

REF-537-2021 Request for Quotations (RFQ) for the provision of an e-tendering system to the Commonwealth Secretariat

Pre-Quote Clarification Questions & Answers

Closing date for questions: 5 pm GMT on 1st Feb 2021

Closing date for Secretariat's responses to be published: 5pm on 5th Feb 2021

Q1: Functionality

W) integration with MS Active Directory for Commonwealth Secretariat staff (for authentication purposes)

Is this a mandatory day one requirement/future requirement or nice to have? If it is a mandatory day one requirement can you please expand on the type of integration e.g., "one way user verification" or SSO etc?

A1: Yes, it is mandatory that AD integration be integrated from day 1 for internal users. That is users with commonwealth.int email addresses. This integration is to be SSO with Azure AD.

Q2: System Security Requirements

- Multifactor Authentication to be set up as per access control matrix to be agreed with the Secretariat.

Is this a mandatory day one requirement or nice to have? Can you share any additional information on what type(s) of authentication Commonwealth Secretariat need to be available? e.g., reCaptcha (not a robot), User ID, Password, Restrict concurrent login etc? Accreditation - Cyber essentials plus - Access control and administrative privilege management etc.

A2: If the implementation above is followed SSO will trigger MFA in Azure

Q3: Please can you clarify if by evaluation you mean allowing users to download supplier responses, carry out offline evaluation and enter the evaluation score back into the system...?

A3: By evaluation we mean a method by which all evaluation panel members could partake in an evaluation through an online system. They should be able to log into the relevant folder, given the access rights by the relevant Admin/Super user responsible for the procurement exercise, and be able to complete the evaluation online or to take it offline and then to upload their scores online for audit purposes. An online evaluation as well as offline - both options should be available. When logging in (if doing an online evaluation) they would see only the parts of the evaluation which they are being invited to evaluate and the access rights would be regulated by the relevant Admin/Super user managing the procurement process.

Q4: With reference to supplier performance reports, please can you clarify that you require suppliers to upload their performance / deliverables directly into the system against their contract record using a Windows style folder structure. E.g., January 2021 performance folder, February 2021 performance folder etc. (show a visual snip of the windows style folder) (please see attached PRIVATE screenshot)

A4: If the system allows for performance/deliverables to be uploaded directly into the system against their contract record, that would be useful to have within the contract

management system. As per our published Specification we expect the system would provide some method of automatic tracking of various performance markers as a function of a possible reporting module in the system. We are not looking for a bespoke system to be developed for us, but we wish to buy a subscription to a web-based e-tender/e-contract management system that meets our published specification of requirements.

Q5: With reference to Single Sign-On Microsoft Active Directory, please can you clarify and confirm that Active Directory Federation Services (ADFS) would be acceptable to you...?

A5: Yes, it is acceptable to use ADFS

Q6: Please can you clarify and confirm that you would like us to include all the professional services and integration costs for the Single Sign-On into our cost model...?

A6: Yes, please include all costs related to the integration and implementation of SSO.

Q7: With reference to the Terms & Conditions; 3.2.1, As you will note, the system will be configured and delivered as SAAS and no specific material is generated since it is an 'out of the box' solution. Please can you clarify and confirm that all IPR associated with the system including all the configurations of the system, all future updates and any development to the system will remain with the contractor...?

A7: Yes. We are not looking to create a new bespoke system or any parts of an existing system to be re-developed for us. We are looking to procure a subscription to an existing web-based e-tendering/e-contract management system.

Q8: We have a query over your request for unlimited internal users. We operate on a named user model, where the Customer can manage the user base themselves via the administration functionality within our suite; this means new users can be approved, and "old" users unapproved from the suite, thus retaining the audit history across all procurements and contracts. This functionality thus requires a much smaller number of user licenses for each Customer.

Thus, would The Commonwealth Secretariat allow us to bid on this RFQ with pricing for 250 users (a small growth over the existing base of 200 mentioned) to remain competitive in terms of pricing?

A8: Our specification of requirements states that 'The Secretariat's procurement team has been established for a number of years. Over time, the team has grown to four roles. This small central team of CIPS qualified procurement professionals manage the sourcing of strategic contracts of the Secretariat as well as monitoring low-cost contracts across the organisation which were sourced by divisional staff. There are in total approximately 200+ staff engaged by the Secretariat, of whom many may be required (at some stage of their career) to call-off small value purchases against established organisational framework agreements or to manage contracts.'

As such the key users of the web-based e-tendering portal will be the four staff in Procurement team who manage the sourcing of the strategic contracts of the Secretariat. You can see the type of contracts we put out to tender on the Secretariat's website at <https://thecommonwealth.org/procurement> under current and past opportunities. Any of the 200 staff may (but not necessarily will) at some time in their career, and over the life of the contract (max 3 years) be involved in a tender evaluation panel and may at some stage require access to the successful system to log their evaluation online. Any of the 200 staff may (but not necessarily will) manage a contract and require access to the successful system to manage a contract through an online optional module (to be costed for as part of the quote).

Q9: Regarding the requirement for "Unlimited internal/external users", please be aware that pricing based on a true unlimited user basis will be very high as bidders will have to hedge against this unknown usage basis. Would it be possible for you to provide

an indication for the estimated maximum numbers of users for eTendering and Contract Management respectively? This would allow costing to better match to your anticipated usage.

A9: In relation to internal unlimited usage basis:

Our specification of requirements states that ‘The Secretariat’s procurement team has been established for a number of years. Over time, the team has grown to four roles. This small central team of CIPS qualified procurement professionals manage the sourcing of strategic contracts of the Secretariat as well as monitoring low-cost contracts across the organisation which were sourced by divisional staff. There are in total approximately 200+ staff engaged by the Secretariat, of whom many may be required (at some stage of their career) to call-off small value purchases against established organisational framework agreements or to manage contracts.’

As such the key users, throughout, of the web-based e-tendering portal will be the four staff in Procurement team who manage the sourcing of the strategic contracts of the Secretariat. You can see the type of contracts we put out to tender on the Secretariat’s website at <https://thecommonwealth.org/procurement> under current and past opportunities. Any of the 200 staff may (but not necessarily will) at some time in their career be involved in a tender evaluation panel and may at some stage require access to the successful system to log their evaluation online. Any of the 200 staff may (but not necessarily will) manage a contract and require access to the successful system to manage online a contract.

In relation to external unlimited usage basis:

We are not looking to build a bespoke system for the Secretariat. We are looking to procure a subscription to existing e-tendering/e-contract management web-based systems which already exist and successfully manage registration of buyers or suppliers on an unlimited usage basis.

You can see the type of contracts we put out to tender on the Secretariat’s website at <https://thecommonwealth.org/procurement> under current and past opportunities. For some of these you may have (as an e.g.) 4-6 bidders applying, for others you may have (as an e.g.) 50 bidders applying or more. It is not possible to estimate how many bidders may be interested in an opportunity, which is advertised on an open competition basis, and how many will wish to register with the successful web-based portal to view the bidding documents and/or to submit a bid.

Q10: Please clarify the requirement “Data Domicile in the Commonwealth”? Could a Cloud solution hosted in the EU be acceptable to the Commonwealth Secretariat?

A10: This refers to where all data related to the system is stored.

The only EU members in the Commonwealth are Malta and Cyprus, as such EU hosting options can only include those countries.

Q11: Please advise us of any systems/processes currently used to manage procurements and tendering?

A11: The Secretariat’s Procurement Team (4 staff) advertises tender opportunities on the Secretariat’s website (<https://thecommonwealth.org/procurement>) and manages the procurement process through a dedicated procurement email inbox (procurement@commonwealth.int).

Q12: Can you please advise the estimated annual budget/expenditure for the new solution?

A12: The estimated annual budget for access to a subscription-based web-based e-tendering/e-contract management system is between £500-£10,000 including VAT. We are looking to receive a discounted proposal for a 3 year period.

Q13: Please can you clarify and confirm the number of 'divisional procurement leads' so for us to determine training numbers for phase 2...?

A13: Currently the 4 staff in central Procurement Team work with 10 Procurement Leads across the organisation. This may change over time so we expect the system to be able to accommodate changes and to have flexibility for new users to be onboarded during the 3-year contract period. For low value goods & services, the Secretariat has Framework Agreements in place whereby Procurement Leads may be required to manage a low cost call off process through the e-tendering system without assistance from the main central Procurement Team.

Q14: Questions on the RFQ document:
In the section on Data Migration and Reporting Requirements it refers to adherence to the CS Data Policy - could you provide a copy of this please?

A14: To clarify, suppliers must comply with relevant (for them) data protection legislation. Suppliers would not comply with our internal policy but may want to see it to establish that we have adequate DP provisions in place and to build confidence that the Secretariat is committed to and follows data protection principles and best practice. Suppliers can make a subject access request by complying with the relevant sections of the ComSec policy. The CS DP will be shared with the successful supplier.

Q15: Part 2 B - Q2 - could you confirm if the word limit is 500 or 800 words?

A15: Thank you for spotting the typo. A max of 500 words shall suffice, however if the bidder needs to expand to a max of 800 words, they will not be penalised given the typo in the RFQ in B Q2.

Q16: Could you advise your reasoning behind the requirement for 'unlimited' licenses please?

A16: Depending on the licensing model, it should be clear whether additional costs will be incurred if a large number of suppliers responds to a tender. The responses cannot be anticipated in advance. Furthermore, for internal users, evaluators who may require one-off access cannot be anticipated in advance. Similarly, for contract managers (it is difficult to anticipate usage in advance) as these will come and go across the organisation.

Q17: re D. Security - Availability - appropriate backup, disaster recovery and business continuity services in place to ensure resilience. Availability should be at-least 99.99% uptime - will 99.95% be acceptable to the Secretariat?

A17: Yes, this is OK

Q18: Part 1 - 1.1 Terms and Conditions - would you consider use of our own standard terms instead of those proposed?

A18: All bidders should answer the question as stated in Part 1 - 1.1. Terms and Conditions, by confirming compliance with Secretariat's Ts and Cs and/or completing the table provided and/or submitting proposed alternative terms stating the reasons as to why the Secretariat's clauses are not acceptable, as and where relevant. Please

NOTE: As stated in the RFQ (please see in the Introduction): *'The Commonwealth Secretariat ("the Secretariat") is an international organisation established by Agreed Memorandum, which is given privileges and immunities under the domestic law of the United Kingdom by the Commonwealth Secretariat Act 1966 (as amended by the International Organisations Act 2005). Under this legislation, the Secretariat is not subject to UK jurisdiction and enforcement. Further information on the Secretariat can be found at: <http://thecommonwealth.org/>*

*This status has an impact on some of our standard terms and conditions. **In particular, we draw your attention to our dispute resolution clause, which refers disputes to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Secretariat Arbitration Tribunal (CSAT).** The 8 members of the Tribunal are selected by the Board of Governors and come from*

Commonwealth member countries. CSAT is located in London, United Kingdom. Information about CSAT, including its governing statute and procedure are available on its website at <http://thecommonwealth.org/tribunal>. **For avoidance of doubt, the successful supplier must agree to the CSAT clause in our Ts and Cs.**

Q19: Could you advise what finance system you use?

A19: Unit 4 CODA Financials

Q20: Re the word count for Question 1 - in order to be able to provide a comprehensive response to your key requirement, is it OK to provide the case studies as separate documents or include them as copy in the response but which sits outside of the word limit?

A20: Please respond to the question providing within that tailored response a description of your solution and how it meets the Secretariat's requirements, supporting your description by referencing a minimum of two case studies where your solution has been deployed successfully within agreed timescales/to budget at similar sized organisations. Please provide contact details to enable the Secretariat to obtain references. We are asking for you to provide a summary of the case study and reference contact details for each referenced Authority. You should provide a response with no more than 800 words.

Q21: Does the Secretariat have any preference on the type of multifactor authentication. E.g., Knowledge Factor used for uid/pwd, Possession factor (OTP, Mobile App based soft token, Hard token) or any Inference Factor (Face Id, biometrics etc)?

A21: Possession Factor may be optimal given our requirements for MFA on tender boxes, however we are open to hearing for solutions based on Industry standard recommendations.

Q22: "Multifactor Authentication to be set up as per access control matrix to be agreed with the Secretariat" - Can the Secretariat provide any more information on the access control matrix at this stage? If not, and this is not a day one requirement, is the Authority happy for the supplier to propose an initial Discovery Workshop as part of implementation methodology to agree this?

A22: The requirement document states that this will be agreed with the Secretariat. As such we will not provide any additional information at this stage.

Q23: According to RFQ, the expected contract start date is April 2021 but there is no indication of the duration of the project. Please advise if the bidders should provide their own timeline and level of effort to complete this project.

A23: On page 3 in 2.21 it states (under section entitled 'Purpose') 'The appointed supplier shall be awarded a contract that shall be effective for up to three years.'

Q24: Please clarify the current server capabilities at the Commonwealth Secretariat.

A24: We run a hybrid environment, managing resources both in the cloud and on prem.

Q25: Please advise on the estimated budget allocated for this consultancy.

A25: This requirement is not for 'consultancy services' but for a subscription to a web-based e-tendering system. For budget estimates please see response in A12 above.

Q26: Please advise if there are any eligibility restrictions based on the bidders' country of origin. Also, please advise if the same applies to the key/non key experts.

A26: This is not a consultancy requirement. For hosting eligibility, it is stated in the published request for quotation document, that "Data (must be) Domicile in the Commonwealth"

Q27: We kindly ask the client if the bidders should provide any addition information

that is not required by the RFQ, such as CVs of key experts, additional project references, etc.
A27: This is not a tender for consultancy services. Please provide what is stated with the RFQ as a requirement.
Q28: Please clarify if the Pricing Proposal must be submitted as a separate file and/or a separate e-mail from the Technical Proposal.
A28: If this was not stated as a requirement in the RFQ, then no.
Q29: Please advise if the bidders can enhance their capabilities by bringing on subconsultants or by forming joint venture partnerships.
A29: This is not a tender for consultancy services. This is a request for quotes for a subscription to a web-based e-tendering system.
Q30: In Question 2, the bidders are asked to propose an implementation methodology and an estimated timetable for onboarding the Secretariat's Procurement Section in the first phase and rest of the relevant Secretariat staff (divisional procurement leads) in phase two. Could you please clarify if this means the capacity building activities will be done in two phases, or if the entire implementation process will be done in two phases? If the latter part is true, could you please list the full list of activities expected under each phase?
A30: This is not a tender for consultancy services. This is a request for quotes for a subscription to a web-based e-tendering system. If you are a provider of such a web-based e-tendering system, then please provide your proposed timetable for on-boarding of our relevant staff to your system.
Q31: Ref the proposed contract terms, these seem to be more suited for the purchase of goods and services and would require extensive modifications for a Software as a Service model. Please can you clarify if it would be acceptable to submit industry standard terms and conditions such as the UK G Cloud 12 or the supplier's terms and conditions with a commitment to negotiate the final contract in good faith with the successful bidder?
A31: Please see response in A18

The End.