MCWA DBA Services RFP/Q Vendor Questions and Responses
2/24/2021

1. Is there an RFP # assigned to the Oracle Database Administration Services RFP? If so, what is it?

   a. No.

2. What applications are being supported by these Oracle databases?

   a. The database supports a variety of internal business applications. Most of these are written in Oracle Forms and Reports.

3. Is there an incumbent vendor currently providing Oracle database administration services? If yes, can you specify which company?

   a. The incumbent vendor is Renaps Technology.

4. Are you looking for a fixed price proposal to include regular hours and hours beyond 8-5 pm and weekend?

   a. MCWA is looking for a fixed price proposal that would meet or exceed all of the requirements stated. Per section 2.2.2.C, non-business hours are to be included in the fixed price proposal with a one-hour response time to production level databases.

5. Are you looking for a full time DBA during the work hours?

   a. MCWA is open to a variety of proposals, the specifics of which remain the responsibility of the proposer. Historically, we have not had a full-time DBA during business hours.

6. Further to question 4, are you looking for an hourly rate during work and non-work hours?

   a. See response to question number 4.

7. Can the work be done remotely?

a. Historically this work has been done remotely. However, it is expected that personnel will be available for on-site work if needed.

8. Can the work be done from offshore?

    a. Location of company and employees will be a factor, and domestic locale is preferred, but not mandated. Furthermore, all data and backups must remain within the United States on MCWA servers.

9. Can you please provide the Oracle DB, Middleware versions for all environments?

    a. The Oracle DB is version 11.2.0.4.0. The Middleware version is 12.2.1.0.

10. Do you have an existing support contract with Oracle?

    a. Yes, MCWA does have a current support contract.

11. Section 1.6: Please clarify the vision and long-term plans in regard to database migration, consolidation, re-platforming as well as cloud considerations.

    a. The long-term plan is still being determined. Our initial priority is to upgrade to a version of Oracle database that is still in active support.

12. What are the 70-applications supported by the DB?

    a. The database supports a variety of internal business applications. Most of these are written in Oracle Forms and Reports.

13. What are the potential databases are you considering for the future?

    a. The long-term plan is still being determined. Our initial priority is to upgrade to a version of Oracle database that is still in active support.

14. How large are the databases on each platform?

    a. The production and QA databases are approximately 100 GB.

15. What database are critical / non-critical?

    a. Production environments are considered critical; however, both production and QA environments are within the scope and require support.

16. May we staff remote resources from outside the country on this project?

    a. Location of company and employees will be a factor, and domestic locale is preferred, but not mandated. Furthermore, all data and backups must remain within the United States on MCWA servers.

17. Do we need an assigned resource, or can we provide revolving resources?

    a. Specific staffing arrangements are the responsibility of the proposer. Revolving resources are acceptable, but it is expected that MCWA will be made aware of any changes in resource assignment.

18. What version of Oracle database is the production, QA and web running?

    a. The Oracle DB is version 11.2.0.4.0 with latest PSU security patch sets on production and QA. The web database is out of scope for this RFP.

19. Is the support requirement for Oracle Apex Server only from DBA perspective?

    a. The support requirement includes APEX infrastructure but it does not include APEX Development.

20. Is the support requirement for Oracle Fusion Server only from DBA perspective?

    a. The support requirement includes Weblogic infrastructure.

21. What are the various Fusion Middleware components in use?

    a. Forms and Report 12c, Oracle Access Manager, Oracle Identity Manager.

22. Is the support required for 24*7 or just during the East Coast business hours?

    a. Support requirements are defined in section 2.2.2.

23. What is the requirement for weekend support?

    a. Support requirements are defined in section 2.2.2.

24. What are the maintenance windows?

a. Maintenance windows are scheduled as needed. MCWA is open to regularly scheduled maintenance windows.

25. Does the customer currently utilize any monitoring system? If not, will we be allowed to set up our own scripts to monitor?

    a. Implementation of a monitoring system would be considered the responsibility of the vendor.

26. What is the current team size supporting the environment?

    a. This is considered a matter of the vendor's internal resource allocation, and is out of scope for this RFP.

27. How many tickets are opened per week?

    a. MCWA currently opens less than 1 ticket per week.

28. Is there any existing documentation about the current environment and SOPs in place?

    a. Yes.

29. Do you have valid Oracle technical support for any product related issues?

    a. Yes, MCWA does have a current support contract.

30. Do you have OEM?

    a. MCWA uses Enterprise Manager on the Weblogic instances. Installing Enterprise Manager on the Databases would be the responsibility of the vendor if desired.

31. "Refresh data from production to test environments upon customer request." Could you please define the maximum number of environment refresh to better scope our base price?

    a. We do not have a known maximum number. Last year, we refreshed QA one time from production. We project no more than once per quarter.

32. "Assist with planned outages and disaster-recovery exercises." Could you please define the yearly planned outages and the number of yearly disaster recovery exercise?

a. One time per year will suffice for planned DR exercises. However, there is the possibility for planned outages that are subject to external factors.

33. "Provide support for Oracle APEX in both production and QA, including maintenance, patching, and upgrades." Could you confirm that Oracle APEX support only consist of DBA APEX support? (and not development apex support)

   a. APEX DBA support as well as integration with Weblogic/OAM for authentication. Support of development of specific APEX programs would be outside the scope of this RFP.

34. "Provide support for Oracle Fusion Middleware installations in both production and QA, including maintenance, patching, and upgrades." Could you please give us the yearly number of Oracle fusion middleware installations in both production and QA, including maintenance, patching, and upgrades?

   a. There is a single Oracle Fusion Middleware installation in both the production and QA environments.

35. How many Suppliers were issued this Oracle DBA Services RFP?

   a. The RFP is open to the public.

36. Will MCWA allow Oracle DBA services to be provided by either non-US based or offshore resources?

   a. Location of company and employees will be a factor, and domestic locale is preferred, but not mandated. Furthermore, all data and backups must remain within the United States on MCWA servers.

37. What Work Authorization is required for Service Provider staff that will be engaged to provide MCWA DBA services?

   a. The internal staffing practices of the Service Providers are considered out of scope for this RFP.

38. Are there any DBA Services that MCWA requires onsite support only? If yes, please describe requirement and approximate timing of need.

   a. It is expected that provider staff be available for on-site support if needed. Historically, this has been an infrequent occurrence.

39. How will the Service Provider be notified that a database issued has been raised by MCWA user?

   a. It is expected that the service provider will be available through both voice and digital communication channels, such as phone, email, or helpdesk/support portal software.

40. Does MCWA utilize an IT Helpdesk software to notify the Service Provider? What is the name of IT HelpDesk software?

   a. Any helpdesk software used will be the responsibility of the service provider.

41. Is there only one (1) Oracle Production Database? If no, how many?

   a. Production has both a primary and a standby (disaster recovery) instance.

42. What is the Oracle Database version? If below Version 12, does MCWA plan to upgrade within the next 12 months?

   a. The Oracle DB is version 11.2.0.4.0 on production and QA. MCWA is seeking to upgrade.

43. What is hardware configuration on these servers? # of CPUs; Memory; Clock Speed; # of Users?

   a. The production database would support up to 250 users in total. Peak usage time occurs during business hours, as defined in section 2.2.2(B). The current hardware configuration is appropriate for the databases installed.

44. What type of database file system is used? Oracle ASM or Other? If other, please identify.

   a. File system on a disk that is physically attached to the system. We do not use ASM or any other similar systems.

45. Is Database Oracle RAC (Real Application Cluster)?

   a. RAC is not in use.

46. Does MCWA run Oracle Enterprise Manager / Oracle Cloud Control to manage and monitor (including alerts)?

    a. MCWA uses Enterprise Manager on the Weblogic instances. Installing Enterprise Manager on the Databases would be the responsibility of the vendor if desired.

47. Does MCWA run Active Data Guard configuration? Is your Oracle Production database using Maximum Availability Architecture (MAA) mode or Max Protection mode?

    a. MCWA does not currently run Active Data Guard.

48. What Security Patches have been applied to Database? What is the frequency of the application of security patches?

    a. All security patches for version 11.2.0.4.0 have been applied. MCWA anticipates future application to match Oracle release schedule.

49. Does MCWA plan to perform tabletop activity for standby or actual fail over or switch over test?

    a. The MCWA IT department performs substantial planning and discussion for all planned outages and recovery exercises.

50. What is the nature of 70 applications supported by the Production Database? For example, are they GUI based applications, Canned Queries, Microsoft Access, etc.?

    a. The database supports a variety of internal business applications. Most of these are written in Oracle Forms and Reports.

51. Is there only one (1) Oracle QA Database? If no, how many?

    a. At present there is only one QA database.

52. What is the Web environment comprised of? Is this the Fusion Middleware environment?

    a. The Web environment is out of scope for this RFP.

53. Is entire Fusion Middleware (FMW) environment hosted on Windows Server or just the middleware component?

a. The Middleware component and RCU databases are hosted on Windows Server.

54. What is the version of FMW software?

    a. 12.2.1.0

55. Are Web Based Applications using a Load Balancer?   Does MCWA require supplier to support Web Servers?

    a. Our on premise Web Based Applications do not use a load balancer. The web servers covered by this RFP are those running Oracle Forms and Reports 12c.

56. With WebLogic Web Server running on Windows server are there plans to migrate to Linux servers?

    a. This migration is under consideration.

57. Section 2.2.2.A: How are these databases currently being monitored for health checks? Is there any monitoring package currently being used?

    a. Our current vendor has scripting in place for health check monitoring. There is no monitoring package currently being used.

58. Section 2.2.2.F: Are there any exiting standard processes to create Users? Is the Awarded Supplier supposed to follow existing processes or create new?

    a. There is not a current written standard process to create users.

59. Section 2.2.2.H: What is meant by networking components? Besides creation of DB links, are there any other examples of "configurations of networking components"?

    a. Our Oracle Database interfaces with SQL Server and MySQL databases in some capacity, as well as our Exchange server for sending emails. The database also makes REST requests to update job statuses to an application server.

60. Section 2.2.2.J: Are there existing processes for backing up and verifying databases? If yes, is Awarded Supplier expected to follow the existing processes?

    a. We are presently using an RMAN backup with log shipping. If the Awarded Supplier prefers a different backup solution, the implementation is expected to be included in the base price.

61. Section 2.2.2.K: Please clarify. What is meant by "at the expense of the vendor"?

    a. It is expected that if the vendor deems it necessary to implement a new or different backup solution, it will be included in the base price.

62. Section 2.2.2.L: Is the RPO (Recovery Point Objective), meaning that at maximum loss of data of up to the last 15 minutes is acceptable? Please explain. What is existing backup strategy?

    a. Our existing backup strategy is industry standard per our current vendor. That allows us to restore within 15 minute increments.

63. Section 2.2.2.M: Is there an already defined frequency to test backups from production? Do all applications (70) get tested during recovery testing that depend on the production database?

    a. Not all applications are tested explicitly. There are a handful of critical applications that are tested.

64. Section 2.2.2.N: Is there already a defined frequency of BCDR (Business Continuity Disaster Recovery)?

    a. Please see the response to question number 32.

65. Section 2.2.2.O: Is there a defined Level of Service (LOS) after which BCDR is invoked if production is not online? Under what circumstances does the BCDR strategy gets invoked?

    a. This is not currently defined. There are many DR scenarios that could invoke it.

66. Section 2.2.2.P: Will Vendor be responsible for providing LINUX support resource?

    a. As stated, it is expected that Vendor will provide assistance with patching and updating of Oracle Linux.

67. Section 2.2.2.R: Here reference to "installation" has been made. Does this mean that more installations are going to be required?

    a. At this time there are no plans to implement additional Fusion Middleware installations.

68. Section 2.2.2.T: Does this include Fusion Middleware environment as well or the non-Fusion Middleware environment?

    a. For data refreshes, this was intended for the non-Fusion Middleware environments only.