

CLARIFICATION DOCUMENT

Please note clarifications may be provided in response to queries submitted and/or at the Contracting Authority's own volition and discretion. Submitted queries may have to be modified for publication purposes.

Contracting Authority:	Pobal
Title of competition:	0384 Provision of Microsoft Services support and associated services
Procedure	Open Procedure
eTenders Ref:	6688382
Closing date and time for Queries:	Friday 14 th November 2025 at 12.00 noon (Irish time)
Closing date and time for Submissions:	Monday 24 th November 2025 at 12.00 noon (Irish time)
<i>This Clarification relates specifically to Questions 6 to 17. For completeness, it contains previously answered questions.</i>	
Clarification Number:	3
Issue Date:	Monday, 10 November 2025

Question #1: Please confirm who the incumbent service provider is.

Answer #1: The proposed new service contract is broader than that currently being provided. Therefore, there is no incumbent for the proposed service.

Question #2: Please advise if submissions from tenderers who meet 4 of the 6 required Microsoft CSP accreditations will be considered, or must all accreditations be met?

Answer #2: It is sufficient to be a Microsoft Gold Partner and hold at least one of the Microsoft Cloud Solution Partner designations. Candidates are invited to comment on the status of any accreditations they are actively seeking and / or planning to seek

Question #3: We would appreciate clarification regarding the Technical Capacity Requirements, specifically under the Quality Assurance section.

We would like to better understand the following statement:

"In addition, the tenderer must hold be all of the following:

- Microsoft Gold Partner
- Microsoft Cloud Solution Partner (CSP) i.e. Infrastructure, Data and AI, Digital and App Innovation, Security, Modern Work and Business Applications"

Could you please confirm whether the reference to "Microsoft Cloud Solution Partner (CSP)" is intended to mean the Microsoft Solution Partner designations under the Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program?

If so, could you clarify:

- Is the tenderer required to hold all six Solution Partner designations (Infrastructure, Data and AI, Digital and App Innovation, Security, Modern Work, and Business Applications)?
- Or is it sufficient to be a Microsoft Gold Partner and hold at least one of the Solution Partner designations?

Answer #3: Please refer to Answer #2.

Question #4:

In section "4.4 Technical Capacity Requirements" Supplier has to provide information about Technical Personnel. There are asked 20 specialists. Can one expert cover more than one role?

Answer #4:

As per the Tender Response Document Section A7 Personnel & Skills:

"Minimum requirement to remain eligible in the competition: Tenderers must demonstrate access to at least the minimum numbers of skilled personnel stated. Please note that the skills outlined may reside in the same person."

Question #5:

Could the Contracting Authority please confirm whether the section titled 'Capability of your organisation to provide skilled resources and expertise to deliver the required services' is included within the 30-page limit specified for Criterion D – Quality, expertise and structure of the team proposed, or if it has a separate page allowance?

Answer #5:

Capability of your organisation to provide skilled resources and expertise to deliver the required services should be included in the 30-page limit specified for Criterion D.

Question #6:

Provided it is stated in the Tender Documentation:

"While the majority of any resource-based services can be delivered remotely, the Contracting Authority may request some resource-based services to be delivered in person, on site in the Contracting Authority offices"

Could the Contracting Authority please indicate the expected percentage of resource-based services that will need to be delivered on-site at Pobal's offices, and what advance notice will typically be provided for on-site delivery?

Answer #6:

Tenderers can assume that there will be requirement for services to be delivered on site at least 2 days per month with a minimum of 2 days' notice in each case.

Question #7:

Under Section 4.4 - Quality Assurance, you have mentioned that tenderer must hold the below certifications:

- Microsoft Gold Partner
- Microsoft Cloud Solution Partner (CSP) i.e. Infrastructure, Data and AI, Digital and App Innovation, Security, Modern Work and Business Applications

However, Microsoft the gold partner program is no longer available from January 22, 2025. Under Microsoft CSP - we have 5/6 of the above-mentioned certifications.

Answer #7:

In relation to the Microsoft Gold Partner program, as this is no longer available, you should indicate in your tender response:

- If you are a legacy Microsoft Gold Partner
- If you have transitioned to a new Microsoft partner programme
- Or if you have an equivalent Microsoft relationship

Please also refer to Answer #2

Question #8

Can you please share additional contextual information about the 5 categories in which Pobal is split – Pobal (Internal), Early Years Programme (EYP), Pobal Services, Sports Capital Programme, Special Advocate Programme? In particular, could you please share, for each of the 5 categories:

- a. General information about its goals and scope of work
- b. Number of users
- c. If they share the same tenant or have separated tenants.
- d. List of solutions that will be in the scope of the service, including high level functional description, architecture and criticality?

Answer #8:

Please see appendix 4 Technical Overview. Tenderers should note that this document must be requested via eTenders.

Question #9:

Can you confirm that is within the scope of the RFT the monitoring of cloud / SaaS production environments, but outside of scope the maintenance of these cloud / SaaS environments?

Answer #9:

Please refer to Section 3.2.2 in the RFT

Question #10:

Within section 3.2.3.1 you refer that there is a set of critical production services that will require 24x7 support, referring to section 3.1.5 for additional information about these critical services. However within section 3.1.5 there is no such information. Can you please clarify?

Answer #10:

Please see appendix 4 Technical Overview. Tenderers should note that this document must be requested via eTenders.

Question #11:

Within section 3.2.3.1 you provide information about the monthly number of expected P1/P2 /P3 incidents per month. Can you please provide a breakdown of the expected incidents per each of the 5 categories?

Answer #11:

Tenderers should use the information that has been provided, no further breakdown is available.

Question #12:

Within section 3.2.3.1 you provide information about the monthly number of expected P1/P2 /P3 service request per month. Can you please provide a breakdown of the expected service request per each of the 5 categories?

Answer #12:

Tenderers should use the information that has been provided, no further breakdown is available.

Question #13:

Can you please provide additional information about the solutions / applications that will be included in the service and for which we will have to provide a transition plan. Relevant information, per application include:

- a. High level functional description;
- b. High level architecture
- c. Level of customizations - high / medium / none
- d. Criticality
- e. Complexity of the application – high / medium / low
- f. Number of users
- g. Usage metrics
- h. Is the application well documented
- i. Will the current provider be available for shadowing / reverse shadowing activities

Answer #13:

Please see appendix 4 Technical Overview. Tenderers should note that this document must be requested via eTenders. Tenderers should note that no further breakdown is available.

Question #14:

Within section 3.2.7 you refer that tenderers are required to provide a proposed draft SLA. This proposed SLA must be presented within the 10 pages limit for responding to criterion C? Or can it be summited as an annex?

Answer #14:

Tenderers may append a proposed sample SLA, which should be clearly referenced to Criterion C and this will not be counted towards the page limit for this criterion.

Question #15:

Can you please clarify what's expected for the role "M365 Solution/Applications Specialist". Is it correct to understand that it refers to a specialist in Microsoft 365 services like SharePoint, Teams, Power Platform, Exchange, and related productivity and collaboration tools? Or are you looking for a cloud native solutions/ applications specialist?

Answer #15:

Yes, it is correct to understand that it refers to a specialist in Microsoft 365 services like SharePoint, Teams, Power Platform, Exchange, and related productivity and collaboration tools.

Question #16:

Within section 3.4.3 you refer that pricing must be provided for daily out of hours rate. However within the Pricing Schedule we don't find any place to fill the price of the out of hours rate. Can you please clarify?

Answer #16:

The out of hours rate should be included in the comments section and will not form part of the total cost or the evaluation.

Question #17:

Within appendix A of the RFT document you provide an SLA for support incidents and requests. Can you please clarify the scope of remote support and remote diagnostics that are referred to in the second table (4_Pobal 0384 Microsoft Services RFT.pdf_ Page 38)?

Answer #17:

Tenderers should use the information that has been provided, no further breakdown is available and in response to Criterion C Contract management approach - should outline your approach and methodology to incident management.