

**RFP 04/2025: Network Carrier and Infrastructure Services (Tower DVC)**

**Communication #3**

**Date of Issue: 01 April 2026**

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

**Questions and Answers:**

No	Question	Answer
<b>TOWER D</b>		
1.	When do the current Cisco Meraki device licenses expire, and will they be renewed or handed over to the new service provider?	The new Service Provider will provide its own new hardware with associated licenses. Meraki hardware owned by SARS for LAN purposes are excluded from Tower D and is associated with the Nexio contract. Not related to Tower D.
2.	Is SARS currently paying for Cisco SMARTnet or Cisco Solution Support on the Meraki devices, or is support handled through the current service provider?	The current Service Provider is responsible for support and hardware supplied as part of Tower D. SARS has no obligation regarding CiscoSMARTnet for Tower D
3.	Who currently holds the Cisco Meraki dashboard, is it SARS directly, or the current service provider? Will this be transferred to the new provider?	SARS currently holds ownership of the Cisco Meraki dashboard directly, not the existing Service Provider. As such, the dashboard will not be transferred. Instead, the new Service Provider will be required to register on SARS’s existing Meraki dashboard and be granted the appropriate access to manage and monitor the environment.
4.	Are the Cisco Umbrella licenses (DNS, SWG, CASB) currently owned by SARS or the service provider, and when do they expire?	Current licenses are owned by current Service Provider. Note that information is not relevant, as the new Service Provider will provide and implement its own solution and associated licenses. Current licenses owned by Service Provider will expire as soon as new Service Provider takes over with its own license structure.
5.	How many Cisco Umbrella seats/users are currently licensed?	There are currently 6,000 Cisco Umbrella seats/users licensed. Is the 6000 umbrella seats only relating to Tower D. Yes
6.	Is SARS currently using Cisco Secure Connect licenses for any of the 58 SD-WAN sites, how many?	Yes, all licenses are on Secure Connect Foundation Advantage. Refers to Cisco license model. 6,000 Cisco Umbrella licenses (Cisco Secure Connect is the new term for Umbrella)
7.	Will the new service provider be expected to take over the existing Cisco licenses, or will new licenses be procured as part of the contract?	New licenses will be provided by the new Service Provider, as no existing licenses will be carried-over.
8.	Has SARS done a full network audit of the 58 SD-WAN sites recently, and is that documentation available to bidders?	Info will be provided to new Service Provider during Transition/Transformation phase if required. Statement correct, as current solution and/or design is not relevant or applicable to new solution provided by new Service Provider

No	Question	Answer
9.	Does SARS have its own Meraki tenant or is it a tenant from a Service Provider?	SARS currently holds ownership of the Cisco Meraki dashboard directly, not the existing Service Provider.  As such, the dashboard will not be transferred. Instead, the new Service Provider will be required to register on SARS's existing Meraki dashboard and be granted the appropriate access to manage and monitor the environment.
10.	For the existing SDWAN sites, how many and what model Meraki devices are at a site?	CISCO Meraki MX68 (Plus Tier license) for all sites and CISCO Meraki MX450 at Service Provider's Hub No financial impact to SARS, as new Service Provider is responsible for SD-WAN solution (hardware, software, licenses, etc.)
11.	What licenses do these MERAKI's currently have?	CISCO Meraki MX68 (Plus Tier license) for all sites and CISCO Meraki MX450 at Service Provider's Hub. This question was answered correctly. Why is this answer an issue?
12.	Tower D Will the SD-WAN HUB site be located at SARS Admin Lehae la SARS in Brooklyn?	No. Provided by the Service Provider at their own Data Center
13.	What is the network end state expected to look, is it safe to assume, SD-WAN network with branches building SD-WAN overlays into HO/Data Centers, and it will be full-mesh SD-WAN overlay topology?	Correct. Entire WAN will be on SD-WAN with centralized Hub for internal traffic and direct Internet access from each branch.
14.	Who will manage the SD-WAN end state network, bidder, or customer, if is the bidder any ROA required?	The Bidder will be responsible for end-to-end, as a total solution. This is the primary requirement for Tower D!
15.	Kindly assist with clarification on the following items relating to the connectivity transition requirements:  <b>Third-party connectivity providers</b> Please provide details of the current third-party service providers delivering connectivity services that will form part of the transition. This should include all connectivity types that the successful bidder will be required to assume responsibility for during the transition phase.  <b>Contractual status of sites</b> Please confirm whether the existing site connectivity services are reaching end of contract, or whether the successful bidder will be required to assume these services through cession or similar contractual transfer arrangements.  <b>Transition period flexibility</b> Please confirm whether there is an opportunity for extension of the stipulated three-month transition period should operational or dependency complexities arise.	Please note that all 3rd Parties terminate at the current service provider Data Center and are then routed across the MPLS network to SARS HO, as virtual (VRF) interfaces. This is configured on dual 1Gb fiber last mile links terminated at SARS HO. Most last mile circuits at the 3rd Party end will remain as is, as they are owned by the 3rd Party.  No connectivity services will be ceded or transferred, as all services will be terminated during the Transition period, which is part of the disengagement phase, as will be provided by the current Service Provider.  No. The transition period will remain three (3) months to ensure a successful takeover of the existing (as-is") services. The subsequent transformation period, spanning eight (8) to twelve (12) months, will serve as the mechanism for migrating WAN services to the new Service Provider underlay service. This approach must be clearly detailed in the bidder's Transformation Plan.

No	Question	Answer
16.	<p>Tower D – Transition &amp; Transformation Timelines and Governance</p> <p>To align with SARS expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition = 3 months (takeover of services as-is)</li> <li>• Transformation = 8–12 months (MPLS → SD-WAN)</li> </ul> <p><b>Please clarify:</b></p> <p>16.1. Should Transformation start only after the Transition period?</p> <p>16.2. Will the new Service Provider assume full operational responsibility for overlay (SD-WAN) and underlay (connectivity), including third-party services, until its own connectivity is implemented?</p> <p>16.3 How will service levels and service credits be measured if underlay services remain under incumbent or third-party control?</p> <p>16.4 Will the new Service Provider have full operational visibility and change control over incumbent and third-party infrastructure?</p> <p>16.5 Alternatively, will a phased responsibility model be applied where the incumbent retains operational accountability until migration completion?"</p>	<p>Yes, transformation will commence only after the completion of the Transition period.</p> <p>The new Service Provider will assume full operational responsibility for overlay (SD-WAN) and underlay (connectivity), including 3rd Party services, only when these services have been transformed to the new Service Provider.</p> <p>Service levels and associated service credits will be measured and applied only to services that are under the operational control of the new Service Provider. Where underlay connectivity remains with the incumbent or third-party providers, service levels and credits will continue to be governed by the respective incumbent arrangements until such services are migrated and transformed to the new Service Provider’s solution. Refer to 16.2</p> <p>Full operational visibility and change control over incumbent and third-party infrastructure will not apply until such infrastructure has been migrated and transformed to the new Service Provider’s solution. Refer to 16.2</p> <p>A phased responsibility model will apply, whereby the incumbent or third-party providers retain operational accountability until the migration and transformation to the new Service Provider are completed, in line with answer 16.2.</p>
17.	<p>Tower D – SD-WAN Equipment</p> <p>Will SARS retain any existing SD-WAN equipment, or is the bidder expected to provide new equipment for the entire solution?</p>	<p>The new Service Provider is expected to provide new equipment for the entire solution.</p>
18.	<p>Tower D – Replacement of Third-Party Links</p> <p>If the bidder is required to replace third-party links, can site addresses and GPS coordinates be provided?</p>	<p>Refer to 15</p> <p>No connectivity services will be ceded or transferred, as all services will be terminated during the Transition period, which is part of the disengagement phase, as will be provided by the current Service Provider.</p>
19.	<p>Are existing SD-WAN and MPLS sites included?</p>	<p>Yes. The appointed bidder will take over existing infrastructure and continue transformation from MPLS to SD-WAN.</p>
20.	<p>Should SD-WAN costs be included in site pricing?</p>	<p>Yes. Pricing must reflect the current state of each site as per the site list.</p>
21.	<p>Please advise whether the pricing is limited to maintenance services only for the already transformed site, inclusive of taking over the existing environment. Furthermore, we request separate pricing schedules to clearly differentiate between:</p> <p>the already transformed site (maintenance only), and</p> <p>the site yet to be transformed (new installation and maintenance).</p>	<p>Pricing should reflect the current state of each site as per the site list. For already transformed sites, include maintenance pricing. For sites yet to be transformed, include transformation and maintenance pricing. The pricing templates are structured to accommodate both scenarios. Refer to the specific Tower D pricing template tabs for transformed vs. to-be-transformed sites.</p>
22.	<p>We have more clarity seeking questions on Tower D:</p> <p>- Do you currently have an APN in place?</p>	<p>Yes. Note that a new APN service is required by the new Service Provider.</p>

No	Question	Answer																																								
23.	- Are the SIMs activated on an existing network, and if so, which network? - Should the services be migrated, or will this be a new activation? -How many SIMs do you currently have, or how many are you looking to procure?	Yes, on the MTN network.  No. A new APN solution is required.  Current information is not accurate. Detailed requirements will be discussed during Transition phase.																																								
24.	Can the service provider propose Broadband Internet Access (BIA) links for the SARS sites or does the links have to be Dedicated Internet Access (DIA)	No BIA links are allowed. Only DIA to be provided, as service must include SLA.																																								
25.	Should the Monitoring & Reporting Portal integrate into the SARS Remedy ITSM via API, or strictly via web access?	No integration from a monitoring and reporting level required. Integration for Service Management (Incidents & Request) is required as stated in the BRS																																								
26.	If SARS strategy is to go SDWAN with a hosted Service Provider SIP trunk can the Service Provider assume that internet breakout will be at each site that is on the SDWAN and not via Alberton and Doringkloof.	SIP breaks out in Alberton and Doringkloof only from a Tower V perspective. Direct Internet breakout is more relevant to Tower D.																																								
27.	Please also address the issue if the Cisco partner letter.	An official letter addressing the Cisco Partner program will be released soon.																																								
28.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Site Code</th> <th>Site Name</th> <th>SDWAN Site</th> <th>Service Level</th> <th>Service Coverage</th> <th>Region</th> <th>Site group</th> <th>Updated Physical Address</th> <th>Longitude</th> <th>Latitude</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>COEC1</td> <td>Customs - Coega</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>Platinum</td> <td>Standard</td> <td>Eastern Cape</td> <td>Eastern Cape Region</td> <td>1 Alcyon Road, Coega, Gqeberha, 6100</td> <td>To Be Supplied</td> <td>To Be Supplied</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PODC1</td> <td>PODC1 - Mobile</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>Platinum</td> <td>Standard</td> <td>Gauteng</td> <td>Gauteng North Region</td> <td>To Be Supplied</td> <td>To Be Supplied</td> <td>To Be Supplied</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PTAR20</td> <td>Admin - Kasteel Office Park</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>Platinum</td> <td>Standard</td> <td>Gauteng</td> <td>Gauteng North Region</td> <td>To Be Supplied</td> <td>To Be Supplied</td> <td>To Be Supplied</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Site Code	Site Name	SDWAN Site	Service Level	Service Coverage	Region	Site group	Updated Physical Address	Longitude	Latitude	COEC1	Customs - Coega	Yes	Platinum	Standard	Eastern Cape	Eastern Cape Region	1 Alcyon Road, Coega, Gqeberha, 6100	To Be Supplied	To Be Supplied	PODC1	PODC1 - Mobile	Yes	Platinum	Standard	Gauteng	Gauteng North Region	To Be Supplied	To Be Supplied	To Be Supplied	PTAR20	Admin - Kasteel Office Park	Yes	Platinum	Standard	Gauteng	Gauteng North Region	To Be Supplied	To Be Supplied	To Be Supplied	<p>Customs – Coega: 1 Alcyon Road, Coega, Gqeberha, 6100</p> <p>PODC1 – Mobile: 7 Protea Street, Centurion, Pretoria</p> <p>Admin – Kasteel Office Park: 527-527 Jochemus St, Erasmuskloof, Pretoria</p>
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PTAR20	Admin - Kasteel Office Park	Yes	Platinum	Standard	Gauteng	Gauteng North Region	To Be Supplied	To Be Supplied	To Be Supplied																																	
29.	Our organization holds a valid ICASA license through its wholly owned subsidiary, Do we still need a letter?	Yes, as it is a Mandatory requirement. Information must be complete as requested.																																								
30.	Tower D - For the existing SD-WAN sites what is the warranty and swap out (RMA) of the devices. Will SARS manage the Warranty and swap out of the devices, or the ownership will be migrated to the service provider.	Not relevant, as no existing hardware and/or licences will be migrated from the existing to the new Service Provider. New Service Provider will provide new hardware as part of the solution.																																								
31.	During the briefing session it was noted that the successful bidder will be required to transition non-SDWAN sites onto SDWAN. To avoid any misunderstanding of scope, please confirm the future state. Which sites are in scope to be transitioned to an SDWAN state? Can we use the pricing sheet as a guide. Which TD tabs need to be transitioned to SDWAN?	Only existing SD-WAN sites will be transformed to the new Service Provider's own network, based on the list provided in TD4. This will take place during the Transformation phase. Non SD-WAN sites (currently on MPLS) will be migrated to SD-WAN as a next phase during the term and is excluded from the Transformation phase. The TD4 tab refers to SD-WAN sites.																																								
32.	What is the current support and maintenance that SARS has in place for the Meraki MX devices?	Not relevant. The new Service Provider will provide its own new hardware. The current Service Provider will be responsible for support and maintenance on the current Meraki hardware until the site is transformed to new Service Provider.																																								

No	Question	Answer
33.	For the SDWAN, who owns the current Meraki tenant? SARS or the incumbent SDWAN provider?	Meraki SD-WAN tenant is owned by SARS
34.	For the SDWAN, if SARS owns the tenant, will SARS allow ownership to be transferred to the successful bidder or will SARS give organization access to the successful bidder?	SARS will give organization access to the successful Bidder.
35.	What Meraki license does SARS currently run on the MX devices? Enterprise, Advanced Security or Secure SDWAN Plus.	MX68 with Plus Tier license
36.	Tower D - For the existing SD-WAN sites what is the warranty and swap out (RMA) of the devices. Will SARS manage the Warranty and swap out of the devices, or the ownership will be migrated to the service provider.	Not relevant. The new Service Provider will provide its own new hardware. The current Service Provider will be responsible for support and maintenance on the current Meraki hardware until the site is transformed to the new Service Provider.
37.	SARS RFP 04-2025 5-3-D Tower D Pricing Response Template: T.D5 – TD.5.3 Satellite sites, Could you please confirm if the satellite sites are part of SD-WAN?	Current satellite sites are on the GEO solution and not part of SD-WAN. The new solution required, as stated in the BRS, requires the new LEO solution, which will be on SD-WAN.
38.	SARS RFP 04-2025 5-3-D Tower D Pricing Response Template: T.D5 – TD.5.3 Satellite sites, are these sites terminating at an aggregated Satellite Hub then linked to the Head office?	Yes
39.	For Satellite sites which already have equipment, do we only quote for the bandwidth, configuration, and management cost?	No. The new Service Provider will provide a total new solution (LEO) as part of the Transformation phase. The current solution/service will be terminated after successful transformation.
40.	Is there a pricing sheet for the Network Services Portal?	No. The Service Portal deliverables are part of the Transitioning Phase
41.	What timeline would SARS provide for the configuration of the customer services/provisioning portal?	New Portal must be ready after the Transition period (90 days) has come to an end.
42.	Does SARS have its own Meraki tenant or is it a tenant from a Service Provider?	SARS has its own tenant and will give organisation access to the successful Bidder.
<b>TOWER V</b>		
43.	Section 3.3 (page 115) mentions the requirements of a Customer Provisioning Portal for Tower V, however no other document (Main Document, BRS, Technical Mandatory Document etc) or Pricing Sheet is this referred to again. Can SARS please clarify if this is a requirement.	On the main document, it does not state Customer Provisioning Portal. It states "Bidder's Solution for Monitoring and Reporting Portal (All Voice Proposals)" WE also do not have a document that goes to page 115. Bidder to provide further clarity
44.	SARS to confirm all Geo and Non-Geo number rangers that need to be ported and will bulk migrations be allowed	Number ranges will be given during the transition period, and yes bulk migrations will be allowed.
45.	If service provider is awarded Tower V and not Tower D does the Tower V Service Provider assume the access for the SIP Trunk is catered for in Tower D	The Sip trunk is a requirement for Tower V only.
46.	The current deployment uses VoIP Connect links into Alberton, Doringkloof and Brooklyn. Will this remain or will these sites move onto the SDWAN for a centralised internet /SIP breaking/Breakout for MS Teams.	Yes, the VoIP Connect links will remain for those 3 sites.
47.	Does SARS expect the Service Provider to manage the VoIP Connect during transition into the VaaS solution and thereafter migrate all sites into VaaS.	Yes, Service Provider must manage the VoIP Connect during and after Transition. There are only 3 sites that have VoIP Connect.

No	Question	Answer
48.	Will SARS provide a SAN Box inter-operability testing environment for MS Teams and Contact Centre	Yes, SARS has an existing SAN Box environment for the Contact Centre.
49.	Is the expectation that the Service Provider provides compliance recording for all MS Teams users as well as Contact Centre agents	The expectation is to provide recordings for all Contact Centre agents for both Inbound and Outbound calls. Recording via Microsoft Teams is a future technical requirement, this is not required during transition.
50.	Is there a requirement for Telephone Management System for Microsoft Teams users and if so where do we price it.	There is no requirement for Telephone Management System for Microsoft Teams users.
51.	Should the current SARS Chatbot be integrated into the proposed Contact Centre or remain as a standalone	The current SARS Chatbot must be included as part of the proposed Contact Centre solution.
52.	Should the Monitoring & Reporting Portal integrate into the SARS Remedy ITSM via API, or strictly via web access?	No integration is required between the Monitoring & Reporting Portal. Integration is required only for Service Management functions, specifically Incidents and Service Requests, as stated in the Business Requirements Specification (BRS).
53.	Tower V - What is being included currently at the sites where there are no SBCs.	Only the two (2) Data Centres are equipped with Session Border Controllers (SBCs). All other sites connect via WAN links to the Data Centres, through which SBC services are provided.
54.	Tower V - What is the migration plan from the Cisco to Teams, will there be any overlap with the existing SIP trunk.	There will be an overlap with the existing SIP Trunks during the migration from the current Cisco environment to Microsoft Teams.
55.	Tower V - Please provide the current Telephone device model to see if they are compatible with Teams.	SARS is currently using Softphones for the Contact Centres and team phones for outbound. We do not make use of physical phones.
56.	Tower V - Please provide us with the number ranges to be ported.	The number ranges will be provided during the transition period.
57.	<p>Please can you provide clarity to the below query regarding the Tower-V?</p> <p>The template indicates that National Fixed Volumes comprise both Cellular and National Fixed. Could you please clarify the breakdown between National Fixed and Cellular?</p> <p>We need to ensure the correct allocation of volumes, as it appears the formula is currently applying the total National Fixed Volumes to both categories.</p>	A 20% allocation of the total volumes has been applied across all five (5) operators for evaluation purposes.
<b>TOWER C</b>		
58.	A document with the name "SARS RFP 04-2025 4-2 Data Protection Agreement- Tower Data-Voice-CPaaS" was provided, however this is not a Tower contract but simply a DPA agreement. We are accordingly unable to provide a completed template for Tower C. Are you able to provide more clarity please?	<p>The Data Protection Agreement (DPA) forms an annexure to the Main Agreement. At this stage of the procurement process, bidders are not required to conclude the DPA itself but are required to review the contract documentation and mark-up the contract where they have any contractual comments. The same principle applies to the Main Agreement.</p> <p>The inclusion of the DPA as an annexure does not prevent completion of the Tower C template. The DPA is treated as an annexure, and its relevance and application should be considered within the context of the Main Agreement when completing the Tower C response template.</p>

No	Question	Answer
59.	Is there a pricing section specific to the Service Management Section including ITSM?	No. It is only referred to in the BRS as a requirement.
60.	Is the payment portion of the network services portal a mandatory portion: Payment: The platform must allow SARS authorised staff to make payments for services rendered. Which form of payment does SARS require support with?	<p>Yes, the payment functionality is a mandatory requirement as stated in the Network Services Portal specifications. The platform must allow SARS authorised staff to make payments for services rendered.</p> <p>Regarding the form of payment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The portal must support standard electronic payment methods compatible with SARS financial systems.</li> <li>2. Payment integration should align with SARS procurement and accounts payable processes.</li> <li>3. Detailed payment method specifications and integration requirements will be discussed during the Transition phase with the successful Bidder.</li> <li>4. The Service Provider must ensure that all payment transactions are secure, auditable, and compliant with relevant financial regulations.</li> </ol>
61.	<p>May you Also, please clarify what exactly are the requirements for the below</p> <p>“provided that the Bidder submits a satisfactory explanation of how such reliance will comply with regulatory requirements and provides a warranty of compliance</p> <p>2. Our organisation is already ISO 27001 certified. What is the requirement then for a letter from the auditor?</p> <p>Please indicate if the official and certified ISO27001 certificate which is already proof of audit sufficient for compliance with the below requirements. “The evidence needs to be provided by the Bidder’s duly appointed Auditor, and such compliance letter needs to indicate all ISMS requirements as it relates to Information Security Policies and Procedures as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework.”</p>	<p>Regarding ICASA licence reliance on a subsidiary:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Bidder must provide a formal letter explaining the legal relationship between the Bidder and the subsidiary holding the ICASA licence.</li> <li>2. The explanation must detail how the subsidiary's licence coverage extends to the services being proposed.</li> <li>3. A warranty of compliance must be provided in the form of a signed declaration confirming that all regulatory requirements will be met through this arrangement.</li> </ol> <p>Regarding ISO 27001 certification:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes, the official and certified ISO 27001 certificate is required as proof of compliance.</li> <li>2. Additionally, a letter from the Bidder's duly appointed Auditor is still required to confirm that the ISMS (Information Security Management System) requirements as stipulated in the ISO 27001 framework are being adhered to, specifically relating to Information Security Policies and Procedures.</li> <li>3. The auditor's letter serves to provide current assurance that the certification remains valid and that ongoing compliance is maintained.</li> </ol>