South African Revenue Service

RFP07/2026 The Procurement of a Master Data Management and Data Governance Solution

Questions & Answers

#	Questions	Answers
1.	When SARS specifies a 'hybrid deployment model with both cloud-based and on-premises components,' does SARS already have a preferred cloud provider (e.g., Microsoft Azure, AWS, Google Cloud), or is the vendor expected to propose the cloud environment? Additionally, will the cloud components be hosted in a SARS-managed cloud tenant, or in the vendor's cloud infrastructure?	▪ SARS will not prescribe a specific public cloud provider in this RFP. Vendors are expected to propose the cloud environment that best supports their platform, subject to the non-negotiable constraints below. Currently, SARS utilizes MS Azure as its primary public cloud provider. ▪ The cloud component must be deployed in a South African region to satisfy data residency, POPIA, TAA and broader SA sovereignty requirements stated in BRS Section 3.13. Off-shore SaaS tenancies that route or store SARS data outside South Africa will not be acceptable. ▪ SARS's strategic data and analytics platform (Microsoft Fabric, MSSQL, M365) is anchored on the Microsoft stack, and bidders should factor native interoperability with this estate into their solution architecture and TCO (Total Cost of Ownership). ▪ Cloud components must be hosted in a SARS-controlled tenancy (or a dedicated single-tenant arrangement equivalent to SARS-managed) to preserve key management, identity federation, audit and exit-rights. Multi-tenant vendor-controlled SaaS where SARS does not hold the tenancy will require explicit motivation and additional security/compliance demonstration. The supplier must clearly identify in their proposal: (i) the cloud provider and SA region, (ii) tenancy model (SARS tenant vs vendor tenant vs dedicated single-tenant), (iii) data residency and sovereignty controls, and (iv) all data flows that cross the SARS perimeter.
2.	SARS Customs Management System (CMS) integration - what is the backing DB for this? (BRS 3.13(g))	▪ The SARS Customs estate is anchored on the Customs Core Systems, which runs on IBM Power Series infrastructure with IBM DB2 as the backing relational

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		database. This is consistent with BRS Section 3.13, which already lists DB2 explicitly as an in-scope integration target. ▪ Bidders must therefore design CMS integration on the basis of a DB2-on-IBM-Power backing database. Acceptable integration patterns include DB2-native connectors and JDBC/ODBC-based metadata harvesting for cataloguing, lineage and quality profiling, together with change-data-capture or controlled replication into the SARS EDW layer where bulk data movement is required. ▪ Direct production database access is not permitted. Connectivity must use SARS-approved integration channels and must respect platform-specific access patterns appropriate to the IBM Power / DB2 environment (including connection limits, workload isolation and audit logging). Final connector specifications, schema visibility and access rules will be confirmed during the architecture and design phase by the SARS Customs domain team, the EDW team and Enterprise Architecture, in line with the governance model.
3.	The Master entities (e.g. Taxpayer) are described as created in source systems. i. Does this mean that there is an expectation that schema/table or some other materialised object is created by the software solution as a part of the MDM flow across the various SARS systems? ii. Alternatively, is this meant to be a virtual concept (calculated)? (BRS 3.1(a))	i. No, SARS's primary expectation is a virtualised / federated (Registry-style) MDM pattern rather than a centralised hub that physically materialises master entities into a new database. Authoritative source systems remain the system of record for the underlying attributes; the MDM solution provides the unified view, cross-system identity resolution (golden record), governance, lineage and quality controls over those source records. ii. Where the solution requires technical objects to operate, for example metadata tables, match-and-merge indexes, cross-reference / survivorship structures, golden record indices, audit and lineage stores, those are accepted and expected as part of the platform's internal architecture. They are not regarded as data migration provided the source systems remain authoritative. iii. Coexistence patterns (limited two-way synchronisation back to source systems

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		for select attributes under workflow approval) are acceptable where business value is demonstrated, but a fully centralised hub model that requires SARS to re-platform master data into the MDM tool's database is not the preferred deployment. Bidders must clearly indicate which MDM style their solution supports natively (Registry, Consolidation, Coexistence, Centralised) and how they will deliver the SARS preference for Registry / Virtualisation with optional Coexistence for selected domains.
4.	Are we expected to propose a separate data privacy and data security tool to meet the requirements?	▪ No. SARS does not require, and does not expect, bidders to propose a separate, standalone data privacy or data security product. The capabilities described in BRS Section 3.8 (data masking, encryption, RBAC/ABAC, classification, audit logging, POPIA-aligned controls) must be delivered as native, integrated capabilities of the proposed MDM and Data Governance platform. ▪ The proposed solution must integrate with the existing SARS enterprise security and identity ecosystem, including SARS's identity provider for SSO/federated authentication, SARS's certificate and key management, and SARS's SIEM/log aggregation rather than introducing parallel tooling. ▪ Where a vendor's privacy and security capabilities are delivered as separately licensed modules of the same product family, this remains acceptable provided the modules are part of a single integrated platform, are quoted in the bid, and do not introduce a separate vendor. Proposing a third-party or separate-vendor data privacy / DLP / data security tool to fill gaps in the primary MDM-DG platform is not aligned with the single-platform, single-vendor stance set out in BRS Section 3.13.
5.	Is SARS looking for a single vendor solution? Is a solution that integrates solutions from different vendors to address all SARS requirements acceptable?	▪ Yes. SARS is procuring a single-vendor, single-platform solution. The successful bidder must directly deliver all in-scope MDM, Data Governance, Metadata Management, Data Catalogue, Data Quality, Data Lineage, and Privacy /

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		Security capabilities described in the BRS. ▪ Multi-vendor integrated stacks (for example, a separate data catalogue product from one vendor combined with an MDM hub from another, integrated through a third) are not aligned with the single-platform requirement of BRS Section 3.13 and will not be accepted. ▪ Subcontracting of implementation services is also not permitted. The bidder must demonstrate the in-house capability and certified resources to deliver the implementation, training and post-implementation support directly. Where a vendor's platform is delivered as a suite of modules under a single product family, single licence agreement, single support contract and single roadmap, this is acceptable as a single-platform solution and not regarded as a multi-vendor stack.
6.	SARS requires at least two client references from South African MDM/Data Governance projects completed in the last 5 years. If local references are limited, can references from global parent company projects or international engagements be provided instead?	No, SARS will only accept South African proven references
7.	Automated Metadata Discovery: What percentage of metadata is currently documented vs. undocumented in SARS? Which systems have the most 'dark data' (undiscovered metadata)? Do you have existing metadata management tools we should integrate with?	Refer to the BRS section 3.2 and 3.3 SARS does not have an existing automated and integrated metadata management tool.
8.	Impact Analysis Capability: When SARS changes a data field (e.g., 'TaxID format changes from 10 to 12 digits'), what needs to happen? (a) Just show which systems will be affected, (b)	SARS prefers the capability of the impact analysis using a dependency graph from a critical data element/ business application process. (on all a, b and c)

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	Show all downstream reports/dashboards, or (c) Actually simulate the change & show expected outcomes? What level of impact visibility is required?	
9.	What's the expected data volume growth over 3 years? i. What is the estimated total volume of master and related data records across key domains, and what is the expected growth over the next 3–5 years? ii. What are the approximate total data volumes (in TB/PB) across systems to be integrated, including both structured and unstructured data sources?	Refer to the BRS section 3.5 (a). The solution must be able to scale with SARS's data needs, accommodating growing volumes of data and metadata without compromising performance.
10.	Workflow Approval Levels & Versioning: How many approval levels does SARS need? (e.g., data steward → team lead → governance officer → sign-off?) How frequently do policies/models change?	Six levels of approval are needed. Policies are refreshed yearly.
11.	SARS requires 99.95–99.99% uptime and unplanned downtime resolution within 2 hours. Will SARS accept a tiered SLA model (e.g., P1 critical issues resolved in 2 hours, P2 in 8 hours, P3 in 24 hours), or does the 2-hour resolution requirement apply to all categories of unplanned downtime regardless of severity?	A tiered SLA model is acceptable; however, the specific SLAs will be determined during the contracting phase.
12.	What is the average and peak daily data change volume (inserts, updates, deletes) across source systems?	Refer to section 3.5 (a) of the BRS. The solution must be able to scale with SARS's data needs, accommodating growing volumes of data and metadata without compromising performance

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13.	What is the estimated number of concurrent users expected to access data governance and master data services?	It is required that all SARS employees (approximately 14 000) are granted read-only access, section 4.4 (c) of the BRS
14.	What are the expected query volumes, including average and peak loads, for both real-time and batch access patterns?	Yes, SARS requires real time access control management and monitoring. SARS does not have a comprehensive catalogue of data sources however critical data sources are identified.
15.	What latency requirements are expected for real-time data access and governance-related operations?	Refer to the BRS section 3.8 (k) and section 3.5(c).
16.	How many source systems are expected to be integrated at the initial phase.	Refer to the BRS, section 13. 13(g) and section 2 (h)
17.	What types of data sources are in scope (e.g. mainframe, databases, APIs, streaming platforms), and what are their relative data volumes?	Refer to the BRS, section 13.13 (g).
18.	What is the anticipated number of data quality rules, validations, and policy checks required at implementation?	Refer to the BRS, section 3.7
19.	What is the expected frequency of data quality monitoring and policy enforcement (real-time versus scheduled)?	Refer to the BRS, section 3.7
20.	What is the expected volume of governance workflows (e.g. approvals, remediation tasks) per day or month?	Refer to the BRS section 3.10.
21.	What percentage of governance processes are expected to be automated versus manually handled?	Full automation as per the requirements.
22.	Beyond read-only users, how many active users are expected across roles such as data stewards, administrators, analysts, and governance teams?	Refer to the BRS section 4.3 (a)
23.	What level of access control granularity is required (e.g. row-	Refer to the BRS section 4.3 (a) and section 3.8 and all three granularity levels are required

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	level, column-level, attribute-level), and how widely should it be applied across datasets?	and must be supported natively by the platform.
24.	What are the expected service level requirements in terms of system availability, response times, and throughput?	Refer to the BRS Section 4.2 and section 4.3 (a) Bidders must declare measured throughput on a like-for-like reference deployment and indicate horizontal-scaling capability to grow without re-architecture.
25.	What data retention and historical tracking requirements apply to master data, metadata, and audit logs?	SARS data retention policies may communicate at contracting state.
26.	Which use cases are considered latency-critical versus those that can operate using near-real-time or batch processing approaches?	The latency-critical are referenced in the BRS, section 3.5 (c) and 3.14
27.	Clarification is requested on the requirement to provide proof of solution ownership or authorised/accredited partner, distributor, or reseller status for the proposed platform. In a scenario where the bidding entity does not directly hold the reseller/authorization status, but has a confirmed partnership arrangement with a third-party entity that is the officially authorized reseller of the proposed solution, and where such authorization proof is available in the third party's name: ▪ Would SARS accept such an arrangement, provided the third-party authorized entity is formally included in the bid structure (e.g., as part of a joint venture or equivalent compliant bidders structure)? ▪ Alternatively, does SARS require that the bidding entity itself must directly hold the reseller/authorization status, with supporting evidence issued in its own name?	▪ SARS requires the bidder to be the Solution owner and to furnish us with proof of such, alternatively SARS requires the bidder to be an authorised reseller/ partner of the Solution owner. ▪ If the proposal is submitted by an incorporated joint venture, the incorporated joint venture is required to submit proof of authorization or accreditation of the joint venture. If the proposal is submitted by an unincorporated joint venture / consortium arrangement, any party of the unincorporated joint venture / consortium can submit proof of authorization or accreditation of each of the parties to the arrangement.

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	We note the requirement that subcontracting is not permitted and would appreciate clarity on how such arrangements should be structured to remain compliant.	
28.	Please can you clarify if the RFP 07/2026 is a new RFP or a reissued RFP that was published last year 2025.	In 2025 SARS issued a request for information RFI 02/2025. RFP07/2026 is a new request for proposal.
29.	Regarding the SBD 3.1 / 3.2 / 3.3 document / section for the above-mentioned RFP; please may you provide us with the SBD 3.1 / 3.2 / 3.3 section as it is not within the tender documents that we have.	SBD 3.1/3.2/3.3 reference the pricing schedule and are encompassed within the annexure referenced as **SARS RFP 07-2026 5-1 Master Data and Data Governance Solution Price Template.**