

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Modernisation of Telephony System with a cloud-based telephone solution, inclusive of ongoing maintenance and support of the associated telephony infrastructure to the CSIR over a period of five (5) years.

RFP No. 3692/03/09/2025

CSIR Response to additional enquiries/clarifications

#	Bidder's Question	CSIR Response
1	Firstly we want to apply for a tender extension as you can see from the questions below that deploying a voice solution in your complex setup requires a carefully designed solution as your private tenant that occupy offices in your premises cannot utilise the same MS Teams tenant that you already have if they have their own Microsoft 365 account.	The tender deadline will be extended by one week and will now close on 12 September 2025 at 16:30.
2	Is this PABX solution just for CSIR employees, or will be offered to private tenants as well?	The PABX solution is intended solely for deployment and use by CSIR personnel.
3	How many non CSIR employees will the telephony solution need to cater for?	None.
4	This is a complete MS Teams Phone system solution, or any cloud PABX of which MS Teams app needs to be used to make and received calls?	The CSIR requires a comprehensive Microsoft Teams system solution, including full integration, deployment, and support
5	A lot of PABX platforms have a softphone app that can be installed within the MS Teams app to make and receive external calls. Can this solution be an option for CSIR	Yes.
6	Do all CSIR users currently have an E3 with phone add on license, or an E5 license to enable MS Teams Phone with direct routing?	The CSIR holds Microsoft 365 E3 licenses without additional add-on licenses
7	Will all private tenants occupying offices at CSIR also utilise this platform even though they are not part of your Microsoft 365 organisation?	No.

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8	Can we offer MS Teams Phone system to CSIR, and a normal cloud based PABX system for private tenants	Yes.
9	Does the 15 switchboard operators only handle CSIR calls, or transfer calls to private tenants' extensions as well?	The 15 Switchboard Operators are designated to handle calls exclusively for CSIR.
10	Private tenants who has their own Microsoft 365 account will not be able to use the hosted MS Teams phone system that CSIR want to deploy. Can we offer a standard hosted PABX to non CSIR employees occupying offices at CSIR who requires a telephone extension.	No.
11	Your call centre solution, do we only cater for a standard inbound service, and only route voice calls to agents, or do you want to handle e-mail and SMS channels as well?	The CSIR requires a standard inbound service to efficiently route voice calls to designated agents.
12	Or do you want to handle inbound voice as well as email enquiries and send SMS's out via the call centre	The CSIR requires inbound voice service only.
13	What functionality does the call centre do within the CSIR organization? What is your need	Receive inbound calls and route calls.
14	Voice recording requirements? Who's calls need to be recorded and should it be compliant recording that needs to be used in a court of law as evidence? Does it need to be encrypted in other words?	Call encryption should be an option.
15	Handset that you need, the 40, does it need to be Microsoft teams compliant or Microsoft teams certified phones as compliant phones is difficult to log into, you need to log into a	Microsoft teams certified phones only.

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	Microsoft website, enter your credentials and get a passcode that you need to enter into the phone everyday.	
16	Call centre, do you require headsets	No, softphone is required for call centre.
17	Call centre- How many of the 10 users agree agents and how many are supervisors/managers?	Eight (8) call centre agents and two (2) supervisors/managers.
18	What is the exact co-ordinates of your premises in Pretoria that we need links for to allow connectivity to our hosted cloud PABX if you will allow normal non CSIR telephony users to use a standard SIP/IP extension and not a MS Teams extension.	Meiring Naude Road, Brummeria, PRETORIA .
19	<p>A. Extension Allocation</p> <p>a. Of the 3,300 extensions referenced in the RFP, how many are allocated to CSIR employees?</p> <p>b. How many are allocated to tenants occupying space within CSIR facilities?</p>	<p>a. 2500 employees.</p> <p>b. None</p>
20	<p>Infrastructure Readiness</p> <p>a. Are all telephone points (for both CSIR offices and tenant facilities) already cabled for IP/SIP telephony?</p> <p>b. If so, who will be responsible for the LAN network configuration and QoS for SIP/IP telephony—CSIR or the tenants for their respective networks?</p>	<p>a. Yes, all telephone points are IP ready</p> <p>b. CSIR and winning bidder will be working together</p>

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21	<p>1. Microsoft Teams Enablement</p> <p>a. Will Microsoft Teams integration be required only for CSIR employees, or also for tenant users?</p> <p>b. If Teams enablement is required for both, does CSIR currently hold Microsoft E3/E5 licenses for all users, or would additional licensing be required?</p> <p>c. Does CSIR hold its Microsoft 365 licensing directly with Microsoft, or via a reseller/service provider partner?</p>	<p>a. CSIR employees only.</p> <p>b. CSIR holds an E3 licence for employees only. Currently, no additional licences are required.</p> <p>d. Yes, directly with Microsoft</p>
22	<p>1. Tenant Telephony Requirements</p> <p>a. For tenant users, should the solution only provide IP/SIP telephony endpoints, or will Unified Communications features (presence, collaboration, conferencing) also be required?</p> <p>b. If UC is required, should tenant users have visibility across the entire CSIR directory, or only within their own company/tenant environment?</p>	<p>a. The CSIR requires IP/SIP telephony endpoints.</p> <p>c. No, the tenant will not have access to Unified Communications or the CSIR directory.</p>

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	If UC is required, should tenant users have visibility across the entire CSIR directory, or only within their own company/tenant environment?	
23	<p>1. Financial Requirements</p> <p>a. The RFP specifies that bidders must demonstrate an average turnover of R10 million. Could you please confirm if this is a strict requirement, or if exceptions can be considered (for example, in the case of smaller but highly capable providers)?</p>	The RFP document does not specify any amount related to R10 million. However, to qualify as a Small Enterprise (QSE), an entity's annual turnover must fall between R10 million and R50 million, which aligns with the Specific Goals targeted in the RFP. Please note that the Specific Goals are not an elimination criterion; if a bidder is not a QSE, they will score zero under the Specific Goals section but will not be disqualified.
24	What is the call concurrency for the Call Centre (Service Desk)?	Call Centre and Back office are sharing the same concurrent call capacity
25	What is the call concurrency for the Back Office?	Currently PRI 13 × channels 30 = 390 concurrent call capacity, however the proposal for the cloud solution will be one session border control and recommended SIP capacity suggested: 260 concurrent channels (200 peak + 30% headroom)
26	In terms of MS Teams phones, do you require 40 handsets in total?	Yes, with the option to increase or decrease on an as-and-when-required basis.
27	Should the Teams integration be for all users or the 40 users?	The Teams integration must be for all CSIR users.
28	Pg. 29: Encryption - Are there any specific standards that you wish for us to confirm to?	The solution provided must be certified for Microsoft Teams.
29	10x Call Centre - how many supervisors? How many agents Email and SMS - to clarify how many agents vs supervisors	Two (2) supervisors & eight (8) agents required.

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30	Call Queues - How many? What reporting is required?	Currently we have 4 – 8 queues. The report should include Call received, answered, abandoned, service level %, agent logins, performance summary, etc.
31	Contact Centre Omni channel requirements – Email and SMS was mentioned, please confirm this is required.	The CSIR does not require the Contact Centre Omni-Channel to receive Email and SMS communications from outside the CSIR.
32	Auto attendant - how many IVR Recordings are required - 1x currently – To be confirmed if more are required	One (1) Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Recordings is required and can be added if and when required
33	Handsets – Capex (Please confirm this)	Capex.
34	Please update Pricing schedule with correct license quantities - 500 users + 15swb + 10 Contact Centre + 40 Tenants (Physical phones) = 565 total users	The Pricing Schedule has been updated and published to include a line item for the total of 565 users, as well as a separate line for Bulk SMS.
35	Call Transfers from Phone system users to normal Teams users not possible, all users will need to be on the phone system licenses to give this functionality- please confirm this is what CSIR had in mind	Correct
36	Do you have the Phone system Licensing for the current MS Teams users? – No, 2500 users only use Teams internally (Currently on ALE solution which will be terminated 30th November 2025, these users will have no outbound functionality)	Only 500 users require full inbound and outbound functionality with an option to increase and decrease as an when is required
37	565x MS Phone system license - does CSIR supply the MS license and we are only required to offer the Phone system licenses? Already have E3 licenses needed for back office (2500 users) - Only 565 users need Phone system licenses to dial externally – client to supply E3 licenses (including Tenants, SWB and Contact Centre).	Yes, CSIR has E3 licences.
38	MS environment - Tenant hosted in Azure (client managed, client will provide access to the Tenant)	Yes.

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39	15x Swb - App Based or Physical Phone based? - App Based	App based.
40	Services - What is in place? MS AD and E- Directory - No Integration currently	MS AD and eDirectory - No Integration currently.
41	Centralized Administration through TMS? TMS to get updates from OC - no budget barring required	Telephone Management System (TMS) to get updates from OC - no budget barring required.
42	Do you have any specific requirements for the 40x MS Teams Phones/Handsets - Entry level	Entry level.
43	Compliant call recording - are we required to import existing recordings to the new service? Offer Complaint call recording for all 565 users – no bulk import required for current recordings	Offer Complaint call recording for all 565 users – no bulk import required for current recordings.
44	Support - Last mile and Tenant not with VOX - Client would like support and guidance on the service support and give necessary access to the platform	Last mile and Tenant not with VOX - Client would like support and guidance on the service support and give necessary access to the platform.
45	Please provide more specifications on the SIP trunks required ?	Requirements are to port Primary Rate interface (PRI) channels to Internet Protocol (IP)/Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) trunks
46	Please confirm if all number must be ported ?	Yes, all number groups to be ported.
47	4. When the cloud PABX loses connectivity what calls must still be able to connect ? a. Internally b. Out going c. In Coming	A, b, & c
48	How many Teams license does CSIR have and confirm if they only require 40 teams licenses.	2500 & yes only 40 is required for physical handset licences are required.

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49	<p>6. Must licenses pricing be provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Such as: § Direct Routing § Teams Phone Standard § Microsoft Teams Shared Device license 	Yes
50	For tenant extensions, do they require full unified communications (presence, collaboration, Teams integration) or only basic IP/SIP telephony?	Only CSIR employees
51	Should tenant users have visibility into the CSIR-wide directory, or should visibility be restricted to their own company/tenant group?	No, restricted to their own company.
52	Are all telephone points across CSIR and tenant buildings already cabled and capable of supporting IP/SIP telephony?	CSIR, yes; tenants, no.
53	Who will be responsible for LAN configuration, QoS, and VLANs for voice traffic—CSIR IT or the service provider?	CSIR ICT and the recommended bidder.
54	Is the existing MPLS or WAN infrastructure expected to remain in place, or should bidders propose new connectivity?	Bidders should propose their preferred Service Provider
55	Will Microsoft Teams telephony (external calling) be required for CSIR employees only, or for tenants as well?	CSIR employees only.
56	If tenants are included, does CSIR plan to provide Microsoft 365 E3/E5 licenses for them, or will these licenses be tenant-provided?	Tenants excluded.
57	Is the Microsoft Teams Phone System already deployed and configured, or should bidders include configuration and enablement as part of the scope?	MS Teams is already deployed. Only the telephony needs to be enabled.
58	Please confirm whether site-to-site or last-mile connectivity is included in scope.	Bidders should propose their preferred Service Provider
59	If yes, kindly specify required SLA levels (e.g., uptime %, response/resolution times).	Bidders should propose their preferred Service Provider
60	Should bidders conduct feasibility checks for connectivity at all regional sites, and if so, please provide GPS coordinates for each site.	Yes, the coordinates will be given to the recommended bidder.
61	For cloud deployment, does CSIR prefer hosting in its own data centres, in a South African public cloud (Azure/AWS), or should the bidder provide cloud hosting?	In a South African public cloud (Azure/AWS).

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62	Are there data sovereignty requirements (i.e., must all telephony data remain in South Africa)?	The telephony data remains in South Africa.
63	Does CSIR expect a hybrid migration (retaining part of the Alcatel system during transition), or a full cutover to cloud within the one-month deadline?	A full cutover to cloud within the one-month deadline
64	What are the main drivers for moving away from the current Alcatel Rainbow system, given that it already integrates with Microsoft Teams and offers unified communications?	Cost to maintain the Alcatel system (incl licence) and lack of integration into eDirectory & TMS.
65	Has CSIR conducted a cost-benefit analysis comparing upgrading the incumbent system versus migrating entirely to a new cloud telephony platform?	Yes, a cost-benefit analysis was conducted, and the results indicated that procuring a new solution would provide greater benefits to the CSIR compared to upgrading the existing system. Therefore, the requirement for this RFP is to acquire a new solution that can seamlessly integrate with Microsoft Teams.
66	Would CSIR consider proposals that leverage and extend the existing Rainbow + Teams environment as a cost-effective alternative?	No.
67	Please indicate on the number of extensions that need to be moved over, including licensing; is it the same?	All number ranges need to be ported to bidder's preferred Service Provider
68	please confirm the bulk messaging quantity.	Approx. 8000 p/m bulk SMS.
69	How they would want the flow to work exactly with each of those omnichannel, so customer sends in an email or sms enquire, then it gets forwarded on to the next available agent, would agent then responded back by the same channel or need to call the customer? Would there be an integration with customers crm to also pull in details about the customer? etc.	Currently, the CSIR does not handle enquiries via email or SMS, and therefore, integration with the CRM system is not required.
70	The Migration from ISDN to NGN network- how may ISDN lines do you ?	Total PRI circuits: 13 Pretoria: 7 × PRI → 210 channels Stellenbosch: 2 × PRI → 60 channels Durban: 1 × PRI → 30 channels Cape Town: 1 × PRI → 30 channels

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		Carlow Road: 1 x PRI → 30 channels Cottesloe: 1 x PRI → 30 channels
71	Does the CSIR have an existing Internet link which may be used for SIP migration?	Yes.
72	Please provide the network topology which show the Voice and Data estate clearly?	
73	Please clarify the total number of use in CSIR?	3300
74	Please confirm if 500 or 525 license are required to accommodate the user 500+ 15x switchboard +10 Call centre	565
75	Please confirm only has E3 is available and if so if SP's are required to provide the Microsoft add-on licenses?	E3 is available. The service provider is required to provide Microsoft add-on licenses.
76	If a hosted solution is provided please confirm how to include everything in the current pricing sheet	The amended pricing schedule will be published, and all bidders will be notified of the changes made to the Annexure D Pricing Schedule.
77	What are the retention period is required for the recordings?	6 months to 1 year – Typical retention for quality assurance, training, and dispute resolution.

