Request for Proposals # AFDO-24-001

SAFHER RFP Vendor Questions & Answers

1. Section *6.7: Operations, Maintenance, and Support* of the RFP indicates that Tier 2 support should be available 24/7. However, other sections indicate that both Tier 1 and Tier 2 should be available during normal business hours. What are the expected hours of availability for Tier 1 and Tier 2 support?

   Answer: Verbiage in section 6.7: Operations, Maintenance, and Support surrounding Tier 2 support availability has been corrected to the following:
   "Tier-2 support service available from 8:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time to 4:30 p.m. in the latest time zone of a participating state using the support service (currently Alaska time) on business workdays. Support response via email or telephone should be provided within 30 minutes."

   An updated RFP has been posted to the AFDO website.

2. Section *3.1.7: Testing and Quality Assurance* indicates the Vendor is expected to develop UAT and Regression testing scripts and use cases for stakeholders. Will Appian provide the Vendor with the testing scripts they used for their initial development testing as a starting point to have a full baseline of Regression testing scripts that will be used to test the system? If so, will these scripts be mapped to User Stories in Jira to be able to validate coverage of the requirements documented in Jira stories?

   Answer: Appian will provide developer test cases / scripts, which will be documented in Jira and associated with relevant User Stories. Vendors should take into consideration that developer testing scripts will need to be updated / polished for more consumable stakeholder UAT testing. Also, Regression testing will need to consider any Vendor led extensions, configurations, or customizations between the Vendor and States.

3. Will the AFDO provide equipment (such as laptops) in which all work will be completed, or is it expected that the Vendor will use Vendor furnished equipment in support of this program?

   Answer: The Vendor will provide equipment in support of the program.

4. Section *6.6: Implementation and Data Migration* indicates for Vendors to "Describe the approach for the creation of custom reports and the configuration of standard reports during the implementation process." For reports incorporated into SAFHER

Core, is the expectation for Appian or the Vendor to complete this development work? What about reports at the state level?

Answer: For reports incorporated into SAFHER Core, Appian will lead intake, discovery, gathering requirements, and development. For additional state level reports that exist or need to be created within the Appian platform, the Vendor will be responsible for intake, discovery, and gathering requirements, while Appian will be responsible for development. Any updates to existing reports or the creation of new reports that do not require the Appian development team will be the responsibility of the Vendor.

5. Section *6.7: Operations, Maintenance, and Support* requests Vendors to "Describe how incident support will be available to AFDO and the users to track issues to resolution or determination." Is the desired requirement here to ensure that an End User has visibility into a logged incident regardless of whether or not it is a bug or enhancement and the status of that issue that was logged throughout the life of the issue? If this becomes an enhancement request and not a bug, is it expected that the end user can see when the request has been slated for future development via visibility into the SAFHER Core backlog?

Answer: The Vendor should ensure that end users have the ability to track the status of bugs and enhancements. AFDO expects the Vendor to coordinate and track SAFHER Core updates with both AFDO and Appian. AFDO is open to Vendor suggestions on how to accomplish this and looks forward to hearing about it.

6. Section *6.8: Training* indicates that "At minimum, a set of training materials (with screenshots) should be provided for the SAFHER Core system." However, section *2.2: Appian Planned Work and Timeline* states that Appian will be responsible for "Training materials that can be used by others to conduct end user training." Can you please clarify if the Vendor is expected to create separate training materials? Will the training material created by Appian contain screenshots of the SAFHER Core system?

Answer: Appian will provide the initial training materials (with screenshots included) for SAFHER Core and MVP capabilities / functionality. It is the responsibility of the Vendor to create training materials for new functionality introduced, as well as update existing materials based on additional configuration, customization, and enhancement efforts.

7. Section *6.9: Documentation* indicates "Minimally, AFDO expects System Configuration Documentation and Application Architecture Documentation, including each historical state specific system documentation." For documentation related to SAFHER Core system, will these types of documents be produced by

Appian? Is the idea with this requirement for the Vendor to create additional documentation around SAFHER Core or is it more so focused on documentation created for state specific customizations beyond what is a part of SAFHER Core that may already have been documented by Appian?

Answer: Appian will be responsible for creating foundational SAFHER Core documentation (risk and security package, integration details, architecture design diagrams, Core requirements, etc.). It is the responsibility of the Vendor to create and update all documentation based on additional configuration, customization, and enhancement efforts.

8. Regarding section *6.13: General Comments,* would it be possible to provide expected volumes for pilot state only?

    Answer: The states have different usage and hosting models. One pilot state has less than 10GB in its main database. The second pilot state self-hosts two legacy systems (USAFS and USA Plants) where their main databases are 10GB and 13GB, respectively. The third pilot state also self-hosts with less than 100GB of data within their main database. AFDO will work with the Vendor and the states to determine the correct amount of data needed for migration.

New Questions and Answers Posted as of 5/3/2024

9. *1.3 Purpose of RFP (pg. 7):* This section indicates "In addition to onboarding efforts, this company must also be willing to provide long-term ongoing operations and support services for AFDO and SAFHER Participating States…" Should this effort be calculated as part of the Scope for this RFP?

    Answer: Yes. Please see page 12, under "3.1.1. Enter a Master Services Agreement with AFDO" for the details of the ongoing operations and support services that would be provided to AFDO and the states. The purpose of this RFP is to procure a partner who can work with AFDO and the states (as well as Appian) throughout various stages of the SAFHER platform development, implementation, and ongoing support.

10. *2.1 Background of the Project (pg. 9):* The top paragraph of pg.9 calls out SAFHER Core architecture as being divided into two domains: Appian Cloud and Amazon Web Services (AWS). In the diagram, it appears that there will be multiple tenants (each state) hitting the same Appian Production instances configured with High Availability. Please further describe the infrastructure, to support the questions listed below.

    1. Will each State have their own independent Appian Cloud HA (High Availability) Production instance or will all States access the same Appian Cloud HA Production instance of Appian in a true multi-tenant fashion?

2. If each State has their own Production instance, will each State have lower level environments in which State specific customizations will be developed or will all State Specific customization be developed in the same Appian DEV environment?
3. If there will only be a single Appian Cloud HA Production instance utilized by all States, please provide additional information as to how Appian is configured to connect to the RDS for SQL Server Databases.
4A. Will the Appian development team be utilizing middleware technology (e.g. MuleSoft) that will allow the Appian platform to hit APIs that will handle communication to the backend RDS for SQL Server Database instances, one for each SAFHER state onboarded?
or
4B. Will the Appian development team be configuring a separate Appian data source, one for each RDS for SQL Server Database?

Answer:
1. Each state deployment will not be on its own cloud instance. The application will be cloned and hosted on the one Cloud HA Production instance.

2. Yes. Each state will have their own development environment for state specific customization and configuration updates. Each state will have their own DevOps pipeline from development to production.

3. In AWS, there will be a singular RDS instance and within the infrastructure each state will be provisioned a database within the RDS instance.

4A. Appian will be using the middleware technology chosen by the vendor. It is suggested that an Enterprise Application Engine be used and AFDO is open to specific suggestions.

4B. Yes, reference answer for question 3 above.

11. *2.2 Appian Planned Work and Timeline (pg.10):* "Initial activities (such as UAT testing efforts, go-live readiness, and the creation of training materials for SAFHER Core deployment) for pre-pilot and pilot SAFHER Participating States will be led by Appian in coordination with AFDO and the Vendor. For post-pilot States, regular implementation and onboarding activities will be led by the Vendor in coordination with AFDO and Appian. The AFDO SAFHER Core will be transitioned to an AFDO Tier 1-2 Support Vendor for maintaining the solution."

1. If Appian will be leading UAT testing efforts, go-live readiness, and the creation of training materials for pre-pilot and pilot SAFHER participating States, should the Vendor expect to have a reduced team size during this period of time to allow AFDO to save on cost since Appian will be leading this effort and may not require the full strength of the Vendor team to manage these activities?
2. Can you please indicate the number of states that are Pre-Pilot vs Pilot vs Post-Pilot States?

3. Is there already a defined schedule that has bee pre-determined by Appian to define the schedule for deploying SAFHER Core to the Pre-Pilot and Pilot states?
4. More importantly, is there a specific delivery cadence Appian expects to follow to support the State specific customizations for the Pre-Pilot and Pilot States or is AFDO open to a recommended delivery cadence from the Vendor that the Appian development team would then follow? It will be helpful to understand if Appian expects to run a certain number of development sprints prior to an MVP release for a given state, for example do they expect to run 2 development sprints for each release, 6, 8?
5. Is there a specific number of Sprints they expect to run in between a each hardening Sprint?
6. The AFDO SAFHER Core implementation Schedule 2024 lables Task Order 1 SAFHER Core MVP/PILOT. The next page indicates Pilot release in March 2025. Is the definition of "Post-Pilot," onboards that happen after that release?

Answer:
1. AFDO leaves it to the vendor to determine the appropriate team size based on the activities required during onboarding pilot states and post-pilot states. Refinement of the team size can occur in collaboration with AFDO, Appian and the States.

2. Pre-Pilot/Pilot states = 3. Post-Pilot states = 18. In addition AFDO believes additional states beyond current states will want to be part of the SAFHER program.

3. The schedule set forth in collaboration with Appian and AFDO for deploying SAFHER core to Pre-Pilot and Pilot States can be found in the RFP starting on page 10. This is the current, tentative schedule for the pre-pilot and pilot states for SAFHER Core. In addition, the schedule is dependent on the states' ability to meet the desired schedule.

4. Appian follows a 2 week Agile sprint for development. AFDO would prefer congruence with the vendors with respect to Agile delivery.

5. Depending on the feature and state onboarding requirements a typical process would be 2 to 4 development 2 week sprints followed by a hardening phase which may incorporate UAT activities. This is subject to change.

6. For post-pilot states, requirements definition, contracting, etc. can occur in parallel with the pre-pilot /MVP states. Tactical onboarding (e.g. data migration, state level configuration updates, integrations, etc.) would occur after the MVP release.

12. *2.2 Appian Planned Work and Timeline (pg.10):* The last sentence states "The AFDO SAFHER Core will be transitioned to AFDO Tier 1-2 Support Vendor for mainting the solution". Does this mean that the Appian development will be transitioned to the Vendor, or is it expected the Vendor will continue to subcontract to Appian for development activities through Dec 31, 2028.

Answer: As it relates to Tier 1-2 support, the vendor will take on configuration implementation and non-Core updates post pilot. Appian will continue to develop the SAFHER core. Any state specific configuration needs should be completed by the vendor. State requested changes that impact the SAFHER Core will be assessed and completed by Appian. Please reference page 6 for Tier 1-2 support definitions as well as the Master Services Agreement (MSA) - Attachment C.

13. *3.1 Ongoing Tasks and Deliverables (pg.13):* The last paragraph in this section indicates that "AFDO anticipates contracts to begin October 2024" In the subsequent section, 3.1.2 Issue State Contracts (pg.13), the second paragraph indicates "We anticipate state contracts beginning approximately November 1, 2024". In section 3.6 Anticipated Contract Schedule and Options (pg.20) the RFP states "1) Base Term: October 1, 2024 - December 31,2024"

Can you please clarify if Vendor(s) should anticipate an October 1, 2024 start or November 1, 2024 start?

Answer: The sections referenced in this question are referring to two different contracts, one with AFDO and one with the states. The vendor contract with AFDO is anticipated to begin Oct 1, 2024, and the vendor contract with the states is anticipated to begin as early as Nov 1, 2024, and then staggered based on implementation schedules. Please see section 4.2 Proposed Contracting Approach and Appendix G and H (sections 8.7 and 8.8), for additional contracting information.

14. *3.1.1 Enter a Master Services Agreement with AFDO:*
1. This section indicates "Provide Support for SAFHER and SAFHER Go. "Emergency" support for "Urgent" requests. Can you define Emergency and urgent in this context and the required response?
2. "Reports on 'mutually agreed upon key performance indicators..." Can you provide any of the current or likely KPIs?
3. "Work in coordination with Appian to support post-pilot ongoing SAFHER Core, operations, maintenance, and development work, which will be contracted through the Vendor(s), as outlined in this document." In this context is "this document" the MSA or the RFP?

Answer:
1. Emergency and urgent requests would be items where production performance is materially impacted and states are unable to perform their functions; Items such as integrations continuously failing, etc.

2. See examples in Master Services Agreement (MSA) Attachment C, page 4-5. Additional KPIs to be discussed with vendor after award.

3. The vendor is expected to enter a Master Services Agreement (MSA) with AFDO and the entire RFP will be part of that MSA, as it outlines the scope of requested services.

15. *5.11 Pricing Information (pg.30):* This section indicates all costs must be included, however we do not have insight into Appian CS costs that we will need to account for when they are to be a sub-contractor to the vendor such that the Vendor can have the single contract with each state.

    If the Appian costs are required to be included, please provide these costs or permission for Vendors to contact Appian to inquire as to what these costs will be so that they can be included.

    Answer: As part of the cost proposal, Appian costs should not be included. In regards to administrative services associated with cost recovery on behalf of Appian (for Appian licensing, cloud based hosting, and other non-Vendor costs for supporting the system that are allocated to States), we encourage the vendor to provide this cost in the form that works for them.

16. *6.10 Mandatory Integrations (pg.37):* This section indicates Appian is responsible for (3) interface categories. With this in mind, has Appian already selected a specific Enterprise Integration Engine to be utilized?

    Is Appian expecting to manage the connections to these (3) interface categories without the use of an Enterprise Integration Engine?

    Answer: An Enterprise Integration Engine has not been chosen. Examples were listed in the RFP and Appian is an open architecture. The vendor is expected to manage the integrations and it is suggested that an Integration Engine be used but AFDO is open to different approaches. Please see Appian's website for more information:

    https://docs.appian.com/suite/help/24.1/Enterprise_Architecture_Overview.html

17. *6.10 Mandatory Integrations (pg.37):*
    1. Can you provide any target metrics to help quantify the amount of data being transmitted through these mandatory integrations? Number of transactions, volume of data (in MB/day, for example)? Can you provide a description of the traffic flow (transactional, nightly batch, etc.)?
    2. Can you provide any more specifics or details on these integrations. For example: "Accounting/Finance management systems (whether state centralized or agency independent)" - understood it's an integration, but challenging to scope without more detail. Are potential State users provided guidance or limitations as to feasibility of integration?
    3. Is there any cap on integration costs?

    Answer:
    1. Integrations will be at a state by state level. The integration volume and transactional information is dependent on each state's processes or business and

could be transactional, batch or other. AFDO suggests an Integration Engine / approach but is open to other suggestions prospective vendors may have.

2. The specific integrations will be identified during discovery. Use the current information about integrations in this RFP to provide an associated cost that is a budgetary number.

3. There are no integration cost caps.

18. *3.1.1 Enter a Master Services Agreement with AFDO (p. 12); 3.1.2 Issue State Contracts (p. 13):*
1. Has AFDO established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) requirements for Service Level Agreement (SLA) between AFDO and Vendor?

2. Can you detail the escalation process between the tiers? How are escalations from Tier II to Tier III handled, particularly with regard to issues requiring Appian intervention?

3. Could you provide detailed information on any required background checks or security compliance standards that our helpdesk personnel must adhere to for this project?

4. Has any analysis been conducted to determine expected call volume for Tier 1 and Tier 2 support?

Answer:
1. Please see details in Attachment C, Master Services Agreement, starting on page 2.

2. Please see details in Attachment C, Master Services Agreement, starting on page 2.

3. It is assumed that the vendor provides standard security compliance checks for their own personnel. In addition, the vendor must adhere to the worker requirements in section 6.11 Worker and Data Requirements on page 37 and section 8.3 Appendix C: Immigration Reform & Control on page 46. States may have additional security requirements for vendor personnel.

4. Please see details in Attachment C, Master Services Agreement, starting on page 2.

19. *Section 2.2 Appian Planned Work and Timeline:* Will the SAFHER Core functional modules released by Appian be universally applicable to state clients, or will these functional modules be tailored to the needs of each state and its regulations and programs before the vendor and Appian begin the process of further customization?

Answer: The SAFHER core functionality will be universally applicable to all states. Some states may have configuration updates specific to their state that do not impact the SAFHER Core. Some states will have little to no specific configuration

changes while others may have some configuration updates required. Any state specific Core customizations will need to go through a change control process between the state, AFDO, and Appian as any Core change may impact other states.

20. *Section 6.3 Proposed High-Level Project Plan, Project Schedule, and Project Management Approach:* How does AFDO define "project requirements" in the context of their place in a project plan? Are these the requirements set forth in the Statement of Work, or is this associated with the requirements gathering described in Section 3.2 Initial Onboarding Activities?

    Answer: In this context project requirements would be state specific configuration needs that would need to be completed on top of the SAFHER core in order to onboard a state onto the platform. This may also include data migration, data integration, etc. requirements that a state will need specific to their needs.

21. *Section 6.13 General Comments:* Do the 1,000-plus internal users described have internal accounts that must be managed? If so, which party is responsible for the account management?

    Answer: Yes, from an account management perspective the management of accounts would be a function managed by the Vendor through support. Account management of all users will be managed by the selected vendor as part of ongoing Tier 1 and Tier 2 support. There will be self service capabilities for such needs as password changes. Based on the states maturity, the state may handle their own user management or may require the vendor to provide support.

22. *Section 1.3 Purpose of RFP:* Are the SAFHER Participating States inclusive of all 21 states currently utilizing USAFoodSafety and USAPlants? If so, are there internal targets set for the number of states that will be onboarded following system go-live?

    Answer: The SAFHER Participating States are inclusive of the 21 states utilizing USAFoodSafety and USAPlants. For the pilot (also referred to as pre-pilot in the RFP), 3 SAFHER Participating States will be onboarded and then after the pilot, gradually the 18 other SAFHER Participating States will be onboarded. After 2025, new implementations/onboarding of non-USAFoodSafety and USAPlants states will begin. Eventually all states that are currently part of AFDO will be onboarded onto SAFHER, along with new programs of existing SAFHER states.

23. *Section 5.5 Proprietary/Confidential Information and Public Disclosure:* "Trade secrets, confidential or proprietary information in a Proposal…must clearly be labeled "Proprietary" and redacted on each individual page of the Public version of the Response." Should this be true of each page of the Private response rather than the Public, per the earlier description of "Public and Private (redacted)"?

Answer: The public version of the proposal should be the redacted version. We have updated the RFP to reflect this correction: Public (redacted) and Private. Please note that this is an advisement and is not mandatory.