

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

INVITATION TO TENDER N° ACER/OP/MMD/04/2016

Provision of IT hosting services for the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators

Contract notice: OJ/S 103 of 31/05/2016 (183472-2016-EN)

Last update: 29/06/2016

Question N° 1:

I understand that you are looking for IT hosting services for Agency. Are there any restrictions about the location the hosting will be provided, e.g. is Berlin a valid location?

Answer N° 1:

The location of the datacentre(s) should be in the territory of the Member States of the European Union.

Question N° 2:

Can you provide more details about the technical infrastructure you are looking for? Are there any specific requirements regarding the services you are looking for?

Answer N° 2:

Details regarding the technical infrastructure are provided in the procurement documents, more specifically in Annex I Tender specifications.

Question N° 3:

What are the Agency's software development products?

Answer N° 3:

Please consult the procurement documents, more specifically Annex I Tender specifications. Please consider also that the Agency is looking for a provider to host a variety of software products, some developed by the Agency and some by third party vendors. For a specific example of how a typical order for hosting a software product could look like, please consult the document Annex I.B Case study.

Question N° 4:

Are you searching for the infrastructure as such or do you require any added services, like management of the infrastructure, operating systems, applications, etc.?

Answer N° 4:

Details regarding the services requested are provided in the procurement documents, more specifically in Annex I Tender specifications.

Question N° 5:

Do you need physical access to the infrastructure you are looking for?

Answer N° 5:

Please consult the procurement documents, especially Annex I Tender specifications, for the details about the services requested. Physical access to all hosted infrastructure is required for Agency staff and Agency's consultants.

Question N° 6

What is the maximum number of pages for the case study? In the "Annex I_Tender specification" on page 16 chapter 15 the following information for the tender submission is provided: "F. The proposal for the case study as described in Section 19 of these tender specifications which should be limited to maximum 50 pages A4." On the other hand you have specified in the "Annex I_B_Case study" page 3 chapter 2 the following: "The tenderer's proposal for the case study shall include at least the following documents/information and the proposal should be limited to a maximum of 30 A4 pages:" The question therefor is what is the maximum number of pages for the case study 50 or 30?

Answer N° 6:

The correct maximum number of pages for the case study, as described in Annex I_B of the invitation to tender, is 30 A4 pages.

Question N° 7:

MS SQL server on RHEL: The text for DB server in the "Annex I_Tender specification" page 9, chapter 2.1.7. G requires "Oracle and MS SQL supported" and has to be "delivered on RHEL server operating system".

The provision and managing of a DB server:

- Oracle and MS SQL supported
- Delivered on RHEL server operating system
- 64 GB RAM supported per instance
- Virtualisation supported

The question is if this option is open for the Ms SQL that will run on Linux or should the database server supported on RHEL and Windows Server operating system?

Answer N° 7:

The selected contractor should be able to deliver Oracle and/or MS SQL database server farms on the RHEL operating system if the vendor of the respective database is supporting such a configuration. Other combinations could potentially be requested by the Agency (e.g. MS SQL or Oracle on Windows Server or MySQL on RHEL server) but such a service would then be considered as "The provisioning and managing of a General purpose server" and those databases would not be used to store and process the main part of the data but for other purposes (e.g. management and support tools).

Question N° 8:

What "supported" mean: The text for the D1. Computing capacity requirement in the "Annex I_Tender specification", chapter 2.1.4 states "-2-way, 4-way and 8-way symmetric multiprocessing for physical CPU supported".

The question is what does "supported" mean:

- A) that any server either with max 2-way or one with max 4-way or max 8-way CPU are allowed to be offered or
- B) all types of servers those with 2-way, those with 4-way and those with 8-way CPU has to be included in the offer, or
- C) one type of server should be offered that can hold 2-way, 4-way or 8-way CPUs?

Answer N° 8:

The selected contractor should be able to provide a sufficiently flexible service that will allow the Agency to request and implement either 2-way, 4-way or 8-way symmetric multiprocessing for physical CPUs. It is expected that any combination of the above listed options could potentially be requested by Agency through a specific contract.

Question N° 9:

Capacity for case study financial proposal: In the case study "Annex I_B_Case Study" there is a list and number of servers specified (software architectural elements). In addition, another table (estimations for capacity planning) in the case study specifies capacities. Sum of resources (capacity) defined for architectural components does not correspond the capacity defined in the table for estimations of capacity planning.

Questions related to that are:

- Which capacity should be used for financial proposal, those from software architectural elements or estimation for capacity planning?
- As good practice dictate separated test, staging and production environment, does the table of estimations for capacity planning considers only capacity for production environment or capacity for all environments?
- Should case study only consider the design of production environment?

Answer N° 9:

In the case study the requested capacity is larger than the sum of resources for the key system components in order to accommodate for future growth and evolution. This is intentional and the proposal for the case study should consider the full capacity requested even if some of it will stay unallocated. The case study only includes the requirements for the production environment. Other environments are out of scope for the case study though they may be requested in a specific contract.

Question N° 10:

Annex I Tender Specifications, Section 18 / page 23: Please confirm that ancillary sections of the technical tender (e.g.: cover page, table of contents, table of figures and the likes) are not to be counted in the document's length limit (35 A4 pages).

Answer N° 10:

The technical tender as described in Section 18 of Annex I Tender Specifications shall not exceed 35 pages A4 format in total (character 12, line spacing 1.5). The documents listed in

Section 15 - points A, B, C, D, F, G, H and I do not count in the length limit of the technical tender.

Question N° 11:

Annex I Tender Specifications, Section 18.8 / page 26: Please confirm that the requested BC/DR draft plan (maximum 5 pages A4 format) is not to be counted in the length limit of the technical tender (35 A4 pages).

Answer N° 11:

The BC/DR draft plan, as described in point 18.8 of Annex I Tender Specifications, shall have maximum 5 pages A4 format and shall count in the length limit of the technical tender as described in Section 18 of Annex I Tender Specifications.

Question N° 12:

Annex I Tender Specifications, Section 15 / page 16 -17: In our understanding the “detailed official price list” (ref. 15.I), may include:

- Additional services (not described in Annex II)
- Services described in Annex II with a unit of measure “year”

If so, in this way we can use this “detailed official price list” to calculate the 1 year Financial Proposal.

If we're not right, please explain the meaning of “detailed official price list” and its relationship with Annex II Financial Offer and with the financial proposals for the case studies.

Answer N° 12:

A detailed official price list shall include all services relevant to the scope of this call for tenders including additional services which are not listed in Annex II. This list shall mark the products and/or services which will be included in the financial proposal referred to in point 15.G of Annex I Tender Specifications.

Each product and/or service listed in the detailed official price list shall include at least a description, a unit of measurement, quantity and price per unit/quantity. In this respect the unit of measure does not need to be set at ‘year’.

The tenders have to include two (2) Financial Proposals, one for a period of one (1) year and one for a period of two (2) years.

Both Financial Proposals have to include only the prices either from Annex II or the ‘detailed official price list’.

Question N° 13:

Annex II – Financial Offer, number J2 / page 6: Please provide the meaning of the “provision of service” Quantity/Scope for J2 Support Services. Being the Unit of Measure “man day” and the Price per Unit to be provided under Professional profiles it's not clear this Quantity/Scope and its applicability.

Answer N° 13:

The meaning of the "Quantity/Scope" column in Annex II is to provide the indication of the Quantity/Scope of the services that are being measured by a "Unit of measure". In this particular case when the "Unit of measure" is man-day the Quantity/Scope is already defined by the description of relevant service and therefore no additional description of the Quantity/Scope is given.

Question N° 14:

Annex I Tender Specifications, Section 9.2 / page 10 (ordering procedure): Please confirm that the duration of the specific contract, that will be signed after the request of services, based on the "ordering procedure", will be at least 1 year (according with the case study).

In case of negative response to req. 3, please consider that the current incumbent has a significant competitive advantage, giving that the two following requests require significant startup investments:

- Agency's request to dedicated infrastructure (with cage)
- Network physical connection with Agency's premise

Answer N° 14:

As stated in Annex I_B Case study, page 3, the case study is a fictional exercise and does not commit the Agency to place such a request for service, should the tenderer be awarded the Framework Contract.

Please note that the main purpose of the Framework Contract is to set up a framework for ordering the requested services (and not yet actually order them) and that the Agency is looking for a contractor that can offer these services in line with the requirements in this tender. Indeed building a Data Centre requires start-up costs but this is only one of the possible models a potential contractor could offer. The purpose of this tender is to find a contractor who can offer sufficiently flexible business models to achieve the best quality and price.

Question N° 15:

SSD cache support: In the "Annex I_A_Technical specifications" on page 5, chapter 2.1.4., paragraph D3, the following requirement is stated: "D3. Storage Capacity: using SSD drives as additional SAN storage controller cache supported".

It is our understanding that this feature is to provide faster access to the frequently accessed data. Please confirm that we are allowed to provide this storage functionality, using similar approach. This will allow you to obtain wider selection of possible solutions.

Answer N° 15:

The purpose of this requirement indeed is to provide faster access to the frequently accessed data. The requirement shall be considered as fulfilled if the SAN storage controller supports the use of SSD storage for such caching.