

1. CLARIFICATION 1 - SAQA Verification of International Qualifications

Reference: Part D, Section 5 (Expertise and Experience); Appendix A (CV Template)

The RFP states that "all international qualifications will need to be verified through a SAQA certificate prior to appointment."

The bidder proposes to include suitably qualified international specialists whose academic credentials are directly relevant to the scope of work. Several of these individuals have already initiated the SAQA verification process; however, given that SAQA verification can take several months to complete, it is unlikely that verified certificates will be available by the time of tender award.

Clarification sought: Will the DBSA accept, as part of the bid submission and/or at the point of tender award, proof that a SAQA verification application has been formally submitted and is in progress, in lieu of a finalised SAQA certificate, provided that full verification is obtained prior to commencement of the contract? Alternatively, would the DBSA consider any interim verification mechanism or conditional acceptance arrangement to accommodate specialists whose applications are actively underway?

RESPONSE 1:

- An enquiry was submitted to SAQA by IFISA to verify the matter, and SAQA confirmed that the verification of foreign qualifications may take up to three (3) months.
- As a result, this condition will be relaxed. The revised requirement will state that, 'within five (5) months of appointment, the appointed service provider must submit proof of verification from SAQA confirming the validation of the foreign qualifications.'
- The verification must indicate an NQF level and field of study. The company must have a resource that has qualifications that are equal to or higher than the minimum tender requirements. Failure to comply may result in IFISA requesting the replacement of the affected expert. If the failure to comply with such conditions persists, the company may be deemed to be in breach of contract.

2. CLARIFICATION 2 - R1 Billion Project Value Threshold in Functionality Scoring Criteria

Reference: Part D, Table 2 — Functionality Criteria, Sub-criteria 1.3, 2.3, and 3.3

The functionality evaluation criteria stipulate that only infrastructure projects with a value of R1 billion or more, which have successfully secured funding from the BFI or from Multilateral Development Banks, will be considered for scoring under sub-criteria 1.3, 2.3, and 3.3.

RebelGroup respectfully submits that this threshold, as currently structured, is highly exclusionary and may not accurately reflect the depth and quality of a consultant's CBA/CEA and SEIA expertise. The number of infrastructure projects in South Africa that both meet the R1 billion threshold and have successfully completed BFI or MDB funding processes is inherently limited. This criterion effectively restricts competition to a very narrow pool of bidders, potentially at the expense of highly experienced specialists whose work has been conducted on similarly complex but lower-value projects, or on projects assessed by other rigorous appraisal frameworks.

Clarification sought: Would the DBSA consider either (a) lowering the project value threshold to a level that remains indicative of material complexity and scale, for example, R250 million or R500 million, or (b) broadening the qualifying funding criterion to include projects that have successfully secured funding from other recognised Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) or organs of state, beyond the BFI and MDBs specifically? If the threshold is to remain unchanged, could the DBSA confirm the policy rationale, so that bidders may assess their eligibility with certainty?

RESPONSE 2:

- The Introduction and Background section of the Scope of Work provides clarity on the founding policy of DBSA/IFISA. In essence, IFISA was established to process funding applications exceeding R1 billion.
- Accordingly, the R1 billion minimum threshold stipulated in the eligibility criteria is informed by IFISA's founding mandate, as well as the scale and complexity of projects processed through the BFI application framework.
- While the principles underpinning CBA/CEA studies may generally apply across projects, large-scale projects subject to the BFI process require a significantly higher level of technical rigour and analysis.
- IFISA therefore requires experts with proven experience in large-scale projects and demonstrated capability in assessing the socio-economic impact of high-value infrastructure investments.
- Furthermore, National Treasury requirements are stringent, and the importance of high-quality reporting and specialised expertise in large-scale projects cannot be overstated.
- It is therefore reasonable to require experts with experience in securing funding approvals for projects exceeding R1 billion.

I want some clarity on the R1 bn threshold in a case whereby a service provider had been involved with infra projects in different key sectors and that amount to more than R1 billion. Will that scenario be also regarded, for example

1. infra project on water and sanitation 150 million
2. transportation 450 million
3. energy 550 million

Would this scenario be recommendable?

RESPONSE 3:

- This is not recommended, as projects processed through the BFI Application framework are consolidated and required to have a minimum value of R1 billion.

We would like to seek a clarification regarding bidder **eligibility** for the current opportunity:

The document mentions that proposals can be submitted by government entities and PPP arrangements. Could you please confirm whether private firms can be part of a consortium?

RESPONSE 4:

- The statement above refers parties / bodies making submissions for BFI funding application. Not relevant in this process.
- For this bid, private firms or consortia are allowed to submit their bid offers, subject to meeting all stipulated bid conditions

I hope and trust that you are well. Regarding the above RFP, the Lead Expert must hold a postgraduate degree in Development Finance, Economics, Econometrics, Statistics, or a related field. I have an MBA from the Manchester Business School in the UK. **Is the MBA satisfactory?** On the other requirements, I qualify because I am also an engineer with 30 years of experience in Energy and Infrastructure projects. There will be two more team members with finance and economics qualifications. Please let me know so that I don't waste our time if the MBA from a top British Business School will not satisfactory.

RESPONSE 5:

- An MBA qualification supported by extensive working experience in the required field is acceptable

Not knowing the exact number of CBA/CEA/SEA required in each year, should we submit a price per project for year 1 and show the escalations for years 2 - 5?

RESPONSE 6:

- The pricing shall be submitted on a per-project basis, based on an estimated total of 50 projects. However, for the purposes of fair price comparison and evaluation, all pricing must be consolidated into a single total amount in accordance with Appendix B.
- Bidders are responsible for incorporating any escalation costs and all other related expenses into their proposed rates for projects 2 through 50. IFISA will only be liable

for the prices and rates accepted and approved at the award stage. No increases to prices or rates will be permitted after the award has been made

2. If the lead bidder is a/an QSE/EME, is there still a requirement to sub-contract the 30% to a/an QSE/EME.

RESPONSE 7:

- Yes, the mandatory sub-contracting special requirement is largely motivated by the value and nature of the project, as well as the future opportunities it is expected to create for participants. It is further informed by the development objectives of DBSA/IFISA.
- Bidder(s) are therefore expected to contribute meaningfully to skills transfer, enhance the exposure of small and micro enterprises to projects of this nature, and support the strengthening of their financial capacity and long-term sustainability.

Based on the briefing session and our review of the Terms of Reference, we are requesting for an extension from IFISA for the above-mentioned tender. Given that this RFP is requesting services for a period of 5 years and for 50 projects, it will require some careful thought regarding the commercial pricing and value for money for DBSA.

RESPONSE 8:

- To assist bidders to fully comply with bid requirements, we will consider extending the closing date for a period of about a week. That is, from 19 May 2026 to 26 May 2026.

Kindly confirm whether the requirement for subcontracting to an EME or QSE that is “at least 51% owned by persons domiciled in the Republic of South Africa” refers specifically to ownership by South African individuals in general, or whether it is intended to mean at least 51% black ownership.

RESPONSE 9:

Refers specifically to ownership by South African individuals in general. These must be EME or QSE entities