

No. O-15012/5/25-Research
Government of India
NITI Aayog
(Research & Networking Division)

Sansad Marg, New Delhi-110001
Dated 27th May, 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Request/Invitation for Expression of Interest (REoI) for Research Projects -reg.

1. NITI Aayog hereby requests/invites expressions of Interest (EoI) for conducting research/study from institutions/organisations of repute (including university/deemed university) for undertaking a Research Study on **"Augmenting Rail Container Freight movements to the Hinterland: Policy challenges and way forward"** The details of the studies are placed in **Annexure I** to this Request for Expressions of Interest (REoI). The detailed Research Scheme of NITI Aayog-2024 (RSNA-2024) guidelines and its amendments, if any: read with this REoI will govern the process and may be seen at NITI Aayog's website at <http://www.niti.gov.in/guidelines>.
2. All the institutions/organisations are requested to go through the Guidelines of the **Research Scheme of NITI Aayog 2024 (Guidelines/RSNA-2024)** before responding to this public notice, especially to satisfy themselves that they fulfill all the eligibility criteria for availing of a grant under the said scheme and also that they can conduct the research study project as per the Guidelines.
3. No Applicant or its Associate shall submit more than one Application for the Consultancy. An Applicant applying individually or as an Associate or as part of the consortium shall not be entitled to submit another application either individually or as a member of any consortium, as the case may be. Applicants are advised to provide sufficient details in their applications to allow for an informed and fair evaluation/review.
4. The hard copy of EoI as per the format prescribed in **Annexure- II** along with the undertaking as per **Annexure -III** must be submitted by hand or by Registered post to Sh Sanchit Jindal, ASO (R&N) **Room No 435**, NITI Aayog, Sansad Marg, New Delhi-110001 by the interested applicants. The EoI must be sent in envelopes superscribed with the words "EoI on (name of the topic as mentioned in the corresponding Annexure)" and the same must reach the NITI Aayog within 21 days of the notified date of Public Notice i.e before 4:00 PM of 17.06.2025. EoI through E-mail may be sent at the address pdresearch-niti@gov.in. However, it must be supplemented with submission of the physical copy.
5. For any query in this regard, R&N Division may please be contacted over email at pdresearch-niti@gov.in.



(Dr Banusri Velpandian)
Sr. Specialist, Law (R&N)

**Research study: Augmenting Rail Container Freight movements to the
Hinterland:
Policy challenges and way forward**

1. Background

- i. Total commodity volumes in the national freight ecosystem during 2026 is projected at 6,366 MT, container traffic projected at 411 MT. (Source National Rail Plan). India has been witnessing growth in non-bulk traffic movements due to development of road infrastructure, increased economic activities. The non-bulk traffic of the nation is 411 MT out of these 66 percent of non-bulk freight moves on road, with 30 percent being moved by rail or rail-intermodal.
- ii. Non-bulk goods comprise a broad array of products such as consumer goods, edible oils, paper products, automotive supplies, milk, and other agricultural products. There is a significant demand for transportation of the non-bulk goods as the production centres are usually at farther distance from the consumption centres. Because of the convenience of moving the non-bulk commodities in containers, the containerized traffic has increased significantly in the last decade from 231 MT in 2019 to 411MT in 2025 (source NRP).
- iii. During April-March 2023-24 cargo handled at Major Ports has increased by 4.38% as compared to April-March 2022-23. During Financial Year 2023-24 total cargo handled had increased to 817.98 million tonnes (MMT) from 783.62 MMT handled during April-March 2022-23. Total capacity of the port is 1630 MT. (Source Ministry of Port shipping and water ways)
- iv. IR's freight traffic has grown at a compounded annual rate (CAGR) of 3.7 percent. Indian Railways has freight share 27 % which is expected to increase. Indian Railways has a share of less than 10% in domestic container transport, and around 20% in total container transport for export-import (EXIM) movements. (NRP).
- v. In 2006, Indian railways allowed private container operators to enter the rail-based container movement. It was the first significant step by the railways to allow private freight operators to increase share of containerized and non-bulk traffic. However, an increase in container traffic was witnessed only in the initial years, which stagnated afterward. Transportation of non-bulk commodities such as FMCG, pharmaceuticals, parcels, and fruits and vegetables require a well-established rail infrastructure. There are currently 19 private container train operators (CTO) including CONCOR, Container Corporation of India (CONCOR) is a government subsidiary under the Ministry of

Railways. Other significant players in this sector are Gateway rail freight, Pristine logistics, and Adani Logistics. The share of container transport in India is mainly towards roads due to various challenges faced in movement by railways such as high transportation cost, lack of adequate intermodal facilities, wagon and container lessors, timetables rail services, and last-mile connectivity. It is essential to increase Rail freight container movement to improve ease of doing business in export & Import, to promote competitiveness of industries and to reduce emission and decongest roads near ports.

2. Terms of Reference

Augmenting Rail Container Freight movements to the Hinterland: Policy challenge and way forward will identify and formulate a methodology to enhance container freight share of railways in hinterland. The objectives of the study would be as follows:

- i. To analyse the existing market share of Railways in container freight movements in Hinterland. Including container movements by other modes.
- ii. To analyse container freight pricing methodology in Indian railways and assess container pricing models globally for identifying the factors affecting modal share.
- iii. To analyse private container operations and identify the critical issues and obstacles faced by the operators. (e.g. High wagon turnaround time, last mile connectivity, etc.)
- iv. To identify policy bottlenecks in railways hinterland container freight movement.
- v. To provide policy level suggestions for cargo consolidation (Specially Parcel) and LCL cargo (Less than container load) and **suggest ways to attract customers to railways for non-bulk movements.**
- vi. To suggest suitable parameters/methodology for rationalizing the freight charges to improve outcome and competitiveness of the domestic industries.
- vii. Issues faced by inland container Depot (ICD), Container Freight Station (CFS) and status of Terminal Handling facilities.
- viii. Accessing demand & supply of containers, suggesting ways to mitigate lack of containers supply?

3. Minimum eligibility

3.1. Organizational Status and Registration:

- (a) Bidders must be legally registered entities, such as companies, research institutions, universities, consulting firms, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), incorporated under relevant laws in India or abroad (e.g., Companies Act, 2013, or equivalent for foreign entities).

- (b) The organization should have a valid registration with appropriate authorities, such as the Registrar of Companies, and possess necessary tax registrations (e.g., GST, PAN).

3.2. Technical Expertise and Experience:

- (a) Relevant Experience: Bidders must demonstrate prior experience of minimum 2 years in conducting research studies, preferably in the infrastructure sector.
- (b) Sector-Specific Knowledge: Research experience in Railway/Metro railways is preferable.
- (c) Team Composition: The bidding entity must have a qualified team, including professionals with advanced degrees (e.g., Master's or Ph.D.) in fields like economics, statistics, social sciences, or public policy.
- (d) Methodological Competence: Bidders should demonstrate proficiency in advanced Research methodologies, and application of Statistical tools.

3.3. Past Performance:

- (a) Bidders must provide evidence of successfully completing research studies in Infrastructure and railways/metro sector.
- (b) The applicant should have minimum net worth of Rs 5 Crore. The Applicant should enclose copies of audited balance sheet for FY 2023-24, FY 2022-23 and FY 2021-22.
- (c) The Applicant should not be blacklisted by any Central Govt./State Govt./PSU/Govt. Bodies.

Format of Expression of Interest (EOI)**Respondents Ref No.:****Date:**

Name-

Designation-

----- Vertical,

NITI Aayog,

Sansad Marg, New Delhi

Dear Sir/Madam,

Subject: RESPONSE TO – EOI FOR _____

We, the undersigned, offer the following information in response to the Expression of Interest sought by you vide your Notification No. _____, dated _____

1. Scope of work and organisation

- (i) The broad scope of work or service (briefly in about 100 words -Remember to tailor the content to the specific project or opportunity you're expressing interest in.)
- (ii) Type of Inputs to expected be provided by NITI Aayog on the subject
- (iii) Eligibility of the Applicant(s) for the EOI/study (Lead Applicant as applicable):

Type of organisation	Address of Organisation	Registration details	Single or Joint or collaboration (Name of all organisations)	Whether blacklisted by Govt of India/ State Govt/any Other department

2. Required Documents:

- (i) Copy of Registration Certificate of the Institution/Organisation **OR** Articles of Association {Copy of the Constitution/MOA (Memorandum of Association) of the Institute/ Any letter issued by UGC if University}
- (ii) Registration number (Copy) in NGO-Portal “Darpan” of NITI Aayog, if applicable.
- (iii) Photo copy of PAN card of the organization.
- (iv) Other supporting documents to evaluate the bidder for minimum eligibility conditions.

3. Undertaking: As per **Annexure – III** [To be given separately on A4 size letter head of the Applicant/ Lead Applicant)

4. Information of PI and Organisation

Details of Bidder		
1.	Name of the Principal Investigator (PI)	
2.	Address of PI	
3.	Status of the Organisation (Public Ltd./ Pvt. Ltd./ NGO/ Society/ Trust/ University/ Autonomous Body/ Deemed University)	
4.	Status as per Registration certificate/ Act	
5.	Name and Designation of the contact person:	
	Telephone No. (with STD code)	
	Mobile Number	
	Email of the Contact/ key person	
	Fax No. (with STD code)	
	Website:	
6.	Particulars of associate applicants/ JV members/ consortium members/ sub-contractors/collaborators	

- A. We have examined and have no reservations to the EoI Document including the self-declaration or any addendum that may be issued by NITI Aayog.
- B. We are duly authorized to represent and act on behalf of all collaborating applicants, which shall include jointly and severally / JV/ consortium/ sub-contractors as applicable.
- C. Our response is valid till _____ (Minimum validity is of three months from the submission deadline)

Yours sincerely,

(Sign)

NAME OF THE ENTITY

NAME OF THE AUTHORIZED PERSON

DESIGNATION

NATURE OF AUTHORISATION- BOARD RESOLUTION/LETTER OF AUTHORITY/ MOA/OM/POA
DATE

OFFICE SEAL/STAMP

SELF-DECLARATION FORM (to be printed on the applicants letter head)

----- hereby declares to NITI Aayog that:

1. In the last three years, we, the lead applicant or any of our Associates / partners/ consortium members have neither failed to perform on any contract, as evidenced by imposition of a penalty by an arbitral or judicial authority or a judicial pronouncement or arbitration award against the Applicant, nor been expelled from any project or contract by any public authority nor have had any contract terminated by any public authority for breach on our part.
2. We as Respondent(s) do not have any Conflict of Interest in accordance with the scope of the EOI in terms of projects or studies or assignments either ongoing or completed: having competing interests or constituting the same key personnel, during the preceding 3 (three) years as on the deadline of EoI submission.
3. We have not directly or indirectly or through an agent engaged or indulged in any corrupt practice, fraudulent practice, coercive practice, undesirable practice or restrictive practice, in respect of any tender or request for proposal or convicted by a Court of Law or indicted or adverse orders passed by a regulatory authority which would cast a doubt on our ability to undertake the Consultancy for the Project.
4. In regard to matters relating to security and integrity of the country, we have not been charge-sheeted by any agency of the Government or convicted by a Court of Law for any offence committed by us or by any of our Associates.
5. We are solvent and **are not** having our management affairs administered by the Courts or IBC. We are in the position to continue being sustainable in connection to performance of the obligations for this Consultancy procurement action.
6. We shall abide by all the conditions of the REoI and the terms in respect of any matter arising out of the detailed RFP Document if to be submitted on being shortlisted or concerning or relating to the Selection Process including the award of Consultancy.

Yours sincerely,

(Sign)

NAME OF THE ENTITY

NAME OF THE AUTHORIZED PERSON

DESIGNATION

NATURE OF AUTHORISATION- BOARD RESOLUTION/LETTER OF AUTHORITY/ MOA/OM/POA

DATE

OFFICE SEAL/STAMP