



TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

For Empanelment of Agencies/Individual Experts to Provide Technical & Professional Assistance to IIMC for Conducting Transparency Audit under the RTI Act, 2005

1. Background and Statutory Mandate

1.1 The Right to Information Act, 2005, is a path-breaking legislation enacted by the Parliament of India with the explicit objective of promoting transparency and accountability in the working of every Public Authority. As observed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in various judgments (e.g., *State of U.P. v. Raj Narain*), the "Right to Know" is derived from the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. To ensure this right is exercised effectively, Section 4 of the RTI Act mandates proactive disclosure of information.

1.2 It is observed that the sheer volume of RTI applications can be significantly reduced if Public Authorities adhere strictly to the "Suo Motu" disclosure mandates. Consequently, the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Government of India, vide its **Office Memorandum No. 1/34/2013-IR dated 15.10.2019**, has made it mandatory for all Public Authorities to undergo a Third-Party Transparency Audit.

1.3 The Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, has been designated and empaneled by the Central Information Commission (CIC) as a Competent Training Institute to conduct these audits.

1.4 Currently, there are approximately 2,033 Public Authorities under the Government of India mandated to undergo this audit annually. Given the enormity of the task and the strict timeline prescribed by the CIC, IIMC intends to empanel qualified Agencies/Individual Experts to provide professional assistance in discharging this statutory function with due diligence.

2. Objectives and Scope of the Assignment

2.1 Statutory Compliance: The primary objective is to ensure compliance with Sub-section 4(2) of the RTI Act, 2005, which mandates that every public authority shall provide as much information *suo motu* to the public at regular intervals.

2.2 Comprehensive Audit Parameters: The audit will rigorously assess the disclosure parameters including, but not limited to:

- Organizational structure, functions, and duties of officers.
- Budget allocation, utilization, and discretionary/non-discretionary grants.
- Decision-making processes, including channels of supervision and accountability.
- Procurement details, Public-Private Partnerships, and Transfer Policies.

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- Information related to CAG & PAC paras, Foreign Tours, and Citizen's Charters.

2.3 Technological Interface: The audit must be conducted utilizing the specialized software/portal developed by the Central Information Commission (CIC) for this specific purpose.

3. Detailed Deliverables and Duties

The empaneled Agency/Expert shall function as a specialized arm of the IIMC Audit Team. The scope of work is exhaustive and includes:

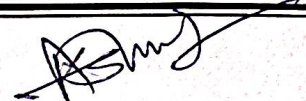
- **3.1 Pre-Audit Facilitation:**
 - Coordinating with the assigned Public Authority to process the formal request for the audit.
 - Issuing the requisite administrative documents, including the Proforma Invoice/Quotation, in accordance with the prescribed procedure.
 - Providing technical guidance to the Public Authority for correctly filling up the 'Self-Appraisal Form' as per CIC guidelines.
- **3.2 Technical Mapping:**
 - Liaising with the Office of the Central Information Commission (CIC) to ensure the Public Authority is correctly mapped on the CIC Audit Software.
- **3.3 The Audit Exercise:**
 - Conducting a meticulous verification of the Public Authority's website against the claims made in their Self-Appraisal Form.
 - Evaluating the quality, quantity, and accessibility of the disclosed information.
- **3.4 Reporting and Submission:**
 - Drafting the Preliminary Audit Report and submitting it to the Public Authority through IIMC for their comments/rectification.
 - Finalizing the Audit Report and submitting it to the CIC within the stipulated deadline.

4. Terms of Payment and Administrative Indemnity (Important)

4.1 Basis of Remuneration: The professional fee payable to the Agency/Expert shall be calculated on a "Per Public Authority" basis. The rate shall be determined based on the Financial Bid submitted by the Agency/Expert and accepted by the Competent Authority at IIMC.

4.2 Statutory Provision for Release of Payment:

- **Regulatory Basis:** In strict adherence to **Rule 172 of the General Financial Rules (GFR), 2017**, which mandates that "*payments for services rendered... shall be released only after the services have been rendered*", the liability of IIMC to pay the empaneled Agency/Expert arises immediately upon the certification of the work.
- **Definition of Service Completion:** For the purpose of this clause, the service shall be deemed "rendered" and "completed" upon the submission of the **Final Audit Report** to the Nodal Officer, IIMC.



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- **Delinking from Third-Party Recovery:** It is explicitly clarified that the settlement of the Agency/Expert's invoice is an independent contractual obligation of IIMC. The release of payment shall not be contingent upon the realization of the audit fee by IIMC from the respective Public Authorities. Any administrative delay in the transfer of funds from the auditee Public Authority to IIMC shall not prejudicially affect the payout timeline of the empaneled Expert, provided the deliverables have been submitted and accepted by the Institute.

5. Criteria for Empanelment (Technical Qualification)

To ensure the sanctity of the audit process, the following technical criteria are mandatory:

- **5.1** The Agency/Expert must possess in-depth knowledge of the RTI Act, 2005, specifically Section 4 disclosures, and must be proficient in operating the CIC Transparency Audit Software.
- **5.2** The Applicant must have a proven track record, having successfully conducted Transparency Audits for at least **35 Public Authorities** in the preceding two financial years.
- **5.3** Documentary evidence (Work Orders/Completion Certificates) in support of the above must be enclosed.

6. Financial Bid and Selection Methodology

6.1 The Applicant must submit a Financial Bid in a separate sealed envelope.

6.2 The Bid should quote a "**Consolidated Rate per Public Authority**" (exclusive of GST/Taxes).

6.3 Removal of Cap: Agencies/Experts are encouraged to quote a competitive and realistic rate commensurate with the professional effort, technical expertise, and time (approx. 15-20 hours per audit) required for the task.

6.4 The selection will be based on the Lowest Bid (L1) amongst the technically qualified applicants.

7. Quantum of Work and Timeline

- **7.1** The Institute anticipates conducting audits for approximately 60-70 Public Authorities during the current cycle. However, this figure is indicative and subject to the number of requests received.
- **7.2** The entire exercise is time-bound and must be completed by **November 2026** or within **one month after the last date mentioned by CIC** of the current year, in line with the CIC guidelines.

8. Submission of Bids

- **8.1** Interested parties are requested to submit their Technical and Financial Bids in two separate sealed envelopes, superscribed appropriately.
- **8.2** Bids may reach the office of the Deputy Registrar, IIMC, Aruna Asaf Ali Marg, New JNU Campus, New Delhi-110067 by **May 01, 2026 (5.00 pm)**.

Arusha D
16/04/2026

Deputy Registrar / Nodal Officer
Indian Institute of Mass Communication