

CPV Division
Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India

No.Q/OI/433/01/2016

11 July, 2018

Notice-1

Subject : Response to queries received from prospective bidders in connection with E-tender for providing Attestation/Apostille Support Services 2018 for the CPV Division, Ministry of External Affairs.

As indicated in the E-tender document for providing Attestation/Apostille Support Services, 2018 for the CPV Division, Ministry of External Affairs, the pre-bid conference with the representatives of prospective bidders was held on 3rd July, 2018 at 1030 hrs at Conference Room, Ground Floor, Patiala House Annexe, Tilak Marg, New Delhi. During the pre-bid conference, various queries were raised by the prospective bidders. Queries were also received by e-mail from some prospective bidders. The response to these queries are tabulated and placed at Annexure 1. All concerned are requested to take note of the same while preparing their bids.

It is also informed that the last date for submission of online Technical bids is 17-07-2018 (1400 hrs) and the Technical Bids will be opened on 18-07-2018 at 1430 hrs in presence of representatives of various bidding companies (only one representative from each bidding company would be allowed to be present during the Technical Bid opening). The venue for opening of Technical Bids would be Room No.1063, A wing, Jawahar Lal Nehru Bhavan, Ministry of External Affairs, Maulana Azad Road, New Delhi.


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Enclosure : Annexure 1.

Annexure 1

CPV Division's response to queries received from prospective bidders

Sr. No.	Query/Clarification sought	Relevant section of RFP	Reply/clarification
1	Kindly provide average number of attestation application received daily during last three years at each of the 15 cities where centre is to be established.	Page 4 para II	Attestation/Apostille support centres do not exist presently in all 15 cities but centres has to be established in the new proposed system. Hence, centrewise data of applications received/processed could not be provided. Presently around 6,000 documents are received on daily basis at all 10 authorized offices of Ministry i.e. Attestation/OI Cell of MEA; Branch Secretariats in Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad & Kolkata and Regional Passport Offices in Bangalore, Chandigarh, Goa, Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram.
2	Kindly provide the details of the office (RPOs or Branch Sectt.) for each centre where applications are to be submitted.	Page 12 sub para xxiv	MEA HQ (Attestation/OI Cell, JLNB) will continue to render services for centres located in New Delhi. Four Branch Secretariats in Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad & Kolkata would render services to respective centres located in these four cities. Similarly 10 Regional Passport Offices i.e. in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Bhopal, Chandigarh, Goa, Kochi, Lucknow, Mumbai, Raipur and Thiruvananthapuram would render services to respective centres located in these ten cities.
3	Kindly confirm the time table for delivery and collection of applications/documents from RPOs and Branch Secretariat.	Page 12 sub para xxiv	Already specified at page No.8 i.e. submission time is 0900-1000 hrs and collection time is 1600-1700 hrs. Timings are same for Ministry /RPOs /Branch Secretariats.
4	Kindly elaborate the scrutiny of genuineness of documents. How the concept of random checking is	Page 11 sub para xvii	Service Providers should make random references to the Document Issuing Authorities for verification of genuineness of



	to be applied.		the documents.
5	What is the minimum requirement of area at each centre including number of counters and number of staff	Page 26 Annexure F	5 counters in the four metro cities and 3 counters in other cities are to be established by the Service Providers. Adequate staff to be deployed for handling the counters and back office work. There should be adequate space/staff to accommodate/handle 50 applicants at a time in metro cities and 20 applicants at a time in other cities.
6	It has been observed from the RFP that the rates security will be required in two different sections. Kindly confirm	Page 29 Annexure G Sr. No.5 & Sr.No.11	Details pertaining to number of security guards to be provided at Sr. No.11 of Annexure G only. At Sr. No.5 of Annexure G, only 2 details viz. (i) Metal detectors and (ii) CCTV cameras with accessories are to be provided.
7	We may request you to confirm our understanding that the referred section/point for Point 9 is Point 3 (Computer related) instead of point 4(Furniture)	Page 29 Annexure G	Confirmed that the reference made at Sr. No.9 of Annexure G (page 30) pertains to Sr. No.3 and not to Sr. No.4.
8	Kindly confirm the details of tax applicable for this section.	Page 33 Annexure G, Part-III	As discussed in pre-bid conference, all taxes as may be applicable from time to time, needs to be taken into account by the Service Providers. Service Fee and Scanning Fee both are to be inclusive of all applicable taxes.
9	Will MEA consider revision of rates of service charges as and when MEA decides to extend establishment of more centres at other/additional locations/cities since it will involve additional recurring expenditure for Service Providers.	Page 4 Para II(ii)	The Service Fee and Scanning Fee will remain the same during the validity / extension of the contract.
10	(a) Will the payments Transaction receipt number for Govt. Fee through NTRP is enough or MEA need a copy of Transaction receipt from applicant. (b) Can SP verify/confirm on NTRP system about	Page 7 Para VI (iii)	(a) Transaction Receipt having details of the payment made is required to be submitted to the Ministry (b) The Service Providers has only to collect the NTRP Transaction Reference/Receipt/Challan number from the

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	<p>the payment of govt. Fee made by applicant through NTRP.</p> <p>(c) In case an applicant arrives at the Centre without making payment of Govt. Fee through NTRP and does not have any mode of making digital/online payment then how and who will make the payment of Govt. Fee in such an event.</p>		<p>applicant, reflect the same during the data entry and forward the receipt to the Ministry. Verification of online payment of Government Fee by the applicant would be checked by the Ministry. Login credentials are required to check status on NTRP system.</p> <p>(c) The applicants are required to pay the Government Fee directly to this Ministry using NTRP. Ideally they should make the online payment themselves. Today almost everyone is using netbanking/credit/debit cards and it is more applicable in case of applicants who are planning to travel abroad for work. Still, in such rare cases, where the applicant does not have any mode of making digital/online payment, he/she should be requested to get fresh netbanking/credit/debit card and if not possible, then, as last resort, to take assistance of some relative/friend to make the online payment and the same should be reflected in the records. In emergency cases, the Service Providers could render appropriate help.</p>
11	<p>Submission time for documents will be from 09.00 to 10.00 AM in the morning and collection of serviced documents will be from 4.00 - 5.00 PM meaning thereby that the documents will be serviced and returned on Same Day by the Ministry/Branch Secretariat/RPOs.</p>	<p>Page 8 Para VII (viii) & (ix)</p>	<p>Documents may be serviced and returned by the Ministry/Branch Sectt/RPO on same day also, but not always, as it depends on successful completion of various internal considerations/procedures.</p>
12	<p>(i) In case applicant has documents from 2-3 different States and wants service of pre-authentication for HRD/Home from SP as he is unable to travel or arrange pre-authentication from 2-3 different States; and</p> <p>(ii) If the applicant is abroad and needs pre-authentication of State HRD/Home services from SP, Can SP assist applicant in getting HRD/Home</p>	<p>Page 8 Para VI(iii) Note II</p>	<p>It is clearly mentioned that getting the documents Pre authenticated from respective Document Issuing Authority (DIA) is responsibility of applicants and Service Providers/Ministry has no role in it. In case applicants are applying from abroad/other states they need to make their own arrangements to get the documents pre-authenticated from respective DIAs</p>

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	pre-authentication services in such a situation.		
13	<p>The Bidding Company must have experience of providing front office services of similar nature from Two Organisations for past three years.</p> <p>The Outsourcing companies are authorised to provide similar services, i.e. attestation/visa applications etc for various Government Departments & Diplomatic Missions in India. As such Outsourcing companies are duty-bound to give such services to applicants including pre-authentication, MEA attestations, translations & attestations from diplomatic Missions in India, submission of visa applications etc. Applicants do ask for services of complete package of attestations and visa applications. Unless all these services are given by Outsourcing companies, how experiences of different Organisations can be gained by them.</p>	Page 4 Para III	Experience in all related fields is not mandatory. Experience in providing any front office activities in the nature of services or similar services outlined in the Scope of Work of the tender document, is sufficient.
14	how long a service provider is supposed to maintain the Data and in which format. Any particular criteria to maintain data.	Page 9 sub para xvii	Service Providers should maintain the data for the duration/extension of the contract. Exact format etc to be finalised in consultation with NIC.
15	There are only 9 days provided for implementation. Can the timeline be increased to have sufficient time in hand to implement ?	Page 6 Para V	As agreed in pre-bid conference, enough time (six working weeks from the date of signing of contract) is likely to be given to the Service Providers to establish centres in all 15 cities. All Timelines are indicative and can be modified by the Ministry as per Administrative requirements. Extension of time line in this regard is being processed.
16	If the L1 price is not sustainable for the bidder, the condition to forfeit the EMD is not justified. Request the Ministry to relook at this clause	Page 5 Para IV	Sub para (ii) of Para IV on page 5 is quite clear in this regard. No change in the condition can be made at this stage.
17	Is it safe to assume that each of cities mentioned	Page 29	Please see Sr. No.2 above

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	will process the documents locally and there would not be any intercity transportation of documents required?	Annexure G	
18	Point (f) assumes volumes at 1000 per each working day for each of the six service providers. And the Note II assumes volumes at 6000. What would be the right assumption to make in order to factor load in individual offices across 15 cities? This will help us determine number of counters and staff required at each location	Page 33 Part III	Please see Sr. No.1 & Sr. No.34.
19	Is this the Indirect Tax (GST) applicable on the Service Fee or is this the corporate tax on profit amount to be mentioned under point (b) ?	Page 33 Part III	Tax includes all the taxes that may be applicable from time to time.
20	Requesting the Authority to extend the duration of the contract from Two(2) years to Five (5) years, which help the bidders in getting the cost viability.	Page 4 Section II	It is quite clearly mentioned in the tender document that the contract is to be signed for a period of two years and may be extended on same terms and conditions for a further period of one year at a time by mutual consent of the Service Provider and the Ministry. This condition can not be changed.
21	Since VAT/Sales are not applicable anymore, can we consider that this is not required to be submitted?	Page 21 Sr. No.4(ii)	Certified copies of VAT/Sales Tax paid prior to introduction of GST may be submitted.
22	Is a CA certified extract of balance sheet or do you need all the pages of sheets for the completed three financial audited balance sheet.	Page 21 Sr. No.6	CA certified extract of balance sheet for each financial year would be sufficient.
23	Does this certificate need to be CA certified?	Page 21 Sr. No.7	Yes
24	Do you need any document supporting authorized signatory? If yes, which are the documents to be produced in support of authorized signatory?	-	A resolution of the Board of Directors authorizing a signatory is required to be produced.
25	Request the authority to let us know if we can provide any Value Added Services to the citizens on	-	The contract does not include any Value Added Service.

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	chargeable basis		
26	Is there a restriction to the number of pages or size of the response document which needs to be uploaded for the technical bid.	-	There is no such restriction, however, the response to the RFP should be brief and precise covering all necessary details and should not include unnecessary details/images not related to the present requirement.
27	How will the applicant pay the Govt fee if he has no access / is a computer illiterate.	-	Please see Sr. No.10(c)
28	How does the MEA expect the service provider to open 15 centres in 25 days? Is this justified?	-	As agreed in pre-bid conference, on giving enough time (six working weeks from the date of signing of contract) to the Service Providers to establish centres in all 15 cities, extension of time line in this regard is being processed.
29	How will the service provider provide with exact details of premises when the service provider has not won or signed the contract with MEA.	-	The Service Providers who are willing to participate in the tender are supposed to establish centers in 15 cities, if awarded the contract and must have started the groundwork for detailed assessment for each city. They are supposed to provide their detailed proposal for each city. It does not mean that centres are to be established first and only then they can provide their details. The proposals must be based on realistic assumptions w.r.t. each city.
30	Why is the eligibility open to companies who have no know how of the service model?	Page 4 para III	The tender is open to all who qualifies the eligibility criterion which also includes experience of rendering similar services in past.
31	As per the eligibility criteria & the details of the scope of work only those companies who are currently providing the Attestation and apostille services would be eligible for bidding.	Page 4 para III	The experience required is not limited to providing Attestation/Apostille services only it is also open to companies providing front office activities in the nature of services or similar services outlined in the scope of work.
32	RFP states in II (i) page 4 that approximately 6000 documents are rendered daily to public. This seems a highly optimistic view. Also, since for commercial documents the service charge will only be charged once as given on page 6 of RFP, this indicates that	Page 4 Para II	Pl see Sr. No.1 & 34. Scanning Fee has been introduced to address the concerns related with handling each page of the document.

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	document with several pages will be counted as one now which was earlier not the case. This will further reduce the count of documents submitted by service providers. This raises question on viability of the estimate taken into account.		
33	Annexure F asks service providers to fill the area in (sq. metres) for different centres. Is there a minimum specific area that MEA has in mind? This is important for costing of centres like Guwahati & Hyderabad.	Page 26	Please see Sr. No.5.
34	Annexure G(Part 3) it is stated that the estimated volume is to be taken at 1000 documents per day & six service providers. Does MEA find this justified & viable. Currently we are processing 1400 documents daily. Also according to the service fee criteria the service provider is supposed to charge per document. Which currently is not the case. This also entails that the over volume of the business mentioned in the RFP is not accurate.	Page 33	At page No.5 of the tender document, Sub para (i) of Para IV of Section 2 clearly outlines that "Ministry has the right to award the contract to a maximum of six Service Providers....". Assuming that the contract would be awarded to six Service Providers, the lowest volume of documents likely to be handled by each Service Provider comes out to 1000 documents per day (assuming equal distribution of total 6000 documents processed per day). That is expected to be the minimum volume handled by each Service Provider and such an assumption is necessary to bring uniformity in the method of projection of Service Fee by various bidders. Please also see Sr. No.32.
35	As per the eligibility criteria any service provider even processing a single document a day can be eligible for the tender.	-	No where does this find mention. All clauses of eligibility criteria are meant to ensure that only serious, experienced and competent enough companies could participate in the bidding process.
36	As per the time schedule provided under clause V the expectation is to setup 15 centres in 17 days. Does MEA feel that this is a viable option?	Page 6 Para V	Please see Sr. No.15 & 28.
37	How has MEA arrived at the count of 6000 documents per day. This count is basis per page	Page 4 Para II	Please see Sr. No.34.

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	attestation and Apostille done by the service providers and not the actual document count. Please clarify.		
38	According to Section 1. A point (xvi) "No handwritten receipt or miscellaneous receipt should be issued by the Service Provider"-What can be done in case of technical failures or general circumstances where the technical tools are not working for digital receipts? Can in any case a manual receipt be issued?	Page 41. sub para (xvi)	Handwritten or miscellaneous receipts are not to be issued and are not acceptable under any circumstance.
39	According to Section 1. A, point (xiv) "The premises used as centre by the Service Providers shall not be used for promoting any other business activities except those concerning the outsourcing of attestation/Apostille services approved by the Ministry under this contract"-all 5 counters in metro cities and 3 counters other cities should be dedicated or can be shared? Do the counters or complete centers have to be exclusive for Attestation/Apostille services from Ministry of External Affairs?	Page 41. sub para (xiv)	The centre providing the Attestation/Apostille Support Services for the CPV Division must be exclusive and not to be shared/used for other services by the Service Providers. The counters/display systems/telephones/computers/other hardwares/data and storage devices /processing area/waiting area etc. being used for Attestation/Apostille Support Services for the CPV Division should not be shared/used for any other purposes.
40	"An efficient and prompt e-mail system where response is provided within 24 hours, except on weekends where a 48 hour time line would apply".- Since from 5:00 pm on Friday till 9:00am on Monday- the hours counted overall would be more than 48 hours. Do 48 hours include only working hours?	Page 9 sub para xv	Page 9, sub para (xiv) of Para VII clearly mention that centres will be open on all working days, except Sundays and Government holidays. Accordingly, the centres should be open on Saturdays and it satisfies the 48 hours time line clause for weekends.
41	"The centres shall be open for public on all working days from 0900 hrs to 1730 hrs"- Can the center timings be bifurcated into submission timings and	Page 9 sub para xiv	As already discussed in pre-bid conference, if applicants are refused a service only because they have not arrived at a particular time, it would cause inconvenience to the applicants

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	collection timings within the guided timeline of 0900 hrs to 1730 hrs?		
42	“Scanning Fee : The Service Providers would charge this fee from the applicants for scanning & uploading each page of documents requiring Attestation/Apostille”- Is this an optional service for the applicants by the service provider or mandatory for service providers to upload the scans while submission to the Ministry?	Page 6 Para VI (ii)	Scanning & uploading is mandatory and not optional.
43	Attested experience Certificates for two years to be issued by the Organizations / Government Deptts- Can the previous contractual agreement awarded by Ministry of External Affairs be presented for this purpose along with the extension documents?	-	Yes
44	As per the police authorities, the Police Clearance Certificate can be issued only for the human beings and not for the company. We request you to please waive off this requirement or modify this for submitting the PCC of Director instead of the company.	Page 4 sub para 4	Police Clearance Certificate in respect of the Director of the company could be provided instead of the company.
45	On checking for the Police Verification certificates/reports for all the personnel to be deployed in each centre for approval of the Ministry- we understand that obtaining the Police clearance certificates for the various states from the local police stations would officially take 50-180 days. We would like you to suggest if the centres are to be up and running within the suggested timeline-4 to 6 working weeks after the award of contractual agreement, how are the police verifications/clearance reports to be submitted for	Page 10 sub para v	The Service Providers should apply for police verification for all its staff immediately after award of the contract and submit the proof of such application to the Ministry. Reports could be submitted on receipt from Police authorities.

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	each staff member.		
46	Discussion regarding the check on genuineness of documents-the verification of documents come with a varying price range. The official fees of certain universities also ranges from 2000-15,000/-. Can the service provider broaden the scope of work and offer services of verification to the applicant before attestation process to avoid malpractices.		Please see Sr. No.12
47	The daily application count of 6000 which may be distributed among the 6 Service Providers (or less, as selected)- would there be any capping on per day application submission by each Service Provider to smoothen and fair out the market? A fixed number of maximum submissions by the Service Providers shall also propose uniformity.	-	There is no capping on daily application submissions by each Service Provider. It is for the applicants to choose a particular Service Provider as per their convenience and their satisfaction with the quality of service provided by a specific Service Provider.

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