

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

## **Communication #6**

**Date of Issue: 08 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](http://www.sars.gov.za).

#### **Question and Answer**

<b>Solution Requirements – Scope of Work</b>		<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answer</b>
1.	Enabling/establishing WhatsApp as an inbound/outbound channel from a technology perspective, considering SARS architecture and security standards.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Can SARS please provide example of Outward Messages envisioned?</li><li>2. Are API's available from the SARS back-end Services or Services?</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Outbound messages would be responses to taxpayer-initiated messages, or campaigns (e.g., deadlines) where taxpayers have opted in, to receiving updates.</li><li>2. The solution should be positioned as a Software as a Service for a communication channel and the recommended Service Provider's technical implementation will be discussed upon award.</li></ol>
2.	Enable the following service requests via a structured menu, that can be auto resolved by o Request Tax Reference Number  o Request Statement of Account	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Can SARS confirm that the back-end services that provide this information as outlined have ready API's.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The solution should be positioned as a Software as a Service for a communication channel and the recommended Service Provider's technical implementation will be discussed upon award.</li><li>2. Refer to point number 1 in the answer section.</li></ol>

Solution Requirements – Scope of Work		Questions	Answer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Request Return Refund Status</li> <li>○ Request Audit Status</li> <li>○ Request Notice of Assessment</li> </ul> <p>Integration to back-end services:</p>	<p>2. If not, what is the envisioned file transfer protocols? Flat files? FTP?</p> <p>3. Does SARS envision providing a WhatsApp Customer Support Number to assist users with using the Service?</p> <p>4. Are any Outboard Messages envisioned in these requests? In other words will SARS originate messages to end-users?</p> <p><b>Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating into SARS Backoffice with or without API's is seen as the greatest effort required to providing the Service required. Please clarify the Availability of APIS</li> <li>• This has direct impact on costs of the Integration and Testing efforts.</li> </ul>	<p>3. No, the existing contact centre number will remain in place for taxpayer support.</p> <p>4. Where taxpayers have opted to receive notifications, certain outbound campaigns are intended.</p>	
3.	Support and Maintenance of the platform for a period of five years.	No provision for costing of support and Maintenance is provided for in the Pricing Table over the 5 Years. Can you provide a Table for Support and Maintenance for the 5 years?	The Pricing Template has been amended to include Support and Maintenance cost for the period of 5 years, refer to the reissued Pricing Template.

Solution Requirements – Scope of Work	Questions	Answer	
4.		<p>The annual Support Costs are dependent on the services offered by META and its Business Service Provider and the support requirements from SARS. Please see below types. Please provide clarity.</p> <p>What is the Support Level Category required for the Service?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severity Level 1 (Critical)?</li> <li>• Severity Level 2 (Moderate)?</li> <li>• Severity Level 3 (Minimum)?</li> <li>• Severity Level 4 (Limited)?</li> </ul>	<p>Any cost relating to annual support should be quoted and provided for on pricing template.</p> <p>Support level category required for the service must align to the requirements as outlined on the <b>Business Requirement Specification and Published Agreement</b>.</p> <p>The solution must align to SARS's expected uptime of near 100% <b>for at least minimum operating times from 06:00 am to 18:00pm</b>.</p> <p>95-100 = <b>(20) points</b>  95 - 97 = <b>(10) points</b>  Less than <b>95 = (0) points</b></p>
5.		<p>Can SARS define the Service Level required?</p>	<p>The solution must align to SARS's expected uptime of near 100% <b>for at least minimum operating times from 06:00 am to 18:00pm = (20)</b></p> <p>95-101 = <b>(20) points</b>  95 - 97 = <b>(10) points</b>  Less than 95 = <b>(0) points</b></p>

Solution Requirements – Scope of Work	Questions	Answer
6.		Note that this Service Level are backed by the Service levels that META provides, and clients pay for.
7.	<b>Price Template</b>	
	<b>Table 2. Cost per Message</b>	
	Outbound Message	Please give examples of “Outbound Message”
	Please Include Multi-Year Support and Maintenance Table	Please provide a Table to provision of Costing this, separating Integration and Platform and support.
8.	<b>Protection of Personal Information Act</b>	
		How does SARS Envision to handle POPI Act for Outbound Messages?
		Will SARS Customers approve POPI Act requirements in-Channel?
		<p>As part of the onboarding process if a taxpayer elects to use and sign up for WhatsApp platform SARS will provide the taxpayer with the privacy policy from Meta to ensure that familiar with the provisions. Further, SARS will request consent from Taxpayer during the onboarding process in line with the conditions of the TAct.</p> <p>Yes, as per the above statement SARS will request consent from Taxpayer during the onboarding process in line with the conditions of the TAX Act.</p>

Solution Requirements – Scope of Work		Questions	Answer
		AS a Service Provider, we do not STORE any end-user information but FORWARD this to SARS Back-end Services. Is this the understanding of SARS for this Solution?	The solution should be positioned as Software as a Service and must support cloud-based data/message storage through a local (within the borders of South Africa) based service provider.
		Outbound Messages will be originating from SARS and not the Service Provider. Is this assumption correct?	Yes, that is correct.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Training Requirements</b>		
		<p>1. What type of Training is required?</p> <p>Question? which answer is applicable to the below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical</li> <li>• IT Administration</li> </ul>	<p>The Bidder to provide ongoing training for the enablement of SARS technical resources, to enable them to provide support to SARS internal and external customers. The Bidder will be expected to provide technical support services which will include fault or query escalation process.</p> <p>Fault logging, incidents and escalation processes will be defined in the SLA.</p> <p>The SARS technical support staff are required to understand the technical solution in the event of any incidents resulting in unavailability of the service to either the customers or service consultants before they escalate to the service</p>

Solution Requirements – Scope of Work		Questions	Answer
			provider. Such incidents may not require escalation but rather resolution by the SARS technical support staff.
10.		2. We envision that the back-end business processes are supported by SARS.	Bidder's understanding is correct.
		3. As a Software As A Service a new Customer or User Interface or Experience (UI/UX) will be provided for users to access these services. Can you provide more clarity on this?	The SAAS should be the WhatsApp Business Platform enabled as a communication channel for SARS.
		4. How many users and roles to be trained?	The envisioned number of resources is five (5).