RFP 23/2022: THE REQUEST TO APPOINT A SERVICE PROVIDER FOR WHATSAPP BUSINESS SOLUTION PLATFORM FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE (05) YEARS

Communication #4

Date of Issue: 18 October 2022

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	The Business Requirements Specification – Data Security 5.1 SARS seeks to ensure the successful Bidder will adhere to all applicable governance requirements as listed below. The Service Provider must demonstrate compliance to the Applicable Laws, including but not limited to the below: 5.1.1 ISO/IEC 27001 (Information Security Management Standard), 5.1.2 ISO/IEC 27002 (Security Controls), 5.1.3 ISO/IEC 27005 (Information Security Risk Management), 5.1.4 Electronic Communications and Transaction Act, Act No. 25 of 2002 (ECTA), 5.1.5 Protection of Personal Information Act, Act No. 2013 (POPIA), 5.1.6 Minimum Information Security Standards, 1996 (MISS), 5.1.7 South African Cybersecurity Framework, 2012, 5.1.8 Tax Administration Act, Act 28 of 2011	SARS seeks to ensure the successful Bidder will adhere to all applicable governance requirements. The Service Provider must demonstrate compliance to the Applicable Laws and Standards. NB: Bidders will be evaluated as per the issued evaluation criteria (Prequalification, Mandatory, Technical and Price & B- BBEE)

No	Question	Answer
	Are these requirements checklist items which must be complied with in order for the bid to be successful i.e. non-compliance related to any of these would exclude us?	
2	**Main RFP document** Table 5: Mandatory evaluation criteria: The Bidder must submit an authorisation letter from Meta for WhatsApp Business Solution which confirms that the bidder is a registered Service Provider. Question: In the context of the proposed submission, would it be acceptable to provide the BSP letter while our partner will be the bidder?	SARS will only accept letter of authorisation from the bidder who is tendering, and such a bidder may be in the form of a private company, public company, CC, JV, Incorporated JV, Sole proprietor, Partnership business.
3	The Pricing Response Template does not seem to cater for development and maintenance costs. How would these be expressed please?	The development and maintenance costs should be included to technical setup as per table 1 of costing model.
4	How do we gain access to the e-filing API's to make the channel interactive	The solution should adress WhatsApp requirements.
5	Are we limited to the same functionality as in the Lwazi chatbot or can we make suggestions to improve the service?	The Lwazi chatbot will remain SARS responsibility.
6	How do you see the authentication working for the users of the channel eg: ID Numbers / Tax Number / email / Mobile numbers / OTP? Is authentication the same as the Lwazi?	The authentication will remain SARS responsibility.
7	If the user is not currently registered on e-fling would they be expected to register via Whats-App or be re-directed to the e-filing website?	E-filling registration is not a requirement and requirements must be limited to WhatsApp solution.
8	What is seen as data storage? Storage on the Platform / Storage on the Mobile Device/ Data in Transit	Data storage refers to data at rest and in terms of requirements such data that is stored in the cloud data centre then the residency should be within the borders of South Africa.
9	We assume a Penetration Test will be required: Who does the Pen Test? Cost?	Penetration Testing and related code reviews remain a SARS responsibility.
10	Can references be from global and local companies?	As per technical requirement 4 of the Bid Specification Document, the bidder must have prior experience in implementation of WhatsApp Business Platform in South Africa. However, any global reference in addition to South African reference will be accepted.
11	RFP didn't mention Live Agent chat, but the briefing did. Is this indeed a requirement?	Livechat is not envisaged for phase 1 RFP 23/2022 solution.
12	"The Service Provider shall provide the service utilising security technologies and techniques in accordance with Industry Best Practices as well as in line with SARS' Processes, Procedures,	SARS will share Processes, Procedures, Standards and Guideline with the recommended Service Provider upon award.

No	Question	Answer
	Standards and Guidelines, including those relating to the prevention and detection of inappropriate use or access of software, systems and networks." - Have SARS provided bidders with the SARS Processes, Procedures, Standards and Guideline?	
13	"Enabling/establishing WhatsApp as an inbound/outbound channel from a technology perspective, considering SARS architecture and security standards" - Has SARS provided bidders with your Architecture and security standards?	SARS will share Architecture and security standards with the recommended Service Provider upon award.
14	Please not that SBD 6.1 Preference point claim form is not there in the tender pack. It would be great if you can attach the same in this mail.	SBD 6.1 has been updated and attached on the National Treasury e-portal. SBD 6.1 has been updated and attached on the SARS tender pack.
15	Please elaborate and provide more clarity on point number "The Bidder must provide details of Information Officer and if any, Information Officer (s) registered with the Information Regulator and proof thereof. Evidence as proof of with Regulator: Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) Manual and/or Letter of appointment from the Business Solution Providers designating a person (s) as Information Officer and/or Deputy Information Officer (s)"	Service Provider (s) is required by law (POPIA) to appoint an information officer and by way of delegation (if applicable) deputy information officer(s) which must be registered with the Information Regulator (section 55 (2) & 56 of POPIA). It is a mandatory compliance (POPIA) requirement for SARS to establish the Services Provider's appointed information Officer and/or deputy information officer (s). Thus, the Service Provider in this regard is required to submit its PAIA Manual or Letter of delegation/appointment designating the relevant Service Provider's official appointed and registered (with Information Regulator) as either the information officer or deputy information officer (s).
16	Do we have to have ISO certification or will company policies in line with ISO suffice?	Yes, company policies in line with ISO suffice as per section 5.1 of the Business Requirement Specification. SARS seeks to ensure the successful Bidder will adhere to all applicable governance requirements as listed below. The Service Provider must demonstrate compliance to the Applicable Laws, including but not limited to the below: ISO/IEC 27001 (Information Security Management Standard), ISO/IEC 27002 (Security Controls),

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		ISO/IEC 27005 (Information Security Risk Management), Electronic Communications and Transaction Act, Act No. 25 of 2002 (ECTA), Protection of Personal Information Act, Act No. 2013 (POPIA), Minimum Information Security Standards, 1996 (MISS), South African Cybersecurity Framework, 2012, Tax Administration Act, Act 28 of 2011
17	Does SARS WhatsApp bot need option to connect to live agent?	Live chat does not form part for the phase 1 of this tender, therefore there is no requirement to integrate to live chat.
18	The Bidder is interested in responding to RFP 23/2022 for a WhatsApp business solution, which is a global partner of Meta and counts Meta as both a client and a partner where they both co-develop solutions. In this light, the Bidder has a global collaboration agreement with Meta, which supersedes a service provider letter. Will this be considered an adequate alternative to the authorisation as a service provider letter?	It is a condition/requirement of tender that all bidders submit an authorisation letter from Meta. Therefore, no substitute shall be accepted to satisfy this requirement. It is expected of bidders to comply and satisfy mandatory requirements as set out in the tender document, failing which a bid shall be construed as non-responsive (not acceptable tender).
19	Question regarding the software architecture which is used for the storage of data, that is the backend database. They need to know this to understand with which backend system the program needs to communicate to access the information mentioned on page 3 of "Summary Guidelines", Section 2.1	The details regarding the software architecture will be shared with the recommended Service Provider upon award.
20	On page 15 of "Summary Guidelines" there is mention of "Training Requirements". It also states that the Bidder must provide support services. Is it meant that we must outline how we will go about training our own staff? In addition, must we provide the necessary but detailed training material or can we just provide a general outline and timeline of how such training will take place?	Training Service Provider staff is not part of solution requirements. SARS expects Service Providers to provide a general outline and timeline of how training of SARS support staff will take place.