utility shall provide appropriate time to the bidders to submit their bids. The same shall be mentioned in the RFP Document. The technical and financial proposals shall be submitted at the same time. No amendments to the technical or financial proposal shall be accepted after the deadline.

(C) Evaluation of Proposals: Consideration of Quality and Cost

Utility shall carry out preliminary and technical evaluation with the help of IT Consultant. However, Utility shall not involve ITC in Price Evaluation of the Bids and would keep it confidential.

Preliminary Evaluation: The technical proposals will be reviewed for deviations, acceptance of terms and conditions, adherence to scope of work, formats required, purchase of bid document etc., In case of non compliance on any of the above, bids will be considered as technically non-responsive.

Technical Evaluation: The Approach & Methodology, the project experience, CV credentials of the team etc., would be evaluated and scores would be given (out of 100). The technical evaluation for the role of IT Consultant by the Utility should be in line with the Section-III: Qualifying Requirements.

Price Bid Evaluation: Financial Proposals of only such firms whose offers have been declared Technically Responsive will be opened by Utility without involving IT Consultant. The Financial Proposals of Technically Responsive Bidders will be evaluated in line with the provisions of RFP.

(D) Award of Contract

Combined technical & price score shall be calculated on the basis of formula mentioned in RFP. Contracts shall be awarded only to the bidder with the highest Total Score. After the award of contract, the Utility shall inform PFC the name of successful consultant and list of key staff (resources) identified for the project so that PFC can publish the same on their website for information of other utilities who intend to appoint ITC for the same purpose under R-APDRP.

6. Confidentiality

Information relating to price evaluation of proposals and recommendations concerning appointment of ITC to other persons not officially concerned with the process. Final contract value shall be disclosed on PFC as well as Utility's website.