

Clarifications - 1

Coimisiún na Meán received the following clarification questions for the Request for Tender for the Provision of Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) as a Service and Associated Cyber Security Advisory and Specialist Support Services.

Our response is outlined below:

Message Ref No.	Query	Contracting Authority Response
726566	1. Could the contracting authority please confirm whether a tenderer may propose a single suitably qualified resource to cover both categories, where that resource can demonstrate the required experience and capability?	It is unclear as to which "categories" the Tenderer is referring. Please submit a further clarification identifying the relevant categories or sections of the Request for Tender to enable a response to be provided.
	2. Could the contracting authority please confirm whether alternative supporting evidence may be considered for newly established SME tenderers, such as the proposed resource's relevant professional experience, qualifications, professional references, company financial position and/or other evidence of capacity, in place of historic company turnover?	The Commission considers the published economic and financial standing requirements to be appropriate and proportionate to the nature, scale and risk associated with this Contract. However, where a Tenderer is unable, for a valid reason (for example, because it is a newly established business), to provide evidence covering the previous three financial years, the Commission will consider other appropriate evidence of economic and financial standing, including evidence covering the period since the Tenderer was established. Any such evidence will be assessed in accordance with the published Selection Criteria.
	3. Could the contracting authority please confirm whether an insurance quotation, broker confirmation or other evidence that the required cover can be put in place would be acceptable at tender submission stage, with the actual policy to be in place prior to contract award or contract commencement?	Yes. At tender submission stage, evidence from an insurer or insurance broker confirming that the required levels of insurance are currently held or can be put in place if the Tenderer is successful will be accepted. The successful Tenderer will be required to have the required insurance cover in place prior to contract commencement.
726992	4. In relation to the requirement for a retained CISO service, can this be delivered on the basis of a fixed amount of days/time per annum, provided the requirements outlined are met?	It is unclear whether the Tenderer is referring to the pricing model, the retained service model or the level of effort. Please clarify the aspect of the requirement to which this question relates.

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733934	5. Will the authority accept suppliers having employers' liability insurance to the level of £10M (GBP)? This is the standard level of cover we have in place for many contracts of this nature.	Yes. The minimum insurance requirements are set out in the Request for Tender. Employers' Liability insurance of £10 million (GBP) will be accepted as equivalent to the minimum Employers' Liability insurance requirement specified.
	6. Will the authority accept proposals from UK companies?	Yes. Economic operators established in the United Kingdom may submit a Tender for this competition, subject to compliance with all requirements set out in the Request for Tender and applicable public procurement legislation. Tenderers should note that the Services include an element of in-person delivery in Ireland, including monthly meetings at Coimisiún na Meán's offices in Dublin and attendance at other in-person meetings where reasonably required. Tenderers should ensure that their proposed service delivery model can meet these requirements. Unless otherwise expressly agreed in writing, all travel, accommodation and associated expenses required to deliver the Services shall be the responsibility of the successful Tenderer and should be reflected in the Tender pricing.
734313	7. Can the Contracting Authority provide an estimate of the anticipated annual effort, in days or hours, associated with the retained Part 1 CISO Advisory Service to assist Tenderers in pricing the annual fixed fee?	The nominal 19 days identified in the Pricing Schedule represents the Contracting Authority's current estimate of the anticipated annual effort for the retained Part 1 CISO Advisory Service over each of the three initial contract years. Tenderers should note that this estimate is indicative only and does not constitute a guaranteed minimum or maximum level of effort. The anticipated effort during Year 1 is expected to be higher than the nominal estimate as the successful Tenderer supports the establishment and implementation of the retained CISO Advisory Service.
	8. Can the Contracting Authority confirm the expected duration of the hybrid weekly under the retained Part 1 service?	The weekly hybrid meeting is anticipated to be approximately one hour. This should be regarded as indicative only and should not be interpreted as limiting the level of engagement required to deliver the service in accordance with the RFT. Tenderers should ensure that adequate capacity is available to meet all contractual requirements, including monthly onsite attendance and other meetings where reasonably required.
	9. Can the Contracting Authority confirm the expected duration of onsite attendance in Dublin under the retained Part 1 service?	The successful Tenderer will be expected to attend Coimisiún na Meán's offices in Dublin approx once per month as part of the retained Part 1 Service. The duration of each onsite visit will depend on

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		operational requirements, meeting agendas and business needs. Tenderers should note that additional onsite attendance may be required from time to time in response to operational priorities, emerging cyber security risks, incidents or other unplanned business requirements.
	10. Can the Contracting Authority confirm whether Coimisiún na Meán is currently ISO/IEC 27001 certified, maintaining an ISO 27001-aligned framework, or seeking alignment/readiness support only?	An Coimisiún is aligning with ISO27001 with 13/16 Policies complete and 3 in draft. Similarly, we currently have 9/15 Standards complete with 4 more drafted.
	11. Has Coimisiún na Meán already undertaken a NIS2 gap assessment, readiness review or maturity assessment, and if so, can the current status or high-level findings be shared with Tenderers?	No specific NIS2 activities have been undertaken to date.
	12. Is there a current risk register in place, what is the duration of the review of the register, who will manage the risk register?	There is an ICT Risk Register in place. An Coimisiún will manage the register with input and best practice guidance from the successful tenderer.
	13. Can the Contracting Authority clarify the respective responsibilities of the CISO Advisory Service provider and the incumbent MSP in relation to technical implementation, remediation activities, incident response and operational security services?	It is anticipated that the MSP will retain responsibility for the operation of the MDR service. The role of the successful Tenderer is as set out in the Request for Tender and Appendix 1 Specification of Services. The successful Tenderer will be expected to work collaboratively with Coimisiún na Meán and its existing ICT service providers, including the MSP, where appropriate.
	14. Can the Contracting Authority provide an estimate of the anticipated number of Statements of Work likely to be created per annum under Part 2, together with the typical expected size, duration and budget range of those engagements?	We are unable to provide an estimate of the number of Statements of Work that may arise during the Contract term, as requirements will be driven by operational needs and emerging priorities. By way of illustration only, 2 comparable activities have been undertaken to date, each requiring approximately 30 person days delivered over a 3–4 month period. This information is provided solely to assist Tenderers in understanding the potential scale of individual engagements and does not constitute a commitment, guarantee or forecast regarding the number, scope, duration or value of future Statements of Work. Tenderers should also note that certain requirements may be time-sensitive and may require delivery within shorter timeframes, depending on operational priorities and business needs.

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	15. Can the Contracting Authority provide an indicative breakdown of anticipated annual drawdown expenditure across the Part 2 resource categories?	No. See 14.
	16. Can the Contracting Authority provide examples of the types of support anticipated in relation to the Online Safety Framework, Digital Services Act or other relevant legislative obligations?	Not at this time.
	17. Does the Contracting Authority anticipate a requirement for digital forensics support in relation to investigations, regulatory activities, incident response or evidential analysis, and if so can indicative demand be provided?	It is not anticipated that investigation digital forensics support will be required. However, the scoping of such a service either internal or externally delivered may be considered as a Part 2 project
	18. Can the Contracting Authority elaborate on the anticipated requirement for OSINT, threat intelligence or investigation-support activities under Part 2?	The Contracting Authority is not in a position to provide further detail at this time. Any future requirements will be determined by operational needs and, where applicable, will be specified within the relevant Statement of Work.
	19. Can the Contracting Authority provide examples of the types of AI systems, emerging technologies, age assurance technologies or equivalent areas where cyber security advisory support may be required?	The Contracting Authority is not in a position to provide further examples at this time. Where specialist advisory support in relation to AI systems, emerging technologies, age assurance technologies or equivalent areas is required, the scope and requirements will be defined within the relevant Statement of Work, where applicable.
	20. Can the Contracting Authority confirm whether the provision of ICT managed services to organisations that fall within Coimisiún na Meán's regulatory remit would constitute an automatic conflict of interest, or whether such relationships may be acceptable where appropriate conflict management, disclosure and independence controls are implemented?	No. Such arrangements would not automatically constitute a conflict of interest. Tenderers must disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in accordance with the Request for Tender. The Contracting Authority will assess the Tenderer's proposed conflict management arrangements in accordance with the published Conflict of Interest award criterion.