RFP 03/2024: NETWORK, SERVER, AND END-USER SUPPORT SERVICES

Communication #5

Date of Issue: 17 July 2024

1. Answers to questions posed by Bidders.

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

Question and Answer

No	Question	Answer
1.	**Tower N – Security Assessment** Accreditation with CREST, EC Council, Offensive Security, GIAC, these governing bodies do not certify companies, they provide training and certification to individuals, can we submit certified resources CVs and Certificates or please suggest on exact requirement.	CREST provides accreditation for companies and equally professional certifications for individuals.
2.	**Tower N – Certification** Clarify on the SCP (Such as Bronze, Silver, etc.) Acronym	Bidders must refer to SARS Master Service Agreement (MSA), these service levels have been defined in Schedule C – Service Levels.
3.	**Tower N – DFIR** Does SARS want DFIR on Retainer? If so what SLA do they need? This is not in scope for this tender as we already have this in another tender	This falls outside the scope of the current tender, as it is already covered in another services.
4.	**Tower N – Penetration Test** What is the scope of work in order to cost	This is project driven service and scope of work is provided at initiation stage. The bidder needs to provide their hourly rate for the service.

No	Question	Answer
5.	**Tower N – Security and Vulnerability Assessments** Can we get a better scope for the security assessments? (what will be in scope and can we define the outcome).	The scope and delivery time frame of each assessment shall be agreed to prior to commencement of the work. • The scope may include remediation, recommendations, and extensive reporting. • Review of system or software vulnerabilities before a product's release. • Bidders must note that SARS is not looking for external application scanning services or auto source code tool-based services in this RFP.
6.	**Tower N:** Do SARS use a Cisco Catalyst Centre (DNAC) to manage / monitor the Network Infrastructure?	No, Cisco Prime Infrastructure is currently used to manage and monitor networks from a legacy point of view. We have a limited implementation of DNAC.
7.	**Tower N:** Please send the site locations for installation of VC equipment's "Yealink".	VC equipment (Yealink) serial numbers provided, Bidders to refer to 2.4 SARS RFP 03-2024 Tower N VC and Yealink Additional Information.
8.	**Tower N:** Please provide us with serial numbers for the VC Cisco spark room kit Plus as this is not on the equipment list.	VC equipment (Cisco Spark) serial numbers provided, Bidders to refer to 2.4 SARS RFP 03-2024 Tower N VC and Yealink Additional Information.
9.	**Tower N:** Please supply us with serial numbers for the Cisco express gateway.	The Express Gateways (Cisco) have no serial numbers as they are VM Based.
10.	**Tower N:** Please provide the number of major incidents logged for Network devices for the past 12 months.	The number of hardware incidents was supplied in slide deck of Compulsory Briefing Session, slide number 14. LAN Switches and Wireless APs indicates the number of calls where field engineers had to be dispatched to complete break fix incidents. Time and material (T/M) Requests are 80% made-up of new cabling requests and T/M Calls is ad hoc incidents related to the network infrastructure again 70% related to cabling break fix. Therefore, the Bidders Cabling Services must be structured properly as new SLA's have been requested for Cabling.

No	Question	Answer
11.	**Tower N:** In the "Compulsory briefing session" document there is a table with volumes. Are those the number of tickets logged per month for Tower N or only specific rows?	Bidders must refer to Question # 10 of Communication #5.
12.	**Tower S:** The following border posts appear on the "Proximity to SARS Sites" in S Tower but do not appear in the Sites Classification lists from SARS in Tower E and Tower S. SARS to please confirm that the sites are in scope for Tower E and to advise the SLA? | SARS Site	Street Address
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Border - Derdepoort	R49(Closest Road) - Botswana
Border - Giriyondo	H1-6(Closest Road) - Mozambique
Border - Pafuri	R525 - Mozambique
Border - SaniPass	R617(Closest Road) - Lesotho
Border - Stockpoort	R572 - Botswana
Border - Swartkopfontein	R49 - Botswana		Please refer to Additional document (Tower S_ Site classification and devices). These sites are out of scope for Tower E.
13.	**Tower E-** Call/Ticket volumes from the "Incident Statistics" indicates an average of 820 tickets per month, but from the "Q&A Comms 2" it indicates 700 break-fix tickets per month. Does the 820 tickets include remote support and do we work on the 820 average or 700 average for Tower E?	The average of 700 tickets does not account for any remote support. This estimate was based on a period of approximately three years. For more accurate information, please refer to the additional documents Tower E_ Incident Statistics as this data is sourced directly from the ITSM system. It is important to note that remote support should not be conducted by a Tower E service provider.

No	Question	Answer
14.	**Tower E-** On Page 75 of the "Business Requirements Specification" document there is mention of critical Resources required at the Commencement Date: End-user Support Service desk engineers. How many Resources are currently fulfilling this role? What function does these Resources perform? Are these resources based onsite at SARS or at the current Service Provider?	**The resources rotate between SARS Office and Home.** **Problem Management Consultants:** 3 Resources **Service Desk Engineers:** 5 Resources **Service Desk Consultants:** 15 Resources **Service Desk Consultants:** o Call logging and escalation. o Password reset and unlocking users accounts. o Windows Hello for Business Support o Assist with Office and email issues. o Register users on Ms Authenticator o Communicate and coordinate major incidents. o Configure users on printing services. o Assist with Updating Service Manager versions (weekly). o Communication and collaboration with stakeholders **Service Desk Engineers:** o -Probing and Troubleshooting. o Problem fact-finding and resolution. o Install and Uninstall software. o Hardware/Software problem diagnosis. o Network troubleshooting. o VPN support. o Microsoft and Cloud platform support. o Communication and collaboration with stakeholders o General end-user service and business understanding **IT Problem Management** Skills required. • Analytical Thinking: Ability to analyse complex problems and derive insightful solutions. • Technical Knowledge: Deep understanding of the field, enabling confident tackling of challenges.

No	Question	Answer
		• Problem-solving skills: Capacity to innovate and overcome obstacles effectively. • Communication Skills: Effective communication fosters collaboration and strengthens connections. • Leadership Abilities: Guide individuals or teams towards the finalisation of problem investigations. • Time Management: Efficiently managing time maximizes productivity and opportunity utilization. • Adaptability: Thriving in changing environments by embracing new challenges with resilience. • Attention to Detail: Ensuring accuracy and precision in all tasks for excellence. The resources are on 24/7 support. They perform all the activities associated with Problem Management, such as logging and tracking major outages, producing quality RCA reports, recording known errors and solutions, doing trend analysis and logging proactive problems, and chairing the RCA review board meeting.
15.	**Tower E-** Please advise what the incident category "Time to repair" refers to, eg. how is it different to the incident category "Support" with reference to hardware attended incidents?	The "Time to Repair (Time and Material)" category focuses on incidents classified as non-standard, which typically arise when the service provider needs to address issues that fall outside the predefined scope of the service agreement. Support category focuses on incidents that are classified as hardware restorations which are covered under the maintenance and support monthly fee.
16.	**Training – All Towers** Please specify the type of training that would be requested?	SARS aims to assess the Bidder's solution in terms of completeness, sustainability (recruitment and training). Transition Plan As part of the transition plan, SARS listed minimum requirements for a successful transition, for which Training and Knowledge Transfer form part of the requirements. Training is an Ad-hoc function, and it is specific to a Tower.
17.	Please confirm the current Application Performance Management toolset being utilised	A legacy Riverbed solution is currently utilized, the solution is SARS owned. This will be replaced with Cisco AppDynamics, the roadmap / strategy towards management and monitoring is currently being reviewed.

No	Question	Answer
		SARS has 2 x ARX-3200 Appliances on release 9.5.3 installed in Brooklyn and Vodacom. There are 5 x AL3100 Appliances in the Contact Centres on Release 8.6.8 plus an extra one in Brooklyn. There is also the RPM Dashboard Application running on a VM and displays the dashboards using browsers. The version of software is V2.3W PL1 Build 9227. SARS makes used of an FTE for the service from current service provider to manage this service.
18.	For the integration into Remedy, what version is the restapi that is available if any?	No RESTAPI is in use.
19.	We have a question with regards to the Mandatory Evaluation Criteria: Bidders to submit as proof Question: Will it be acceptable to SARS if we supply a reference of a client which has 1500 Cisco devices and a reference of a different client with 150 or more Meraki devices?	The Bidder must have provided network-related services for a cumulative period of 2 (two) years over the past five (5) years, to at least 2 (two) South African customer organisations and supporting at least 1 500 (one thousand five hundred) CISCO network devices (routers, switches, firewalls), including CISCO Meraki network devices (10% of 1 500) at each customer organisation. The Bidder itself must have been providing such services and cannot rely on a subcontractor to fulfil this requirement. NB: The Bidder must complete all fields in the response table.
20.	Can suppliers select the towers (tower N, Tower S and/or Tower E) they will be responding to, or must suppliers respond to all three towers?	Bidders can select the Tower they are bidding for and that it is not a must to respond to all the three Towers. Bidders can refer to paragraph 13 of the SARS Main RFP Document (Instructions for submitting a response to this RFP).
21.	**CLS:** Please advise, will SARS accept electronic signatures: on the hardcopy, and on the soft copy?	Electronic signatures are permitted on both documents.
22.	**TRT 5.2 TRANSITION TEAM, STRUCTURE, and EXPERIENCE for all three Towers –** Please clarify the correct usage of the second table labelled	Bidders to refer to the specific evaluation guidelines provided on the SARS Main RFP document for : - Tower N, S, E refer to Criteria 4.1 of the Technical Evaluation;

No	Question	Answer
	"Project 2". The SARS guidance in the template shows that the Project 1 Table can sufficiently cover the planned SARS project team composition, and their previous experience. May we disregard the Project 2 table i.e. state "N/A" in the fields?	which indicates points awarded for projects experience.
23.	**Tower E –** There is a duplication of street addresses in "5.2 SARS RFP 03-2024 5-2-E Tower E Technical Response Template, Service Centres, Table A, SARS Sites." **Nelspruit (31 Sitrus Crescent Nelspruit extension 7)** and **Polokwane (31 Sitrus Crescent Nelspruit extension 7 Mbombela).** Please clarify this and recommended response approach as we are not permitted to change anything on the Table.	This is indeed a duplication. The correct address is Nelspruit (31 Sitrus Crescent Nelspruit extension 7). The second address can be **ignored.**
24.	**Tower N, S and E –** With regards to the CV's for Tower E and Tower S that needs to be submitted, do we have to include the name and surnames of technicians and do we need to submit CV's for all the indicated positions required? Reason being is that we envisage to take over most of the current incumbent staff, how do we then indicate these individuals as people we identify to take on positions if we are successful.	SARS will accept a CV that does not disclose the name of an individual/Identity, but the Bidder is required to provide a CV that includes the capacity or designation, qualification(s), experience, and skill(s) of a resource to be assigned to do the work in line with the tender requirements. On award and contracting a bidder will provide to SARS a resource with the name, identity number, capacity or designation, qualification(s), experience, and skill(s) as per the tender requirements. Personal information tendered in a tender proposal will be kept secured against the risk of loss, unlawful access, interference, modification, unauthorized destruction, and disclosure in compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act. Bidders are referred to section 9, Paragraph 9.8.6 of SARS Main RFP Document which refers: 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 bidder.

No	Question	Answer
		As such, any misrepresentations in a proposal may result in legal action or other processes by SARS against the Bidder, notwithstanding the conclusion of an agreement between SARS and the Bidder for the provision of the goods and services in question. If a conflict arises between the Bidder's proposal and the agreement concluded between the parties, the agreement will prevail.
25.	**Legal - CLS** We have contacted many of our clients where we are currently offering similar services to tenders 02/2024 and 03/2024 respectively regarding giving their go ahead for the references. Due to the POPIA Act, many have refused to do so but are willing to engage with SARS directly in due course. Will that work for you?	The Bidder is required, at minimum to complete all fields in the response table. Nothing precludes the Bidder to provide more evidentiary proof of their Services beyond the questions asked. Compliance with Protection of Personal Information Act relating to the processing of personal information will be followed in that processing thereof will be for specific, explicitly defined, and legitimate reasons as provided in the RFP. Personal information tendered in a tender proposal will be kept secured against the risk of loss, unlawful access, interference, modification, unauthorized destruction, and disclosure in compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act
26.	**Legal – CLS** The BRS document makes reference to Schedule B (Service Management SOW), which applies to Tower N, Tower S and Tower E. Schedule B is not among the documents shared along with the published RFP.	Schedule B is not on the SARS Main RFP Document, is it contained in the Agreement as part of the Annexures, see page 78 of the Agreement.
27.	Can we sign and Initial the RFP documents Electronically?	Electronic signatures are permitted.
28.	If submitting as an unincorporated consortium, do we require a combined B-BBEE Certificate, or can we submit each consortium members B-BBEE certificate?	Paragraph 10.1.2. of the SARS RFP 03/2024 Main RFP Document: 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: -Identification of each party to the agreement in full. -The percentage ownership of the joint venture/consortium of each party to the agreement (if applicable).

No	Question	Answer
		-The precise functions and responsibilities that 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(ies).
29	If submitting as an unincorporated consortium do SARS require the Performance Bond in the Consortium name or can the performance bond be in the name of the lead partner of the consortium?	Yes, performance bond may be in the name of the lead partner of the consortium. If the proposal is submitted by an unincorporated joint venture/consortium arrangement, the unincorporated joint venture/consortium must submit a consolidated B-BBEE certificate or affidavit as if they were a group structure, and that such consolidated B-BBEE certificate or affidavit is prepared for every separate proposal. 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: -Identification of each party to the agreement in full. -The percentage ownership of the joint venture/consortium of each party to the agreement (if applicable). -The precise functions and responsibilities that 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(ies).