



sassa

SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY

RESPONSE TO BIDDER QUERIES

Terms of Reference
29 September 2026

SASSA: 11-26-ICT-HO

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The Terms of Reference indicated that SASSA would respond to the enquiries within 7 working days from the date of bid advertisement.

Number	Bidder	Bidder Query	SASSA response
1.	Alteram (Petrus Janson)	The publication of the SASSA: 11-26-ICT has reference Refer to your Term of Reference; Section A: General Information; 1. Structure of the Bid Document. In this section, you have the Sections A to I listed but in your document we cannot find the Section F: Mandatory Requirements. There is no section F between Section E and Section G.	SASSA has noted the query, and it was due to the table of contents not being properly updated. Therefore, service providers are requested to note that Section F - Mandatory Requirements, is not applicable in this Terms of Reference and must be ignored.
2.	Ara Group (Izélle Williams)	1. General and award 1.1 Will the tender be awarded to one bidder or more than one? If more than one, what allocation ratio will apply? This affects our resource calculations. 1.2 Will SASSA publish all questions and answers to all bidders? 2. Compliance and evaluation 2.1 Must the ISO 27001, SOC 2 and CSA STAR certifications be held by the bidder, or will the certifications of the CCaaS OEM or cloud platform provider be accepted? 2.2 Does the 3-year experience requirement in clause 17.1.6 have to be specifically cloud-based omni-channel CCaaS? Will on-premise, hybrid or outsourced contact-centre (BPO) experience also count? 2.3 For the digital capabilities criterion in clause 17.1.11: What qualifies as "AI" for the top score?	1.1 The tender will be awarded to one bidder or partners with formal agreements (subcontractor, joint venture, consortium etc.). Agreements must clearly indicate each party's roles and responsibilities as well as percentage share. 1.2 Yes. 2.1 CCaaS OEM and/or Cloud provider to have the required certifications. NB. These are under special conditions and if not submitted the bidder will be disqualified. 2.2 Only cloud-based omnichannel CCaaS experience is required. 2.3 SASSA is not prescriptive regarding the type of AI however the bidder should

		- Will the successful bidder have access to SASSA's social media accounts? 2.4 Will the site visit take place at the bidder's operational facility? Must any additional facility and workforce already exist at bid stage, or may they be proposed? 3. Volumes and historical data 3.1 Please provide historical data for the last 12–24 months, including: - monthly, daily and half-hourly call arrival patterns - peak periods (payment dates, SRD cycles, start of month) - actual average handling time (AHT) - abandonment rates - repeat-caller rates 3.2 Does the 1 million call figure refer to calls offered to the IVR, calls reaching the agent queue, or unique callers? 3.3 Please provide current and forecast volumes for WhatsApp, web chat, social media, SMS and USSD, as these are not included in the TOR. 3.4 For campaigns "on request", what frequency and volumes are expected? 4. Service levels 4.1 How is "90% answered" defined?	provide CCaaS related AI capabilities that meets the requirements as per the TOR. Yes. The bidder will integrate with SASSA social media accounts to enable logging of enquiries BUT not actively managing the accounts. 2.4 Bidder must determine the appropriate facility for the site visit including current operational facility, client-based where possible. The site visit will be to evaluate capacity and capability for bidder to acquire and establish a facility for this bid. Bidders are not expected to setup a facility unless the bidder wishes to do so. 3.1 Refer to the attached report for historical data. 3.2 Calls offered to the IVR. 3.3 Refer to the attached report for 2025/26 financial year volumes. Sassa does not currently have SMS and USSD capabilities. 3.4 SASSA has not run campaigns from a call centre perspective however it is anticipated that 2 campaigns per financial year which is from April to March will be done. 4.1 90% of calls received through the IVR, should be answered.
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		• Is there also a speed-of-answer target (for example, 80% within 20 seconds)? • Are short abandons (for example, under 5 seconds) excluded? • Is it measured daily, weekly or monthly? 4.2 Do calls fully resolved in the IVR or self-service, and completed callbacks, count as "answered"? 4.3 What are the exact "approved business hours"? Do they include Saturdays, public holidays or extended hours around payment dates? 4.4 Do calls handled by SASSA's in-house agents (22 front-line and 10 back-office staff) count toward the 1 million volume and the 90% target? How will traffic be split between SASSA agents and bidder agents? 4.5 Does "close 90% of emails" mean a first response or full resolution, and within what timeframe? Please also provide current email categories, attachment volumes and the share of emails requiring back-office work. 4.6 For the requirement to resolve 90% of enquiries within 5 working days: • Are cases escalated to and awaiting SASSA excluded? • What turnaround time will the SASSA back office commit to? 5. Channels, languages and accessibility 5.1 Which official languages must agents support? 5.2 What is expected for hearing-impaired clients (for example, South African Sign Language via	• No, however it will be included in the SLA. • All abandoned calls must be reported. • Daily. 4.2 "Answered" refers to all calls that are answered by Agents including digital capabilities. 4.3 SASSA approved business hours are 07:30 to 16:30, Monday to Friday excluding weekends and public holidays however, provision needs to be made as per TOR. 4.4 SASSA agents are meant to augment the bidder's workforce however the bidder is fully responsible for all calls. 4.5 90% of emails must be resolved however the timeframe will be stipulated in the SLA. The email volumes as indicated in the TOR are inclusive of all email categories and attachment volumes. 4.6 • Cases escalated to SASSA are included. • The turnaround time for SASSA is the same. 5.1 All official south African languages. 5.2 Bidder must propose a suitable solution for social grants clients with hearing and sight impairment.
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		video, or text-only channels)? 5.3 Does SASSA have an existing USSD short code? Which social media accounts are in scope? 5.4 For co-browse, which web applications are in scope (for example, the SASSA website and the SRD portal)? 6. Transition and handover 6.1 What is the exact end date of the current contract, and what are the expected award and start dates? Given the 6–8 week take-on period, can the current contract be extended if the award is delayed? 6.2 Does Section 197 of the Labour Relations Act apply? Will the incumbent's agents transfer to the new service provider? 6.3 Will the incumbent be contractually required to cooperate with the handover (knowledge base, scripts, IVR flows, reports)? 6.4 Must historical data (interactions, recordings, open cases) be migrated to the new platform? If so, what are the volumes and formats? 7. Pricing and commercial 7.1 Clause 12.1 states that take-on must be at "no additional cost". Does this mean no separate implementation fee may be quoted, and that setup costs must be built into the monthly fees? 7.2 What pricing structure does Annexure A use: fixed monthly fee, per agent, per interaction, per minute or per licence? 7.3 Will price be evaluated on the 3-year total?	5.3 No. SASSA does not have an existing USSD short code. Facebook, Instagram and X? 5.4 SASSA website, SRD, Online Grants Applications, ICCAS, QMS. 6.1 The current contract ends on 30 November 2026. Immediately after bid closing date, the evaluation process will commence. It is the intention of SASSA to award 6 to 8 weeks before the end of the current contract. 6.2 Section 197 of the labour relations act does not apply. 6.3 Yes. 6.4 Yes. Data shared in CSV format, recordings shared in MP3 and WAV format. 7.1 No separate implementation fee. Sassa cannot prescribe to the bidder how to quote for their bid. 7.2 Annexure A require annual costs. 7.3 Yes. The bid will be evaluated on the bid price for a period of 3 years.
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		7.4 Is annual escalation (for example, CPI) permitted? 7.5 Who will pay for outbound calls, such as the feedback calls in clause 13.5, callbacks and campaigns? 7.6 Who will pay SMS, USSD and WhatsApp (Meta) conversation fees? Will WhatsApp fees be billed directly to SASSA's Meta account? 7.7 Should AI and LLM consumption costs be quoted separately or included in the pricing? 8. Licences for SASSA users 8.1 How many licences are required, and of which types (agent, supervisor, back office, reporting/view-only)? 8.2 Do these cover the 50 head-office staff and the 10 back-office officials, and how many regional officials must be included? 8.3 Should the additional licences referred to in clause 8.2.11 be priced as unit rates? 9. Intellectual property 9.1 Will the bidder or SASSA own the intellectual property in scripts, bots, workflows and integrations developed during the contract?	7.4 Yes, it is permitted. However, it must not be included in your pricing. 7.5 The bidder will cover the costs. 7.6 SASSA will pay for consumption costs (SMS, USSD, WhatsApp). SASSA has an existing WhatsApp account with Meta. WhatsApp fees will be billed directly to SASSA's meta-account. 7.7 Include all costs in pricing. 8.1 50 licenses are required which will be profiled according to the roles assigned to SASSA officials. Paragraph 8.2.11 in the TOR, provides requirement for scalability and flexibility. 8.2 At the start of the contract, SASSA requires 50 licenses however additional may be required during the contract duration. 8.3 Additional licenses should be costed as and when they are required. 9.1 SASSA owns the intellectual property in scripts, bots, workflows and integrations developed during the contract.
3.	Vodacom (Collen Sedibe)	Vodacom respectfully requests the SASSA to consider granting a one-week extension to the closing date of Tender SASSA:11-26-ICT-HO for the provision of a Cloud-Based Omnichannel Contact Centre as a Service (CCaaS) and Contact Centre Operations Services. The	No extension will be considered for this bid.

		tender is currently scheduled to close on 09 October 2026 at 11:00 AM.	
4.	Alteram (Yvette Mulder)	May we port the 0800 601011 number? Please clarify: To handover all contact centre data collected during the project; Please clarify: Continuous provision of contact centre and beneficiaries' data collection. Please clarify: Closeout report including SASSA contact centre recommendation improvement. Please provide specific details for the following question: The solution shall support the secure processing, storage, transmission and disposal of SASSA information, including Personally Identifiable Information (PII), beneficiary information, call recordings, transcripts and interaction metadata. Please clarify the requirement for Support time-bound and just-in-time privileged access. What information should the AI voice agent provide back to the customer? Will external CRMs or systems need to be queried to provide the customer with information?	No. All data collected during this project should be handed over to SASSA. Details will be stipulated in the SLA. All data collected during this project should be handed over to SASSA. Details will be stipulated in the SLA. At the end of the project, the bidder should submit a close-out report and recommendations for SASSA to improvement customer care services. The solution should comply with data security and compliance laws. Access to sensitive data should be time-bound and should be allocated for specific purpose. The information requested by the customer. Yes. External systems are SASSA systems where social grants information is processed and stored for different purposes. SASSA requires the bidder to provide a CRM system.
5.	K2026134560 South Africa T/A Rush (Pty)Ltd (Rashika Ramlal)	1. On Pg 3, Section A – General Information, it says that the document is divided into ten sections, however provides only A-I (9 sections). Clarity Required: Is there any section missing in this document?	1. SASSA has noted the query, and it was due to the table of contents not being properly updated. Therefore, service providers are requested to note that Section F - Mandatory Requirements, is not applicable in this Terms of Reference and must be ignored.

		2. On Pg 3, it says the document is divided into sections A-I, and the contents include SECTION F (Mandatory Requirements), but in the content of the document there is no SECTION F. This is missing. Clarity Required – Kindly provide all mandatory requirements of this bid and how are they evaluated? What will be the metrics? 3. Pg 10, Inconsistent SASSA Staff Numbers: Section 8.2.10 mentions supporting 50 Head Office customer care, regions, and ICT officials. However, the organogram provided on Page 12 displays a total count of 45 internal personnel blocks (including management and receptionists). Clarity Required: Kindly verify if there are 50 people or 45 people for licensing purposes. 4. On Pg 15, it states The CCaaS platform must have embedded Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution for case management. Our solution has and embedded CRM. Clarity Required: Is there an existing CRM at SASSA, for full case history of the citizen that we are required to connect to create a comprehensive single view of the customer (including the new interaction with us, the Bidder, and historic information)? 5. On Pg 16, 11.12.1 Indicates that “SASSA’s in-house call centre agents will also be onboarded onto the Bidder contact centre system, however, management of SASSA call centre agents/staff, will remain with SASSA” Clarity Required:	2.SASSA has noted the query, and it was due to the table of contents not being properly updated. Therefore, service providers are requested to note that Section F - Mandatory Requirements, is not applicable in this Terms of Reference and must be ignored. 3. There is no inconsistency, the required licenses are not aligned to the organogram. There is no CRM at SASSA, the bidder must provide a CRM solution. 5.
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		4.1 Will SASSA continue to pay these staff? 4.2 If they continue to be managed by SASSA, their performance will be reported on, but their performance will not form part of 4.3 Where will they be seated – will they continue to reside in the SASSA offices, or should they be hosted at the Bidders premises? 6. On Pg 17, 11.14.6 SMS and USSD –communication campaigns through SMS and USSD channels; and 11.14.6 SMS's and USSD to notify Clients Clarity Required: These are required to be sent to the client. Do you have an estimate of how many of these outgoing SMS's and USSD messages have to be relayed from the CCAAS system, for correct pricing. 7. On Pg 18, 11.15 – Security Privacy and Compliance - Mandatory Requirements – indicate 11.15.1 The bidder shall provide a comprehensive description of the security architecture, security controls, and governance measures implemented within the proposed CCaaS solution; and 11.15.2 The solution shall support the secure processing, storage, transmission and disposal of SASSA information, including Personally Identifiable Information (PII), beneficiary information, call recordings, transcripts and interaction metadata. Clarity required – What are the metrics that the evaluation committee will be using to evaluate the bid response against these clauses? 8. On Pg 21, 11.26 Data Residency, Sovereignty and Privacy (Mandatory Requirement)	4.1 Yes. 4.2 This sentence is incomplete. The bidder is fully responsible for the provision and performance of the contact centre service including the bidder's staff. 4.3 Sassa staff will be hosted at SASSA offices. 6.Sassa does not have estimates. 7.The evaluation criteria clearly indicates how the bid responses will be evaluated. The bidder should provide the capabilities of the solution in their bid.
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		There is a list of 13 requirements – from 11.26.1 – 11.26.13. Clarity Required – How will the bid evaluation team evaluate this – what are the metrics to be used to evaluate the bid response against these clauses ? 9. On Pg 22, 11.27 POPIA Compliance and 11.28 Right to Audit – <u>does not</u> specify Mandatory Requirements Clarity Required – Are these clauses mandatory requirements? If yes how will the bid evaluation team evaluate this – what are the metrics to be used to evaluate the bid response against these clauses? 10. On Pg 23, 12.1...service continuity before the expiry of the current managed services contract. The current managed services contract ends in Nov (assumed, 31 Nov 2026). In order for the 6-8 week take over, the award and contracting for this bid must be completed at earliest by the 19 October 2026 for a 6 week readiness timeframe, or by the 5 October for the 8 week readiness timeframe before go live. This means that the Bidder must be awarded and contracted by the 19 October 2026, 10 days after the close of the Tender, which seems likely that this is a typo - error. Clarity Required: Kindly indicate the expected award date/contracting of the tender, and expected go-live date as the current expectations seem to be mismatched. 11. On Pg 31, Erroneous Due Diligence Reference (Evaluation Criteria) There is an incorrect clause reference: Section 17.1.14.1 (Page 31) states that the due diligence site visit will involve the "verification of 17.1.8 and 17.1.9 under functionality criteria."	8.The evaluation criteria clearly indicate how the bid responses will be evaluated. The bidder should provide the capabilities of the solution in their bid. 9.The evaluation criteria clearly indicate how the bid responses will be evaluated. The bidder should provide the capabilities of the solution in their bid. 10.The current contract ends on 30 November 2026. Immediately after bid closing date, the evaluation process will commence. It is the intention of SASSA to award 6 to 8 weeks before the end of the current contract.
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		Items 17.1.8 and 17.1.9 (Page 29) are actually under Phase 2: Administrative Compliance (CSD registration and SBD forms). The actual functionality criteria are numbered 17.1.10, 17.1.11, and 17.1.12 (Page 30-31). Clarity Required: Kindly confirm or correct this 12. Clarity Required: 9.1 On Pg, 10, Integration with SASSA systems, can you provide what specific backend systems does the CCAAS system need to link to? And does SASSA have the APIs or must we provide it? 9.2 What CRM does SASSA currently have? 9.3 Who is the 0800 telephony carrier service provider? This is required to determine routing/configuration between CCAAS system and Carrier. 9.4 What date do you expect will be the award and contracting date with the Bidder? Does the 6-8 week for Phase 1 implementation start then? If yes, then when is the expected Go-Live date with the Bidder. We require this for planning purposes. 9.5 The 90% of 1000,000 calls (@5mins) and 90% of 50,000 emails SLA, must also take into consideration the 45 or 50 current SASSA staff or is this only for the Bidders CallCenter and should not incorporate the SASSA staff in this SLA? 9.6 Are you able to provide an indication of the number of messages to be managed from Whatsapp, web and digital platforms, this will assist with Licensing planning	11.The referencing in the TOR is incorrect. It should read as follows; The purpose of the visit is to; 17.1.14.1 Observe the system demonstration and verification of 17.1.10 and 17.1.11 under functionality criteria. 9.1 SASSA uses web-based systems and Natural Adabas mainframe system. The bidder is required to provide API. 9.2. SASSA does have a CRM solution. 9.3 Telkom BCX. 9.4 Immediately after bid closing date, the evaluation process will commence. It is the intention of SASSA to award 6 to 8 weeks before the end of the current contract. Phase 1 implementation start when the bid is awarded. The go-live will be communicated when the bid is awarded. 9.5 The bidder should not take into consideration the SASSA staff. The bidder is fully responsible for the contact centre service. 9.6 No.
10	iSon Experiences (Arushi Jain)	Please confirm the required training duration for each Line of Business (LOB).	Contact centre and Customer care training, to be incorporated in the SLA discussions.

		Please confirm the required On-the-Job Training (OJT) duration for each LOB. Please confirm whether all training rooms are required to be PC-enabled and fully operational prior to commencement of training for the first batch. Please confirm whether there is a prescribed implementation timeline from the date of issuance of the Letter of Intent (LOI), including key milestones and expected completion dates. Please describe the proposed Train-the-Trainer (TTT) approach, including the expected duration, number of sessions, participant profile and delivery methodology. Please confirm the Region(s) and Country/Countries covered under the scope of the contract. Please confirm whether all regions/sites are required to go live concurrently or whether a phased/staggered implementation approach will be permitted. If a staggered implementation is permitted, please confirm the maximum number of implementation waves envisaged, together with any prescribed sequencing or dependencies. Please provide the expected implementation timeline from LOI issuance through pilot, UAT, training, deployment and final go-live. Please provide the expected average monthly WhatsApp interaction volume, including any available historical or forecasted volumes. Please provide the expected average monthly social media	Contact centre and Customer care training, to be incorporated in the SLA discussions. The bidder is fully responsible to provide required training prior to commencement of the contract and during the course of the contract. The prescribed implementation timeline is 6 to 8 weeks. The bidder to ensure that they are ready to deliver the required services within the 6 to 8 weeks period. Contact centre and Customer care training, to be incorporated in the SLA discussions. South Africa. The project is a national project and will be implemented at a national level. The project is a national project and will be implemented at a national level. The prescribed implementation timeline is 6 to 8 weeks. The bidder to ensure that they are ready to deliver the required services within the 6 to 8 weeks period.
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		interaction volume, preferably broken down by individual channel where available. With respect to the 90% email-closure target, please confirm the applicable measurement period and the definition of "closure." Specifically, please clarify whether cases escalated to SASSA officials and awaiting their response will be considered closed for KPI measurement purposes. Please confirm whether SASSA anticipates increasing the number of Head Office and/or regional officials using the platform during the contract term. If so, please clarify whether such additional users will be procured and paid for separately from the initial contracted user base. Please clarify whether additional regional SASSA users beyond the identified initial cohort will require dedicated full agent licences, or whether role-based, limited-access, or concurrent-user licensing models may be proposed where appropriate. Please confirm whether Meta WhatsApp conversation and template messaging charges will be paid directly by SASSA under its existing Meta account, or whether bidders are required to include these transactional charges in their tender pricing. Please confirm whether SMS and USSD transactional charges will be borne directly by SASSA or are required to be included in the bidder's fixed contract price. If they are to be included, please provide the applicable monthly transaction volumes or allowances to be priced. For newly requested proactive WhatsApp and SMS campaigns, please clarify whether SASSA	90% of emails must be resolved however the timeframe will be stipulated in the SLA. Cases escalated to SASSA officials will not be considered as closed. Paragraph 8.2.11 in the TOR, provides requirement for scalability and flexibility. Additional licenses should be costed as and when they are required. Additional licenses required will be profiled according to the roles assigned to SASSA officials. SASSA has an existing WhatsApp account with Meta. WhatsApp fees will be billed directly to SASSA's meta-account. SASSA will pay for transaction charges (SMS, USSD). The bidder is not expected to absorb campaign messaging costs, nor include them in their bid pricing.
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		will approve a separate budget and transaction allowance on a per-campaign basis, or whether campaign messaging costs are expected to be fully absorbed within the contracted price. Please provide the monthly consumption assumptions or included allowances that bidders should use for pricing AI voice assistants, chatbots, speech services and other AI-enabled automation. Please also clarify the commercial treatment of usage exceeding the agreed allowances. Where actual AI, WhatsApp, SMS or USSD consumption exceeds the agreed tender allowances, please confirm whether the bidder may invoice the excess usage at pre-agreed unit rates, or whether all such additional consumption must be absorbed within the fixed contract price. Please confirm whether any new outbound voice usage, carrier services, telecommunications services or additional telephone numbers outside SASSA's existing telephony contract are required to be included in the bidder's pricing. Please identify the additional SASSA source systems and APIs that will be made available for Phase 2 digital self-service capabilities, including any planned integrations for authentication, grant status, case management and other relevant services beyond the incumbent environment. Please confirm whether SASSA will provide and maintain the required source-system APIs, test environments, technical documentation and technical support necessary for approved integrations. Please also clarify how delays attributable to	Sassa has never used AI capabilities before. The bidder should incorporate such costs in their bid pricing. SASSA will pay for transaction charges (SMS, USSD and WhatsApp). The bidder should incorporate AI costs in their bid pricing. The bidder will cover the outbound costs. SASSA uses web-based systems and Natural Adabas mainframe system. The bidder is required to provide API. API's will be supported and maintained in the environment where they operate however API's which will be required for the contact centre will be incorporated during the SLA discussion.
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		dependencies outside the bidder's control will be treated in relation to project milestones and acceptance criteria. Please confirm whether the requirement for production data, recordings, transcripts, backups and metadata to be hosted and processed within South Africa also prohibits transient offshore processing or inference for AI services, speech recognition, text-to-speech and telemetry, unless expressly approved by SASSA in writing. Please provide a prioritised list of the self-service use cases that SASSA expects the successful bidder to implement across WhatsApp, web chat, chatbots and voice self-service. Please indicate which self-service use cases are mandatory for go-live and which are planned for subsequent implementation phases. For each phase, please identify the required backend-system integrations and any relevant dependencies. Please clarify whether the bidder is expected to monitor and respond to customer interactions across additional social media channels, including Facebook, X and Instagram, or whether these activities will remain under the responsibility of the SASSA Marketing/Communications Department. If the bidder is required to manage responses across these additional social media channels, please provide the expected monthly interaction volumes for each channel, together with any applicable service-level or response-time requirements. For purposes of the functionality assessment, please confirm whether historical call-volume	Exceptions in terms of project milestones will be incorporated in the SLA discussion. Yes. Self-service capabilities will be discussed during project implementation stage. Self-service capabilities will be discussed during project implementation stage. These activities will continue to be managed by SASSA Communications and Marketing department. However, the bidder solution should enable call logging from these platforms. These activities will continue to be managed by SASSA Communications and Marketing department. However, the bidder solution should enable call logging from these platforms. Historical call volumes must originate from the proposed CCaaS OEM solution.
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		and digital-channel reports must originate specifically from the proposed CCaaS OEM/platform, or whether independently verifiable incumbent operational reports, together with appropriate supporting platform evidence, will be acceptable. Please clarify how bidders are expected to complete the SBD 3.1 Pricing Schedule. Specifically, should bidders provide a single consolidated price for the full 36-month contract period, or should pricing be presented separately by individual cost components, such as Telephony/Cloud Telephony, CRM, AI, Other Costs and Agent Costs? Please confirm whether the SBD 3.1 pricing should reflect fixed contractual costs only, or whether variable consumption-based costs and transactional charges should also be separately identified and priced.	Bidder must specify total bid pricing for the period of 3 years as per the pricing template provided (Annexure A). Bidder must specify total bid pricing for the period of 3 years as per the pricing template provided (Annexure A).
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