

**Response to Pre-bid Queries for Tender no. RailTel/2026/OT/CO/BD/e-
Empanelment/02 dated 20.04.2026**

S.No.	Reference Clause	Bidder Query / Questions	Reply by RailTel
1	Tender Notice	Kindly permit acceptance of EMD in the form of Bank Guarantee, subject to submission in the prescribed format and validity as required under the tender terms.	Please refer Corrigendum-1
2	Chapter 1, Information to Bidder, S.No. 3	Should all third-party licenses be included in quoted cost?	As per RFP
3	Chapter 1, Information to Bidder, S.No. 3	Clarification on third-party tools (DB, search, AI frameworks)	As per RFP
4	Chapter 1, Note 3 and Note 4; Chapter 1, SoR-B	As per the BOQ, items under SoR-B (including Document Referencing and Chatbot Platform phases) require bidders to quote unit rates and total costs. Since it is mentioned that infrastructure (including cloud, storage, and GPUs) will be provided by RailTel, we understand that the bidder may only need to consider development effort, resource cost, and processing effort. However, we request clarification on the following: 1. Should the bidder include only manpower/development and implementation cost in these line items, or also include operational costs such as OCR processing, embedding, vector database, storage, and AI model usage? 2. Specifically for SoR-B line items (Sl. No. 4 & 5 – Chatbot Platform Phase 1 and Phase 2), what components should be included in the quoted unit rate? For example, should it cover only platform development and deployment, or also include AI model licensing, training, fine-tuning, and usage costs? 3. For “Document Referencing” (Sl. No. 6), should the quoted cost per lot (25,000 pages) include end-to-end processing (OCR, embedding, indexing, storage, retrieval setup), or only ingestion and development effort assuming infrastructure is provided? 4. Kindly clarify whether any recurring costs (such as LLM API usage, OCR engine cost, or database cost) should be included in one-time charges or in O&M.	As per RFP
5	Chapter 1, Note 4	Whether bidders can participate for only SoR-A or SoR-B individually, or submission is mandatory for both	Bidders are required to submit bids mandatorily for both SoR-A and SoR-B.
6	Chapter 1, Note 4 & 5	Whether both systems are independent or require mandatory integration	As per RFP
7	Chapter 1, Note 5	Whether bidder must ensure interoperability even if both are awarded separately	As per RFP
8	Chapter 1, SoR-B, S.No. 6	Is 25k pages fixed or scalable?	As per RFP
9	Chapter 1, SoR-B, S.No. 6	What is the expected volume of documents per annum for the initial 3-year O&M period, to assist in accurate pricing of the Document Referencing SoR item?	As per RFP
10	Chapter 1, SoR-B, Sl. No. 6	For “Document Referencing (25,000 pages per lot)”, please clarify: (a) number of lots expected, (b) average data size per lot (GB/TB), and (c) whether pricing should include OCR, embedding, storage, vector DB, and compute costs or only development & processing effort.	In the initial period of 2-3 months, the lot of 25000 pages is expected to be uploaded. Thereafter, based on each User department's requirement, only incremental lot shall be required for upload.
11	Chapter 2 / Tender Notice	We kindly request you to share the online pre-bid meeting link and relevant details (date, time, and platform) to enable our participation in the meeting.	As per RFP
12	Chapter 9, Form No. 10; GFR Rule 144(xi)	Given the requirement for on-premise, open-weight LLMs, please clarify if there are any restrictions on the geographic provenance of the foundational AI models. Specifically, are bidders permitted to utilize open-weight models developed by entities based in countries sharing a land border with India (e.g., DeepSeek R1, Qwen)? Or must the core models strictly originate from non-restricted geographies (e.g., Llama, Mistral) to comply with RailTel's data sovereignty policies and Ministry of Finance guidelines under GFR Rule 144(xi)?	As per RFP
13	Clause 3.1.7	We seek clarification on whether consortium participation or subcontracting arrangements are permissible under this tender. In case consortium participation is not permitted, kindly confirm whether bidders may engage subcontractors for software development under their overall responsibility.	Please refer Corrigendum-1
14	Clause 3.1.7	Whether OEM + Implementation Partner model is allowed?	As per RFP
15	Clause 3.1.7	Is it acceptable for the bidder to engage a CERT-In empaneled third-party VA/PT agency sub-contracted for this specific deliverable, without it constituting 'subcontracting' of the core scope?	Please refer Corrigendum-1
16	Clause 3.11; Form No. 4	Will minor deviations lead to rejection?	As per RFP
17	Clause 3.2, S.No. 1	Whether Proprietorship / LLP firms are allowed to participate?	Please refer Corrigendum-1

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18	Clause 3.2, S.No. 1	The RFP requires bidders to be Private or Public Limited Companies; however, DPIIT-recognized startups include LLPs. Please clarify whether a DPIIT-recognized LLP is eligible to participate and will be treated at par for eligibility and evaluation criteria, including applicable startup relaxations (turnover, net worth, experience). Additionally, please confirm whether EMD exemption is applicable to such LLP startups and the required supporting documentation or alternative provisions.	Please refer Corrigendum-1
19	Clause 3.2, S.No. 2	Can the turnover from AI-related consulting, licensing, and platform subscription revenue be included in the qualifying cumulative turnover figure?	As per RFP
20	Clause 3.2, S.No. 2	Requesting relaxation/exemption from the prior turnover criteria for registered MSEs.	As per RFP
21	Clause 3.2, S.No. 2	Many DPIIT-recognized startups working in emerging technology domains such as Artificial Intelligence, software development, and digital platforms may possess the required technical expertise, skilled manpower, and capability to execute similar nature of work, but may not yet have achieved the specified turnover threshold, particularly during their early growth stages. While the tender provides certain relaxations and exemptions for DPIIT-recognized startups, the turnover requirement has not been fully exempted, therefore, we seek clarification on this matter. Therefore, it is humbly requested that the authority may kindly consider providing complete exemption from the turnover criteria for DPIIT-recognized startups, subject to fulfillment of the technical qualification and capability requirements specified in the tender.	As per RFP
22	Clause 3.2, S.No. 2 & 6	Clarify extent of exemption for DPIIT startups (turnover & net worth)?	As per RFP
23	Clause 3.2, S.No. 4; Clause 3.3, S.No. 3	Kindly clarify whether ISO 9001 certification alone is sufficient to meet the basic eligibility criteria. Further, please confirm whether the additional certifications mentioned under technical evaluation are mandatory or are considered only for scoring purposes. Additionally, please confirm whether equivalent third-party certifications (such as CMMI) would be acceptable in lieu of ISO/IEC 20000-1/27001/42001.	As per RFP
24	Clause 3.2, S.No. 4; Clause 3.3, S.No. 3	Are certifications mandatory or only for scoring?	As per RFP
25	Clause 3.2, S.No. 6	We request clarification on whether telecom-based digital marketing, bulk SMS aggregation, chatbot development, or IVR implementation projects may be considered as "similar work" for eligibility purposes. In case such experience is not considered, kindly confirm whether the requirement may be fulfilled through association with an AI solution provider via subcontracting (or consortium, if permitted).	As per RFP
26	Clause 3.2, S.No. 6	Whether chatbot / OCR / AI projects individually qualify or must be combined?	As per RFP
27	Clause 3.2, S.No. 6	Define minimum AI complexity (basic chatbot vs ML models)?	As per RFP
28	Clause 3.2, S.No. 6	Is CA certificate sufficient or client certificate mandatory?	As per RFP
29	Clause 3.2, S.No. 6	Does experience with AI solutions for BFSI-regulated entities (RBI/SEBI regulated) or large private sector enterprises qualify under 'Similar Work', given the intent is AI capability demonstration?	As per RFP
30	Clause 3.2, S.No. 6	Requesting relaxation in "Prior Experience" criteria for registered MSEs.	As per RFP
31	Clause 3.2, S.No. 6	Will alternative proofs (client email/acceptance) be accepted if completion certificate is unavailable?	Customer confirmation for completion of the project via e-mail/letter is acceptable.
32	Clause 3.2, S.No. 6	Are there relaxations for SMEs/startups not meeting listed company criteria?	As per RFP
33	Clause 3.3	Extra marks for advanced architecture?	As per RFP
34	Clause 3.3	request to reconsider the marks here, being MSME we will not be able to score the marks for fair evaluation	As per RFP

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35	Clause 3.3	We sincerely appreciate RailTel's initiative to encourage DPIIT-recognized Startups by providing baseline eligibility exemptions. However, we humbly wish to bring to your notice a practical challenge in the QCBS Technical Evaluation (Clause 3.3). Currently, the scoring matrix awards maximum marks based on absolute financial volume (e.g., >₹5 Crores turnover) and a high quantity of past projects (>6 AI projects). For a young, quality-focused Startup (e.g., incorporated within the last 3 years), achieving a ₹5 Crore average turnover or executing 6+ enterprise AI projects is mathematically highly improbable, making it exceedingly difficult to secure the minimum 70% technical qualifying marks. Furthermore, the 'Bidder Profile' turnover criteria do not currently specify that the revenue must be generated exclusively from IT/AI services. This inadvertently allows entities with high turnover from non-IT operations to score higher than highly specialized, pure-play AI Startups. Additionally, mandating resources with 5+ years of experience creates a paradox for Startups that have been in existence for a shorter duration but possess cutting-edge expertise in training and managing AI models related to Vision, Voice and Text. To uphold the true intent of the Government of India's Startup mandate and ensure RailTel partners with genuine, high-quality AI developers, we kindly request RailTel to consider: a) Specifying that the claimed turnover for scoring must strictly pertain to IT/Software/AI-related business receipts. b) Awarding proportionate or full marks in the 'Bidder Profile' and 'Project Experience' segments to DPIIT-recognized Startups that successfully meet the basic exempted criteria. c) Allowing flexibility in the resource experience criteria for Startups, perhaps evaluating the team's capabilities through the Technical PoC Demonstration rather than strict chronological experience.	As per RFP
36	Clause 3.3, S.No. 2	How many Projects have to be submitted to get 30 marks and of how much value?	As per RFP
37	Clause 3.3, S.No. 4	Can existing solutions be demonstrated?	Any existing solution can be demonstrated. Demonstration of generic AI solutions will not suffice; the demo/PoC should reflect the proposed system's capabilities relevant to broad scope of the RFP.
38	Clause 3.3, S.No. 4	Is live demo mandatory or PPT/demo video acceptable?	Any existing solution can be demonstrated. Demonstration of generic AI solutions will not suffice; the demo/PoC should reflect the proposed system's capabilities relevant to broad scope of the RFP.
39	Clause 3.3, S.No. 4	What is expected to show? Can we show any AI Related solution?	Any existing solution can be demonstrated. Demonstration of generic AI solutions will not suffice; the demo/PoC should reflect the proposed system's capabilities relevant to broad scope of the RFP.
40	Clause 3.3, S.No. 5; Clause 4.3.3(A)	Are proposed resources required full-time deployment?	As per RFP
41	Clause 3.4(ii)	Kindly confirm whether the minimum technical qualifying criteria (i.e., 50% marks in each parameter and 70% overall) are strictly applicable. Further, in case a bidder meets the basic eligibility requirements but does not possess AI-specific experience, kindly clarify whether the bid will be rejected or evaluated with lower technical marks.	As per RFP
42	Clause 3.6	Are milestone approvals time-bound from RailTel side?	As per RFP
43	Clause 3.6	Mapping of deliverables to payment milestones	As per RFP
44	Clause 3.6, SoR-B	Can Phase-2 Chatbot expansion be issued as a separate PO with distinct acceptance?	As per RFP
45	Clause 3.7(i) & (ii)	Does 10% liability cap include data breach/security issues?	As per RFP
46	Clause 3.7; Clause 4.5.1(2)	Whether there is a cap on cumulative penalties and maximum liability of the bidder	As per RFP

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47	Clause 4.1, Paragraph 3	What multi-zone capability is supported by the RailTel cloud?	RailTel has Tier-III/Rated-3 data centres in Delhi NCR and Southern region of India with capability to offer DC and DR services from these respective DCs.
48	Clause 4.3.1 (F)	Expected number of users, vendors, and transactions	<p>For e-Empanelment system, No. of External Users: 1000 - 1200 No. of Internal Users: 800 - 1000</p> <p>For Chatbot (public website): 70,000 - 75,000 hits per month</p> <p>For Chatbot (internal) : 800 - 1000 users</p> <p>The bidder has to plan the architecture to support minimum 50% concurrency for the e-empanelment system and Chatbot (for both public website and internal).</p>
49	Clause 4.3.1(A)(c); Clause 4.3.6(E)	Will there be a well-defined list of documents or the list could change after the system is operational?	In reference to para 4.3.6(E), the list of documents shall be as decided by the respective user departments.
50	Clause 4.3.1(A)(d); Chapter 1, SoR- B Sl. No. 6	If enterprise OCR is required please give expected no. of pages to be processed in it per month.	In the initial period of 2-3 months, the lot of 25000 pages is expected to be uploaded. Thereafter, based on each User department's requirement, only incremental lot shall be required for upload.
51	Clause 4.3.1(A)(d); Clause 4.3.1(F)(c)	Whether OCR/document AI is in scope or optional	As per RFP
52	Clause 4.3.1(A)(d); Clause 4.3.1(F)(c)	Please clarify the expected functionality of OCR: whether it is only for defect detection (missing/incorrect data) or also for intelligent data extraction and auto-filling of forms. Also specify expected monthly document volume.	As per RFP
53	Clause 4.3.1(A)(d); Clause 4.3.6(C)	What types of errors are expected (format vs semantic) to be detected?	As per RFP
54	Clause 4.3.1(A)(d); Clause 4.3.6(C)	Should ML detect only syntax or semantic errors also?	As per RFP
55	Clause 4.3.1(A)(k); Clause 4.3.6(G)	Expected repository size and search capability?	As per RFP
56	Clause 4.3.1(A)(k); Clause 4.3.6(G)	Is legacy partner/credential data required to be migrated? If yes, please confirm data formats and volumes.	As per RFP
57	Clause 4.3.1(A)(n); Clause 4.3.6(D)	Should system crawl data or use APIs/search engines to get new tenders?	Bidder has to plan suitable solution for meeting the requirements as specified in the RFP, including meeting the required SLA parameters.

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58	Clause 4.3.1(A)(n); Clause 4.3.6(D)	Will RailTel provide scraping permissions for pre-defined sites to crawl data for tender search?	Bidder has to plan suitable solution for meeting the requirements as specified in the RFP, including meeting the required SLA parameters.
59	Clause 4.3.1(C)	The scope mentions document handling. Please clarify whether a full-fledged Document Management System (with versioning, audit logs, user tracking) is required or only basic upload/retrieval functionality. Also specify if open-source or enterprise DMS is preferred.	As per RFP
60	Clause 4.3.1(C)(a)(1) & (2)	Is OTP/CAPTCHA-based validation required?	CAPTCHA-based validation is required during authentication of users to empanelment portal and internal platform.
61	Clause 4.3.1(C)(b)(4)	Who will provide payment gateway and bear transaction charges?	RailTel shall provide the API for payment gateway. The system proposed by bidder should have capability to integrate any industry leading & RBI approved payment gateway service provider. Integration of payment gateway shall be the responsibility of the selected bidder.
62	Clause 4.3.1(C)(b)(4)	Who bears setup & recurring payment gateway costs?	RailTel shall provide the API for payment gateway. The system proposed by bidder should have capability to integrate any industry leading & RBI approved payment gateway service provider. Integration of payment gateway shall be the responsibility of the selected bidder.
63	Clause 4.3.1(C)(b)(4); Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 27	Please confirm who will provide APIs for Email, SMS, WhatsApp, and Payment Gateway. If bidder is responsible, kindly share estimated monthly volumes for accurate costing.	APIs for Email, SMS and Payment gateway shall be provided by RailTel. Integration of all APIs including RailTel application APIs shall be the responsibility of the selected bidder. Currently, WhatsApp integration shall not be required.
64	Clause 4.3.1(C); Clause 4.5.2, S.No. 6	What is expected document volume and performance benchmarks?	In the initial period of 2-3 months, the lot of 25000 pages is expected to be uploaded. Thereafter, based on each User department's requirement, only incremental lot shall be required for upload.
65	Clause 4.3.1(C); Clause 4.5.2, S.No. 6	Expected accuracy benchmark for AI-based defect detection?	As per RFP
66	Clause 4.3.1(D)	Will RailTel provide complete cloud infrastructure including GPU, or should bidder provision AI infrastructure?	As per RFP
67	Clause 4.3.1(D)	Who will bear cloud infrastructure cost?	As per RFP

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68	Clause 4.3.1(D)	The RFP indicates the solution will be hosted on RailTel's cloud (DC-DR). Please confirm that RailTel will provide the servers, network, backup/DR infrastructure, middleware, and licenses for the cloud environment. In other words, the bidder's scope excludes procuring infrastructure or cloud instances. If any infrastructure sizing or O&M charges are expected from the bidder, please specify.	RailTel shall provide the cloud infrastructure (including bandwidth) for hosting of the solution. However, any licensed OS, DB or any other specific license/service required on top of the cloud infrastructure for hosting of this application shall be provided by the selected bidder for which the cost to be included in the financial bid. The deployment, operations and maintenance of the application on this cloud infrastructure shall be the responsibility of the selected bidder.
69	Clause 4.3.1(D)	Whether infrastructure (VMs, storage, network) will be provisioned by RailTel or bidder	As per RFP
70	Clause 4.3.1(D)	Details of environment: On-prem DC / NIC Cloud / Hybrid	As per RFP
71	Clause 4.3.1(D)	Whether bidder must host AI/ML models or RailTel will provide environment	As per RFP
72	Clause 4.3.1(D)	As the RFP mandates the deployment of a closed-domain AI Chatbot system without reliance on the open internet, the use of locally hosted, open-weight Large Language Models (LLMs) is required. Please clarify if RailTel will provision the specific high-compute GPU instances (e.g., NVIDIA A100, H100, or equivalent L-series) required for LLM inference within its DC-DR cloud to ensure the system meets expected sub-minute conversational response times and SLAs. If so, what are the specifications of the GPU instances that will be allocated to this project?	As per RFP
73	Clause 4.3.1(D)	Please confirm whether cloud infra (compute, storage, DB, DR setup) will be fully provisioned by RailTel or bidder needs to size and provision?	As per RFP
74	Clause 4.3.1(D)	What are the services available on RailTel cloud under IaaS/PaaS/SaaS category?	RailTel shall provide the cloud infrastructure (including bandwidth) for hosting of the solution. However, any licensed OS, DB or any other specific license/service required on top of the cloud infrastructure for hosting of this application shall be provided by the selected bidder for which the cost shall be included in the financial bid. The deployment, operations and maintenance of the application on RailTel cloud infrastructure shall be the responsibility of the selected bidder.
75	Clause 4.3.1(D)	What will be the final deployment environment (cloud/on-prem/hybrid)?	As per RFP
76	Clause 4.3.1(D)	As RailTel is providing infrastructure it will also provide GPUs?	As per RFP

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77	Clause 4.3.1(D); Chapter 1, Note 3	Does RailTel already have access to 3rd-party services or we need to include the cost?	RailTel shall provide the cloud infrastructure (including bandwidth) for hosting of the solution. However, any licensed OS, DB or any other specific license/service required on top of the cloud infrastructure for hosting of this application shall be provided by the selected bidder for which the cost shall be included in the financial bid. The deployment, operations and maintenance of the application on RailTel cloud infrastructure shall be the responsibility of the selected bidder.
78	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.3.2(d)	Please share indicative RailTel cloud/DC specifications, scaling limits, and DR architecture.	The bidder shall provide the cloud infrastructure requirements during the technical presentation. Please refer Corrigendum-1.
79	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.3.3	In case APIs are unavailable or incomplete, whether bidder is expected to build middleware/APIs or same will be provided by RailTel	The bidder has to arrange third-party APIs and its integration with or without middleware. For RailTel applications, the APIs shall be provided by RailTel.
80	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.3.3	As the complete infrastructure (including cloud, storage, and GPUs) is being provided by RailTel, we request clarification on operational responsibilities. Specifically, does RailTel expect the bidder to deploy dedicated resources for managing and monitoring this infrastructure (such as server management, GPU utilization, scaling, backups, and performance tuning), or will these activities be handled by RailTel's internal team?	RailTel shall provide the cloud infrastructure (including bandwidth) for hosting of the solution. However, monitoring of the resources for optimized working of the application shall be the responsibility of the bidder. Cloud infrastructure provisioning/modification shall be done by RailTel DC team.
81	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.3.6(D)	Will APIs be provided for MCA, GeM, CPPP, ERP?	The bidder has to arrange third-party APIs and its integration with or without middleware. For RailTel applications, the APIs shall be provided by RailTel.
82	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.3.6(D)	Will APIs be provided or scraping required?	Bidder has to plan suitable solution for meeting the requirements as specified in the RFP, including meeting the required SLA parameters.
83	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.3.6(D)	Will APIs (MCA, GeM, CPPP) be provided by RailTel?	The bidder has to arrange third-party APIs and its integration with or without middleware. For RailTel applications, the APIs shall be provided by RailTel.

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84	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.3.6(D)	Will RailTel provide data sources or scraping required?	Bidder has to plan suitable solution for meeting the requirements as specified in the RFP, including meeting the required SLA parameters.
85	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.3.6(D)	The platform is expected to integrate with multiple external systems as part of its operational scope. In this regard, should the bidder provision a comprehensive integration architecture that includes:• API-based connectors for all identified systems• Alternate/fallback mechanisms where APIs are unavailable• Handling of upstream changes (API/version updates) during O&MOr will certain integrations be managed separately or phased outside the core implementation scope?	Bidder has to plan suitable solution for meeting the requirements as specified in the RFP, including meeting the required SLA parameters.
86	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.3.6(D)	List of systems, API availability, and integration responsibility	As per RFP
87	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.3.6(D)	Please provide final list of approved e-procurement portals and integration mechanism (API vs scraping).	As per RFP
88	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.3.6(D) & (E)	How many 3rd party entities are required to be integrated?	As per RFP
89	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.3.6(D) & (E)	For integrations with external systems (MCA, CPPP, GeM, ERP, etc.), please confirm whether APIs and access credentials will be provided by RailTel or need to be arranged by bidder.	The bidder has to arrange third-party APIs and its integration with or without middleware. For RailTel applications, the APIs shall be provided by RailTel.
90	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.3.6(E)	What data needs to be fetched from MCA? What does 'other document errors' specify?	As per RFP
91	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 3	How many documents need to be parsed and verified simultaneously across multiple onboarding processes?	RailTel receives average 50-70 empanelment applications per month. The empanelment process requirements (EoI document for Empanelment of Business Partner) is already available on RailTel's website under the Tenders section.
92	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 4	Will the portal be accessed via devices with different form factors (handheld, tablet, laptop, palmtop)?	The solution is expected to be accessible across diverse device types and form factors including all industry leading browsers.
93	Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.4.2	If high concurrency is required (OCR/AI processing), will RailTel provide scalable GPU resources on demand, or is there a fixed limit?	As per RFP
94	Clause 4.3.1; Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 20	Please confirm estimated number of partners, users, documents (pages/year) and simultaneous onboarding cases expected.	<p>For e-Empanelment system, No. of External Users: 1000 - 1200 No. of Internal Users: 800 - 1000</p> <p>For Chatbot (public website): 70,000 - 75,000 hits per month</p> <p>For Chatbot (internal) : 800 - 1000 users</p> <p>The bidder has to plan the architecture to support minimum 50% concurrency for the e-empanelment system and Chatbot (for both public website and internal).</p>

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95	Clause 4.3.2(A); Clause 4.4.2	Expected concurrent users and latency requirements?	The bidder has to plan the architecture to support minimum 50% concurrency for the e-empanelment system and Chatbot platform (internal).
96	Clause 4.3.2(B)	Whether future phases will be separate work orders or included	Single work order shall be issued against the SoR, i.e., e-Empanelment system and Chatbot platform mentioned in the RFP.
97	Clause 4.3.2(b)(2)	What all functions are expected to be supported by the no-code admin & analytics dashboards?	Bidder has to plan suitable solution for meeting the requirements as specified in the RFP, including meeting the required SLA parameters.
98	Clause 4.3.2(b)(3)	Are all of these environments required or only one?	As per RFP
99	Clause 4.3.2(B); Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 31, 38	Please specify number of chatbots required (department-wise). Also clarify whether chatbot should be knowledge-base only, LLM-based, or hybrid (LLM + uploaded documents + knowledge base).	Bidder has to plan suitable solution for meeting the requirements as specified in the RFP, including meeting the required SLA parameters.
100	Clause 4.3.2(B); Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 38	Is there provision for future expansion phases?	As per RFP
101	Clause 4.3.2(d)(3)	What is the time window for support during RailTel website team integration and pre-launch testing?	Necessary information shall be provided by RailTel team in a timely manner, however the responsibility for integration and testing is of the selected bidder.
102	Clause 4.3.3	Does O&M include enhancements or only bug fixes?	As per RFP
103	Clause 4.3.3	Definition of CR vs scope and rate card applicability	Please refer Corrigendum-1
104	Clause 4.3.3	Does the O&M scope include only development support or also L1/L2 operational support?	As per RFP
105	Clause 4.3.3	Post acceptance testing, will ongoing integration support be required or only in case of new change requests?	As per RFP
106	Clause 4.3.3	What is expected under database administration—only monitoring or full maintenance and optimization?	As per RFP
107	Clause 4.3.3(A)	Minimum team size is defined; under what conditions is an increase in team size expected?	As per RFP
108	Clause 4.3.3(A); Clause 4.3.3(D)	Total number of resources required/support structure i.e., 8x5/16x5/24x7.	Bidder has to plan suitable solution for meeting the requirements as specified in the RFP, including meeting the required SLA parameters.
109	Clause 4.3.3(A); Clause 4.3.5(F)-(H)	Do you require any onsite resources during development or O&M phase? If yes, please specify duration, location, and required skillsets.	As per RFP
110	Clause 4.3.3(C)	Will functional changes beyond approved FRS/SRS be treated as paid Change Requests?	Please refer Corrigendum-1
111	Clause 4.3.3(C)	What is the defined scope of enhancements and how should effort estimation be approached given that requirements are not fully specified?	Please refer Corrigendum-1
112	Clause 4.3.3(C)	How should bidders budget for enhancements like UI/UX improvements or integrations where scope is undefined?	As per RFP
113	Clause 4.3.3(C); Clause 3.3	Please confirm whether CERT-In empanelment, STQC certification, or both are required. Also clarify whether periodic security audits (CERT-In audit) are required and at what frequency.	As per RFP
114	Clause 4.3.3(C); Clause 4.4.1; Clause 4.4.2	Specific standards (CERT-In, STQC, VAPT frequency)	As per RFP

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S.No.	Reference Clause	Bidder Query / Questions	Reply by RailTel
115	Clause 4.3.3(D)	Is 24x7 support mandatory or business hours sufficient?	Bidder has to plan suitable solution for meeting the requirements as specified in the RFP, including meeting the required SLA parameters.
116	Clause 4.3.3(D)	Is 24x7 support including dedicated helpdesk mandatory?	Bidder has to plan suitable solution for meeting the requirements as specified in the RFP, including meeting the required SLA parameters.
117	Clause 4.3.3(D)	Could you please suggest total number of tickets (incidents/change/problem/request) in a month and if possible please share the data month metrics as per priority.	Bidder has to plan suitable solution for meeting the requirements as specified in the RFP, including meeting the required SLA parameters.
118	Clause 4.3.3(E)	Will implementation of change requests post acceptance be treated as separate billable items?	Please refer Corrigendum-1
119	Clause 4.3.3(E)	Kindly clarify the scope and definition of 'unlimited support' mentioned in the clause.	Bidder has to plan suitable solution for meeting the requirements as specified in the RFP, including meeting the required SLA parameters.
120	Clause 4.3.3(E); Clause 4.4.1; Clause 4.4.2	The clause appears to assume a pre-built solution. Can RailTel confirm if a custom-built solution is acceptable?	As per RFP
121	Clause 4.3.3; Clause 4.3.3(D)	Does support include AI model tuning?	As per RFP
122	Clause 4.3.3; Clause 4.3.3(D)	L1/L2/L3 scope, SLA expectations, onsite vs remote	As per RFP
123	Clause 4.3.3; Clause 4.3.3(D)	Will payment gateway charges (transaction fees, MDR) be borne by RailTel or included in bidder scope?	RailTel shall provide the API for payment gateway. The system proposed by bidder should have capability to integrate any industry leading & RBI approved payment gateway service provider. Integration of payment gateway shall be the responsibility of the selected bidder.
124	Clause 4.3.3; Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 14	Whether bidder responsible for DevOps, CI/CD, monitoring	As per RFP
125	Clause 4.3.4(B); Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 27; Clause 4.3.3(C), Clause 4.3.1(D); Clause 4.3.6(D)	Who will bear cost of SSL certificates, SMS/WhatsApp gateways, and CERT-In VA/PT audits?	As per RFP
126	Clause 4.3.4(C) & (I); Clause 4.3.6(I)	Ownership and source of knowledge base content	As per RFP
127	Clause 4.3.4(E) & (F); Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 30	Knowledge base updates have a direct impact on chatbot accuracy and consistency over time. Should the platform enforce a structured governance workflow for managing such updates, including review, validation, versioning, and controlled publishing? Or is it expected that authorized users can directly push updates live without intermediate validation layers?	As per RFP
128	Clause 4.3.4(I)	Who will own source code, AI models, and datasets?	As per RFP
129	Clause 4.3.4(I)	Is exit management/knowledge transfer required?	As per RFP
130	Clause 4.3.4(I)	Extent of IP transfer (platform vs custom code)	As per RFP
131	Clause 4.3.4(I)	Whether full source code handover is mandatory or escrow/access-based model is acceptable for proprietary components	As per RFP
132	Clause 4.3.4(I); Clause 4.4.1; Clause 4.4.2	Whether bidders can propose an existing proprietary platform (with on-prem deployment) instead of full custom development	As per RFP. The bidder shall be required to submit updated complete source code every 6 months to RailTel.

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S.No.	Reference Clause	Bidder Query / Questions	Reply by RailTel
133	Clause 4.3.5	Number of users, locations, and training format	As per RFP. For on-site training (other than New Delhi), the bidder has to plan minimum 7-10 days per site.
134	Clause 4.3.5	Please confirm expected number of trainees and maximum offline training sessions/location.	As per RFP
135	Clause 4.3.6(A) & (E)	Will templates be provided from Railtel	Templates shall be finalized post discussion with RailTel.
136	Clause 4.3.6(C)	What volume and quality of historical documents will be provided for ML training and model validation?	As per RFP
137	Clause 4.3.6(C) & (I)	To develop and train the OCR/AI components (defect detection, chatbot NLP), what data will RailTel furnish? Specifically:• Will RailTel provide historical bid documents, annotated defect datasets, or scanned images for training/testing the OCR defect-detector?• For the chatbot, will RailTel supply existing FAQs, documents, user manuals or any prior chat logs to build the knowledge base?• Are there license or privacy issues for using any internal data (e.g. employee handbook)?	As per RFP
138	Clause 4.3.6(C), (E), (G); Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 31	Please clarify: (a) any legacy data migration requirements (volume/format), (b) expected number of concurrent users, and (c) whether chatbot needs to support multiple languages (Hindi, English, regional).	As per RFP
139	Clause 4.3.6(E)	Number of roles, approval levels, and workflow complexity	As per RFP
140	Clause 4.3.6(E)	How many approval levels are expected in onboarding processes?	As per RFP
141	Clause 4.3.6(I)	Will structured data be provided or should bidder build KB?	As per RFP
142	Clause 4.3.7	Will acceptance criteria be predefined?	As per RFP
143	Clause 4.3.7	Who defines acceptance criteria and success metrics	As per RFP
144	Clause 4.3.7(C); Clause 4.3.2(c)	Whether acceptance criteria and success metrics will be mutually agreed and documented prior to development	As per RFP
145	Clause 4.3.7(D) & (E); Clause 4.5.2, S.No. 6	How accuracy will be measured and validated	The bidder has to provide suitable system for tracking all operational SLAs / Parameters.
146	Clause 4.3.7(D); Clause 4.5.2, S.No. 6	Please define methodology for measuring OCR defect detection accuracy and acceptance thresholds.	The bidder has to provide suitable system for tracking all operational SLAs / Parameters.
147	Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 10 & 28	Is SSO/LDAP integration required?	Not required at present.
148	Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 12 & 23; Clause 4.3.4(B)	Will sensitive data be stored requiring encryption/vault solutions?	As per RFP
149	Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 13; Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 14	Log retention duration?	RailTel will provide the necessary storage.
150	Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 13; Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 14	Retention period and storage responsibility	RailTel will provide the necessary storage.
151	Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 19; Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 22	Any data localization requirements?	As per RFP
152	Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 19; Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 22	Whether MeitY/NIC empanelled cloud is mandatory	As per RFP
153	Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 20	What is the expected number of concurrent onboarding users?	The bidder has to plan the architecture to support minimum 50% concurrency for the e-empanelment system and Chatbot platform (internal).
154	Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 21; Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 10 & 11	RBAC with document-level segregation is a key requirement across the platform. Should the access control model be designed as a fine-grained, workflow-aware system, where permissions dynamically change based on user roles, document states, and process stages? Further, is the chatbot expected to tailor its responses based on the access level of the user interacting with it?	As per RFP

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S.No.	Reference Clause	Bidder Query / Questions	Reply by RailTel
155	Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 27	Will SMS/WhatsApp APIs be provided by RailTel?	APIs for Email, SMS and Payment gateway shall be provided by RailTel. Integration of all APIs including RailTel application APIs shall be the responsibility of the selected bidder. Currently, WhatsApp integration shall not be required.
156	Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 27, Chapter 1, Note 3	Whether messaging costs are included or reimbursable	APIs for Email, SMS and Payment gateway shall be provided by RailTel. Integration of all APIs including RailTel application APIs shall be the responsibility of the selected bidder. Currently, WhatsApp integration shall not be required.
157	Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 28	What is the currently approved password policy?	Password policy shall be shared with the selected bidder only. However, industry standard password policy shall be required.
158	Clause 4.4.1, S.No. 4	What web-browsers are expected to be supported (chrome, safari, edge, firefox)?	The solution is expected to be accessible across diverse device types and form factors including all industry leading browsers.
159	Clause 4.4.1; Clause 4.4.2	Whether a unified architecture is expected or separate deployments allowed	As per RFP
160	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 18	What capability is provided by the RailTel cloud for live replication to cater to Disaster Recovery?	RailTel shall provide DC and DR infrastructure.
161	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 23 & 24	Can the solution use on-premises hosted open-source LLMs (e.g., Llama 3, Mistral) within RailTel's infrastructure? This would be self-hosted with no external API calls.	As per RFP
162	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 23 & 24	Whether external LLM APIs (OpenAI/Azure) are allowed or only on-prem models	As per RFP
163	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 23 & 24	Whether LLM/API usage costs are included in bid or reimbursable	As per RFP
164	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 23 & 24	Whether AI/LLM usage is expected to be unlimited under fixed cost or capped based on defined usage thresholds	As per RFP
165	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 23 & 24; Clause 4.3.4	Whether anonymized interaction data can be used for model improvement or restricted strictly within RailTel environment	As per RFP
166	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 23, 24, 25, 32	If openai llm is used or we have to host our own model on your gpus . Also tell do you need any project management tool Like Jira. If yes tell me how many users from your side will be using it.	As per RFP
167	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 25 & 26	The chatbot is expected to function within a closed-domain environment with defined response governance constraints. To ensure consistency and measurable performance:• Should the system implement confidence scoring for all generated responses?• What is the expected handling for low-confidence or out-of-scope queries (e.g., fallback response vs escalation)?• How should such cases be accounted for within the ≤10% unanswered query threshold?	As per RFP
168	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 31	Is multilingual support required?	As per RFP
169	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 31	Multilingual capability has been specified, however the depth of Hindi language handling will significantly influence the NLP design and training effort. Is the system expected to support only basic Hindi queries, or should it also handle mixed-language inputs (Hindi-English), domain-specific terminology, and conversational phrasing? Additionally, are there any defined benchmarks or expectations around response quality and accuracy for Hindi interactions?	As per RFP
170	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 31	Is multilingual support limited to English and Hindi only, or will future languages be required under same cost?	At present, only English and Hindi languages are required.
171	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 31	Please confirm the language to be supported? The text indicates English and Hindi are the minimum; the upper bound is not defined.	At present, only English and Hindi languages are required.

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S.No.	Reference Clause	Bidder Query / Questions	Reply by RailTel
172	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 34	What level of analytics expected (basic reports vs AI insights)?	The bidder has to provide suitable system for tracking all operational SLAs / Parameters.
173	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 34; Clause 4.3.3	Expected analytics scope?	As per RFP
174	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 5	Is the vendor allowed to use an equivalent DB product instead of PostgreSQL?	Please refer Corrigendum-1
175	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 9; Clause 4.3.3	Is automated retraining required?	As per RFP
176	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 9; Clause 4.3.3	The platform includes ML-driven OCR and chatbot components that are expected to evolve over time. Is the system required to include a formal MLOps framework for model lifecycle management, including versioning, performance monitoring, drift detection, rollback capability, and controlled redeployment across both models independently?	As per RFP
177	Clause 4.4.2, S.No. 9; Clause 4.3.3	As the solution is expected to improve continuously through feedback loops and supervised learning, clarity on the retraining approach becomes important. Should the system incorporate a closed-loop retraining pipeline within O&M, covering feedback capture, retraining, validation, and controlled release of updated models into production? Or is periodic/manual retraining considered sufficient?	As per RFP
178	Clause 4.4.2; S.No. 32	Does AI-enabled conversational platform refer to text-only dialogues or voice conversations as well?	As per RFP
179	Clause 4.5	In case of delays due to RailTel dependencies (APIs, data, approvals), whether timelines and penalties will be adjusted accordingly	RailTel dependencies shall not be counted for calculating the SLA penalties.
180	Clause 4.5.1(1)	Will RailTel provide ticketing/SLA measurement tool or should bidder provision the same?	The bidder has to provide suitable system for tracking all operational SLAs / Parameters.
181	Clause 4.5.1(8)(a) & (b)	Are SLA penalties cumulative across parameters in a quarter, or capped per parameter?	As per RFP
182	Clause 4.5.2, S.No. 5	This depends on external factors like internet bandwidth, signal strength, network policies etc. Can't be accepted in real time scenario.	As per RFP
183	Clause 4.5.2, S.No. 6	Are SLA penalties tied to AI accuracy?	As per RFP
184	Clause 4.5.2, S.No. 6	Is there a stabilization period post go-live before SLA measurement begins?	As per RFP
185	Clause 4.5.2, S.No. 8	Please clarify definition and classification of security incidents triggering penalties.	As per RFP
186	Clause 4.5.2; Clause 3.7(iii); Clause 4.5.1(2) & (8)	Clarify penalty calculation and applicability (per milestone/overall)?	As per RFP
187	Clause 4.5; Clause 3.6	Will delays due to non-availability of RailTel inputs (data, approvals, infra) be excluded from SLA/LD?	RailTel dependencies shall not be counted for calculating the SLA penalties.
188	Clause 4.5; Clause 4.5.1, Note	How will SLA penalties be treated for outages caused by third-party portals or APIs beyond bidder control?	As per RFP
189	Clause 4.5; Clause 4.5.1, Note	How will this be evaluated?	As per RFP
190	Clause 6.4.8.1	Requesting formal confirmation of EMD exemption for our firm as a registered MSE.	As per RFP
191	Clause 6.4.8.1; Clause 3.2, S.No. 2 & 6	We request clarification on whether MSME (Micro/Small Enterprise) status provides any relaxation in experience criteria. In case no such relaxation is available, kindly confirm whether MSME bidders are still eligible to participate even if they do not fully meet the prescribed turnover requirements.	As per RFP
192	Clause 6.4.8; Clause 6.4.8.1 & 6.4.8.2	Is Udyam OR DPIIT sufficient for EMD exemption?	As per RFP
193	Chapter 9	In Chapter 9 (Forms), certain forms such as Form No. 5, Form No. 7, Form No. 8, and Form No. 9 are specifically marked as "(Not to be used)". Kindly clarify whether these forms are not required to be filled and submitted as part of the bid submission.	Those forms marked as "Not to be used" are not required to be submitted during bid submission. Please refer Corrigendum-1 for Form No. 5.

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S.No.	Reference Clause	Bidder Query / Questions	Reply by RailTel
194	Chapter 10	In Chapter 10 – Checklist, under the second table, one of the checklist items mentions “Downloaded tender document digitally signed”. We request clarification regarding the exact requirement for compliance against this point, specifically whether bidders are required to: digitally sign the downloaded tender document separately, or upload the signed/stamped tender document through the DSC-enabled e-tender portal submission process.	Signed and stamped tender document needs to be submitted for compliance to RFP terms and conditions
195	Chapter 10	Chapter 10 – Checklist also mentions “Compliance statement for acceptance of Scope of Work (Chapter 4) & Instructions and Tender Conditions (Chapter 3, 6, 7, 8).” Kindly clarify whether a separate declaration/compliance statement is required to be submitted for this clause or whether submission of Form No. 4 (Nil Deviation Compliance Undertaking) shall be considered sufficient compliance.	As per RFP
196	—	Expected number of users/documents/chatbot queries?	<p>For e-Empanelment system, No. of External Users: 1000 - 1200 No. of Internal Users: 800 - 1000</p> <p>For Chatbot (public website): 70,000 - 75,000 hits per month</p> <p>For Chatbot (internal) : 800 - 1000 users</p> <p>The bidder has to plan the architecture to support minimum 50% concurrency for the e-empanelment system and Chatbot (for both public website and internal).</p>
197	—	Given the multi-module data flow across onboarding, bid monitoring, credential bank, and tender tracking, the system will need to process data in varying formats and structures. Is the platform expected to implement a centralized data normalization layer that harmonizes inputs from documents, images, and structured datasets? This is particularly relevant where incoming data may be inconsistent, semi-structured, or vary across modules.	As per RFP
198	—	While RBAC is defined at the platform level, the chatbot will also act as an access point to structured and unstructured information across modules. Is the chatbot expected to enforce role-based access policies at the response level, ensuring that users only receive information aligned with their access rights? Specifically:• Should different user categories (e.g., admin, evaluator, vendor) have controlled visibility over distinct data sets or document types?• Is the chatbot required to dynamically filter or tailor responses based on user roles and	As per RFP
199	—	Timeline and readiness of infra (Dev/UAT/Prod environments)	RailTel shall provide the cloud infrastructure in a timely manner for UAT and Production environments only.
200	—	Whether any non-API systems require RPA or custom connectors	The bidder has to arrange third-party APIs and its integration with or without middleware. For RailTel applications, the APIs shall be provided by RailTel.
201	—	Whether chatbot will consume data from empanelment system	No, it is not expected that proposed chatbot solution will consume data from the e-empanelment system.
202	—	In case of increase in usage beyond estimated capacity, whether additional infrastructure cost will be borne by RailTel	As per RFP

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S.No.	Reference Clause	Bidder Query / Questions	Reply by RailTel
203	—	Expected number of total users (external + partners + internal)?	<p>For e-Empanelment system, No. of External Users: 1000 - 1200 No. of Internal Users: 800 - 1000</p> <p>For Chatbot (public website): 70,000 - 75,000 hits per month</p> <p>For Chatbot (internal) : 800 - 1000 users</p> <p>The bidder has to plan the architecture to support minimum 50% concurrency for the e-empanelment system and Chatbot (for both public website and internal).</p>