RFP 31/2025:

Appointment of a service provider for the acquisition of eDiscovery tool

Communication #2

Date of Issue: 21 January 2025

These questions and answers will be posted to all potential bidders.

Questions and Answers:

No	Question	Answer
1.	We viewed the questions and answers related to the RFP. We noted the answer to the first question states an on-premises solution or components hosted within SARS' cloud environment. We would however still just like to confirm that SARS only requires service providers who are able to implement an on-premises eDiscovery solution within your IT environment only, or if service providers offering an eDiscovery solution as a service and data being hosted within our environment, are also eligible and should proceed to submit a bid response.	It is SARS requirement and preference that the data is hosted in the SARS environment to ensure chain of evidence and data integrity. However, service providers may indicate the manner in which the service and data would be hosted in its environment and how SARS would access such for information purposes. SARS will remain the owner of the data and if there is any reason for the contract to be terminated, the data has to revert back to SARS immediately

No	Question	Answer
2.	From the responses to the earlier questions, it sounds like the actual volume of data that the eDiscovery solution would need to support is a subset of the current 30TB of data collected per annum. 10 projects are mentioned, potentially covering multiple taxpayers. Would it be reasonable to estimate somewhere nearer to 1/10th of that being processed into the eDiscovery system? Modern eDiscovery solutions which can meet your terms of reference are generally based around volumes rather than users, hence the need to understand these in more detail.	The 30TB of data relate to two current active projects. The 10 projects referenced pertain to new projects that will form part of the take-on into the eDiscovery tool. All projects in the illicit economy environment, where this tool will be utilized, will comprise multiple taxpayers, multiple tax types and multiple tax periods. With regard to the assumption that only 1/10th of the data will be processed in the eDiscovery system, it may be helpful to clarify that this is not the case. The data obtained from SARS enforcement actions (tax inquiries, search and seizures, etc.), third-party responses to requests for information, as well as data submitted by taxpayers, will all be incorporated into the tool. The volume of 100–300 TB of data per annum represents what SARS envisages for all new projects that will be investigated using the eDiscovery tool. The number of users is based on the initial take-on of new projects, which is why scalability in terms of user capacity is an important requirement.

No	Question	Answer
3.	We understand the importance of data confidentiality and security, having recently been the successful bidder in a similar tender and evaluation process where the same legislation and guidelines governing data management and protection applied. The client was satisfied with the security and governance provisions of the cloud-based Software-as-a-Service solution we proposed, which enabled them to benefit from key advantages of cloud-based platforms—namely scalability, enhanced security, and access to the latest AI componentry that aligns with your terms of reference. In such a solution, your source data would remain fully within your domain and under your control. Only the extracted, processed, or derived content subject to investigation within the eDiscovery tool would move into the environment, and even then, it would be protected through strict access controls, encryption standards, and governance protocols	As indicated under question 1 above, the response should address the point being raised. It may also be important to note that the requirements of a previous tender may not necessarily be the same as those of the current tender. Each tender is evaluated based on its own scope, specifications, and compliance criteria.
4.	We took notice that the tender was released in December 2025. Given that December is an exceptionally busy period, several of our personnel were on annual leave and were therefore not aware of the tender's publication, resulting in the work on the tender not commencing as early as intended.	Due to pressing timelines and other factors SARS took a decision not to grant extension of the tender period. As per the decision taken on 20 January 2026, no extension will be granted and SARS current timelines on this tender will remain in place.

No	Question	Answer
	Taking this into consideration we kindly request that you would consider allowing us an extension date for the submission. By allowing us an extension it will place us in a position to negotiate the best possible price with the manufacturers and provide SARS with the best solution that will satisfy the stipulated criteria's.	
5.	I kindly request clarification regarding the submission requirements for the RFP. The documentation indicates that one (1) USB and one (1) hard copy must be submitted, with the hard copy specified as an A4 ring-bound lever arch file. Could you please confirm whether the tender must be submitted in a lever arch file, or whether it is permissible to submit the hard copy as a bound document enclosed in a sealed envelope? Your assistance in this matter would be greatly appreciated	SARS prefers that the hard copy be submitted in an A4 ring-bound lever arch file, as this helps ensure submissions are neat, identifiable and easy for evaluators to navigate. However, while this format is recommended, SARS will still accept submissions that meet the overall requirements, even if not provided in a lever arch file
6.	Under the Technical specifications and requirements specifically point 6.4 it mentions an On-Prem solution. Will a fully cloud based solution that is hosted by the software provider in MS Azure within South Africa be acceptable?	Refer to the response on question 1.
7.	Will SARS permit hybrid deployment (on-prem + isolated cloud enclave)?	No Hybrid, fully on-prem. Please see the response to question 1 above as to SARS' requirement for the solution to be hosted on premises

No	Question	Answer
8.	Are mobile forensic sources expected to include full WhatsApp DB extraction or review-only artefacts?	Yes, both full and/or artefacts Both the full WhatsApp and artefacts are required to be provided as part of the evidentiary value to the investigation
9.	Confirm whether OEM tool outputs are mandatory integration points or preferred.	Preferred integration
10.	Is multilingual OCR required for all 11 official languages or search-only?	Translation is required as per the BRS 5.1 Based on historic experience on SARS investigations, translation to South Africa's 11 official languages is required. Provision should also be made for other international languages noting mainstream communications for other African countries, Europe, Asia and South America.