

Notification Of Intent to Invite Bids

Private Cloud Installation, Operation and Maintenance as a Managed Service

NOI-15722-PRVCLD

Total Estimated Value for Base Period (Installation, configuration, and three years service operations; excluding optional periods): EUR 450,000

The NCI Agency is planning to issue an Invitation for Bids (IFB) for the implementation and management of a disconnected deployment of an Azure Stack Hub infrastructure (private cloud).

The NCI Agency expects to issue the formal IFB in Q3 2023 with an anticipated contract award in Q4 2023.

NCI Agency Point of Contact

Dan Gaertner, Senior Contracting Officer

E-mail: daniel.gaertner@ncia.nato.int



To : See Distribution List

Subject : Notification of Intent to Invite Bids
Private Cloud Installation, Operation and Maintenance as a Managed Service
NOI-115722-PRVCLD

Reference(s) : A. BC/D(2018)0004, Budget Procurement Guidance, dated 16 January 2018

1. In accordance with Reference A, the NCI Agency, as the Host Nation, hereby gives notice of its intent to issue an Invitation for Bids (IFB) for the implementation and management of a disconnected deployment of an Azure Stack Hub infrastructure (private cloud).
2. A high-level summary of the technical requirements of the IFB is set forth in Annex B of this letter. The NCI Agency will include all of the technical details in the Invitation for Bid.
3. The reference for the IFB is **IFB-CO-115722-PRVCLD**, and all correspondence concerning this IFB should reference this number.
4. For planning purposes, the period of performance is expected to be:
 - a. Base Period
 - i. Installation, configuration and implementation period (Q1 2024)
 - ii. Service operations, 3 years, following security approval of implementation
 - b. Optional Periods
 - i. Two 1-year options for continued service operations
5. The NCI Agency will use the International Competitive Bidding (ICB) Procedure with the expected evaluation method of Lowest Price-Technically Compliant.
6. The NCI Agency plans to issue the IFB in Q3 2023 with a bid closing date 35 days following the release of the IFB. Contract award is planned for Q4 2023. Please take note of the expedited bidding phase; the longer timelines sometimes associated with ICB do not apply to this procurement.
7. National Responsible Authorities are kindly requested to provide Declarations of Eligibility (DoE) to the NCI Agency, **not later than 1 August July 2023**, of additional qualified and certified companies that may be interested in receiving an Invitation for Bid for this project. In addition to the information required by Section 5, *Eligibility*, of



the procedures at Reference A, please ensure that the DoE includes the following information for each of the nominated companies:

- a) Official company name and address that would be included on a contract.
- b) Company point of contact, telephone number and e-mail address.

This information is critical to enable prompt and accurate communication with prospective bidders. The DoE should be sent by email to the following point of contact:

NATO Communications and Information Agency
Attention: Dan Gaertner – Senior Contracting Officer
E-mail: daniel.gaertner@ncia.nato.int

8. Please note that requests for participation in this competition received directly from individual companies cannot be considered.
9. Bidders will be required to declare a bid validity of twelve (12) months from closing date for receipt of bids. No bid guarantee (standby letter of credit) will be required.
10. The National Authorities and bidders are advised that the IFB package will be NATO UNCLASSIFIED.
11. The successful bidder may be required to handle and store classified information up to the level of "NATO SECRET". In addition, execution of the proposed contract may require, in accordance with NATO Security Policy C-M(2002)49, personnel of the successful bidder to hold individual security clearances of "COSMIC TOP SECRET". Only firms maintaining such cleared facilities and the appropriate personnel clearances will be able to perform the resulting contract.
12. Please note that, in order to ensure bids are received from qualified companies, it is anticipated that the IFB will contain provisions requiring bidders to clearly demonstrate in their bid their qualifications as "Microsoft Certified: Azure Stack Hub Operator Associate" and years of experience with Azure Stack Hub on-premise installations and service provision.
13. The NCI Agency point of contact for this IFB is Dan Gaertner, who can be reached at e-mail: daniel.gaertner@ncia.nato.int.
14. Your assistance in this procurement is greatly appreciated.

For The Director of Acquisition:

Daniel K. Gaertner
Senior Contracting Officer

Attachments: Annex A – Summary of the Requirements



Distribution List

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NCI Agency – Internal



ANNEX A – Summary of Requirements

Private Cloud Installation, Operation and Maintenance as a Managed Service

1. Background

- 1.1. With the success harnessed by the NATO Software Factory (NSF) public cloud DevSecOps platform in recent years, NATO now aims at extending this service to projects and initiatives with higher security classification than that permitted by a service hosted on the internet, enabling data, AI, machine learning, and DevSecOps technology adoption in support of C4ISR information superiority.
- 1.2. To achieve this while leveraging the experience and expertise of the NSF, NATO will acquire an Azure Stack Hub infrastructure capability in disconnected mode (fully disconnected from the internet), as a managed service.
- 1.3. This private cloud will be deployed, set up and operated by the service contractor, enabling the NCI Agency-led teams to be fully dedicated to business specific activities on the infrastructure.
- 1.4. The NCI Agency intends to deploy two main workloads on the Azure Stack Hub infrastructure.
- 1.5. This de-coupling of the infrastructure from the platform layer will allow the service contractor to focus on the infrastructure and service management, and the NCI Agency to focus on the DevSecOps and Data Science platforms and activities.
- 1.6. The NCI Agency will retain the Cloud Architect role and Azure Stack Hub User role, which will be responsible for transforming the technical requirements of the private cloud into the architecture and design that the service provider will implement and operate, being the Azure Stack Operator role its responsibility.
- 1.7. The deployment and operation of the hardware assets for the capability will be on NCI Agency premises, disconnected from the internet.
- 1.8. The private cloud capability will be implemented with initial capacity requirements, but it is expected that these increase over time as it services more projects and initiatives.
- 1.9. Following the initial contract period, the private cloud operations contract will be renewed on an annual basis.

2. Estimated Schedule

- 2.1. It is expected that the IFB will be released in Q3 2023.
- 2.2. It is expected that the contract will be awarded in Q4 2023.
- 2.3. The initial implementation of the hardware and Azure Stack Hub infrastructure and configuration for operation must be completed timely so that the managed service can be operational by the end of Q1 2024.



3. Scope

3.1 The private cloud solution shall be based on the Microsoft Azure Stack Hub infrastructure in disconnected mode.

3.2 The service provider shall perform datacenter integration at all required layers (i.e. networking, DNS, identity, PKI, time servers etc.).

3.2 The Azure stack hub shall have the following functionalities enabled:

- 3.2.1 Operate on-premises fully disconnected from internet
- 3.2.2 Support for virtual machines
- 3.2.3 Support for Kubernetes clusters
- 3.2.4 Support for PaaS Databases
- 3.2.5 Support for Event Hubs
- 3.2.6 Support for Key vaults
- 3.2.7 Support for storage accounts (container, table, queue)
- 3.2.8 Support for App services
- 3.2.9 Support for Marketplace items
- 3.2.10 Support for graphics processing unit (GPU)
- 3.2.11 Integration with Microsoft ADFS
- 3.2.12 Ability to deploy all the resources by using infrastructure as code
- 3.2.13 Ability to interconnect with the current on-premises infrastructure
- 3.2.14 Ability to export logging and auditing data to third-party SIEM system

3.3 The hardware and software shall be owned by the service provider and provided as part of the private cloud service to the NCI Agency. Security restrictions will dictate that some parts of the infrastructure (e.g. storage devices) will be provided and owned by the NCI Agency.

3.4 The service provider shall perform O&M for the Azure Stack Hub infrastructure.

3.5 The service provider shall perform the Azure Stack Hub Operator role, while the NCI Agency assumes the Azure Stack Hub User role.

3.6 The service provider shall enable Azure Stack Hub new functionalities as requested by NCI Agency.

3.7 The service provider shall offer administrative visibility (web-based) on the Azure Stack Hub infrastructure health.



- 3.8 The service provider shall enable Azure Stack Hub infrastructure security features to meet NATO security requirements.
- 3.9 The service provider shall provide IT Service Management services in support of the private cloud's operation.
- 3.10 The service provider shall act as the single point of contact for both hardware and software support tickets.
- 3.11 The service provider Azure stack hub operators shall hold a COSMIC TOP SECRET security clearance.
- 3.12 The service provider shall expand the Azure Stack Hub infrastructure as requested by the NCI Agency.
- 3.13 The Service provider shall be responsible for the full system lifecycle of the Azure Stack Hub ensuring the hardware and software products delivered remain fully within vendor support applying relevant updates, preventing any obsolescence.

4. Key Personnel

- 4.1. It is expected that the IFB will include requirements for the following Key Personnel:
 - 4.1.1. Project Manager
 - 4.1.2. Cloud platform architect
 - 4.1.3. Administrator

5. Technical Constraints

- 5.1. Cloud hardware assets in NCI Agency premises / Class 1
The hardware assets must be deployed in the NATO on-premises datacentre and integrated with the existing IT infrastructure.
- 5.2. NATO SECRET environment
The solution will handle information classified up to NATO SECRET.
- 5.3. Azure Stack Hub
The solution provided shall be based on the Azure Stack Hub infrastructure.
- 5.4. Disconnected mode



Azure Stack Hub must be deployed and operated without internet connectivity, by using the disconnected deployment mode.

5.5. Flexible capacity

Azure Stack Hub must allow capacity increase based on technical requirements.