

## **RFP 02/2024: NETWORK CARRIER AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES**

### **Communication #2**

**Date of Issue: 19 June 2024**

#### **1. Answers to questions posed by Bidders.**

These questions and answers as well as issued / reissued documents referred to in this document can be found on SARS's website at [www.sars.gov.za](http://www.sars.gov.za).

#### **Question and Answer**

No	Question	Answer
1.	Should we update the certificate for the compulsory briefing session with our details? If so, does it still retain its original status?	Yes, bidders are required to update their details on both the compulsory briefing session certificate and the price templates workshop session certificates.  NB: Bidder must submit both certificates as part of their mandatory responses, at the time when they submit their bid proposals (in common file under mandatory requirements).
2.	Tower D  On section 6.2 (Current Delivery Model) within Business Requirement Specifications document, the document state that the Customer Provisioning Portal is currently being used in the environment, does the current Customer Provisioning Portal provides all the services that specified on section 6.4.5 (Network Services Portal) and section 6.4.6 (Customer Provisioning Portal)? Or is the service provider expected	The existing Provisioning Portal only caters for the current requirements within Tower D.  There are a lot of new services and functionalities required as stipulated in 6.4.5 and 6.4.6 that SARS require from the Service Provider. It will be beneficial if the Service

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	build such customised services for SARS or is SARS expecting service provider to already have such service offerings?	Provider already have a similar platform and then develop specific services, based on SARS's requirements during the Transition period.
3.	<p>Tower D</p> <p>The requirement for Service Portal can only be met by the bidder that already in the SARS environment. The requirement seems to be excluding every other bidder except the one that may be an incumbent in the SARS environment at this stage. If the service provider does not have Services Portal at the current stage will SARS allow the service provider to build the required service portal during the contract term to meet SARS requirements?</p>	<p>The existing Provisioning Portal only caters for the current requirements within Tower D.</p> <p>There are a lot of new services and functionalities required as stipulated in 6.4.5 and 6.4.6 that SARS require from the Service Provider. It will be beneficial if the Service Provider already have a similar platform and then develop specific services, based on SARS's requirements during the Transition period</p>
4.	<p>Tower D</p> <p>We require an extension to be provided for this RFP response, one for the main is that we need GPS Coordinates and addresses for all the sites including the datacentres, SITA DR. The absence of this mention we unable to do any access infrastructure feasibility checks that will inform us on how price for the access component for the solution.</p>	SARS has updated the outstanding GPS Coordinates; all sites have been provided accordingly.
5.	<p>Tower D</p> <p>With regards to the WAN Inventory document section TD.3 states that 3rd Party Links are Platinum sites terminating on Dimension Data Infrastructure, does the reverence of Platinum sites seek to mean that the sites have redundant architecture from DD perceptive or we need to deploy the own redundant infrastructure towards the ~57 sites? If not, are we expected to install dual access infrastructure at Dimension Data</p>	All 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party circuits currently terminate at Dimension Data's Data Center as an aggregation point. Two separate MPLS links provides connectivity between Dimension Data and Brooklyn Head Office. The Service Provider is expected to provide dual access infrastructure to Dimension Data and to Brooklyn Head Office and route traffic accordingly. All 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party circuits will remain as is. A back-to back

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	DC (location) to interface with DD infrastructure to route that traffic towards SARS Brooklyn office which will have platinum services in place (new access links), if that is the case, then what are we pricing on the price template for service Tower D section TD.4? Are we supposed to price for IPsec VPN tunnels effort configurations from the SARS Brooklyn side or what? Will SARS still pay DD as the conduit service provider for 3rd party Links as we don't know what the current charge from DD at moment of this services. Or is the intention for the service provider to price for 2Mbps actual circuits per site at the third-party locations? If yes, then we require full decimal GPS coordinates per sites.	agreement will be negotiated between Dimension Data and the incoming Service Provider.
6.	<p>Tower D</p> <p>On the pricing template for service tower D section TD.4, what is meant by non-Platinum sites? As this term does not appear in business requirements specification document.</p>	<p>6.4.7 <b>Service Levels Required</b> in the BRS refers:</p> <p>SARS needs non-Platinum sites to have two circuits (a main and a backup), but the backup circuit can be inactive until needed.</p> <p>The service levels will apply to the individual circuits (Gold, Silver, or Bronze). Failover must occur if the primary link is unavailable, unreliable, or experiencing poor quality or response problems.</p>
7.	<p>Tower D</p> <p>On the pricing template for service tower D section TD.11, we see there is a required rate card for Diginet services, please note that this product has been discontinued by Openserve (Telkom) and we are unable to price this component, can it be removed from section TD.11 pricing altogether. We understand that the current incumbent might be running these legacy services in meantime, but Openserve is decommissioning copper infrastructure on their network.</p>	The rate card for Diginet services in section TD11 can be ignored, so no response required.

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8.	<p>Tower: Tower D, V and C</p> <p>Please clarify if a bidder can sub-contract for the requirement below:</p> <p>The Bidder must possess Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) Individual ECS (I-ECS) regulatory licence to provide the services for which it is bidding for in Tower D.</p> <p>NB: The Bidder must submit proof of licence(s) it holds, together with a warranty that enables it to provide the services for which it is bidding for. The Bidder may rely on regulatory licences held by a parent company or subsidiary, provided that the Bidder submits a satisfactory explanation of how such reliance will comply with regulatory requirements and provides a warranty of compliance. The Bidder may not rely on a third party's licence(s). The evidence of licence-holding must correspond with the licence(s) the Bidder claims to hold.</p>	<p>No, this cannot be sub-contracted as clearly indicated within Mandatory <i>“The Bidder may not rely on a third party's licence(s)”</i>.</p>
9.	<p>I am writing to express my interest in the Network Carrier and Infrastructure Services - RFP 02/2024 and to inquire about the possibility of still being able to submit a response despite having missed the compulsory briefing session held on 03 June 2024.</p> <p>Due to unforeseen circumstances, I was unable to attend the session, and I sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused. My team and I are highly interested in this tender and believe that we have the capability to meet the requirements and deliver a quality proposal.</p> <p>Could you please advise if there is any alternative arrangement or any additional</p>	<p>The attendance of both the briefing session and the price templates workshop is mandatory for prospective Bidders wishing to participate in the RFP 02/2024 tender.</p>

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	<p>steps, we could take to ensure our participation in this tender process?</p> <p>Thank you very much for your understanding and assistance in this matter. I look forward to your response.</p>	
10.	<p>Tower: General</p> <p>Due to the size, complexity, and amount of supporting evidence to be provided for this RFP, for us to be able to submit a comprehensive response covering all requirements of the tender may we request SARS to consider an extension of at least two weeks.</p>	<p>Bidder should note that, the SARS' BSC has granted approval to extend the tender by a further period of 3 weeks from <b>27 June 2024 to 18 July 2024</b>. SARS encourages Bidders to utilize the extension time to complete their submissions, due to limited time that SARS requires to evaluate, adjudicate, negotiating a contract, and transition to the newly appointed service provider(s).</p>
11.	<p>Tower: Tower D, V and C</p> <p>Kindly advise if sub-contracting is mandatory for all towers?</p>	<p>Sub-contracting is not Mandatory for any Tower.</p>
12.	<p>Tower: Tower D</p> <p>With regards to the following TRT Reference 18A, 20- kindly advise if the ISO certificate would suffice for this requirement or do you require a compliance letter from the appointed auditor.</p> <p>a. Security —Organisational Management Structure Inquiry</p> <p>SARS aims to establish whether the Bidder's organisational approach to security management as defined within the ISO 27001 framework and with specific reference to an implemented ISMS.</p> <p>The Bidder must give as much information as possible to show its security approach</p>	<p>SARS is testing the Bidder' response of compliance to the ISO 27001 Standard and in order to do so needs to ascertain the Bidder's compliance to the ISO 27001 Standard. Whilst Bidders will have a level of compliance to the Standard, not all Bidders may have ISO 27001 Certification status. Should a Bidder be fully ISO 27001 Certified in terms of the Services for which the Bidder is responding to, such certification would have been conducted by an authorised Auditor and as such SARS require that the duly appointed auditor responsible for such ISO Certification, provides the ISO 27001 Certificate as part of the Auditor confirmation letter.</p>

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	<p>and how it will benefit SARS in the delivery of the Services in this Tower.</p> <p>The Bidder will be evaluated formally on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SARS seeks to establish the extent to which the Bidder has an approved and well-appointed organisational HR structure with specific reference to Information Security and Risk Management.</li> </ul> <p>Bidders who have a single point of accountability regarding Information Security (formally appointed CISO/ISO or equivalent) will achieve maximum points for this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence must be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter must indicate all ISMS requirements as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>Specific evaluation guidelines</p> <p>4: The Bidder has shown an approved and well-appointed organisational HR structure with specific reference to Information Security and Risk Management. Single accountability for Information Security (formally appointed CISO/ISO or equivalent).</p> <p>The evidence must be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter must indicate all ISMS requirements as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>b. Security — Organisational Policy</p> <p>Inquiry</p>	<p>Please note that the ISO 27001 Certification has a limited validation period. Bidders must ensure that the provided ISO certification is valid for at least 180 days from the closing date of this tender.</p>

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	<p>SARS aims to establish the Bidder's organisational approach to security management as defined within the ISO 27001 framework and with specific reference to an implemented ISMS.</p> <p>The Bidder must give as much information as possible to explain its security approach and how it will benefit SARS in the delivery of the Services in this Tower.</p> <p>The Bidder will be evaluated formally on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Bidder has shown its implemented ISM capability with specific reference to organisational strategy and approved Information Security Policies and Procedures (Structure) that is in line with industry standards and has been formalised within its organisation.</li> </ul> <p>The evidence must be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter must indicate all ISMS requirements as it relates to Information Security Policies and Procedures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>Specific evaluation guidelines</p> <p>4: The Bidder has shown its implemented ISM capability with specific reference to organisational strategy and approved Information Security Policies and Procedures (Structure) which are in line with industry standards and have been formalised within its organisation. The evidence must be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter must indicate all ISMS requirements as it relates to Information Security Policies and Procedures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>c. Security Incident Management</p>	

No	Question	Answer
	<p>Inquiry</p> <p>SARS aims to establish the Bidder's management approach to Security-related incidents. The Bidder must give as much information as possible to justify its claims that its way of handling security-related incidents will benefit SARS in the delivery of this service. The Bidder will be evaluated formally and generally on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Bidder has shown that its approach to Security Incident Management complies with the ISO 27001 framework which includes Identification, Assessment, Decision, and Response to information[1]security events. The evidence needs to be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter needs to indicate all ISMS requirements as it relates to Security Incident Management as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</li> </ul> <p>Specific evaluation guidelines</p> <p>4: The Bidder has shown, with substantiation, the approach it has to Security Incident Management as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework. The evidence needs to be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter needs to indicate all ISMS requirements as it relates to Security Incident Management as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p>	



**DOCUMENT RE-ISSUED.**

<b>No</b>	<b>Re- Issued Documents</b>	<b>Comment</b>
1.	SARS RFP 02-2024 1-0 Invitation Letter	Bidders must note that, the closing date for the above-mentioned tender has been extended from <b>27 June 2024 at 11:00 to 18 July 2024 at 11:00.</b>
2.	SARS RFP 02-2024 2-2 SARS Site Classifications	
3.	SARS RFP 02-2024 3-1 Invitation to Bid (SBD 1)	
4.	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-3-D Tower D Pricing Response Template	
5.	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-3-V Tower V Pricing Response Template	
6.	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-4 Proposal Response Checklist	