UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

PROCUREMENT DOCUMENT

FOR

RFI – Request for Information
Wits 2026 38 FSC MSS ICT Scale out storage

Reference No.:	Wits 2026 38	
Description:	Wits FSC MSS ICT Scale out storage RFI	
Issue Date:	1 November 2026	
Issued by:	Faculty Science: Mathematical Sciences	
Submission Date and Time:	Date: 13 November 2026	Time: 23h59 (Midnight)
Non Compulsory briefing session details	**Non-compulsory Online Briefing Session (link below): via Microsoft Teams** https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/3947773020958904?p=m20y6tNsh4tXoZ5wzk Meeting ID: 394 777 302 095 890 4 Passcode: R35Sf9Ae **Date: 6 November 2026 10h00**	Time: 10h00
Questions and Submission contact details	Email cyril.malatsi@wits.ac.za and copy belinda.harry@wits.ac.za and admin.tenders@wits.ac.za	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 RFI OUTLINE 3
2 Procurement Strategy 3
3 RFI Disclaimer 3
4 RFI TIMELINE 5
5 RFI EVALUATION PROCESS 5
6 UNIVERSITY CONTACT INFORMATION 7
7 DEVELOPING YOUR RFI SUBMISSION 7
8 SUBMITTING YOUR RFI 7
9 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY 8
10 EVALUATION CRITERIA 8
11 SCOPE OF WORK 9
12 THE SUBMISSION OF RETURNABLE SCHEDULES & DOCUMENTS 9

ATTACHMENTS:

List of Appendices/Annexures	Description	Returnable
Annexure A	Scope of Work	No – For your information
Annexure B and C	Acceptance to Participate Declaration of Interest	Yes – complete Yes - complete
	Signed Non-disclosure Agreement (returnable deliverable)	Yes - complete
Annexure D	Compliance Schedule	Yes- complete
Schedule 1	OEM Information and Track record	Yes - provide
Schedule 2	System-solution design, BOQ, roadmap	Yes - provide
Schedule 3	Sales-support model - assurance	Yes - provide
Schedule 4	Reference information	Yes - provide
Schedule 5	Other information	Yes - provide
Schedule 6	Partial or non-compliant criteria	Yes - provide

PART A: RFI OVERVIEW

1 RFI OUTLINE

1.1 University's Background

The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (the "**University**") is a leading university in Africa, as reflected by its international standing and the quality of its graduates, many of whom have played a major role in founding industries in South Africa, including sectors such as mining, financial services, and information technology. The University prepares students for managerial, professional and leadership positions in the public, private and non-governmental sectors. The University has more than 40000 students and approximately 6500 staff and is one of the biggest sources of skills in Africa.

1.2 RFI Invitation

The Mathematical Sciences support unit at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, invites suitably qualified and experienced original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) to provide solutions for a turnkey scale-out file storage system: Storage hardware and file system software made and supported by a single OEM or accredited partner as one product. The system will hold the home directories of about 3,000 users of the University's mathematical sciences teaching laboratories, serve about 1,000 Linux workstations, and must be expandable over several years.

1.3 Purpose of this RFI

The primary operational objective is to invite suitably qualified and experienced original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) to provide solution (s) to address the requirements above and as described in more detail in Annexure A: Scope of Work. The RFI process will assess the solutions to inform shortlisting of a subsequent procurement process.

2 Procurement Strategy

2.1.1 The University will consider the submissions in line with the protocol described in the RFI documents.

2.1.2 The MSS Scale out storage process will be in two separate procurement stages:

2.1.2.1 **Stage 1**: Request for Information (RFI) - invitation to Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM's), where the University will consider and shortlist OEMs/technology offerings as per the requirements and the minimum thresholds as set out in this RFI.

2.1.2.2 **Stage 2**: Request for Proposals (RFP). The University will invite the OEMs and/or suitable South African partners of the shortlisted OEMs/technologies to tender.

2.1.3 This RFI is part of Stage 1.

2.1.4 Joint ventures, partnerships or subcontracting is not permitted.

3 RFI Disclaimer

3.1.1 Respondents are required to:

3.1.1.1 treat the RFI and any information provided to the respondents by or on behalf of the University in connection with the RFI process as strictly confidential information belonging to the University, subject to the executed Non-Disclosure Agreement (Annexure C), and accordingly, not disclose or use that information except as strictly required for developing a response in accordance with the RFI; and upon request by the University, promptly return or securely destroy all confidential information and any copies thereof

3.1.1.2 All response documents submitted and materials submitted in response to this RFI, together with all intellectual property rights therein, shall vest in and become the exclusive property of the University upon submission, at no cost to the University. Respondents submitting documents do so on the basis that the University may use, retain, disclose and copy the information contained in those documents for any purpose related to the University's procurement and business activities.

3.1.1.3 In responding to this RFI, the respondent acknowledges that:

a) the University may approach other suppliers (including suppliers that have not responded to this RFI) to provide information as set out in this RFI, including information the same or similar to that requested by this RFI;

b) the University may conduct other industry engagement activities and future procurement processes in relation to the RFI, which the respondent may or may not be invited to participate;

c) no right, entitlement, or legitimate expectation arises from participation in this RFI to be invited to any future procurement process, or to receive any award, contract, or compensation from the University

1.1.1.2 The University has endeavoured to provide sufficient guidance to inform Respondents' responses. However, it may be necessary to make some assumptions. Where assumptions have been made, these must be documented in the response. The University accepts no responsibility for assumptions made by each respondent.

1.1.1.3 The respondent's participation in this RFI process, or in relation to any matter concerning this RFI, is at the respondent's own risk and cost. The University will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by any Respondent in preparation or lodgement of a response to this RFI, regardless of the outcome of the RFI process or any subsequent procurement

3.1.1.4 The University reserves the right at any time to:

a) request further information should any submission yield insufficient detail or respondent differentiation; contact any respondent to clarify any information, without being obliged to inform any other respondent of such contact;

b) cancel, withdraw, defer, suspend or reissue this RFI in whole or in part at any time, without liability to any respondent;

c) Share all non-confidential information and findings with any other South African higher education institutions, for benchmarking purposes, provided that respondents' confidential information (including proprietary pricing, solution architecture, and commercial models) shall not be shared without the prior written consent of the relevant Respondent

d) Nothing in this document shall be construed as a contract between the parties, and no communication, whether verbal or written, by the University, its personnel, or its agents during the course of this process shall create such a contract in respect of the requirements specified in this RFI.

3.1.1.5 To the maximum extent permitted by law, the University, and its personnel shall have no liability or responsibility whatsoever to the respondent (whether based in contract, promissory estoppel, restitution, quantum meruit, quasi-contract, delict, statute or otherwise) in connection with or in relation to the RFI, or the respondents partaking in the RFI process; including without limitation any indirect, consequential, special, or punitive damages, or any loss of profits, revenue, data, or business opportunity.

3.1.1.6 The Respondent agrees to indemnify, and keep indemnified, the University and its personnel from and against all liabilities, costs, expenses, damages and losses and any reasonable professional costs and expenses suffered by, incurred by, or awarded against the University, arising out of or in connection with this RFI, to the extent caused or contributed to by the respondent's act, omission, breach of this RFI, or misrepresentation.

3.1.1.7 This RFI and all related documents issued in connection with it are confidential and proprietary to the University, may be recalled by the University at any time, and are disclosed to Respondents solely for the purpose of enabling them to prepare and submit a response.

3.1.1.8 Respondents shall not use, reproduce, distribute, or disclose any information contained in this RFI or provided in connection with this process for any purpose other than preparing a response, without the prior written consent of the University.

3.1.1.9 The University reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to withdraw, amend, supplement, replace, or recall this RFI in its entirety or in part at any time and without prior notice, and no respondent shall have any claim against the University as a result of any such action.

3.1.1.10 Participation in this RFI process does not entitle any respondent to any award, preference, or right of first refusal in any subsequent procurement process, nor does it create any obligation on the University to proceed with any procurement.

PART B: KEY INFORMATION

4 RFI TIMELINE

The table below lists key events, dates and periods applicable to this RFI. Note: These dates and times do not create an obligation on the part of the University to take any action or create any right for a respondent to demand that the University executes a certain action on a specific date at a certain time.

No.	Description	Date / Period
1.	RFI issued to suppliers	1/11/2026
2.	Deadline for questions / clarification period	9/11/2026
3.	**Non-Compulsory registration** **Note that any amendments or additional information related to this RFI may be made available on the University's website and tender page. Ensure that you check the site on a regular basis for updates. Registered entities will be emailed. We recommend you register your details with the contact person indicated in this document. This will enable communication to be sent to you related to possible questions and answers that may be posed during the submission period.**	
4.	**Non-Compulsory Online Briefing Session** **Date and time: 6th November 2026 | 10h00** **Link:** https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/3947773020958904?p=m20y6tNsh4tXoZ5wzk Meeting ID: 394 777 302 095 890 4 Passcode: R35Sf9Ae Date: 6 November 2026 10h00 **Note: it is highly recommended that the person/s that will be working on the submission attends the online briefing session**	
5.	Online Submission Date and Time	13/11/2026 23h59
6.	*The University may request an online Presentations/Reference Site engagement/Testing/verification. Dates will be advised accordingly.	TBC

PART C: RFI EVALUATION PROCESS

5 RFI EVALUATION PROCESS

5.1 Phase 1: Pre-qualification Criteria

5.1.1 Respondents should only submit their proposal if the following essential eligibility criteria are met. Failure to do so will impact on your solution/proposal being considered further.

5.1.2 Insert the information below in the indicated Schedules. Ensure that each criteria is labelled in the Schedule. The University reserves the right to request additional information/clarity (to be responded to within a particular timeframe) related to these items below, if insufficient information is provided.

No.	Prequalification (Mandatory) Criteria	Provide your information in the Schedules/Annexures listed below
	It is compulsory that the Respondent:	
1	Completes Annexure B. The RFI submission must be signed and approved by an authorised signatory of the Respondent. Complete Annexure B.	Annexure B
2	The Respondent must be an OEM. Provide your company information/profile. The OEM must have local (South African) representation.	Schedule 1
	Provide a high-level summary of a track record demonstrating that the OEM has a minimum of 10 years of experience in the provision of servers and software for scale-out file systems as indicated in the specification attached as Annexure A.	Schedule 1- track record
3	Provide a proposed solution (Schedule 2: System design) that meets the requirements as per Annexure A and Annexure D. The solution will be assessed for acceptability.	Schedule 2 – System design
4	Provide your proposed specification and BOQ information in Schedule 2. This will be assessed for acceptability including alignment with the mandatory elements listed in Annexure A.	Schedule 2 – Proposed Specification-BOQ
5	Provide a product roadmap i.e. a technical roadmap related to the product in terms of a 5-Year plan including upgrades, expansion and replacement elements including providing assurance that spares will be available for the lifetime of the product/solution. This will be assessed for acceptability. This will inform risk in terms of sustainability of the proposed product/solution. High risk will impact on the shortlisting of your solution.	Schedule 2 – Roadmap-upgrades- assurance
6	It is required that your company (Product Manufacturer) is directly represented by OEM certified implementation partners in South Africa or represented directly by the OEM for supply, installation and support requirements. Indicate whether an OEM direct and/or indirect sales and support model is available in South Africa to address this requirement.	Schedule 3 – local sales & support model
7	the OEM must provide assurance that any related certified reseller/partner will be able to support the proposed solution, if not directly supported by the OEM. Confirm your assurance	Schedule 3 – assurance local support
8	Provides at least one reference where the proposed solution specification or similar was implemented and has stabilised for at least 12 months. The reference should include a description of the scale and complexity of the installation. References must be contactable, and may be verified (email or site visit). References must be dated within the last 5 years and could relate to the proposed solution being delivered by a certified reseller for the OEM solution or by the OEM themselves.	Schedule 4 - references
9	Must meet all mandatory requirements as per Annexure D Compliance schedule	Annexure D
Other Information required (non-mandatory). This will be considered and may inform further processes.		
10	What is the expected delivery timelines if an order is placed directly with the OEM or via their certified partner. Indicate days from date of order placed and impact of December 2026 and January 2027 period or other key considerations and/or assumptions that need to be factored in.	Schedule 5 – indicative delivery timelines and assumptions
11	Provide a list of your local accredited partners for the supply, install and support of this proposed solution if you have an indirect supply and/or support model	Schedule 5 - partners
12	Indicate if you provide these services as an OEM directly i.e. direct model only or both direct and indirect models (via local accredited partners)	Schedule 5 – direct vs indirect

5.1.3 The Respondent's attention is drawn to the pre-qualification criteria which requires the Respondent to

provide the necessary evidence (please refer to the section above and section 12) to be eligible, failure to do so will result in disqualification.

5.1.4 Respondents who fail to provide the required schedules and documents will not have their Submissions evaluated further.

5.1.5 Despite the above, the University reserves the right to request additional information (which must be responded to and/or provided to the University within the period as determined and communicated by the University) where the information provided yields insufficient detail and differentiation.

5.2 Tender Terms and Conditions

5.2.1 The Tender Terms & Conditions apply to and form an integral part of this RFI.

Full link: https://www.wits.ac.za/media/wits-university/footer/about-wits/procurement/Tender%20Terms%20%20Conditions%2015.08.2020.pdf

5.2.2 Words and phrases defined in the Tender Terms & Conditions shall also apply in the interpretation of the same words and phrases in this RFI, save where specifically otherwise indicated.

PART D: THE GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

6 UNIVERSITY CONTACT INFORMATION

6.1 Queries relating to the RFI must be addressed via e-mail to Cyril Malatsi (**Procurement Representative**): cyril.malatsi@wits.ac.za and copy Belinda.harry@wits.ac.za and the Tender Administrator at admin.tenders@wits.ac.za .

7 DEVELOPING YOUR RFI SUBMISSION

7.1 The RFI Documents set out the step-by-step process and conditions that apply.

7.2 Respondents should take time to read and understand the RFI Documents, in particular:

7.2.1 the Tender Terms & Conditions: URL is https://www.wits.ac.za/media/wits-university/footer/about-wits/procurement/Tender%20Terms%20%20Conditions%2015.08.2020.pdf which applies,

7.2.2 the Electronic Submission protocol (please refer to section 8),

7.2.3 develop a strong understanding of the University's Scope of Work detailed in Annexure A,

7.2.4 in structuring your Submission consider how it will be evaluated, Part E: The Evaluation Process of this document describes the evaluation approach,

7.3 Respondents are advised to check the number of pages, and should any be missing or duplicated, or the reproduction indistinct, or any descriptions ambiguous, or this document contain any obvious errors they shall inform the parties indicated in section 6 above.

7.4 The University will respond to requests for clarification received up to the deadline for questions in the RFI Timeline (section 4). Queries should be by email to the parties indicated in section 6 above. Please note that additional information supplied to anyone Respondent may also be provided to other Respondents via e-mail.

7.5 It must be noted that the University shall not be held liable for any loss or damage incurred to the Respondent should the Respondent fail to fulfil the requirements of the RFI.

8 SUBMITTING YOUR RFI

8.1 The mode of delivery for submission is set out below and will apply to this RFI:

8.2 Electronic Submissions:

8.2.1 The Electronic Submission Protocol will apply to this RFI.

Full Link: https://www.wits.ac.za/media/wits-university/footer/about-wits/procurement/Electronic%20Submission%20Protocol%2015.08.2020.pdf

8.2.2 Respondents must submit Annexure D: Compliance Schedule in an editable - Microsoft Excel file and a .pdf - PDF file.

8.3 Respondents are urged to contact the University's Procurement Representative if unsure which mode of

delivery applies to the RFI. The University will not be held responsible where the Respondent incorrectly interprets the mode of delivery.

8.4 For the avoidance of doubt, please note that telegraphic, telephonic, telex, facsimile, physical submissions, and late submissions will not be accepted by the University.

PART E: THE EVALUATION PROCESS

9 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

9.1 The University will apply a multi-criteria approach in evaluating the prospective Submissions. It is envisaged that the following core criteria (not complete and in order of preference) will amongst others form the basis of the evaluation:

9.1.1 The financial offer (if applicable) and risk,

9.1.2 The Respondents proposed solution and ability to match service requirements as set out in Annexure A: Scope of Work and adequate client liaison,

9.1.3 The type of organisation and the number of years in operation in the industry,

9.1.4 The track record and experience of the Respondent,

9.1.5 The Respondent‘s contactable client references,

9.1.6 The competence of the proposed management, project managers and staff of the Respondent (where applicable),

9.2 **Evaluation Procedure**:

9.2.1 The University may request additional information, clarification, or verification in respect of any information contained in or omitted from a Respondent’s Submission and this information will be requested in writing.

9.2.2 The University may enforce whatever measures it considers necessary to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the contents of the Submission.

9.2.3 The University will evaluate the proposals with reference to the University’s set and approved evaluation criteria as indicated in these RFI Documents.

10 EVALUATION CRITERIA

10.1 Stage 1: Pre-qualification Stage (Procurement Mandatory Criteria & Functionality Criteria)

10.1.1 The University has a defined minimum pre-qualification listed in the table under section 5 that must be met by the Respondent for the University to accept the RFI Submission for evaluation.

10.1.2 The pre-qualification evaluation will be carried out by the University’s evaluation committee members to determine which Submissions are compliant or non-compliant with the requirements issued by the University as part of this process.

10.1.3 Where there is failure to comply with the pre-qualification criteria as set out in section 5 or the University is for any reason unable to verify whether the pre-qualification criteria are fully complied with, the University may disqualify the Submission;

10.1.4 Respondents that do not meet the pre-qualification criteria may not advance to the next stage of evaluation.

10.1.5 Please note that no points are allocated at this stage.

10.1.6 **Note**: Documents submitted in support of this RFI must be documents of the Respondent’s entity. It is not permitted that documents submitted pertain to different companies or business units within a group.

10.2 Stage 2: Presentation, Site Visits, Demonstrations, or other due diligence

10.2.1 This phase of assessment is a possible second stage in the evaluation process and only successful Respondents that have passed the previous stage will be considered. This includes a possible testing and verification step and clarification related to the technical solution and sales and support models.

10.2.2 Presentations/Demo/Site visits:

10.2.2.1 The University may require short-listed Respondents to make presentations to the University's evaluation team.

10.2.2.2 Presentations are designed to allow Respondents to present their solution and various aspects as identified by the University. A question-and-answer session is part of the presentation phase. A threshold may apply to the presentation phase if applicable

10.3 Other Information

10.3.1 All Respondents will be formally notified (successful or not) after the evaluation process has been completed and are requested not to contact the University in this regard.

10.3.2 The detailed evaluation results and Respondent and Solution will not be published or made available to anyone.

PART F: SCOPE OF WORK

11 SCOPE OF WORK

11.1 The detailed scope of work is attached to the RFI Documents and marked as Annexure A: Scope of Work and Annexure D: Compliance Schedule.

11.2 Respondents must carefully review Annexure A: Scope of Work and Annexure D and confirm their ability to meet all the requirements outlined therein before submitting a Response.

11.3 The University strictly prohibits any material variation to Annexure A: Scope of Work. This prohibition encompasses but is not limited to changes in the products, services, and service levels specified in the scope of work.

PART G: RETURNABLE SCHEDULES & DOCUMENTS

12 THE SUBMISSION OF RETURNABLE SCHEDULES & DOCUMENTS

12.1 All respondents must submit the following information

No	Description	Please label the document as follows
1.	Acceptance to Participate and Declaration of Interest	Annexure B and C
2.	Signed Non-disclosure Agreement (returnable deliverable)	
3.	Compliance Schedule	Annexure D
4.	OEM Information and Track record	Schedule 1
5.	System-solution design, BOQ, roadmap	Schedule 2
6.	Sales-support model - assurance	Schedule 3
7.	Reference information	Schedule 4
8.	Other information	Schedule 5
9.	Partial or non-compliant criteria information	Schedule 6

12.2 Any response, including all attachments and supporting documentation, should be written in English.

12.3 Respondents are requested to ensure that the information provided is accurate, complete and current.

12.4 Respondents must ensure that they carefully review all documentation; complete it fully, and submit the documentation as requested.

12.5 Note that the onus is on the respondents to ensure that their submissions are submitted on or before the closing date and time.

12.6 The University accepts no responsibility for unsent emails or non-submission for any reason whatsoever.