

RFP 02/2024: NETWORK CARRIER AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Communication #4

Date of Issue: 02 July 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.

Question and Answer

| No | Question | Answer |
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| 1. | <p>The Main Document of the RFP states in page 22, Table 7, that “The Bidder must possess Independent Communications authority of South Africa (ICASA) individual ECS (I-ECS) regulatory license to provide the services for which it is bidding for in Tower C”.</p> <p>Question: Why do we need I-ECS for Messaging Services?</p> <p>Our question is to get clarity and understanding as to why would an I-ECS license be required in providing messaging services. Especially since the following services: EMAIL, LIVE-CHAT , Shortern URL will not require any integration to the Mobile Network Providers?</p> <p>Subsequently, the incumbent delivers the services via SMPP (Page 29 of</p> | <p>The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) is responsible for regulating broadcasting, postal, and telecommunications services in the country. When it comes to providing electronic communications services (ECS) and electronic communications network services (ECNS), licenses are essential. Specifically, the I-ECS (Individual ECS) license is relevant for messaging services.</p> <p>Here's why an I-ECS license is required for messaging services:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Regulatory Compliance: The I-ECS license ensures compliance with regulatory standards set by ICASA. It covers various aspects related to service provision, including security, quality, and consumer protection.Scope of Messaging Services: While some messaging services (such as email, live chat, and URL shortening) may not directly integrate with mobile network providers, they still fall under the broader category of electronic communications. The I-ECS |

| No | Question | Answer |
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| | <p>Business Requirement Specification). As such, it is confusing the requirement of the license, as the direct connection to the MNO (WASP Model), does not require licensing, and enables sufficient security, capability to connect to the SMSC, MMSC, and USSD Gateway.</p> | <p>license ensures that providers adhere to legal and technical requirements, regardless of the specific integration.</p> <p>3. Interconnection and Network Access: Even if messaging services don't directly connect to mobile networks, they often rely on underlying infrastructure (such as internet service providers or data centers). The I-ECS license facilitates interconnection and access to these networks, ensuring seamless communication.</p> <p>4. Security and Privacy: Messaging services handle sensitive information, and the I-ECS license helps maintain security and privacy standards. It ensures that providers follow protocols to protect user data and prevent unauthorized access.</p> <p>Regarding the incumbent's use of SMPP (Short Message Peer-to-Peer) for service delivery, it's important to note that SMPP is a protocol used for SMS messaging between application servers and Short Message Service Centers (SMSCs). While direct connections to mobile network operators (MNOs) via SMPP may not require licensing (as in the WASP model), messaging services provided to end-users still fall within the regulatory framework.</p> <p>In summary, the I-ECS license serves as a safeguard, regardless of the specific technical implementation. It ensures that messaging services meet legal requirements, maintain security, and provide reliable communication channels.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Please find below additional questions, with regards to the Tower C, submissions.</p> <p>1. CPAAS: Is there a restriction as to which Cloud Provider, and where the cloud provider is hosting the service (e.g. AWS- Ireland)</p> | <p>1. CPaaS may be run on a cloud service provider that has a local representative – Procurement to help with this one.</p> <p>Future requirement, SARS wants to understand if bidders`ZX capabilityto deliver this service and to what extent to be put on a panel once these requirements become necessary</p> |

| No | Question | Answer |
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| | <p>2. AI/LLM</p> <p>For the AI/LM, is the requirement for service provider to integrate with existing 3rd party provider or manage & provide the full service.</p> | |
| 3. | <p>Tower D</p> <p>Bidder A does not have ISO 20000 – IT Service Management certificate for managed cloud services, do we meet the requirements RFP? or do we need to hold the certificate that includes network services?</p> | <p>SARS aims to establish that the Bidder follows a service-management framework, and that the Bidder has implemented a set of well-defined practices and processes for IT-services management. The Bidder must demonstrate its commitment to delivering high-quality IT services and to improving its service-management processes in line with SARS's requirements.</p> |
| 4. | <p>We appreciate the opportunity given to us to bid. Upon studying the documents, We will need all the serial numbers for your Cisco installed base to check what is End of Life and what we can cover with Cisco back to back support. Would you be kind enough to assist us with this urgent request?</p> | <p>The back-to-back support of SARS owned equipment will be provided by SARS for Tower D and V.</p> |
| 5. | <p>Please can we request clarity regarding the Special Board Resolution</p> <p>Question:</p> <p>Bidder A would like clarity if we can submit our generic governance authority to sign document or does it need to be specific to this tender?</p> | <p>A Bidder does not need to submit its generic governance authority, in order to demonstrate to SARS that the person who approves the tender is dully authorized by the company, however it is a bidder's responsibility to ensure that its tender documents are signed by a dully authorized individual(s) in line with the company's governance structures and processes.</p> |
| 6. | <p>Tower V Voice carrier Services</p> <p>In the BRS the functional requirement (7.1) must provide a proposal for a Contact Centre as a Service for 1000 agents, please clarify the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no place to insert pricing for the Contact Centre in the provided Tower V pricing sheets, where do we include the pricing for | <p>This is just a proposal. You don't need to have a pricing template for this. A full set up cost is required from end-to-end Voice routing with IVR. Example: Genesys Cloud Full Suite. The Bidders must add their free-hand proposal under Response Table B as a supporting document within TRT for Tower V, TRT Ref 1.3.</p> |

| No | Question | Answer |
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| | this? | |
| 7. | <p>Tower V Voice carrier Services</p> <p>Please provide more information as to what mediums/channels will the agents be working on ie. Voice only, Web chat, SMS, Social Media etc.</p> | <p>Agents work on Voice inbound and outbound, Whatsapp, Live Chat, Call Backs and Case management.</p> |
| 8. | <p>Tower V Voice carrier Services</p> <p>Will the agents be at the Doringkloof and Alberton sites and using the existing Internet access from these sites or when they use their VPN to login?</p> | <p>There are 4 Contact Centers. Each Contact Centre has a 50% agent split. Meaning that the Contact Centre agents in KZN, 50% connect to the ALB Data Center and 50% connect to the Doringkloof Data Centre. Currently, the CC agents are working 2 weeks remotely from home and 2 weeks at the office. Contact Centre locations are in Alberton, KZN, WC and Doringkloof. They will work on the LAN as well as on VPN.</p> |
| 9. | <p>Tower V Voice carrier Services</p> <p>In the BRS the Future Technical Transformation (7.2.2), please clarify the following: The SBC's are already in place and out of scope for this response and the MS Teams licenses for the SBC's will be in place for deployment and again is out of scope for this response?</p> | <p>Only Microsoft Teams license is out of scope, SBCs should be supplied and managed by the Bidder for their solution. The Bidders must add their free-hand proposal under Response Table B as a supporting document within TRT for Tower V, TRT Ref 1.3.</p> |
| 10. | <p>Tower V Voice carrier Services</p> <p>In the BRS the Future Technical Transformation (7.3.5), please clarify the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In this part of the BRS SARS is requesting routing inbound and outbound calls via Teams and also recording, how many users needs to be | <p>As a future requirement, the Outbound will be via Microsoft Teams. No recordings are required.</p> <p>Should we decide to go Inbound, then a total of +- 5000 users calls will need to be recorded but this requirement is out-of-scope for now. The Bidders must add their free-hand proposal under Response Table B as a supporting document within TRT for Tower V, TRT Ref 1.3.</p> |

| No | Question | Answer |
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| | recorded? | |
| 11. | Tower V Voice carrier Services Bidder A will, depending on the period, send SARS the historical recordings and will SARS then store these recordings in the SARS document store for the period required? | Yes, SARS will store current recordings on site. No recordings will be stored on Vendors infrastructure. The retention on the voice logs will be achieved as per case classification. |
| 12. | Tower V Voice carrier Services 3. Teams is driven or based on the use of Internet as the access medium so that you can access the service from anywhere and any device as long as you have a internet service, can the Bidder assume that the underlay for the SIP will be Internet? VaaS is based on Internet as the underlay. | For now, the scope is not VaaS. The MS Phone System deployment would be based on utilizing a vendors Hosted DRaaS, The MS Phone System is hosted on Microsoft's O365 cloud platform, SARS has a voice gateway that provides the voice breakout service into the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN). The vendor will provide the Hosted Direct Routing service while SARS and Microsoft will enable the Microsoft Phone System service within the SARS Microsoft Teams tenant for PSTN voice services into the SARS Microsoft Teams Tenant. |
| 13. | Tower D and Tower V ISO 20000 Certification: Does the 20000 ISO Certification have to cover/include WAN Services as well as Voice Services? | Yes, SARS aims to establish that the Bidder follows a service-management framework, and that the Bidder has implemented a set of well-defined practices and processes for IT-services management. The Bidder must demonstrate its commitment to delivering high-quality IT services and to improving its service-management processes in line with SARS's requirements |
| 14. | Main RFP Document for Tower D, V and C On pages 70 and 71 Organisation and Content of Proposal: There is no number 5 in the Common File list of Returnable ...please confirm | Yes, there is no number 5. Kindly also refer to the checklist, <u>SARS RFP 02-2024 5-4 Proposal Response Checklist</u> |

| No | Question | Answer |
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| 15. | Tower D,V and C Mandatory and Technical Evaluation Criteria : For electronic copies do we embed the evidence documents at the last page of each mandatory / technical templates received? and for the hardcopy submission do we attach those evidence docs at the end of that technical/mandatory template using dividers to separate them? | Yes. The evidence must then be properly referenced on section B (Response Table B: References to Additional Documentation) for both the mandatory and response documents |
| 16. | Tower D,V and C Please advise which file do we include JV and subcontracting agreements | The JV and sub-contract agreement must be submitted in the common file and must be properly referenced in section B (Response Table B: References to Additional Documentation) |
| 17. | Tower D,V and C Can we initial and sign the proposal and tender documents electronically? | Yes. |
| 18. | 7.4.1 Existing number retention To port numbers we would need to port single numbers or number ranges. Will SARS please indicate the relevant number ranges as well as any single numbers. | Number Ranges will be provided during Transition Period. |
| 19. | 2.1 Voice POPs "The Bidder's current Voice network has POPs in 100% - 70% of all SARS Sites per SARS's site list for Tower V - Please confirm site list for Tower V. Can we assume that the site list is as per the Tower V pricing sheet i.e. TV.2 in the pricing sheet for Tower V (Doringkloof, Alberton and Brooklyn)" | A Site list has been provided - SARS RFP 02-2024 2-2 SARS Site Classifications.xlsx If the Bidder is only responding to Tower V, then physical voice circuits must be provided to all SARS sites which must be included in the Bidder voice rates. For SDWAN sites, SARS will allow voice traffic to prioritized over the SDWAN layer in Tower D, for all other MPLS sites circuits must be provided for Tower V. |
| 20. | 7.4.10 Context: Bidders submitting a Proposal for both Tower V and D must note that their Proposal for Tower V must propose the carriage of voice traffic over the same physical circuits as that for Tower D. The voice circuits will be | Refer to Question # 19 (in this communication). |

| No | Question | Answer |
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| | <p>logically separated from the data circuit on the same physical circuit, except for SD-WAN sites.</p> <p>Question: "except for SDWAN sites" - Does this mean that voice and data should not be on separate logical circuits, but on the same "circuit/VLAN" and just prioritised by the SDWAN layer?</p> | |
| 21. | <p>7.4.10</p> <p>Context: Bidders submitting a Proposal for both Tower V and D must note that their Proposal for Tower V must propose the carriage of voice traffic over the same physical circuits as that for Tower D. The voice circuits will be logically separated from the data circuit on the same physical circuit, except for SD-WAN sites.</p> <p>Question: "1) - Which are the applicable sites here? Which are the sites that are NOT SDWAN sites, AND require voice traffic? 2) What are the concurrent calls for these sites? Or what is the total number of users so that we can apply the 30% ratio as stipulated in 7.4.1 of the Business Requirements Specification?"</p> | <p>Refer to Question # 19 (in this communication).</p> |
| 22. | <p>7.3.3 and 7.4.1</p> <p>7.3.3 states that Brooklyn may be added in future whereas 7.4.1 states that Brooklyn must have SIP trunks. Must Brooklyn be included from Day1?</p> | <p>Yes, Brooklyn must be added from day 1.</p> |

| No | Question | Answer |
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| 23. | Tower D How should we treat the 40 sites that have already been migrated to SARS. | The 40 SDWAN sites should be part of the Bidders proposal. |
| 24. | Tower D SARS RFP 02-2024 2-4 WAN Inventory TD.3 says the SP need to provide Dual Interconnect for 3rd party link to Dimension Data who will subsequently provide the connections back to the Brooklyn site. | All 3 rd Party circuits currently terminate at Dimension Data's Data Center as an aggregation point. Two separate MPLS links provide connectivity between Dimension Data and Brooklyn Head Office. It is expected from the Service Provider to provide dual access infrastructure to Dimension Data and to Brooklyn Head Office and route traffic accordingly. All 3 rd Party circuits will remain as is. A back-to back agreement will be negotiated between Dimension Data and the Service Provider. |
| 25. | Tower D Are we providing the 3rd party link or is DD providing (as per as-is) | Refer to Question # 24 (in this communication). |
| 26. | Tower D The 3rd party sites are listed as 2048Mbps on T , was this supposed to be 2048Kbps ? | The pricing template was updated to reflect 2048 kb/s. |
| 27. | Tower D Kindly confirm the bandwidth required at Admin – e-Services Vodacom (SARS Vault),WAN inventory list and Pricing response bandwidth are not the same. | The bandwidth should be 2 * 10 Gbps to e-Service Vodacom. The pricing template was updated to reflect 2*10 Gbps. |
| 28. | Tower V | Yes. |

| No | Question | Answer |
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| | Is SARS looking to integrate their voice communications with Microsoft Teams using the Service provider SBCs? | |
| 29. | Tower V Does SARS require full management of the MS Teams voice solution ? | Yes, full management of the MS Teams Voice Solution is required. |
| 30. | Tower V Kindly provide the total number of users to be enabled for Enterprise Voice. | + -9000 |
| 31. | Tower V If not, will the service provider only provide the SIP Trunk service using SARS owned SBCs. | No, the Bidder must supply their own Session Border Controller (SBC)s. |
| 32. | Tower V Kindly provide a list of Geo Numbers to be ported. | Refer to Question # 18 (in this communication). |