

Tender number: BIPA390/2021

Tender name: Microsoft Azure Managed Service Provider to migrate and manage data systems and applications in a Microsoft Azure environment for the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) for a period of two (2) years

1. Answers to questions asked in non-compulsory briefing session

Non-compulsory briefing session was held: Wednesday 9 June 2021 (09h00 – 10h00)

The following questions were asked at the non-compulsory briefing session and answers were provided in the meeting. It was also stated that these questions and answers will be made available on the SANBI website for the bidders' information.

Question	Answer
Mandatory documents required as listed under section 5 in the tender document	It was highlighted that if any of the mandatory documents are not provided as part of the tender submission by the service provider, then the service provider will be disqualified. It was also reiterated that the pricing must be in the 'original' document only and not in the electronic copy on the USB.
1. Are there any advanced specialisation requirements in terms of the Microsoft Azure certification?	For the mandatory document requirements, it is just the company level Microsoft Azure certification that is required. However, in terms of the technical evaluation process, the company staff should have the requisite certification in line with what the tender requires. This will be discussed in the technical evaluation criteria.
2. Is it acceptable to have a cloud enablement partner? How will a situation like this work?	Yes, this is fine. In this case, the partner will need to be listed as a partner on the tender as part of the team and cannot be a sub-consultant i.e. you would need to submit a joint tender with this partner.
3. Does B-BBEE play a role in the scoring?	Bidders need a minimum B-BBEE Status Level 2. This is a pre-qualification requirement for this tender and if this is not met, the proposal will not be evaluated further. Any queries on the SCM requirements, please send to: sanbi.tender@sanbi.org.za Any queries on the technical requirements, please send to: b.daly@sanbi.org.za
Technical requirements of the tender	
4. As this requires a 'lift and shift' of applications, will these applications be shared? There are often certain workloads that require specific skills to migrate these applications across e.g. CRMs, ERPs etc.	Yes, the applications to be migrated can be provided, however, they are all biodiversity information systems that service providers will not necessarily be familiar with. Most of them are bespoke systems, including a few open source systems. There are no ERPs etc. involved. Digital asset management systems etc. are located on premise at SANBI. SANBI will provide visibility on all systems hosted at Xneelo currently. This information will be added to the tender documentation on the website. See Appendix 1 below for the list of applications.
5. How are the systems at Xneelo being accessed currently e.g. are they being accessed by RD or IIS as this can change the scoping.	See Appendix 1 below.
6. In terms of the reservation, there are only one and three year reservations available, not two	Microsoft did the assessment and provided the pricing, and when SANBI checked the calculator prior to the development of this tender it still showed one, two and three-

year reservations. Would this then be two, one year reservations if it is for a period of two years?	year reservations available. SANBI chose two years due to the budget currently available and, therefore, if there is no longer a two-year reservation, it would need to be two, one-year reservations. SANBI have subsequently contacted their Cloud Solutions Specialist at Microsoft and it has been confirmed that this will need to be two, one-year reservations (i.e. 1+1).
7. You refer to a development environment set up by a SANBI partner. Does this mean you have an existing Azure tenant and the work required will be done in the existing Azure tenant?	SANBI does not have an existing Microsoft Azure environment. SANBI's development partner is using their own Azure environment for the development of the system. SANBI still needs its own Azure environment. The successful service provider will be put into contact with this development partner to migrate the system out of their environment.
8. Does SANBI consume Office 365 licenses?	Yes it does. SANBI has a Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (E3).
9. Does the Enterprise Agreement include Azure or will this be consumed on a CSB or purchased through the Enterprise Agreement?	Azure is not included in the SANBI Microsoft Enterprise Agreement.
10. Will this then be a separate subscription within the existing 365 Tenant in the name of the successful bidder?	Yes, it will be.
11. What are the specific requirements that requires the service provider to an Azure Managed Service Provider? This requirement will exclude a large number of service providers who do deliver the lift and shift services and manage Azure clients with similar workloads.	This is a quality control mechanism used more and more by government, as a proxy, for assurance that the service provider's staff are qualified to do the work.
12. You refer to bespoke applications, currently on-premise, that are fairly old. Is there a requirement for potential application modernisation or is this tender only looking at the migration?	The scope is limited to the migration of the systems only.
13. Clarity was required on whether an End Customer Investment Funds (ECIF) funding application had already been put in place.	Correct, no application was put in place. At the time of the SANBI Microsoft review in 2019, the architect indicated that SANBI would likely be eligible for funding from the ECIF to support the migration given that this is public data that will be exposed for global use. SANBI is not sure if this funding is still available but bidders can explore this as an option during their bid preparation.
14. Is change management a requirement for SANBI, especially to assist the end users with the migration and adopting the new method of connectivity better?	SANBI were not seeing a significant change in terms of this. SANBI has two primary groups of end uses. • External end users: where anyone can access the various systems through a URL. Almost all the systems that are being migrated will have websites where anybody can register to use the systems that will be migrated. • Internal end users: who will access the systems to improve the data that we provide to the public (which is why we require a VPN). They will mostly use the active directory on these systems, but some will have another login created to access these systems. SANBI therefore sees the shift as minimal as having a new URL to access the systems for internal end users. For external end users, SANBI doesn't foresee any change to how they access the systems. The SANBI Biodiversity Information Management team and Business Information Technology teams will require training and support in terms of managing the systems in the new environment.
15. Please elaborate on the current agreement with Microsoft? Is it for Office 365 licenses?	Currently SANBI has an E3 Enterprise Agreement with Microsoft for Office 365. Azure is not included in the SANBI Microsoft Enterprise Agreement.
16. Just to confirm that all the requirements for SQL and Server licences are covered by the SANBI Microsoft Enterprise Agreement and are not a requirement for the Azure infrastructure?	Yes, that is correct. All Windows and SQL licenses will be covered by SANBI's Enterprise Agreement using the Azure Hybrid Use Rights.
17. Is the Enterprise Agreement valid for the duration of the migration to the Azure environment?	Yes, the Enterprise Agreement started in April 2021 and it is a three year agreement.

18. In terms of backup and disaster recovery, can SANBI share their RTOs and RPOs with the bidders?	Yes, SANBI can do this. Due to the lack of storage space, the current back up process for the systems at Xneelo requires SANBI to back up onto external hard drives. The VMs are shut down on a Sunday morning and copied onto external hard drives which are taken off-site so can recover if needed. It happens weekly and a schedule of each on is kept. This backup system is not ideal. The SANBI Business Continuity Plan has a 24 hours RTO.
19. What is the current size of the backups that need to be imported?	The physical size of all the VMs is 1.69 TB of backups that are required.
20. With regards to the applications, if there are applications that are managed or owned by external companies will the successful service provider be given these details.	Yes, where SANBI has proprietary software, the individuals will be available. It is understood that there will be an Azure-ready assessment on the various VMs. After this assessment, will then look at getting it Azure-ready and do the lift and shift. In this case, cannot do an upload through SANBI's bandwidth as there is too much data. The VMs will be put onto an external hard drive and provided to the successful service provider. From here then will look at streamlining and making the system more efficient. During the process of getting Azure-ready will require some support from SANBI's proprietary software individuals. Most of the other technical detail will be handled by the SANBI team.
21. Will the data be given to Microsoft to upload directly into the Azure environment? This requires data going to Microsoft Ireland for verification, stress testing, virus testing etc. and can take up to two months.	This was discussed with Microsoft as SANBI cannot do a bandwidth upload due to the cost. SANBI will discuss this again with Microsoft and confirm how this will happen. The two options that SANBI will confirm are either using an Azure Box, uploaded into an Azure Edge device and sent to Ireland. If this is the case, the cost will be for SANBI i.e. it will be external to this tender. The second option is if the successful service provider logs into the Xneelo environment and use their bandwidth to download the data from the VMs and then upload the data into the Azure environment, factoring the cost into their proposals. However, SANBI will still be charged for the download of data out of Xneelo. The data can however be downloaded onto a hard drive and provided to the successful service provider. The bidders will then just include the upload cost of the data into the Azure environment in their proposals. Either of these two options would be acceptable in a bid proposal. SANBI have subsequently contacted their Cloud Solutions Specialist at Microsoft and confirmed that although Azure DataBox is not available in South Africa, Azure Disk Shipping is available in South Africa. Please see the link below: Using Azure Import/Export to transfer data to and from Azure Storage Microsoft Docs SANBI will accept either option in the proposal, but, the preferred option would be for the data to be downloaded onto a hard drive and provided to the service provider.
22. What is the requirement for disaster recovery? Is it active-active disaster recovery, hot stand-by disaster recovery etc.?	The SANBI Business Continuity Plan has a 24 hours RTO.

2. Answers to questions asked via email

The following questions were asked of SANBI in emails from a prospective tenderers:

Question	Answer
Will the recording be shared with those who attended?	SANBI will check whether the recording can be made available via the tender webpage, as part of the tender documentation, along with the Q&A document.
In the ToR it refers to Microsoft Azure certification being required to show that the Service Provider is a certified Microsoft Azure Managed Service Provider. Kindly advise if the accreditation mentioned is: Azure Expert Managed Service Providers (MSP)?	Yes, this is correct. Potential bidders need to show they are Azure Expert Managed Services Provider (MSP). To become certified you need to be audited by Microsoft and for this tender SANBI will use this as a measure of quality control.

	

Annexure 1: System applications (see question 4 under technical requirements of tender above)

Application	URL	Function	Web server	OS
Botanical Record and Herbarium Management System (BRAHMS)	https://herbaria.plants.ox.ac.uk/bol/	BOL server	IIS	Microsoft Windows
Specify	https://www.specifysoftware.org/	Web server	Apache	Linux
SQL		SQL server		Microsoft Windows
Bespoke web application	http://bgis.sanbi.org/	Web server	IIS	Microsoft Windows
ArcGIS server	https://www.esri.com/en-us/home	GIS server		Microsoft Windows
Geocortex	www.geocortex.com	Geocortex server		Microsoft Windows
Goenetwork	http://geonetwork-opensource.org	Metadata server	Tomcat	Microsoft Windows
SQL		SQL server		Microsoft Windows
Bespoke web applications	https://www.gbif.org/ipt/ / PHP (Drupal)	Web server	IIS & Tomcat	Microsoft Windows
SQL, PostgreSQL, MySQL		SQL server		Microsoft Windows
Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)	http://www.amlib.co.uk	Amlib server	IIS	Microsoft Windows
DigiVol	https://volunteer.ala.org.au/	Digivol server	Apache	Linux
		CAS		Linux