



National Assessment and Accreditation Council
(An Autonomous Institution of the University Grants Commission)
P. O. Box. No 1075, Nagarbhavi Bengaluru- 560 072

Notice of Tender

Tender No: NAAC/Admin/ DVV/2021

Dt: 12/04/2021

Invitation for Expression of Interest (Eoi) for Empanelment of additional Suppliers of Services related to Data Validation and Verification for Assessment and Accreditation purposes through Letter of Intent.

NAAC intends to empanel technologically competent, cost effective and resourceful suppliers for Data Validation and Verification initially for one year.

Interested service providers may download the application form from the NAAC website and submit duly filled in form accompanied by application fee of Rs.1,000/- (rupees One Thousand only) by way of a crossed demand draft drawn in favour Director, NAAC, Bengaluru. This amount is non- refundable.

The completed application should reach the undersigned before the due date i.e. 26/04/2021. The application not accompanied by required fee will not be accepted.


12/4

Admin . Officer
NAAC

शासकीय अधिकारी / Administrative Officer
एन.ए.ए.सी. - बंगलुरु / Bengaluru



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL(RFP)

Selection of Agencies for Data Validation and Verification of Accreditation for National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)

Regions in Scope: All states and Union Territories of India (through only online resources)

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)
P.O. Box No. 1075,
Nagarbhavi,
Bengaluru- 560 072,
Karnataka, India

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INTRODUCTION

NAAC has revised its accreditation process using a new methodology and measurement system that is both quantitative as well as qualitative. The NAAC has identified about 140 data points that are required to be used in the new accreditation system. About 100 of them are quantitative while 40 of them are qualitative. In order to reduce subjectivity, NAAC employed a computer assisted system that helps in creating a common system of validating data-points and arrives at a unified score for all the participating institutions. All the institutions that get accredited are required to do self assessment first and then the same is validated by NAAC for reliability and accuracy. And thereafter a grading is arrived at after computing a CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average) for all the parameters/data-points that are part of the accreditation framework.

For this purpose, NAAC invites proposals from agencies that will help in validating these quantitative data-points in order to fulfil its objective. The verification and validation work will not involve any travel to the institution, will not involve electronic or phone conversations with the representatives of the Institution under consideration, but will be done using the available information in the public domain as well as the information provided by the institution in the NAAC portal. The communication of the DVV with the institutions will have to be only through the facilitated NAAC portal.

This Request for Proposal (RFP) specifically requests submissions from potential service providers who wish to sign the Expression of Interest.

- Experience in Data Validation and Verification services.
- Experience working with academic or educational institutions.
- Ability to comprehend and interpret educational information for validating the claims.
- Demonstrate innovative approach for the tasks that can be used and institutionalize as best practices across India.

1. CONFIDENTIALITY

This RFP has been prepared by NAAC, and the data will be related to several institutions that apply to NAAC for accreditation. It is therefore issued in consideration of the agreement to treat it as confidential and upon selection as a potential service provider NAAC Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) need to be executed and submitted.

The information contained in this proposal and any related discussions or documents produced by NAAC or its Advisers are confidential and proprietary information of NAAC. NAAC is not conveying any ownership to any party by disclosing this information.

By accepting this document, the service provider agrees to hold this information in strict confidence and will not use the same by itself or allow any other person or entity to see it or use it and it will not be used in any way other than for the preparation of the requested proposal. The service provider should ensure no conflict of interest with the institution assigned to them retrospective and prospective for 3 years. An undertaking regarding the same should be provided before empanelment of the selected service provider.

2. OVERVIEW OF NAAC

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an autonomous body established by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India to assess and accredit institutions of Higher education in the country. It is an outcome of the recommendations of the National Policy in Education (1986) which laid special emphasis on upholding the quality of higher education in India. To address the issues of quality, the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Programme of Action (POA-1992) advocated the establishment of an independent national accreditation body with its headquarters at Bengaluru.

Functions of NAAC

NAAC is entrusted with the primary function of assessing and accrediting higher education institutions of the country. It entails the following:

- Provide guidance to institutions for preparing their self-study Reports (SSRs)
- Preparing in-house pre-visit documents for the perusal of assessors.
- Coordinating the 'on-site' visit to its effective completion.
- Evolving appropriate instruments of accreditation strategies.
- Identifying, enlisting and creating a pool of efficient assessors.
- Providing appropriate training to assessors.
- Assessing and accrediting institutions

For more information please visit website at www.naac.gov.in

3. RFP INSTRUCTIONS AND TERMS

3.1 NAAC Contact

To foster a fair and equitable evaluation process, NAAC has designated a single point of contact for this RFP as detailed below. This individual is the only person authorized to communicate with service providers regarding the RFP process and the Service providers shall not contact any other member of staff of NAAC or any other entity associated with NAAC. Violation of this requirement may result in disqualification from this RFP.

RFP Contact Point

Single Point of Contact – name (Section 3.1)	Administrative Officer, NAAC
Single Point of Contact – e-mail (Section 3.1)	m.arun@naac.gov.in
Single Point of Contact – phone (Section 3.1)	+91 80_23005122 (desk) +91 9632499931 (mobile)

3.2 Rights of NAAC

NAAC reserves and may exercise one or more of the following rights and options regarding this RFP:

- To accept or reject any and all responses to this RFP, or any portion thereof without specifying any reason
- To seek additional proposals, conduct negotiations and/or contract with one or more qualified Service providers
- To cancel or withdraw this RFP at its sole discretion, without the substitution of another RFP, or to alter the terms and conditions and evaluation criteria of this RFP
- To conduct any checks and investigations as to the qualifications of each Service providers at any time prior to and/or after the award of a contract
- Acceptance and rejection of any proposal shall have no legal obligation on NAAC

3.3 No Guarantee

While it is NAAC's intent to award a contract as a result of the RFP, NAAC does not guarantee that a contract will be executed with the bidding service providers.

3.4 Costs for Preparation of Proposal

NAAC shall not be held liable for any costs incurred by any respondent for work performed in the preparation and the production of the proposal or for any work performed prior to execution of contract.

3.5 Five Levels of Evaluation

All properly completed proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee. NAAC is in no way bound to accept the lowest proposal and may reject any or all proposals received, at its sole discretion.

The following criteria shall be considered by the selection committee when evaluating proposals and it is suggested that the Service providers keep these aspects in mind when responding to the RFP:

- Satisfaction of Requirements mentioned in the RFP
- Cost
- Experience in validation and verification of data of higher education institutions for various purposes such as ranking, grading and certifications. References of the same to be included.
- Technology understanding and using it for the overall effective delivery of the assigned job.
- Understand and demonstrate Security and Confidentiality requirement of the system.
- Availability of trained and qualified Human resources.

3.6 Revisions

In the event that it becomes necessary to revise this RFP, revisions will be made by issuing an addendum that clearly state the changes. Changes to the RFP due date are at the sole discretion of NAAC.

3.7 Service Level Agreements (SLA)

If the service provider is awarded any business as a result of this RFP, they will be required to sign a SLA.

3.8 Innovation Agreement

NAAC believes that during the course of work certain innovations / changed in tool might be generated and those are because of the work being done on the new accreditation methodology and framework that is the property of NAAC. Therefore all the innovations that are generated during the course of service provider's engagement with NAAC after being awarded the contract for this RFP will be the property of NAAC and the Service providers agrees to have no claim on the same. No publications or other material can be generated or published by the service provider.

3.9 RFP Intent

All service provider's must declare their intentions to bid by emailing the given NAAC contact (section 3.1). The following format must be used for declaring your intention:

"(name of company) is in agreement with the terms/conditions of the RFP and we intend to bid on the RFP by the required due date. I (name of contact) confirm that I am the person applying or am an authorized representative of the company and I have the authority to make such an intention." All intentions to EOI must be declared by the date referenced in section 4.0. (In this particular case the Last date is 12/04/2021)

3.10 Questions/Comments

The only acceptable method of requesting clarification on any aspect of the proposal/project is via an email to the designated contact (section 4.0). All questions and/or comments must be submitted in one email (not in pieces or multiple emails) by the due date (on or before 26.04.2021) indicated in section 4.1. Questions that are deemed inappropriate, unrelated to the scope of this project and/or considered confidential will not be answered. NAAC is under no obligation to provide a specific reason for not answering a question. NAAC will combine all questions (without indicating the specific name of the service provider that asked the question) and provide answers in an aggregate manner. To improve the quality of responses, NAAC may also restate questions.

3.11 Presentations

After an initial review of the responses, NAAC will invite specific service providers to present their offering to the committee. Please note that providing a response to the RFP does not guarantee a presentation/meeting with the committee. A specific schedule will be provided to all service providers that have been invited to meet with the committee to make the presentation by the designated RFP contact. The specific date/time will be communicated to you by the designated RFP contact. In anticipation of receiving an invitation to present your offering, you may make yourself available in NAAC in the dates listed in section 4.0 open.

4. Timeline – Important Dates

The process of Expression of Interest to be completed on or before **26/04/2021**.

The last date for seeking clarifications is **23/04/2021**.

5. OVERVIEW OF OPPORTUNITY

The section describes in detail the process of transformation and also the role of service providers to the RFP as part of the desired state in the proposed solution.

5.1 Current State

NAAC currently has implemented the Revised Accreditation Framework (RAF), where in there are Quantitative metrics (Qnm) and Qualitative metrics (QIm). The DVV verifies and validates the Qnm based on the data provided by the institutions through Self Study Report (SSR) submitted by the institutions with the data available in public domain and other databases.

In order to verify the QIm, NAAC sends a team of experts (Peer team) to the institution which is called as Peer Team Visit (PTV). The final CGPA is computed based on the amalgamated scores of Qnm after the completion of DVV process and QIm given by the PTV team.

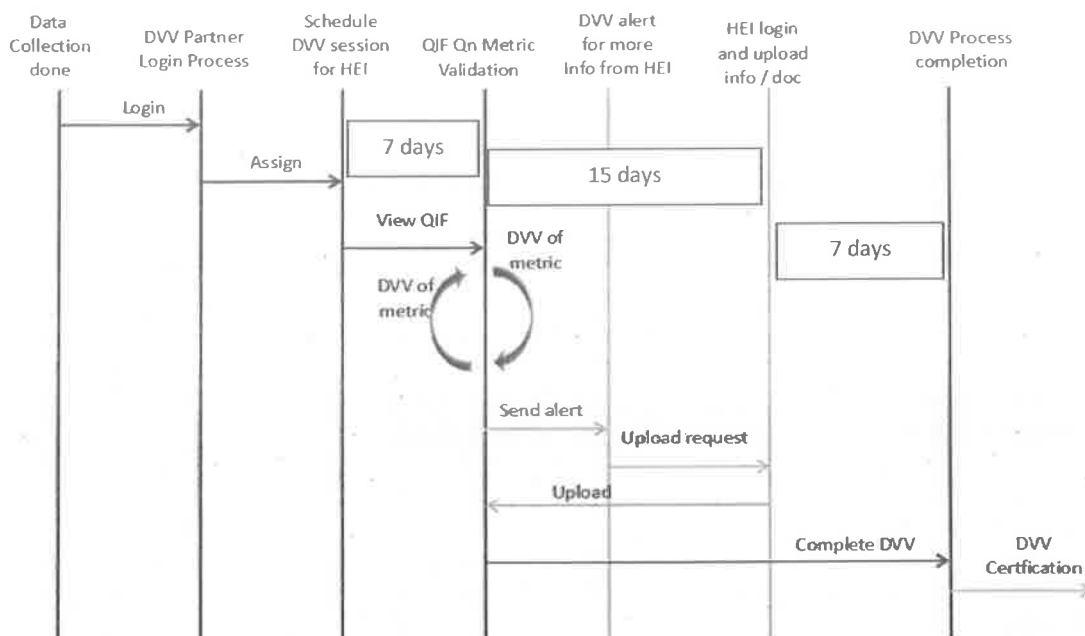
5.2 NAAC's Methodology and Framework

NAAC believes in continuous improvement and is always on the look out to enhance the system and provide a better and objective assessment to the Institutions of Higher Learning that use the accreditation system to enhance its competitive advantage and also to comply with the governmental grants.

A framework of evaluation has been put into place and been implemented since July 2017. For parameters that are used in the evaluation framework, please refer: <http://www.naac.gov.in/apply-now> .

The process of DVV is to verify and validate the data on the **quantitative metrics** by external agencies for which the RFP is floated in order to make the system as objective as possible.

The process for the Data Validation and Verification (DVV) is depicted below. The process is indicative and might undergo change as and when required.



Source: NAAC

NAAC as mentioned in earlier sections has drafted an Assessment framework and the data points that are captured in that are listed in the section along with Standard Operating Procedure for DVV applicable to Universities, Autonomous institutions and Affiliated UG/PG schemes of institutions. Please refer to <http://www.naac.gov.in/apply-now> for details.

5.3 Target Solution

The time line: The entire DVV process is envisaged to be completed within 30 days from the date of assignment to the DVV partner. The following are the break-up of the time-lines:

- 7 days for the DVV partner to prepare the deviations to be sent to HEI for clarification
- 15 days for the HEI to respond for the DVV's clarification
- 7 days after the receipt of clarification from institution for the DVV partner to reconcile the data based on the clarification provided by the HEI and submit the final report to NAAC.

When the institution does not respond within the stipulated time due to any unforeseen situation, the DVV partner will not be held responsible for such instances, and NAAC reserves the right to extend / terminate the institution's accreditation process. Any deviation from the above time-line shall attract penalty as per Section 6 of RFP.

5.4 DW Process

NAAC's primary goal is to make the assessment and accreditation process transparent and objective. To this effect NAAC has chosen to administer the process using a software based system. The software will be access controlled and only the persons responsible will be given access to the modules that they are authorized to work on. All the work assigned and performed by the designated staff/consultants will be tracked and monitored to ensure the data points verified and validated follow a logical path to conclusions. The agencies that are selected will be given a secure access to this software and will be asked

to perform the outsourced activity of validation and verification of the quantitative data on this tool itself. The process for administering the process will be as below:

1. Ask the participating institutions to input the self assessment data into the software portal that will be provided and hosted by NAAC
2. Once the self assessment data has been entered by the higher institution a time-line is kicked in and rest of the activity is time bound
3. The SSRs are assigned to the agencies that are empanelled with NAAC by way of this RFP and are required to complete DVV within a set time.
4. The claims on quantitative data are to be verified and validated by the agencies using the public information sources or by requesting the institution for further data or proofs through the facilitated portal.
5. Upon the final consolidation of the quantitative metrics, the DVV partner submits final DVV report to NAAC through the portal and the accreditation work is taken further.

The purpose of this RFP is to choose a partner agency that will support NAAC to achieve this goal.

The service providers are invited to propose to NAAC how they could provide such support. NAAC assumes that a service provider is capable of providing an objective proposal for this verification and validation requirement.

NAAC reserves the right to award no business whatsoever as a result of this RFP.

NAAC has identified a few of key business drivers and solution/service imperatives for this initiative. As a part of the response to this RFP, service providers should articulate their value proposition to address these, as detailed below.

5.5 Key Business Drivers

- Although NAAC framework application is to have a pan India reach, its operations and controls are centralized and standardized, bringing an improved visibility into results of the validation process.
- Cost effective with top benchmarks promise of improved time-line and accuracy
- Increase of NAAC's customer satisfaction:
 - Takes advantage of innovative ways to receive better outcomes
 - Service providers staff capabilities with resources to be utilized to deliver greater and faster value-added job
 - The resource deployed for the DVV process should possess minimum qualification of Post-Graduate and above with relevant knowledge in Higher Education and written and communication skills in English language.
- Increase of NAAC's staff satisfaction:
 - Reduction of repetitive queries to reduce staff workload
 - Focus shifted to high-value-added fact based search and research
 - Scalability and flexibility
- Improvement of Control & Compliance:
 - 100% data accuracy and striving to eliminate human errors as far as possible
 - Full responsibility over performance of validation outcomes

- Reliable and foolproof analysis and validation of the data to be assessed.
- Suggestions for process improvements and data quality

5.6 Solution and Service Imperatives

In support of NAAC's Key Business Drivers detailed in Section 5.5, a few solution and service imperatives are:

- NAAC pays detailed attention to the process and underlying tool supporting the implementation of the processes. Hence, adherence to the same is of utmost importance to NAAC.
- NAAC will include a tracking and reporting functionality that will be monitoring Key Performance Indicators related to time, quality and costs of executed verifications, as well as dashboards enabling analytics around outcome realization.
- NAAC intends to capitalize on both the know-how, as well as experience and skills of Service providers's talents – hence a thorough review of team members of the Service providers as presented in Service providers's proposal will be conducted.

6.PENALTY CLAUSE

6.1. Penalty for Time Delay :

For any failure or delay up to 15 days from stipulated time in execution of the work assigned to the satisfaction and or as per the SLA will attract penalty at 2% of the cost.

6.2. Penalty for Substandard Work :

For any failure to adhere to the standard operating procedures of DVV held out by NAAC at different point of time causing repetitive errors, the service provider will be removed from empanelment.

7.SERVICE PROVIDERS PROFILE

If any service providers bidding for this RFP are current service providers to NAAC please mention it upfront.

7.1 NAAC Experience

- 7.1.1 Has your company signed a any agreement with NAAC or one of its subsidiaries or affiliated agencies (either currently or in the past)? If yes, please provide start date and end date of the contract, description of the contract scope and the names of the contacts that executed the contract.
- 7.1.2 If you do not have a contract with NAAC or one of its subsidiaries or affiliated agencies, do you currently (or in the past) provide or have provided any ad hoc products/services to NAAC or one of its subsidiaries or affiliated agencies? If yes, please provide the main contacts that you coordinate (d) with and the main products/services provided.
- 7.1.3 Experience/agreements with individual/institutions/state government or any other government agencies dealing with quality of Higher Education.

7.2 Service providers Information for Companies

- 7.2.1 Number of years your organization has been in business under its present business name .
- 7.2.2 Other or former names under which your organization operated.
- 7.2.3 List any parent, subsidiary, and/or associated companies that you have.
- 7.2.4 Identify and describe any mergers or acquisitions made by your company in the last three years for companies.
- 7.2.5 Enclose audited statements of accounts for the last 3 years.

7.3 Legal Proceedings

- 7.3.1 Are there any judgments, claims, arbitration proceedings or lawsuits pending or outstanding against your organization or its officers? If yes, please provide explanation of the circumstance.
- 7.3.2 Has your organization filed any lawsuits or requested arbitration with regard to any contracts within the last five years. If yes, please provide explanation of the circumstance.
- 7.3.3 Has your organization or any of its officers or owners ever been convicted of a crime or are they presently the target of any criminal or administrative investigation? If yes, please provide explanation of the circumstance.
- 7.3.4 In case of default by the service provider to provide requisite services, penalty as per rules will be levied. The details will be provided in the PSA.

7.4 Clients

- 7.4.1 Pertaining to the RFP, please list the specific number of clients you have supported or have been supporting in data validation and verification services that might be similar to the work as stated in the RFP especially in the education sector.

7.5 Workforce

- 7.5.1 Detail the size of your company workforce, their qualifications and nature of experience in number of years (either full or part time or contractual).
- 7.5.2 Detail your annual employee staff turnover figure as a percentage of your total employee numbers. Please exclude any contractual and temporary workers.
- 7.5.3 Since this work entitles data evaluation specific to Higher Educational Institutions and their functioning, NAAC believes that it is important for the Service providers to have the following skills:
 - 7.5.3.1 Senior Academic/educational administrator with impeccable integrity
 - 7.5.3.2 Good understanding of the higher education scenario in the country and is in sync with the latest/future expectations of a institution
 - 7.5.3.3 Ability to understand and interpret various parameters on which Higher Educational Institutions (HEI's) can be measured
 - 7.5.3.4 Ability to objectively evaluate the data points and validate against the HEI claims
 - 7.5.3.5 Preference to academicians with outstanding research credentials evidenced by their bibliometric profile
 - 7.5.3.6 Members of reputed Academies

7.5.3.7 Versatile with the use of technology for purposes of analysing the Self-Study Report, English language skills and in preparing detailed deviation report through the tool

7.5.4 Service providers are therefore required to indicate such profiles who will be assigned to this project

7.6 Market Positioning

7.6.1 Please share key attributes that distinguish your organization from the competition.

7.6.2 Identify any products/services that represent more than 10% of total annual revenues and indicate what percentage of revenue each product/service accounts for.

7.7 Insurance & Indemnification

Please detail your insurance coverage in support of the services outlined in the scope of this RFP – your proposal should be accompanied by evidence of coverage.

7.8 Supplemental Questions

7.8.1 What awards and recognition has your company and /or its subsidiaries received? Has your company or received any awards specific to data validation and verification offering?

7.8.2 Are your services has ISO or any other complaint agency certified? Provide validity period and type of certification. Please provide a copy of your most recent certification or audit conducted.

7.8.3 Please attach with your submission a suitable template for Service Level Agreement that is currently in use with other clients and you believe would be suitable for NAAC in meeting its vision as set out in this RFP. This will be reviewed as the basis for discussion at a later date should your bid progress to further discussions.

8. COMMERCIALS / PRICING

8.1 General Information

- Assume a one year 'operate' term for the services and support following awarding of the contract to the selected Service providers.
- NAAC has fixed the fee structure with 2 different slabs for DVV charges for processing Universities & for all other category of HEI's. Accordingly the following fees has been fixed and this in not Negotiable:

SI No.	Category of HEI	Fees per institution
1.	University	15,000/-+ Taxes
2.	All other HEI	10,000/-+ Taxes

8.2 Setup Costs

NAAC will host and provide the access to the Software Platform for Service providers to work on the task. The infrastructural set-up cost will be borne by the service provider which includes internet connectivity, computer hardware and supporting software's etc.

8.3 Application Fee

Rs.1,000/- (Rupees one thousand only)

Exemptions Allowed for MSME's.

Application Fee to be remitted by way of a Crossed Demand draft favouring The Director, NAAC, Bengaluru.

8.4 Cost Proposal

The cost proposal should take into consideration all the costs including the above setup costs, operational cost and consulting costs of the staff (total time and material costs)

- The suggested data sources to validate with, will be indicated for each institution type (institutions will be asked to put most of the data on their website), against each quantitative metric for further clarity. The same need to be escalated to the institution through the portal to get clarifications. The same data shall also be verified with sources like AISHE, NIRF and other open-source/ Secondary source databases.
- Currently there are about 100 data points (please see through the QIF mentioned in the RAF manual hosted in NAAC website) per institution that need to be verified and validated by the potential Service providers, hence quote for the pricing should include the indicative effort required for the requisite service per institution based on the Service providers' prior experience.
- The total costs based on the data points per institution in consideration should be added and one comprehensive cost per institution should be provided as the cost proposal from the Service providers institution.
- Please include the suggested payment terms for the services provided, that will be negotiated by NAAC and finalised at the negotiation phases
- The quoted price should be exclusive of mandatory taxes
- Statutory deductions as applicable will be made from all payments

8.5 Rate per HEI / University

The data points are enumerated in the RAF and as indicated the total number of validation points are about 100. The service provider will be Rs. 10,000/-+ Taxes (Rupees Ten Thousand plus tax) per HEI (all HEI) & Rs. 15,000/-+ Taxes (Rupees Fifteen Thousand Plus Tax) per University for validating these 100 points and provide a total cost of the service to NAAC.

9. REFERENCES:

Please provide two client references whose scope of work is similar to that described in this RFP. Each client reference should include the information requested below. It is in your best interest to provide customers who are similar to NAAC's size and service expectations.

- Company Name
- Industry
- Description of product/services provided
- Contact name, address, phone, email
- Company procurement contact (if different from the above named contact)