Clarifications on the Pre-Bid Queries received from the Bidders

Sl. No.	Clarification sough for by the various bidders	Clarification
1.	Clause 6.16 requires ISO 27701 certification, whereas Eligibility Clause 10 does not. Kindly confirm whether ISO 27701 is a mandatory eligibility criterion or only a contract compliance requirement.	Requirement relating to ISO/IEC 27701 certification is not a mandatory eligibility criterion, as it is not specified under Eligibility Clause 10 of the tender document. The certification shall be treated as a contract compliance requirement, to be complied with by the successful bidder in accordance with the relevant provisions of the tender document, wherever applicable.
2.	During the exam progress, Complete data will not be transferred from the venue local server to central server. regarding 5.1.2.(b)(v) Please confirm if this is acceptable	The Service Provider shall ensure that the examination data, including candidate responses, audit logs, and test progress, is synchronized to the Central Server at intervals not exceeding five (5) minutes in encrypted form. The synchronization may be incremental, provided that the Central Server maintains an up-to-date view of the examination progress and no data is lost.
3.	Please clarify whether TNPSC will provide Aadhaar authentication access (Sub-AUA/API) or whether the selected bidder must independently arrange the Aadhaar authentication ecosystem.	TNPSC will provide the Sub AUA details.
4.	Kindly provide indicative district-wise centre/node requirements and expected candidate distribution for planning venue readiness and capacity.	The district-wise requirement of examination centres/nodes and the distribution of candidates will vary depending on the examination and the number of applications received. Therefore,

		TNPSC is not in a position to provide an indicative district-wise centre/node requirement or expected candidate distribution at this stage.
5.	For technical evaluation, will candidate volume be considered on the basis of actual candidates appeared or registered candidates, and what documentary evidence shall be acceptable?	For the purpose of technical evaluation, the candidate volume shall be considered based on the number of registered/allotted candidates as evidenced in the work order or contract document, completion certificate, client certificate, or any other documentary evidence issued by the client.
6.	Will detailed use cases, test scenarios and evaluation methodology for the 50-mark software demonstration be shared with all technically qualified bidders before presentation?	The evaluation methodology has already been furnished in the Tender Document.
7.	For eligibility and technical evaluation, will computer-based recruitment examinations conducted for State Governments, Government Agencies, Universities and other public institutions be considered equally for experience evaluation?	Yes.
8.	Regarding Section VII, 10(c) & Section IX, 13.1(D) (Sl.No.1) Request to allow to submit provisional Balance Sheets and Profit & Loss statements for the FY 2025-26	In respect of the financial year 2025–2026, if the audited Financial Statements are not available as on the date of bid submission, the bidder may submit the provisional Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss Account, duly certified as stated in the tender document. The successful bidder shall furnish the audited Financial Statements for the financial year 2025–2026 as and when they become available, if required by TNPSC.

9.	Please confirm that there is no Tender fee?	There is no Tender Fee applicable for this tender.
10.	Pl confirm on this - our understanding is the commercial bid should only be uploaded as per the Eproc BOQ format so Annexure IV can be ignored - pl confirm	Yes.
11.	We understand all categories Micro/Small/ Medium MSME vendors can avail of this Exemption	MSME will be accepted. Bidders must submit a valid Udyog Aadhaar Memorandum (UAM) certificate.
12.	Do we need to perform both finger print capture and Aadhaar verification?	Yes.
13.	Request to please elaborate the objective / purpose of this requirement (Authorized books relating to departmental Examinations)	The authorized books are required for **Departmental Examinations**, wherever permitted by the Commission. TNPSC will provide the authorized books in digital format for uploading to the venue server, enabling candidates to access only the permitted reference materials during the examination. The Service Provider shall ensure secure uploading, controlled access, and availability of such authorized books throughout the examination, in accordance with the instructions issued by the Commission.
14.	We assume and basis the other points mentioned in the RFP, TNPSC will provide the question paper for the exam in the bidder's required format kindly confirm	Yes.

15.	Please confirm the following: i. The examination will be conducted only in the Tamil Nadu State and the venues will be arranged accordingly. ii. The citywise breakup of the previous examinations conducted by TNPSC iii. Please confirm if the examination will be conducted in a single shift or multiple shift.	Refer tender document
16.	As bulk SMS services are required, kindly note that the client needs to register themselves on the DLT platform as per TRAI guidelines and share the details with the bidder	Query does not arise. The reply has to be sent to the candidate in the same manner in which he seeks the information by the service provider through call centre.
17.	We propose that the examination data will be uploaded to the Central Data Centre after completion of the final shift at the end of the day	The Service Provider shall ensure that the candidate responses, audit trails, attendance data, and examination logs are uploaded from every examination centre/venue to the Central Data Centre **within one (1) hour from the completion of each examination session**, so as to facilitate timely monitoring, data integrity, and post-examination processing.
18.	Could TNPSC provide the exhaustive list of agencies classified as 'similar recruiting agencies' under Section 8.6, confirm the maximum additional volume that may be assigned under the same contract, and clarify whether a separate work order with independently scoped pricing will be issued for each such assignment or whether all assignments will be executed at the same per-candidate Financial Bid rate?	No. Any assignment under this provision shall be issued only through a **separate work order**, clearly specifying the scope of work, quantity, timelines, and other applicable terms.

19.	Could TNPSC confirm whether the full operational cost of scribe sourcing, deployment, reserve management at 5:1, and exception case handling (including medical document-based scribe requests) must be absorbed within the per-candidate quoted rate, or will these costs be reimbursed through a separate reimbursement mechanism outside the Financial Bid?	Yes.
20.	Could TNPSC confirm in writing that VAPT costs are fully absorbed in the per-candidate quoted rate, and additionally clarify: (a) the exact scope of systems to be covered — examination platform only, or also DC/DR infrastructure and peripheral systems; (b) whether a baseline VAPT report is required and accepted by TNPSC before the first live examination; and (c) whether the Service Provider's choice of CERT-In empanelled auditor requires prior written approval from TNPSC?	The VAPT cost shall be deemed to be **included in the per-candidate rate quoted** by the Service Provider, and no separate payment shall be made towards this activity. The Vulnerability Assessment and Penetration Testing (VAPT) shall cover all systems forming part of the examination solution, including the examination platform and the associated infrastructure deployed for execution of the contract, as applicable. A **baseline VAPT report** shall be submitted to the Commission **before commencement of the first live examination**. The VAPT shall be carried out by a **CERT-In empanelled auditor**. The selection of the CERT-In empanelled auditor or any other authority approved by Government of India shall be at the discretion of the Service Provider and **shall not require prior approval from TNPSC**, provided that the auditor is validly empanelled with CERT-In or any other authority approved

		by Government of India at the time of the audit.
21.	Could TNPSC clarify whether the flat Rs.10 lakh malpractice penalty under Section 12.3(A) and the 'up to 100% of total contract value' data breach penalty under Section 12.4(c) sit within the 10% overall penalty cap defined in Section 12.7(a), or are they treated as exceptions outside the cap? And in the event of termination alongside penalty, does the cap still apply to the financial penalty component?	The provisions relating to penalties shall be read **independently as specified in the respective clauses of the tender document**. The overall penalty cap of **10% of the contract value** under Section 12.7(a) shall apply to the penalties covered under the said clause. However, penalties specifically provided for **serious violations such as malpractice and data breach** under Sections 12.3(A) and 12.4(c) shall be governed by the respective provisions and shall not be construed as being automatically limited by the overall penalty cap. In the event of termination of the contract along with imposition of penalties, the applicable penalty provisions shall continue to apply. The financial liability of the Service Provider shall be determined in accordance with the terms and conditions of the tender document and the contract.
22.	Could TNPSC define a maximum payment processing timeline — for example 15 or 30 working days — for both the 75% tranche upon invoice submission and the 25% balance upon post-examination certification, and also clarify the maximum period TNPSC may withhold payment during a dispute before an interim payment mechanism is triggered, given that price escalation is prohibited	Payments shall be processed by TNPSC subject to submission of valid invoices, completion of the applicable milestones, verification of deliverables, and certification by the authority of TNPSC. TNPSC shall endeavour to process eligible payments within a reasonable period; however, no fixed payment timeline shall be prescribed, as processing is

	throughout the contract	subject to examination of records, verification of performance, administrative approvals, and other applicable procedures including budgetary sanctions of the Government. In case of any dispute relating to the invoice or deliverables, TNPSC shall have the right to withhold the disputed amount until resolution of the issue. The undisputed portion, if any, shall be processed as per the applicable payment provisions of the tender document. The quoted rates shall remain valid throughout the contract period as specified in the tender document, and no price escalation shall be considered.
23.	Could TNPSC specify: (a) the precise formula for calculating uptime — whether measured per session, per venue, or as an aggregate across all venues in a single examination; (b) the monitoring tool or dashboard that will serve as the binding authoritative record; and (c) the formal process available to the Service Provider to raise and resolve a discrepancy if its own system logs differ materially from TNPSC's assessment, given that TNPSC's determination is currently stated as final with no recourse?	The uptime shall be assessed based on the availability of the examination application / system during the conduct of the examination. The measurement shall be considered **venue-wise and session-wise**, based on the system-generated logs and monitoring reports maintained for the examination. The monitoring tools, dashboards, and system logs deployed by the Service Provider and/or the Commission shall be used for verification of uptime and service performance. The Service Provider shall provide all necessary logs, reports, and technical support required for such verification.

		In case of any discrepancy identified by the Service Provider, the Service Provider may submit its representation along with supporting technical evidence within the time prescribed by the Commission. The matter shall be examined by the Commission based on available records and system logs, and the decision of the Commission shall be final and binding as per the tender conditions.
24.	Could TNPSC clarify: (a) the minimum number of nodes and simulated candidates required for the demonstration; (b) whether TNPSC will provide dedicated space, power supply, and internet connectivity at TNPSC Office, or whether the bidder must arrange these independently; (c) whether the full setup, transportation, and dismantling cost is borne by the bidder; (d) the tentative date and duration of advance notice before the demonstration; and (e) whether all technically shortlisted bidders will be evaluated under identical conditions and infrastructure?	The minimum number of nodes **not more than fifty (50)** and simulated candidates required for the mock examination demonstration shall be communicated to the technically qualified bidders before the scheduled demonstration. TNPSC will provide dedicated space, power supply, and internet connectivity at TNPSC Office. The cost towards setup, transportation, installation, operation, and dismantling of the demonstration infrastructure shall be borne by the bidder. The date and schedule of the demonstration shall be intimated to the shortlisted bidders with reasonable advance notice. All technically shortlisted bidders shall be evaluated based on the same evaluation criteria and under similar conditions to ensure a fair and transparent assessment.

25.	Could TNPSC clarify: (a) whether the 'different seismic zone' requirement for Primary DC and DR is a mandatory disqualifying criterion or a scored preference in the technical evaluation; (b) whether 'different seismic zones' means strictly non-adjacent seismic zones per the Bureau of Indian Standards map, or simply two separately classified zones regardless of geographic adjacency; and (c) whether TNPSC has a preferred list of city pairs that satisfy both the seismic zone and Tier-III certification requirements simultaneously?	a) The requirement of having the **Primary Data Centre (DC) and Disaster Recovery (DR) Centre located in different seismic zones** is a **mandatory eligibility requirement**. (b) The term **"different seismic zones"** shall mean that the Primary DC and DR Centre shall be located in **two different seismic zones as classified under the applicable Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) seismic zoning map**. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure geographical and disaster risk resilience. (c) TNPSC has not prescribed any specific city pairs. Bidders may propose suitable locations that satisfy the requirements of **Tier-III or above certification** and placement of Primary DC and DR in different seismic zones, as specified in the tender document. The decision of Technical Evaluation Committee is final.
26.	Could TNPSC provide precise definitions for: 'billable value for affected candidates' — specifically whether this is limited to the per-candidate rate of only the directly impacted candidates, or extends to the entire session, shift, or venue value.	The term **"billable value for affected candidates"** shall mean the applicable per-candidate charges payable under the contract multiplied by the number of candidates directly affected by the incident. It shall be restricted to the candidates impacted by the specific lapse and shall not extend to the entire session, shift, or venue unless specifically stated in the relevant penalty provision.

27.	Could TNPSC confirm whether there is a minimum guaranteed candidate volume per year or per contract period against which the Service Provider can price its fixed infrastructure, staffing, and technology costs? If actual examination volumes fall significantly below the stated 3.5 lakh estimate, will TNPSC provide a floor payment or volume shortfall compensation, or does the Service Provider bear the full infrastructure cost risk against an unguaranteed volume?	The figure of **3.5 lakh candidates** indicated in the tender document is **only a tentative estimate** based on the Commission's anticipated count of candidates and is provided solely for the purpose of enabling bidders to estimate the likely scope of work. TNPSC shall not be liable to provide any floor payment, minimum revenue guarantee, or compensation for any shortfall in the actual examination volume.
28.	Could TNPSC clarify whether the 2-year contract period is aligned to the TNPSC examination calendar year or runs strictly from the work order issue date regardless of where that falls in the examination cycle? And in the event the contract expires mid-examination cycle, what is the formal mechanism — beyond the 3-month transition provision — to ensure continuity of examinations that were scheduled and announced before contract expiry?	The contract period shall be **two (2) years from the date of issue of LOA/AOC, as specified in the tender document**, and shall not be linked to the Commission's examination calendar or financial year. In the event the contract period expires during an ongoing examination cycle, the successful Service Provider shall continue to provide the contracted services for the examinations that have already been scheduled, notified, or entrusted to it before the expiry of the contract, to ensure continuity and completion of the examination process, subject to the terms and conditions of the tender and any extension, if considered necessary by TNPSC. The provision relating to transition assistance shall operate in addition to, and not in substitution of, the Commission's right to require completion of

		ongoing examination assignments entrusted during the currency of the contract. Any extension of the contract, if required in the interest of ensuring uninterrupted examination services, shall be at the sole discretion of TNPSC and on the terms and conditions specified in the tender.
29.	Could TNPSC confirm that examinations conducted during the transition period under Section 9.4 will be covered by active work orders at the contracted per-candidate rate, and that the Service Provider will receive full payment for all examinations delivered during the transition period? If transition is genuinely unpaid, could TNPSC clarify the basis on which the Service Provider is expected to sustain full staffing, infrastructure, and operational costs for up to 3 months without contracted revenue?	Yes. Any examination or related services specifically entrusted by TNPSC during the transition period shall be covered under the applicable work order(s) and shall be paid at the rates accepted under the contract, subject to satisfactory performance and certification in accordance with the terms of the tender. Service Provider shall be entitled to payment for all examination services actually performed during the transition period in accordance with the contract, whereas no independent transition fee or exit management charge shall be admissible unless specifically approved by TNPSC.
30.	Could TNPSC clarify whether Departmental Examinations and Direct Recruitment Examinations will each be issued under separate independent work orders, or whether both streams will be consolidated under a single work order for a given date or period? Further, in a scenario where a venue infrastructure failure — such as a server outage, power	Separate work orders will be issued for each examination/notification.

	failure, or CCTV disruption — occurs on a day when both a Departmental session and a Direct Recruitment session are running at the same venue, could TNPSC clarify: (a) which work order the penalty will be applied against; (b) whether penalties will be computed separately for each examination stream or consolidated into a single penalty event; and (c) how "affected candidates" will be defined and isolated across the two concurrent streams for the purpose of penalty quantification under Sections 12.1 and 12.3?	
31.	Could TNPSC confirm whether the DC and DR requirement under Section 10(j) is satisfied by: (a) certified Tier-III colocation facilities contracted and managed by the Service Provider; (b) cloud infrastructure deployed in Indian sovereign cloud or Indian-region data centres of major providers; or whether only (c) physically owned and independently operated data centres qualify? And if colocation is acceptable, must the Tier-III certification be held by the colocation facility or by the Service Provider itself?	(a) & (c) Ownership of the physical facility is **not mandatory**. (b) cloud infrastructure deployed in Indian sovereign cloud or Indian-region data centres of major providers are permitted.
32.	Could TNPSC confirm whether the following specific cost heads must be fully absorbed within the per-candidate per-shift rate: (a) procurement and maintenance of CCTV hardware and live streaming infrastructure; (b) DC/DR hosting, bandwidth, and replication costs; (c) ISO 27001, ISO 22300, and CMMI certification maintenance fees; (d) biometric device procurement, calibration, and replacement; (e) invigilator, IT manager, security, and	Yes Rate to be quoted per candidate per shift shall include all the expenditure incurred for the conduct of the examination except amount to be paid for the scribe (which will be reimbursed separately).

	housekeeping remuneration across all venues; (f) VAPT audit fees; and (g) helpdesk operations? A clear confirmation or itemized exclusion list will enable bidders to price comprehensively and without ambiguity.	
33.	Could TNPSC define the formal data handover and verified deletion procedure required at contract end when the Service Provider uses cloud infrastructure, so that bidders can plan compliant retention architectures from day one?	The requirement under **Sections 5.3.12, 6.15(ii), and 9.6(y)** is that all examination-related data shall be stored, processed, backed up, and retained **only within data centres located in India**. The tender does not mandate any specific hosting model.
34.	Could TNPSC define the precise boundary of the outsourcing prohibition under Section 9.6(j) — specifically whether it applies to examination operations and manpower deployment only, or extends to standard technology procurement such as: cloud infrastructure hosting, data centre colocation services, third-party biometric device vendors, licensed antivirus and endpoint protection platforms, and network hardware suppliers? Without this clarity, any technology-native service provider risks an inadvertent breach of this clause through routine infrastructure procurement.	Refer to Tender Document