

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

From companies with the capability to resell, market, train end-users and provide end-user support for the CSIR's Secondary Geo-location Spectrum Database (S-GLSD) A. K. A “Spectrum Switch”

Eoi No. BDC/NGEI/001/17/03/2021

Date of Issue:	19/03/2021	
Closing Date and Time:	15/04/2021 at 16:30	
Eoi submission:	Only electronic submissions will be accepted (lmfupe@csir.co.za)	
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CSIR business hours	08h00 – 16h30	
Category	ICT and Telecommunications	

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1 Introduction

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), is an entity of the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) in South Africa. The CSIR is one of the leading scientific research and technology development organisations in Africa. As a public institution established under the Scientific Research Council Act No 46 of 1988 (as amended by Act 71/1990), the CSIR focuses on multi-disciplinary research, development and innovation (RD&I). In the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector, the CSIR conducts its RD&I activities through its Next Generation Enterprises and Institutions cluster (NGEI). The NGEI cluster has been working on RD&I in the field of Dynamic Spectrum Access and Spectrum Management (DSA/SM) since 2009. Such RD&I work has been taking place with research addressing costs to communicate and lack of broadband access in under-served and rural communities and hard-to-reach areas.

2 Purpose

The objective of this invitation process is to collect information to enable the CSIR to evaluate and identify suitably experienced, highly qualified, and financially sustainable organisations within the ICT and telecommunication fields with a view to entering into a non-exclusive reseller (white label) agreement with the CSIR for its Spectrum Switch offering.

3 Background

National radio spectrum is an important wireless ICT infrastructure resource of any nation. Spectrum is becoming increasingly scarce due to traditionally static allocation mechanisms used by national spectrum regulators. The CSIR has researched and developed an innovative Geo-Location Based Dynamic spectrum access technology platform with the aim of improving the spectrum utilisation efficiency in any radio frequency band of interest. The platform is primarily comprised of the following technology offerings: (1) Reference Geo-location Spectrum database (R-GLSD); (2) Secondary Geo-location Spectrum database (S-GLSD), also known as Spectrum Switch; (3) Wireless Network Planning Tool, and; (4) Calculation Engine-as-a-Service (CEaaS). The aforementioned product technology offerings enable among other benefits, regulators to account for usage of spectrum in real-time throughout their respective geographical area of authority; whereas for wireless network operators the technology allows for accurate planning and creation of opportunistic communication networks

and related models of operation that lower cost of access to broadband networks by orders of magnitude.

4 The Secondary Geo-location Spectrum Database (S-GLSD), also known as “Spectrum Switch”

The Spectrum Switch is a cloud-hosted software platform that is capable of dynamic identification and availing for sharing by network devices, the unused broadcast television spectrum in any given geo-location of interest, commonly referred to as Television White Space (TVWS). The Spectrum Switch functions in compliance to the 2018 regulations on the use of television whitespaces, as gazetted by the Independent Regulatory Authority of South Africa (ICASA).

The main application area for the Spectrum Switch is to enable wireless network operators provide low-cost/affordable broadband Internet services to the hard-to-reach, underserved and unserved communities. The Spectrum Switch user interface is an 'easy-to-use' menu navigation system combined with 'how-to' instructions, both of which give easy access to various applications.

The Spectrum Switch's competitive advantage is as follows:

- It is computationally accurate;
- It is computationally fast;
- It is the only such technology in the country that has been authorised by the regulator (ICASA) to be used in various TVWS technology trial deployments in the past 10 years;
- It has been extensively used by, and is compatible with all major TVWS Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs);
- It is provided as a platform-as-a-service therefore, very little infrastructure is required by the would-be licensee service provider to start operation;
- It enables provision of low-cost retail services;
- New features and value-added services can be added easily; and
- It is backed by a pro-active, world-class CSIR research and development (R&D) team, back-end support to potential licensee service provider is available, which reduces the operational cost and ensures a sustained service provision to the end user.

5 Invitation for the Expressions of Interest

Expressions of interest (Eol) are hereby solicited from relevant organisations with a track record in the ICT and telecommunications fields, with a view to entering a non-exclusive reseller (white label) agreement with the CSIR for its Spectrum Switch offering. Existing infrastructure and experience in the resale of ICT and telecommunications services to end-users and organisations would be an advantage, together with experience in providing training to end-users and providing end-user support.

Scope of the work:

- Resale TVWS device registration and channel availability services to wireless network operators;
- Resale TVWS device technical compliance assessment services;
- Resale the wireless network planning service to wireless network planners and wireless network operators;
- Provide after-sales support to the wireless network operators and network planners;
- Work with the CSIR to co-create, upgrade and enhance the offerings; and
- Market and promote the offerings to the industry.

6 Expressions of Interest Submission

All Eol submissions must be submitted to the following email address:

lmfupe@csir.co.za

Considering the Covid-19 pandemic, the CSIR requires that all Eol submissions be submitted to the email address above. Should the file size exceed 30 MB, the interested parties can submit Eols in multiple emails. Use the Eol number and the description of the Eol as the subject on your email.

7 Expressions of Interest Programme

One or more bid windows are envisaged. The current Eol programme incorporates the following key dates:

- Issue of Eol document: 19/03/2021

- Closing / submission Date: 15/04/2021 at 16:30
- Target start date of the project: As soon as the agreement is signed by both parties.

8 Submission of Expressions of Interest

Proposals should not exceed 20 pages, and where relevant, supporting documentation should be attached as appendices. The following documentation must be included:

- Brief company profile.
- Ownership / management information.
- Description of current business activities.
- Description of distribution capabilities.
- Description of distribution infrastructure.
- Technical capabilities and resources to deliver on the scope of work set out above.
- Evidence of experience/track record in operating in this environment, including entrepreneurial support.
- Description of possible markets and how the offering will be marketed.
- Indication of availability to pursue opportunities from April 2021.
- Original valid Tax Clearance Certificate or Letter of Good standing issued by SARS.
- BBBEE certificate.
- Proof of company registration (CK2 form).
- Bank letter.
- Annual Report showing financial turn-over.
- Municipality Rates and Taxes.

The EoI submitted by companies must be signed by a person or persons duly authorised thereto.

9 Evaluation Process and Criteria

All proposals will be evaluated by an evaluation committee against the following criteria:

- Experience and track record of operating in the relevant environment:
 - Current and past business activities;
 - References;

- Understanding of the job requirements and approach;
- Validity of submission documents listed in Section 8 e.g. tax clearance certificate, company registration document, etc.
- Professionalism and ability to deliver;
 - Infrastructure;
 - Distribution capability;
 - Marketing, training and after-sales support;
- BBBEE status (Transformation agenda); and
- Financial sustainability.

Short-listed applicants may be required to present to the CSIR and shall be notified thereof no later than four days prior to the presentation date.

Please Note: If you have not heard anything from us within 12 weeks of applying, please consider your application unsuccessful.

10 Elimination Criteria

EoI submissions will be eliminated under the following conditions:

- Submission after the deadline.
- Submitted to an incorrect address.

EoI submissions that do not accompany the mandatory documentation as listed above.

11 Deadline for submission

EoI must be submitted via the link provided above no later than 16H30 on 15 April 2021.

12 Cost of submission

Organisations submitting an EoI assume all risks for resource commitment and expenses, direct or indirect, of proposal preparation and participation throughout the EoI process. The CSIR is not responsible directly or indirectly for any costs incurred by the organisation.

13 Process for shortlisted applicant/s

- The shortlisted applicant/s shall proceed into the application phase where further technical and commercial assessments shall be completed. These will include:
 - Proposed business model and financial framework;
 - Proposed structure and management of the scope of work;
 - Anticipated margins;
 - Further financial and legal due-diligence; and
 - Further technical and other requirements to be disclosed to the shortlisted applicants.
- The successful appointment shall be subject to the parties agreeing to mutually acceptable contractual terms and conditions. In the event of the parties failing to reach such agreement within a mutually agreed date after the provisional appointment date, the CSIR reserves the right to appoint or not appoint.
- This expression of interest has been issued for the current bid window. One or more bid windows are envisaged and will be communicated at a date to be determined.

14 CSIR reserves the right to:

- Extend the closing date;
- Request documentary evidence regarding any issue;
- Appoint one or more entities, separately or jointly (whether or not they submitted a joint EoI);
- Award this EoI as a whole or in part, or not at all; and
- Cancel or withdraw this EoI as a whole or in part.

15 DISCLAIMERS

The CSIR has produced this EoI in good faith. However, the CSIR, its agents and its employees do not warrant its accuracy or completeness. To the extent that the CSIR is permitted by law, the CSIR will not be liable for any claim whatsoever and howsoever arising (including, without limitation, any claim in contract, negligence or otherwise) for any incorrect or misleading information contained in this EoI due to any misinterpretation of this EoI. This EoI is a request for expressions of interest only and is not an offer document; answers to it must not be construed as acceptance of an offer or imply the existence of a Contract between

the parties. By submission of its information, organisations shall be deemed to have satisfied themselves with and to have accepted all Terms & Conditions of this EoI. The CSIR makes no representation, warranty, assurance, guarantee or endorsements to any party concerning the EoI, whether with regards to its accuracy, completeness or otherwise and the CSIR shall have no liability towards any party in connection therewith.