The following questions were received by the FAIS Ombud for the abovementioned bid and are responded to hereto as follows:

NO	QUESTION	RESPONSE
1.	Content Criteria: With reference to Section 25.2.4.2, must each item of content meet all criteria (i.e., vendor-neutral, evidence-based, and peer-reviewed), or can selective content meet one or more of these?	The TOR states as a requirement that "Content must be vendor-neutral, evidence-based, and peer-reviewed." – so the procurement expectation is that content provided meets all three characteristics as a package.
2.	Peer Review: How should bidders demonstrate that content is peer-reviewed? Is an attestation sufficient, or is a different mechanism required? Will the FAIS Ombud need to validate that peer review has been conducted, or is it acceptable for the peer review of content to be pending?	The TOR requires peer-reviewed content but does not prescribe a verification mechanism. It also gives FAIS the right to request documentation to verify information supplied and requires successful bidders to conclude an SLA and provide a scorecard.
3.	Content Languages: Should the content database support languages other than English?	The TOR is written and states that contracts will be in English; it does not mandate support for other languages.
4.	Proprietary Content: Should the pricelist include proprietary third-party content (e.g., SANS/ISO 27001 documents), or will the FAIS Ombud pay for access separately? Alternatively, is a different licensing mechanism through our content platform envisaged?	The TOR requires full and unrestricted access to a comprehensive ICT research database and requests a pricing schedule as a subscription.
5.	Archival Content: Should the database include historical research archives, and if so, how far back should it go?	The TOR requires a "comprehensive and regularly updated ICT research database" but does not set a minimum archival period.
6.	Financial Services Sector: Should deliverables and content be tailored to the financial services sector, given the FAIS Ombud's regulatory focus?	TOR emphasises alignment to FAIS strategic objectives and asks for a proven track record in the public sector — it also lists deliverables aligned to governance, policy, risk and compliance. That points to an expectation for sector-relevant tailoring.

NO	QUESTION	RESPONSE
7.	<u>FAIS Ombud Engagement</u>: What is the expected level of engagement from the FAIS Ombud's side? For example, will there be a dedicated internal team to work with our experts?	TOR specifies a single-user license (one user) and four quarterly advisory meetings per year; it also expects FAIS to perform quarterly service delivery reviews. The TOR does not require FAIS to provide a dedicated liaison team, but it assumes reasonable collaboration.
8.	<u>Advisory Responsiveness</u>: What is the expected turnaround for advisory support requests? What are the typical types of inquiries we would receive?	TOR sets a responsiveness expectation for advisory support of 48–72 hours for scheduled inquiries. Typical inquiries to expect: strategic ICT planning questions, policy draft reviews, vendor short-list advice, cyber-incident contextual briefings, risk/regulatory interpretation for ICT controls, and maturity assessment clarifications.
9.	<u>Strategic Meetings</u>: What is the typical duration and preferred format for the quarterly strategic advisory meetings? What topics or decisions do you anticipate discussing in these meetings?	TOR: four (4) quarterly advisory meetings per year, virtual or in-person; bidder pays travel if in person. Practical recommendation: propose a 60–120 minute virtual meeting or a half-day (3–4 hours) in-person session if deeper workshops are needed. Typical agenda: review of upcoming regulatory risks, summary of intelligence updates, roadmap and investment priorities, outstanding advisory actions, SLA/performance review items.
10.	<u>Performance Metrics:</u> What specific performance metrics will be used during quarterly service delivery reviews?	TOR requires quarterly service delivery review meetings and requests a scorecard be provided by the bidder.
11.	Downtime/Maintenance: Are there preferred maintenance windows for platform downtime?	TOR allows scheduled maintenance and requires platform availability 24/7, excluding scheduled maintenance.
12.	<u>Technology Stack</u>: Is there a preferred technology stack (e.g., Microsoft, Google, etc.)?	The TOR does not prescribe a stack

NO	QUESTION	RESPONSE
13.	<u>Existing Systems</u>: Are there existing or legacy platforms that should be considered (e.g., Microsoft SharePoint, Google Drive)?	No
14.	<u>Licensing</u>: Are there existing user license considerations that bidders should be aware of?	TOR specifies a single user license for a two-year subscription. Bidders must price accordingly
15.	<u>Customization</u>: What level of customization is expected for reports and frameworks to align with the FAIS Ombud's specific mandate?	TOR asks for strategic frameworks, toolkits and templates aligned to COBIT/NIST/ISO and to support FAIS decision-making. That implies a need for customizable outputs.
16.	<u>User Access</u>: Who is the single user licensed to access the platform, and what is their role? How will they interact with the platform and our advisory experts?	TOR mandates one (1) licensed user for the subscription but does not name the role. Bidders must assume FAIS will designate the user (typically a Head of ICT)
17.	<u>Vendor Evaluations</u>: What specific types of technologies or vendors do you anticipate needing advice on in the near term?	TOR lists "vendor evaluations" as a content area. Expect requests about cloud providers, cybersecurity vendors, enterprise architecture tools, SIEM/XDR, identity & access management, backup/DR vendors, and managed security services.
18.	<u>Team Composition</u>: Given the requirement for a maximum of four CVs, what is the ideal mix of experience across the nine ICT research content areas?	TOR requires a maximum of four CVs and that the set collectively demonstrate at least five years' advisory experience across 6 of the 9 content areas. Points in evaluation favour submissions where four CVs collectively cover the six areas.
19.	<u>Qualifications</u>: What are the preferred qualifications or certifications for subject-matter experts (e.g., CISSP, CISA, specific industry experience)?	TOR requests proof of advisory experience but does not list required certificates

NO	QUESTION	RESPONSE
20.	<u>Research Methodologies:</u> Are there specific research methodologies or analytical frameworks that the FAIS Ombud particularly values?	TOR explicitly lists COBIT, NIST CSF and ISO/IEC 27001 and asks for alignment to global standards.
21.	<u>Regulatory Frameworks:</u> Are there specific regulatory frameworks beyond those mentioned (COBIT, NIST, ISO 27001) that should be prioritized for the South African context?	TOR mentions global standards but not local frameworks.