

Virtual Session

Hiring a Consultancy Firm for Pakistan's cybersecurity infrastructure, sectoral readiness, and recommendations for improvement.

Date: 9th December 2025 **Time:** 11:30 AM

A virtual session was convened to brief interested firms on the consultancy assignment being procured under the Digital Economy Enhancement Project (DEEP). Participants were provided an overview of the assignment, which aims to assess Pakistan's cybersecurity infrastructure and sectoral readiness, review existing legal and policy frameworks, and develop strategic instruments to strengthen the national cybersecurity ecosystem. It was informed that this stage pertains to the Expression of Interest (EOI), which seeks to evaluate firms' capacity, experience, and qualifications prior to the issuance of the Request for Proposal (RFP).

The floor was then opened for questions from interested firms. **Mr. Kanzal Abbas (ABS & Co.)** asked whether timelines for individual deliverables would be provided, noting that only an overall twelve-month duration had been mentioned.

Response: It was explained that detailed timelines will be shared at the RFP stage with shortlisted firms. At the EOI stage, only the scope of work and overall duration has been provided for evaluating firms' capabilities.

Mr. Kanzal Abbas further inquired about the number of members permissible in a joint venture and requested clarity regarding the expected budget.

Response: It was stated that the expected budget is publicly available on the World Bank's website in the Procurement Plan. Firms may propose their joint venture structure as they consider appropriate.

Mr. Ghassan Kalassina (Mastercard) asked whether a specific submission format had been prescribed. And also, whether the evaluation criteria would be shared at a later stage.

Response: There is no particular format prescribed. Firms should submit all relevant information that demonstrates their strengths, including past experience, completed assignments, team details, and firm capabilities. The detailed evaluation criteria will be included in the RFP to be shared with shortlisted firms.

Mr. Nouman Cheema (Hassan Law Chambers) asked whether all Joint Venture members and experts must be identified at this stage, and whether a consortium may add members later.

Response: Joint Venture members must be identified at the EOI stage and cannot be added or removed during the RFP stage. Technical team details may be further elaborated during the RFP.

Mr. Cheema also asked whether e-signatures would be acceptable for international partners.

Response: E-signatures are acceptable at the EOI stage. Physical signatures and complete documentation will be required at the RFP/contracting stage. A letter of support from international partners will suffice at this stage.

Mr. Yanni Selimas (Aqovia UK) requested whether the list of firms participating in the session could be shared.

Response: The list will be shared.

Ms. Erum Mushtaq (Welling) asked whether any citizenship restrictions apply, and also sought clarity on whether the DPI rollout aims to serve multiple sectors through a centralized national infrastructure.

Response: There is no restriction on nationality, as this is an international EOI under World Bank guidelines. Regarding DPI, it was explained that the broader DEEP includes development of the Pakistan First DPI to support cross-sectoral services in health, finance, transport, etc. However, the present EOI relates specifically to the cybersecurity assessment and development of the national cybersecurity strategy and frameworks, which will ultimately support secure DPI rollout.

Mr. Jibran Jamshed (Mastercard) requested an extension of the submission deadline.

Response: The request was noted; however, due to internal project timelines, the possibility of extending the deadline is limited.

Mr. Sarjeel Mowahida (ABS & Co.) supported the request for an extension, noting the time required to identify and finalize partners.

Response: The request was noted. Participants were advised to submit a formal request through the email address provided in the EOI for internal consideration.

The meeting concluded with appreciation for the participation of all attending firms. It was reiterated that firms are encouraged to submit comprehensive EOIs reflecting their relevant experience, organizational strength, and capability to undertake the assignment.

List of Attendees:

MoITT:

1. Mr. Asfand Yar Khan, Member (D&ET)
2. Mr. Muhammad Azeem Khan, Program Director (DEEP)
3. Mr. Muhammad Babar Khan, Director (IGN)
4. Mr. Junaid Imam, Senior Digital Strategy Consultant (DEEP)
5. Mr. Sami Ahmed Khan, JD (Infra)

Firms:

1. Mr. Yanni Selimas, Aqovia UK Ltd.
2. Mr. Gavin Harrison, Aqovia UK Ltd.
3. Mr. Marc Harry, Aqovia UK Ltd.
4. Mr. Sarjeel Mowahid, ABS & Co.
5. Mr. Mr. Kanzal Abbas, ABS & Co.
6. Mr. Mirza Saadullah Baig, CCO (Malik Haroon Ahmad & Co.)
7. Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, CISO (Malik Haroon Ahmad & Co.)
8. Mr. Ghassan Kalassina, Mastercard - Security Solutions BD
9. Mr. Jibran Jamshad, Director Public Sector (Mastercard)
10. Mr. Nouman Cheema, Hassan Law Chambers (HLC)
11. Obaid ur Rehman, Manager Security & Compliance (RISE-RIPHAH International University)
12. Ms. Komal Batool, CS Consultant (RISE-RIPHAH International University)
13. Ms. Erum Mushtaq, Welling