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A: 09th Pink street, Botshabelo industrial park, Botshabelo, South Africa

Registration number: 2000/028790/08

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR PROVISION OF BOARD SECRETARIAT SERVICES FOR 36 MONTHS

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES	Provision of Professional Board Secretariat Services for 36 Months
Closing Date:	9 July 2026
Closing Time:	16:00
Submission of Proposals	Electronic submissions: tenders@softstartbti.co.za



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SECTION I

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Introduction

Softstart Business and Technology Incubator ("SBTI") hereby invites suitably qualified and experienced service providers to submit proposals for the provision of professional Board Secretariat Services for a period of thirty-six (36) months.

The successful bidder will provide comprehensive governance and board secretariat support to the Board and its Committees as more fully set out in Section II.

2. General Rules

2.1 SBTI is not bound to accept any of the proposals submitted and reserves the right to call for presentations from shortlisted bidders before final selection.

2.2 SBTI reserves the right to terminate this appointment or temporarily defer the work, or **any** part thereof, at any stage of completion should SBTI decide not to proceed with the RFP.

2.3 SBTI also reserves the right to appoint any other person to undertake any part of the tasks.

2.4 SBTI reserves the right to modify the timelines as set out in respect of the submission of the proposal. SBTI may cancel this RFP at any time on notice.

2.5 The Service Provider must be a single legal entity with all other necessary expertise. **SBTI** will enter into a single contract with a single entity for the delivery of the work set out in this RFP document.

2.6 Must have a minimum BBBEE grading of Level 3 upwards (i.e. Level 2 and Level 1).

3. Costs Incurred by the Supplier

3.1 The Supplier shall be responsible for all costs, expenses and losses incurred by it in the preparation, presentation and demonstration of the submission contained in its respective proposal about this RFP. SBTI shall not compensate the Supplier for any such **costs**, expenses or losses, regardless of the outcome of the tender.

3.2 Should this RFP be cancelled, SBTI shall not incur any liability whatsoever.

4. Disclaimer of Rights and Limitation of Liability

4.1 The Supplier provides this proposal at its sole and absolute risk.

4.2 By submission of its tender, the Supplier shall be deemed to have:



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- Satisfied itself with all conditions and circumstances affecting its tender; and
- Satisfied itself with any policies with which the Supplier is obliged to comply in the rendering of the Services.

4.3 The terms and conditions provided by the Supplier in the Proposal shall have no force and effect and shall never be taken as operative, whether to override or supplement any term or condition as may pertain to this RFP or any subsequent agreement.

4.4 Save as expressly provided herein, no rights whatsoever are granted whether in terms of the common law or as may arise from any written or oral undertakings provided by SBTI to the Supplier.

Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, SBTI shall not and does not undertake to:

- Accept the lowest priced response.
- SBTI reserves the right to accept any of the responses in whole or in part.
- Reject all responses submitted.
- Terminate discussions and/or negotiations at any time.
- Depart from any terms and conditions contained within this RFP without incurring liability.
- Negotiate with one or more Suppliers.

5. Submission of Proposal

5.1 Proposals must be submitted via email to ensure that SBTI receives them no later than the closing time and date specified for their receipt at:

Email to: tenders@softstartbti.co.za

5.2 The proposal shall, unless otherwise provided, be enclosed in a sealed envelope marked:

5.3 Supplier's proposal shall remain valid for **120 days** from tender closure.

6. Late Submission of Proposals

Proposals received after the closing date and time shall not be considered.

7. Supplier Information

The Supplier will be required to furnish SBTI with the information as set out in Section III.

8. BBBEE Information



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SBTI is committed to the achievement of the goals set out in the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act and all related legislation.

Suppliers are required to submit:

- BBEE Certificate
- Shareholding information
- Black women ownership
- BBEE Policy and improvement plans.

9. Declaration of Interest

The owners/directors of the Supplier shall sign the required declaration stating whether they hold an interest in SBTI or any of its subsidiaries.

10. EVALUATION CRITERIA

SBTI shall evaluate proposals received in three (3) stages as follows:

Stage 1: Administrative Compliance

Bidders must submit all mandatory documents required in this Request for Proposal (“RFP”). Failure to submit any mandatory document may result in the proposal being declared non-responsive and excluded from further evaluation.

Mandatory documents include, but are not limited to:

- Company Registration Documents issued by the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (“CIPC”);
- Valid SARS Tax Compliance Status PIN;
- Valid B-BBEE Status Level Certificate or Sworn Affidavit;
- Company Profile;
- Technical Proposal;
- Detailed Pricing Proposal for the full twelve-month contract period;
- Curriculum Vitae of the proposed lead Company Secretary and other key personnel;
- Certified copies of relevant qualifications;
- Proof of registration or membership with an appropriate professional body, where applicable;



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- At least three (3) contactable references for similar Board Secretariat or corporate governance assignments;
- Signed Declaration of Interest;
- Signed Declaration of Acceptance of the Terms of Reference and conditions contained in this RFP.

Only bidders who meet all the administrative compliance requirements will proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Functionality Evaluation (100 Points)

The functionality evaluation will be based on the criteria set out below.

Bidders must obtain a minimum score of **70 out of 100 points** to qualify for Stage 3.

Evaluation Criteria	Weight (Points)												
<p>Relevant Board Secretariat and Corporate Governance Experience</p> <p>The bidder must demonstrate relevant experience in providing Board Secretariat, governance advisory and company secretarial services to NPCs, NPOs, public entities, development institutions or organisations of a similar nature to SBTI that are reporting to SEDFA.</p>	<p>25 Points</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Criteria</th> <th>Points</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ten (10) years or more relevant experience</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seven (7) to nine (9) years relevant experience</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Five (5) to six (6) years relevant experience</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Three (3) to four (4) years relevant experience</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Less than three (3) years relevant experience</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Criteria	Points	Ten (10) years or more relevant experience	25	Seven (7) to nine (9) years relevant experience	20	Five (5) to six (6) years relevant experience	15	Three (3) to four (4) years relevant experience	10	Less than three (3) years relevant experience	0
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<p>Experience in Similar Board and Committee Secretariat Assignments The</p>	<p>15 Points</p>												



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<p>bidder must provide evidence of completed or current assignments involving the provision of secretariat services to Boards and Board Committees.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Criteria</th> <th>Points</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Five (5) or more similar assignments</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Three (3) to four (4) similar assignments</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>One (1) to two (2) similar assignments</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No similar assignments demonstrated</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Criteria	Points	Five (5) or more similar assignments	15	Three (3) to four (4) similar assignments	10	One (1) to two (2) similar assignments	5	No similar assignments demonstrated	0
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<p>Understanding of the Assignment and Proposed Methodology</p> <p>The bidder must demonstrate a clear understanding of the required Board Secretariat services and submit a comprehensive methodology covering, amongst other matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparation and circulation of meeting notices, agendas and Board packs; • attendance at Board and Committee meetings; • accurate recording and preparation of minutes; • preparation and maintenance of resolution registers and matters-arising schedules; • management of Board and Committee records; • governance and legislative compliance monitoring; 	<p>20 Points</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Criteria</th> <th>Points</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Excellent understanding supported by a comprehensive, practical and clearly detailed methodology</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Good understanding supported by an appropriate methodology addressing most requirements</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fair understanding supported by a generally acceptable methodology</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Limited understanding or methodology that</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Criteria	Points	Excellent understanding supported by a comprehensive, practical and clearly detailed methodology	20	Good understanding supported by an appropriate methodology addressing most requirements	15	Fair understanding supported by a generally acceptable methodology	10	Limited understanding or methodology that	5
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support relating to Board evaluations, induction and training; • management of confidentiality and sensitive Board information; • communication and reporting arrangements with the Chairperson, Board, Committee Chairpersons and Management. 	<p>does not adequately address the requirements</p>									
	<p>No methodology submitted or response is inadequate</p>	<p>0</p>								
<p>Qualifications, Professional Registration and Experience of the Proposed Personnel</p> <p>The bidder must propose suitably qualified and experienced personnel to undertake the assignment.</p> <p>Preference will be given to personnel with qualifications and experience in one or more of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Secretariat or Chartered Governance; • Corporate Governance; • Law or Company Law; • Business Administration; • Compliance; • Risk Management; • Board and Committee Administration. <p>Membership or registration with a recognised professional body governing company secretarial, legal, governance or compliance professionals will be advantageous.</p>	<p>20 Points</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="791 1003 1133 1064">Criteria</th> <th data-bbox="1133 1003 1484 1064">Points</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="791 1064 1133 1456"> <p>Highly qualified and experienced personnel with appropriate professional memberships or registrations and extensive relevant Board Secretariat experience</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1133 1064 1484 1456"> <p>20</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="791 1456 1133 1736"> <p>Qualified and experienced personnel with good relevant Board Secretariat and governance experience</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1133 1456 1484 1736"> <p>15</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="791 1736 1133 2016"> <p>Personnel meets the minimum qualification and experience requirements but has limited directly relevant experience</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1133 1736 1484 2016"> <p>10</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Criteria	Points	<p>Highly qualified and experienced personnel with appropriate professional memberships or registrations and extensive relevant Board Secretariat experience</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>Qualified and experienced personnel with good relevant Board Secretariat and governance experience</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>Personnel meets the minimum qualification and experience requirements but has limited directly relevant experience</p>	<p>10</p>
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	Personnel only partially meets the minimum requirements	5												
	Personnel does not meet the minimum requirements or supporting CVs and qualifications were not submitted	0												
<p>Implementation Plan and Ability to Meet Required Timelines</p> <p>The bidder must submit an implementation plan for the thirty six -months contract period, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commencement and handover arrangements; • Board and Committee meeting planning; • Board pack preparation and circulation timelines; • timelines for issuing draft and final minutes; • management of resolutions and matters arising; • monthly or quarterly governance reporting; • responsible personnel; • quality review and approval processes; • contingency arrangements where the lead secretariat representative is unavailable. 	<p>10 Points</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="791 1122 1134 1189">Criteria</th> <th data-bbox="1134 1122 1484 1189">Points</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="791 1189 1134 1431">Comprehensive implementation plan with clear activities, responsibilities, milestones and realistic timelines</td> <td data-bbox="1134 1189 1484 1431">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="791 1431 1134 1603">Good implementation plan with clear activities and timelines</td> <td data-bbox="1134 1431 1484 1603">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="791 1603 1134 1738">Basic implementation plan with limited detail</td> <td data-bbox="1134 1603 1484 1738">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="791 1738 1134 1839">Inadequate implementation plan</td> <td data-bbox="1134 1738 1484 1839">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="791 1839 1134 1939">No implementation plan submitted</td> <td data-bbox="1134 1839 1484 1939">0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Criteria	Points	Comprehensive implementation plan with clear activities, responsibilities, milestones and realistic timelines	10	Good implementation plan with clear activities and timelines	7	Basic implementation plan with limited detail	5	Inadequate implementation plan	2	No implementation plan submitted	0
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<p>Contactable References</p> <p>References must relate to similar Board Secretariat, governance advisory or company secretarial assignments completed or undertaken within the last five (5) years.</p> <p>SBTI reserves the right to contact the references provided and to verify the information contained in the bidder's proposal.</p>	<p>10 Points</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 70%;">Criteria</th> <th style="width: 30%;">Points</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Three (3) or more relevant and contactable references</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Two (2) relevant and contactable references</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>One (1) relevant and contactable reference</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No relevant and contactable references</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Criteria	Points	Three (3) or more relevant and contactable references	10	Two (2) relevant and contactable references	7	One (1) relevant and contactable reference	5	No relevant and contactable references	0
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No relevant and contactable references	0										
<p>Total</p>	<p>100</p>										

Only bidders who achieve the minimum qualifying score of **70 points out of 100 points** for functionality will proceed to Stage 3.

Stage 3: Price and Specific Goals — 80/20 Preference Point System

Bidders who meet the minimum functionality threshold will be evaluated on Price and Specific Goals in accordance with the applicable Preferential Procurement legislation and the 80/20 Preference Point System.

Evaluation Criterion	Points
Price	80
Specific Goals	20
Total	100

Allocation of Points for Specific Goals



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The allocation of points for Specific Goals shall be as follows:

Specific Goal	Points	Evidence Required
Valid B-BBEE Status Level Certificate or Sworn Affidavit	10	Valid B-BBEE Status Level Certificate or Sworn Affidavit
Women Ownership	5	CIPC registration documents, ownership information and valid B-BBEE documentation
Youth Ownership	5	CIPC registration documents, ownership information and certified identification documents confirming youth ownership
Total	20	

Where a bidder qualifies under more than one Specific Goal, the applicable points shall be awarded up to a maximum of twenty (20) points.

Failure to submit acceptable documentary proof in support of a claimed Specific Goal will result in zero (0) points being allocated for that Specific Goal.

11. Use of the Softstart Business and Technology Incubator Name and Logo

The Supplier shall not use or display the SBTI name or logo in its proposal or any related documentation.

12. Governing Law

This Agreement shall be governed in accordance with the laws of the Republic of South Africa.

SECTION II: REQUIREMENTS

13. Introduction

The intention of this RFP is to ensure a fair and transparent procurement process that results in the appointment of the most suitable service provider.

14. Scope of Work

The appointed service provider shall employ every lawful means to undertake its duties, including but not limited to:



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- 14.1 Preparation of all meetings in line with the Board Calendar.
- 14.2 Attending and taking minutes in all Board meetings.
- 14.3 Attending and taking minutes in all four (4) Subcommittee meetings preceding Board meetings.
- 14.4 Ensure minutes are accurately recorded and issued within seven (7) days after meetings.
- 14.5 Obtain appropriate responses on agenda items and matters arising.
- 14.6 Issue notices and take minutes in Annual General Meetings.
- 14.7 Ensure proper record keeping of Board and Committee minutes, attendance registers and Board resolutions.
- 14.8 Appraise the Board of applicable laws and legislative changes affecting NPCs similar to Softstart BTI who receive funding from SEDFA.
- 14.9 Advise and ensure good corporate governance compliance.
- 14.10 Facilitate compliance updates as required (e.g. CIPC).
- 14.11 Administer Board induction, orientation, training and ongoing education.
- 14.12 Assist the Board with recruitment of Board members when required.
- 14.13 Assist the Board with annual evaluations of the Board, Committees and individual Board members.
- 14.14 Draft and Registration of Softstart BTI Memorandum of Incorporation MOI and Board Charters(Including Committee Charters)

15. Staffing

The successful Service Provider shall deploy suitably qualified personnel in line with industry norms and legislative requirements.

16. Commencement Date

The successful bidder must be prepared and able to commence providing the services from **1 August 2026**.

17. OBLIGATIONS OF THE SUCCESSFUL SERVICE PROVIDER

Professional and Legislative Compliance



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The successful service provider shall perform the services professionally, independently, diligently, ethically and with the degree of skill, care and competence reasonably expected of an experienced Board Secretariat and corporate governance professional.

The successful service provider shall perform the services in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, governance frameworks and professional requirements, including, where applicable:

- the Companies Act 71 of 2008, as amended;
- the Companies Regulations, 2011, as amended;
- SBTI's Memorandum of Incorporation;
- SBTI's Board Charter and Committee Terms of Reference;
- the King V Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa;
- the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013;
- the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000;
- applicable CIPC requirements;
- any funding, regulatory or governance requirements applicable to SBTI;
- all applicable SBTI policies, procedures and delegations of authority.

Performance of Services

The successful service provider shall:

- provide all services set out in the Scope of Work and agreed deliverables;
- allocate suitably qualified and experienced personnel to the assignment;
- ensure continuity of the Secretariat service throughout the twelve-month contract period;
- attend all scheduled and properly convened Board, Committee and Annual General Meetings;
- prepare and circulate notices, agendas, Board packs and related documents within the agreed timelines;
- prepare accurate, complete and professionally drafted minutes that properly reflect deliberations, decisions, declarations of interest and resolutions;
- circulate draft minutes within seven (7) calendar days after each meeting, unless otherwise agreed in writing;



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- maintain updated resolution registers, matters-arising schedules, attendance registers, declaration-of-interest records and governance calendars;
- follow up on outstanding Board and Committee actions and provide progress reports;
- ensure that all Board and Committee records are properly indexed, securely stored and readily retrievable;
- provide timely governance and compliance advice to the Board and Management;
- immediately inform SBTI of any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest;
- promptly disclose any matter that may affect the service provider's independence, objectivity, capacity or ability to perform the services.

Confidentiality

The successful service provider shall maintain strict confidentiality regarding all information obtained or accessed during the performance of the services.

The successful service provider, its directors, employees, representatives, subcontractors and assigned personnel shall not, without prior written authorisation from SBTI:

- disclose confidential information to any third party;
- use confidential information for any purpose other than performing the services;
- copy, reproduce, publish or distribute confidential information except where reasonably required for the assignment;
- retain Board packs, minutes, reports, personal information or other SBTI records after completion or termination of the contract, except where retention is required by law;
- make any public statement concerning SBTI, its Board, Committees, Management, employees, beneficiaries, funders or stakeholders.

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Board and Committee packs;
- agendas, minutes and resolutions;
- financial and operational information;
- strategic plans and business information;
- legal advice and privileged information;
- personal information of directors, employees, service providers and stakeholders;



- declarations of interest;
- passwords, electronic records and access credentials;
- any information marked or reasonably understood to be confidential.

The confidentiality obligation shall continue after the completion, expiry or termination of the contract.

SBTI may require the successful service provider and each individual assigned to the engagement to sign a separate Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement before being granted access to SBTI information.

Protection of Personal Information

The successful service provider shall process personal information only for purposes directly related to the performance of the services and shall comply with POPIA and SBTI's information security and privacy requirements.

The successful service provider shall:

- implement appropriate technical and organisational safeguards;
- prevent unauthorised access, loss, destruction, alteration or disclosure of information;
- restrict access to authorised personnel only;
- immediately report any actual or suspected information security or personal information breach to SBTI;
- cooperate with SBTI in investigating and addressing any information security incident;
- securely return, transfer or destroy information upon instruction from SBTI.

Independence and Conflict of Interest

The successful service provider shall remain independent and objective throughout the contract period.

The service provider shall immediately disclose to SBTI any relationship, financial interest, business interest, personal interest or other circumstance that may create an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

SBTI reserves the right to require the replacement of any assigned person where a conflict of interest, lack of independence, misconduct, poor performance or confidentiality concern arises.

Quality and Accuracy



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The successful service provider shall establish appropriate internal quality-review procedures to ensure that all notices, agendas, minutes, resolutions, registers, governance reports and other deliverables are accurate, complete and professionally presented before submission to SBTI.

The successful service provider shall correct, at no additional cost to SBTI, any errors, omissions or deficiencies attributable to the service provider.

Personnel and Continuity

The personnel proposed in the successful bidder's submission shall be the personnel assigned to the contract.

No replacement of key personnel may be made without SBTI's prior written approval.

Where replacement is necessary, the successful service provider shall provide a replacement with qualifications and experience equal to or better than those of the person being replaced.

The successful service provider shall maintain appropriate contingency arrangements to ensure that Board and Committee meetings and deliverables are not disrupted by staff absence, illness or unavailability.

Ownership and Return of Information

All information, documents, registers, minutes, resolutions, reports, schedules, templates and other deliverables prepared specifically for SBTI under this contract shall become the property of SBTI upon creation or payment, as applicable.

Upon termination or expiry of the contract, the successful service provider shall:

- hand over all current and historical Secretariat records in its possession;
- provide all records in an organised electronic and, where applicable, physical format;
- provide an updated handover report;
- return all SBTI property and information;
- permanently delete any remaining electronic copies, unless retention is required by law.

Reporting and Cooperation

The successful service provider shall report to the person designated by SBTI and shall cooperate with the Chairperson of the Board, Committee Chairpersons, the Chief Executive Officer, Management and other authorised SBTI representatives.

The successful service provider shall provide periodic reports on:

- meetings held and minutes issued;
- resolutions adopted;



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- outstanding matters arising;
- governance and compliance deadlines;
- Board and Committee attendance;
- declarations of interest;
- Board evaluations, induction and training;
- material governance concerns requiring attention.

Breach and Non-Performance

Failure by the successful service provider to comply with the agreed service standards, confidentiality requirements, applicable legislation or material obligations contained in this RFP may constitute a breach of contract.

SBTI may require the service provider to implement a corrective-action plan within a specified period and reserves the right to terminate the appointment where the breach is material, repeated or not remedied within the required timeframe.

SECTION III

18. Information Required with the Proposal

The proposal must include, but not be limited to:

Annexure 1

- Cover Letter
- Company Profile
- CIPC Registration Documents
- Certified copies of relevant certifications, accreditations and licenses
- CVs of project staff
- Awards and recognitions

Annexure 2

- Valid Tax Compliance Status PIN
- Relevant statutory certificates

Annexure 3

- List of References



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- Three (3) testimonial letters not older than three years

Annexure 4

- Completed RFP document
- Detailed technical proposal
- Comprehensive methodology

Annexure 5

- Price Breakdown (Annually and Total of 36 Months)

Annexure 6

- Declaration of acceptance of the terms of reference.