

Expression of Interest

INDEPENDENT THIRD-PARTY REVIEW OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION AND HEC-FUNDED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (Consultancy Services)

International

Single Stage-Two Envelope



October 28, 2026

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INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION

PROCUREMENT OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES

1. The **Higher Education Commission (HEC) (Higher Education Commision (HEC))** has reserved Funds for the procurement planned for FY **2026-27**. The **Higher Education Commission (HEC) (Higher Education Commision (HEC))** intends to apply part of the proceeds of this Fund to cover eligible payments under the contract for the "**INDEPENDENT THIRD-PARTY REVIEW OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION AND HEC-FUNDED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**" with the reference of "**P164583**"
2. The **Higher Education Commission (HEC) (Higher Education Commision (HEC))** intends to pre-qualify consulting firms / consultants for subsequent issuance of Request for Proposals (RFP), and sign the contract agreement(s) with the selected consultant(s) following the selection process.
3. The objective of the intended pre-qualification is the provision of "**INDEPENDENT THIRD-PARTY REVIEW OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION AND HEC-FUNDED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**" through engagement of qualified consultants, and the purpose of this Pre-qualification Notice is to provide basic information to enable potential applicants to decide whether or not to respond to this Pre-qualification Notice.
4. Only the pre-qualified applicants shall be invited to participate in the Request for Proposals (RFP) process, and it is expected that the RFP will be issued to the Pre-qualified Applicants.
5. The pre-qualification process is open to all **International** Applicants subject to fulfilling the eligibility requirements mentioned in the respective Pre-qualification Documents. Interested Applicants may obtain further information from the Higher Education Commission (HEC) (Higher Education Commision (HEC)) through **EPADS v2.0** during office hours. A complete set of Pre-qualification Documents may be accessed by interested Applicants through **EPADS v2.0** at **<https://epads.gov.pk/opportunities/federal/procurements/164583>**.
6. The application, prepared in accordance with the instructions in the Pre-qualification Documents, must be submitted through **EPADS v2.0** on or

before **Tuesday, November 17, 2026 11:30 AM**. E-applications will be opened using **EPADS v2.0** on the same day at **Tuesday, November 17, 2026 12:00 PM**. Manual submission of applications shall not be entertained. Applicants who have not yet registered on the new version of **EPADS v2.0** may register themselves at <https://vendors.epads.gov.pk/>. A tutorial to explain the registration process is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNW6T38v7tc>.

In terms of Rule 65 of Public Procurement Rules, 2026, a Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC) is notified for the subject procurement and the notification copy is available on the procuring agency's website and on Authority's website at (www.ppra.org.pk).

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Instructions to Applicants

A. General

B. Contents of the Prequalification Documents

Sections of Prequalification Documents

1. **Scope of Application**

1.1. In connection with the “**Invitation for Prequalification**”, the Procuring Agency, as defined in Section II (Prequalification Data Sheet abbreviated as PDS), issues this set of Prequalification Documents (PD) to prospective applicants (also hereinafter referred as Applicants) interested in submitting applications (also hereinafter referred as Applications) to determine the capacity and capability of the Applicant(s) for supply of Goods and Related Services incidental thereto as specified in Section VII (Schedule of Requirements).

2. **Source of Funds**

2.1. Source of funds is same as referred in Invitation for Pre-qualification.

3. **Fraud and Corruption**

3.1. The Procuring Agency requires that the Applicants /Bidders/ Suppliers/Contractors under Government financed contracts, observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of such agreements and contracts.

3.2. The Applicants/Bidders shall permit and shall cause their agents (whether declared or not), sub-contractors, sub-consultants, service providers, suppliers, and their personnel, to permit the Procuring Agency to inspect all accounts, records and other documents relating to any, Application/Bid submission, Secondary Procurement process, and to have them audited by auditors appointed by the Procuring Agency.

3.3. Any communications between the Applicant and the Procuring Agency related to matters of alleged corrupt and fraudulent practices must be made in writing or in electronic forms that provide record of the content of

communication.

3.4. Procuring Agency will reject an application or bid or proposal, if it is established that the Applicant or the Bidder or Prosper was engaged in corrupt and fraudulent practices in competing for the contract.

3.5. Procuring Agency will also declare the Applicant as blacklisted in accordance with rules and predefined standard mechanism.

4. Eligible Applicants

4.1. An Applicant may be a private entity, a state-owned enterprise or institution subject to ITB 4.6, or any combination of such entities in the form of a joint venture (JV) under an existing JV agreement or with the intent to enter into such an agreement supported by a letter of intent.

In case of single (private or state-owned entity), it shall be liable for execution of all the provisions of the Contract Agreement.

In the case of a joint venture, all members shall be jointly and severally liable for the execution of all the provisions of the Contract Agreement (if signed b/w the Procuring Agency and the JV), in accordance with the Contract conditions that apply.

The JV shall nominate a Representative who shall have the authority to conduct all business for and on behalf of any and all the members of the JV during the Prequalification process, Bidding process (in the event the prequalified JV submits a Bid) and during the period of contract agreement and contract execution (in the event the JV is awarded the Contract). Unless specified in the PDS, there is no limit on the number of members in a JV.

4.2. An Applicant may apply for Prequalification both individually, and as part of a joint venture, or participate as a subcontractor. If prequalified as a JV only, it will not be permitted to bid for the same contract as an individual entity. Bids submitted in violation of this provision will be rejected.

4.3. An Applicant and any of its affiliates (that directly or indirectly control, are controlled by or are under common control with that entity) may submit its Application for Prequalification either individually, as joint venture or as a sub-contractor among them for the same contract. However, if prequalified only one prequalified Applicant will be allowed to bid for the same contract.

All Bids submitted in violation of this provision will be rejected.

4.4. Applicants shall be considered to have a conflict of interest, if they participated as a consultant in the preparation of the design or technical specifications or have been hired or proposed to be hired by the Procuring Agency for execution of subsequent Contract Agreement. In addition, Applicants may be considered to have a conflict of interest if they have a close business or family relationship with such professional staff of the Procuring Agency (or a recipient of a part of the funds) who:

4.4.1. are directly or indirectly involved in the preparation of the Prequalification Documents or Bidding Documents or specifications of Contract and/or the Prequalification or Bid evaluation process of such Contract; or

4.4.2. would be involved in the implementation or supervision of such Agreement t, unless the conflict stemming from such relationship has been resolved throughout the Procurement Process, Bidding.

4.5. An Applicant that has been declared debarred or blacklisted shall be ineligible to be prequalified to bid for such period of time and for such type of procurement for which he has been declared debarred or blacklisted. The list of debarred firms and individuals is available at PPRA's website.

4.6. An Applicant shall provide such documentary evidence for determining the eligibility of the Applicant to the reasonable satisfaction of the Procuring Agency.

5. Eligibility (in terms of Nationality)

5.1. Applicants may be ineligible if they are nationals of ineligible countries as indicated in Section V.

B. Contents of the Prequalification Documents

6. Sections of Prequalification Documents

6.1. This set of Prequalification Documents consists of Parts 1 and 2 which comprise all the sections indicated below, and which should be read in conjunction with any Addendum issued in accordance with ITA 8.

PART 1 Prequalification Procedures PART 2 Supply Requirements

6.2. Section I - Instructions to Applicants (ITA)

6.3. Section II - Prequalification Data Sheet (PDS)

6.4. Section III - Qualification Criteria and Requirements

6.5. Section IV - Application Forms

6.6. Section V - Eligible Countries

6.7. Section VI - Fraud and Corruption

6.8. Section VII – Schedule of Requirements

6.9. The Procuring Agency accepts no responsibility for the completeness of the Prequalification documents, responses to requests for clarification, the minutes of the pre-Application meeting (if any), or Addenda to the Prequalification documents in accordance with ITA 8. In case of any discrepancies, documents issued directly through ePADS shall prevail.

6.10. The Applicant is expected to examine all instructions, forms, and terms in the Prequalification Documents and to furnish with its Application all information or documentation as is required by the Prequalification Documents.

7. Clarification of Pre-qualification Documents and Pre-Application Meeting

7.1. An Applicant requiring any clarification of the Pre-qualification Documents shall contact the Procuring Agency in writing through ePADS as. The Procuring Agency will respond in writing through ePADS to any request for clarification provided that such request is received no later than three (03) days prior to the deadline for submission of the Applications. The Procuring Agency shall forward a copy of its response to all prospective

Applicants through ePADS who have obtained the Prequalification Documents from ePADS, including a description of the inquiry but without identifying its source. If so indicated in the PDS, the Procuring Agency shall also promptly publish its response through ePADS. Should the Procuring Agency deem it necessary to amend the Prequalification Documents as a result of a clarification, it shall do so in accordance with the provisions of ITA 16.2.

7.2. If indicated in the PDS, the Applicant's designated representative is invited at the Applicant's cost to attend a pre-Application meeting through online platform / **EPADS v2.0** as per date and time mentioned in the PDS. During this Pre-Application meeting, prospective Applicants may request clarification of the schedule of requirement, the qualification criteria or any other aspects of the Pre-qualification Documents.

7.3. Minutes of the Pre-Application meeting, if applicable, including the text of the questions asked by Applicants, including those during the meeting (without identifying the source) and the responses given, together with any responses prepared after the meeting will be transmitted promptly through ePADS to all prospective Applicants who have obtained the Pre-qualification Documents. Any modification to the Pre-qualification Documents that may become necessary as a result of the pre-Application meeting shall be made by the Procuring Agency exclusively through the use of an Addendum pursuant to ITA 8 and through **EPADS v2.0**. Non-attendance at the pre-Application meeting will not be a cause for disqualification of an Applicant.

8. Amendment of Prequalification Documents

8.1. At any time prior to the deadline for submission of Applications, the Procuring Agency may amend the Prequalification Documents by issuing an Addendum through **EPADS v2.0**.

8.2. Any Addendum issued shall be part of the Prequalification Document and shall be communicated in writing through ePADS to all Applicants who have obtained the Prequalification Documents from the Procuring Agency. The Procuring Agency shall promptly publish the Addendum at the Procuring Agency's web page and **EPADS v2.0**.

Provided that an Applicant who had already submitted their Applications

prior to the issuance of any such addendum shall have the right to withdraw his already submitted Application and submit the revised Application prior to the original or extended Application submission deadline through **EPADS v2.0**.

8.3. To give Applicants reasonable time to take an Addendum into account in preparing their Applications, the Procuring Agency may at its discretion, extend the deadline for the submission of Applications in accordance with ITA 16.2:

Provided that the Procuring Agency shall extend the deadline for submission of Applications, if such an addendum is issued within last three (03) days of the Application submission deadline.

C. Preparation of Applications

9. Cost of Applications

9.1. The Applicant shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of its Application. The Procuring Agency will in no case be responsible or liable for those costs, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the Pre-qualification process.

10. Language of Application

10.1. The Application as well as all correspondence and documents relating to the Pre-qualification exchanged by the Applicant and the Procuring Agency, shall be written in the language specified in the PDS. Supporting documents and printed literature that are part of the Application may be in another language, provided they are accompanied by an accurate translation of the relevant passages in the language specified in the PDS, in which case, for purposes of interpretation of the Application, the translation shall govern.

11. Documents Comprising the Application

11.1. The Application shall comprise the following:

11.1.1. **Application Submission Letter**, in accordance with ITA 12.1;

11.1.2. **Eligibility**: documentary evidence establishing the Applicant's eligibility, in accordance with ITA 13.1;

11.1.3. **Qualifications**: documentary evidence establishing the Applicant's qualifications, in accordance with ITA 14; and

11.1.4. any other document required as specified in the PDS.

11.2. **Application Submission Letter**

11.2.1. The Applicant shall complete an Application Submission Letter as provided in Section IV (Application Forms). This Form must be completed without any alteration to its format.

11.3. **Documents Establishing the Eligibility of the Applicant**

11.3.1. To establish its eligibility in accordance with ITA 4, the Applicant shall complete the eligibility declarations in the Application Submission Letter and Form ELI-1.1 (eligibility), included in Section IV (Application Forms).

11.4. **Documents Establishing the Qualifications of the Applicant**

11.4.1. To establish its qualifications to perform the contract(s) in accordance with Section III (**Qualification Criteria and Requirements**), the Applicant shall provide the information requested in the corresponding Information Sheets included in **Section IV (Application Forms)**.

11.4.2. Wherever an Application Form requires an Applicant to state a monetary amount, Applicants should indicate the Pak Rupee equivalent using the rate of exchange determined as follows:

11.4.2.1. for turnover or financial data required for each year - Exchange rate prevailing on the last day of the respective calendar year (in which the amounts for that year is to be converted).

11.4.2.2. value of single contract - Exchange rate prevailing on the date of the contract.

11.4.3. Exchange rates shall be taken from the publicly available source identified in the PDS. Any error in determining the exchange rates in the Application may be corrected by the Procuring Agency.

11.4.4. The documentary evidence of the Applicant's qualifications to conclude a contract Agreement, shall establish to the Procuring Agency's satisfaction:

11.4.4.1. that, if required in the BDS, an Applicant that does not manufacture or produce the Goods it offers to supply shall submit the Manufacturer's Authorization using the form included in Section IV A (Bidding Forms) to demonstrate that it has been duly authorized by the manufacturer or producer of the Goods to supply these Goods in the Procuring Agency's Country;

11.4.4.2. that, if required in the BDS, in case of an Applicant not doing business within Islamic Republic of Pakistan (or the country where the procurement is being made), the Applicant is, or will be, (if awarded the call off contract) represented by an Agent in the country, equipped and able to carry out the Supplier's maintenance, repair, and spare parts stocking obligations in respect of the Goods.

D. Submission of Applications

15. Submission of the Applications through EPADS v2.0

15.1. The Bidder shall prepare and submit Bid with due diligence after carefully reading all the terms and condition before submission through ePADS in accordance with the procedures specified in the PDS.

15.2. In case the Applicant is a JV, the Application shall submit an authorized representative of the JV on behalf of the JV and so as to be legally binding on all the members as evidenced by a power of attorney signed by their legally

authorized signatories.

16. **Deadline for Submission of Applications**

16.1. Applicants shall be submitted through ePADS no later than the deadline indicated in the PDS.

16.2. If required in accordance with the provisions of ITA 8.3, the Procuring Agency will extend the deadline for the submission of Applications, in which case all rights and obligations of the Procuring Agency and the Applicants subject to the previous deadline shall thereafter be subject to the deadline as extended.

16.3. The deadline will be extended in the same manner as that of original Invitation for Prequalification (or the advertisement) through **EPADS v2.0**.

17. **Opening of Applications**

17.1. The Procuring Agency shall open all Applications on the date and time specified in the PDS through **EPADS v2.0**. Late Applications shall be treated in accordance with ITA 16.1.

E. Procedures for Evaluation of Applications

18. **Confidentiality**

18.1. Information relating to the Applications, their evaluation and results of the Prequalification shall not be disclosed to Applicants or any other persons not officially concerned with the Prequalification process until the notification of Prequalification results is made to all Applicants in accordance with ITA 26 through **EPADS v2.0**.

18.2. From the deadline for submission of Applications to the time of notification of the results of the Prequalification in accordance with ITA 26, any Applicant that wishes to contact the Procuring Agency on any matter related to the Prequalification process may do so only in writing through **EPADS v2.0**

19. **Clarification of Applications**

19.1. To assist in the evaluation of Applications, the Procuring Agency may, ask an Applicant for a clarification (including missing documents) of its Application, to be submitted within a stated reasonable period of time. Any request for clarification from the Procuring Agency and all clarifications from the Applicant shall be in writing through **EPADS v2.0**

19.2. If an Applicant does not provide clarifications and/or documents requested by the date and time set in the Procuring Agency's request for clarification, its Application shall be evaluated based on the information and documents available at the time of evaluation of the Application.

20. Responsiveness of Applications

20.1. The Procuring Agency may reject any Application which is not responsive to the requirements of the Prequalification Documents. In case the information furnished by the Applicant is incomplete or otherwise requires clarification as per ITA 19.1, and the Applicant fails to provide satisfactory clarification and/or missing information within prescribed time, it may result in disqualification of the Applicant.

21. Margin of Preference

21.1. Unless otherwise specified in the PDS, a margin of preference shall not apply in the Bidding process resulting from this Pre-qualification.

22. Sub-contractors

22.1. Subcontractors' qualification and experience will not be considered for evaluation of the Applicant. The Applicant on its own (without taking into account the qualification and experience of the Subcontractor) should meet the qualification criteria.

F. Evaluation of Applications and Prequalification of Applicants

23. Evaluation of Applications

23.1. The Procuring Agency shall use the factors, methods, criteria, and requirements defined in Section III, Qualification Criteria and Requirements, to evaluate the qualifications of the Applicants, and no other methods, criteria, or requirements shall be used. The Procuring Agency reserves the right to waive minor deviations from the qualification criteria if they do not materially affect the technical capability and financial resources of an Applicant to perform the contract, however subject to the provisions of ITA 25.

23.2. Subcontractors proposed by the Applicant shall be fully qualified for their parts of the Scope of Supply of the Goods and Allied Services.

23.3. In case of multiple contracts, Applicants should indicate in their Applications the individual contract or combination of contracts in which they are interested. The Procuring Agency shall prequalify each Applicant for the maximum combination of contracts for which the Applicant has thereby indicated its interest and for which the Applicant meets the appropriate aggregate requirements. The Qualification Criteria and Requirements are mentioned in Section III.

Only the qualifications of the Applicant shall be considered. The qualifications of other related entities such as the Applicant's subsidiaries, parent entities, affiliates, subcontractors or any other firm(s) different from the Applicant shall not be taken into consideration in determining the qualifications of the Applicant.

24. Procuring Agency's Right to Accept or Reject Applications

24.1. The Procuring Agency reserves the right to accept or reject all the Applications, and to annul the Prequalification process at any time, without thereby incurring any liability to the Applicants. However, the procuring agency shall record its reasons and justifications on **EPADS v2.0**, duly approved by the Principal Accounting Officer or Head of Organization.

25. Pre-qualification of Applicants

25.1. All Applicants whose Applications substantially meet or exceed the specified qualification requirements will be prequalified by the Procuring

Agency.

25.2. An Applicant may be “conditionally prequalified,” that is, qualified subject to the Applicant submitting or correcting certain specified nonmaterial documents or deficiencies to the satisfaction of the Procuring Agency.

25.3. Applicants that are conditionally prequalified will be so informed along with the statement of the condition(s) which must be met to the satisfaction of the Procuring Agency before or at the time of submitting their Bids.

26. Notification of Prequalification

26.1. The Procuring Agency shall notify all Applicants in writing through **EPADS v2.0** indicating the names of those Applicants who have been prequalified or conditionally prequalified. In addition, those Applicants who have been disqualified will be informed separately through **EPADS v2.0**.

26.2. The procuring agency shall communicate to those suppliers or contractors who have not been pre-qualified the reasons for not pre-qualifying them through **EPADS v2.0**

27. Request for Bids

27.1. Promptly after the notification of the results of the Prequalification, the Procuring Agency will invite the Bids from all the Applicants that have been prequalified through **EPADS v2.0**.

28. Changes in Qualifications of Applicants

28.1. Any change in the structure or formation of an Applicant after being prequalified in accordance with ITA 25 and invited to bid (including, in the case of a JV, any change in the structure or formation of any member thereto) shall be subject to the written approval of the Procuring Agency prior to the deadline for submission of Bids. Such approval shall be denied if:

28.1.1. a prequalified Applicant proposes to associate with a disqualified Applicant or in case of a disqualified joint venture, any of its members;

28.1.2. as a consequence of the change, the Applicant no longer substantially meets the qualification criteria set forth in Section III, Qualification Criteria and Requirements; or

28.1.3. in the opinion of the Procuring Agency, the change may result in a substantial reduction in competition.

28.2. Any such change should be submitted to the Procuring Agency before the date of “Invitation to Bids”.

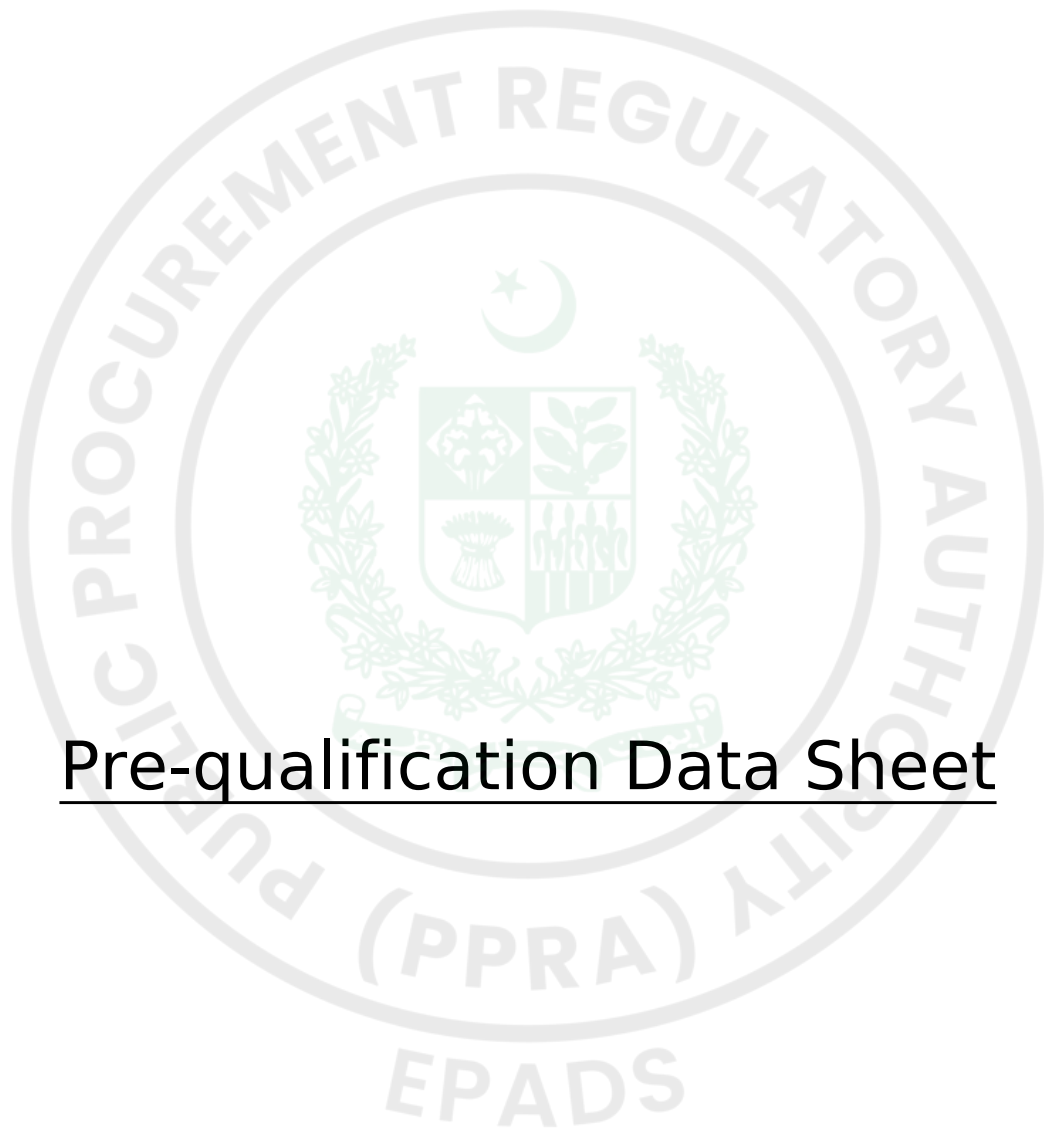
29. Redressal of Grievances

29.1. Procuring agency shall constitute a Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC) and proceed in accordance with the procedure and mechanism defined under Rule-65 of Public Procurement Rules, 2026.

29.2. The GRC shall not have any of the members of Procurement Evaluation Committee. The committee must have one subject specialist depending on the nature of the procurement.

30. Mechanism of Blacklisting

30.1. The procuring agency shall initiate blacklisting or debarment proceedings against any bidder, supplier or contractor in accordance with the mechanism prescribed under Rule-25 of Public Procurement Rules, 2026 read with “Mechanism for Blacklisting Regulations, 2024”.



Pre-qualification Data Sheet

Prequalification Data Sheet (PDS)

The following specific data for the Prequalification of Applicants shall complement, supplement, or amend the provisions in the Instructions to Applicants (ITA). Whenever there is a conflict, the provisions herein shall prevail over those in ITA.

PDS Clause Number

ITA Number

Amendments of, and Supplements to, Clauses in the Instructions to Applicants

A. General

PDS Clause Number 1

ITA Number 1.1

Identification Number of the Invitation for Prequalification: **P164583**

The Procuring Agency is: **Higher Education Commission (HEC) (Higher Education Commission (HEC))**

List of Service Contracts:

See section services and Lots

PDS Clause Number 2

ITA Number 2.1

The name of Procuring Agency is: **Higher Education Commission (HEC) (Higher Education Commission (HEC))**

The name of Project / Procurement is: **INDEPENDENT THIRD-PARTY REVIEW OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION AND HEC-FUNDED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

PDS Clause Number 3

ITA Number 4.2

Maximum number of members in a Joint Venture (JV): **5**

PDS Clause Number 4

ITA Number 4.5

A list of debarred firms and individuals is available on PPRA website: **<https://ppra.gov.pk>**

B. Contents of the Prequalification Document

PDS Clause Number 5

ITA Number 7.1

For clarification, the Applicant shall seek clarifications through: **EPADS v2.0**

PDS Clause Number 6

ITA Number 7.1 & 8.2

Information related to Prequalification shall be published on: **EPADS v2.0**

PDS Clause Number 7

ITA Number 7.2

Pre-Application Meeting: **Clarification Date: Saturday, November 14, 2026**

Pre-Bid Meeting: Monday, November 2, 2026 11:00 AM

Venue: Central Procurement Cell, Sector H-9

Meeting

Link:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/454916396016901?p=yGhyGcEJmVI5gi8KZ6>

C. Preparation of Applications

PDS Clause Number 8

ITA Number 10.1

This Prequalification Document has been issued in the language: **English**

PDS Clause Number 9

ITA Number 11.1(d)

Additional documents to be submitted through EPADS v2.0:

No

PDS Clause Number 10

ITA Number 14.2

Source for determining exchange rates: **Not Applicable**

D. Submission of Applications

PDS Clause Number 11

ITA Number 16.1

Deadline for Application Submission:

Day: **Tuesday**

Date: **Tuesday, November 17, 2026**

Time: **11:30 AM**

PDS Clause Number 12

ITA Number 17.1

Opening of Applications shall be conducted through: **EPADS v2.0**

Day: **Tuesday**

Date: **Tuesday, November 17, 2026**

Time: **12:00 PM**

Virtual participation link: **<https://vendors.epads.gov.pk/>**

E. Procedures for Evaluation of Applications

PDS Clause Number 13

ITA Number 21.1

Margin of Domestic Preference: **Not Applicable**

(Applicable only if authorized in Procurement Plan)

PDS Clause Number 14

ITA Number 29.1

Prequalification-related complaints / grievances shall be submitted in writing through: **EPADS v2.0**

A complaint may challenge:

- The terms of the Prequalification Documents
- The Procuring Agency's decision not to prequalify an Applicant

Eligibility & Qualification Criteria

All Active Taxpayers shall be eligible to participate in the procurement process, unless expressly excluded or otherwise restricted under the Eligibility Criteria specified by the Procuring Agency.

Required Registration
None

Eligibility Criteria	Document
Legally registered company/firm (SECP/Registrar of Firms in Pakistan, or equivalent companies/registration authority in the country of incorporation).	Yes
Authorized application and, for a JV, a signed agreement/letter of intent identifying the lead member and responsibilities.	Yes
At least ten (10) years of relevant consulting operations by the applicant/lead JV member, supported by registration and corporate records.	Yes
Valid tax registration with FBR and applicable Active Taxpayer status for Pakistan-based applicants; equivalent home-country tax registration/compliance evidence for foreign applicants, with Pakistan registrations obtained as legally required.	Yes
Capacity of at least forty (40) relevant professional employees/consultants (support staff will not be counted), employed or substantively engaged during the preceding two years by the lead firm, verifiable by a named roster showing qualifications, role, engagement dates and status.	Yes

Evaluation Criteria

Quality Based Selection (QBS)

Weightage (Without Financial Criteria)

Technical Evaluation %	
100	
Technical Marks	100
Passing Marks	70
INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY : 20 Marks	
Average annual turnover (latest 3 audited years): (Quantitative)(Doc Required)	10
PKR $\geq$ 275m (10)	
PKR 225 - <275m (7)	
PKR 200 - <225m (4)	

<p>Operational capability for national/multi-region fieldwork : Verifiable local offices = 2 Mark for each field office in a distinct city in Pakistan. (Quantitative)(Doc Required)</p> <p>5 or More verifiable local offices in a distinct city in Pakistan. (10)</p> <p>4 verifiable local offices in a distinct city in Pakistan. (8)</p> <p>3 verifiable local offices in a distinct city in Pakistan. (6)</p> <p>2 verifiable local offices in a distinct city in Pakistan (4)</p> <p>1 verifiable local office in a city in Pakistan (2)</p>	10
PROFESSIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITY : 20 Marks	
<p>Relevant professional staff/consultants (unique named individuals with evidence of substantive engagement within 2 years): (Quantitative)(Doc Required)</p> <p>≥80 (20)</p> <p>60-79 (15)</p> <p>40-59 (10)</p>	20
RELEVANT FIRM EXPERIENCE AND PAST PERFORMANCE : 60 Marks	

<p>Completed higher education sector-wide or multi-institutional review for HEC or comparable higher education/funding or any other regulatory authority. (Quantitative)(Doc Required)</p> <p>2 or more completed review (20)</p> <p>1 completed review (10)</p>	20
<p>Completed funding-impact, evaluation, public expenditure, cost-effectiveness or value-for-money studies, public-finance or policy-review assignment (preferably education/skills/public programmes or public institutions) (Quantitative)(Doc Required)</p> <p>2 or more completed assignment (20)</p> <p>1 completed assignment (10)</p>	20
<p>1 or more completed regulatory, governance, quality assurance or institutional-performance reviews of public-sector organizations. (Quantitative)(Doc Required)</p>	10
<p>Completed national/multi-region institutional surveys, tracer studies or substantial field-data assignments: (Quantitative)(Doc Required)</p> <p>2 or more completed assignments (10)</p> <p>1 completed assignment (5)</p>	10

Lot Title : Scope of Services: Four Distinct Assessment Components

Position: Component A: Impact of HEC Funding on Institutional and Sector Outcomes

Specifications / Requirements:

Assess the results of federal/HEC funding and interventions against institutional baselines, funding exposure and reasonable comparison groups, with attention to the following five outcome domains:

A1. Teaching and educational quality

- a. Programme relevance and quality; curriculum improvements; externally available quality-assurance / programme-review outcomes; teaching-learning conditions and effective use of libraries, laboratories and digital learning infrastructure.
- b. Enrolment, retention, completion, student progression and access/equity trends (including gender, region and disadvantaged groups), with appropriate adjustment for institution type and baseline circumstances.
- c. Evidence of tangible learning or educational improvement using reliable existing assessments, graduate evidence and targeted student/faculty feedback, without introducing a stand-alone national learning examination under this contract.

A2. Research, innovation and wider impact

- a. Research publications of verifiable quality, discipline-normalised citations where feasible, competitive grants, research completion, postgraduate research, collaboration, patents, licensing, start-ups and other documented innovation outputs.
- b. Contribution of funded research to industry, public policy, services, economic activity and strategic national priorities, substantiated by verifiable examples rather than publication volumes alone.

A3. Faculty quality and capacity

- a. Faculty qualifications, subject mix, PhD ratios where relevant, teaching/research capacity, development initiatives, recruitment/retention trends and staff-student ratios on consistent definitions.
- b. Linkage between HEC support (including scholarships and faculty development programmes) and tangible changes in faculty capacity and institutional performance.

A4. Graduate employability and labour-market relevance

- a. Graduate employment and time-to-employment, field relevance, underemployment (where defensibly measurable), employer perceptions, self-employment/entrepreneurship and the relevance of academic programmes to market demand.
- b. Review and validate existing graduate tracer studies and institutional data; undertake a proportionate supplementary

graduate/employer sample where data gaps are material. Wage data may be examined only where availability, comparability and respondent confidentiality permit.

A5. Global competitiveness and aggregate sectoral contribution

a. Trends in recognised national/international institutional and subject rankings, research visibility and academic collaboration; examine explanatory drivers rather than treating rankings as direct proof of educational quality.

b. Higher education's contribution to skilled human capital, research and innovation, regional opportunity and economic competitiveness, using identifiable measures and clearly stated attribution limitations.

Output from Component A: a defensible account of outcomes achieved, disparities and areas of underperformance, supported by matched financing, institutional context, historic trends and representative case evidence.

Position: Component B: Effectiveness of HEC as a Regulatory and Sector-Oversight Body Evaluate the adequacy, implementation and demonstrable outcomes of HEC's statutory, policy, regulatory and sector-governance functions, rather than duplicating routine univer

Specifications / Requirements:

Evaluate the adequacy, implementation and demonstrable outcomes of HEC's statutory, policy, regulatory and sector-governance functions, rather than duplicating routine university compliance inspections.

a. Statutory mandate and division of responsibilities: review relevant provisions of the HEC Ordinance, post-18th Amendment arrangements, relationships with MoFEPT, provinces, higher education departments/commissions, accreditation councils and HEIs; identify overlaps, gaps and coordination constraints.

b. Regulatory architecture and service delivery: assess standards and policy clarity, institutional/programme recognition, QA and programme oversight, review mechanisms, decision timeliness, institutional compliance monitoring and response to identified deficiencies.

c. Regulatory outcomes: assess evidence that policy, oversight and support have improved teaching quality, academic standards, institutional governance, transparency and public accountability; distinguish policy existence from actual uptake and results.

- d. Governance and autonomy interface: assess whether regulations and funding conditions appropriately balance academic/institutional autonomy with accountability, and whether HEC has proportionate means to discharge its mandates.
- e. Coordination and emerging needs: evaluate coverage and effectiveness in light of growth in HEIs, programmes, students, new delivery modes and digitalisation of HEI operations.

Output from Component B: an evidence-based regulatory-effectiveness assessment, with mapped statutory functions, observed constraints, benchmarks, and options for strengthening coordination, regulation and oversight.

Position: Component C: Financial Efficiency, Funding Adequacy and Sustainability

Specifications / Requirements:

Undertake a consolidated public-finance and value-for-money assessment, avoiding double-counting between HEC administrative expenditure, transfers to HEIs, federal development financing, provincial grants and HEIs' own resources.

C1. Funding architecture, utilisation and value for money

- a. Reconcile annual federal allocations, releases and expenditure through HEC: recurring grants, development interventions, research programmes, scholarships/faculty development and material sector services; separate funding managed directly by HEC from grants transferred to institutions
- b. Compare expenditures against credible outputs and outcomes using indicators such as expenditure/subsidy per student, cost per graduate, spending by institution type, research output per relevant research rupee, asset utilisation and programme results—only where denominators and cost boundaries are comparable.
- c. Review transparency, predictability, use and timeliness of grants, financial management and implementation constraints; identify demonstrable inefficiencies, duplication and areas where additional funding could yield stronger returns.

C2. Actual funding requirements and international comparison

- a. Estimate HEC's reasonable recurrent administrative, regulatory and sector-development funding needs and the aggregate HEI

funding envelope required to maintain essential quality and meet projected enrolment, faculty, technology, research and strategic priorities under low/base/high scenarios.

b. Benchmark Pakistan against suitably selected regional and international peers using harmonised indicators including public higher education expenditure as a share of GDP and government expenditure; expenditure per tertiary student; participation/enrolment trends; institutional funding mix and relevant outcomes. Adjust for differences in system composition, income levels and price bases where feasible.

c. Present funding gaps and projected needs as transparent ranges with explicit assumptions, separating efficient minimum operating requirements, service-quality improvements and strategic expansion; do not treat current funding as inherently adequate or inadequate without evidence.

C3. Federal-provincial responsibilities and financing:

a. Analyse the federal/provincial shares and respective roles in recurring and development financing; assess the relevance of constitutional/statutory arrangements, applicable Council of Common Interests decisions, the National Fiscal Pact and the nature of national-interest or shared-benefit expenditure.

b. Examine fiscal feasibility and potential impacts of different federal-provincial cost-sharing approaches on institutional sustainability, regional equity, continuity and academic quality. Verify any cited aggregate such as Rs 71 billion against audited/official records before use.

c. Identify policy issues and options for future intergovernmental consultation; do not prepare a binding devolution schedule or assume wholesale withdrawal of federal support as a predetermined result.

C4. HEI sustainability, performance orientation and student support:

a. Review institutional finances and resilience: grant dependence, salary and non-salary shares, own-source revenues, fee affordability, endowment/competitive grants where applicable, capital maintenance, financial reporting and effective use of assets.

b. Assess evidence for strengthening existing formula-based and performance-oriented funding approaches, taking account of funding adequacy, equity, institution mission and unintended consequences; recommend whether a separate reform/design

exercise is justified.

c. Review the current scholarship, need-based financial assistance and loan-based support landscape; examine accessibility, cost, coverage, repayment/administration risks and compatibility with sustaining core institutional teaching/research functions; identify options for detailed feasibility study rather than designing a new student-finance product.

Output from Component C: a reconciled funding/VfM diagnostic, sustainable funding-needs scenarios, peer-country comparison, and evidence-based options for future grant policy, cost sharing and financial assistance reforms.

Position: Component D: HEC Organisational Capacity, Rightsizing and Digital Readiness Independently assess whether HEC's functions, organisational capacity, professional composition, administrative costs and technologies are proportionate to the mandate and gr

Specifications / Requirements:

Independently assess whether HEC's functions, organisational capacity, professional composition, administrative costs and technologies are proportionate to the mandate and growing scale/complexity of Pakistan's higher education system. The analysis must be neutral as to whether the result should be reduction, reallocation or augmentation of capacity.

a. Functional mapping and workload: catalogue principal HEC services/functions, outputs, statutory obligations, duplication, service volumes and trends, HEC/HEI coverage, staff workload and feasible productivity benchmarks, including federal-provincial coordination requirements.

b. Human resources and institutional capacity: examine sanctioned versus working strength, vacancies, skill mix, age/retirement profile, professional shortages, functional overlaps, field/regulatory coverage and management arrangements; identify critical functions requiring specialised capability.

c. Financial and efficiency implications: evaluate administration/staff costs in relation to volume, service quality, statutory duties and comparative regulators; quantify practicable savings, process efficiencies, redeployment or targeted capacity enhancement

options with transition costs and risks, using financial inputs coordinated with Component C.

d. Digitisation and service processes: examine existing HEC/HEI systems and major initiatives, end-to-end electronic services, data quality, interoperability, operational support and monitoring workflows; identify high-value opportunities for process simplification, integration and automation without specifying or developing a new digital platform or detailed technical architecture.

e. Rightsizing assessment: explicitly test any suggested staff/administrative budget reduction against validated workload, existing reforms, affordability, sector growth, service-level consequences and statutory obligations. Recommend a justified configuration—reduction, restructuring, redeployment, strengthened staffing, or a combination—as warranted by evidence.

Output from Component D: a functional capacity and rightsizing diagnostic, evidence-backed capacity options, preliminary costs/benefits and a sequenced roadmap for any more detailed organisational, HR or digital systems study.

Scope of Work

2. Purpose, Objectives and Scope:

The overarching purpose is to furnish the Federal Government, MoFEPT and HEC with an independent, verifiable and policy-relevant assessment of the effectiveness of public investment in higher education, the discharge of HEC's statutory and regulatory responsibilities, and the adequacy, efficiency and future requirements of federal support and HEC's institutional capacity.

2.1 Principal objectives

1. Evaluate the contribution and measurable impact of HEC funding and interventions on the quality, relevance, accessibility, research performance, faculty capacity, graduate outcomes and international competitiveness of HEC-funded HEIs.
2. Assess the effectiveness and outcomes of HEC's regulatory, quality-assurance, policy, monitoring, compliance and sector-coordination functions, considering statutory responsibilities and federal-provincial arrangements.

3. Assess financial efficiency, value for money, sustainability and adequacy of HEC and HEI financing, including an evidence-based estimate of the federal funding required to fulfil sector needs under credible future scenarios.

4. Assess whether HEC's present functional structure, staffing profile, and administrative capacity are proportionate to its current and foreseeable mandate, and identify options for strengthening, rationalisation, redeployment, automation or rightsizing as objectively warranted.

2.2 Nature of the assignment:

This is an independent diagnostic and advisory assignment. The Consultant shall review existing policies, funding arrangements and performance measures, identify strengths and weaknesses, quantify feasible reform options, and propose a prioritised roadmap for subsequent Government/HEC consideration. Where the evidence suggests that any new regulatory, funding, scholarship, digital or organisational framework may be warranted, the Consultant shall specify the problem, possible options, prerequisites, indicative resource implications, responsible authorities and the terms of reference for a separate follow-on study or implementation process. Recommendations shall not be represented as approved Government or HEC policy.

3. Scope of Services: Four Distinct Assessment Components For analytical clarity, the assessment is divided into four mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive components. i. ii. iii. iv. Component A assesses outcomes at the HEI/sector level; Component B assesses HEC's regulatory and sector-oversight performance; Component C assesses funding flows, costs, adequacy and sustainability; and Component D assesses HEC's internal operational capacity and staffing requirements.

Baseline development, sampling, data collection, benchmarking and recommendations are cross cutting methods/outputs rather than additional overlapping assessment components.

Component A: Impact of HEC Funding on Institutional and Sector Outcomes Assess the results of federal/HEC funding and interventions against institutional baselines, funding exposure and reasonable comparison groups, with attention to the following five outcome domains:

A1. Teaching and educational quality a. Programme relevance and quality; curriculum improvements; externally available quality assurance / programme-review outcomes; teaching-learning conditions and effective use of libraries, laboratories and digital

learning infrastructure. b. Enrolment, retention, completion, student progression and access/equity trends (including gender, region and disadvantaged groups), with appropriate adjustment for institution type and baseline circumstances. c. Evidence of tangible learning or educational improvement using reliable existing assessments, graduate evidence and targeted student/faculty feedback, without introducing a stand-alone national learning examination under this contract.

A2. Research, innovation and wider impact a. Research publications of verifiable quality, discipline-normalised citations where feasible, competitive grants, research completion, postgraduate research, collaboration, patents, licensing, start-ups and other documented innovation outputs. b. Contribution of funded research to industry, public policy, services, economic activity and strategic national priorities, substantiated by verifiable examples rather than publication volumes alone.

A3. Faculty quality and capacity a. Faculty qualifications, subject mix, PhD ratios where relevant, teaching/research capacity, development initiatives, recruitment/retention trends and staff-student ratios on consistent definitions. b. Linkage between HEC support (including scholarships and faculty development programmes) and tangible changes in faculty capacity and institutional performance.

A4. Graduate employability and labour-market relevance a. Graduate employment and time-to-employment, field relevance, underemployment (where defensibly measurable), employer perceptions, self-employment/entrepreneurship and the relevance of academic programmes to market demand. b. Review and validate existing graduate tracer studies and institutional data; undertake a proportionate supplementary graduate/employer sample where data gaps are material. Wage data may be examined only where availability, comparability and respondent confidentiality permit.

A5. Global competitiveness and aggregate sectoral contribution a. Trends in recognised national/international institutional and subject rankings, research visibility and academic collaboration; examine explanatory drivers rather than treating rankings as direct proof of educational quality. b. Higher education's contribution to skilled human capital, research and innovation, regional opportunity and economic competitiveness, using identifiable measures and clearly stated attribution limitations.

Output from Component A: a defensible account of outcomes achieved, disparities and areas of underperformance, supported by matched financing, institutional context, historic trends and representative case evidence.

Component B:

Effectiveness of HEC as a Regulatory and Sector-Oversight Body Evaluate the adequacy, implementation and demonstrable outcomes of HEC's statutory, policy, regulatory and sector-governance functions, rather than duplicating routine university compliance inspections. a. Statutory mandate and division of responsibilities: review relevant provisions of the HEC Ordinance, post-18th Amendment arrangements, relationships with MoFEPT, provinces, higher education departments/commissions, accreditation councils and HEIs; identify overlaps, gaps and coordination constraints. b. Regulatory architecture and service delivery: assess standards and policy clarity, institutional/programme recognition, QA and programme oversight, review mechanisms, decision timeliness, institutional compliance monitoring and response to identified deficiencies. c. Regulatory outcomes: assess evidence that policy, oversight and support have improved teaching quality, academic standards, institutional governance, transparency and public accountability; distinguish policy existence from actual uptake and results. d. Governance and autonomy interface: assess whether regulations and funding conditions appropriately balance academic/institutional autonomy with accountability, and whether HEC has proportionate means to discharge its mandates. e. Coordination and emerging needs: evaluate coverage and effectiveness in light of growth in HEIs, programmes, students, new delivery modes and digitalisation of HEI operations.

Output from Component B: an evidence-based regulatory-effectiveness assessment, with mapped statutory functions, observed constraints, benchmarks, and options for strengthening coordination, regulation and oversight

Component C: Financial Efficiency, Funding Adequacy and Sustainability Undertake a consolidated public-finance and value-for-money assessment, avoiding double-counting between HEC administrative expenditure, transfers to HEIs, federal development financing, provincial grants and HEIs' own resources.

C1. Funding architecture, utilisation and value for money

a. Reconcile annual federal allocations, releases and expenditure through HEC: recurring grants, development interventions, research programmes, scholarships/faculty development and material sector services; separate funding managed directly by HEC from grants transferred to institutions.

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a. Estimate HEC's reasonable recurrent administrative, regulatory and sector-development funding needs and the aggregate HEI funding envelope required to maintain essential quality and meet projected enrolment, faculty, technology, research and strategic priorities under low/base/high scenarios.

b. Benchmark Pakistan against suitably selected regional and international peers using harmonised indicators including public higher education expenditure as a share of GDP and government expenditure; expenditure per tertiary student; participation/enrolment trends; institutional funding mix and relevant outcomes. Adjust for differences in system composition, income levels and price bases where feasible.

c. Present funding gaps and projected needs as transparent ranges with explicit assumptions, separating efficient minimum operating requirements, service-quality improvements and strategic expansion; do not treat current funding as inherently adequate or inadequate without evidence.

C3. Federal-provincial responsibilities and financing

a. Analyse the federal/provincial shares and respective roles in recurring and development financing; assess the relevance of constitutional/statutory arrangements, applicable Council of Common Interests decisions, the National Fiscal Pact and the nature of national-interest or shared-benefit expenditure.

b. Examine fiscal feasibility and potential impacts of different federal-provincial cost-sharing approaches on institutional sustainability, regional equity, continuity and academic quality. Verify any cited aggregate such as Rs 71 billion against audited/official records before use.

c. Identify policy issues and options for future intergovernmental consultation; do not prepare a binding devolution schedule or assume wholesale withdrawal of federal support as a predetermined result.

C4. HEI sustainability, performance orientation and student support a. Review institutional finances and resilience: grant dependence, salary and non-salary shares, own-source revenues, fee affordability, endowment/competitive grants where applicable, capital maintenance, financial reporting and effective use of assets. b. Assess evidence for strengthening existing formula-based and performance-oriented funding approaches, taking account of funding adequacy, equity, institution mission and unintended consequences; recommend whether a separate reform/design exercise is justified. c. Review the current scholarship, need-based financial assistance and loan-based support landscape; examine accessibility, cost, coverage, repayment/administration risks and compatibility with sustaining core institutional teaching/research functions; identify options for detailed feasibility study rather than designing a new student-finance product. Output from Component C: a reconciled funding/VfM diagnostic, sustainable funding-needs scenarios, peer-country comparison, and evidence-based options for future grant policy, cost sharing and financial assistance reforms.

Component D: HEC Organisational Capacity, Rightsizing and Digital Readiness Independently assess whether HEC's functions, organisational capacity, professional composition, administrative costs and technologies are proportionate to the mandate and growing scale/complexity of Pakistan's higher education system. The analysis must be neutral as to whether the result should be reduction, reallocation or augmentation of capacity.

a. Functional mapping and workload: catalogue principal HEC services/functions, outputs, statutory obligations, duplication, service volumes and trends, HEC/HEI coverage, staff workload and feasible productivity benchmarks, including federal-provincial coordination requirements.

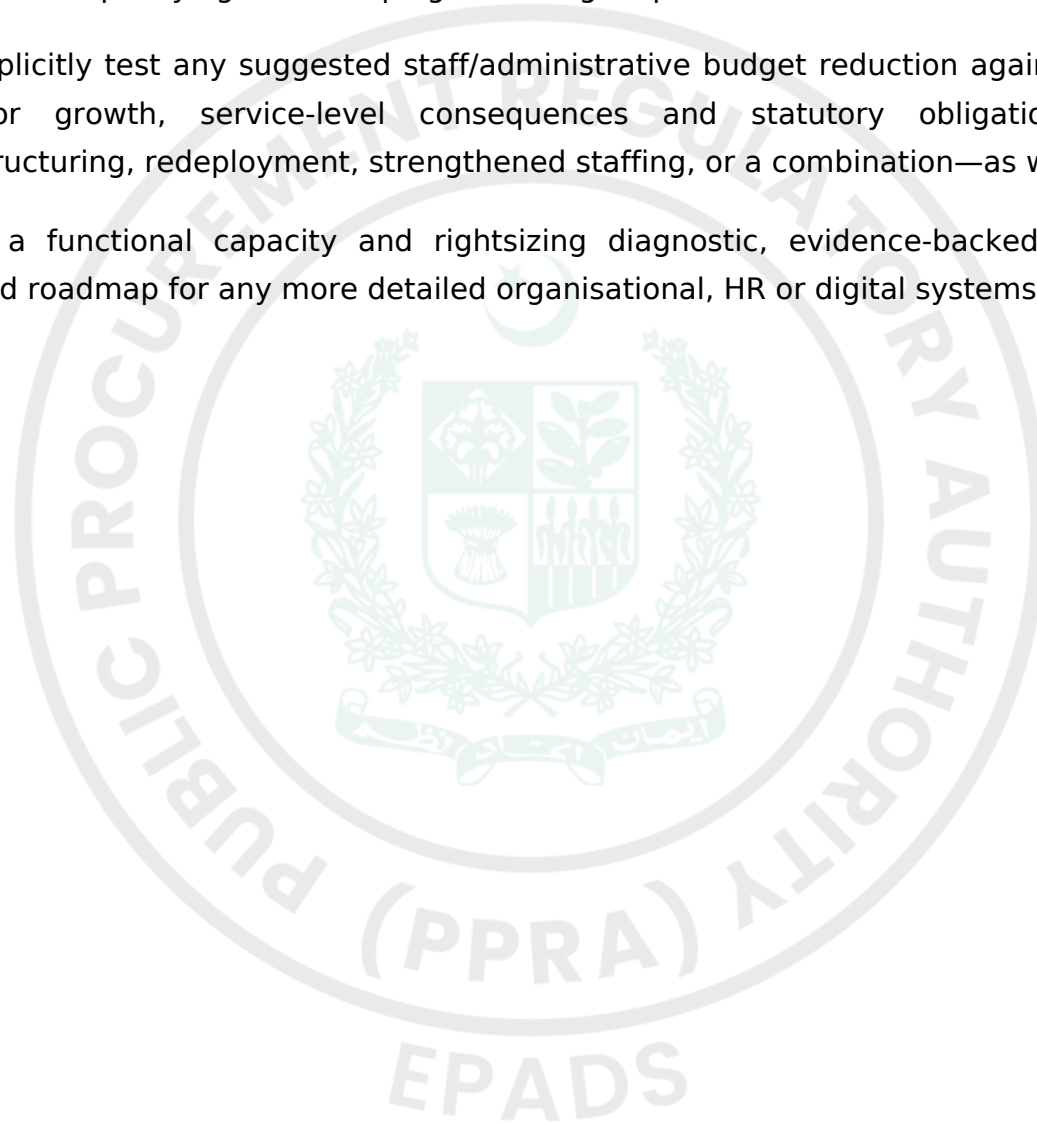
b. Human resources and institutional capacity: examine sanctioned versus working strength, vacancies, skill mix, age/retirement profile, professional shortages, functional overlaps, field/regulatory coverage and management arrangements; identify critical functions requiring specialised capability.

c. Financial and efficiency implications: evaluate administration/staff costs in relation to volume, service quality, statutory duties and comparative regulators; quantify practicable savings, process efficiencies, redeployment or targeted capacity enhancement options with transition costs and risks, using financial inputs coordinated with Component C.

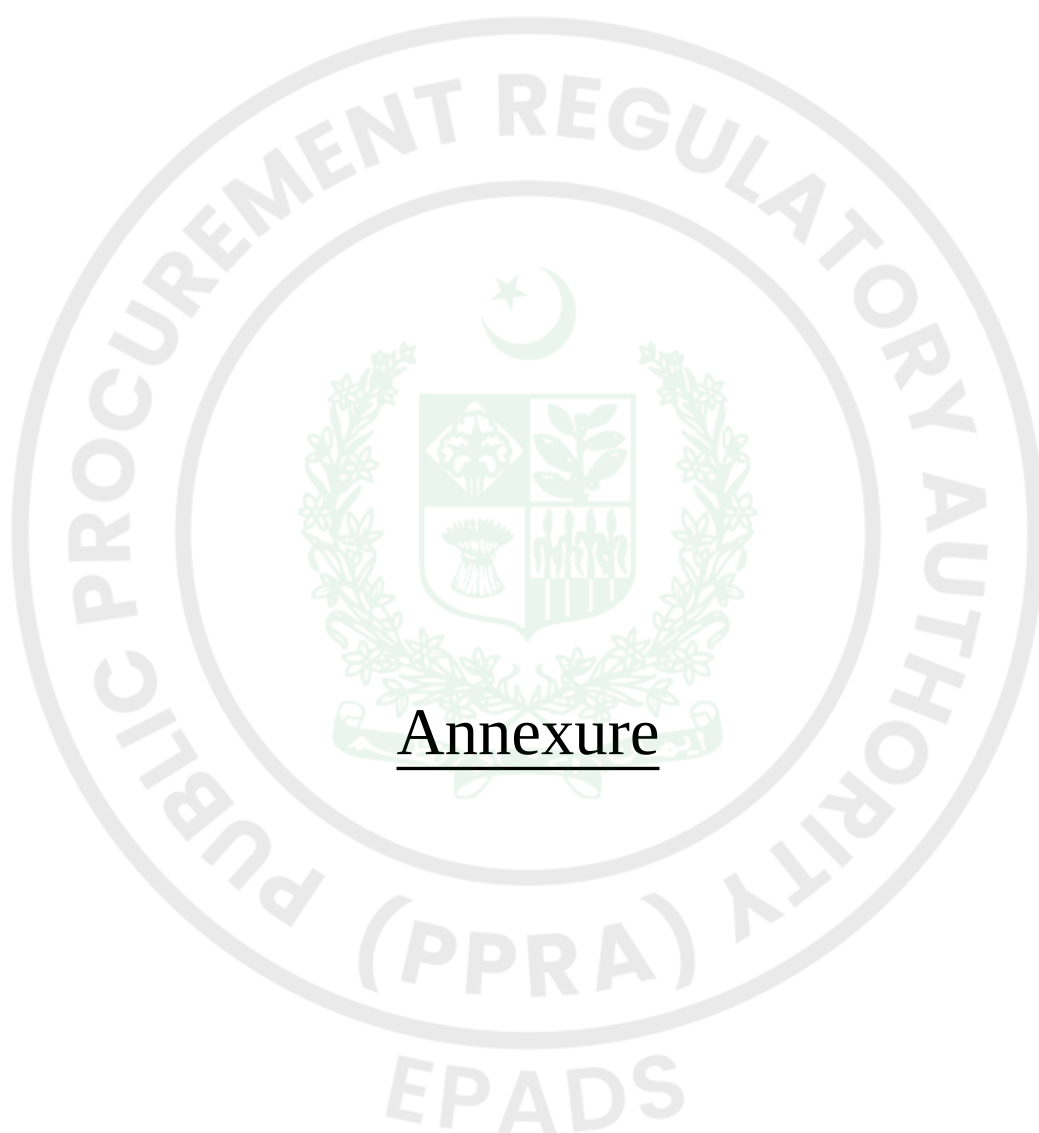
d. Digitisation and service processes: examine existing HEC/HEI systems and major initiatives, end to-end electronic services, data quality, interoperability, operational support and monitoring workflows; identify high-value opportunities for process simplification, integration and automation without specifying or developing a new digital platform or detailed technical architecture.

e. Rightsizing assessment: explicitly test any suggested staff/administrative budget reduction against validated workload, existing reforms, affordability, sector growth, service-level consequences and statutory obligations. Recommend a justified configuration—reduction, restructuring, redeployment, strengthened staffing, or a combination—as warranted by evidence.

Output from Component D: a functional capacity and rightsizing diagnostic, evidence-backed capacity options, preliminary costs/benefits and a sequenced roadmap for any more detailed organisational, HR or digital systems study.







Annexure

Baseline and Sampling

Information (Read-Only)

See Form Under Additional Forms and Documents: **Baseline and Sampling** (page number: 44)

Deliverables and Duration of Assignment

Information (Read-Only)

See Form Under Additional Forms and Documents: **Deliverables and Duration of Assignment** (page number: 45)

Final Report and Policy Recommendations

Information (Read-Only)

See Form Under Additional Forms and Documents: **Final Report and Policy Recommendations** (page number: 47)

Key Evaluation Questions

Information (Read-Only)

See Form Under Additional Forms and Documents: **Key Evaluation Questions** (page number: 50)

Methodology and Indicators

Information (Read-Only)

See Form Under Additional Forms and Documents: **Methodology and Indicators** (page number: 53)

Payment Schedule

Information (Read-Only)

See Form Under Additional Forms and Documents: **Payment Schedule** (page number: 55)



Procurement Forms

Historical Contract Non-Performance, and Pending Litigation and Litigation History

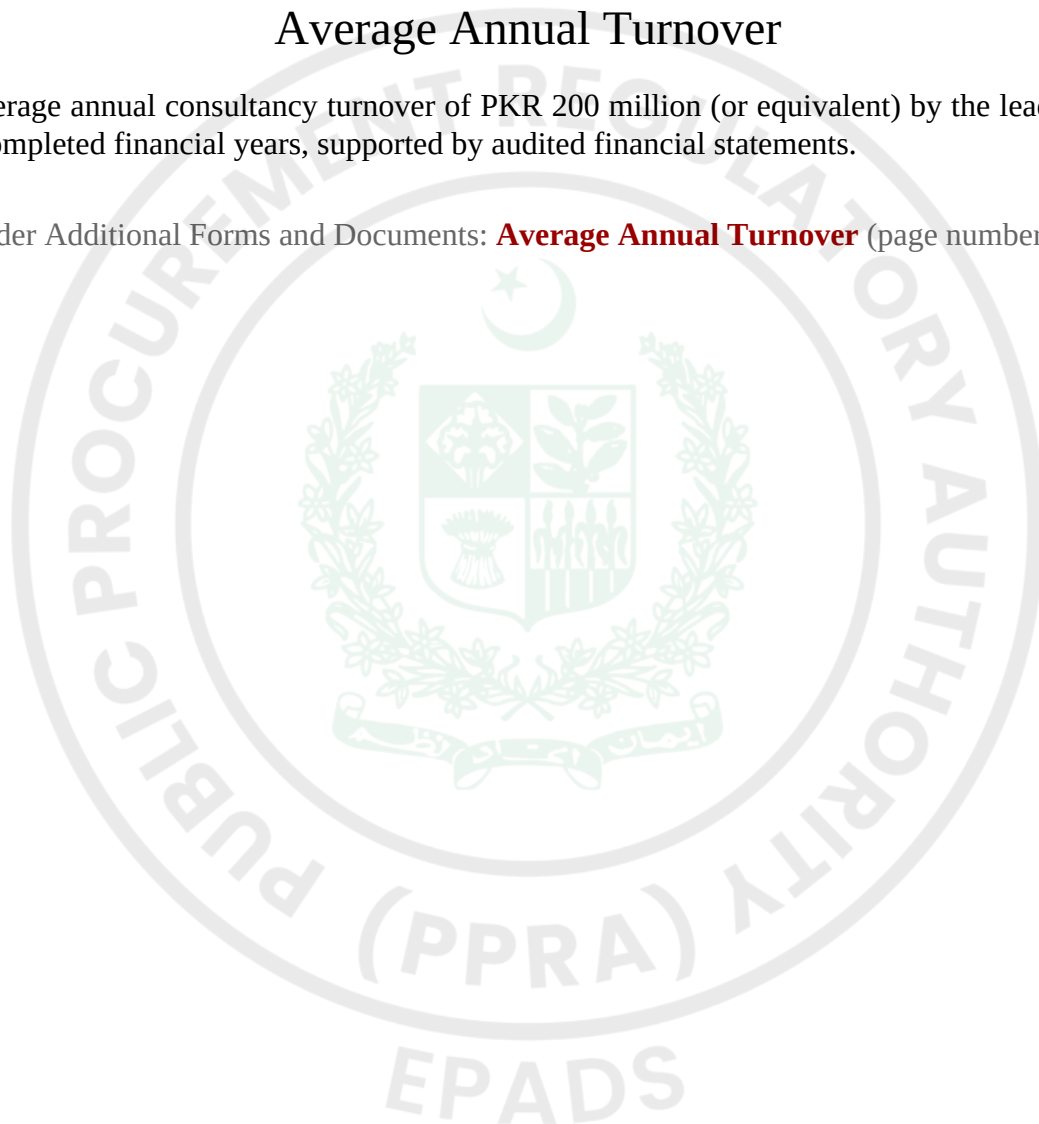
Undertakings/declarations on non-blacklisting/debarment, material litigation, conflicts of interest, accuracy of submissions and ability to undertake a nationwide, independent assessment.

See Form Under Additional Forms and Documents: **Historical Contract Non-Performance, and Pending Litigation and Litigation History** (page number: 56)

Average Annual Turnover

Minimum average annual consultancy turnover of PKR 200 million (or equivalent) by the lead firm over the latest three completed financial years, supported by audited financial statements.

See Form Under Additional Forms and Documents: **Average Annual Turnover** (page number: 58)







Additional Forms and Documents

5. Baseline, Institutional Coverage and Sampling

5.1 Period and frame

The study shall prepare a concise historical overview from the transition from the University Grants Commission (UGC) to HEC and assess major sector trends since 2002. Detailed, comparable analysis shall focus on at least the latest ten (10) completed years and, where data quality permits, more than ten-year trends. The fiscal and academic years, nominal versus real values, institution counts and series breaks must be explicitly defined.

5.2 Institutional sampling

The Consultant shall propose a multi-stage, stratified, statistically and analytically defensible sample representing at least 25% and targeting 25–30% of the relevant universe of public-sector HEIs receiving HEC grants/support. The population and eligibility cut-off shall be established from HEC's official institution and funding lists and reconciled at inception. Any departure below 25% must be rigorously justified in statistical and operational terms and formally approved before fieldwork.

- i. Mandatory stratification considerations: federal/provincial/territorial jurisdiction, geography (including AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan), institutional size and maturity, general/specialised mission, financing level/mix, research intensity and risk/performance differences.
- ii. All selected institutions shall receive core desk-based and documentary assessment. The Consultant shall propose risk-based verification visits and approximately 8–12 in-depth institutional case studies within the larger sample, proportionate to geographic coverage and evidentiary requirements; the exact number and visit modalities shall be finalised at inception.
- iii. The methodology must state confidence/precision limitations, treatment of non-response, comparability restrictions, sample weights where appropriate, survey targets, and how institution-level evidence will support sector conclusions.

HEC shall facilitate access and may raise methodological objections, but the final selection and reported results shall not be manipulated to favour particular institutions. Material deviations from the agreed sampling plan require documented justification and approval

8. Deliverables and Assignment Duration

The assignment shall be undertaken over six months period (26 weeks) from commencement. Workstreams may proceed concurrently under an integrated analytical plan. Interim outputs shall be diagnostic and evidence-based; no deliverable requires adoption or design of a new national financing, KPI, digital or rightsizing system.

No. / Due	Deliverable	Minimum contents
D1 / W2	Inception Report	Refined evaluation matrix, 4-component analytical framework, baseline/period definitions, preliminary financing map, sampling design, staffing, quality and risk plans, data requests and schedule.
D2 / W4	Evaluation Matrix and Tools	Indicators with definitions, data dictionary, institutional templates, interview/survey instruments, verification protocols, attribution/contribution approach.
D3 / W6	Baseline and Desk Review	Sector evolution since HEC inception; 5–10-year trends where reliable; mapping of HEC functions, policies, funding programmes, historical evidence and data gaps.
D4 / W7	Approved Sampling and Fieldwork Plan	Final sampling frame and selected HEIs, 25–30% coverage validation, planned verifications/case studies, survey quotas and consent/data arrangements.
D5 / W12	Interim Diagnostic Note	Early cross-cutting evidence, reconciled preliminary grant data, quality concerns, emerging hypotheses, fieldwork progress and corrective actions.
D6 / W19	Institutional Evidence and Case Study Compendium	Consolidated sample assessment, fieldwork and case studies, graduate/employer findings, data validation register and comparative institution profiles.
D7 / W21	Draft Integrated Assessment	Preliminary findings under A–D; regulatory review, funding/VfM and adequacy scenarios, institutional capacity/rightsizing options, international benchmarks and confidence levels.
D8 / W22	Technical Validation Workshop	Presentation and structured discussion of factual accuracy and methodological issues, with written response matrix; independence of conclusions retained.
D9 / W24	Final Independent Evaluation Report	Fully integrated analysis and conclusions, alternatives and estimated financing/resource needs, prioritised reform recommendations and staged roadmap.
D10 / W25	Executive Policy Brief and Presentation	Decision-oriented brief and management presentation, highlighting evidence, uncertainties, immediate improvements and distinct recommendations requiring separate study/approval.
D11 / W26	Final Evidence and Knowledge Package	Cleaned anonymised datasets as permissible, reproducible analytical tables, templates, code/calculation files where applicable, bibliography, data-quality log and handover session.

The Consultant shall submit editable copies and PDF versions of all reports. Draft and final milestones will be reviewed under the contractually agreed procedure.

9. Reporting, Coordination and Governance

The Consultant shall report through the designated HEC focal office/technical review arrangement for data access, institutional liaison, review of technical outputs and consultation, with procurement administration and contractual acceptance in accordance with the final contract.

HEC shall facilitate access to relevant records and sampled HEIs, including designation of focal persons, while the Consultant remains solely responsible for independent verification, interpretation and conclusions. Stakeholder comments shall be recorded in a transparent matrix.

10. Required Consulting Team

The firm/Joint Venture shall deploy the multidisciplinary team specified in HEC's Annex-A. The following nine key positions and marks are retained unchanged for evaluation consistency:

Key expert / Position	Marks
Team Lead / Finance and Policy Expert	7
Higher Education Financing Expert	5
Regulatory, Governance and Legal Expert	4
Quality Assurance and Academic Standards Expert	4
Research and Innovation Expert	3
Labour-Market and Graduate Employability Expert	3
Public-Sector Financial Analyst / Accountant	3
Statistician / Econometrician / Data Analyst	3
Survey, Fieldwork and Stakeholder-Engagement Coordinator	3

The Consultant firm shall additionally demonstrate how it will provide, within the overall price and without changing Annex-A's scored positions, appropriate specialist inputs on organisational workload/HR capacity, higher education economics and digital process assessment.

Required person-months, presence and supervision shall be justified in the technical proposal; experts shall not be nominally listed without availability.

16. Final Report, Strategic Roadmap and Policy Recommendations

A. Final Report and Integrated Assessment

The consultant shall submit a comprehensive Final Report presenting an independent, evidence-based assessment of HEC and the higher education sector, with particular emphasis on the impact of public funding, regulatory effectiveness, financial efficiency, institutional capacity and future sectoral requirements. The Final Report shall include, at minimum:

1. Executive Summary: Principal findings, overall assessment, key conclusions and priority recommendations.
2. Background, Objectives and Policy Context: Scope of the assignment, HEC's statutory mandate, relevant legal and policy frameworks, and the Federal Government's rightsizing and higher education reform objectives.
3. Sectoral and Institutional Profile: Historical growth and current status of Pakistan's higher education sector, funding trends, institutional coverage and profile of sampled HEIs.
4. Methodology and Limitations: Evaluation framework, sampling, data sources, analytical methods, verification procedures, assumptions and limitations.
5. Impact of HEC Funding: Evidence of funding effectiveness in improving educational quality, research, faculty development, graduate employability, institutional performance and international competitiveness.
6. Regulatory Effectiveness: Assessment of HEC's regulatory mandate, institutional oversight, quality assurance, governance, compliance and effectiveness of regulatory interventions.
7. Financial Efficiency and Funding Adequacy: Value-for-money assessment, institutional financial sustainability, efficiency of public expenditure and estimates of actual and projected federal funding requirements under alternative sectoral growth and financing scenarios.
8. HEC Institutional Capacity and Rightsizing: Assessment of organisational structure, functional responsibilities, staffing adequacy, workload, operational efficiency, digitalisation opportunities and requirements for rationalisation or strategic capacity strengthening.
9. Regional and International Benchmarking: Comparative assessment of higher education investment, funding adequacy, regulatory arrangements, institutional performance and sectoral outcomes against relevant regional and international benchmarks.
10. Institutional Case Studies: Validated findings from sampled HEIs, highlighting institutional performance, funding outcomes, governance, financial efficiency and transferable good practices.
11. Integrated Conclusions: Consolidated assessment of HEC's effectiveness, efficiency, institutional relevance, resource adequacy and contribution to national socioeconomic development.
12. Strategic Roadmap and Policy Recommendations: Prioritised, evidence-based recommendations for HEC's future institutional development and higher education sector reform, accompanied by an actionable implementation roadmap.

B. Strategic Roadmap for HEC and the Higher Education Sector

Based on the findings of the assessment, the consultant shall craft a revitalization strategy for self sustainability and formulate a Strategic Roadmap for HEC's Future Growth, Institutional

Strengthening and Higher Education Sector Development, outlining a realistic and sustainable trajectory for improving the quality, competitiveness, financial sustainability and socioeconomic contribution of higher education in Pakistan.

The roadmap shall identify short-term (0–2 years), medium-term (3–5 years) and long-term (beyond 5 years) strategic priorities, taking into consideration projected institutional and student enrolment growth, emerging skills and labour-market requirements, research and innovation priorities, regional equity, international competitiveness and national development objectives. The proposed strategic direction shall explicitly address the following areas:

1. **Higher Education Financing and Resource Adequacy:** Recommend an appropriate level and medium-term trajectory of federal higher education investment, supported by defensible estimates of HEC's annual resource requirements under alternative funding, enrolment and sectoral growth scenarios, including regional and international benchmarks.
2. **Funding Effectiveness and Institutional Sustainability:** Identify improvements to existing funding allocation arrangements, opportunities for strengthening performance-oriented financing, diversification of institutional revenues, accountability and efficient utilisation of public resources.
3. **Federal–Provincial Financing Responsibilities:** Assess opportunities for enhanced federal–provincial coordination, appropriate cost sharing and complementary financing arrangements, consistent with applicable constitutional, statutory and fiscal frameworks.
4. **Student Financial Support and Equitable Access:** Examine options for strengthening need-based scholarships, financial assistance and appropriately structured student financing or loan mechanisms as complementary instruments while assessing the continuing requirement for core institutional funding and safeguarding affordability and equitable access. The consultant is also required to present a concept paper for student financing and loans for shifting from subsidized higher education to scholarship/ financial aid/ loan based funding.
5. **Regulatory and Institutional Strengthening:** Recommend measures to improve HEC's regulatory effectiveness, governance, service delivery, institutional oversight and coordination with relevant federal, provincial and sectoral bodies.
6. **Organisational Capacity and Rightsizing:** Recommend evidence-based options for staffing rationalisation, functional realignment, process optimisation, digital efficiencies or strategic capacity enhancement, taking into account HEC's current and anticipated workload, statutory responsibilities and sectoral requirements. The assessment shall not presume staff reductions or organisational expansion as predetermined outcomes.
7. **Sectoral Growth and Global Competitiveness:** Recommend strategic priorities for improving academic quality, research excellence, graduate employability, international collaboration, innovation and the higher education sector's contribution to national economic growth and human capital development.

C. Prioritised Recommendations and Implementation Matrix

The consultant shall translate the findings and proposed strategic direction into a concise, actionable and prioritised Policy Recommendations and Implementation Matrix. Each recommendation shall be supported by verifiable evidence and shall identify:

- Key finding and supporting evidence/rationale;
- Proposed policy, regulatory, financial, institutional or operational intervention;

- Responsible institution and competent decision-making authority;
- Indicative financial implications, resource requirements and potential savings or benefits;
- Technical, legal, institutional and financial feasibility;
- Priority and urgency;
- Indicative implementation timeframe;
- Key dependencies, risks and required approvals;
- Expected outcomes and suggested indicators for monitoring implementation; and
- Requirement, if any, for a separate technical, policy, fiscal, organisational or digital study, including indicative Terms of Reference and decision milestones.

The recommendations shall distinguish between measures that may be implemented through existing institutional arrangements and those requiring additional policy decisions, legislative or regulatory amendments, intergovernmental consultations, financial commitments or further specialist assessments.

D. Future Reform Initiatives and Follow-up Studies

Where detailed policy formulation, development of financing models, organisational restructuring, digital system design or other specialised reforms are warranted, the consultant shall identify these as potential subsequent assignments, supported by indicative scope, objectives, expected outputs, sequencing, and resource implications.

The Final Report and Strategic Roadmap shall provide the Federal Government and HEC with a coherent, evidence-based basis for determining future higher education funding levels, institutional and regulatory reforms, organisational capacity requirements and sectoral investment priorities, ensuring an appropriate balance between financial efficiency, educational quality, institutional sustainability, equitable access and long-term national development objectives.

17. General Conditions and Finalisation

The Consultant shall comply with the applicable public procurement, taxation, security, research ethics and confidentiality requirements and with the contract signed by the procuring agency. The procuring agency reserves the right to exercise powers available under applicable procurement rules; such powers shall not be interpreted as a discretionary waiver of statutory procurement requirements.

4. Key Evaluation Questions

Area	Principal questions to be answered
A. Impact of funding	i. What measurable improvements in teaching/learning, faculty, research, employability and international standing coincide with HEC support? ii. What credible contribution can be assigned to interventions, and which groups/institutions benefit most or least?
B. Regulatory effectiveness	i. Is HEC delivering its statutory and regulatory responsibilities effectively at current sector scale? ii. Which regulatory/coordination processes produce results, and where do authority, enforcement or capacity gaps persist?
C. Financial efficiency / adequacy	i. What outputs/outcomes are achieved for funding used? ii. Are cost structures proportionate and sustainable? iii. What defensible federal/HEI funding level is needed given projected demand, comparators and fiscal constraints, and what should be examined further in financing reforms?
D. Rightsizing / capacity	i. Is HEC over-capacitated, appropriately capacitated, or under-resourced by function? ii. What mix of staffing, process improvement, digitisation, partnerships and budget is warranted to fulfil its mandate efficiently?

5. Baseline, Institutional Coverage and Sampling

5.1 Period and frame

The study shall prepare a concise historical overview from the transition from the University Grants Commission (UGC) to HEC and assess major sector trends since 2002. Detailed, comparable analysis shall focus on at least the latest ten (10) completed years and, where data quality permits, more than ten-year trends. The fiscal and academic years, nominal versus real values, institution counts and series breaks must be explicitly defined.

5.2 Institutional sampling

The Consultant shall propose a multi-stage, stratified, statistically and analytically defensible sample representing at least 25% and targeting 25–30% of the relevant universe of public-sector HEIs receiving HEC grants/support. The population and eligibility cut-off shall be established from HEC's official institution and funding lists and reconciled at inception. Any departure below 25% must be rigorously justified in statistical and operational terms and formally approved before fieldwork.

- i. Mandatory stratification considerations: federal/provincial/territorial jurisdiction, geography (including AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan), institutional size and maturity, general/specialised mission, financing level/mix, research intensity and risk/performance differences.
- ii. All selected institutions shall receive core desk-based and documentary assessment. The Consultant shall propose risk-based verification visits and approximately 8–12 in-depth institutional case studies within the larger sample, proportionate to geographic coverage and evidentiary requirements; the exact number and visit modalities shall be finalised at inception.

- iii. The methodology must state confidence/precision limitations, treatment of non-response, comparability restrictions, sample weights where appropriate, survey targets, and how institution-level evidence will support sector conclusions.

HEC shall facilitate access and may raise methodological objections, but the final selection and reported results shall not be manipulated to favour particular institutions. Material deviations from the agreed sampling plan require documented justification and approval.

6. Methodology, Indicators and Evidence Standards

6.1 Core approach

The Consultant shall use proportionate mixed methods: structured desk/document review; financial/statistical analysis; institutional data validation; targeted student/faculty/graduate/employer consultations; key informant interviews; selective site verification; institutional case studies; international benchmarking; and triangulated synthesis. The design must clearly identify what can be measured robustly within 38 weeks and what remains a limitation or subject for a future study.

Where impact can be reasonably estimated, analysis may use baseline–endline trends, comparison institutions, matched cohorts, programme exposure, interrupted time series or other suitable approaches. The Consultant shall not claim causal attribution solely from correlation, rankings movement, stakeholder opinion or expenditure growth. Each major finding shall be classified as directly measured, plausibly contributory, descriptive or insufficiently evidenced.

6.2 Indicative diagnostic measures

Component	Core indicative measures
A. Education and faculty	Programme quality indicators; progression/completion; qualified teaching staff; faculty development outcomes; research quality; graduate employment; recognised rankings trends.
B. Regulatory effectiveness	Policy implementation coverage; regulatory timeliness; institutional follow-up/compliance trends; quality-assurance coverage; coordination and grievance resolution.
C. Funding and adequacy	Reconciled grant flows; funding per student/graduate; cost mix; salary share; verified outputs per relevant investment; own income; budget gap scenarios; selected country fiscal benchmarks.
D. Functional capacity	Service/workload per staffed position; sanctioned/working strength; critical vacancies; service turnaround; cost per function; feasible automation and redeployment gains.

6.3 International and regional benchmarking

The Consultant shall select a focused and explicitly justified comparator set (normally 4–6 jurisdictions/institutions, including relevant regional and income-comparable cases) covering higher education participation, public financing effort, regulatory models, unit costs and demonstrable sector outcomes. Comparisons shall use consistent definitions and disclose fiscal, demographic, wage-level, mission and purchasing-power differences. Benchmarking shall inform reasonable funding and capacity ranges, not transfer untested foreign policies to Pakistan.

6.4 Data integrity and verification

The Consultant shall use authenticated source documents, auditable calculations, cross-verification and documented source hierarchies. Where results depend on survey evidence, instruments, sample sizes, response rates and limitations must be disclosed. Missing or contradictory data shall be recorded and materially affect the confidence attached to conclusions. No claims shall be supported solely by unverified self-reported statements.

7. Data Sources and Stakeholder Engagement

Data sources shall include HEC grant/allocation/release records; PSDP and programme reports; HEC annual sector statistics, enrolment and faculty databases; institutional budgets/audited accounts; HEC quality assurance and regulatory records; research/bibliometric databases; ranking archives; scholarship/grant systems; relevant Government accounts and official provincial records; graduate/employer information; and applicable laws, CCI decisions and the National Fiscal Pact.

The Consultant shall specifically review existing external studies already commissioned by HEC, including studies of governance, university grants/research impact, student satisfaction and graduate tracking, and relevant learning-assessment work, for efficient reuse and validation. Repeating large stand-alone studies shall not be presumed necessary merely because the topic appears in this TOR.

Consultations shall include MoFEPT and other relevant federal bodies; HEC leadership and concerned divisions; selected HEI VCs/Rectors and management, faculty and students; provincial higher education bodies; accreditation/quality agencies; alumni; employers/industry; and development partners where materially relevant. The Consultant shall preserve respondent confidentiality and document any institutional non-cooperation.

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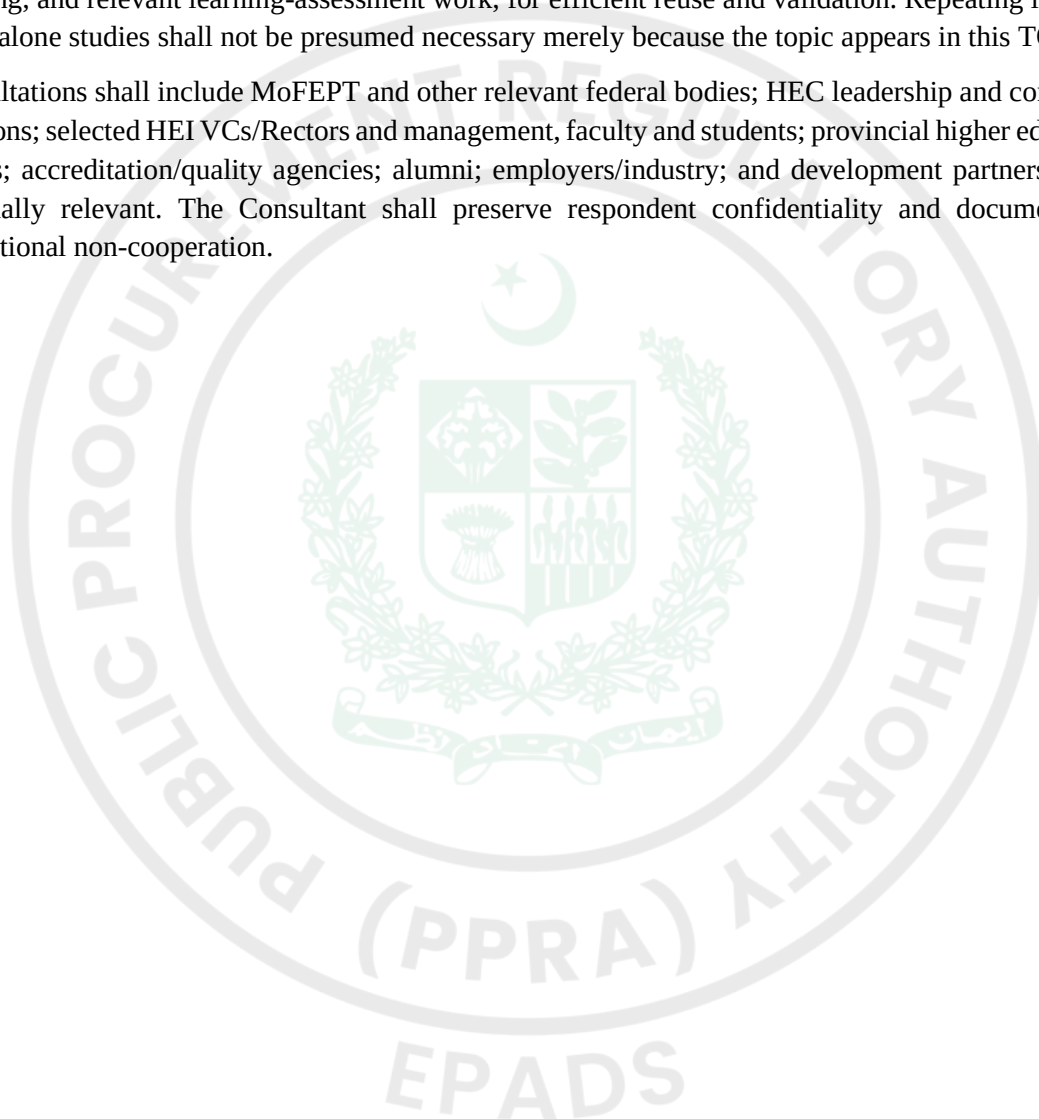
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13. Payment Schedule

Payments shall be linked to the satisfactory submission and acceptance of verifiable contractual outputs, not to agreement with any preferred finding or recommendation.

Milestone	Linked deliverables	Percentage
1	Approval of D1 Inception Report	10%
2	Approval of D2 Evaluation Matrix/Tools and D3 Baseline/Desk Review	15%
3	D5 Interim Diagnostic after acceptance of D4 sample/fieldwork plan	10%
4	D6 Institutional Evidence and Case Study Compendium	20%
5	D7 Draft Integrated Assessment and D8 Technical Validation Workshop	20%
6	Approval of D9 Final Report, D10 Policy Brief/Presentation and D11 Evidence Package	25%
TOTAL		100%

14. Independence, Quality Assurance and Ethics

The Consultant shall maintain professional impartiality, use defensible analytical approaches, apply internal peer review and exercise effective quality control over research, fieldwork and financial data. The evaluation shall account fairly for achieved results, deficiencies, fiscal constraints, regional disparities, external influences and the limits of available evidence. An actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest shall be disclosed at bidding and throughout implementation.

A designated quality assurance lead shall check data sources, comparison definitions, transcription, calculation reproducibility and the distinction between observation, inference, analysis and recommendation. The Consultant shall document any non-responding institutions or inaccessible data and explain resulting bias.

15. Data Access, Confidentiality and Ownership

HEC and participating HEIs shall provide access to reasonably necessary information, subject to law, operational availability and agreed confidentiality protocols. The Consultant shall not disclose identifiable personal, financial, research or regulatory records without lawful authority and prior consent where required. Surveys must respect informed consent, anonymisation and secure retention.

All project-funded final reports, analyses, instruments, anonymised datasets and other commissioned outputs shall be owned by HEC as specified in the final contract, and shared with the authorised Government/HEC entities under approved data arrangements. Pre-existing proprietary methods, third-party data licences and confidentiality restrictions shall be clearly identified and appropriately licensed rather than assumed to transfer automatically.

Historical Contract Non-Performance, and Pending Litigation and Litigation History

[The following table shall be filled in for the Applicant and for each member of a Joint Venture]

Applicant's Name: *[insert full name]*

Date: *[insert day, month, year]*

Joint Venture Member Name: *[insert full name]*

IFP No. and title: *[insert IFP number and title]*

Page *[insert page number]* of *[insert total number]* pages

☐ Not debarred due to deviation from commitment of Bid Securing Declaration- ☐ Not debarred due to non-performance			
Year	Non-performed portion of contract	Contract Identification	Total Contract Amount (current value, currency, exchange rate and PKR equivalent)
<i>[insert year]</i>	<i>[insert amount and percentage]</i>	Contract Identification: <i>[indicate complete contract name/ number, and any other identification]</i> Name of Procuring Agency: <i>[insert full name]</i> Address of Procuring Agency: <i>[insert street/city/country]</i> Reason(s) for nonperformance: <i>[indicate main reason(s)]</i>	<i>[insert amount]</i>
Pending Litigation, in accordance with Section III, Qualification Criteria and Requirements			
☐ Pending litigation in accordance with Section III, Qualification Criteria and Requirements, Sub-Factor 2.3 as indicated below.			
Year of dispute	Amount in dispute (currency)	Contract Identification	Total Contract Amount (currency), US\$ PKR Equivalent (exchange rate)

<i>[insert year]</i>	<i>[insert amount]</i>	Contract Identification: [indicate complete contract name, number, and any other identification] Name of Procuring Agency: <i>[insert full name]</i> Address of Procuring Agency: <i>[insert street/city/country]</i> Matter in dispute: <i>[indicate main issues in dispute]</i> Party who initiated the dispute: <i>[indicate "Procuring Agency" or "Supplier"]</i> Status of dispute: <i>[Indicate if it is being treated by the Adjudicator, under Arbitration or being dealt with by the Judiciary]</i>	<i>[insert amount]</i>
☐ No consistent history of court/arbitral award decisions in accordance with Section III, Qualification Criteria and Requirements, Sub-Factor 2.4. ☐ Consistent history of court/arbitral award decisions in accordance with Section III, Qualification Criteria and Requirements, Sub-Factor 2.4 as indicated below.			
Year of award	Outcome as percentage of Net Worth	Contract Identification	Total Contract Amount (currency), PKR Equivalent (exchange rate)
<i>[insert year]</i>	<i>[insert percentage]</i>	Contract Identification: [indicate complete contract name, number, and any other identification] Name of Procuring Agency: <i>[insert full name]</i> Address of Procuring Agency: <i>[insert street/city/country]</i> Matter in dispute: <i>[indicate main issues in dispute]</i> Party who initiated the dispute: <i>[indicate "Procuring Agency" or "Supplier"]</i> Court/ arbitral award decision: <i>[Indicate if the award decision was against the Applicant or any member of a joint venture.]y]</i>	<i>[insert amount]</i>

Average Annual Turnover (Annual Sales Value)

[The following table shall be filled in for the Applicant and for each member of a Joint Venture]

Applicant's Name: *[insert full name]*

Date: *[insert day, month, year]*

Joint Venture Member Name: *[insert full name]*

IFP No. and title: *[insert IFP number and title]*

Page *[insert page number]* of *[insert total number]* pages

Annual Turnover Data			
Year	Amount Currency	Exchange rate* (If applicable)	PKR equivalent
<i>[indicate calendar year]</i>	<i>[insert amount and indicate currency]</i>		
		Average Annual Turnover **	

* Refer ITA for date and source of exchange rate.

** Total PKR equivalent for all years divided by the total number of years. See Section III, Qualification Criteria and Requirements, ITA.