

February 9, 2024

[Update February 20, 2024](#)

It was brought to the attention of DRBC that one timely submittal of questions was routed to an email junk folder. Therefore, this document has been amended with answers to questions 44-90, starting on page 9 of this document.

RELATIONAL DATABASE UPGRADE & PERMIT SYSTEM UPGRADE PROJECT

Responses to questions received by 01/26/2024

Note: All questions have been recreated exactly as received and are provided in *italic text* (although company names have been redacted). DRBC responses are provided below in **blue text**. If DRBC determined that the question had already been answered, a link is provided, and the answer is in **red text**.

Question 1

Would you consider a COTS solution that can be configured to meet your needs or are you solely looking to upgrade the existing on-premise Access database? We have a cloud based system that services both applicants and internal staff that sounds like it would be a great fit for what you are looking for but if you have a policy reason to enhance the current platform we won't pursue it any further. Thanks for any additional information you can provide.

Regarding customizable pre-programmed solutions: DRBC will review all proposals submitted. Our primary consideration comes down to whether or not the proposed solution can meet the objectives and needs outlined in the RFP.

Regarding cloud-based hosting for the database project: Cloud-based hosting is not being considered at this time due to the expected recurring costs. However, cloud-based development may be acceptable to enable collaboration during development. To reiterate, the final database must not be kept on the cloud beyond the production cutover period due to recurring costs.

Question 2

Is there currently a firm supporting the current access application and SQL Server backend, or is it supported internally by DRBC?

Support for the current on-premises database is provided by DRBC staff. A small component of the database is hosted by a third-party consultant on its AWS server. This small component of the database has a public-facing portion and syncs with the on-premise DRBC database.

Question 3

What is the current budget allocated for this project?

DRBC is not disclosing the current budget for the project as part of the RFP process. As stated in the RFP, "Implementation of the requested upgrade will be in phases, and cost proposals for each phase are requested as separate line items. DRBC in its sole discretion will decide which phases will ultimately be implemented, consistent with DRBC's budget and timeline."

Question 4

Given the nature of the project what are the On-site V.S. Off-Site expectations of DRBC for this project?

It is not expected that work be conducted on-site, unless the selected bidder chooses to. All work may be conducted remotely if necessary. However, it is expected that in-person representation will be available for infrequent on-site meetings as appropriate.

Question 5

Is DRBC open to consider proposals to migrate to a cloud-based hosting and development platform, such as Microsoft Azure?

Refer to the answer to **Question 1**.

Question 6

Page 6 of the RFP notes “Integrating the new system with paper check payment processing”. Can you provide an expanded explanation of the requirements of this functionality? Is it expected that the system will be able to generate checks?

Expanded explanation: The portion of the DRBC database hosted by a third-party contractor at AWS utilizes webforms, on which external users input data to generate invoices based on the volume of water used. Most external users then pay those invoices via paper check mailed to DRBC. When the paper mail comes to DRBC, the current "mail control" process in the database allows for tracking the paper checks, as well as all formal communication received and sent by DRBC.

- It is expected that the new system being developed should have the same functionality.
- It is NOT expected that the new system would generate checks or handle payment processing.

Question 7

The RFP specifies a requirement to upgrade the SQL Server database version. Will DRBC provide a newly created Windows Server for implementation of the new database services?

DRBC has an existing, recently-procured server that is currently hosting another application. Our plan is for this server to co-host the named SQL server installation that will house the upgraded database. The RFP is also seeking bidders' proposed solution(s) for virtualization of servers.

Question 8

Does the DRBC database store any Personally Identifiable Information (PII)?

No, DRBC does not store any PII. However:

- DRBC is a government agency and therefore has regulations concerning public access to records. Some Commission records, such as deliberative documents and those containing confidential business information (“CBI”), may be exempt from disclosure. The regulations could be relevant if the final database solution contains an online application process that stores communications between applicants and DRBC. It is important to note that the determination of whether a specific record is exempt from disclosure is an analysis performed on a record-by-record basis. The ability for DRBC staff to tag documents that may be CBI or deliberative would be useful.
- Other information such as the coordinates of drinking water intakes are considered sensitive information which is not publicly available for security reasons.

Question 9

On page 16 of the RFP, it is noted that the selected contractor will need to work with NJOIT network, cyber security, and firewall teams. Does that mean that current and planned DRBC infrastructure is hosted by NJOIT?

No, NJOIT does not host any hardware. Only some IT functions are provided by NJOIT.

Question 10

On page 15, DRBC specifies using an Agile Development Methodology project approach. Yet, on page 17, DRBC request that a schedule and listing of milestones is provided as part of the approach. These two requirements somewhat contradict/conflict with each other in that an Agile approach is somewhat of a fluid development process. The Agile approach makes sense given the limited details provided for the solution, but does DRBC have a preference with how to provide a schedule within an Agile approach?

The project duration is 12 months. Sprints can be 2-4 weeks, but one-week sprints would also be acceptable. The number of parallel sprint teams is left to the vendor's discretion in its proposal and implementation, but would typically be based on the story points, sprint velocity, effort per team to deliver the committed solution by the milestones projected, and approved dates. As noted in the response to **Question 3**, above, DRBC has a limited budget which is not being disclosed at this time.

Question 11

On page 9, DRBC mentions setting up ArcGIS Portal within their existing network. Can DRBC expand on the specific needs on this? Is the expectation that the contractor will leverage their existing server or set up a new ArcGIS Enterprise deployment?

DRBC maintains an ArcGIS Enterprise Standard version 11.1 license that is currently not installed on the DRBC server. DRBC is seeking a solution that includes installation of ArcGIS Enterprise software on DRBC's server and integrates ArcGIS Enterprise with the updated database (e.g., provides for communication of real-time geospatial information, such as coordinates for points or addresses, within the database).

Question 12

On page 11, DRBC mentions Physical Mail Tracking process, can DRBC expand on the details of this process?

DRBC's receipt or transmittal of postal or courier mail documents is recorded in the database. As an example, referencing the current process, when a paper check is mailed to DRBC for any payments due to DRBC, a new record is entered into the mail tracking module, a slip is generated and attached to the paper check, and both are handed over to the accounting department. As a result, all incoming and outgoing mail is tracked to ensure checks are not lost pending action by the accounting department or other concerned department on those checks or other documents.

Question 13

Phase-2: Develop web-forms for DRBC internal user access only – [REDACTED] typically will use .net for web applications. Is this acceptable to DRBC?

Yes.

Question 14

4.0 General Requirements – While [REDACTED] follows the Agile development methodology, we do not have certification for our Scrum Master. Does DRBC require certifications?

The certification is preferred but not required; it is expected that the team has expertise with the subject matter and methods.

Question 15

4.0 General Requirements – Does DRBC have an estimate of the number of hours to be allocated to annual maintenance?

No.

Question 16

4.4 Hybrid Work Environment – Is it necessary for the selected contractor to have a workspace at the Commission location, or can all work be conducted virtually?

Refer to the answer to **Question 4**.

Question 17

Section 4.4 of the RFP notes that "this project will be conducted onsite and virtually". Can you please describe the expectations regarding onsite presence during the 12 month timeframe, i.e., how frequently must the provider be present on site? Are there regular hours that the vendor must be at the onsite location?

Refer to the answer to **Question 4**.

Question 18

Section 5 notes that "The final scope of work and budget will be negotiated by DRBC after the contractor(s) are selected and an agreed upon time frame and total cost of the project is determined." Understanding that, could you please provide some directional sense of the overall anticipated budget or a likely not to exceed level. We understand that this is not a commitment but want to make sure we are able to deliver within a reasonable estimate.

Refer to the answer to **Question 3**.

Question 19

Is there a requirement for the percentage of work that must be done on-site at the Commission's facility?

Refer to the answer to **Question 4**.

Question 20

Can you please provide additional information about the current GIS functionality and what enhancements to the GIS functionality are desired?

Refer to the answer to **Question 11**.

Question 21

Can you please provide information about the differences between the internal data entry and the internal staff data entry requirements?

No differences.

Question 22

Can you please provide an overview of the workflow required in the system to review and approve submissions?

The permit approval process is not contained within the current database system; permits are drafted as written documents, which get approved at quarterly DRBC business meetings. The database currently functions primarily as an information warehouse; consequently, there are no processes within the database requiring staff to “log-in” and approve pending actions/requests (i.e. no workflow). Following a business meeting, DRBC staff update the approval status of the permit within the database, for example, changing the “Project status” from "Pending" to "Active" (or similar). Additionally, an "Action Date" is entered as part of a list of formal actions related to the permit, where the associated action might be "Approval". There may be similar administrative data entry following a permit’s approval.

Question 23

Can you please provide an overview of the validation rules for the form data entry?

Data validation rules are generally typical of those found in a SQL database. As an example, all data must be in English. Dates and numbers are validated based on the current database design, and forms should be able to display existing SQL Server data. Text should be alphanumeric, etc.

Question 24

Can you please provide more detail on the requirements for invoice generation? Does that involve generating .pdf files? Is there a need for a mailing solution?

Refer to the answer to **Question 6**.

Question 25

Can you please provide more information about payment processing? Do you just need to support paper check processing or is there a requirement for integration with a credit card processing solution?

Refer to the answer to **Question 6**.

Question 26

What is the current authentication mechanism in place for user sign-in?

If accessing the servers remotely, DRBC staff must have NJOIT Active Directory-based authentication. Once in communication with DRBC servers, staff must have DRBC local SQL server authentication to access the SQL database, but do not require further authentication to use the MS Access front-end, which is a local file on all staff computers that have the appropriate ODBC user data source established.

Question 27

Is the payment processing for Paper check automated, and if so, is there a background job responsible for processing the PDF file and generating the request? For manual processing, does the user manually upload the file?

Refer to the answer to **Question 6**.

Question 28

For the approval process, is there a requirement to implement a workflow system with multiple levels of approvers?

Refer to the answer to **Question 22**.

Question 29

Can you provide details on the technology stack you prefer to use in implementing the proposed solution?

The technology, programming language and framework is left to the vendor's discretion in its proposal.

Question 30

Are there any SQL jobs existing in the current database environment?

Currently there are no formal "SQL Server Agent jobs" in the database. However, there are many stored procedures and views within SSMS. Additionally, there are numerous SQL scripts which are stored on the local DRBC server and executed at timed intervals using "Task Scheduler".

Question 31

What is the current reporting technology or tool being used? Is it SSRS, or is there another reporting framework in place?

Reports are created using the MS Access front-end application. SSRS is not used.

Question 32

Can external users have unrestricted access to the entire application, or is access limited to specific forms/data?

External users cannot have access to the entire application. External user access will need to be limited to actions such as applicable data entry supporting the permit application process, update of the data provided, and the ability to send/receive communications to DRBC regarding the application/permit. Creation of accounts to access permit information should require DRBC staff review/approval. External users should not need DRBC approval to reset usernames/passwords.

Question 33

In the current system/application, how do external users interact with and access the data?

The existing permit database is not accessed by external users. The only external user interaction is managed by a third-party contractor using AWS, where external users log-in to webforms to enter water use data and generate a PDF invoice. Data entered to the third-party cloud database is synced with DRBC's database via RedGate software.

Question 34

Can we get access to high-level Architecture of the current system?

Refer to Appendices A-C of the RFP.

Question 35

What proposed technologies, tools, or methodologies will be leverage to accomplish the project goals?

Refer to the answer **Question 29**.

Question 36

Will DRBC provide or can we access pre-production environment/testing environment to perform acceptance and testing?

The vendor must create development, test, and user acceptance test (Pre-Production) environments as part of this project and will be provided with necessary access.

Question 37

Does NJOIT allow vendors to co-ordinate with them to create required security and firewall rules? Will there be a direct access to vendors?

NJOIT interaction will be coordinated via DRBC staff, although it is expected that appropriate personnel from the vendor's project team will be on NJOIT calls along with DBRC staff representatives.

Question 38

Can DRBC share the budget or a ballpark range for this project to inform bidders' proposals?

Refer to the answer to **Question 3**.

Question 39

Will DRBC consider a cloud-hosted solution?

Refer to the answer to **Question 1**.

Question 40

Approximately how many forms are in the current Microsoft Access interface?

There are approximately 170 forms within the current MS Access front end database.

Question 41

Are there technical requirements for the future state web application? Programming languages, frameworks etc.?

Refer to the answer **Question 29**.

Question 42

Does DRBC have an existing document management solution? If so, can you provide details on the solution and the version?

DRBC does not currently use any document management system. For each permit record within the database, a network drive folder is created on a local server using the permit identifier. The MS Access front-end application uses a "Web-browser" sub-form to link the correct folder based on the permit number of the active record being viewed. The "Web-browser" sub-form acts like an embedded windows "File Explorer" application.

Question 43

RFP Section 2.4.5 states this project may include setting up ArcGIS Portal within the existing network; can you provide details on the current ArcGIS Enterprise/ Server deployment in use today?

Refer to the answer to Question 11.

Question 44

What is the budget range for this project?

Refer to the answer to **Question 3**.

Question 45

Can you confirm that Phase 1 is just the database version upgrade with NO changes to the db?

Confirmed, no changes to database structure.

Question 46

Do we need to follow the phases as defined?

Yes.

Question 47

There's mention that Phase 4 may not happen, and another mention that "Depending upon intellectual property" the new web forms may or may not happen. Can you explain this?

Upon reviewing the proposals, DRBC will determine if all or parts of the project can be implemented initially given the current budget and schedule.

Question 48

There's implication that some other phases defined in the RFP may not happen. Is this due to budget or are there other reasons?

Refer to the answer to **Question 47**.

Question 49

Who is the primary stakeholder?

DRBC is the primary stakeholder.

Question 50

There's mention of 50-75 screens - is this across both applications, or just the permit system? If that count does NOT include the SWC, how many are in that?

That is just for the permit system; the SWC webforms include another possibly 10 screens.

Question 51

What will be a reasonable time from the team to receive any feedback or approvals on the items submitted for review and feedback? Ideally, we advise it to be around within 2 Business Days

DRBC prioritizes work and response times are typically short. If contractual response times are required, it can be negotiated during the contracting phase.

Question 52

Are there any technologies or algorithm built which needs to be transferred to the new upgrade?

This question is not clear – the database (e.g. the MS Access front end) has been custom built for DRBC, the functionality of which needs to be “transferred” or recreated in a new database.

Question 53

Do you require the training to be virtual or face to face on your premises?

Most of the training can be performed virtually. Regarding the hybrid work expectations, refer to the answer to **Question 4**.

Question 54

Are there any specific KPI's identifies to measure the success of the project?

This type of information can be provided during the design stage.

Question 55

Could you specify the security and compliance the web app must adhere to?

Industry standard compliance.

Question 56

Will a preference be given to a local agency?

The location of a proposing vendor is not itself a factor that DRBC will use in awarding the bid. The proposing vendor's proposal's responsiveness to the RFP, including the identified hybrid work element described in the RFP and in this document, may affect the DRBC's selection.

Question 57

What is your expectation of the response time from the agency during critical issue?

Refer to the answer to **Question 51**.

Question 58

How many vendors you have approached for this?A

DRBC is not disclosing this information.

Question 59

Is a company outside USA eligible for submitting proposal for this RFP?

The company must be able to meet the hybrid working requirements as stated in the response to **Question 4**.

Question 60

For Database Upgrade, what issues are you currently facing which is making it mandatory to upgrade?

The product is at the end of support.

Question 60

While we are consolidating few more questions for this opportunity, would you be accepting few more questions from us post deadline?

No.

Note: Question 62 through 78 are directed towards the permitting system.

Question 61

Who are the main users of this system? We know there are 10 -- are they all the same function or do they have different roles and permissions?

There are different roles and different permissions.

Question 62

We see the list of the five application types. Are more expected to be created in the future?

No.

Question 63

What type of attached documents are required, and how many are there per application? What is the max file size of these attachments?

Currently, applications are completed in a fillable PDF and loaded onto "DRBC File Manager" via "applications.drbc.net". This uploads the files to an AWS server, at which point DRBC staff can download the application material and enter the applicable information into the permit system database. The current file size restriction is 50MB.

Question 64

Can you describe the basic workflow for a new permit application? Once it's entered, what are the details of the review process and approval process? Please describe the steps in detail, including the different statuses possible per application type.

Refer to the answer to **Question 22**.

Question 65

Is it possible to get a list of the screens for this workflow?

This type of information can be provided during the design stage.

Question 66

For the physical mail tracking - can you describe that in more detail? Assuming you capture the receipt of a piece of mail, what other information is captured? Response? Subsequent communications?

Refer to the answers to **Question 6** and **Question 12**.

Question 67

Is it a goal to reduce the amount of physical mail required for each application?

It is one of the goals, although most applications are submitted digitally.

Question 68

Are the invoices sent directly to the applicants by email or mail -- or both? Can we see an example invoice?

Refer to the answer to **Question 6**.

Question 69

Other than applicant entry, review, and approval, what other communications are expected between DRBC staff and applicants? What are some examples?

This is ultimately dependent on the specific permit/application. It is envisioned to include any correspondence between the applicant and the commission that is specific to the particular permit, such as routine correspondence to ask questions about application materials, notifications of commission action such as permit approval, or even reminder notifications after the permit is considered active.

Question 70

Are the email reminders sent to DRBC staff? What are some examples?

Currently, email reminders are sent to the permit holders; DRBC staff may be cc'd on the email.

Question 71

We have the list of some reports, but can we see the reports themselves? The requirement is for 20 predefined reports.

This type of information can be provided during the design stage.

Question 72

One requirement is to allow the public to query select information from the database via the DRBC website -- what information specifically? Can we get an example?

It is desired that there be some public-facing functionality connected to the database which allows external users to obtain information via simple queries. This would be discussed during the design stage.

Question 73

There's a request to "generate maps and data for both the public and staff" -- what are the specific use cases where the maps are required? What does the current integration look like?

Refer to the answer to **Question 11**.

Question 74

Besides the manual entry of applications, and the issue with the display of the forms to the end user (and needing to manually link related forms), what are OTHER pain points?

Performance, especially when accessing via VPN.

Question 75

Are the applicants an organization or business?

They are typically organizations such as public water suppliers, municipal authorities, industrial facilities, golf courses, non-profit or government organizations, etc...

Question 76

Can an applicant submit multiple different types of applications, in addition to resubmitting an expired application?

Yes.

Question 77

Would you be okay to share Demo Login of the current DRBC Permit System to view the functionality?

No.

Note: Questions 79 through 91 reference the surface water charges system.

Question 78

Can we get more details on the water charging program? The link on the DRBC website leads to a 404 (<https://www.nj.gov/drbc/programs/supply/water-charging>)

Additional information regarding the water charging program is available at this website:

<https://www.nj.gov/drbc/programs/supply/water-charging-program.html>

Question 79

To be clear, will the system from AECOM Inc be replaced with this new portal? (Phase 4)

This is the intent; however, DRBC will determine if it can be completed during the initial project based on several conditions such as feasibility, schedule and budget.

Question 80

Are the water users commercial or residential? What are some examples?

Essentially the same answer as **Question 75**, although restricted to those who withdrawal/distribute surface water and meet certain legal requirements.

Question 81

What are the current administrative web forms in this portal? Can we get the full list, including the purpose of each?

There are only a handful which include a log-in page, a main menu where a user can select an invoice to enter data for, and a primary web-form for reporting data to generate an invoice.

Question 82

What is the full ADMIN workflow once a program is set up for a user who is self reporting their usage? What does the internal team do?

Refer to the answer to **Question 12**.

Question 83

Can we see an example of the form for users to enter water usage data for their facility?

This type of information can be provided during the design stage.

Question 84

Is there other data than this that gets synced: organizations, certifying officials, billing cycles, facility water sources and storage of notes.

There are 40 tables which sync between the local DRBC database, and the remote SWC database. About 30 of these tables have a local database preference and append data to the remote database, whereas the other 10 have a remote preference and append data to the local database.

Question 85

What are some of the type of notes added per account?

The notes are generally standard text fields up to 252 characters, as an example.

Question 86

Can we get a workflow of the tasks that currently happen in this system from AECOM Inc?

The workflows are minimal and include administrative things like setting-up each pay period and dealing with user login information. Beyond that the primary workflow is external users logging into the webforms to enter data and generate invoices.

Question 87

Are GIS maps used as part of SWC?

No.

Question 88

Are you looking to leverage electronic payments in the future?

To be determined.

Question 89

Would you be okay to share Demo Login of the SWC to view the functionality?

No.

Question 90

Is there any current GIS System used, like for eg: ArcGIS etc?

Refer to the answer to **Question 11**.