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GOVERNEMENT OF ASSAM

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EXCISE, ASSAM

HOUSEFED COMPLEX, DISPUR, GUWAHATI-06

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ADVERTISEMENT FOR REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

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No.III-1/2025-26/7   Dated Guwahati, the 30th June, 2025

The Commissioner of Excise, Assam invites **Request for Information (RFI)** from eligible firms for the production and supply of tamper-evident, high-security polyester holograms with QR code integration for liquor packaging in Assam.

This RFI is for information gathering only and will help design a future tender

Submission Instructions

- **Format:** Responses must be submitted in PDF format, not exceeding 20 pages, with clear section headings corresponding to Section 4.
- **Submission Method:** Submissions must be made via email only to procurementexciseassam@gmail.com with the subject line "RFI Response: No.III-1/2025-26/7 – [Company Name]". A copy of the submission must also be sent to the following email addresses:
    1. excomassam@gmail.com
    2. ex-compermit@assam.gov.in
- **Deadline:** Responses must be received by **July 10, 2025**, 11:59 PM IST. Late submissions will not be considered.
- **Clarifications:** Questions regarding this RFI may be submitted to procurementexciseassam@gmail.com by **July 4, 2025**.

The detailed RFI is available on the Excise Department website (https://excise.assam.gov.in/) & (https://stateexcise.assam.gov.in/)

For further details, visit the website or contact the undersigned.

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Sd/-

Commissioner of Excise,Assam

Housefed Complex, Dispur, Ghy-06

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Request for Information (RFI)

Production and Supply of Tamper-Evident, High-Security Polyester Holograms with QR Code Integration

RFI Number: III-1/2025-26/7   Dated 30th June 2025

Submission Deadline: 10th July 2025, 11:59 PM IST

Issuing Authority: Commissioner of Excise, Assam, Government of Assam

Contact Information:

- Address: Office of the Commissioner of Excise, HOUSEFED Complex, 3rd Floor, Dispur, Guwahati-6, Assam

- Email: procurementexciseassam@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The Commissioner of Excise, Assam, is exploring the procurement of tamper-evident, high-security polyester holograms with QR code integration for affixing on liquor, beer, wine bottles, cans, and tetra packs sold within Assam. These holograms are critical for ensuring product authenticity, preventing counterfeiting, and enabling traceability to support excise duty compliance. This Request for Information (RFI) aims to gather insights from potential suppliers to assist in developing comprehensive tender specifications, bidding conditions, and other contractual requirements for a forthcoming tender.

This RFI is not a tender or a Request for Bid (RFB). Responses to this RFI will not result in a contract award but will inform the development of the subsequent tender process.

2. Objectives of the RFI

The Excise Department seeks input from qualified vendors to:

i.   Identify advanced technologies and features for high-security holograms with QR code integration.

ii. Understand industry capabilities, including production capacity, delivery timelines, and quality assurance processes.

iii. Develop clear, fair, and competitive bidding conditions.

iv. Incorporate robust anti-counterfeiting and tamper-evident features to enhance security.

v.   Ensure compliance with regulatory and environmental standards, including the Assam Excise Rules (as amended).

3. Background

The Excise Department is responsible for regulating the sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages and ensuring compliance with excise duty regulations in Assam. High-security holograms with QR codes are essential for:

i.   Preventing counterfeiting and unauthorized duplication of labels.

ii.   Enabling real-time tracking and authentication of products via QR codes.

iii.   Reducing revenue losses due to under-declaration of sales by distilleries.

iv.   Enhancing consumer trust through verifiable product authenticity.

The current contract, includes specifications for polyester-based, tamper-evident holograms with QR codes. The department now seeks to refine these specifications based on latest technological advancements and industry feedback to issue a fresh tender.

4. Information Requested

The Excise Department invites potential suppliers to provide detailed responses to the following areas. Responses should be concise, specific, and supported by technical details where applicable.

4.1   Current Specifications (Baseline)

The following are the current specifications for the tamper-evident, high-security polyester holograms with QR codes, and revised technical specifications effective April 1, 2025, with proposed enhancements to the mirror effect. Respondents are encouraged to review these and propose further enhancements or alternatives to meet or exceed these standards:

a) Master Origination :

Technology: Dot-Matrix Holography with resolution up to 120,000 DPI, incorporating the following security features:

i.   Multi-level animated effect.

ii.   Pearl effect with 2-channel effect.

iii.   Raster text

iv.   2D and 3D images.

v.   Diffractive animated guilloche pattern.

vi.   Lens effect.

vii.   Microtext (30–60 microns).

viii. Concealed animated text.

ix. Expanding effect.

x. Four different CLR text at one point

xi. Modulated depth effect.

xii. Multiple animated CLR images.

xiii. Embossed effect.

xiv. Motion effect.

xv. Nanotext (10–15 microns).

xvi. Commissioner's signature in invisible ink.

xvii. 2D-3D depth effect.

xviii. Four-channel effect.

xix. Letter lens effect.

xx. Fresnel element with 3D effect.

b) **Non-Holographic Features** (Revised as of April 1, 2025, per Schedule 'C', with Proposed Mirror Effect Enhancements):

1**. Mirror Effect (New Generation):**

i. Pure mirror effect (without color) allowing clear reflection of the viewer's face.

ii. Includes mirrors in the shape of circles (4–5 mm diameter), triangles (6–7 mm per side), and potentially the Assam State map in running form (dimensions as per approved artwork, similar to other states' use of state map shapes in excise holograms).

iii. Minimum two alphabetical texts (1 mm height) inside each mirror shape.

iv. Microtext in the background between mirrors.

v. Proposed Enhancement: Fusion of mirror effect with hidden text on a color-changing background, where hidden text is visible only through a special Polaroid identifier film, enhancing security and robustness.

vi. Incorporated via transfer process, not lamination.

2. Taggant Effect:

i. Complete taggant effect (excluding mirror portion), verified by a special reader indicating authenticity with a blinking light (green/red for yes/no result).

ii. Taggant verification functional even if the polyester layer is peeled off or tampered with (on the metalized part).

3. Tamper-Evident Features:

    i.   Different color with UV text tampering.

    ii.   Serrated edges with security cuts ('T'-shaped at both ends) to ensure complete damage if peeled off or tampered with.

4. De-metalized Text/Image Effect:

    i.   Partially aluminum de-metalized effect as per approved artwork.

5. Hidden Text/Images on Color-Changing Background:

    i.   Stripe design (minimum 6 mm x 15 mm) transferred (not laminated) with visual holographic designs on the top layer and hidden texts/images on the second layer.

    ii.   Hidden color changes every 45° angle, visible only with a special Polaroid identifier.

6. True Single Stable Color or Interchangeable Single Colors:

    i.   Visible at all angles without color change through reflection, or interchangeable colors (e.g., red to blue) clearly visible to the naked eye.

7. 2D Barcode/QR Code:

    i.   Integrated into the hologram for tracking via the Electronic Supply Chain Management System (ECMS).

    ii.   Encodes a unique ID linking to a database with customizable data fields (alphanumeric or image-based).

    iii.   Data includes (for consumption in Assam): Brand name, brand owner details, registered address, measure (liters/ml), strength, content description, MRP, distiller/brewer/bottler details, manufacturing date, batch number, legend "Assam Excise," expiry date (for beer), "For sale in Assam only," health caution, and specific markings for defense personnel or imports/exports.

    iv.   Readable by CCDs or imaging cameras per ISO/IEC 16022 standards, with 256 grayscale levels for low-contrast symbols.

    v.   Supports carton and permit tracking by mapping bottle QR codes to carton labels and transport passes.

8. Numbering:

    i.   Both inkjet-printed and laser-etched numbering for serial/coding purposes.

9. Chemical Etching:

    i.   Incorporated as an additional security feature.

c. Product Specifications (per Schedule 'A'):

i. Shape and Size: 65 mm (length) x 15 mm (width).

ii. Type: Tamper-evident on metalized polyester film (ultra-clear EMCL grade, 2.00 optical density), affixed on bottle cap and partly on the neck of glass/PET bottles.

iii. Color: Specific colors as decided by the department.

iv. Thickness: 30–35 microns (±10%).

v. Material: Tamper-evident metalized polyester film, suitable for automatic mechanical applicators and all weather conditions.

vi. Other Features:

1. All features (except laser-viewable animated covert images, raster text, hidden text/images, microtext, and other covert features) visible to the naked eye.

2. Serrated edges all around.

3. Unaffected by normal atmospheric variations, with a minimum shelf life of three years without deformation or deterioration.

4. Security cuts ('T'-shaped) at both ends to ensure complete damage upon tampering.

vii. Packaging:

1. Supplied in spools of 10,000 holograms, with three spools per sealed corrugated carton.

2. Each spool labeled with spool number on the core and opening end.

3. Gaps: 3.0 ± 0.50 mm horizontally and 1.5 ± 0.75 mm vertically between holograms for automatic application.

d. Additional Requirements:

i. Manufacturing: In-house facilities for master origination and intermediate processes within Kamrup (Metropolitan) district, Assam, with remote monitoring via internet and CCTV footage preserved for one year.

ii. Artwork: Revised artwork indicating the position of each security feature, including the new generation mirror effect, to be submitted for approval by the Commissioner of Excise before production.

iii. Compliance: Meets International Hologram Manufacturers Association (IHMA) standards and Assam Excise Rules, 2016 (as amended).

iv. Support Equipment:

1. Supply of 100 taggant readers for authenticity verification.
2. Supply of 2,650 pieces of 2x2 inch and 100 pieces of 6x6 inch polarized film for hidden feature verification, including the enhanced mirror effect.
3. Supply of 200 QR code handheld scanners for enforcement teams.

Respondents should propose enhancements to these specifications, focusing on latest advanced technologies, improved security (e.g., further refinements to the new generation mirror effect), cost-effective alternatives, or additional features (e.g., blockchain integration, RFID).

4.2 Technical Specifications for Holograms

Please provide recommendations and details on:

i. Materials: Suitable substrates (e.g., polyester, other polymers) for durability, tamper-evidence, and environmental resistance.

ii. Security Features:
   1. Overt features (e.g., advanced holographic effects, color-shifting inks).
   2. Covert features (e.g., enhanced microtext, UV inks, forensic markers).
   3. Tamper-evident mechanisms (e.g., advanced "VOID" patterns, residue upon removal).

iii. QR Code Integration:
   1. Capabilities for unique, serialized QR codes with enhanced encryption.
   2. Compatibility with Assam's Electronic Supply Chain Management System (ECMS).
   3. Data security measures to prevent duplication.

iv. Durability: Resistance to environmental factors (e.g., moisture, heat, UV exposure) and adhesion strength on various surfaces (glass, plastic, metal).

v. Customization: Options for incorporating logos, serial numbers, barcodes, or other branding elements, including the Assam State map in the mirror effect.

vi. Production Capacity: Maximum volume of holograms that can be produced and delivered monthly.

4.3 Manufacturing and Quality Assurance

i. Production Processes: Outline manufacturing capabilities, including equipment, technology (e.g., E-beam, laser ablation), and scalability.

ii.   Quality Control: Describe quality assurance protocols, including testing for durability, tamper-evidence, QR code functionality, and the new generation mirror effect.

iii. Certifications: Provide details of relevant certifications (e.g., ISO 9001, IHMA registration).

iv.   Anti-Counterfeiting Measures: Processes to ensure holograms cannot be replicated or reused.

4.4 Bidding Conditions

i.   Eligibility Criteria: Suggest eligibility requirements for bidders (e.g., experience in hologram production, financial stability, past performance).

ii. Submission Requirements: Recommend documents or information bidders should provide (e.g., technical proposals, sample holograms with the new generation mirror effect, proof of authorization).

iii. Evaluation Criteria: Propose criteria for evaluating bids (e.g., technical compliance, cost, delivery timelines, innovation in security features like the mirror effect).

iv. Contract Terms: Suggest key contract terms, such as delivery schedules, payment terms, and penalties for non-compliance.

4.5 Delivery and Implementation

i.   Delivery Timelines: Estimated timelines for production and delivery of large-scale hologram orders (e.g., 10 million units).

ii. Packaging: Recommendations for secure packaging and transportation to prevent damage or theft.

iii. Integration with Excise Systems: Suggestions for integrating QR codes with the department's ECMS for tracking and reporting.

iv. Training and Support: Availability of training for excise staff on hologram application, QR code verification, and use of Polaroid identifiers for the new generation mirror effect.

4.6 Cost Considerations

i.   Cost Drivers: Identify key factors affecting the cost of hologram production (e.g., materials, advanced security features like the new generation mirror effect, volume).

ii. Handling Fee: A handling fee of Rs. 0.10 per hologram will be charged, which is submitted to the government exchequer as per the Assam Excise Rules (as

amended). Respondents should provide transparency on how it will be managed.

iii. Cost Optimization: Suggest ways to balance cost with high-security requirements (e.g., standard vs. custom features) while incorporating the handling fee.

iv. Sample Pricing: Provide indicative pricing for tamper-evident holograms with QR codes and the new generation mirror effect (per 1,000 units), inclusive of the handling fee and applicable taxes (e.g., GST), based on varying levels of security features.

4.7 Regulatory and Environmental Compliance

i. Regulatory Standards: Compliance with local and international standards for security labels (e.g., ISO, IHMA) and the Assam Excise Rules, 2016 (as amended), including provisions for the handling fee submission to the government exchequer.

ii. Environmental Impact: Use of eco-friendly materials or processes to minimize environmental footprint.

iii. Legal Compliance: Measures to prevent unauthorized production or counterfeiting, including cooperation with law enforcement, in accordance with the Assam Excise Rules (as amended).

4.8 Additional Suggestions

i. Provide innovative ideas or emerging technologies that could enhance the security or functionality of holograms, particularly complementing the new generation mirror effect.

ii. Share case studies or examples of similar projects successfully implemented for other government or excise departments, especially those using Gui state-specific features like map-shaped mirror effects or handling fee structures.

5. Submission Instructions

i. Format: Responses must be submitted in PDF format, not exceeding 20 pages, with clear section headings corresponding to Section 4.

ii. Submission Method: Submissions must be made via email only to procurementexciseassam@gmail.com with the subject line "RFI Response: III-1/2025-26/7 – [Company Name]". A copy of the submission must also be sent to the following email addresses:

1. excomassam@gmail.com

      2. ex-compermit@assam.gov.in

iii.   Deadline: Responses must be received by July 10, 2025, 11:59 PM IST. Late submissions will not be considered.

iv.   Clarifications: Questions regarding this RFI may be submitted to procurementexciseassam@gmail.com by July 4, 2025. Responses to questions will be shared in the Excise Department website with all participants to ensure fairness.

v.   Confidentiality: All information provided in response to this RFI will be treated as confidential and used solely for the purpose of developing the tender.

6. General Information

i.   Non-Binding: This RFI does not commit the Excise Department to issue a tender or award a contract.

ii.   No Compensation: Respondents will not be compensated for costs incurred in preparing or submitting responses.

iii.   Future Tender: Information gathered through this RFI will inform the development of a formal Request for Bid (RFB) or tender.

iv.   Eligibility: All interested parties, including manufacturers, suppliers, and technology providers, are encouraged to respond.

7. Next Steps

The Excise Department will review all submissions and may invite select respondents for discussions or presentations to clarify their proposals. A formal RFB or tender is expected to be issued by mid-July 2025.

Sd/-

Commissioner of Excise, Assam

Housefed Complex, Guwahati-06