

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

(PRE-MARKET CONSULTATION)

SARS RFI 05/2025

A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FOR NETWORK CARRIER AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

RFI MAIN DOCUMENT

SUMMARY, GUIDELINES, INSTRUCTIONS AND CONDITIONS

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1 PREAMBLE

The South African Revenue Service ("SARS") invites interested persons ("Respondents/ Industry market player") to submit information/contributions on the SARS Main RFP document, Technical Specifications, Evaluation Criteria and Pricing Template in accordance with the rules set out in this RFI for Network Carrier and Infrastructure Services (known as Tower DVC)

2 INTERPRETATION AND DEFINITIONS

2.1 Interpretation

2.1.1 This RFI is a solicitation sent to a broad base of potential bidders for purposes of conditioning and of gathering information/contributions, and **not** to make a selection or an award. The information collected in this fashion will not be used to lead to sourcing from one supplier only *nor* will it be used to write the ultimate specification in a manner that would suite just one specific supplier.

2.1.2 This RFI is merely focused to proactively engage and consult for the purpose of market research and is **not a competitive bid** and **cannot** be used for placing a contract or purchase order and does not constitute a commitment.

2.1.3 Respondents are advised that the objective of this RFI process is **not** to seek proposals for new infrastructure technology. The intent of this market consultation is not to solicit or consider proposals to change, overhaul, or substitute the established IT architecture, but rather to refine and optimize the tender documents to enhance clarity, practicality, and competitive fairness within the boundaries of the current IT ecosystem.

2.1.4 SARS aim to invite the market to refine and provide inputs on the current draft RFP documents, including the pricing templates and evaluation criteria. Respondents are requested to submit their contributions and feedback strictly within the scope as specified in the SARS RFI 05-2025 2-1 Business Requirement Specifications. Submissions and/or recommendations should be made using the Recommendation Response Templates provided in the RFI Pack.

2.1.4.1 if the word or expression is technical in nature, such word or expression will have its generally understood meaning in the Information Communication and Technology (ICT) industries; or

2.1.4.2 if the word or expression is not technical in nature, then it will have its generally understood meaning.

- 2.1.5 In any document in the RFI Pack, an underlined and italicised word or expression is a reference to a document in the RFI Pack. The reference can be resolved to the full document filename in Table 3: RFI Pack Contents in paragraph 3.1 below (RFI Pack Contents).
- 2.1.6 Within a document in the RFI Pack, a reference to a paragraph number is a reference to a paragraph within the document in which it appears. If the reference to a paragraph number is followed by a document name, the reference is to that paragraph number in the document so named.
- 2.1.7 In this document, a reference to:
- 2.1.7.1 persons or entities, includes a reference to natural persons, any association, body corporate, trust, partnership, organization or other entity including their respective successors and/or assigns.
 - 2.1.7.2 the singular includes the plural and *vice versa*, unless the context otherwise requires; and
 - 2.1.7.3 the words "**include**" and "**including**" mean "**include without limitation**" and "**including without limitation**". The use of the words "**includes**" and "**including**" followed by a specific example or examples will not be construed as limiting the meaning of the general wording preceding it.

2.2 Definitions (Glossary table)

Table 1: Glossary

Description	Meaning
Respondent	means an interested person who submits information for this RFI.
Pre-market consultation	<p>means a process to engage the market with main RFP pack to allow the market to engage with the contents, to provide inputs, clarification questions and contributions prior to the official tender.</p> <p>The intent is to allow for clarifications process prior to the tender publication to limit the number of erratum once the tender is fully advertised.</p>
B-BBEE	means Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment.
RFI	means this Request for Information.

Description	Meaning
RFI Pack	means the collection of documents making up this RFI as listed in Table 3: RFI Pack Contents in paragraph 3.1 below.
Information Proposal	means a response submitted by a Respondent to this RFI.
OEM	Original Equipment Manufacturer
Closing Date and Time	means the date set forth in the Table 4: Key Dates and Activities in Table 4 below.

3 STRUCTURE OF THE RFI PACK

This RFI Pack is organised into **5 (five) sections** consisting of one or more documents in each section.

3.1 RFI Pack Contents

Table 3: RFI Pack Contents

Section	Document name	Document file name
1	RFI Invitation Letter	SARS RFI 05-2025 1-0 Invitation Letter
	RFP Main Document	SARS RFI 05-2025 1-1 Main Document
2	Business Requirements Specification	DRAFT - SARS RFI 05-2025 2-1 Business Requirement Specifications
	SARS Site Classifications	SARS RFI 05-2025 2-2 SARS Site Classifications
	WAN Diagram	SARS RFI 05-2025 2-3 WAN Diagram
	WAN Inventory	SARS RFI 05-2025 2-4 WAN Inventory
	SDWAN Diagram	SARS RFI 05-2025 2-5 SDWAN Diagram
3	Tower D Recommendation Response Template	SARS RFI 05-2025 3-1 Tower D Recommendation Response Template
	Tower V Recommendation Response Template	SARS RFI 05-2025 3-2 Tower V Recommendation Response Template

Section	Document name	Document file name
	Tower C Recommendation Response Template	SARS RFI 05-2025 3-3 Tower C Recommendation Response Template
4	Tower D Mandatory and Technical Evaluation Criteria	DRAFT - SARS RFI 05-2025 4-1 Tower D Mandatory and Technical Evaluation Criteria
	Tower V Mandatory and Technical Evaluation Criteria	DRAFT - SARS RFI 05-2025 4-2 Tower V Mandatory and Technical Evaluation Criteria
	Tower C Mandatory and Technical Evaluation Criteria	DRAFT - SARS RFI 05-2025 4-3 Tower C Mandatory and Technical Evaluation Criteria
5	Tower D Pricing Response Template	DRAFT - SARS RFI 05-2025 5-1-D Tower D Pricing Response Template
	Tower V Pricing Response Template	DRAFT - SARS RFI 05-2025 5-2-V Tower V Pricing Response Template
	Tower C Pricing Response Template	DRAFT - SARS RFI 05-2025 5-3-C Tower C Pricing Response Template Category A

4 KEY DATES AND ACTIVITIES

The table below lists certain key dates and activities relevant from time of issuance of the RFI up to and until the Closing Date and Time

Table 4: Key Dates and Activities

No	Description	Start Date/Time	End Date/Time
1.	RFI is published on e-Tender	19 September 2025	
2.	RFI issued on SARS website	19 September 2025	
3.	Non- Compulsory Briefing Session	<p>The Non - Compulsory Virtual Briefing Session will take place on:</p> <p>29 September 2025 At 10:00 AM</p> <p>Via The Following Link:</p>	<p>29 September 2025 at 13:00 PM</p>

No	Description	Start Date/Time	End Date/Time
		Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 381 359 954 255 1 Passcode: Tp3Wj7Cg	
4.	Respondent to submit written questions	19 September 2025	02 October 2025
5.	SARS posts answers to Respondent's questions on the SARS website	22 September 2025	03 October 2025
6.	Information Proposal due (the "Closing Date and Time")	06 October 2025 at 11h00 AM	

All times and dates in this RFI are South African Standard Time.

Any time or date in this RFI is subject to change at SARS's discretion. The establishment of a time or date in this RFI does not create an obligation on the part of SARS to take any action or create any right in any way for any Respondent to demand that any action be taken on the date established, or on any other date. The Respondent accepts that if SARS extends the Closing Date and Time for RFI submission for any reason, the requirements of this RFI will otherwise apply equally to the extended timeline.

5 CONTACT PERSONS

All communication to SARS must be emailed to:

Email: tenderoffice@sars.gov.za

Communication sent by SARS must only be regarded as official communication if sent from tenderoffice@sars.gov.za or a communication accompanied by a letter of authorisation signed by the SARS Acting Business Area Head: Acquisition.

A respondent may not send any communication to SARS regarding this RFI other than through the official contact provided in this document. SARS may, at its sole discretion, disqualify a respondent if the respondent communicates or attempts to communicate any information regarding this RFI to any of SARS employees; officials; or any third parties

involved other than through the official contact provided.

6 OVERVIEW OF SARS'S REQUIREMENTS

6.1 Introduction

SARS's mandate under the South African Revenue Service Act, 1997 (Act No 34 of 1997), includes the collection of all revenues that are due, ensuring maximum compliance with revenue legislation and providing a customs service that will maximise revenue collection, facilitate trade and protect the borders of South Africa. SARS's vision is to be an innovative revenue and customs agency that enhances economic growth and social development and supports South Africa's integration into the global economy in a way that benefits all citizens. SARS strives to exercise its mandate in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

6.1.1 In the ever-changing environment of information technology procurement, the foundation for success rests not only upon the clarity and precision of tender documentation but also on the inclusiveness and quality of stakeholder engagement. SARS has recognised the importance of collaborative consultation and industry insight; we therefore extend an invitation for Pre-market consultation to qualifying suppliers in the market.

6.1.2 The initiative seeks to consult the market in an open, transparent, and constructive process aimed at enhancing the SARS' draft tender documents for Network Carrier and Infrastructure Services (also known as Tower DVC) with the express intention of maintaining the continuity and stability of the existing SARS IT architecture landscape as defined in the **SARS RFI 05-2025 2-1 Business Requirement Specification**.

6.2 Background

6.2.1 SARS is preparing to issue an RFP for Network Carrier and Infrastructure Services (also known as Tower DVC) and the organisation is committed to ensure that the requirements outlined in the tender documents reflect not only SARS' strategic objectives but also industry best practices, technical feasibility, and market realities. The draft tender documents represent a working baseline open to constructive feedback and expert recommendations from industry market.

6.2.2 It is important to note that the SARS core IT architecture landscape supporting Network Carrier and Infrastructure Services (also known as Tower DVC) is foundational to the organisation's operations and will remain unchanged as part of this process. The intent of this market consultation is not to solicit or consider proposals to change, overhaul, or substitute the established IT architecture, but

rather to refine and optimize the tender documents to enhance clarity, practicality, and competitive fairness within the boundaries of the current IT ecosystem.

- 6.2.3 Innovation and Creativity: This process will enable industry market player to provide insights into innovative solutions, and best practices.

6.3 Objectives of the Market Consultation

The purpose of the market consultations is to achieve the following objectives:

- 6.3.1 To engage supplier market in a procedural discussion, harnessing practical experience and technical insight to improve the draft tender documents.
- 6.3.2 To identify ambiguities, risks, or limitations in the draft documents that could deter fair competition or the achievement of project objectives.
- 6.3.3 To ensure that the business requirement specification, mandatory and technical requirements and pricing templates align with industry capabilities and standards without necessitating changes to the existing IT architecture.
- 6.3.4 To foster transparency and mutual understanding between SARS and potential market players, thereby promoting competition and value for money.

6.4 Scope of Market Consultation

The scope of this this RFI and the planned non-compulsory briefing session is strictly limited to the structured information, and expression of the draft tender documents. Participants are invited to review and provide input on areas such as:

- 6.4.1 DRAFT Business Requirements Specification, as they relate to the existing SARS IT architecture interfaces, integrations;
- 6.4.2 DRAFT Pricing Templates;
- 6.4.3 DRAFT Mandatory and Technical Evaluation criteria;
- 6.4.4 Any other aspect of the draft tender documentation that may benefit from clarification, improvement, or alignment with market best practices.
- 6.4.5 Participants are expressly requested not to propose or advocate for changes to the underlying SARS IT architecture, platforms, or infrastructure supporting Network Carrier and Infrastructure

Services.

6.5 Participation and Submission Guidelines

All interested suppliers with relevant expertise are encouraged to express their interest in participating in this market consultation. The process is open to established firms, consortia, independent consultants, and other qualified entities who can demonstrate a track record in similar engagements.

To participate, submit recommendations using the below mentioned response templates for each Tower:

- 6.5.1 For Tower D (Data Carrier Services): Suppliers are requested to provide their recommendations or inputs using the template included in the RFI tender pack: **SARS RFI 05-2025 3-1 Tower D Recommendation Response Template.**
- 6.5.2 For Tower V (Voice Carrier Services): Suppliers are requested to provide their recommendations or inputs using the template included in the RFI tender pack: **SARS RFI 05-2025 3-2 Tower V Recommendation Response Template.**
- 6.5.3 For Tower C (Unified Communication Services): Suppliers are requested to provide their recommendations or inputs using the template included in the RFI tender pack: **SARS RFI 05-2025 3-3 Tower C Recommendation Response Template**

6.6 Consultation Process Overview

After reviewing expressions of interest submissions through the RFI, selected participants may be invited to engage in a series of consultation activities, which may include workshops and written feedback sessions. All interactions will be governed by principles of transparency, equal opportunity, and confidentiality.

The outputs of the consultation will be reviewed and, where appropriate, incorporated into the final tender documents.

6.7 Benefits of Participation

- 6.7.1 Opportunity to make inputs on the quality and clarity of the tender documents;
- 6.7.2 Early insight into project requirements and

strategic direction, supporting informed future tender documents;

- 6.7.3 Contribution to the advancement of best practice in the SARS procurement processes and market engagement.
- 6.7.4 Opportunity to contribute to the tender documents that is fair, free from bias, clear, transparent and competitive.

6.8 Assurance of IT Architecture Stability

It is important to reiterate that while we value innovation and strategic input, the parameters of this market consultation are firmly set to safeguard the existing SARS IT architecture. This is to ensure operational continuity, mitigate risk, and respect ongoing investments and dependencies. Proposals that suggest changes to the SARS IT architecture such as migrations, replacement, or introduction of new core systems will **not be considered**.

6.9 SARS's Requirements

- 6.9.1 Details of the required information are contained in the Business Requirements document.
- 6.9.2 This RFI is a solicitation sent to a broad base of potential suppliers for purposes of conditioning and of gathering information, and **not to make a selection or an award**. The information collected in this fashion will **not be used to lead to sourcing from one supplier only nor will it be used to write the ultimate specification in a manner that would suit just one specific supplier**.
- 6.9.3 This RFI is merely focused on market research and not a competitive bid and cannot be used for placing a contract or purchase order and does not constitute a commitment.

7 RESPONSE PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

7.1 Question and Answer Process

- 7.1.1 Between the dates given in item 4 of Table 4: Key Dates and Activities above, SARS will receive questions sent by Respondent by email to the address tenderoffice@sars.gov.za SARS will respond to these questions, provided that SARS will not be obliged to respond to a question should it choose not to do so. The identity of a Respondent who has directed a question to SARS will not be disclosed by SARS in such responses. The questions and answers will be published on the SARS procurement website at <http://www.sars.gov.za/procurement>.
- 7.1.2 SARS may issue updated versions of documents

issued in the RFI Pack and/or may issue additional documentation to form part of the RFI Pack. Such re-issued or additional documentation will be published on the SARS procurement website. It is the Respondent's responsibility to visit the SARS procurement website at regular intervals in order to ensure that the Respondent uses the latest versions of documents in the RFI Pack.

- 7.1.3 Depending on SARS's assessment of the nature and extent of Respondent's questions during the question-and-answer process, SARS may schedule non-compulsory briefing sessions.
- 7.1.4 The SARS's procurement website must be treated as primary means of communication by SARS to Respondent. Communications to Respondent made by email are made as a courtesy. In the event of any communication received by the Respondent that is in conflict with communications posted on the SARS procurement website, the SARS procurement website communication will prevail.

7.2 Site Inspections

Although SARS does not envisage that any inspections of SARS's Sites will be required, SARS reserves the right to schedule either optional or compulsory site inspections should it become apparent to SARS that it is necessary for prospective Respondent to gain an understanding of the RFI specification.

7.3 INFORMATION PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

- 7.3.1 Information Proposal must be properly submitted to SARS Tender office email address tenderoffice@sars.gov.za.
- 7.3.2 Documents will only be considered if received by the Tender Office before the Closing Date and time, regardless of the method used to send or deliver such documents to SARS.
- 7.3.3 Information Proposal submitted after the Closing Date and Time set out in the Table 4: Key Dates and Activities above will not be considered under any circumstances whatsoever.
- 7.3.4 All Information Proposal documents must be submitted via email in the document formats specified in paragraph 10 below.
- 7.3.5 All Information Proposal and supporting documentation must be submitted in English.
- 7.3.6 SARS reserves the right to retain the Respondent's Information Proposal for audit purposes. SARS will return the Respondent's Information Proposal only upon written request being made to SARS and on condition that SARS, at its own cost, will be allowed to make the necessary copies of the Respondent's Information Proposal for record

purposes.

- 7.3.7 All costs incurred during the preparation and compilation of a Respondent's Information Proposal, as well as the delivery of a Respondent's Information Proposal documents to SARS will be borne exclusively by the Respondent.

8 EVALUATION AND SELECTION

8.1 Process after the Closing Date and Time

After the Closing Date and Time:

- 8.1.1 SARS may request additional information, clarification or verification in respect of any information contained in or omitted from a Respondent's Information Proposal, which SARS may do either in writing or at a meeting convened with the Respondent for that purpose. Only under exceptional circumstances and in line with applicable legislation, SARS may, at its sole discretion, allow the Respondent to make any amendments to or supplement their Information Proposal submissions after the stipulated Closing Date and Time.
- 8.1.2 SARS will evaluate the Information Proposal with reference to the business requirements.
- 8.1.3 SARS reserves the right to employ subject matter experts to assist in performing such evaluations.
- 8.1.4 SARS may request additional information, clarification, or verification in respect of any information contained in or omitted from a Respondents information proposal, which SARS may do either in writing or at a meeting convened with the Respondent for that purpose.
- 8.1.5 SARS may require respondents that submit adequate information to perform a demonstration of the solution.
- 8.1.6 SARS may also visit respondents reference sites as part of its information gathering and exploration phase.

8.2 Process Following Evaluation

- 8.2.1 Following SARS's evaluation of the Information Proposal, SARS has the rights, *inter alia*, to, in its sole discretion, may consider the Information for the preparing of a Tender or Request for Proposal, based on the Information Proposal received.

9 GENERAL CONDITIONS OF RFI

9.1 Acceptance of RFI Conditions

- 9.1.1 The Respondent's participation in the RFI process is deemed to constitute an acknowledgement and an acceptance by the Respondent of the terms and conditions contained in this RFI as binding on the Respondent.

9.2 Validity of Information

- 9.2.1 SARS has made reasonable efforts to ensure the accuracy of information in compiling this RFI. However, neither SARS, nor its employees, officers, advisers or agents will be liable (directly or otherwise) to the Respondent or any third party for any inaccuracy or omission of any information in the RFI or in respect of any other additional information SARS may provide to the Respondent as part of the RFI process.
- 9.2.2 The Respondent is deemed to have examined this RFI and any other information supplied by SARS to the Respondent and to have satisfied itself as to the correctness and sufficiency of such information before submitting its Information Proposal.
- 9.2.3 The Respondent must submit questions to SARS as part of the question-and-answer process to gain a full understanding of any aspect of the RFI that is not clear to the Respondent.

9.3 RFI not an Offer

- 9.3.1 This RFI **does not constitute an offer** to do business with SARS but merely serves to facilitate a requirements-based decision process.
- 9.3.2 Nothing in this RFI or any other communication made between SARS (including its officers, directors, employees, advisers and representatives) is a representation that SARS will offer, award or enter into an agreement with the Respondent.

9.4 Preparation Costs

- 9.4.1 The Respondent will bear all its costs in preparing, submitting and presenting any response or Information Proposal to this RFI and all other costs incurred by it throughout the RFI process. Furthermore, no statement in this RFI will be construed as placing SARS, its employees or agents under any obligation whatsoever, including in respect of costs, expenses or losses incurred by the Respondent in the preparation of their Information Proposal to this RFI.

9.5 Confidentiality

- 9.5.1 Except as may be required by operation of law, by a court or by a regulatory authority having appropriate jurisdiction, information contained in or relating to this RFI or a Respondent's Information Proposal(s) may not be disclosed by any Respondent to a person other than a person officially involved with SARS's examination and evaluation of an Information Proposal.
- 9.5.2 Throughout this RFI process and thereafter, the Respondent must secure SARS's written approval prior to the release of any information that pertains to: (i) the potential work or activities to which this RFI relates; or (ii) the process which follows this RFI. Failure to adhere to this requirement may result in disqualification from the RFI process and such legal action as SARS may deem suitable.
- 9.5.3 No confidential information relating to the process of evaluating Information Proposal will be disclosed to a Respondent or any other person not officially involved with such process.

9.6 Communication with SARS

- 9.6.1 The Respondent may not make any communication to SARS regarding this RFI other than through the official contact provided in paragraph 6 above. SARS may, at its sole discretion, disqualify the Respondent if the Respondent communicates or attempts to communicate any information regarding this RFI to any of SARS's employees; officials; or any third parties engaged by SARS involved in the preparation, evaluation or award of the RFI other than through the official contact provided in paragraph 5 above.

9.7 Intellectual Property

- 9.7.1 SARS retains ownership of all intellectual property rights in the documents that form part of this RFI. The Respondent will retain the intellectual property rights in their Information Proposal, but grant SARS the right to make copies of, alter, modify or adapt their Information Proposal or to do anything which in SARS sole discretion is reasonably necessary to do for reasons relating to the RFI process.
- 9.7.2 No part of the RFI may be distributed, reproduced, stored or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, photocopying, recording or otherwise, in whole or in part except for the purpose of preparing an Information Proposal. This RFI and any other documents supplied by SARS remain proprietary to SARS and must be promptly returned to SARS upon request together with all copies, electronic versions, excerpts or summaries thereof or work derived therefrom.

9.8 Limitation of Liability

- 9.8.1 A Respondent participates in this RFI process

entirely at its own risk and cost. SARS will not be liable to compensate a Respondent on any grounds whatsoever for any costs incurred or any damages suffered as a result of the Respondent's participation in this RFI process.

10 INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A RESPONSE TO THIS RFI

This paragraph details the instructions to the Respondent for preparing an Information Proposal in response to this RFI. These instructions must be followed in detail to enable the information contained in the Respondent's Information Proposal to be read, understood and evaluated in a common and consistent layout.

10.1 Information Proposal Format

10.1.1 The Respondent's Information Proposal will consist of only the electronic submission via tender office email address.