Specifications and Requirements for

RFP UJ 81/2024: Provision of a Bulk Emailing Service Solution

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Specifications.

Overview.

The University of Johannesburg (UJ)'s Information and Communications Systems Department (ICS) is responsible for providing IT services to enable UJ to meet its strategic objectives of research, teaching, and learning.

The ICS department is looking to improve our bulk emailing service and enhance the end user's experience, including protection against insider threats and mitigation of external threats across ICS systems. We request that suppliers submit proposals per the specifications and requirements below.

This tender will be for a period of 3 years, where the fees will be paid annually year 1, year 2 and year 3.

Requirements.

The successful supplier **must** meet the following requirements and list any value-added or extra features not listed below:

1.1 Introduction.

UJ ICS requires the successful bidder, the Contractor, to provide the delivery, installation, testing, commissioning, maintenance, and knowledge transfer of the bulk mailing solutions tool.

1.1.1 Accreditations.

An accreditation (from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO 27001)) or an ongoing accreditation process by a certified accreditation body will be an asset (desirable).

1.2 Work to be performed.

Implement a dedicated, reliable and secure bulk mailing service. We require a solution that can efficiently manage and deliver large volumes of email communications to a variety of audiences, including staff and students.

1.2.1 Key requirements.

Interested vendors must submit the following information in their proposals:

- Company Overview and Experience
- Detailed Description of Proposed Services
- Detailed Description of Proposed Services the layout per year
- References from at least three (3) similar clients
- Pricing Structure and Service Tiers (if applicable)
- Implementation Timeline and Plan

- Customer Support Response Guarantees
- Security and Compliance Certifications

1.2.2 Current ICS and UJ Alumni usage

ICS usage Volume based pack	**1 000 000** volume based sending per month	**12 000 000** volume based sending per year
Alumni usage Subscriber based pack	**1 035 259** email transactions per month	**12 423 100** email transactions expected for the year

UJ Alumni shall receive the same service package as all other beneficiaries outlined in the specification form. This includes access to all services, benefits, and resources.

While the service package remains consistent, ICS will be subject to a volume-based package and UJ Alumni will be subject to a subscriber-based package (This means that they pay for the number of contacts, but can send unlimited emails per month)

- Specific costs associated with each service for ICS and for UJ Alumni must be broken down in the costing description of the tender submission
- A transparent billing system is to be implemented to track service usage and associated costs for ICS volume based pack and Alumni subscriber based pack.
- UJ Alumni members will have the flexibility to choose and utilize services based on their individual needs and preferences independently.

1.2.3 Technical Requirements.

The System shall be capable to:

Email Sending	Points: 10	Comply Y/N
• Support for standard email protocols (SMTP, STARTTLS, and/or SMTP/TLS).	2	
• Ability to send large volumes of emails efficiently.	2	
• Throttling and queuing functionality to manage sending speed and avoid overwhelming mail servers.	2	
• Emails need to be encrypted in transit.	2	
• Reporting of usage per list and campaigns	1	
• Account management and reporting	1	
Email List Management	**Points: 10**	**Comply Y/N**
• Secure storage of email addresses with appropriate access controls. (2 factor authentication / MFA, individual logins and passwords and other)	2	

	Points	Comply Y/N
• Import and export of email lists in various formats (e.g., CSV, TXT).	2	
• Ability to segment email lists based on demographics, interests, or other criteria.	2	
• Suppression list management should exclude bounced or unsubscribed addresses.	2	
• Provide reports on successful / failed email delivery / campaigns.	2	
Campaign Management	**Points: 5**	**Comply Y/N**
• Ability to schedule and send email campaigns.	1	
• Ability testing capabilities for optimising email content and subject lines.	2	
• Personalization features to customise email content for individual recipients.	1	
• Provide reports on successful / failed campaign delivery.	1	
TOTAL	25	

1.2.4 Maintenance, Support, and Personnel Requirements.

	Points	Comply Y/N
a) Provide regular system updates and schedule annual maintenance in coordination with UJ ICS;	5	
b) Provide online technical support. This includes a mechanism available to log service requests and categorize them by severity levels and response times accordingly as follows: - Level 1 (High) – response time within 4 hours. - Level 2 (Medium) – response time within 8 hours. - Level 3 (Low) – response time within the next business day. - Provide full explanations on sla levels	5	
c) Provide a call logging ticketing system to address any issues that may arise with the service.	5	
d) Detailed preventative maintenance and support that adhere to the UJ change control process.	2	
e) Provide at least 3 reference letters no older than 3 years.	3	
f) UJ administrators should be trained to have at least five individuals in ICS who can use the service. Knowledge transfers to ICS.	5	
TOTAL	**25**	

1.2.5 Additional Functionality.

The System shall be capable to:

	Points	Comply Y/N
Email List Management: Secure and user-friendly platform for creating, managing, and segmenting our email lists.	5	
Campaign Design and Creation: Tools for building professional-looking email templates with drag-and-drop functionality and personalisation options.	5	
Email Delivery and Tracking: Reliable email delivery infrastructure ensuring high inbox placement rates and detailed reporting on opens, clicks, bounces, and unsubscribes.	5	
List Hygiene: Services to maintain accurate and up-to- date email lists, including suppressing invalid or inactive addresses.	5	
Compliance Management: Tools and support to ensure adherence to anti-spam regulations (e.g., CAN-SPAM) and data privacy laws (e.g., POPIA).	5	
Security: Secure data storage and transmission protocols to protect sensitive information.	10	
Integration Capabilities: Ability to integrate with our existing CRM or marketing automation platform (if applicable).	5	
Customer Support: Responsive and knowledgeable technical support team to address any issues promptly.	5	
Scalable Account: We require an account structure that allows for application and review by your team to assess the impact of our sending volume and usage on the specific service tier allocated. This ensures optimal performance and deliverability rates. ** *Explain and add any extra costs involved with a scalable account setup*	5	
TOTAL	**50**	

1.2.6 Place of Performance.

The Contractor shall implement a Bulk Mailing Service Monitoring and Reporting at UJ ICS, ensuring integration with the existing UJ ICS hybrid IT infrastructure (on-premises and in the cloud). This work can be done remotely or on-site with at least 3 days before arrangement.

The Contractor shall provide a minimum of two (2) days of vendor-authorized training (presented in English) for up to five (5) staff of the UJ ICS department in the operation and maintenance of the System immediately after the installation of the System. The training should be delivered remotely.

The Contractor shall:

- Complete and hand over to UJ ICS Team a set of technical design documents, operation and servicing manuals and architecture technical drawings.
- Deployment and configuration documents and technical drawings.

- Testing and acceptance document.

1.2.7 Timelines.

System implementation should be completed and operational three (3) months after UJ Tender has been awarded. Training should also be provided to the end-users and other stakeholders prior to service going live. Should extra time be required this needs to be communicated with the UJ ICS team via the UJ Tender office.

1.2.8 Reporting requirements.

Once installation is completed, the system shall be tested by the Contractor, together with the UJ ICS team, to demonstrate that performance meets the manufacturer's performance specifications, and the requirements specified in the Specifications and Requirements document.

The UJ ICS team and the Contractor will create a Testing and Acceptance document. This document shall record System testing results and demonstrate System's compliance with product performance specifications. This testing will be conducted bi-annually.

Based on the Contractor's technical expertise, the contractor shall recommend the Bulk Emailing Solution Compliance Score scheme. This scheme will have measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to assess the effectiveness of the performance (e.g. "Good", "Moderate", etc.) to set a clear benchmark for improvement.

1.2.9 Performance monitoring.

The Contractor shall:
- Provide resolution within 8 hours of designation of an incident at the highest severity level.
- Actively participate in the resolution of identified problems and root cause analysis in which Contractor-provided components are involved.
- Acknowledge all reported tickets/incidents by either email or phone call within four hours of being reported by the UJ ICS team.
- Ensure Service availability is at least 98.99%.

Project Management.

Project management methodology must be included, indicating the approach that will be used for the UJ project.

The project duration from site handover will be 1 month (from site handover). The service provider to ensure that the Solution/methodology demonstrates the following:

- The Solution to be sequenced properly.
- The activities need to be linked.
- Indicate a critical path.

1.2.10 A high-level project plan is to be included as part of the submission.

1.2.11 Detailed project plan will be required by the successful service provider after awarding.

Additional notes.

- The response must adhere to the requirements strictly. Deviations must be clearly mentioned and explained. However, it will be at the sole discretion of UJ to accept or reject such deviations.
- A contract is to be signed between the two parties for the duration of the implementation of the project before the implementation of the bulk mailing system.
- *UJ reserves the right to, at any time during the term of the Agreement, terminate the Agreement with no less than 60 (sixty) days' written notice if UJ, in its sole discretion, is of the view that the solution offered by the Service Provider, is not fit for purpose, as required by UJ.*
- The contract period will be for 3 (three) years - paid annually/yearly.

Evaluation Criteria.

The RFP will be evaluated in three stages:

Stage 1 – Key requirements.

Stage 2 – Functionality.

Stage 3 – Financial and B-BBEE.

1.2.12 Key Requirements.

Appendix 1.

The bidder needs to comply to move on to Stage 2

Key requirements
Installation and Configuration instructions.
Integration documentation
Troubleshooting guide
Compliance and regulatory considerations

1.2.13 Functionality.

Requirement	Maximum attainable Points
Technical Requirements (1.2.3)	25
Maintenance, Support, and Personnel Requirements (1.2.4)	25

Additional Functionality (1.2.5)	50
Total points awarded	**100**

All bidders requires a minimum of 70 points before further evaluation. All bidders that achieve 70 points or more will be evaluated equally in Stage 3.

1.2.14 Financial and B-BBEE.

- Price (80 points).
- BBBEE (20 points).

Annexure A

Requested by:

Ms. Amanda Coetzee

Signature: _____   Date**:** 04/11/2024_____

Approved by:

Domain Owner: Mr Hennie Hendriks

Signature: _____   Date**:** Nov 4, 2024_____

Project Sponsor (CIO): Dr Chelma Sliep

Signature: _RSliep_____   Date: Nov 4, 2024_____

Bulk Mailing Service - Specifications(revised v3.5)

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