

RFI 03 /2025: Request for Information for Implementation of AI-Driven Digital Twinning (Cognitive Decision Automation) Solutions

Communication #2

Date of Issue: 07 July 2025

Questions and Answers:

No	Question	Answer
1.	Kindly advise if a non-submission of the RFI will lead to bidders not being invited to the RFP or if the RFP (once advertised) will be open to all service providers?	RFP will be open to all service providers
2.	A request an extension of the deadline from 4 July to 18 July 2025.	The extension granted. The new closing date is 18 th July 2025

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3.	<p>We kindly request clarification on the estimated number of users (including administrative, supervisory, and technical users) that will interact with the solution during the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of Concept (PoC) phase • Pilot implementation, and • Full-scale deployment. 	<p>At this stage, SARS is conducting a market engagement exercise and has not yet defined the number of users. Exact user counts and processing volumes will be finalized during the RFP and/or planning stages of the PoC and subsequent phases. However, during the PoC phase, the solution is expected to be used by a small, focused group, primarily comprising technical project team members and administrative officers and a defined number of cases will be processed.</p> <p>For indicative estimates, solution providers may use their own indicative pricing based on their pricing/licensing model. (Infrastructure, users and processing volumes).</p>
4.	<p>Can SARS provide a process map or detailed SOP for the initial administrative decision-making use case to be automated?</p>	<p>At this stage, SARS is conducting a market engagement exercise and will provide detailed process documentation during the PoC scoping phase to shortlisted solution providers. Broadly, the process involves intake of submissions with supporting documents, manual review and validation, historical taxpayer context checks, and decision outcomes.</p>

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5.	What are the expected formats and sources of structured and unstructured data (e.g., PDFs, scanned documents, SAP systems, emails)?	The data inputs typically include structured data from transactional systems and unstructured or semi-structured data such as PDFs, scanned forms, and free-text reasons provided by taxpayers. This data originates from channels like eFiling.
6.	Will SARS provide annotated training data for initial model development?	SARS anticipate making available a limited set of historical cases and/or explore models that do not heavily enquire historical data for training. However, the extent of required training data, annotation or labelling will be defined collaboratively with the selected solution providers during the design phase of the PoC.
7.	Are there predefined business rules, ontologies, or taxonomies that guide current decision logic, or is all decision-making based on historical human interpretation?	Broadly, the process involves intake of submissions with supporting documents, manual review and validation against documented policy, historical taxpayer context checks, and decision outcome.
8.	Which specific SARS systems or platforms must the solution integrate with (e.g., eFiling, backend case management, SAP, custom databases)?	Integration requirements will be provided at the RFP phase. Generally, integration may involve SARS' eFiling platform for case intake, internal case management systems for decision recording and workflows, and other systems.
9.	What languages are expected to be processed in the NLP pipeline (e.g., English only, or also Afrikaans, isiZulu, etc.)?	At this stage, the primary language for processing is English.

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10.	Does SARS have a preferred framework or standard (e.g., XAI methods, SHAP, LIME) for model explainability and audit trails?	SARS requires that AI decisions be explainable and traceable to support audit, compliance, and dispute resolution. While there is no mandated framework at this stage, providers should demonstrate support for industry-standard explainability techniques and be prepared to incorporate SARS' specific audit requirements.
11.	At what stages must human reviewers intervene or approve decisions, and what interfaces or workflows are expected to support HITL?	Human-in-the-loop (HITL) intervention is anticipated for cases flagged by confidence thresholds or exception rules. The specifics, including thresholds and escalation workflows, will be determined collaboratively during the PoC. The solution should support configurable workflows and interfaces for SARS administrative officials to review, override, or approve automated decisions.
12.	Are there specific regulatory frameworks or certifications the solution must adhere to (e.g., POPIA, ISO 27001, Government Cloud Standards)?	Compliance with SARS internal security and governance frameworks is required. Requirements for specific security standards and regulatory frameworks will be discussed and provided during subsequent phases.
13.	Does SARS require on-premises deployment, private cloud, or is a secure hybrid model acceptable?	SARS has not yet defined the deployment model at this stage of the RFI, and we are exploring different deployment models. Solution providers should indicate deployment flexibility of their proposed solution.
14.	Can SARS outline anticipated future business processes for automation post-pilot, to better align the architecture with long-term scalability?	While the initial PoC will focus on a specific administrative decision process, SARS envisages extending cognitive decision automation to other

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		processes across its operations. More details will be shared during subsequent phases.
15.	What timelines and evaluation criteria can providers prepare for after the RFI for the RFPs?	SARS anticipates issuing a formal RFP following internal governance and market analysis, with timelines and evaluation criteria provided in that process. Providers should be prepared for an evaluation that balances technical capability, data security, implementation approach, references, innovation, and commercial value.