

SOUTH AFRICAN REVENUE SERVICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP 02/2024

**NETWORK CARRIER AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SERVICES**

MAIN RFP DOCUMENT

INSTRUCTIONS, GUIDELINES, AND CONDITIONS OF TENDER

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Summary, Guidelines, Conditions, and Instructions

1 PURPOSE OF THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

- 1.1 With this Request for Proposal (RFP), the South African Revenue Service (SARS) invites suitably qualified service providers (Bidders) to submit proposals (tenders) in accordance with the rules that are set out in this RFP for appointment as a service provider(s) on a non-exclusive basis.

2 PREAMBLE

- 2.1 SARS invites suitably qualified service providers to submit proposals in accordance with the rules that are set out in this RFP to supply the areas of scope (each of which will be referred to as a “**Tower**”) listed below on a non-exclusive basis and as defined in more detail in this and other documents that form part of this RFP.

Data Carrier (WAN) Services Tower (Tower D)	<p>The supply of Data Carrier (WAN) Services to SARS, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SDWAN (including SASE); private intellectual-property network connectivity; edge networking service; mobile network service; digital monitoring; and all related data carrier services, including service management, monitoring, reporting, support, consulting, and advisory services.
Voice Carrier Services Tower (Tower V)	<p>The supply of Voice Carrier Services to SARS, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preferred inbound and outbound voice services and all specific cost-saving solutions for SARS's outbound voice requirements to fixed and mobile destination requirements; - Related voice-carrier services such as PABX solutions; and - Related voice-carrier services, including service management, monitoring, reporting, support, consulting, and advisory services.

Communication/s Platform as a Service Tower (Tower C)	<p>The supply of a Unified Communication/s Platform as a Service Carrier for services that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The carriage of computer-generated SMS, Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD), short messages, email messages, printed letters, live chat, and artificial intelligence (AI) or large language models (LLM) through operators to clients; and - Related Communications Platform as a Service (CPaaS) Carrier for services such as service management, monitoring, support, reporting, consulting, and advisory services.
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Proposals may be submitted by Bidders for 1 (one) or more of the 3 (three) Towers.

Prospective Bidders' attention is drawn to the important conditions stated below relating to the award of the scope of this RFP.

Tower D

SARS requires a single service provider to be accountable for its Data Carrier Network Services, including all carrier elements underpinning SARS's WAN. SARS does not require the Service Provider to provide all the Data Carrier Network Services itself and the service provider may source different elements of the Data Carrier Network Services from other service providers (sub-contractors), provided that the service provider manages the provision of the individual elements in a manner that SARS deems as seamless. Sub-contractors must be fully accountable for all aspects of the services, including meeting the service levels.

Therefore, SARS intends to appoint a single service provider for all the services in Tower D with the provisions of the exclusivity within Business Requirements Specifications (BRS).

Tower V

SARS's objective is to award the scope of Tower V to a Service Provider subject to its maintaining the lowest cost for calls at acceptable quality for both inbound and outbound services. SARS retains the right to award certain services of the scope (e.g. outbound calls or inbound calls to different voice carrier providers ["Preferred Outbound Voice Carrier Provider and Preferred Inbound Voice Carrier Provider"]). SARS is under no obligation to appoint a Bidder as a Preferred Outbound Voice Carrier Provider if no Bidder's Proposal provided a more cost-effective solution for outbound voice traffic. SARS is under no obligation to appoint a Bidder as a Preferred Inbound Voice Carrier Provider if no Bidder's proposal provided a more cost-effective solution for inbound voice traffic.

NB: For the Technical Solution Response Templates, a Bidder will respond and be scored on either the Preferred Inbound Voice Carrier Solution (2.3) or Preferred Outbound Voice Carrier Solution (2.4) or on both if bidding for Inbound and Outbound

Tower C

Tower C is divided into five (5) categories, namely, All Categories, Category A, Category B, Category C, and Category D. A Bidder can respond to all categories, or it can respond to any one of the other four (4) categories.

The categories are:

All Categories: SMS, USSD, and short-message code messages; SMS traffic; email messages; printed letters; live chat; and AI/LLM Carrier Solution. SARS will award tenders or appointment service providers according to the stipulations set out from Category A to Category D.

Category A: operating Capacity for SMS, USSD, or short-message code messages; and operating capacity for SMS traffic. SARS intends to award the scope of Tower C (SMS) — Category A — to a minimum of two (2) service providers. During the term, SARS will periodically, at least once a year, update the routing algorithms for its SMS traffic to the service providers based on availability, performance, and pricing, as service providers improve their offering.

SARS will award the operating capacity for SMS, or short-message code messages, traffic to a minimum of two (2) service providers that ranked high after consolidation of Price and Specific goals. A Bidder responding to this requirement must complete the following tabs in the *SARS RFP 02-2024 5-3-C Tower C Pricing Response Template Category A*: TC.1, TC.2, TC.5, TC.6, and TC.7.

SARS will award the USSD services to a single service provider ranked number 1 after consolidation of Pricing and Specific goals. A Bidder responding to this requirement must complete the following tabs in the *SARS RFP 02-2024 5-3-C Tower C Pricing Response Template Category A*: TC.4, TC.6, and TC.7.

SARS will award the URL to a single service provider ranked number 1 after consolidation of Pricing and Specific goals. A Bidder responding to this requirement must complete the following tabs in the *SARS RFP 02-2024 5-3-C Tower C Pricing Response Template Category A*: TC.3, T.6, and TC.7.

Category B: operating capacity for mail messages. SARS will appoint a panel of service providers, because this category comprises technical requirements that SARS may have in the future. All service providers that meet the required threshold after technical evaluation will be appointed to the panel and, when the need arises, SARS will issue a Request for a Quotation (RFQ) to all the service providers on the panel to quote for the services.

Depending on the nature of the future requirements that SARS will require during the contract period

within the scope of Category B, SARS will issue an RFQ that will be evaluated under the following options:

- Appoint a Bidder on technical evaluation criteria (where technical capacity is a requirement for new request), and on price and specific goals, in line with the Bidder's ranking, per 80/20 or 90/10 preference points to acquire goods and services. SARS will perform due diligence before SARS pronounces on the outcome of the RFQ evaluations.
- Appoint a Bidder based on price and specific goals, in line with the Bidder's ranking, per 80/20 or 90/10 preference points to acquire goods and services. SARS will perform due diligence before SARS pronounces on the outcome of the RFQ evaluations.

Category C: operating capacity for printed letters. SARS will appoint a panel of service providers, as these are future requirements. All service providers that meet the technical evaluation criteria will be appointed on the panel and, when the need arises, SARS will issue an RFQ to all the service providers who have been appointed on the panel. Depending on the nature of SARS's requirements during the contract period within the scope of Category C, SARS will issue an RFQ that will be evaluated under the following options:

- Appoint a Bidder on technical evaluation criteria (where technical capacity is a requirement for new request), and on price and specific goals, in line with the Bidder's ranking, per 80/20 or 90/10 preference points to acquire goods and services. SARS will perform due diligence before SARS pronounces on the outcome of the RFQ evaluations.
- Appoint a Bidder based on price and specific goals, in line with the Bidder's ranking, per 80/20 or 90/10 preference points to acquire goods and services. SARS will perform due diligence before SARS pronounces on the outcome of the RFQ evaluations.

Category D: operating capacity for live chat and AI/LLM. All service providers that meet the technical evaluation criteria will be appointed to the panel and, when the need arises, SARS will issue an RFQ to all the service providers that will be appointed to the panel. Depending on the nature of SARS's requirements during the contract period within the scope of Category D, SARS will issue an RFQ that will be evaluated under the following options:

- Appoint a Bidder on technical evaluation criteria (where technical capacity is a requirement for new request), and on price and specific goals, in line with the Bidder's ranking, per 80/20 or 90/10 preference points to acquire goods and services. SARS will perform due diligence before SARS pronounces on the outcome of the RFQ evaluations.
- Appoint a Bidder based on price and specific goals, in line with the Bidder's ranking, per 80/20 or 90/10 preference points to acquire goods and services. SARS will perform due diligence before SARS pronounces on the outcome of the RFQ evaluations.

3 OVERVIEW OF SARS's REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Summary of the Scope

Details of the scope of work and the required goods and services are defined in the Business Requirements Specification document and other documents that form part of this RFP.

Tower D:

SARS currently operates within an established architecture and infrastructure framework provided mostly by Cisco with some firewalls of Fortinet. As such, the specifications outlined in the tender document must align with the capabilities and compatibility of these existing OEMs.

Tower V:

SARS currently operates within an established architecture and infrastructure framework provided by Cisco SBC's. As such, the specifications outlined in the tender document must align with the capabilities and compatibility of this existing OEM.

Tower C

SARS future earmarked platforms to optimise communication includes WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter/X, Telegram, LinkedIn, PostScript and Remedy. As such, the specifications outlined in the tender document must align with the capabilities and compatibility of these platforms.

3.2 Background

Achieving SARS's Vision 2024 of a smart, modern SARS with unquestionable integrity that is trusted and admired is of paramount importance. Pivotal to the delivery of SARS's vision are our digital platforms and technology infrastructure. To achieve SARS Strategic Objective 9, of building public trust and confidence, our technology assets must demonstrate the highest levels of robustness and security. It is for these reasons that SARS prioritises 99% uptime and zero security breaches from known risks. To meet organisational objectives, SARS partners with third-party suppliers to provide services and products.

This tender for the Tower Infrastructure contracts for Towers D, V, and C is aligned with SARS's Strategic Objectives, including:

Objective 1: Provide clarity and certainty for taxpayers and traders of their obligations.

Objective 2: Make it easy for taxpayers and traders to comply with their obligations.

Objective 6: Modernise our systems to provide digital and streamlined services.

Objective 5: Increase and expand the use of data within a comprehensive knowledge-management framework to ensure integrity, drive insight, and improve outcomes.

The primary objective of this RFP is to provide for the delivery, continuity, and cost-effectiveness of SARS's data carrier (WAN), voice carrier, and SMS carrier services.

SARS has sought to simplify the definition of the services by specifying the requirements, as far as possible, without specifying the detail of the underlying technologies. This approach puts greater emphasis on the agreed service levels, while allowing the service provider freedom to configure the technology solutions in the most cost-effective manner. This approach is particularly evident in the requirements specification in Towers D, V, and C.

- 3.2.1 SARS's objectives in issuing this RFP do not include contracting to transform the network to newer technologies. Rather, SARS aims to contract services that will allow for the deployment of newer technologies that will improve the quality of services and provide value for money. During the term of the Network Carrier and Infrastructure Services Agreement, inevitable developments in carrier technologies and service-based offerings demand that SARS maintains a flexible approach in engaging service providers to ensure that SARS can take advantage of such developments. This Business Requirements Specification sets out, to the extent that it has currently been determined, the strategic direction that SARS is taking regarding services in the Towers. In some of the Towers, the strategic direction will affect, distribution, and requirements for underlying technologies. These are presented for reasons of transparency to enable the service providers contracted work with knowledge of SARS's plans (which are subject to approvals, budget, and capacity). The information presented in this document is to the best of the SARS's knowledge at the time of issuing this RFP. Flexibility, however, remains a key principle regarding the directions presented, which may change during the term.

4 STRUCTURE OF THE RFP PACK

4.1 Structure

- 4.1.1 This RFP pack is organised into 5 (five) sections, and each section consists of one document or more.

Table 1: RFP Pack Outline and Contents

Section	Index	Description of section contents
1	Main RFP Document	Document outlining the main RFP guidelines, instructions, conditions, and documents necessary for a Bidder to submit a proposal.
2	Business Requirements Specification	Document(s) outlining the business requirements specifications, technical requirements, and other information required by a Bidder to submit a proposal.
3	Standard Bid Documents (SBDs)	SBDs and other administrative documents that are required by National Treasury and SARS Procurement to be read, completed, and returned as part of a Bidder's proposal.

Section	Index	Description of section contents
4	Contract management	The proposed agreement under which SARS wishes to contract the services.
5	Response templates	Where applicable, response templates that Bidders must complete and return as part of a Bidder's proposal.

4.2 Table 2: RFP Pack Contents

Section	Document name	Document file name
1	RFP Invitation Letter	SARS RFP 02-2024 1-0 Invitation Letter
	RFP Main Document	SARS RFP 02-2024 1-1 Main Document
2	Business Requirements Specification	SARS RFP 02-2024 2-1 Business Requirement Specifications
	SARS Site Classifications	SARS RFP 02-2024 2-2 SARS Site Classifications
	WAN Diagram	SARS RFP 02-2024 2-3 WAN Diagram
	WAN Inventory	SARS RFP 02-2024 2-4 WAN Inventory
	SDWAN Diagram	SARS RFP 02-2024 2-5 SDWAN Diagram
3	Invitation to Bid (SBD1)	SARS RFP 02-2024 3-1 Invitation to Bid (SBD 1)
	Declaration of Interest (SBD 4)	SARS RFP 02-2024 3-2 Declaration of Interest (SBD 4)
	National Industrial Participation Programme (SBD 5)	SARS RFP 02-2024 3-3 National Industrial Participation Programme (SBD 5)
	Preference Points Claim Form (SBD 6.1)	SARS RFP 02-2024 3-4 Preference Points Claim Form (SBD 6.1)
	Supplier Cost and Risk Assessment Questionnaire	SARS RFP 02-2024 3-5 Supplier Cost and Risk Assessment Questionnaire
4	Network Carrier and Infrastructure Services Agreement	SARS RFP 02-2024 4-1 Network Carrier and Infrastructure Services Agreement
	Data Protection Agreement — Tower Data-Voice-CPaaS	SARS RFP 02-2024 4-2 Data Protection Agreement — Tower Data-Voice-CPaaS
	Appendix E-4 — Incident Management Major Priority Process	SARS RFP 02-2024 4-3 Appendix E-4 — Incident Management Major Priority Process
	General Contract of Conditions (GCC)	SARS RFP 02-2024 4-4 General Contract of Conditions (GCC)
	Tower D Contract Response Template	SARS RFP 02-2024 4-5 Tower D Contract Response Template
	Tower V Contract Response Template	SARS RFP 02-2024 4-6 Tower V Contract Response Template

Section	Document name	Document file name
	Tower C Contract Response Template	SARS RFP 02-2024 4-7 Tower C Contract Response Template
5	Tower D Mandatory Response Template	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-1-D Tower D Mandatory Response Template
	Tower V Mandatory Response Template	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-1-V Tower V Mandatory Response Template
	Tower C Mandatory Response Template All Categories	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-1-C Tower C Mandatory Response Template All Categories
	Tower C Mandatory Response Template Category A	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-1-C Tower C Mandatory Response Template Category A
	Tower C Mandatory Response Template Category B	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-1-C Tower C Mandatory Response Template Category B
	Tower C Mandatory Response Template Category C	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-1-C Tower C Mandatory Response Template Category C
	Tower C Mandatory Response Template Category D	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-1-C Tower C Mandatory Response Template Category D
	Tower D Technical Response Template	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-2-D Tower D Technical Response Template
	Tower V Technical Response Template	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-2-V Tower V Technical Response Template
	Tower C Technical Response Template All Categories	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-2-C Tower C Technical Response Template All Categories
	Tower C Technical Response Template Category A	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-2-C Tower C Technical Response Template Category A
	Tower C Technical Response Template Category B	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-2-C Tower C Technical Response Template Category B
	Tower C Technical Response Template Category C	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-2-C Tower C Technical Response Template Category C
	Tower C Technical Response Template Category D	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-2-C Tower C Technical Response Template Category D
	Tower D Pricing Response Template	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-3-D Tower D Pricing Response Template
	Tower V Pricing Response Template	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-3-V Tower V Pricing Response Template
	Tower C Pricing Response Template Category A	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-3-C Tower C Pricing Response Template Category A
	Proposal Checklist	SARS RFP 02-2024 5-4 Proposal Response Checklist

5 KEY ACTIVITIES AND DATES

- 5.1 The table below lists certain key dates and activities relevant from the time that the RFP is issued to the closing date.

Table 3: Key activities and dates

No.	Activity	Date/time/details
1.	Bid number:	RFP 02/2024
2.	Description:	Network Carrier and Infrastructure Services
3.	Duration of contract:	The successful Bidder will be appointed for 5 (five) years, with an option to renew the contract for a further 2 (two) years at SARS's sole discretion, subject to SARS's terms and conditions.
4.	Validity period of proposals:	Bids submitted will be valid for 180 calendar days from the closing date. However, SARS may, subject to the Bidders' consent, extend the validity period prior to its expiry.
5.	Advertisement of the RFP:	SARS website: 20 May 2024 National Treasury Tender Portal: 20 May 2024
6.	RFP pack (complete set of bid documents) available for download from National Treasury's e-Tender Portal and SARS website:	20 May 2024
7.1	Compulsory in-person/virtual briefing session date, location and address:	<p>Attending a briefing session virtually or physically is compulsory. The physical briefing session will take place on:</p> <p>03 June 2024 at 10:00</p> <p>At the following address: Auditorium, Second Floor, Linton House, Brooklyn Bridge, 570 Fehrsen Street, Brooklyn, Pretoria</p> <p>NB: Bidders are requested to arrive at 09:00 for registration.</p>

No.	Activity	Date/time/details
		<p>NB: A Bidder can attend the physical or virtual compulsory briefing session, or both.</p>
7.2	<p>Compulsory Virtual briefing session date and link:</p>	<p>The compulsory virtual briefing session will take place on:</p> <p>03 June 2024 at 10:00</p> <p>Via the following link:</p> <p>Click here to join the meeting</p> <p>Meeting ID: 369 136 099 831 Passcode: TFD8Us</p> <p>NB: Bidders are requested to join at 09:00 for registration.</p> <p>NB: A bidder can attend the compulsory physical or virtual briefing session or both.</p>
7.3	<p>Compulsory in-person Price Templates workshop date, location, and address:</p>	<p>Attending a price templates workshop virtually or physically is compulsory. The physical price templates workshop will take place on:</p> <p>04 June 2024 at 10:00</p> <p>And at the following address: Auditorium, Second Floor, Linton House, Brooklyn Bridge, 570 Fehrsen Street, Brooklyn, Pretoria</p> <p>NB: Bidders are requested to arrive at 09:00 for registration purposes.</p> <p>NB: A Bidder can attend the physical or virtual Price Schedules workshop or both</p>
7.4	<p>Compulsory virtual Price Templates workshop</p>	<p>The virtual price templates workshop will take place on:</p>

No.	Activity	Date/time/details
		04 June 2024 at 10:00 Via the following link: Click here to join the meeting Meeting ID: 394 706 332 279 Passcode: 2bCmS8 NB: Bidders are requested to join at 09:00 for registration.
8.	Bidders to submit written questions:	21 May 2024 to 18 June 2024
9.	SARS to respond to Bidders' written questions from:	23 May 2024 to 20 June 2024
10.	Closing date and time (proposals due):	27 June 2024 at 11:00

- 5.2 All dates and times in this RFP are South African Standard Time (UTC+2). The establishment of a time or date in this RFP does not obligate SARS to take any action or create any right or expectation for any Bidder to demand that any action be taken on the date established, or on any other date. A Bidder accepts that if SARS extends the deadline (closing date) for proposal submissions for any reason, the requirements of this RFP will apply equally to the extended deadline.

6 COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 All communication to SARS must be addressed to the SARS Tender Office, emailed to tenderoffice@sars.gov.za, and contain a clear reference to this RFP. Communication sent by SARS must be regarded as official communication only if sent from tenderoffice@sars.gov.za, or if a communication accompanied by a letter of authorisation signed by the SARS Procurement Executive.
- 6.2 A Bidder may communicate with SARS regarding this RFP only through the official contact details provided in this document. SARS may, at its sole discretion, disqualify a Bidder if the Bidder uses unauthorised channels to communicate or attempt to communicate any information regarding this RFP to any of SARS's employees, officials, or any third parties involved in the preparation, evaluation, or award of the RFP.

7 TENDER PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 SARS has a detailed evaluation methodology premised on Treasury Regulation 16A3 promulgated under section 76 of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999), which prescribes that SARS's procurement processes be:

7.1.1.1 Economical, efficient, fair, equitable, transparent, competitive, and cost effective; and

7.1.1.2 Consistent with the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, 2000 (Act 5 of 2000), its Regulations, and the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act, 2003 (Act 53 of 2003).

7.2 Question-and-answer Process

7.2.1 A Bidder may submit questions to SARS as part of the question-and-answer process to gain a full understanding of any aspect of the RFP that is not clear to the Bidder.

7.2.2 Between the dates given in section 5, SARS will receive written questions sent by Bidders by email through the official contact provided in this document. SARS will respond to these questions but is not obliged to respond to a question which, in SARS's opinion, is inappropriate and does not reasonably warrant an answer. The questions and answers will be published on the National Treasury e-Tender Portal and the SARS website. In its responses, SARS will not disclose the identity of a Bidder who has directed a question to SARS.

7.2.3 SARS may issue updated versions of documents issued in the RFP pack or may issue additional documentation to form part of the RFP pack. Such reissued or additional documentation will be published on the National Treasury e-Tender Portal and SARS website. It is a Bidder's responsibility to visit the National Treasury e-Tender Portal and SARS website regularly to ensure that it uses the latest versions of documents in the RFP pack.

7.2.4 **The National Treasury e-Tender Portal must be treated as the primary means of communication regarding updates to the RFP. Should there be any other communication that conflicts with communications posted on the National Treasury e-Tender Portal, the National Treasury e-Tender Portal communication will prevail.**

7.3 Central Supplier Database (CSD)

7.3.1 All Bidders who wish to do business with SARS must register on the government's CSD at www.CSD.gov.za and include their CSD Master Registration Number in their submission. The recommended Bidder(s) must be registered on the CSD prior to an award letter/purchase order/signed contract being issued.

7.3.2 Foreign suppliers with neither South African tax obligations nor history of doing business in South Africa must complete the questionnaire on SBD 1.

7.4 Proposal Submission

7.4.1 For this RFP, SARS will accept proposal submissions in the form of physical proposal submissions, either deposited in the SARS tender box or posted to the SARS Tender Office.

7.4.2 The physical proposal submissions must be deposited in the SARS tender box on or before the closing date and time at the SARS Tender Office, situated at the main entrance at:

**SARS Procurement Tender Office,
Lehae La SARS,
299 Bronkhorst Street, Nieuw Muckleneuk, Brooklyn,
Pretoria, 0181.**

7.4.3 The proposals may also be couriered to the address provided in the aforementioned paragraph.

7.4.4 Proposals will be considered only if received by the SARS Tender Office before the closing date and time, regardless of the method of delivery used.

7.4.5 SARS will not accept late proposals.

7.4.6 The onus is on the Bidder to ensure that its proposal submission and documentation received by SARS in this bid are submitted timeously and are accurate and complete. Failure by any Bidder to discharge this onus will result in proposal submissions being disqualified.

7.5 Instruction for Submitting a Proposal

7.5.1 This section details the instructions to Bidders to prepare a proposal in response to this RFP. Bidders must follow these instructions exactly to enable the information contained in a Bidder's proposal to be read, understood, and evaluated in a common and consistent layout, and to ensure that the information submitted is correct, complete, and well structured. If SARS receives a proposal in an incorrect format, SARS reserves the right to disqualify the entire proposal or portions of the proposal, depending on the extent of the deviation from the format described in this document.

7.5.2 All proposals and supporting documentation must be submitted in English.

7.5.3 A Bidder's proposal must be submitted in two forms:

1 x Hardcopy submission	<p>One (1) hardcopy submission clearly marked.</p> <p>A "hardcopy submission" means an A4 ring-bound lever-arch file.</p>
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1 x Electronic submission	<p>One (1) electronic submission of a complete copy of the hardcopy submission.</p> <p>An “electronic submission” means a memory stick (USB stick) containing a complete copy of the hardcopy submission. The onus is on the Bidder to ensure that the electronic submission submitted is a complete copy of the hardcopy submission.</p>
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7.5.4 The hardcopy and electronic submission must be marked and labelled correctly, and must be externally sealed, wrapped, and packaged for ease of reference during the evaluation process.

7.5.5 Bidders are requested to refer to section 12, which is a guide of how a Bidder must submit their proposal.

8 EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

8.1 Process after the Closing Date

8.1.1 After the closing date and time, SARS will evaluate the proposals with reference to SARS's evaluation criteria. SARS reserves the right to employ subject-matter experts to assist in performing such evaluations.

8.2 Pre-qualification Evaluation Process (Gate 0)

8.2.1 SARS has defined minimum administrative pre-qualification criteria that the Bidder must meet. The table below contains the administrative pre-qualification documents that are required as part of a Bidder's proposal. A representative authorised by the prospective Bidder(s) must complete and sign these documents.

8.2.2 Where a Bidder's proposal fails to comply fully with any of the pre-qualification criteria, SARS may, at its discretion, allow the Bidder an opportunity to submit or supplement the information or documentation provided within a grace period of **seven (7) working days** or such alternative period as SARS may determine to achieve full compliance with these criteria before disqualifying the Bidder.

8.2.3 **SARS will disqualify a Bidder that does not achieve full compliance of the pre-qualification SBD after the grace period provided by SARS.**

Table 4: Prequalification Criteria

No:	Prequalification documents to be submitted	Instructions	Non-submission will result in disqualification?
1.	SBD 1: Invitation to Bid Form	Bidder to complete and sign the supplied pro forma document.	YES
2.	SBD 4: Bidder's Disclosure	Bidder to complete and sign the supplied pro forma document.	YES
3.	SBD 5: National Industrial Participation Programme Form	Bidder to complete and sign the supplied pro forma document.	YES
4.	SBD 6.1: Preference Points Claim Form	Bidder to complete and sign the supplied pro forma document, to claim the points for Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE/specific goals).	NO Non-submission will lead to a zero score on B-BBEE/specific goals.
6.	Proof of Registration on the CSD	Bidder to submit the proof of registration on CSD.	NO However, a Bidder must be registered on the CSD to be considered for award.
7.	Draft Agreement	Bidder to sign the supplied pro forma document.	NO The recommended Bidder(s) will be required to sign the applicable agreement on award.
8.	A complete set of three (3) most recent years' annual financial statements	Submit complete sets of three (3) most recent years' annual financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Financial Risk Analysis paragraph 8.6 as detailed in this RFP.	NO

8.3 Mandatory Evaluation Process (Gate 1)

8.3.1 Only Bidders who have met the pre-qualification criteria in Gate 0 will be evaluated in Gate 1 for mandatory evaluation. The table below contains the mandatory evaluation criteria.

8.3.2 **If a Bidder does not meet any of the mandatory evaluation criteria, the Bidder will be disqualified, and the Bidder's proposal will not be evaluated further.**

Table 5: Mandatory Evaluation Criteria for Tower D

No:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
1.	Bidder Organisation	SARS is interested only in organizations that take full accountability for service delivery. Thus, any Bidder, be it a juristic person, partnership, sole

No:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
		<p>proprietor, or any special-purpose vehicle, must take full accountability for service delivery.</p> <p>A Bidder must be registered in South Africa in terms of South African laws and operate in South Africa.</p> <p>NB: The Bidder must have attached its Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) registration. In terms of consortiums or Joint Ventures (JVs), incorporated JVs must submit their CIPC registration, and unincorporated JVs must submit individual CIPC registration documents.</p>
2.	Licences	<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>
3.	Cisco Gold Partner Certification	<p>The Bidder must possess a valid Cisco Gold Partner certificate to provide the services for which it is bidding for in Tower D.</p> <p>The Bidder must also be registered in the following roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CISCO Integrator with Advanced Enterprise Networks Architecture Specialisation and Advanced Security Architecture Specialisation; and - CISCO Provider with Advanced Customer Experience Specialisation. <p>NB: The Bidder itself must be a CISCO Gold Partner and cannot rely on a sub-contractor to fulfil this requirement.</p> <p>NB: The Bidder must provide the following proof from Cisco to verify its status as a CISCO Gold Partner reseller and its certification level with respective architecture specialisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manufacturing Authorisation Form (MAF) confirms that the Bidder is a

No:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
		<p>Cisco Partner); and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certification letter with specialisations (Bidder's certification level and architecture speciality).
4.	SD-Wan Network Services	<p>The Bidder must have been operating/running an SD-WAN network for a South African customer, similar in size to SARS for the past 1 (one) year, to at least 1 (one) South African customer, covering 100 (one hundred) or more sites.</p> <p>NB: A Bidder must provide a reference letter/testimonial from current/recent contactable clients where they were or are operating/running SD-WAN network for a South African customer, similar in size to SARS, for the past 1 (one) year for at least 1 (one) customer, covering 100 (one hundred) or more sites.</p> <p>NB: The reference letter/testimonial from the named customers confirming such service must include the "customer name, service delivered to customer, start date, end date, and a contactable reference's details".</p>
5.	Compulsory Briefing Session (Hybrid)	<p>The Bidder(s) must have attended the compulsory briefing session.</p> <p>NB: An attendance register will be taken at the compulsory briefing session and a certificate of attendance will be issued (which will be submitted as part of the mandatory requirement, per the Mandatory Response template). If the Bidder does not attend this compulsory briefing session, the Bidder will be disqualified.</p>
6.	Compulsory price-schedules workshop session (Hybrid)	<p>The Bidder(s) must have attended the compulsory price-schedules workshop session.</p> <p>NB: An attendance register will be taken at the compulsory price workshop session and a certificate of attendance will be issued (which will be submitted as part of the mandatory requirement, as per the Mandatory Response template). If the Bidder does not attend this compulsory price-schedules workshop session, the Bidder will be disqualified.</p>

Table 6: Mandatory Evaluation Criteria for Tower V

No:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
1.	Bidder Organisation	<p>SARS is interested only in organisations that take full accountability for service delivery. Thus, any Bidder, be it a juristic person, partnership, sole proprietor, or any special-purpose vehicle, must take full accountability for service delivery.</p> <p>A Bidder must be registered in South Africa in terms of South African laws and operate in South Africa.</p> <p>NB: The Bidder must have attached its CIPC registration. In terms of consortiums or JVs, incorporated JVs must submit their CIPC registration and unincorporated JVs must submit individual CIPC registration documents.</p>
2.	Licences	<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 in Tower V.</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>
3.	Preferred Outbound Voice Carrier	<p>If the Bidder is submitting only a proposal for the Preferred Outbound Voice Carrier Provider Services, then it must have provided similar service to a current or recent service provider, carrying outbound calls for at least three (3) customers over SIP channel infrastructure from the customers' site(s) to a terminating network operator. A minimum of 3 (three) years' experience in the telecommunication industry must be proven on the company profile, which covers the history of the organisation's services to date.</p> <p>NB: A Bidder must provide a letter/testimonial/affidavit from current/recent contactable clients for which they were or are carrying outbound calls for at least three (3) customers, over SIP channel infrastructure from the customers' site(s) to a terminating network operator. A minimum of 3 (three) years experience in the</p>

No:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
		<p>telecommunication industry must be proven on the company profile, which covers the history of the organisation's services to date.</p> <p>NB: The reference letter/testimonial from the named customers confirming such service must include the "customer name, service delivered to customer, start date, end date, and a contactable reference's details".</p>
4.	Preferred Inbound Voice Carrier	<p>If the Bidder is submitting a proposal only for the Preferred Inbound Voice Carrier Provider Services, then the Bidder must have provided similar service to a current or recent customer routing inbound SIP calls via SIP Trunks for at least 3 (three) customers over SIP channel infrastructure from the customers' site(s) to a terminating network operator. A minimum of three (3) years experience in the telecommunication industry must be proven on the company profile, which covers the history of the organisation's services to date.</p> <p>NB: A Bidder must provide a letter/testimonial from current/recent contactable clients for which they were or are routing inbound SIP calls via SIP Trunks for at least 3 (three) customers over SIP channel infrastructure from the customers' site(s) to a terminating network operator. A minimum of three (3) years experience in the telecommunication industry must be proven on the company profile, which covers the history of the organisation's services to date.</p> <p>NB: The reference letter/testimonial from the named customers confirming such service must include the "customer name, service delivered to customer, start date, end date, and a contactable reference's details.</p>
5.	Network Operation Centre	<p>The Bidder must confirm (in the Mandatory response template) that the bidder has its own Network Operation Centre existing in South Africa for at least three (3) years, with a centralised call-logging facility to provide customer support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year.</p> <p>NB: A Bidder must confirm (in the Mandatory response template) that the bidder has its own Network Operation Centre existing in South Africa for at least three (3) years, with a centralised call logging facility to provide 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year customer support.</p>

No:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
6.	Compulsory Briefing Session (Hybrid)	<p>The Bidder(s) must have attended the compulsory briefing session.</p> <p>NB: An attendance register will be taken at the compulsory briefing session and a certificate of attendance will be issued (which will be submitted as part of the mandatory requirement, per the Mandatory Response template). If the Bidder does not attend this compulsory briefing session, the Bidder will be disqualified.</p>
7.	Compulsory price-schedules workshop session (Hybrid)	<p>The Bidder(s) must have attended the compulsory price-schedule workshop session.</p> <p>NB: An attendance register will be taken at the compulsory price-schedules workshop session and a certificate of attendance will be issued (which will be submitted as part of the mandatory requirement, per the Mandatory Response template). If the Bidder does not attend this compulsory price-schedules workshop session, the Bidder will be disqualified.</p>

Table 7: Mandatory Evaluation Criteria for Tower C, All Categories

NO:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
1.	Bidder Organisation	<p>SARS is interested only in organisations that take full accountability for service delivery. Thus, any Bidder, be it a juristic person, partnership, sole proprietor, or any special purpose vehicle, must take full accountability for service delivery.</p> <p>A Bidder must be registered in South Africa in terms of South African laws and operate in South Africa.</p> <p>NB: The Bidder must have attached its CIPC registration. In terms of consortiums or JVs, incorporated JVs must submit their CIPC registration and unincorporated JVs must submit individual CIPC registration documents.</p>
2.	Licences	<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 in Tower C.</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.</p>

NO:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
		<p>The Bidder may rely on regulatory licences held by a parent company or subsidiary, provided that the Bidder explains 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 the Bidder claims to hold.</p>
3.	Operating Capacity for SMS, USSD, or Short Message Code Messages	<p>The Bidder must have carried at least 70 000 000 (seventy million) SMS, USSD, or short-message code messages for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p> <p>NB: A Bidder must submit relevant documentation that demonstrates that the Bidder has carried at least 70 000 000 (seventy million) SMS, USSD, or short-message code messages for a cumulative period of 12-months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p>
4.	Operating Capacity for SMS Traffic	<p>The Bidder must propose a solution that carries the SMS traffic directly to the mobile network operators and not to other wireless-application service providers. The Bidder must have and supply proof of existing agreements that are in place with all mobile network operators in terms of which SMSs to subscribers of each mobile network operator are carried.</p> <p>NB: A Bidder must provide proof that demonstrates that it has an existing agreement in place with all mobile network operators in terms of which SMSs to subscribers of each mobile network operator are carried.</p>
5.	Operating Capacity for Email Messages	<p>The Bidder must have carried at least 10 000 000 (ten million) email messages for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p> <p>NB: A Bidder must submit relevant documentation that demonstrates that it has carried at least 10 000 000 (ten million) email messages for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p>
6.	Operating Capacity for Printed Letters	<p>The Bidder must have carried at least 10 000 000 (ten million) printed letters for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p>

NO:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
		NB: A Bidder must submit documentation that demonstrates that it has carried at least 10 000 000 (ten million) printed letters for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).
7.	Operating capacity for live chat and AI/LLM	<p>The Bidder must have carried at least 10 000 000 (ten million) live chat messages for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p> <p>NB: A Bidder must submit documentation that demonstrates that it has carried at least 10 000 000 (ten million) live chat messages for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p>
8.	Compulsory Briefing Session (Hybrid)	<p>The Bidder(s) must have attended the compulsory Briefing Session.</p> <p>NB: An attendance register will be taken at the compulsory briefing session and a certificate of attendance will be issued (which will be submitted as part of the mandatory requirement, per the Mandatory Response template). If the Bidder does not attend this compulsory briefing session, the Bidder will be disqualified.</p>
9.	Compulsory price-schedules workshop session (Hybrid)	<p>The Bidder(s) must have attended the compulsory price-schedules workshop session.</p> <p>NB: An attendance register will be taken at the compulsory price-schedules workshop session and a certificate of attendance will be issued (which will be submitted as part of the mandatory requirement, per the Mandatory Response template). If the Bidder does not attend this compulsory price-schedules workshop session, the Bidder will be disqualified.</p>

Table 8: Mandatory Evaluation Criteria for Tower C, Category A

NO:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
1.	Bidder Organisation	SARS is interested only in organisations that take full accountability for service delivery. Thus, any Bidder, be it a juristic person, partnership, sole proprietor, or any special purpose vehicle, must take full accountability for service delivery.

NO:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
		<p>A Bidder must be registered in South Africa in terms of South African laws and operate in South Africa.</p> <p>NB: The Bidder must have attached its CIPC registration. In terms of consortiums or JVs, incorporated JVs must submit their CIPC registration and unincorporated JVs must submit individual CIPC registration documents.</p>
2.	Licences	<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 in Tower C.</p> <p>NB: The Bidder must submit proof of licence(s) it holds, together with a warranty that its licence holding enables it to provide the services for which it is bidding. The Bidder may rely on regulatory licences held by a parent company or subsidiary, provided that the Bidder explains 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 the Bidder claims to hold.</p>
3.	Operating Capacity for SMS, USSD, or Short Message Code Messages	<p>The Bidder must have carried at least 70 000 000 (seventy million) SMS, USSD or short-message code messages for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p> <p>NB: A Bidder must submit relevant documentation that demonstrates it has carried at least 70 000 000 (seventy million) SMS, USSD, or short-message code messages for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p>

NO:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
4.	Operating Capacity for SMS Traffic	<p>The Bidder must propose a solution that carries the SMS traffic directly to the mobile network operators and not to other wireless application service providers. The Bidder must have and supply proof of existing agreements that are in place with all mobile network operators in terms of which SMSs to subscribers of each mobile network operator are carried.</p> <p>NB: A Bidder must provide proof that demonstrates that it has an existing agreement in place with all mobile network operators in terms of which SMSs to subscribers of each mobile network operator are carried.</p>
5.	Compulsory Briefing Session (Hybrid)	<p>The Bidder(s) must have attended the compulsory briefing session.</p> <p>NB: An attendance register will be taken at the compulsory briefing session and a certificate of attendance will be issued (which will be submitted as part of the mandatory requirement, per the Mandatory Response template). If the Bidder does not attend this compulsory briefing session, the Bidder will be disqualified.</p>
6.	Compulsory price-schedules workshop session (Hybrid)	<p>The Bidder(s) must have attended the compulsory price-schedules workshop session.</p> <p>NB: An attendance register will be taken at the compulsory price-schedules workshop session and a certificate of attendance will be issued (which will be submitted as part of the mandatory requirement, per the Mandatory Response template). If the Bidder does not attend this compulsory price-schedules workshop session, the Bidder will be disqualified.</p>

TABLE 9: Mandatory Evaluation Criteria for Tower C, Category B

NO:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
1.	Bidder Organisation	<p>SARS is interested only in organisations that take full accountability for service delivery. Thus, any Bidder, be it a juristic person, partnership, sole proprietor, or any special purpose vehicle, must take full accountability for service delivery.</p> <p>A Bidder must be registered in South Africa in terms of South African laws and operate in South Africa.</p>

NO:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
		NB: The Bidder must have attached its CIPC registration. In terms of consortiums or JVs, JVs must submit their CIPC registration and unincorporated JVs must submit individual CIPC registration documents.
2.	Licences	<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 in Tower C.</p> <p>NB: The Bidder must submit proof of licence(s) it holds, together with a warranty that its licence-holding enables it to provide the services for which it is bidding. The Bidder may rely on regulatory licences held by a parent company or subsidiary, provided that the Bidder explains 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 the Bidder claims to hold.</p>
3.	Operating Capacity for Email Messages	<p>The Bidder must have carried at least 10 000 000 (ten million) email messages for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p> <p>NB: A Bidder must submit relevant documentation that demonstrates that it has carried at least 10 000 000 (ten million) email messages for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p>
4.	Compulsory Briefing Session (Hybrid)	<p>The Bidder(s) must have attended the compulsory briefing session.</p> <p>NB: An attendance register will be taken at the compulsory briefing session and a certificate of attendance will be issued (which will be submitted as part of the mandatory requirement, per the Mandatory Response template). If the Bidder does not attend this compulsory briefing session, the Bidder will be disqualified.</p>

Table 10: Mandatory Evaluation Criteria for Tower C, Category C

NO:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
1.	Bidder Organisation	SARS is interested only in organisations that take full accountability for service delivery. Thus, any Bidder, be it a juristic person, partnership, sole

NO:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
		<p>proprietor, or any special purpose vehicle, must take full accountability for service delivery.</p> <p>A Bidder must be registered in South Africa in terms of South African laws and operate in South Africa.</p> <p>NB: The Bidder must have attached its CIPC registration. In terms of consortiums or JVs, incorporated JVs must submit their CIPC registration and unincorporated JVs must submit individual CIPC registration documents.</p>
2.	Licences	<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 in Tower C.</p> <p>NB: The Bidder must submit proof of licence(s) it holds, together with a warranty that its licence-holding enables it to provide the services for which it is bidding. The Bidder may rely on regulatory licences held by a parent company or subsidiary, provided that the Bidder explains 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 that the Bidder claims to hold.</p>
3.	Operating Capacity for Printed Letters	<p>The Bidder must have carried at least 10 000 000 (ten million) printed letters for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p> <p>NB: A Bidder must submit relevant documentation that demonstrates that it has carried at least 10 000 000 (ten million) printed letters for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p>
4.	Compulsory Briefing Session (Hybrid)	<p>The Bidder(s) must have attended the compulsory briefing session.</p> <p>NB: An attendance register will be taken at the compulsory briefing session and a certificate of attendance will be issued (which will be submitted as part of the Mandatory requirement, per the Mandatory Response template). If the Bidder does not attend this compulsory briefing session, the Bidder will be disqualified.</p>

Table 10: Mandatory Evaluation Criteria for Tower C, Category D

NO:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
1.	Bidder Organisation	<p>SARS is interested only in organisations that take full accountability for service delivery. Thus, any Bidder, be it a juristic person, partnership, sole proprietor, or any special purpose vehicle, must take full accountability for service delivery.</p> <p>A Bidder must be registered in South Africa in terms of South African laws and the Bidder must operate in South Africa.</p> <p>NB: The Bidder must have attached its CIPC registration. In terms of consortiums or JVs, incorporated JVs must submit their CIPC registration and unincorporated JVs must submit individual CIPC registration documents.</p>
2.	Licences	<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 in Tower C.</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 explains 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 the Bidder claims to hold.</p>
3.	Operating Capacity for Live Chat and AI/LLM	<p>The Bidder must have carried at least 10 000 000 (ten million) live chat messages for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p> <p>NB: A Bidder must submit relevant documentation that demonstrates that it has carried at least 10 000 000 (ten million) live chat messages for a cumulative period of 12 months, over the past five (5) years, from the closing date of the tender (27 June 2024).</p>
4.	Compulsory Briefing Session (Hybrid)	<p>The Bidder(s) must have attended the compulsory briefing session.</p> <p>NB: An attendance register will be taken at the compulsory briefing session and a certificate of attendance will be issued (which will be submitted as part of the mandatory requirement, per the Mandatory</p>

NO:	Mandatory Evaluation Criteria	Bidder to submit as proof
		Response template). If the Bidder does not attend this compulsory briefing session, the Bidder will be disqualified.

NB: Tower C is divided into five (5) Categories, namely, All Categories, Category A, Category B, Category C, and Category D. A Bidder can respond to all categories or to any one of the other four (4) categories.

The categories are divided as follows:

- **All Categories:** Bidder organisation; licences; SMS, USSD, or short-message code messages; SMS traffic; email messages; printed letters; live chat and AI/LLM carrier solution; compulsory briefing sessions and compulsory price-schedules workshop session.
- **Category A:** Bidder organisation; licences; operating capacity for SMS, USSD, or short-message code messages; operating capacity for SMS traffic; compulsory briefing session and compulsory price-schedules workshop session
- **Category B:** Bidder organisation; licences; operating capacity for email messages; and compulsory briefing session.
- **Category C:** Bidder organisation; licences; operating capacity for printed letters; and compulsory briefing session.
- **Category D:** Bidder organisation; licences; operating capacity for live chat and AI/LLM; and compulsory briefing session.

8.4 Technical Evaluation Process (Gate 2)

- 8.4.1 Only Bidders who have met the pre-qualification and mandatory evaluation requirements will be evaluated for technical capability and functionality, strictly according to the technical evaluation criteria below. A Bidder must provide a technical solution for the required goods and services that meets SARS's requirements, and that is financially competitive and offers value for money.
- 8.4.2 The technical evaluation will be scored out of 100 points. Bidders must score a minimum threshold of 70 out of 100 points to proceed to the next stage of evaluation, namely price and B-BBEE/specific goals evaluation.
- 8.4.3 **If a Bidder does not meet the technical-evaluation minimum threshold, it will be disqualified, and its proposal will not be evaluated further.**

Table 11: Technical Evaluation Criteria for Tower D

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
1.	Capability Criterion			30	
1.1.	Current Client Base	<p>SARS aims to establish the current capability of delivering services within the scope of this Tower. Bidders who can show that they are delivering services within the scope of this Tower to an established client-base of sufficient scale, similar or bigger than SARS's client base, will achieve maximum points. Documentation, such as letters of reference from the clients substantiating the Bidder's claims, must be attached.</p> <p>Services to at least one client with a minimum of 150 sites will achieve maximum points.</p>	<p>4: All technical elements of scope are currently delivered by the Bidder to at least one client, the same size or larger than SARS's client base of 150 sites or more.</p> <p>2: All technical elements of scope are delivered by the Bidder to at least one client with a site-count up 149 site to 121 sites</p> <p>0: All technical elements of scope are delivered by the Bidder to at least one client with a site-count fewer than 120 sites.</p>	<p>4 = 9.00</p> <p>2 = 4.50</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	1
1.2.	Sub-contractor service for network underlay infrastructure	<p>SARS seeks to establish the nature and level of partnership or relationship between the Bidder and Sub-contractor to deliver network connectivity as part of the network-underlay services component of the SD-WAN solution.</p> <p>Bidders who can show the level of their partnership and track record with which it has engaged these sub-contractors in previous engagements and does not pose a risk to the delivery of service to SARS will achieve maximum points for this criterion.</p> <p>The Bidder must attach documentation to substantiate its claims to achieve maximum points.</p>	<p>4: The Bidder has indicated its ability to establish effective partnerships, with a proven track record, and their overall suitability for delivering network-connectivity services as part of the SD-WAN solution for SARS. All necessary criteria are met.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has failed to indicate their ability to establish effective partnerships and their overall suitability for delivering network-connectivity services as part of the SD-WAN solution for SARS. Not all necessary criteria are met.</p>	<p>4 = 6.00</p> <p>0 = 0.0</p>	2
1.3.	Bidder's Strategic Direction (NaaS)	<p>SARS seeks to establish the extent to which the Bidder has a commitment to provide services based on each of the components listed in <i>Business Requirements Specification (6.4.1)</i>. These services must include Connectivity, Value Added Services (VAS), Virtual Network Functions (VNF), Managed Network Services, and similar Cloud services.</p> <p>The Bidder's strategic direction regarding the development and delivery of these new technologies must inform SARS of enhancements to the services within this Tower. The Bidder must attach documents to support any claims made.</p>	<p>4: The Bidder has demonstrated a clear strategic direction regarding its NaaS model and can provide all the components and related services.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has demonstrated a poor strategic direction regarding its NaaS model and lacks the ability to provide all the components and related services.</p>	<p>NaaS Components</p> <p>4 = 3.00</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p> <p>Functional Requirements</p> <p>4 = 3.00</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p> <p>Non-Functional Requirements</p> <p>4 = 1.50</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p> <p>Technical Requirements</p> <p>4 = 1.50</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	<p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p>
1.4.	Service Centres	<p>SARS aims to establish the capability that the Bidder (and its sub-contractors) will deliver to SARS. Bidders who can show that its existing Service Centres have sufficient coverage of required skills will achieve maximum points. SARS will also consider the extent to which Service Centres that are not yet established are relied upon to provide distribution of skills.</p>	<p>4: The Bidder has a 100%-90% presence of Service Centres in all nine (9) provinces in terms of its location to SARS's list of sites.</p> <p>2: The Bidder has a 89%- 71% presence of Service Centres in all nine (9) provinces in terms of its location to SARS's list of sites.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has 70% or less presence of Service Centres in all nine (9) provinces in terms of its location to SARS's list of sites.</p>	<p>4 = 6.00</p> <p>2= 3.00</p> <p>0= 00</p>	4
2.	Technical Solution			50	
2.1.	Bidder's SD-WAN Network Presence	<p>SARS aims to establish the Bidder's current distribution of SD-WAN POPs — both current and planned — to be used to deliver SARS SD-WAN services.</p> <p>Bidders with currently established SD-WAN POP locations and those planned in strategic areas to provide services to the SARS list of sites will score maximum points for this sub-criterion.</p>	<p>4: The Bidder has a 100%-90% WAN Network presence in all nine (9) provinces in terms of its POPs to SARS's list of sites.</p> <p>2: The Bidder has 89%- 71% WAN Network presence in all nine (9) provinces in terms of its POPs to SARS's list of sites.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has 70% or less WAN Network presence in all 9 provinces in terms of its POPs to SARS's list of sites.</p>	<p>4 = 7.50</p> <p>2 = 3.75</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	5
2.2.	Bidder's SD-WAN Capability	<p>SARS aims to establish the Bidder's capability to deliver a SD-WAN solution designed to optimise network performance, enhance security, and simplify network management. The Bidder will be evaluated on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bidder has shown an understanding of SARS requirements as set out in the <i>Business Requirements Specification (6.4.1.1)</i>. <p>The Bidder's solution and design will meet or exceed SARS's requirements for SD-WAN availability, reliability, and connectivity, which include dual links to every site for direct internet access and one link for access to internal applications.</p>	<p>4: The Bidder understands the SARS SD-WAN requirement and can provide a secure, reliable, and redundant network to SARS's full list of sites. (The Bidder uses different Service Providers to provide the dual links to 90–100% of SARS sites.)</p> <p>0: The Bidder understands the SARS SD-WAN requirement and can provide a secure, reliable, and redundant network to some SARS's list of sites. (The Bidder uses different Service Providers to provide the dual links to less than 90% of SARS sites.)</p>	<p>4 = 7.50</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	6

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines		Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
2.3.	Bidder's SASE Solution and Capability	SARS aims to establish whether the Bidder's SASE solution combines secure connectivity, network security, and network-management capabilities into a unified cloud-based service, as set out in the <u>Business Requirements Specification (6.4.1.1.2)</u> . A solution that fully meets the requirements for a single-vendor SASE offering to deliver a converged network and security capability, will receive maximum points. The Bidder must provide its SASE solution as an integrated part of the SD-WAN design.	4: All of SARS's SASE requirements are covered with an equivalent or better solution. 0: The Bidder's SASE solution does not adequately meet SARS's requirements.		4 = 7.50 0 = 0.00	7
2.4.	Bidder's External/Public Network Connectivity	SARS aims to establish whether the Bidder has the capability to provide dedicated and high-speed connectivity to its external and public-facing third parties. A solution that fully meets the requirements set out in the <u>Business Requirements Specification (6.4.1.2)</u> for External/Public Network Connectivity will receive maximum points.	4: All SARS External / Public Network Connectivity requirements are covered. 0: The Bidder's External / Public Network Connectivity solution does not adequately meet SARS's requirements.		4 = 5.00 0 = 0.00	8
2.5.	Bidder's Private 5G Capability	SARS aims to establish the Bidder's ability to provide a reliable, high-bandwidth, and low-latency private 5G solution, with the ability to support multiple enterprise use-cases on a single network. The Bidder will be evaluated formally and generally on the following basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bidder has shown an understanding of SARS's requirements and has set out its response accordingly. The Bidder's private 5G capability will provide SARS with the ability to use a variety of edge devices at specified locations (airports, harbours, and border posts). A solution that fully meets the requirements set out in the <u>Business Requirements Specification (6.4.2.1)</u> for Private 5G Capability will receive maximum points.	4: All SARS Private 5G Capability requirements are covered. 0: The Bidder's Private 5G Capability solution does not adequately meet SARS's requirements.		4 = 2.50 0 = 0	9
2.6.	Bidder's Mobile Network Service capability (APN Solution)	SARS aims to establish the Bidder's ability to provide a mobile network, delivered via a corporate/private APN solution. The Bidder will be evaluated formally and generally on the following basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bidder has shown an understanding of SARS's requirements and has set out its response accordingly. The Bidder's Mobile Network Service will provide SARS with the ability to use the corporate/private APN solution for all its mobile requirements set out in the <u>Business Requirements Specification (6.4.3)</u> .	4: All SARS APN requirements are covered. 0: The Bidder's APN solution does not adequately meet SARS's requirements.		4 = 5.00 0 = 0.00	10
2.7.	Bidder's Digital Experience Monitoring (DES) Capability	SARS aims to establish the Bidder's ability to provide a digital experience and intelligence platform (DES) that provides real-time insight into the performance of the network infrastructure, applications, and cloud services. The Bidder will be evaluated formally and generally on the following basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bidder has shown an understanding of SARS requirements and has set out its response in accordance with <u>Business Requirements Specification (6.4.4)</u>. 	4: All SARS Digital Experience Monitoring requirements are covered. 0: The Bidder's Digital Experience Monitoring solution does not adequately meet SARS's requirements.		4 = 2.50 0 = 0	11
F2.8.	Bidder's satellite network capability	SARS aims to establish the Bidder's ability to provide satellite communication services to its remote, temporary, and mobile sites. The Bidder will be evaluated on the following basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bidder has shown an understanding of SARS requirements and has set out its response in accordance with the <u>Business Requirements Specification (6.4.1.1.1)</u>. The Bidder's satellite solution seamlessly integrates into the SD-WAN architecture to provide secure communication to the specified SARS locations.	4: All SARS satellite network capability requirements are covered. 0: The Bidder's satellite network capability solution does not adequately meet SARS's requirements.		4 = 5.00 0 = 0.00	12
2.9.	Bidder's Network Services Portal	SARS aims to establish the Bidder's ability to provide a comprehensive Network Services Portal as a platform that provides access to various network-related services, while ensuring security, reliability, and efficiency. The Bidder will be evaluated on the following basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bidder has shown an understanding of 	4: The Bidder has shown a current solution or a clear and committed plan to deliver the functionality required and to meet all the requirements. 0: The Bidder has shown a solution that is unacceptable to SARS and	Portal design (web based, user-friendly, simple, and intuitive interface)	4 = 1.25 0 = 0.00	13.1
				Range of Portal services (network design, installation, configuration, monitoring, and maintenance)	4 = 1.25 0 = 0.00	13.2

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines		Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
		SARS's requirements and has set out its response in accordance with the <u>Business Requirements Specification (6.4.5)</u> .	does not meet the specified requirements.	Cloud-hosted solution which is scalable, secure, and compatible with range of devices and browsers	4 = 1.25 0 = 0.00	13.3
				Reports of all events not repaired with the Service Levels.	4 = 1.25 0 = 0.00	13.4
2.10.	Customer Provisioning Portal	<p>SARS aims to establish the Bidder's ability to provide a centralised platform that facilitates the automated and streamlined process of provisioning and managing IT network resources within SARS.</p> <p>The Bidder will be evaluated on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bidder has shown an understanding of SARS's requirements and has set out its response in accordance with the <u>Business Requirements Specification (6.4.6)</u>. 	<p>4: The Bidder has shown a current solution or a clear and committed plan to deliver the functionality required and to meet all the requirements.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has shown a solution that is unacceptable to SARS and does not meet the specified requirements.</p>	Portal design (web based, user-friendly, simple, and intuitive interface).	4 = 2.50 0 = 0.00	14
3.	Service Management Solution				10	
3.1.	Service Management Compliance/Conformance	<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> <p>The Bidder will be evaluated on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bidder that has provided evidence of its ISO 20000 certification OR that has provided a formal IT Service Management Maturity Assessment report indicating an overall Maturity score of 4 or higher will attain the maximum score. 	<p>4: The Bidder has indicated that its organisation adheres to a best-practice Service Management framework/standard and has provided one of the following as evidence: A valid ISO 20000 certificate OR a formal IT Service Management Maturity Assessment report showing an overall organisational Maturity score of 4 (four) (quantitatively managed or equivalent) or higher.</p> <p>Bidders that provide a Maturity Assessment report as evidence, must adhere to the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Service Management Maturity Assessment must be based on the COBIT or ITIL Framework. The report must be produced by an accredited independent assessor/auditor. The letter confirming the accreditation of independent assessor/auditor must be provided. The report must be signed by the Bidder's CFO and CEO or equivalent management structures. <p>2: The Bidder has provided a formal IT Service Management Maturity Assessment report showing an overall organisational Maturity score of 3 (below 4).</p> <p>The following requirements must be met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Service Management Maturity Assessment must be based on the COBIT or ITIL Framework. The report must be produced by an accredited independent assessor/auditor. The letter confirming the accreditation of independent assessor/auditor must be produced. The report must be signed by the Bidder's CFO and CEO or equivalent management structures. <p>0: The Bidder has not demonstrated that the company adheres to a best-practice Service Management framework in line with SARS's requirements.</p> <p>For Bidders with ISO certification: The ISO certification must remain valid for the contract duration.</p> <p>For Bidders with ITSM Maturity Assessment Report: the Bidder must produce an annual IT Service Management Maturity Assessment report from an accredited auditor/assessor, signed by the CFO and CEO or equivalent management structures, confirming the maintenance of advanced and optimised IT Service Management processes in line with SARS's requirements.</p>		4 = 5.71 2 = 2.86 0 = 0.00	15A
3.2.	Service Management Toolset	<p>SARS aims to establish the level of automation of the Bidder's service-management process as a foundational element to the successful provision of IT services as stipulated in the Business Requirement Specification.</p> <p>The Bidder that can give verifiable references to confirm that the toolset used offers enough automation of its service management according to SARS's requirements will achieve maximum points for this sub-criterion.</p>	<p>4: The Bidder has demonstrated that its IT Service Management toolset/system is fully automated and well established to meet or surpass all of SARS's requirements and has provided two contactable references, confirming details of full system automation in the following domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incidents Management. Problems Management. Change Management. Configuration Management. Service level management. Performance and Capacity management. Service Management Reporting. <p>2: The Bidder has demonstrated that its IT Service Management toolset/system is fully automated and well prepared to meet or surpass all of SARS's requirements and has provided one</p>		4 = 4.29 2 = 2.15 0 = 0	15B

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
			<p>contactable reference, confirming details of full system automation in the following domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incidents Management. Problems Management. Change Management. Configuration Management. Service level management. Performance and Capacity management. Service Management Reporting. <p>0: The Bidder has not demonstrated that its IT Service Management system is fully automated and well established to meet or surpass all of SARS's functionality needs.</p> <p>SARS reserves the right to conduct due diligence to validate the information provided.</p>		
4.	Transition Criterion			10	
4.1.	Transition Team Structure and Experience	<p>SARS aims to assess the Bidder's capability to transition the services effectively. All aspects of the transition team must be adequately detailed by the Bidder's proposal. The Bidder that presents acceptable risk in achieving the requirements will score maximum points for this criterion.</p> <p>The key inquiry is: Does the Bidder's proposal for Transition as defined in the <u>Business Requirements Specification</u> include a formally defined multidisciplinary Transition team with named and experienced key resources?</p>	<p>4: The Bidder's proposal for a Transition team structure has been formally defined and includes experienced personnel who meet all of the following minimum requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All team members have experience in transitioning two projects similar in size to those stipulated by SARS. Summary of individual experience clearly stipulating the roles in the project, minimum qualification/certification based on the below areas, and roles of the team members in previous/past transitions. The different roles in the transition team's structure should fulfil the following areas of expertise at a minimum, supported by relevant experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition Management. Project Management/Programme Management. Vendor and Contract Management. IT Service Management. Technical Subject Matter Experts. <p>2: The Bidder's proposal for a Transition team structure has been formally defined and includes personnel who meet all of the following minimum requirements:</p> <p>All team members have experience in transitioning one project similar in size to SARS's.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The different roles in the transition team structure should fulfil the following areas of expertise at a minimum, supported by relevant past experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition Management. Project Management/Programme Management. Vendor and Contract Management. IT Service Management. Technical Subject Matter Experts. <p>0: The Bidder's proposal for a Transition team structure does not meet SARS's minimum requirements.</p> <p>The Bidder may provide additional areas of expertise over and above the minimum requirements, in relation to the teams' experience which the Bidder deems key to a successful transition process.</p>	<p>4 = 2.14</p> <p>2 = 1.07</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	17
4.2.	Organisational Transition Experience	<p>SARS aims to assess the Bidder's capability to transition the services effectively, as demonstrated by its past experience of transition and the complexity of the transition projects undertaken. At least two transition projects that the Bidder has performed during its service to different clients should be described with substantiating documentation by the Bidder to be eligible to achieve maximum points.</p> <p>The key inquiry is: Is the Bidder experienced in conducting Transition Projects?</p>	<p>4: The Bidder is experienced and has conducted a successful transition of at least two projects and transformation projects, similar in size and complexity to those required by SARS. The Bidder provided reference letters from two (2) clients similar in size and complexity to SARS.</p> <p>0: The Bidder does not show experience in conducting two successful transition projects of a similar size and complexity to SARS.</p> <p>NB: SARS reserves the right to validate all the information provided by the Bidder.</p>	<p>4 = 1.43</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	18A
4.3.	Transition Plan	<p>SARS aims to assess the Bidder's proposal for transitioning the services effectively. All requirements for Transitioning in the <u>Business Requirements Specification</u>, the <u>Agreement</u>, and this <u>RFP Main Document</u> must be included in the scope of the project, including the plan to meet the required timelines.</p> <p>The key inquiry is: Does the Bidder's proposal for a transition plan contain all the elements for a successful transition project?.</p>	<p>4: The Bidder's proposal for a transition plan contains the following minimum requirements for a successful transition project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly stipulated stages of the transition project (e.g. Initiation, Planning, Execution, Monitoring, Closure). The Project schedule with scope, timelines, dependencies, milestones, deliverables, based on the services provided in Tower D. The schedule must also show a maximum transition period of three (3) months and recommend timelines for the network transformation. Defined Roles and Responsibilities (between SARS, the outgoing vendor, and incoming vendor). Stakeholder Engagement and Communication. Risk Management. Deployment and migration approach. Training and Knowledge Transfer. 	<p>4 = 2.87</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	17

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality assurance. Post-Transition Support and Optimisation. Transition approach: Specify how downtime and disruptions will be minimised during the transition. <p>0: The Bidder's proposal for a transition plan does not meet SARS's minimum requirements for a successful transition project.</p>		
4.4.	Security — Organisational Management Structure	<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 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"> 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. <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>4: The Bidder has shown an approved and <u>well-appointed</u> organisational HR structure with specific reference to Information Security and Risk Management. <u>Single accountability</u> for Information Security (formally appointed CISO/ISO or equivalent). The evidence must be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter must indicate <u>all ISMS requirements</u> as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>2: The Bidder has shown approved but <u>limited appointment</u> (acting/vacant) positions in the organisational HR structure with specific reference to Information Security and Risk Management. <u>No single accountability</u> for Information Security (no appointed CISO/ISO or equivalent). The evidence must be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter must indicate <u>partial compliance</u> as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has not shown an approved or appointed organisational structure with specific reference to Information Security and Risk Management, or has demonstrated no single accountability for Information Security (no appointed CISO/ISO or equivalent).</p>	<p>4 = 0.71</p> <p>2 = 0.36</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	18A
4.5.	Security — Organisational Policy	<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"> 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. <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>4: The Bidder has shown its implemented ISM capability with specific reference to organisational strategy and <u>approved</u> Information Security Policies and Procedures (Structure) which are in line with industry standards and <u>have been formalised</u> 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>2: The Bidder has shown its implemented ISM capability with specific reference to organisational strategy, <u>draft (non-approved)</u> Information Security Policies, or Procedures (Structure) that <u>have not been formalised</u> within its organisation. The evidence must be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter must indicate partial compliance as it relates to Information Security Policies and Procedures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has no ISM capability, organisational strategy, or approved Information Security Policies or Procedures, nor are these formalised within its organisation.</p>	<p>4 = 0.71</p> <p>2 = 0.36</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	18A
4.6.	Information Security Control Measures	<p>SARS wants to know how the Bidder implements information-security control measures in its organisation. The Bidder must provide all relevant documentation that shows its information-security level and how it will benefit SARS in the delivery of the Services.</p> <p>The Bidder will be evaluated formally and generally on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bidder has shown its approach to Information Security Control Measures being implemented including a detailed description of its solution to protect data at the Bidder's site and to transmit information to and from the Bidder's site. The description should include a detailed technical diagram indicating both physical and logical protection mechanisms including information and IT security measures (logical access control 	<p>4: The Bidder has shown, with substantiation, its capability to implement Information Security Control Measures. 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 Control Measures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>2: The Bidder has shown its limited approach it has to Information Security Measures implemented. The evidence must be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter must indicate all ISMS requirements or partial compliance as it relates to Control Measures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has not shown, with any substantiation, that it has implemented any Security Control Measures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p>	<p>4 = 1.07</p> <p>2 = 0.54</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	19

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
		<p>[passwords]; firewalls; intrusion prevention; anti-virus; audit capability).</p> <p>Descriptions of appropriate safeguards (through technical controls) against the unauthorised access, destruction, loss, or alteration of SARS's confidential Information under the management of the Bidder.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of processes and procedures implemented to secure the Bidder's hardware and software, and to prevent unauthorised access to the Bidder's environment so as to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and non-repudiation of SARS's confidential information that is transmitted through or stored on Bidder's infrastructure. 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 Control Measures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework. 			
4.7.	Security Incident Management	<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.</p> <p>The Bidder will be evaluated formally and generally on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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-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. 	<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> <p>2: The Bidder has shown, with limitations, 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 or partial compliance as it relates to Security Incident Management as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has not shown and substantiated that it has implemented any Security Incident Management capability as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p>	<p>4 = 1.07</p> <p>2 = 0.54</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	20

Table 12: Technical Evaluation Criteria for Tower V

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
1.	Capability Criterion			20	
1.1.	Current Client Base	<p>SARS aims to establish the current capability of delivering services within the scope of this Tower. Bidders that can show that they are currently delivering services within the scope of this Tower to an established client base of sufficient scale will achieve maximum points.</p> <p>Documentation, such as letters of reference from the clients substantiating the Bidder's claims must be attached to achieve maximum points.</p>	<p>4: All technical elements of scope are currently delivered by the Bidder to clients. Some only to customers more than quarter the size (>4 000 staff) of SARS. Bidder to provide 3 reference letters from clients where services have been successfully rendered within a mandatory defined period. Letters are to be dated with client letterheads and authorised signatures.</p> <p>2: All technical elements of scope are delivered. Some only to customers less than quarter the size (≤3 000 staff) of SARS. Bidder to provide 2 reference letters from clients where services have been successfully rendered within a mandatory defined period. Letters are to be dated with client letterheads and authorised signatures.</p> <p>0: Most technical elements of scope are currently delivered by the Bidder. All the services are not currently delivered by the Bidder to any clients. No reference letters are provided.</p> <p>Note to Bidders: Bidders who can show that they are currently delivering services within the scope of this Tower to an established client base of sufficient scale will achieve maximum points. Documentation, such as letters of reference from the clients substantiating the Bidder's claims must be attached to achieve maximum points.</p>	<p>4 = 2.67</p> <p>2 = 1.34</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	1.1
1.2.	Sub-contractor/ Underlying Carrier	<p>SARS seeks to establish the extent to which the Bidder places reliance on third parties generally to deliver the services; the formality with which third parties have been engaged for the Bidder's Proposal; and the track record of the Bidder working together with the particular third parties. Bidders who can show that the level of reliance on third parties and the formality with which it has engaged such third parties as sub-contractors do not pose a risk to the delivery of service to SARS will achieve maximum points for this criterion. The Bidder must attach documentation to substantiate its claims to achieve maximum points.</p>	<p>4: All third parties engaged as part of the Bidder's proposal have been formally engaged and the Bidder has established relationships. The Bidder relies on underlying carriers, but does not subcontract voice services (inbound and outbound calls).</p> <p>2: All third parties engaged as part of the Bidder's proposal have been formally engaged and the Bidder has established relationships. The Bidder relies on underlying carriers, but subcontracts a significant (<40%) of the voice services (inbound and outbound calls).</p> <p>0: Third parties engaged as part of the Bidder's proposal are not formally engaged and the Bidder has established relationships. The Bidder relies on underlying carriers, but subcontracts a significant (>70%) of the voice services (inbound and outbound calls).</p>	<p>4 = 4.00</p> <p>2 = 2.00</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	1.2

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines			Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
1.3.	Bidder's Strategic Direction	SARS seeks to establish the extent to which the Bidder has a commitment to provide services based on each of the technologies listed. The Bidder's strategic direction with regard to developing new technologies and replacing older technologies must include informing SARS of enhancements to the services within this Tower. The Bidder must attach documentation to support any claims made.	4: The Bidder has a national footprint in implementing each of the technologies listed. (National Footprint means all 9 Provinces.)	SIP	4 = 2.00 2 = 1.00 0 = 0.00	1.3	
			2: The Bidder has a footprint in implementing each of the technologies listed in at least 4 of the biggest Metros of South Africa.	Microsoft Teams	4 = 2.00 2 = 1.00 0 = 0.00	1.3	
			0: The Bidder does not have any experience in implementing the listed technologies in any of the major Provinces.	Hosted Voice	4 = 0.67 2 = 0.34 0 = 0.00	1.3	
			Note to Bidders: The Bidder should describe its commitment to providing the technology, enhancements, migration to newer technologies, opportunities newer technologies may bring, cost savings, and any other information that will show opportunity for the reduction in risk.	Service Management	4 = 1.33 2 = 0.67 0 = + 0.00	1.3	
				Innovation	4 = 1.33 2 = 0.67 0 = 0.00	1.3	
1.4.	Service Centres	SARS aims to establish the depth of skills and capabilities that the Bidder (and its sub-contractors) will bring to bear in delivering services to SARS. Bidders who can show that its existing Service Centres have sufficient coverage of required skills will achieve maximum points. SARS will consider the extent to which Service Centres that are not yet established are relied upon to provide distribution of skills.	4: The Bidder should have a 24/7 Service Centre with the required third-line support skills. The Bidder must provide documents with the names of the employees, including their certified skills and number of years' experience. 2: The Bidder has a 24/7 Service Centre, but only has first- and second-line support skills. The Bidder must provide documents with the names of the employees who have technical voice experience and their certifications. 0: The Bidder does not have a 24/7 Service Centre and does not have the required support skills. Note to Bidders: Service Centres are required in Gauteng region at SARS's Brooklyn Lae La SARS headquarters, Alberton Campus, and Doringkloof, where the Bidder's equipment will be deployed. The Bidder's Service Centres must also serve the region where any equipment or software is deployed at the Bidder's hosting facility or at any of the Bidder's points of presence (POP) to deliver the requested services. Voice to all SARS branches will be routed over the Data Carrier provider's network, prioritised as required.			4 = 2.67 2 = 1.34 0 = 0.00	1.4
1.5.	Skills	SARS aims to establish the depth of skills that the Bidder (including its sub-contractors) will offer to SARS, if required by SARS, for projects or operations to run from SARS's Head Office, Alberton Campus, or Doringkloof office.	4: The Bidder exceeds the requirement, with no reliance on sub-contractors.	Skill	Min # Of Skills Required	Weight	TRT Reference
			2: Meets at least 50% of the requirement, with reliance on sub-contractors.	Voice-Related OEM Certification (CISCO CCIE or similar with 3 Years' Voice Experience).	5	4 = 1.33 2 = 0.67 0 = 0.00	1.5
			0: Does not meet the requirement at all.	Voice Network Design and Architecture Skills (CISCO CCDA or similar with 3 Years' Experience).	2	4 = 1.33 2 = 0.67 0 = 0.00	1.5
				Project Management (PMBOK Certified with 3 Years' Experience).	2	4 = 0.67 2 = 0.34 0 = 0.00	1.5
2.	Technical Solution					40	
2.1.	Bidder Organisation: Voice Points of Presence	SARS aims to establish the Bidder's current distribution of Voice POPs, both current and planned, to be used to deliver SARS voice services. Bidders with currently established voice locations and those planned near the SARS Sites (Alberton and Doringkloof) will score maximum points for this sub-criterion.	4: The Bidder's current Voice network has POPs in 100% - 70% of all SARS Sites per SARS's site list for Tower V, including designated Voice breakouts (Alberton Campus, Brooklyn, and Doringkloof). 2: The Bidder's current Voice network has POPs in 69%- 50% of all SARS sites per SARS's site list for Tower V, including designated Voice breakouts (Alberton Campus, Brooklyn, and Doringkloof). 0: The Bidder's current Voice network has POPs in less than 49% of all SARS sites per SARS's site list for Tower V; the Bidder has no designated Voice breakouts for Alberton Campus, Brooklyn, and Doringkloof).			4 = 13.34 2 = 6.67 0 = 0.00	2.1
2.2.	Interconnect to other Voice Operators	SARS aims to establish the Bidder's capability in delivering a complete voice solution to subscribers of all voice networks. Bidders who can show that they have direct interconnect agreements with all local voice providers will score maximum points for this criterion.	4: The Bidder can provide proof of an agreement between the Bidder and the major voice providers (Vodacom and MTN), plus any one of the following interconnect networks: Telkom, Vox Telecoms, and Liquid Technologies. 2: The Bidder can provide proof of an agreement between the Bidder and the major voice providers (Vodacom or MTN). 0: The Bidder does not have any interconnect agreements with any of the voice providers.			4 = 13.33 2 = 6.67 0 = 0.00	2.2
2.3.	Preferred Inbound Voice Carrier Solution (Preferred Inbound Voice Bidders Only)	Preferred Inbound Voice Carrier Bidders will be evaluated on the following basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Bidder has shown an understanding of SARS's requirements.The information set out meets the requirements.The Bidder's solution will meet or	4: The Bidder has proposed a complete Inbound SIP Trunk solution that covers 100% of the solution with geographical redundancy options. Geographical redundancy means that the VoIP solution will connect to both ALB and DRK. This will offer geo-redundancy to SARS Test-and Production Sites, with a VoIP Platform for automatic failover should a site-specific SIP Instance fail, and vice versa. Currently, the design is an "Active-Active" fully geo-redundant system. The Preferred Inbound Voice Carrier provider must provide a SIP Trunking solution for break-in and -out at Alberton campus, Brooklyn (Pretoria), and Doringkloof offices. This must support G.729 Codecs, G2, G3, and			4 = 13.33 0 = 0.00	2.3

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
		<p>exceed SARS's requirements for connectivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bidder's solution represents a low risk to the take-on and on-going delivery of these Services. 	<p>G4 Fax (T.38); direct dialling inward; direct dialling outward; caller-line identification presentation; caller-line identification restriction; call forward; and number barring. The SIP Trunk solution must be fully redundant with 24/7 support. Minimum concurrent SIP sessions should be 1 860 per site to support G.729. Please refer to the BRS for the full requirement.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has not proposed a complete solution that meets all requirements for all SARS sites</p> <p>Note to Bidder/Evaluator: The Bidder must provide interconnectivity for voice calls within and outside South Africa. The SIP Trunk service must be scalable.</p>		
2.4.	Preferred Outbound Voice Carrier Solution (Preferred Outbound Voice Bidders Only)	<p>Preferred Outbound Voice Carrier Bidders will be evaluated on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bidder has shown an understanding of SARS's requirements. The information set out meets the requirements. The Bidder's solution will meet or exceed SARS's requirements for connectivity. The Bidder's solution represents a low risk to the take-on and on-going delivery of these Services. 	<p>4: The Bidder must provide statistical data showing that its network can accommodate more than 35 000 outbound calls a day, which must be routed directly to the cellular network providers' network via interconnection links with a call quality MoS value of not less than 3.8. All outbound traffic must be routed via dedicated Voice Links. The requirement is that all SARS offices will use outbound calls. All voice links must be fully redundant, with a secondary link in place. The call routing must be based on least-cost routing.</p> <p>0: The Bidder can provide only a maximum of 35 000 outbound calls on its network and cannot guarantee a call quality MoS value of higher than 3.8.</p>	<p>4 = 13.33</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	2.4
3.	Service Management Solution			20	
3.1.	Service Management Compliance/Conformance	<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-service management. The Bidder must demonstrate its commitment to delivering high-quality IT services and to continuously improve its service-management processes in line with SARS's requirements.</p> <p>The Bidder will be evaluated on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bidder that has provided evidence of its ISO 20000 certification OR has provided a formal IT Service Management Maturity Assessment report indicating an overall Maturity score of 4 or higher will attain the maximum score. 	<p>4: The Bidder has indicated that their organisation adheres to a best practice Service Management framework/standard and has provided one of the following as evidence: A valid ISO 20000 certificate OR a formal IT Service Management Maturity Assessment report showing an overall organisational Maturity score of 4 (four) (quantitatively managed or equivalent) or higher.</p> <p>Bidders that provide a Maturity Assessment report as evidence, must adhere to the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Service Management Maturity Assessment must be based on the COBIT or ITIL Framework The report must be produced by an accredited independent assessor/auditor. The letter confirming the accreditation of independent assessor/auditor must be provided. The report must be signed by the Bidder's CFO and CEO or equivalent. <p>2: The Bidder has provided a formal IT Service Management Maturity Assessment report showing an overall organisational Maturity score of 3 (below 4).</p> <p>The following requirements must be met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Service Management Maturity Assessment must be based on the COBIT or ITIL Framework The report must be produced by an accredited independent assessor/auditor. The letter confirming the accreditation of independent assessor/auditor must be produced. The report must be signed by the Bidder's CFO and CEO or equivalent management structure. <p>0: The Bidder has not demonstrated that the company adheres to a best-practice Service Management framework in line with SARS's requirements.</p> <p>For Bidders with ISO certification: The ISO certification must remain valid for the contract duration.</p> <p>For Bidders with ITSM Maturity Assessment Report: The Bidder must produce an annual IT Service Management Maturity Assessment report from an accredited auditor/ assessor, signed by the CFO and CEO or equivalent management structure confirming the maintenance of advanced and optimised IT Service Management processes in line with SARS's requirements.</p>	<p>4 = 2.80</p> <p>2 = 1.40</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	3.1
3.2.	Service Management Toolset	<p>SARS aims to establish the level of automation of the Bidder's service-management process as a foundational element to the successful provision of IT services as stipulated in the Business Requirement Specification.</p> <p>The Bidder that can give verifiable references to confirm that the toolset used offers enough automation of its service management according to SARS's requirements will achieve maximum points for this sub-criterion.</p>	<p>4: The Bidder has demonstrated that its IT Service Management toolset/system is fully automated and well established to meet or surpass all of SARS's requirements. The Bidder has also provided two contactable references, confirming details of full system automation in the following domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incidents Management. Problems Management. Change Management. Configuration Management. Service Level Management. Performance and Capacity Management. Service Management Reporting. <p>2: The Bidder has demonstrated that its IT Service Management toolset/system is fully automated and well prepared to meet or surpass all of SARS's requirements. The Bidder has also provided one</p>	<p>4 = 2.70</p> <p>2 = 1.35</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	3.2

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines		Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
			contactable reference , confirming details of full system automation in the following domains: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Incidents Management.Problems Management.Change Management.Configuration Management.Service Level Management.Performance and Capacity Management.Service Management Reporting. 0: The Bidder has not demonstrated that its IT Service Management system is fully automated and well established to meet or surpass all of SARS's functionality needs. SARS reserves the right to conduct a due diligence to ensure validity of provided information.			
3.3.	Bidder's Solution for Monitoring and Reporting Portal (All Voice Proposals)	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's solution for effectiveness in achieving the specifications as set out in the Business Requirements Specification. A solution that adequately fulfils all aspects of the requirements listed above and which presents little or no risk to SARS will score maximum points for this criterion.	4: The Bidder has shown a current solution or a clear and committed plan to deliver the functionality required and to meet all the requirements. 0: The Bidder has shown a solution that is unacceptable to SARS and does not meet the specified requirements.	Bidder's Solution for Monitoring and Reporting Portal: Real-time (or near real-time with no longer than 10 minutes' delayed updating).	4 = 2.50 0 = 0.00	3.4
				Monitoring and Reporting Portal: Reports of all outages.	4 = 2.50 0 = 0.00	3.4
				Monitoring and Reporting Portal: Reports of all events not repaired with the Service Levels.	4 = 2.50 0 = 0.00	3.4
				Monitoring and Reporting Portal: Problem trends.	4 = 2.50 0 = 0.00	3.4
				Monitoring and Reporting Portal: Utilisation trends.	4 = 1.50 0 = 0.00	3.4
				Ad-hoc Daily Call Volume Reports to be submitted when requested.	4 = 1.50 0 = 0.00	3.4
				Ad-hoc Daily Call Volume Reports to be submitted when requested.	4 = 1.50 0 = 0.00	3.4
4.	Transition Criterion				20	
4.1.	Transition Team Structure and Experience	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's capability to transition the services effectively. The Bidder that explains all aspects of the transition team listed above and poses least risk to SARS will score maximum points for this criterion. The key inquiry is: Does the Bidder's proposal for Transition as defined in the <u>Business Requirements Specification</u> include a formally defined multidisciplinary Transition team with named and experienced key resources?	4: The Bidder's proposal for a Transition team structure has been formally defined and includes experienced personnel who meet all of the following minimum requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">All team members have experience in transitioning two projects similar in size to SARS's requirements.Summary of individual experience clearly stipulating the roles in the project, minimum qualification/certification based on the areas below, and roles of team members in previous/past transitions.The different roles in the transition team's structure should fulfil the following areas of expertise at a minimum, supported by relevant experience:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Transition Management.Project Management/Programme Management.Vendor and Contract Management.IT Service Management.Technical Subject Matter Experts. 2: The Bidder's proposal for a Transition team structure has been formally defined and includes personnel who meet all of the following minimum requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Each team member has experience in transitioning one project similar in size to those required by SARS.The different roles in the transition team structure should fulfil the following areas of expertise at a minimum, supported by relevant past experience:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Transition Management.Project Management/Programme Management.Vendor and Contract Management.IT Service Management.Technical Subject Matter Experts. 0: The Bidder's proposal for a Transition team structure does not meet SARS's minimum requirements. The Bidder may provide additional areas of expertise over and above the minimum requirements, in relation to the teams' experience which they deem key to a successful transition process.		4 = 7.21 2 = 3.61 0 = 0.00	4.1
4.2.	Transition Plan	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's proposal for transitioning the services effectively. All requirements for Transitioning in the <u>Business Requirements Specification</u> , the <u>Agreement</u> , and this <u>RFP Main Document</u> must be included in the scope of the project, including the plan to meet the required timelines. The key inquiry is: Does the Bidder's proposal for a transition plan contain all the elements for a successful transition?	4: The Bidder's proposal for a transition plan contains the following minimum requirements for a successful transition project as outlined below: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Clearly stipulated stages of the transition project (e.g. Initiation, Planning, Execution, Monitoring, Closure).The Project schedule with scope, timelines, dependencies, milestones, and deliverables, based on the services provided in Tower V and showing a maximum transition period of 3 months. The Bidder must also recommend timelines for the network transformation.Defined Roles and Responsibilities (between SARS, the outgoing vendor, and incoming vendor).		4 = 5.47 0 = 0.00	4.2

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder Engagement and Communication. Risk Management. Deployment and Migration Approach. Training and Knowledge Transfer. Quality Assurance. Post-Transition Support and Optimisation. Transition Approach: Specify how downtime and disruptions will be minimised during the transition. <p>0: The Bidder's proposal for a transition plan does not meet SARS's minimum requirements for a successful transition project.</p>		
4.3.	Security — Organisational Management Structure	<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. The Bidder must give as much information as possible to show 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"> 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. <p>Bidders who have a single point of accountability regarding Information Security (formal appointed CISO/ISO or equivalent) will achieve maximum points for this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence needs to be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter needs to indicate all ISMS requirements as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p>	<p>4: The Bidder has shown an approved and <u>well-appointed</u> organisational HR structure with specific reference to Information Security and Risk management. <u>Single point of accountability</u> for Information Security (formally appointed CISO/ISO or equivalent). The evidence needs to be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter needs to indicate <u>all ISMS requirements</u> as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>2: The Bidder has approved but <u>limited appointment</u> (acting/vacant) positions in the organisational HR structure with specific reference to Information Security and Risk Management. <u>No single point of accountability</u> for Information Security (no appointed CISO/ISO or equivalent). The evidence needs to be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter needs to indicate <u>partial compliance</u> as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has not shown an approved or appointed organisational structure with specific reference to Information Security and Risk Management, or has no single point of accountability for Information Security (no appointed CISO/ISO or equivalent).</p>	<p>4 = 1.83</p> <p>2 = 0.92</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	4.3
4.4.	Security — Organisational Policy	<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. 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"> The Bidder has shown its implemented ISM capability with specific reference to organisational strategy and approved Information Security Policies and Procedures (Structure) that are in line with industry standards and which have been formalised within its organisation. <p>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 Information Security Policies and Procedures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p>	<p>4: The Bidder has shown its implemented ISM capability with specific reference to organisational strategy and <u>approved</u> Information Security Policies and Procedures (Structure) that are in line with industry standards, and which <u>have been formalised</u> within its organisation. 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 Information Security Policies and Procedures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>2: The Bidder has shown its implemented ISM capability with specific reference to organisational strategy, <u>draft (non-approved)</u> Information Security Policies, or Procedures (Structure) that <u>have not been formalised</u> within its organisation. The evidence needs to be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter needs to indicate partial compliance as it relates to Information Security Policies and Procedures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has no ISM capability, organisational strategy, or approved Information Security Policies or Procedures, nor are these formalised within its organisation.</p>	<p>4 = 1.83</p> <p>2 = 0.92</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	4.4
4.5.	Information Security Control Measures	<p>SARS wants to know how the Bidder implements information-security control measures in its organisation. The Bidder must provide all relevant documentation that shows its information-security level and how it will benefit SARS in the delivery of the Services.</p> <p>The Bidder will be evaluated formally and generally on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bidder has shown its approach to Information Security Control Measures being implemented, including a detailed description of its solution regarding the protection of data at the Bidder's site and the transmission of information to and from the Bidder's site. The 	<p>4: The Bidder has shown, with substantiation, its capability to implement Information Security Control Measures. 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 Control Measures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>2: The Bidder has shown the limited approach it has to Information Security Measures implemented. The evidence needs to be provided by the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor and the compliance letter needs to indicate all ISMS requirements or partial compliance as it relates to Control Measures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has not shown and substantiated that it has implemented any Security Control Measures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p>	<p>4 = 1.83</p> <p>2 = 0.92</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	4.5

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
		<p>description should include a detailed technical diagram indicating both physical and logical protection mechanisms including information and IT-security measures (logical access control [passwords]; firewalls; intrusion prevention; anti-virus; audit capability).</p> <p>Descriptions of appropriate safeguards (through technical controls) against the unauthorised access, destruction, loss, or alteration of SARS's confidential information under the management of the Bidder.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of processes and procedures implemented to secure the Bidder's hardware and software, and to prevent unauthorised access to the Bidder's environment so as to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and non-repudiation of SARS's confidential information that is transmitted through or stored on Bidder's infrastructure. 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 Control Measures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework. 			
4.6.	Security Incident Management	<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.</p> <p>The Bidder will be evaluated formally and generally on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bidder has shown its approach to Security Incident Management as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework, which includes Identification, Assessment, Decision, and Response to information-security events. <p>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>	<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> <p>2: The Bidder has shown, with limitations, 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 or partial compliance as it relates to Security Incident Management as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has not shown and substantiated that it has implemented any Security Incident Management capability as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.</p>	<p>4 = 1.83</p> <p>2 = 0.92</p> <p>0 = 0.00</p>	4.6

NB: For the Technical Solution Response Templates, a Bidder will respond only to and be scored on either the Preferred Inbound Voice Carrier Solution (2.3) or Preferred Outbound Voice Carrier Solution (2.4) or on both if bidding for Inbound and Outbound

Table 13: Technical Evaluation Criteria for Tower C, All Categories

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
1.	Capability Criterion Evaluation			25	
1.1.	Direct Links to Mobile Network Operators	<p>SARS aims to establish the Bidder's current capability to deliver SMS, USSD, MMS, and short messages across secure links to mobile operators (MOs).</p> <p>A Bidder must demonstrate that it is currently carrying SMS traffic directly to all South African MOs. The Bidder will be required to provide a confirmation letter from each network operator.</p>	<p>5: A proposal confirming that a secure link (encrypted and VPN) is in place from the Bidder's short message service centre (SMSC) to all the MOs with redundancy and security. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder.</p> <p>3: A proposal confirming that a partially secure link is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder.</p> <p>0: An unsecured link is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs.</p> <p>The SMSC.</p>	5	1
1.2.	Direct Links to Operators	<p>SARS aims to establish the Bidder's current capability to deliver emails, letters, live chat, AI/LLM, or similar services across secure channels to the "operator" (Meta/other).</p> <p>A Bidder must demonstrate that it is currently carrying the service traffic directly to the South African-based entity interfacing into the "operator" (Meta/other). The Bidder will be required to provide a confirmation letter from the operator.</p>	<p>5: A proposal confirming that a secure link (encrypted and VPN) is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs with redundancy and security. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder.</p> <p>3: A proposal confirming that a partially secure link is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder.</p> <p>0: An unsecured link is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs.</p>	5	2

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines		Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
1.3.	Bidder's Strategic Direction	SARS seeks to establish the extent to which the Bidder has a commitment to providing CPaaS end-to-end from the taxpayer, staff, and citizens to SARS and back to the taxpayer based on each of the required technologies within the scope listed. The Bidder's strategic direction with regard to resolving tactical issues in South Africa — such as accommodating increasing load shedding, guaranteeing end-to-end value-chain availability of 99.9% with no interruptions, and developing new technologies and replacing older technologies — must inform SARS of enhancements to the services within this Tower. The Bidder should attach documentation to support any claims made about high availability and load shedding. The Bidder must provide a confirmation letter on its letterhead stating its strategic commitment and plans in place or deadlines to implement such plans. The Bidder's confirmation letter must also list factors that may affect service delivery from the client to SARS and back to the client via the Bidder's value chain (e.g. load shedding and data-centre load/availability).	5: The Bidder's commitment to the factors that affect its service delivery to the SARS client poses no risk to SARS. The Bidder's confirmation letter demonstrates a 99.9% solution availability. 3: The Bidder's commitment to the technology poses some risk to SARS, but is acceptable. The Bidder commits to 95–99.8% solution availability. 0: Unacceptably high level of risk in the Bidder's commitment to the technology. Less than 95% solution availability.		5	3
1.4.	Skills	SARS aims to establish the depth of skills that the Bidder (including its sub-contractors) will offer to SARS, if required by SARS, for projects/assignments run from SARS's head office, or at SARS sites nationwide. A Bidder who can show sufficient coverage of all technical-skill categories available for such assignments will be eligible to achieve maximum points for this sub-criterion.	5: At least one (1) resource with five (5) years' experience with relevant documentation (CV, Certificates, Reference letters). 3: At least one (1) resource with three (3) to four (4) years' experience with relevant documentation (CV, Certificates, Reference letters). 0: Resources with less than three (3) years' experience or with no relevant documentation.	Skill	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
				CPaaS design and architecture skills (minimum of 5 years' experience as an enterprise architect specialising in CPaaS).	5	4
				Technical account management skills (minimum of 5 years' project-management and ITSM experience and ITIL Foundation or COBIT 5 certification).	5	4
2.	Technical Solution Criterion				30	
2.1.	SMS, USSD, Short Message, MMS, Short URL Link Carrier Solution	SARS seeks information to establish whether the Bidder has a developed message-carrier solution that will meet SARS's message-carrier-service requirements. Bidders who propose a full solution with no single points of failure will receive maximum points for this criterion. The Bidder must provide an architectural diagram specifying the components of the solution, including a published API specification. The Bidder must also include the protocol supported (SMPP, SOAP-WS, Restful WS).	10: Bidder has a fully developed message-carrier solution substantiated by an architectural diagram, which has a failover and published API that support SMPP, SOAP-WS, and Restful-WS. 5: Bidder has a developed message-carrier solution which has a failover and published API that support any two of these three: SMPP, SOAP-WS, and Restful-WS. 0: Bidder has a developed message-carrier solution that supports only one or zero of these three: SMPP, SOAP-WS, and Restful-WS.		10	5.1
2.2.	Email Equipment Services Solution	SARS is seeking information to establish whether the Bidder has a developed email-message carrier solution which will meet SARS's email-message-carrier service requirements. Bidders that propose a full solution with no single points of failure will receive maximum points for this criterion. The Bidder is expected to provide an architectural diagram specifying the components of the solution, including a published API specification. It must also include the protocol supported: Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP).	5: Bidder has a fully developed message-carrier solution substantiated by an architectural diagram, which has a failover, and a published API that supports SMTP. 3: Bidder has a fully developed message-carrier solution substantiated by an architectural diagram, with a single point of failure, and a published API which supports SMTP. 0: Bidder does not have a developed message-carrier solution.		5	5.2
2.3.	Printed Letters Solution	SARS is seeking information to establish whether the Bidder has a developed message-carrier solution that will meet SARS's message-carrier-service requirements. Bidders that propose a full solution with no single points of failure will receive maximum points for this criterion. The Bidder is expected to provide an architectural diagram specifying the components of the solution, including a published API	5: Bidder has a fully developed message-carrier solution substantiated by an architectural diagram, which has a failover, and a published API that support MQ. 3: Bidder has developed message-carrier solution with single points of failure. 0: Bidder does not have a developed message-carrier solution.		5	5.3

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
		specification. It must also include the protocol supported (MQ).			
2.4.	Live chat and AI/LLM Carrier Solution	SARS is seeking information to establish whether the Bidder has a developed message-carrier solution that will meet SARS's message-carrier service requirements. Bidders that propose a full solution with no single points of failure will receive maximum points for this criterion. The Bidder is expected to provide an architectural diagram specifying the components of the solution, including a published API specification. It must also include the protocol supported (SMPP, SOAP, RESTFUL, SMTP).	5: Bidder has a fully developed message-carrier solution substantiated by an architectural diagram, which has a failover, and a published API that supports SMPP, SOAP, RESTFUL, SMTP. 3: Bidder has a developed message-carrier solution with single points of failure and a published API that supports SMPP, SOAP, RESTFUL, SMTP. 0: Bidder does not have a developed message-carrier solution.	5	5.4
2.5.	Firewall Service	SARS is seeking information to establish whether the Bidder has a developed firewall service or supports such a service which will meet SARS's message-carrier-service requirements. Bidders that propose a full solution with no single points of failure will receive maximum points for this criterion. The Bidder is expected to provide an architectural diagram specifying the components of the firewall.	5: Provide a high-level architecture diagram with IP addresses and ports which should be opened for communication. 3: Provide a high-level architecture diagram without IP addresses and ports which should be opened for communication. 0: Bidder does not have an architecture diagram.	5	5.5
3.	Service Management Solution Criterion			30	
3.1.	Service Management Maturity	SARS aims to establish the maturity of the Bidder's service management process(es) as a foundational element for the successful provision of services. Formal assessment scores meeting or exceeding a certain maturity level (quantitatively managed or equivalent) will score maximum points for this criterion.	5: The Bidder has conducted service-management process assessments, including certification achievements in the last five (5) years from the closing date of the tender and has achieved a minimum maturity-level score of 3.5. 3: The Bidder has conducted service-management process assessments, including certification achievements in the last five (5) years and has achieved a minimum maturity-level score of 3–3.4. 0: The Bidder has not conducted service-management process assessments, including certification achievements in the last five (5) years and achieved a minimum maturity-level score of less than 3. Service-assessments report will be required.	5	6.1
3.2.	Service Management Toolset	SARS aims to establish the level of automation of the Bidder's service-management process as a foundational element to the successful provision of services. A Bidder will score maximum points for this sub-criterion if it can show through a confirmation letter that the toolset employed provides sufficient automation of its service management, and that the toolset is established in the organisation so that the execution of service-management functions should present little or no risk to SARS.	5: The Bidder's automated service-management capability has been designed and built to standard service management framework(s). Confirmation letter of the service management tool used with its capabilities (problem, incident, service requests, release, change, event, and knowledge management). 3: The Bidder's automated service-management capability has not been designed to standard service-management framework(s), but may still cater for SARS's requirements. (medium risk). Confirmation letter of the service-management tool used with its capabilities. At least one capability missing. 0: The Bidder does not have automated service-management capability designed to standard service-management framework(s) and there is high risk for SARS in the approach. In determining the risk, the evaluator should assess the amount of detail provided, and how the responses reflect risk in attaining the required level of service-management as specified in the Business Requirements Specification.	5	6.2
3.3.	Bidder's Solution for Monitoring and Reporting Portal	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's solution for its effectiveness in achieving the specifications as set out in the Business Requirements Specification. A Bidder must provide an architectural diagram of its monitoring and reporting tool, plus a user manual, containing screenshots of the solution, and sample reports provided by the solution. The solution should contain functionality to deal with real-time monitoring of all relevant aspects of the channel (SMS, USSD, short messages, letters, emails), including circuits to the MOs, capacity utilisation of critical elements, and queue status. Additionally, the service provider must provide up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics for all in-scope elements of the SMS carrier services over the term of the agreement, including traffic volumes, incidents and problems, and a breakdown of volumes per channel and, within each channel, the relevant department or cost centre. A Bidder must provide monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions to	20: The Bidder has shown a current solution to deliver the functionality required (real-time monitoring, up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics, and monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions). 10: The Bidder has shown a current solution to deliver one or two of the functionalities required (real-time monitoring, up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics, and monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions). 0: The Bidder does not have a current solution to deliver any of the required functionality.	20	6.3

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
		detect unusual usage and ensure reconciliation of invoices to SARS data. Real-time (or near-real-time with no longer than 10 minutes' delayed updating.			
4.	Transition, Risk, and Quality Criterion			15	
4.1.	Transition Team	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's capability to transition the services effectively. All aspects of the transition team (team structure, escalation, key personnel, experience, & related qualifications) must be adequately explained by the Bidder's proposal, supported by relevant documentation (CV, Certifications, Reference letters) and it must present acceptable risk in achieving the requirements to score maximum points for this criterion. The key inquiry is: Does the Bidder's proposal for transition include a formally defined transition team with named and experienced key resources?	5: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team structure has been formally defined and includes personnel in key positions who have at least one personnel with three (3) years' experience in conducting transition projects. (The effect of the transition project will be little/no risk to SARS.) 3: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team structure has mostly been defined and includes personnel in key positions that who less than three (3) years' experience in conducting projects. (The effect of the transition project will be medium and may pose acceptable risk to SARS.) 0: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team presents unacceptable risk to SARS (no experience).	5	7.1
4.2.	Transition Experience	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's capability to transition the services effectively by its experience of transition and the complexity of the transition projects undertaken. To achieve maximum points, the bidder must describe at least three(3) transition projects that the Bidder has performed during services for different clients, and submit substantiating documentation supported by relevant documentation (CV, Certifications, Reference letters). The key inquiry is: Is the Bidder experienced in conducting transition projects?	5: The Bidder has three (3) or more completed transition-reference letters. (The effect of the transition project will be little/no risk to SARS.) 3: The Bidder has from one (1) to two(2) completed reference letters showing successful transition projects of a similar nature to what is required. (The effect of the transition project will pose acceptable risk to SARS.) 0: The Bidder does not show experience (less than a year) in conducting successful transition projects of a similar nature to what is required. (The effect of the transition project will pose unacceptable risk to SARS.)	5	7.2
4.3.	Transition Plan	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's proposal for transitioning the services effectively. All requirements for transitioning in the <u>Business Requirements Specification</u> , the <u>Agreement</u> , and the <u>RFP Main Document</u> must be included in the scope of the project, including the plan to meet the required timelines. The key inquiry is: Does the Bidder's proposal for a transition plan contain all the elements for a successful transition?	5: Bidder has submitted a transition plan that meets the three-month transition period. 3: Bidder has submitted a transition plan without timelines or timelines that are beyond the three-month transition period. 0: Bidder has not submitted a transition plan.	5	7.3

Table 14: Technical Evaluation Criteria for Tower C, Category A

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
1.	Capability Criterion Evaluation			25	
1.1.	Direct links to Mobile Network Operators	SARS aims to establish the Bidder's current capability for delivering SMS, USSD, MMS, and short messages across secure links to the MOs. A Bidder must demonstrate that it is carrying SMS traffic directly to all South African MOs. The Bidder will be required to provide a confirmation letter from each network operator.	5: A proposal confirming a secure link (encrypted and VPN) is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs with redundancy and security. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder. 3: A proposal confirming a partially secure link is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder. 0: An unsecured link is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs. The SMSC.	5	1
1.2.	Direct links to Operators	SARS aims to establish the Bidder's current capability for delivering SMS, USSD, MMS, and short messages across secure to the "operator" (Meta/other). A Bidder must demonstrate that it is carrying the service traffic directly to the South African-based entity interfacing into the "operator" (Meta/other). The Bidder will be required to provide a confirmation letter from the operator.	5: A proposal confirming a secure link (encrypted and VPN) is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs with redundancy and security. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder. 3: A proposal confirming a partially secure link is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder. 0: An unsecured link is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs.	5	2
1.3.	Bidder's Strategic Direction	SARS seeks to establish the extent to which the Bidder has a commitment to providing CPaaS end-to-end from the taxpayer, staff, and citizens to SARS and back to the taxpayer based on each of the required technologies within the scope listed. The Bidder's strategic direction	5: The Bidder's commitment to the factors that affect its service delivery to the SARS client poses no risk to SARS. Bidder's confirmation letter that will demonstrate a 99.9% solution availability.	5	3

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines		Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
		with regard to resolving tactical issues in South Africa — such as accommodating increasing load shedding, guaranteeing end-to-end value-chain availability of 99.9% with no interruptions, and developing new technologies and replacing older technologies — must inform SARS of enhancements to the services within this Tower.. Documentation should be attached by the Bidder to support any claims made about high availability and load shedding. The Bidder must provide a confirmation letter on its letterhead stating its strategic commitment and plans in place or deadlines to implement such plans. The Bidder's confirmation letter must also list factors that may affect service delivery from the client to SARS and back to the client via the Bidder's value chain (e.g. load shedding and data-centre load/availability)..	3: The Bidder's commitment to the technology poses some risk to SARS, but is acceptable. Bidder commits to 95–99.8% solution availability. 0: Unacceptably high level of risk in the Bidder's commitment to the technology. Less than 95% solution availability.			
1.4.	Skills	SARS aims to establish the depth of skills that the Bidder (including its sub-contractors) will offer to SARS, if required by SARS, for projects/assignments run from SARS's head office, or at SARS Sites nation-wide. A Bidder who can show sufficient coverage of all technical skills categories available for such assignments will be eligible for maximum points for this sub-criterion.	5: At least one (1) resource with five (5) years' experience with relevant documentation (CV, Certificates, Reference letters).. 3: At least one (1) resource with three (3) to four (4) years' experience with relevant documentation (CV, Certificates, Reference letters).. 0: Resource with less than three (3) years' experience or with no relevant documentation.	Skill	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
				CPaaS design and architecture skills (minimum of 5 years' experience as an enterprise architect specialising in CPaaS).	5	4
				Technical account management skills (minimum of 5 years' project-management and ITSM experience, and ITIL foundation or COBIT 5 certification).	5	4
2.	Technical Solution Criterion				30	
2.1.	SMS, USSD, Short Message, MMS, short URL link Carrier Solution	SARS is seeking information to establish whether the Bidder has a developed message-carrier solution which will meet SARS's message-carrier services requirements. Bidders who propose a full solution with no single points of failure will receive maximum points for this criterion. The Bidder is expected to provide an architectural diagram specifying the components of the solution, including a published API specification. It must also include the protocol supported (SMPP, SOAP-WS, Restful WS).	25: Bidder has a fully developed message-carrier solution substantiated by an architectural diagram, which has a failover and published API that supports SMPP, SOAP-WS, and Restful-WS. 15: Bidder has a developed message-carrier solution, which has a failover and published API that supports any two of these three: SMPP, SOAP-WS, and Restful-WS. 0: Bidder has a developed message-carrier solution that supports only one or zero of these three: SMPP, SOAP-WS, and Restful-WS.		25	5.1
2.2.	Firewall service	SARS is seeking information to establish whether the Bidder has a developed/ firewall service or supports such a service which will meet SARS's message-carrier service requirements. Bidders who propose a full solution with no single points of failure will receive maximum points for this criterion. The Bidder is expected to provide an architectural diagram specifying the components of the firewall.	5: Provide a high-level architecture diagram with IP addresses and ports which should be opened for communication. 3: Provide a high-level architecture diagram without IP addresses and ports which should be opened for communication. 0: Bidder does not have an architecture diagram.		5	5.2
3.	Service Management Solution Criterion				30	
3.1.	Service Management Maturity	SARS aims to establish the maturity of the Bidder's service-management process(es) as a foundational element for the successful provision of services. Formal assessment scores meeting or exceeding a certain maturity level (quantitatively managed or equivalent) will score maximum points for this criterion.	5: The Bidder has conducted service-management process assessments, including certification achievements in the last five (5) years from the closing date of the tender and achieved a minimum maturity level score of 3.5. 3: The Bidder has conducted service-management process assessments, including certification achievements in the last five (5) years and achieved a minimum maturity level score of 3–3.4. 0: The Bidder has not conducted service management process assessments, including certification achievements in the last five (5) years and achieved a minimum maturity level score of less than 3. Service-assessments report will be required.		5	6.1
3.2.	Service Management Toolset	SARS aims to establish the level of automation of the Bidder's service management process as a foundational element to the successful provision of services. A Bidder that can show through a confirmation letter that the toolset employed provides sufficient automation of its service management and that the toolset is established in the organisation — so that the execution of service-management functions should present little or no risk to SARS — will score maximum points for this sub-criterion.	5: The Bidder's automated service-management capability has been designed and built to standard service-management framework(s). Confirmation letter of the service-management tool used with its capabilities (problem, incident, service requests, release, change, event, and knowledge management). 3: The Bidder's automated service management capability has not been designed to standard service-management framework(s), but may still cater for SARS's requirements. (Medium risk). Confirmation letter of the service-management tool used with its capabilities. At least one capability missing.		5	6.2

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
			0: The Bidder does not have automated service-management capability designed to standard service-management framework(s) and there is high risk for SARS in the approach. In determining the risk, the evaluator should look at the amount of detail provided and the risk in getting adequate service management as specified in the Business Requirements Specification.		
3.3.	Bidder's Solution for Monitoring and Reporting Portal	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's solution for effectiveness in achieving the specifications as set out in the Business Requirements Specification. A Bidder must provide an architectural diagram of its monitoring and reporting tool, plus a user manual, containing screenshots of the solution, and sample reports provided by the solution. The solution should contain functionality to enable real-time monitoring of all relevant aspects of the channel (SMS, USSD, short messages, letters, emails), including circuits to the MOs, capacity utilisation of critical elements, and queue status. Additionally, the service provider must provide up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics for all in-scope elements of the SMS carrier services over the term of the agreement, including traffic volumes, incidents, and problems, and a breakdown of volumes per channel and, within each channel, the relevant department or cost centre. A Bidder must provide monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions to detect unusual usage and ensure reconciliation of invoices to SARS data. Real-time or near-real-time with no longer than 10 minutes' delayed updating.	20: The Bidder has shown a current solution to deliver the functionality required (real-time monitoring, up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics, and monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions). 10: The Bidder has shown a current solution to deliver one or two of the functionalities required (real-time monitoring, up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics, and monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions). 0: The Bidder does not have a current solution to deliver any of the required functionality.	20	6.3
4.	Transition, Risk, and Quality Criterion			15	
4.1.	Transition Team	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's capability to transition the services effectively. All aspects of the transition team (team structure, escalation, key personnel, experience, & related qualifications) must be adequately explained by the Bidder's proposal, supported by relevant documentation (CV, Certifications, Reference letters) and it must present acceptable risk in achieving the requirements to score maximum points for this criterion. The key inquiry is: Does the Bidder's proposal for transition include a formally defined transition team with named and experienced key resources?	5: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team structure has been formally defined and includes personnel in key positions who have at least one (1) personnel with three (3) years' experience in conducting transition projects. (The effect of the transition project will pose little/no risk to SARS). 3: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team structure has mostly been defined and includes personnel in key positions who have less than three (3) years' experience in conducting projects. (The effect of the transition project will be medium and may pose acceptable risk to SARS). 0: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team presents unacceptable risk to SARS (no experience).	5	7.1
4.2.	Transition Experience	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's capability to transition the services effectively by its experience of transition and the complexity of the transition projects undertaken. To achieve maximum points, the bidder must describe at least three (3) transition projects that the Bidder has performed during services for different clients, and submit substantiating documentation supported by relevant documentation (CV, Certifications, Reference letters). The key inquiry is: Is the Bidder experienced in conducting transition projects?	5: The Bidder has three (3) or more completed transition-reference letters. (The effect of the transition project will be little/no risk to SARS). 3: The Bidder has from one (1) to two(2) completed reference letters showing successful transition projects of a similar nature to what is required. (The effect of the transition project will pose acceptable risk to SARS). 0: The Bidder does not show experience (less than a year) in conducting successful transition projects of a similar nature to what is required. (The effect of the transition project will pose unacceptable risk to SARS).	5	7.2
4.3.	Transition Plan	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's proposal for transitioning the services effectively. All requirements for transitioning in the <i>Business Requirements Specification</i> , the <i>Agreement</i> , and the <i>RFP Main Document</i> must be included in the scope of the project, including the plan to meet the required timelines. The key inquiry is: Does the Bidder's proposal for a transition plan contain all the elements for a successful transition?	5: Bidder has submitted a transition plan that meets the three-month transition period. 3: Bidder has submitted a transition plan without timelines or timelines are beyond the three-month transition period. 0: Bidder has not submitted a transition plan.	5	7.3

Table 15: Technical Evaluation Criteria for Tower C, Category B

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
1.	Capability Criterion Evaluation			25	
1.1.	Direct Links to Mobile Network Operators	SARS aims to establish the Bidder's current capability for delivering emails or similar services across secure links to the MOs. A Bidder must demonstrate that it is currently carrying email traffic directly to all valid email-address operators. The Bidder will be required to provide a confirmation letter from network operators.	5: A proposal confirming a secure link (encrypted and VPN) is in place from the Bidder's message carrier solution with redundancy and security. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder. 3: A proposal confirming a partially secure link is in place from the Bidder's message carrier solution. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder.	5	1

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines		Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
			0: An unsecured link is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs.			
1.2.	Direct Links to Operators	<p>SARS aims to establish the Bidder's current capability to deliver emails or similar services across secure links to the "operator" (Meta/other).</p> <p>A Bidder must demonstrate that it is currently carrying the service traffic directly to the South Africa-based entity interfacing into the "operator" (Meta/other). The Bidder will be required to provide a confirmation letter from the operator.</p>	5: A proposal confirming a secure link (encrypted and VPN) is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs with redundancy and security. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder. 3: A proposal confirming a partially secure link is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder. 0: An unsecured link is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs.		5	2
1.3.	Bidder's Strategic Direction	<p>SARS seeks to establish the extent to which the Bidder has a commitment to providing CPaaS end-to-end from the taxpayer, staff, and citizens to SARS and back to the taxpayer based on each of the required technologies within the scope listed. The Bidder's strategic direction with regard to resolving tactical issues in South Africa — such as accommodating increasing load shedding, guaranteeing end-to-end value-chain availability of 99.9% with no interruptions, and developing new technologies and replacing older technologies — must inform SARS of enhancements to the services within this Tower.</p> <p>Documentation should be attached by the Bidder to support any claims made about high availability and load shedding. The Bidder must provide a confirmation letter on its letterhead stating its strategic commitment and plans in place or deadlines to implement such plans. The Bidder's confirmation letter must also list factors that may affect service delivery from the client to SARS and back to the client via the Bidder's value chain (e.g. load shedding and data-centre load/availability).</p>	5: The Bidder's commitment to the factors that affect its service delivery to the SARS client poses no risk to SARS. Bidder's confirmation letter demonstrates a 99.9% solution availability. 3: The Bidder's commitment to the technology poses some risk to SARS but is acceptable. Bidder commits to 95–99.8% solution availability. 0: Unacceptably high level of risk in the Bidder's commitment to the technology. Less than 95% solution availability.		5	3
1.4.	Skills	SARS aims to establish the depth of skills that the Bidder (including its sub-contractors) will offer to SARS, if required by SARS, for projects/assignments run from SARS's head office, or at SARS Sites nationwide. A Bidder who can show sufficient coverage of all technical skill categories available for such assignments will be eligible for maximum points for this sub-criterion.	5: At least one (1) resource with five (5) years' experience with relevant documentation (CV, Certificates, Reference letters).. 3: At least one resource with three (3) to four (4) years' experience with relevant documentation (CV, Certificates, Reference letters).. 0: Less than three (3) years' experience or with no relevant documentation.	Skill	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
				CPaaS design and architecture skills (minimum of 5 years' experience as an enterprise architect specialising in CPaaS).	5	4
				Technical account management skills (minimum of 5 years' project management and ITSM experience and ITIL foundation, or COBIT 5 certification).	5	4
2.	Technical Solution Criterion				30	
2.1.	Email Equipment Services Solution	SARS is seeking information to establish whether the Bidder has a developed email message-carrier solution which will meet SARS's email message-carrier service requirements. Bidders who propose a full solution with no single points of failure will receive maximum points for this criterion. The Bidder is expected to provide an architectural diagram specifying the components of the solution, including a published API specification. It must also include the protocol supported (SMTP).	25: Bidder has a fully developed message-carrier solution substantiated by an architectural diagram, which has a failover and a published API that supports SMTP. 15: Bidder has a developed message-carrier solution substantiated by an architectural diagram, with a single point of failure and a published API that supports SMTP. 0: Bidder does not have a developed message-carrier solution.		25	5.1
2.2.	Firewall Service	SARS is seeking information to establish whether the Bidder has a developed firewall service — or supports such a service — that will meet SARS's message-carrier service requirements. Bidders who propose a full solution with no single points of failure will receive maximum points for this criterion. The Bidder is expected to provide an architectural diagram specifying the components of the firewall.	5: Provide a high-level architecture diagram with IP addresses and ports which should be opened for communication. 3: Provide a high-level architecture diagram without IP addresses and ports, which should be opened for communication. 0: Bidder does not have an architecture diagram.		5	3
3.	Service Management Solution Criterion				30	
3.1.	Service Management Maturity	SARS aims to establish the maturity of the Bidder's service-management process(es) as a foundational element for the successful provision of services. Formal assessment scores meeting or exceeding a certain maturity level (quantitatively managed or equivalent) will score maximum points for this criterion.	5: The Bidder has conducted service-management process assessments, including certification achievements in the last five (5) years from the closing date of the tender and achieved a minimum maturity level score of 3.5. 3: The Bidder has conducted service-management process assessments, including certification achievements in the last five (5) years and achieved a minimum maturity level score of 3–3.4. 0: The Bidder has not conducted service-management process assessments, including certification achievements in the last five (5) years and achieved a minimum maturity level score of less than 3.		5	6.1

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
			A service-assessments report will be required.		
3.2.	Service Management Toolset	SARS aims to establish the level of automation of the Bidder's service-management process as a foundational element to the successful provision of services. A Bidder who can show through a confirmation letter that the toolset employed provides sufficient automation of its service management — and that this toolset is established in the organisation so that the execution of service management functions should present little or no risk to SARS — will score maximum points for this sub-criterion.	<p>5: The Bidder's automated service-management capability has been designed and built to standard service-management framework(s). Confirmation letter of the service-management tool used with its capabilities (problem, incident, service requests, release, change, event, and knowledge management).</p> <p>3: The Bidder's automated service-management capability has not been designed to standard service-management framework(s), but may still cater for SARS requirements. (Medium risk.) Confirmation letter of the service-management tool used with its capabilities. At least one (1) capability missing.</p> <p>0: The Bidder does not have automated service-management capability designed to standard service-management framework(s) and there is high risk for SARS in the approach.</p> <p>In determining the risk, the evaluator should look at the amount of detail provided, and the risk posed in getting adequate service management as specified in the Business Requirements Specification.</p>	5	6.2
3.3.	Bidder's Solution for Monitoring and Reporting Portal	<p>SARS aims to assess the Bidder's solution for effectiveness in achieving the specifications as set out in the Business Requirements Specification. A Bidder must provide an architectural diagram of its monitoring and reporting tool, plus a user manual, containing screenshots of the solution, and sample reports provided by the solution. The solution should contain functionality to enable real-time monitoring of all relevant aspects of the channel (SMS, USSD, short messages, letters, emails), including circuits to the MOs, capacity utilisation of critical elements, and queue status. Additionally, the service provider must provide up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics for all in-scope elements of the SMS carrier services over the term of the agreement, including traffic volumes, incidents and problems, and a breakdown of volumes per channel, and — within each channel — the relevant department or cost centre. A Bidder must provide monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions to detect unusual usage and ensure reconciliation of invoices to SARS data.</p> <p>Real-time (or near-real-time with no longer than 10 minutes' delayed updating</p>	<p>20: The Bidder has shown a current solution to deliver the functionality required (real-time monitoring, up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics, and monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions).</p> <p>10: The Bidder has shown a current solution to deliver one or two of the functionalities required (real-time monitoring, up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics, and monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions).</p> <p>0: The Bidder does not have a current solution to deliver any of the required functionality.</p>	20	6.3
4.	Transition, Risk, and Quality Criterion			15	
4.1.	Transition Team	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's capability to transition the services effectively. All aspects of the transition team (team structure, escalation, key personnel, experience, & related qualifications) must be adequately explained by the Bidder's proposal, supported by relevant documentation (CV, Certifications, Reference letters) and it must present acceptable risk in achieving the requirements to score maximum points for this criterion. The key inquiry is: Does the Bidder's proposal for transition include a formally defined transition team with named and experienced key resources?	<p>5: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team structure has been formally defined and includes personnel in key positions that have at least one (1) personnel with three (3) years' experience in conducting transition project. (The effect of the transition project will pose little/no risk to SARS.)</p> <p>3: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team structure has mostly been defined and includes personnel in key positions that have less than three (3) years' experience in conducting projects. (The effect of the transition project will be medium and may pose acceptable risk to SARS.)</p> <p>0: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team presents unacceptable risk to SARS (no experience).</p>	5	7.1
4.2.	Transition Experience	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's capability to transition the services effectively by its experience of transition and the complexity of the transition projects undertaken. To achieve maximum points, the bidder must describe at least three (3) transition projects that the Bidder has performed during services for different clients, and submit substantiating documentation supported by relevant documentation (CV, Certifications, Reference letters). The key inquiry is: Is the Bidder experienced in conducting transition projects?	<p>5: The Bidder has three (3) or more completed transition-reference letters. (The effect of the transition project will be little/no risk to SARS.)</p> <p>3: The Bidder has from one (1) to two(2) completed reference letters showing successful transition projects of a similar nature to what is required. (The effect of the transition project will pose acceptable risk to SARS.)</p> <p>0: The Bidder does not show experience (less than a year) in conducting successful transition projects of a similar nature to what is required. (The effect of the transition project will pose unacceptable risk to SARS.)</p>	5	7.2
4.3.	Transition Plan	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's proposal for transitioning the services effectively. All requirements for transitioning in the <i>Business Requirements Specification</i> , the <i>Agreement</i> , and the <i>RFP Main Document</i> must be included in the scope of the project, including the plan to meet the required timelines. The key inquiry is: Does the Bidder's proposal for a transition plan contain all the elements for a successful transition?	<p>5: Bidder has submitted a transition plan that meets the three-month transition period.</p> <p>3: Bidder has submitted a transition plan without timelines or the timelines are beyond the three-month transition period.</p> <p>0: Bidder has not submitted a transition plan.</p>	5	7.3

Table 16: Technical Evaluation Criteria for Tower C, Category C

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines		Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
1.	Capability Criterion Evaluation				25	
1.1.	Direct Links to Operators	<p>SARS aims to establish the Bidder's current capability for delivering printed letters or similar services across secure to the “operator” (Meta/other).</p> <p>A Bidder must demonstrate that it is currently carrying the service traffic directly to the South Africa–based entity interfacing into the “operator” (Meta/other). The Bidder will be required to provide a confirmation letter from the operator.</p>	<p>5: A proposal confirming a secure link (encrypted and VPN) is in place from the Bidder's message carrier services to all the MOs with redundancy and security. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder.</p> <p>3: A proposal confirming a partially secure link is in place from the Bidder's message carrier services to all the MOs. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder.</p> <p>0: Unsecured link is in place from the Bidder's message carrier services to all the MOs.</p>		10	1
1.2.	Bidder's Strategic Direction	<p>SARS seeks to establish the extent to which the Bidder has a commitment to providing CPaaS end-to-end from the taxpayer, staff, and citizens to SARS and back to the taxpayer based on each of the required technologies within the scope listed. The Bidder's strategic direction with regard to resolving tactical issues in South Africa — such as accommodating increasing load shedding, guaranteeing end-to-end value-chain availability of 99.9% with no interruptions, and developing new technologies and replacing older technologies — must inform SARS of enhancements to the services within this Tower.</p> <p>Documentation should be attached by the Bidder to support any claims made about high availability and load shedding. The Bidder must provide a confirmation letter on its letterhead stating its strategic commitment and plans in place or deadlines to implement such plans. The Bidder's confirmation letter must also list factors that may affect service delivery from the client to SARS and back to the client via the Bidder's value chain (e.g. load shedding and data-centre load/availability).</p>	<p>5: The Bidder's commitment to the factors that affect its service delivery to the SARS client poses no risk to SARS. Bidder's confirmation letter demonstrates a 99.9% solution availability.</p> <p>3: The Bidder's commitment to the technology poses some risk to SARS, but is acceptable. Bidder commits to 95–99.8% solution availability.</p> <p>0: Unacceptably high level of risk in the Bidder's commitment to the technology. Less than 95% solution availability.</p>		5	2
1.3.	Skills	SARS aims to establish the depth of skills that the Bidder (including its sub-contractors) will offer to SARS, if required by SARS, for projects/assignments run from SARS's head office or at SARS sites nationwide. A Bidder that can show sufficient coverage of all technical skill categories available for such assignments will be eligible for maximum points for this sub-criterion.	<p>5: At least one (1) resource with five (5) years' experience with relevant documentation (CV, Certificates, Reference letters)..</p> <p>3: At least one (1) resource with three (3) to four (4)-years' experience with relevant documentation (CV, Certificates, Reference letters)..</p> <p>0: Resources with less than three (3) years' experience or with no relevant documentation.</p>	Skill	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
				CPaaS design and architecture skills (minimum of 5 years' experience as an enterprise architect specialising in CPaaS).	5	3
				Technical account management skills (minimum of 5 years' project management and ITSM experience and ITIL foundation, or COBIT 5 certification).	5	3
2.	Technical Solution Criterion				30	
2.1.	Printed Letters Solution	SARS is seeking information to establish whether the Bidder has a developed message carrier solution which will meet SARS's message-carrier services requirements. Bidders who propose a full solution with no single points of failure will receive maximum points for this criterion. The Bidder is expected to provide an architectural diagram specifying the components of the solution, including a published API specification. It must also include the protocol supported (MQ).	<p>25: Bidder has a fully developed message-carrier solution substantiated by an architectural diagram, which has a failover, and a published API that support MQ.</p> <p>15: Bidder has a developed message-carrier solution with single points of failure.</p> <p>0: Bidder does not have a developed message-carrier solution.</p>		25	4.1
2.2.	Firewall Service	SARS is seeking information to establish whether the Bidder has a developed firewall service — or supports such a service — which will meet SARS's Message Carrier Services requirements. Bidders who propose a full solution with no single points of failure will receive maximum points for this criterion. The Bidder is expected to provide an architectural diagram specifying the components of the firewall.	<p>5: Provide a high-level architecture diagram with IP Addresses and ports which should be opened for communication.</p> <p>3: Provide a high-level architecture diagram without IP Addresses and ports which should be opened for communication.</p> <p>0: Bidder does not have an architecture diagram.</p>		5	2
3.	Service Management Solution Criterion				30	
3.1.	Service Management Maturity	SARS aims to establish the maturity of the Bidder's service-management process(es) as a foundational element for the successful provision of services. Formal assessment scores that meet or exceed certain maturity level (quantitatively managed or equivalent) will score maximum points for this criterion.	<p>5: The Bidder has conducted service-management process assessments, including certification achievements in the last five (5) years from the closing date of the tender and achieved a minimum maturity level score of 3.5.</p> <p>3: The Bidder has conducted service-management process assessments, including certification achievements in the last five (5) years and achieved a minimum maturity level score of 3–3.4.</p> <p>0: The Bidder has not conducted service-management process assessments, including certification achievements in the last five (5) years and achieved a minimum maturity level score of less than 3.</p>		5	5.1

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
			A service-assessments report will be required.		
3.2.	Service Management Toolset	SARS aims to establish the level of automation of the Bidder's service-management process as a foundational element to the successful provision of services. A Bidder who can show through a confirmation letter that the toolset employed provides sufficient automation of its service management — and that this toolset is established in the organisation so that the execution of service-management functions should present little or no risk to SARS — will score maximum points for this sub-criterion.	<p>5: The Bidder's automated service-management capability has been designed and built to standard service-management framework(s). Confirmation letter of the service-management tool used with its capabilities (problem, incident, service requests, release, change, event, and knowledge management).</p> <p>3: The Bidder's automated service-management capability has not been designed to standard service-management framework(s), but may still cater for SARS requirements. (Medium risk.) Confirmation letter of the service-management tool used with its capabilities. At least one (1) capability missing.</p> <p>0: The Bidder does not have automated service-management capability designed to standard service-management framework(s) and there is high risk for SARS in the approach.</p> <p>In determining the risk, the evaluator should look at the amount of detail provided, and the risk posed in obtaining adequate service management as specified in the <u>Business Requirements Specification</u>.</p>	5	5.2
3.3.	Bidder's Solution for Monitoring and Reporting Portal	<p>SARS aims to assess the Bidder's solution for effectiveness in achieving the specifications as set out in the Business Requirements Specification. A Bidder must provide an architectural diagram of its monitoring and reporting tool, plus a user manual, containing screenshots of the solution, and sample reports provided by the solution. The solution should contain functionality to enable real-time monitoring of all relevant aspects of the channel (SMS, USSD, short messages, letters, emails), including circuits to the MOs, capacity utilisation of critical elements, and queue status. Additionally, the service provider must provide up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics for all in-scope elements of the SMS carrier services over the term of the agreement, including traffic volumes, incidents and problems, and a breakdown of volumes per channel, and — within each channel — the relevant department or cost centre. A Bidder must provide monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions to detect unusual usage and ensure reconciliation of invoices to SARS data.</p> <p>Real-time (or near-real-time with no longer than 10 minutes' delayed updating.</p>	<p>20: The Bidder has shown a current solution to deliver the functionality required (real-time monitoring, up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics, and monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions).</p> <p>10: The Bidder has shown a current solution to deliver one or two of the functionalities required (real-time monitoring, up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics, and monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions).</p> <p>0: The Bidder does not have a current solution to deliver any of the required functionality.</p>	20	5.3
4.	Transition, Risk, and Quality Criterion			15	
4.1.	Transition Team	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's capability to transition the services effectively. All aspects of the transition team (team structure, escalation, key personnel, experience, & related qualifications) must be adequately explained by the Bidder's proposal, supported by relevant documentation (CV, Certifications, Reference letters) and it must present acceptable risk in achieving the requirements to score maximum points for this criterion. The key inquiry is: Does the Bidder's proposal for transition include a formally defined transition team with named and experienced key resources?	<p>5: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team structure has been formally defined and includes personnel in key positions that have at least one (1) personnel with three (3) years' experience in conducting transition project. (The effect of the transition project will pose little/no risk to SARS.)</p> <p>3: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team structure has mostly been defined and includes personnel in key positions that have less than three (3) years' experience in conducting projects. (The effect of the transition project will be medium and may pose acceptable risk to SARS.)</p> <p>0: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team presents unacceptable risk to SARS (no experience).</p>	5	6.1
4.2.	Transition Experience	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's capability to transition the services effectively by its experience of transition and the complexity of the transition projects undertaken. To achieve maximum points, the bidder must describe at least three (3) transition projects that the Bidder has performed during services for different clients, and submit substantiating documentation supported by relevant documentation (CV, Certifications, Reference letters). The key inquiry is: Is the Bidder experienced in conducting transition projects?	<p>5: The Bidder has three (3) or more completed transition-reference letters. (The effect of the transition project will be little/no risk to SARS.)</p> <p>3: The Bidder has from one (1) to two(2) completed reference letters showing successful transition projects of a similar nature to what is required. (The effect of the transition project will pose acceptable risk to SARS.)</p> <p>0: The Bidder does not show experience (less than a year) in conducting successful transition projects of a similar nature to what is required. (The effect of the transition project will pose unacceptable risk to SARS.)</p>	5	6.2
4.3.	Transition Plan	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's proposal for transitioning the services effectively. All requirements for transitioning in the <u>Business Requirements Specification</u> , the <u>Agreement</u> , and the <u>RFP Main Document</u> must be included in the scope of the project, including the plan to meet the required timelines. The key inquiry is: Does the Bidder's proposal for a transition plan contain all the elements for a successful transition?	<p>5: Bidder has submitted a transition plan that meets the three-month transition period.</p> <p>3: Bidder has submitted a transition plan without timelines or timelines are beyond the three-month transition period.</p> <p>0: Bidder has not submitted a transition plan.</p>	5	6.3

Table 17: Technical Evaluation Criteria for Tower C, Category D

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines		Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
1.	Capability Criterion Evaluation				25	
1.1.	Direct links to Operators	<p>SARS aims to establish the Bidder's current capability for delivering live chat, AI/LLM or similar services across secure to the “operator” (Meta/other).</p> <p>A Bidder must demonstrate that it is currently carrying the service traffic directly to the South African based entity interfacing into the “operator” (Meta/other). The Bidder will be required to provide a confirmation letter from the operator.</p>	<p>5: A proposal confirming a secure link (encrypted and VPN) is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs with redundancy and security and a published API that supports SMPP, SOAP, RESTFUL, SMTP. A high-level architectural diagram with an IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder.</p> <p>3: A proposal confirming a partially secure link is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs. High-level architectural diagram with IPsec connection between SARS and the Bidder.</p> <p>0: Unsecured link is in place from the Bidder's SMSC to all the MOs.</p>		10	1
1.2.	Bidder's Strategic Direction	<p>SARS seeks to establish the extent to which the Bidder has a commitment to providing CPaaS end-to-end from the taxpayer, staff, and citizens to SARS and back to the taxpayer based on each of the required technologies within the scope listed. The Bidder's strategic direction with regard to resolving tactical issues in South Africa — such as accommodating increasing load shedding, guaranteeing end-to-end value-chain availability of 99.9% with no interruptions, and developing new technologies and replacing older technologies — must inform SARS of enhancements to the services within this Tower.</p> <p>Documentation should be attached by the Bidder to support any claims made about high availability and load shedding. The Bidder must provide a confirmation letter on its letterhead stating its strategic commitment and plans in place or deadlines to implement such plans. The Bidder's confirmation letter must also list factors that may affect service delivery from the client to SARS and back to the client via the Bidder's value chain (e.g. load shedding and data-centre load/availability).</p>	<p>5: The Bidder's commitment to the factors that affect their service delivery to the SARS client poses no risk to SARS. Bidder's confirmation letter that will demonstrate a 99.9% solution availability.</p> <p>3: The Bidder's commitment to the technology poses some risk to SARS, but is acceptable. Bidder commits to 95–99.8% solution availability.</p> <p>0: Unacceptably high level of risk in the Bidder's commitment to the technology. Less than 95% solution availability.</p>		5	2
1.3.	Skills	SARS aims to establish the depth of skills that the Bidder (including its sub-contractors) will offer to SARS, if required by SARS, for projects/assignments run from SARS's head office, or at SARS sites nationwide. A Bidder that can show sufficient coverage of all technical skills categories available for such assignments will be eligible for maximum points for this sub-criterion.	<p>5: At least one (1) resource with five (5) years' experience with relevant documentation (CV, Certificates, Reference letters).</p> <p>3: At least one (1) resource with three (3) to four (4) years' experience with relevant documentation (CV, Certificates, Reference letters).</p> <p>0: Resources with less than three (3) years' experience or with no relevant documentation.</p>	Skill		
				CPaaS design and architecture skills (minimum of 5 years' experience as an enterprise architect specialising in CPaaS).	5	3
				Technical account management skills (minimum of 5 years' project management and ITSM experience and ITIL Foundation, or COBIT 5 certification).	5	3
2.	Technical Solution Criterion				30	
2.1.	Live Chat and AI/LLM Carrier Solution	SARS is seeking information to establish whether the Bidder has a developed message carrier solution which will meet SARS's message carrier services requirements. Bidders who propose a full solution with no single points of failure will receive maximum points for this criterion. The Bidder is expected to provide an architectural diagram specifying the components of the solution, including a published API specification. It must also include the protocol supported (SMPP, SOAP, RESTFUL, SMTP).	<p>25: Bidder has a fully developed message carrier solution substantiated by an architectural diagram, which has a failover, and a published API that supports SMPP, SOAP, RESTFUL, SMTP.</p> <p>15: Bidder has a developed message carrier solution with single points of failure and a published API that supports SMPP, SOAP, RESTFUL, SMTP.</p> <p>0: Bidder does not have a developed message carrier solution.</p>		25	4.1
2.2.	Firewall Service	SARS is seeking information to establish whether the Bidder has a developed firewall service — or supports such a service — which will meet SARS's message-carrier service requirements. Bidders who propose a full solution with no single points of failure will receive maximum points for this criterion. The Bidder is expected to provide an architectural diagram specifying the components of the firewall.	<p>5: Provide a high-level architecture diagram with IP addresses and ports which should be opened for communication.</p> <p>3: Provide a high-level architecture diagram without IP addresses and ports which should be opened for communication.</p> <p>0: Bidder does not have an architecture diagram.</p>		5	2
3.	Service Management Solution Criterion				30	
3.1.	Service Management Maturity	SARS aims to establish the maturity of the Bidder's service-management process(es) as a foundational element for the successful provision of services. Formal assessment scores meeting or exceeding a certain maturity level (quantitatively managed or equivalent) will score maximum points for this criterion.	<p>5: The Bidder has conducted service-management process assessments, including certification achievements in the last five (5) years from the closing date of the tender and achieved a minimum maturity level score of 3.5.</p> <p>3: The Bidder has conducted service management process assessments, including certification achievements in the last five (5) years and achieved a minimum maturity level score of 3–3.4.</p> <p>0: The Bidder does not conduct service-management process assessments, including certification achievements</p>		5	5.1

No:	Sub-criterion	Inquiry	Specific evaluation guidelines	Inquiry weighting	TRT Reference
			in the last five (5) years and achieved a minimum maturity level score of less than 3. A service-assessments report will be required.		
3.2.	Service Management Toolset	SARS aims to establish the level of automation of the Bidder's service-management process as a foundational element to the successful provision of services. A Bidder who can show through a confirmation letter that the toolset employed provides sufficient automation of its service management — and that this toolset is established in the organisation so that the execution of service management functions should present little or no risk to SARS — will score maximum points for this sub-criterion.	5: The Bidder's automated service-management capability has been designed and built to standard service-management framework(s). Confirmation letter of the service-management tool used with its capabilities (problem, incident, service requests, release, change, event, and knowledge management). 3: The Bidder's automated service-management capability has not been designed to standard service-management framework(s), but may still cater for SARS requirements. (Medium risk.) Confirmation letter of the service management tool used with its capabilities. At least one (1) capability missing. 0: The Bidder does not have automated service-management capability designed to standard service-management framework(s) and there is high risk for SARS in the approach. In determining the risk, the evaluator should assess the amount of detail provided and the risk in obtaining adequate service management as specified in the Business Requirements Specification.	5	5.2
3.3.	Bidder's Solution for Monitoring and Reporting Portal	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's solution for effectiveness in achieving the specifications as set out in the Business Requirements Specification. A Bidder must provide an architectural diagram of its monitoring and reporting tool, plus a user manual, containing screenshots of the solution, and sample reports provided by the solution. The solution should contain functionality to enable real-time monitoring of all relevant aspects of the channel live chat, AI/LLM or similar services, including circuits to the MOs, capacity utilisation of critical elements, and queue status. Additionally, the service provider must provide up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics for all in-scope elements of the SMS carrier services over the term of the agreement, including traffic volumes, incidents and problems, a breakdown of volumes per channel, and — within each channel — the relevant department or cost centre. A Bidder must provide monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions to detect unusual usage and ensure reconciliation of invoices to SARS data. Real-time or near-real-time with no longer than 10 minutes' delayed updating.	20: The Bidder has shown a current solution to deliver the functionality required (real-time monitoring, up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics, and monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions). 10: The Bidder has shown a current solution to deliver one or two of the functionalities required (real-time monitoring, up-to-date monthly accumulated statistics, and monitoring tools to analyse the outbound transactions). 0: The Bidder does not have a current solution to deliver any of the required functionality.	20	5.3
4.	Transition, Risk, and Quality Criterion			15	
4.1.	Transition team	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's capability to transition the services effectively. All aspects of the transition team (team structure, escalation, key personnel, experience, & related qualifications) must be adequately explained by the Bidder's proposal, supported by relevant documentation (CV, Certifications, Reference letters) and it must present acceptable risk in achieving the requirements to score maximum points for this criterion. The key inquiry is: Does the Bidder's proposal for transition include a formally defined transition team with named and experienced key resources?	5: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team structure has been formally defined and includes personnel in key positions that have at least one (1) personnel with three (3) years' experience in conducting transition project. (The effect of the transition project will pose little/no risk to SARS). 3: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team structure has mostly been defined and includes personnel in key positions that have less than three (3) years' experience in conducting projects. (The effect of the transition project will be medium and may pose acceptable risk to SARS.) 0: The Bidder's proposal for a transition team presents unacceptable risk to SARS (no experience).	5	6.1
4.2.	Transition Experience	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's capability to transition the services effectively by its experience of transition and the complexity of the transition projects undertaken. To achieve maximum points, the bidder must describe at least three (3) transition projects that the Bidder has performed during services for different clients, and submit substantiating documentation supported by relevant documentation (CV, Certifications, Reference letters). The key inquiry is: Is the Bidder experienced in conducting transition projects?	5: The Bidder has three (3) or more completed transition-reference letters. (The effect of the transition project will be little/no risk to SARS.) 3: The Bidder has from one (1) to two(2) completed reference letters showing successful transition projects of a similar nature to what is required. (The effect of the transition project will pose acceptable risk to SARS.) 0: The Bidder does not show experience (less than a year) in conducting successful transition projects of a similar nature to what is required. (The effect of the transition project will pose unacceptable risk to SARS.)	5	6.2
4.3.	Transition Plan	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's proposal for transitioning the services effectively. All requirements for transitioning in the <i>Business Requirements Specification</i> , the <i>Agreement</i> , and the <i>RFP Main Document</i> must be included in the scope of the project, including the plan to meet the required timelines. The key inquiry is: Does the Bidder's proposal for a transition plan contain all the elements for a successful transition?	5: Bidder has submitted a transition plan that meets the three months transition period. 3: Bidders has submitted a transition plan without timelines or timelines are beyond the three months transition period. 0: Bidder has not submitted a transition plan.	5	6.3

8.5 Price and B-BBEE/Specific Goals Evaluation (Gate 3)

- 8.5.1 In line with the requirements of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, 2000 (Act 5 of 2000) and its Regulations, and SARS's Preferential Procurement Policy, only Bidders who have met or exceeded the minimum threshold for functionality in the technical evaluation, will be evaluated further.
- 8.5.2 SARS will apply the relevant preference point system in accordance with the published preference point system. Should the actual pricing proposals submitted by the Bidders differ from the estimated costs which prescribe the system to be used, the lowest acceptable tender will be used to determine the applicable preference point system.

Table 18: Price and B-BBEE/Specific Goals Evaluation

Criteria		Points
1.	Price	90
2.	Specific goals	10
TOTAL		100

8.5.3 Price Evaluation (Gate 3, Stage 1)

8.5.3.1 Points for the price evaluation will be calculated in accordance with the formula stated below.

8.5.3.2 Bidders must complete all line-items in the pricing response template(s) provided by SARS, which will be used for the price evaluation. The price should be all-inclusive for all the goods and services required in the scope of work, and Bidders must ensure the completeness and accuracy of the pricing figures provided in the pricing-response template. Failure to complete the pricing-response template or bill of quantities may cause the Bidder to score zero for the pricing evaluation or to be disqualified.

Table 19: Pricing Evaluation Formula

Price evaluation formula	Points
$P_s = 90 \left(1 - \frac{P_t - P_{min}}{P_{min}} \right)$	90

Where

- P_s = Points scored for price of proposal under consideration
- P_t = Rand value of proposal under consideration
- P_{min} = Rand value of lowest acceptable proposal

8.5.4 B-BBEE/Specific Goals Evaluation (Gate 3, Stage 2)

8.5.4.1 Points for the B-BBEE/specific goals evaluation will be allocated in accordance with a Bidder's size and ownership per table 1 (on pages 4–5) of the SBD 6.1 Preference Points Claim Form. Points for specific goals can be awarded only to a Bidder that submits a valid B-BBEE certificate, affidavit, share certificate of the company, or CIPC registration documents, together with the SBD 6.1 Preference Points Claim Form.

8.5.4.2 **Bidders should refer to the SBD 6.1 Preference Points Claim Form in terms of the Preferential Procurement Regulations 2022, for the specific goals and points to be claimed for this RFP.**

8.5.4.3 Bidders who do not claim preference points will be scored zero for B-BBEE/specific goals.

8.5.4.4 Failure of a Bidder to submit the required documentation to support claiming the preference points for specific goals together with the proposal, will be interpreted to mean that preference points for specific goals are not claimed.

8.5.4.5 The B-BBEE certificate or affidavit should be submitted in the name of the bidding entity. If the proposal is submitted by an incorporated JV, the incorporated JV must submit its B-BBEE status-level verification certificate or affidavit. If the proposal is submitted by an unincorporated JV/consortium, the unincorporated JV/consortium must submit a consolidated B-BBEE certificate or affidavit as if they were a group structure. Such a consolidated B-BBEE certificate or affidavit must be prepared for every separate proposal.

8.5.4.6 SARS reserves the right to request Bidders to submit proof of any information to substantiate claims made about their B-BBEE status/size.

Table 20: Specific Goals Evaluation Points Allocation

Specific goals evaluation criteria		Points
Bidders to submit:		10
a)	A duly completed SBD 6.1 Preference Point Claim Form	
b)	A valid B-BBEE certificate or affidavit	
c)	CIPC registration documentation	

8.5.4.7 The following table indicates the specific B-BBEE documents that must be submitted for this RFP.

Table 21: B-BBEE Documents Checklist

Classification		Turnover	Submission requirement
1.	Exempted Micro Enterprise (EME)	Less than R10 million p.a.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An affidavit or certificate from CIPC.
2.	Qualifying Small	From R10 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An affidavit (only 51% black ownership and above);

Classification		Turnover	Submission requirement
	Enterprise (QSE)	and R50 million p.a.	or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A copy of B-BBEE rating certificate from an agency accredited by the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS).
3.	Large Enterprise (LE)	More than R50 million p.a.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A copy of B-BBEE rating certificate from a SANAS-accredited rating agency.

8.5.5 Consolidation of Price and Specific Goals Evaluation (Gate 4)

8.5.5.1 The points scored by a Bidder for the price evaluation and the specific goals evaluation will be added together to determine the overall points a Bidder's proposal will score out of 100 points for the consolidated price and specific goals evaluation and ranking of the Bidders.

8.6 Financial Risk Analysis

8.6.1 SARS may conduct a financial risk analysis on the Bidders and SARS has the right not to make an award to a Bidder(s) if its risk analysis indicates a high risk.

8.6.2 The Bidders must submit complete sets of annual financial statements, for the three (3) most recent financial periods in the name of the bidding entity. The annual financial statements must be either audited or independently reviewed in accordance with the public interest score (PIS) in compliance with the Companies Act, 2008 (Act 71 of 2008). Bidders must submit the PIS in compliance with the Companies Act. The annual financial statements must contain:

8.6.2.1 A statement of profit and loss and other comprehensive income;

8.6.2.2 A statement of financial position;

8.6.2.3 A statement of cash flows;

8.6.2.4 A statement of changes in equity/net assets; and

8.6.2.5 Accompanying notes.

8.6.3 If the Bidder cannot provide the preceding year's audited/independently reviewed financial statements as part of its bid submission, the Bidder should submit draft annual financial statements or its latest management accounts, together with the three (3) most recent years audited/independently reviewed annual financial statements.

8.6.4 Bidders who have been trading for fewer than three (3) financial periods must provide:

8.6.4.1 A letter detailing this fact, signed by a duly authorised representative of the entity;

8.6.4.2 The annual financial statements that the entity can provide, considering the period that it has been trading; and

8.6.4.3 Any other information or documentation that will clarify the Bidder's financial history.

8.6.5 SARS reserves the right to request further information regarding the annual financial statements of a Bidder at any point to demonstrate the potential Bidder's financial capability. This information will include:

8.6.5.1 Holding company's/parent company's accounts;

8.6.5.2 Management accounts;

8.6.5.3 Signed letter from a recognised financial institution confirming capital availability and bank statements; and

8.6.5.4 Credit-rating reports (confirming capital availability or access to capital).

8.6.6 If a Bidder is a subsidiary company and it submits the holding company's financial statements for financial analysis, the holding company must furnish a performance guarantee that is signed by a financial service provider (guarantor) of the holding company. The performance guarantee must state that the guarantor will undertake to cover any or all risks associated with a Bidder if the Bidder is awarded the RFP.

8.6.7 If the proposal is submitted by an incorporated JV, it must submit its annual financial statements. If the proposal is submitted by an unincorporated JV/consortium, it must submit annual financial statements of each of the parties to the arrangement.

8.6.8 SARS reserves the right to request a financial guarantee from the recommended Bidder(s) prior to award, based on the financial risk-evaluation outcome.

8.7 Recommended Bidders' Due Diligence and Risk Assessment prior to Award

8.7.1 SARS has a legal and moral obligation to ensure that a supplier's financial position does not place public money or services at unacceptable risk. SARS will perform due diligence and assess the risk of recommended Bidder(s) prior to award.

8.7.2 As part of due diligence and risk assessment, the Bidder must ensure that the Bidder is complying with all regulatory prescripts — including industry regulations specific to the commodity/services SARS is procuring — that are applicable to this tender. The Bidder must also have adopted ethical business practices. SARS has the right to request evidence of this compliance from the Bidder, and third parties, to perform due diligence and for audit or contracting arrangements.

8.7.3 If a due-diligence exercise reveals that a recommended Bidder does not comply with SARS's risk appetite or compliance requirements, then SARS has the right not to make an award to the recommended Bidder.

8.7.4 The recommended Bidder(s) will be required to consent in the agreement to continuous and in-depth due diligence to ensure ethical business practices throughout the term of the tender.

8.8 Proposed Legal Agreement

- 8.8.1 Any award made to a Bidder under this RFP is conditional, among other provisions, upon SARS and the Bidder's concluding a written agreement within twenty-one (21) working days of SARS's receipt of Bidder's written acceptance of the award. The timeous finalisation of such an agreement will be an absolute pre-condition to the recommended Bidder's or Bidders' being awarded the tender and providing the goods or services to SARS.
- 8.8.2 If the recommended Bidder(s) fails to sign the proposed agreement within the timeframe stipulated, SARS reserves the right to:
- 8.8.2.1 Cancel the award to the recommended Bidder;
 - 8.8.2.2 Enter into negotiations with the second-ranked Bidder(s) (based on the consolidation of price and specific goals) for that Tower and to conclude the proposed agreement with such second-ranked Bidder(s). If the second-highest-ranked Bidder fails to sign the proposed agreement within the timeframe stipulated, SARS shall enter into negotiations with the third-ranked Bidder(s) (based on the consolidation of price and specific goals) for that Tower; or
 - 8.8.2.3 Take any other action SARS deems reasonable and appropriate.
- 8.8.3 Mark-ups/comments:
- 8.8.3.1 Bidders may submit mark-ups/comments on the terms and conditions of this agreement, its schedules, appendices, and attachments. Each comment or amendment must be explained. All changes or amendments to the agreement must be in an easily identifiable font colour and tracked for ease of reference. SARS reserves the right to accept or reject any such mark-ups or comments.
- Mark-up/comments will **NOT** be acceptable with regard to the following clauses:
- 8.8.3.1.1 Confidentiality
 - 8.8.3.1.2 Data protection/data-protection agreement
 - 8.8.3.1.3 SARS oath/affirmation of secrecy
 - 8.8.3.1.4 Tax compliance
 - 8.8.3.1.5 Audit rights
 - 8.8.3.1.6 B-BBEE
 - 8.8.3.1.7 Vetting (integrity and security competence)
 - 8.8.3.1.8 Limitation of liability
 - 8.8.3.1.9 Insurance
 - 8.8.3.1.10 Performance bond
 - 8.8.3.1.11 Records retention

- 8.8.4 Upon award, SARS and the successful Bidder will conclude the agreement which regulates the specific terms and conditions applicable to the goods and services being procured by SARS. In this regard:
- 8.8.4.1 SARS will enter into negotiations with the successful Bidder to conclude the agreement.
 - 8.8.4.2 SARS will be entitled to cease negotiating with a successful Bidder if SARS, in its sole discretion, is of the opinion that: (i) the successful Bidder has made misrepresentations in its proposal; (ii) the successful Bidder is attempting to withdraw from positions or commitments made in its proposal; (iii) the successful Bidder is not negotiating in good faith; or (iv) prospects of the agreement are not being expeditiously concluded with the successful Bidder for any other reason.
 - 8.8.4.3 SARS reserves the right to vary the terms and conditions of the proposed agreement during the course of negotiations with a successful Bidder at SARS's sole discretion.
 - 8.8.4.4 SARS reserves the right to accept or reject any or all amendments or additions proposed by the successful Bidder if such amendments or additions are unacceptable to SARS or pose a risk to the organisation.
- 8.8.5 A Bidder should note that the terms of its proposal will be incorporated in the proposed agreement by reference and that SARS relies upon the Bidder's proposal as a material representation in making an award to a successful Bidder and in concluding an agreement with the successful Bidder. Therefore, any misrepresentations in a proposal may result in legal action or other processes by SARS against a Bidder, notwithstanding the conclusion of an agreement between SARS and the Bidder for the provision of the goods and services in question. In the event of a conflict between the Bidder's proposal and the agreement concluded between the parties, the agreement will prevail.

NB: For Tower C — Category B to D — SARS will issue a General Contract of Conditions as part of the Tender pack and later issue the draft panel agreement and the terms and conditions thereof which shall take precedence. SARS will issue a draft panel agreement only to the Bidders that qualify to be appointed to the panel before the end of June 2024. The Bidders will then be allowed to make mark-ups in that panel agreement subject to paragraph 8.8.3 above.

8.9 Performance Bond

- 8.9.1 Service Providers will post, on the Effective Date, a performance bond ("**Performance Bond**") by a financial institution approved by SARS and in the form prescribed by SARS or, if SARS does not prescribe a form, in a form proposed by Service Provider and approved by SARS at its sole discretion. Notwithstanding the generality of the above, such Performance Bond will secure Service Providers' obligations in an amount equal to:

[Note to the Bidder:

For Tower D, the Performance Bond will be R4 500 000.00 (Four Million Five Hundred Thousand Rand) awarded to the Bidder.

For Tower V, the Performance Bond for both, the preferred Outbound and Preferred Inbound (Smart Access) will be R2 000 000.00 (Two Million Rand) awarded to the Bidder. For Tower V, the Performance Bond for preferred Outbound will be R1 500 000.00 (One Million Five Hundred

Rand) awarded to the Bidder and For Tower V, the Performance Bond for preferred inbound will be R500 000.00 (Five Hundred Rand) awarded to the Bidder

8.9.2 **For Tower C, the Performance Bond for the SMS will be R1 800 000 (One Million Eight Hundred Thousand Rand) awarded to the Bidder and the Performance Bond for the USSD will be R500 000.00 (Five Hundred Thousand Rand)]** SARS will be entitled to make a claim for payment from the Performance Bond in the event that:

8.9.2.1 The Service Provider materially breaches this Agreement, and the breach is reasonably capable of being remedied and the Service Provider fails to remedy such breach within 30 (thirty) days of being called upon by SARS to do so;

8.9.2.2 The breach is not capable of being remedied;

8.9.2.3 An event occurs in respect of which this Agreement permits SARS to recover a penalty or similar service credit from the Service Provider and the Service Provider fails to pay such penalty when it is due in terms of this Agreement; and/or

8.9.2.4 The Service Provider is placed under provisional or final liquidation; placed under judicial management; enters into an arrangement with its creditors; or the Service Provider enters into business rescue procedures under Chapter 6 of the Companies Act, 2008 (Act No. 71 of 2008).

8.9.2.5 To avoid doubt, any claim that SARS may be entitled to make under the Performance Bond will be subject to (i) the indemnities and limitations of liability contained in clauses 23 and 24 of the SARS RFP 02-2024 4-1 Network Carrier and Infrastructure Services Agreement, and (ii) the Performance Bond claims-procedure contained in this clause 8.9.

8.9.3 The Service Provider will not be absolved of any of its obligations and liabilities under this Agreement by virtue of its having furnished the Performance Bond.

8.9.4 If SARS intends to encash the Performance Bond, it must demand, on 15 (fifteen) days' written notice, payment from the Service Provider, specifying:

8.9.4.1 the cause of the claim, and

8.9.4.2 the amount claimed.

8.9.5 If the Service Provider fails to make payment per SARS's demand in clause 8.9.4 or fails to lodge a dispute in accordance with clause 27 of the SARS RFP 02-2024 4-1 Network Carrier and Infrastructure Services Agreement within 15 (fifteen) days of receipt of SARS's notice, in accordance with clause 8.9.4 SARS will be entitled to encash the Performance Bond with immediate effect.

8.9.6 If SARS encashes the Performance Bond in terms of clause 8.9.2, SARS will be entitled to recover from the proceeds of the Performance Bond all of (i) SARS's Losses occasioned by the Service Provider; (ii) all amounts for which the Service Provider is liable in terms of any indemnities given by it to SARS; (iii) all penalties which SARS is entitled to impose upon the Service Provider; (iv) all legal costs which SARS is entitled to recover from Service Provider in asserting SARS's rights under this Agreement and the Performance Bond; and (v) any other amounts which may be owing by the Service Provider to SARS, of whatever nature and however arising; provided always that the provisions of this clause 8.9.6 will never be construed as in any way limiting SARS's right of recovery to the full value of the Performance Bond.

8.9.7 In the event that SARS:

8.9.7.1 Cancels the Agreement pursuant to any matter referred to in clause 8.9.2, after SARS has

recovered all amounts which may be owing to SARS by Service Provider in terms of clause 8.9.6, SARS will pay the balance, if any, to Service Provider;

- 8.9.7.2 Does not cancel the Agreement pursuant to any matter referred to in clause 8.9.2, the Service Provider will deliver to SARS, within 10 (ten) Business Days of SARS's written instruction, a new Performance Bond for the same value as that of the original Performance Bond (and for which purpose clause 8.9 will again apply, *mutatis mutandis*) against delivery of which SARS will pay to the Service Provider the balance, if any, of the amounts remaining from the previous Performance Bond following SARS's recovery of the amounts owing to it in terms of clause 8.9.6.

8.10 The Performance Bond will automatically be revoked on expiry of a period of 6 (six) months after Termination of the Agreement.

8.11 Performance Standards

- 8.11.1 SARS may prescribe certain performance standards (service levels) with which a successful Bidder must comply in performing the services.
- 8.11.2 Failure to adhere to the service levels will result in SARS levying a financial penalty for the service-level failure.
- 8.11.3 Multiple service-level failures in terms of SARS's prescribed service levels will constitute a material breach of the Service Level Agreement.
- 8.11.4 Notwithstanding the implementation of the service levels and financial penalties, SARS reserves the right, and without derogation to any other remedies it may have in law, to terminate the Service Level Agreement for breach (persistent non-compliance) by the successful Bidder.

9 TRUSTS, JOINT VENTURES, SUB-CONTRACTING, AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

9.1 Proof of Existence of a Trust, Joint Venture, Consortium, and Subcontracting Arrangements

- 9.1.1 Where, for the purposes of this RFP, a Bidder submits its proposal as a trust, such Bidder must submit concrete proof of the existence of a trust. SARS will accept a registered trust deed as acceptable proof of the existence of a trust. The trust deed must include:
 - 9.1.1.1 Details of the trustees of the trust; and
 - 9.1.1.2 Details of the beneficiaries of the trust. If the beneficiary is a trust, the trust deed of that specific trust is required.
- 9.1.2 Where, for the purposes of this RFP, a Bidder submits its proposal as a joint venture or consortium (incorporated or unincorporated), the Bidder must submit the joint venture/consortium agreement, which sets forth the following details:
 - 9.1.2.1 Identification of each party to the agreement in full;

- 9.1.2.2 The percentage ownership of the joint venture/consortium of each party to the agreement (if applicable);
 - 9.1.2.3 The precise functions and responsibilities which each party will fulfil in terms of the agreement; this should include details of the delimitations of scope within the goods and services to be assigned to such a party/parties;
 - 9.1.2.4 The anticipated percentage of the revenue that the party/parties would receive (anticipated revenue that the party/parties would receive as a percentage of the total revenue the Bidder would anticipate receiving over the term of the agreement with SARS), if the Bidder is successful; and
 - 9.1.2.5 Clearly set-out roles and responsibilities of the lead partner and the remainder joint venture/consortium party/parties; the agreement must also clearly identify the lead partner, who shall be given the power of attorney to bind the other party/parties in respect of matters pertaining to the joint venture.
 - 9.1.2.6 If a Bidder is submitting a proposal in the form of an unincorporated joint venture/consortium, the SBD 4 Bidder's Disclosure Form should be completed by each party participating in the joint venture/consortium agreement, and proof of CSD registration should be submitted for all parties participating in the joint venture/consortium for this RFP.
 - 9.1.2.7 Joint venture members should be advised that each member will be held jointly and severally liable for the performance of the joint venture.
- 9.1.3 Where, for the purposes of this RFP, a Bidder has or intends to sub-contract areas of scope of the goods and services, the Bidder must submit the subcontracting agreement, and must note the following:
- 9.1.3.1 The Bidder must indicate the name of the sub-contractor(s), the percentage of the contract that will be subcontracted, the B-BBEE status level of the sub-contractor(s), and whether the sub-contractor(s) is an Exempted Micro Enterprise (EME) or Qualifying Small Enterprises (QSEs);
 - 9.1.3.2 A Bidder awarded a contract may enter into a sub-contracting arrangement only with the approval of SARS;
 - 9.1.3.3 The agreement will be concluded between the main contractor(s) and SARS; therefore, the main contractor(s) and not its/their sub-contractor(s) will be held liable for performance in terms of the contractual obligations;
 - 9.1.3.4 The successful Bidder must, at all times, be solely and entirely accountable to SARS for the performance of its contractual obligations in terms of the agreement; and
 - 9.1.3.5 Without diminishing the Bidder's accountability in any way for the delivery of the services, including the performance standards, SARS may require access to and transparency in the sub-contracting agreements; the full details of the functions which the sub-contractor will fulfil in terms of the agreement, including details of the delimitations of scope within the services to be assigned to such a sub-contractor; monitoring and reporting of the sub-contractor's

participation and performance to SARS; direct participation of sub-contractor(s) in the account and project-planning activities; and sub-contractors' representation in governance structures and committees. SARS will, at all times, demand fair dealing in the relationship between a Bidder and its sub-contractor(s).

10 COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

- 10.1.1 Should a Bidder have rational reasons to believe that the tender process is unfair or irregular, including the fact that the technical specifications are not open or are written for a particular Bidder, brand, or product, then SARS urges the Bidder to notify the Procurement department within 10 (ten) days of publication of the bid and to provide details of its complaint for SARS's consideration.
- 10.1.2 For any suspicious activity, including requests, approaches, or calls asking for upfront payment to secure an award of a bid, or for claims that the outcome of a tender can be influenced toward a particular Bidder, Bidders are requested immediately to inform SARS's Fraud/Anti-Corruption Hotline at 0800 002 870 or email anti-corruption@sars.gov.za for further investigation.
- 10.1.3 The SARS Hotline mentioned above is an anonymous reporting channel for any unethical behaviour that a Bidder wants to report.

11 GENERAL CONDITIONS OF BIDDING

- 11.1 **By bidding, a Bidder is deemed to have accepted all terms and conditions of this RFP; and is further deemed to have accepted that, if successful, any award made will be made subject to the terms and conditions of this RFP.**
- 11.2 **Reservation of Rights**
 - 11.2.1 In addition to any rights that SARS has reserved to itself in this document or any other document in the RFP pack, SARS reserves the right in its sole discretion to:
 - 11.2.1.1 Make no award or accept part of a proposal rather than the whole;
 - 11.2.1.2 Withdraw or cancel this RFP;
 - 11.2.1.3 Amend, vary, or supplement any of the information, terms, or requirements contained in this RFP; any information or requirements delivered pursuant to this RFP; or the structure of the RFP process;
 - 11.2.1.4 Schedule additional briefing sessions/site inspections, and to conduct site visits, site inspections, product evaluations, local content evaluations, or perform audits, including due-diligence exercises, on any Bidder whenever SARS deems it prudent to do so;
 - 11.2.1.5 No longer consider a Bidder's proposal where adverse information about the Bidder or its proposal submission has come to the attention of SARS, provided that such Bidder is informed accordingly and afforded an opportunity to object;

- 11.2.1.6 Award a proposal — subject to applicable legislation and conditions of tender — based on which the Bidder is offering the best value for money, even if such proposal has not scored the highest points during the evaluation;
 - 11.2.1.7 Conduct a risk assessment of a Bidder's capability to deliver the goods and perform the services in accordance with the specified service levels /or to achieve SARS's objectives;
 - 11.2.1.8 Request clarification or verification in respect of any information contained in or omitted from a Bidder's proposal, which SARS may do either in writing or at a meeting convened with the Bidder for that purpose;
 - 11.2.1.9 Conduct due diligence on any Bidder or its sub-contractor, which may include interviewing customer references or performing other activities to verify information and capabilities submitted or claimed (including by visiting a Bidder's, sub-contractor's, or customer's reference premises, sites, or facilities to verify certain stated facts or assumptions). The Bidder will be obliged to grant SARS with all such access, assistance, or information as SARS may reasonably request. The Bidder must respond within the timeframes set by SARS, failing which SARS reserves the right not to consider the Bidder's proposal any further; and/or
 - 11.2.1.10 Request presentations from such shortlisted Bidders. All costs relating to the preparation of such presentations will be borne by the Bidders.
- 11.2.2 SARS will disqualify, report to National Treasury, and take the necessary steps to restrict from doing business with the State any bidder that:
- 11.2.2.1 Engages in any collusive tendering, anti-competitive conduct, or any other similar conduct, including but not limited to any collusion with any other Bidder in respect of the subject matter of this RFP;
 - 11.2.2.2 Seeks any assistance, other than assistance officially provided by a government entity, from any employee, advisor, or other representative of a government entity to obtain any unlawful advantage in relation to procurement or services provided or to be provided to a government entity;
 - 11.2.2.3 Makes or offers any gift, gratuity, anything of value, or other inducement, whether lawful or unlawful, to any of SARS's officers, directors, employees, advisors, or other representatives;
 - 11.2.2.4 Makes or offers any gift, gratuity, anything of any value, or other inducement, to any government entity's officers, directors, employees, advisors, or other representatives to obtain any unlawful advantage in relation to procurement or services provided or to be provided to a government entity;
 - 11.2.2.5 Accepts anything of value or an inducement that would or may provide financial gain, advantage, or benefit in relation to procurement or services provided or to be provided to a government entity;
 - 11.2.2.6 Pays or agrees to pay to any person any fee, commission, percentage, brokerage fee, gift, or any other consideration, which is contingent upon or results from the award of any tender,

contract, right, or entitlement which is in any way related to procurement or the rendering of any services to a government entity;

11.2.2.7 Has been found guilty in a court of law or by an administrative or regulatory authority with appropriate jurisdiction on charges of unethical or improper conduct, regardless of whether or not a prison term or penalty was imposed;

11.2.2.8 Is listed on National Treasury's Register for Tender Defaulters or National Treasury's Database of Restricted Suppliers; or

11.2.2.9 Whose tender contains a misrepresentation which is materially incorrect or misleading.

11.2.3 Bidders' Own Conditions

11.2.3.1 Bidders may not formulate their own terms and conditions, counter conditions, modify or vary any of the terms, conditions, or requirements herein. SARS may disqualify any Bidder who fails to comply with this clause.

11.3 Conflict of Interest

11.3.1 If at any time a Bidder identifies an actual or potential conflict of interest, the Bidder must immediately notify SARS in writing. SARS reserves the right to exclude the proposal submitted by such Bidder from further consideration, unless the Bidder can resolve the conflict to SARS's satisfaction. If it comes to SARS's knowledge that there was indeed a conflict of interest or a potential conflict of interest, these will be grounds for the immediate disqualification of the Bidder.

11.4 Confidentiality

11.4.1 Except as may be required by operation of law, by a court, or by a regulatory authority having appropriate jurisdiction, information contained in a Bidder's proposal(s) may not be disclosed by any Bidder, other than to a person officially involved with SARS's examination and evaluation of a proposal.

11.4.2 Throughout this RFP process and thereafter, the Bidders 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 RFP relates; or (ii) the process which follows this RFP. Failure to adhere to this requirement may result in disqualification from the RFP process and such legal action as SARS may deem suitable.

11.5 Fronting

11.5.1 SARS supports the spirit of B-BBEE and recognises that real empowerment can be achieved only when individuals and businesses conduct themselves in accordance with the Constitution and in an honest, fair, equitable, transparent, and legally compliant manner. Against this background, SARS condemns any form of fronting.

11.5.2 SARS, in ensuring that Bidders conduct themselves in an honest manner will, as part of the bid-evaluation processes, conduct or initiate the necessary enquiries/investigations to determine the

accuracy of the representations made in the bid documents. Should any of the fronting indicators as contained in the Guidelines on Complex Structures and Transactions and Fronting — issued by the Department of Trade, Industry and Corporation — be established during such enquiry/investigation, the onus will be on the Bidder/contractor to prove that fronting does not exist. Failure to do so within a period of 14 (fourteen) days from date of notification may invalidate the bid/contract and may also result in the restriction of the Bidder/contractor to conduct business with the public sector for a period not exceeding 10 (ten) years, in addition to any other remedies SARS may have against the Bidder/contractor concerned.

11.6 Insurance

- 11.6.1 The successful Bidder will be required, on or before the effective date of the agreement and for the duration of the agreement, to have and maintain in force adequate insurance cover consistent with acceptable and prudent business practices and which is acceptable to SARS, which shall include, without limitation, professional indemnity and public liability insurance cover as appropriate.

11.7 Indemnity

- 11.7.1 If a Bidder breaches any condition of this RFP and, as a result of that breach, SARS incurs costs or damages (including, without limitation, the cost of any investigations, procedural impairment, repetition of all or part of the RFP process, or enforcement or defence of intellectual-property rights or confidentiality obligations), then the Bidder indemnifies and holds SARS harmless from any and all such costs which SARS may incur and for any damages or losses SARS may suffer.
- 11.7.2 A successful Bidder shall indemnify, hold harmless and agree to defend SARS and its officers, employees, agents, successors-in-title, and assigns, from any and all losses arising from, or in connection with, any of the following:
- 11.7.2.1 Third-party claims attributable to any breach of the provisions of the Services Agreement by the successful Bidder;
 - 11.7.2.2 Third-party claims attributable to theft, fraud, or other unlawful activity or any negligent, wilful, or fraudulent conduct by the successful Bidder or its employees and claims attributable to errors or omissions;
 - 11.7.2.3 Third-party claims arising from or related to the death or bodily injury of any SARS agent, employee, business invitee, or business visitor or other person on SARS's premises caused by the negligent acts or omissions of the successful Bidder or its employees; and
 - 11.7.2.4 Third-party claims arising from damage to property owned or leased by SARS or a third party caused by the successful Bidder's or its employees' negligence or misconduct.

11.8 Intellectual Property

- 11.8.1 SARS retains ownership of all intellectual property rights in the documents that form part of this RFP.

- 11.8.2 Bidders will retain the intellectual property rights in their proposals but grant SARS the right to reproduce any copyrighted works for the purposes of the tender process.
- 11.8.3 Subject to any specific provisions in any service level agreement, master services agreement, work orders, change orders, or any other agreement concluded between SARS and a Bidder in terms of this RFP, all intellectual property rights created, generated, coded, or designed in terms of this bid to meet SARS's business requirements and needs will be, and remain, the perpetual exclusive property of SARS. Successful Bidders who so create, generate, code, or design any intellectual property for SARS in terms of this RFP, undertake to provide SARS with full access to such intellectual property, including the provision of security keys and access codes both during and after the Bidder's appointment as a service provider or vendor.
- 11.8.4 In the event that any Bidder utilises any third-party intellectual property, in terms of a licence, to submit a bid, or that such third-party intellectual property will be utilised to fulfil SARS's business requirements for the bid, Bidders firstly warrant that they have the rights to do so, and secondly, agree fully to indemnify SARS against in any claims whatsoever arising from the application of third-party intellectual property in the SARS environment and on the basis of SARS's indemnity rights in the indemnity clause above.

11.9 Limitation of Liability

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

11.10 Preparation Costs

- 11.10.1 A Bidder will bear all its costs in preparing, submitting, delivering, and presenting any response or proposal to this RFP and all other costs incurred by it throughout the RFP process. No statement in this RFP 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 Bidders in the preparation of their response to this RFP.

11.11 Precedence

- 11.11.1 The terms and conditions of this document will prevail over any information provided during any briefing session or communication, whether oral or written, unless such information is official written communication, as set out per the communication paragraph in this document, and only if such information expressly states that it amends this document.

11.12 Responsibility for Bidder's Personnel and Sub-contractors

- 11.12.1 A Bidder is responsible for ensuring that its personnel (including agents, officers, directors, employees, advisors, and other representatives of a Bidder), its sub-contractors (if any), and personnel of its sub-

contractors comply with all the terms and conditions of this RFP.

11.12.2 If SARS allows a Bidder use of sub-contractors, such sub-contractors will, at all times, remain the responsibility of the Bidder and SARS will, not under any circumstances, be liable for any losses or damages incurred by such sub-contractors.

11.12.3 The proposal shall, however, be awarded to the Bidder as a primary contractor who shall be responsible for the management of the awarded proposal. No separate contract shall be entered into between SARS or its client and any such sub-contractors.

11.12.4 If a Bidder includes evidence of professional experience of individuals who are not currently employed by the said Bidder, then the Bidder must include in its submission a letter or agreement from the respective individual, whose evidence of experience is included in the proposal, that the individual is aware of and agrees that his/her evidence of experience may be included for tendering purposes, and that the said individual confirms to commit and will make him/herself available for the contract period should the contract be awarded.

11.12.5 If a Bidder includes experience of an entity other than the Bidder itself, then the Bidder must include in its submission a letter or agreement from the respective entity that the entity is aware and agrees that its experience may be included for tendering purposes. Copies of the signed agreements between the relevant parties must be attached to the proposal responses.

11.13 Prohibition of Participation in Resultant Tender

11.13.1 Any Bidder, whether participating in a trust, joint venture, consortium, or subcontracting arrangement, who participates in preparatory work on the basis of which another tender will flow, may not participate in the resultant tender because of the advantage of having been privy to the underlying preparatory work.

11.14 RFP Not an Offer

11.14.1 This RFP does not constitute an offer to do business with SARS, but merely serves as an invitation to Bidders to facilitate a requirements-based decision process. Nothing in this RFP 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 Bidder.

11.15 SARS's Oath/Affirmation of Secrecy

11.15.1 SARS has a policy in terms of which the successful Bidder, key personnel, or any other personnel as may be determined by SARS will be required, upon award, to individually take a mandatory oath/declaration/affirmation of secrecy. The award will, therefore, be made subject to the condition that the successful Bidder along with the personnel referred to above comply with the afore mentioned

policy.

11.16 Screening and Vetting of a Bidder

- 11.16.1 Acceptance of a Bidder's proposal is subject to the condition that both the successful Bidder and its personnel providing the goods and services, must be screened and cleared by the appropriate authorities to the grade of clearance in line with SARS's applicable policies.
- 11.16.2 Obtaining the necessary clearance is the responsibility of the successful Bidder concerned. If the successful Bidder appoints a sub-contractor, the same provisions and measures will apply to the sub-contractor.
- 11.16.3 The Bidders shall supply and maintain a list of personnel involved on the project indicating their clearance status.

11.17 Tax Compliance

- 11.17.1 It is a requirement that any supplier conducting business with SARS is tax compliant at the date of award of a contract/bid and remains tax compliant throughout the duration of its contracts with SARS.
- 11.17.2 No contract/bid may be awarded to a supplier that is not tax compliant. SARS reserves the right to withdraw an award made, or cancel a contract concluded with a supplier/successful Bidder if it is established that such supplier/Bidder was in fact not tax compliant at the time of the award. SARS further reserves the right to cancel a contract with a supplier/successful Bidder if such supplier/Bidder does not remain tax compliant for the full term of its contract.
- 11.17.3 Where the recommended supplier/Bidder is not tax compliant, it must be notified in writing of their non-compliant status and be granted a minimum of seven (7) working days to rectify their tax-compliance status with SARS. Thereafter, the supplier/Bidder is responsible for providing SARS with proof of its tax-compliance status, which must be verified through CSD or the Tax Compliance System.
- 11.17.4 In line with SARS's Strategic Objectives, the directors/owners of the bidding entity who are not tax compliant may be referred to the SARS Tax Compliance Unit for further investigation to achieve full tax compliance.

11.18 Tender Defaulters and Restricted Suppliers

- 11.18.1 No bid will be awarded to a Bidder whose name (or any of its members, directors, partners, or trustees) appears on National Treasury's Register for Tender Defaulters or National Treasury's Database of Restricted Suppliers.

11.19 Local Production and Content

- 11.19.1 SARS supports and promotes local production and local content, environmentally friendly products, and sustainable sourcing.

11.19.2 To enable this objective to be adequately assessed and as part of contract management, Bidders shall advise SARS of its local and regional strategy and its initiatives to involve, support, and use local/regional entities and workforce.

11.19.3 The appointed supplier shall provide and use, for the performance of this contract, local sub-contractors or locally acquired materials, equipment, and facilities, to the extent available and within reasonable costs, to produce the quality and quantity of work and materials required by this contract.

11.20 **Validity of Information**

11.20.1 SARS has made reasonable efforts to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this RFP. However, neither SARS nor its employees, officers, advisers, or agents will be liable (directly or otherwise) to a Bidder or any third party for any inaccuracy or omission of any information in the RFP or in respect of any additional information SARS may provide to a Bidder as part of the RFP process.

11.20.2 A Bidder is deemed to have examined this RFP and any other information supplied by SARS to the Bidder and to have satisfied itself as to the correctness and sufficiency of such information before submitting any of its responses.

11.21 **Governing Law**

11.21.1 This RFP and any resultant agreement shall be governed by the laws of the Republic of South Africa.

12 **INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A RESPONSE TO THIS RFP**

This paragraph **Error! Reference source not found.** details the instructions to Bidders for preparing a proposal in response to RFP 04-20. These instructions must be followed in detail to enable the information contained in the Bidder's proposal to be read, understood, and evaluated in a common and consistent layout. Should a proposal be received that is not in the correct format, SARS reserves the right to reject the entire proposal or portions of the proposal depending on the extent of the deviation from the format described in this document. Information that has not been requested must not be submitted in the Bidder's proposal.

12.1 **Proposal Format**

12.1.1 The Bidder's proposal contents are detailed in paragraph 12.2.

12.1.2 The Bidder must submit a single hardcopy of its proposal contained in several hardcopy files, and a single electronic copy written to several Compact Discs (CD) or Digital Versatile Discs (DVD).

12.1.3 The Bidder's hardcopy must be printed single-sided.

12.1.4 Where reference is made to a "hardcopy file", this means a separate A4 ring-bound file. Where reference is made to a "CD", this means a separate CD or DVD. The proposal submission will consist of several hardcopy files and CDs.

12.1.5 A file will consist of a hardcopy file and a CD. The CD must be the electronic copy of the hardcopy file.

- 12.1.6 A file (the hardcopy file and CD) must be wrapped and sealed in brown paper and must be labelled with the same text as the hardcopy file and CD.

12.2 Organisation and Content of a Proposal

12.2.1 Common File

Irrespective of which or how many Towers for which the Bidder is submitting a proposal, the Bidder will be required to submit the common file. This file must contain the sections listed below, each divided by a file divider in the hardcopy file and placed in separate directories on the electronic copy (memory stick (USB stick)).

Common File		
Label (on both file cover and memory stick (USB stick)).		RFP 02/2024 <Bidder Name> Common File
No.	File divider/directory name	Content required
1	Covering Letter	<p>A letter from the Bidder confirming the submission of the proposal, and for which Tower(s) or options within the Tower(s) the Bidder is submitting its proposal. This letter must be signed by an authorised signatory of the Bidder.</p> <p>No template is provided. The Bidder can submit the Covering Letter in a format of its choosing and must be submitted on the Bidder's letterhead.</p> <p>Electronic copies must be in PDF format.</p>
2	Board Resolution	<p>Signed Board Resolution authorising the Bidder's signatory.</p> <p>In the electronic copy, the original signed document must be scanned and submitted in PDF format.</p>
3	SBDs	<p>Completed SBDs.</p> <p><u>Invitation to Bid (SBD1)</u></p> <p><u>Declaration of Interest (SBD 4)</u></p> <p><u>National Industrial Participation Program (SBD 5)</u></p> <p><u>Supplier Cost and Risk Assessment Questionnaire</u></p> <p>The original signed documents must be included in the hardcopy file.</p> <p>In the electronic copy, the original signed document must be scanned and submitted in PDF format.</p>
4	Bidder CSD Registration Report	<p>CSD registration report, including the Tax Clearance Status.</p> <p>In the hardcopy file, a printout of the report obtained from the CSD system should be included. (www.csd.gov.za)</p> <p>In the electronic copy the downloaded PDF report should be included.</p>

No.	File divider/directory name	Content required
6	Mandatory Response Template for Each Tower for which the Bidder is Submitting a Proposal	<p>A completed template for each Tower for which the Bidder is submitting a proposal:</p> <p><u><i>Tower x Mandatory Response Template</i></u> (where x is the Tower reference for which the Bidder is submitting a response)</p> <p>A printout of the completed and signed template(s) must be included in the hardcopy file.</p> <p>The completed template(s) must be submitted in Microsoft Word format in the electronic copy.</p>
7	Annual Financial Statements	<p>The Bidder's last three (3) years' audited annual financial statements.</p> <p>In the electronic copy, the originals must be scanned and submitted in PDF format.</p>
8	Checklist	<p>Completed template:</p> <p><u><i>Proposal Checklist</i></u></p> <p>A signed printout of the completed template must be included in the hardcopy file.</p> <p>A scanned copy of the signed checklist must be submitted in PDF format.</p>

12.2.2 File NP-x (Non-pricing Section for Tower x)

Depending on which and for how many Towers the Bidder is submitting a proposal, the Bidder will be required to submit a File NP-x for each Tower bid upon (where x is the Tower reference). This file must contain the following sections, each divided by a file divider in the hardcopy file and placed in separate directories on the electronic copy memory stick (USB stick) and labelled as set out hereunder. Note that the x is the Tower reference appearing in the title, divider name, directory names, and filenames.

Note that if a Bidder is submitting a proposal for more than one Tower, the same documents may have to be submitted in more than one File. (For example, if a sub-contractor is proposed in more than one Tower, then the sub-contractor's CSD Registration Report should be submitted in each Tower file for which the sub-contractor is being proposed). Note that an original certificate need not be supplied in every file, provided that where a copy is provided, the copy must contain a note referencing the file in which the original is contained. This principle applies to all documents, so that all documents for a Tower are contained within the file for a Tower and can be evaluated as a self-contained pack.

File NP-x (Non-Pricing Section for Tower x)	
<p>Label (on both file cover and memory stick (USB stick)).</p>	<p>RFP 02/2024</p> <p><Bidder Name></p> <p>File-NP-x</p> <p>Non-pricing</p>

No.	File divider/directory name	Content required
1	Technical Response Template	<p>Completed template:</p> <p><u><i>Tower x Technical Response Template</i></u></p> <p>A printout of the completed, signed, and initialled template must be included in the hardcopy file.</p> <p>The completed template must be submitted in Microsoft Word format in the electronic copy.</p>
2	Contract Agreement	The Bidder must submit a signed agreement with the contract mark-up.
3	Sub-contractor CSD Registration Report.	<p>In the hardcopy file a printout of the report obtained from the CSD system should be included. (www.csd.gov.za).</p> <p>In the electronic copy, the downloaded PDF report should be included.</p>

12.2.3 File P-x (Pricing and B-BBEE/Specific Goals Section for Tower x)

Depending on which and how many Towers the Bidder is submitting a proposal for, the Bidder will be required to submit a File P-x for each Tower for which it is submitting a proposal (where x is the Tower reference). This file contains one section to be placed in a file divider in the hardcopy file and in a directory on the electronic-copy memory stick (USB stick) with the label set out hereunder. Note that the “x” (appearing in the title, directories, and filenames) is the Tower reference. The actual Tower reference must be substituted for “x” in the Bidder’s response.

Note that if a Bidder is submitting a proposal for more than one Tower, the same documents may have to be submitted in more than one file. (For example, if a sub-contractor is proposed in more than one Tower, then the sub-contractor’s B-BBEE certificate must be submitted in each Tower file for which the sub-contractor is being proposed.) Note that an original certificate need not be supplied in every file, provided that where a copy is provided, the copy must contain a note referencing the file in which the original is contained. This principle applies to all documents, so that all documents for a Tower are contained within the file for a Tower and can be evaluated as a self-contained pack.

File P-x (Pricing Section for Tower x)		
Label (on both file cover and CD)		RFP 02/2024 <Bidder Name> File-P-x Pricing
No.	File divider/directory name	Content required
1	Pricing Response Template	<p>Completed template:</p> <p><u><i>Tower x Pricing Response Template</i></u></p> <p>A printout of the completed template must be included in the hardcopy file.</p> <p>The completed template must be submitted in Microsoft Excel format in the electronic copy.</p>

2	Preference Points Claim Form	A completed Preference Points Claim Form (SBD 6.1) for Tower x.
3	Bidder's BEE Certificate	The Bidder's B-BBEE certificate, valid at the closing date. For the electronic copy, the original hardcopy must be scanned and submitted in PDF format.
4	Sub-contractor B-BBEE Certificates	For every sub-contractor named by the Bidder in Template 1 in 0 above, the Bidder must attach a B-BBEE certificate or auditor's report in the hardcopy file. The B-BBEE certificates must be scanned and submitted as PDF documents on the memory stick (USB stick).

12.3 Example

12.3.1 If a Bidder is submitting a proposal for Tower D and Tower V, it would consist of the following:

Files	Documents in the file
<p>Hardcopy response to be submitted in file labelled:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RFP 02/2024 <Bidder Name> Common File</p> <p>Electronic response to be submitted in on a memory stick (USB stick) labelled:</p> <p>RFP 02-2024-<Bidder Name>-Common</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covering Letter • Board Resolution • SBDs • Bidder's CSD Registration Report • Mandatory template for Tower D and the mandatory template for Tower V • Annual Financial Statements • Proposal Checklist (indicating that all documents have been submitted)
<p>Non-pricing Section — Tower D</p> <p>Hardcopy response to be submitted in file labelled:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RFP 02/2024 <Bidder Name> File NP-D Non-pricing</p> <p>Electronic response to be submitted on a memory stick (USB stick) labelled:</p> <p>RFP02-2024-<Bidder Name>-NP-D</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical response template for Tower D • Contract mark-up template for Tower D • Sub-contractor list • Sub-contractor's CSD Registration Report
<p>Pricing Section — Tower D</p> <p>Hardcopy response to be submitted in file labelled:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RFP 02/2024 <Bidder Name> File P-D Pricing</p> <p>Electronic response to be submitted on a memory stick (USB stick) labelled:</p> <p>RFP02-2024-<Bidder Name>-P-D</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pricing Response Template for Tower D • Preference Points Claim Form SBD 6.1 for Tower D • Bidder's B-BBEE certificate • Sub-contractors' B-BBEE certificates

Files	Documents in the file
<p>Non-pricing Section — Tower V</p> <p>Hardcopy response to be submitted in file labelled:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RFP 02/2024 <Bidder Name> File NP-V Non-pricing</p> <p>Electronic response to be submitted on a memory stick (USB stick) labelled:</p> <p>RFP02-2024-<Bidder Name>-NP-V</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Response Template for Tower V • Contract Response Template for Tower V • Sub-contractor list • Sub-contractor's CSD Registration Report • Sub-contractors' B-BBEE certificates
<p>Pricing Section — Tower V</p> <p>Hardcopy response to be submitted in file labelled:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RFP 02/2024 <Bidder Name> File P-V Pricing</p> <p>Electronic response to be submitted on a memory stick (USB stick) labelled:</p> <p>RFP02-2024-<Bidder Name>-P-V</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pricing Response Template for Tower V. • Preference Points Claim Form SBD 6.1 for Tower V • Bidder's B-BBEE certificate • Sub-contractors' B-BBEE certificates

The Bidder, in this example, will submit five (5) sealed packages wrapped in brown paper:

- (i) A package containing the hardcopy file of the Common File and the memory stick (USB stick) of the Common File labelled:

RFP 02/2024
<Bidder Name>
Common File

- (ii) A package containing the hardcopy file of File NP-D and the memory stick (USB stick) of File NP-D labelled:

RFP 02/2024
<Bidder Name>
File NP-D
Non-pricing

- (iii) A package containing the hardcopy file of File P-D and the memory stick (USB stick) of File P-D labelled:

RFP 02/2024
<Bidder Name>
File P-D
Pricing

- (iv) A package containing the hardcopy file of File NP-V and the memory stick (USB stick) of File NP-V labelled:

RFP 02/2024

<Bidder Name>

File NP-V

Non-pricing

- (v) A package containing the hardcopy file of File P-V and the memory stick (USB stick) of File P-V labelled:

RFP 02/2024

<Bidder Name>

File P-V

Pricing

12.4 Template-specific Instructions

12.4.1 Mandatory Template

The Bidder must complete and submit the Tower x Mandatory Response Template (where x is the Tower reference) for each Tower for which the Bidder is submitting a proposal.

The completed template(s) must be included in File 1 (Common File).

12.4.2 Pricing Response Template

For each Tower for which the Bidder is submitting a proposal, the Bidder must provide a response to the Tower x Pricing Response Template (where x is the Tower reference).

The detailed instructions for preparing a response to the Tower x Pricing Response Template (where x is the Tower reference) are embedded in the template.

Bidders must submit an electronic copy, as well as a signed and initialled hardcopy of the Pricing Response Template. A submission that is not accompanied by an electronic copy will not be considered. The completed pricing template must contain values in all cells that must be populated. If the price is 0 (zero) for an item, the Bidder must ensure a zero is entered.

The completed template must be included in the pricing section for the Tower.

12.4.3 Technical Response Template

The Bidder must complete and submit Tower x Technical Response Template for each Tower for which it is submitting a proposal (where x is the Tower reference).

The Bidder must provide responses to all questions, requests for information or detail, or other requests posed to the Bidder in the technical response template document(s). Where a response is requested in the template and no response is supplied by the Bidder, the Bidder will score zero for that section.

The completed template must be included in the non-pricing section for the Tower.

12.4.4 **Proposal Checklist**

The Bidder must complete, and a duly authorised representative must sign, the Proposal Checklist. Only one checklist must be submitted, regardless of the number of Towers for which the Bidder is submitting a proposal.

The completed template must be included in the Common File.