CLARIFICATIONS

14/11/2024

1. **Based on the RFP document, could you please clarify:**

   a) **Functional Requirement:**

   - **FR.01 – How many Virtualization instances required?**
     As many as it is required to have a high availability solution on the 2 main sites Noumea and Lotus.

   - **FR.09 – Based on this point, Does SPC need a full SIEM solution, please provide more detail on this.**
     The NGFW solution must either include or be compatible with major XDR and SIEM solutions in the market. We require SIEM integration as part of the NGFW solution, either as a built-in feature (as an option) or through compatibility with existing SIEM platforms. We are currently using MS Defender as XDR but we might change it to some other one in the future, either form the market or opensource. We are open to evaluate, maybe as an option of the solution, an SIEM solution directly integrated into the global NGFW solution.

   - **FR.15 – Is your total number of endpoint 1071 that will be using cloud based VPN solution? Also do you need a cloud-based VPN solution or VPN on the firewall?**
     The total number of 1071 refers to the maximum potential users who could connect to the VPN. A more typical baseline is about 400 concurrent VPN users. For the best user experience, users should connect to the nearest VPN gateway. For example, users in New Caledonia or Fiji should connect to a local gateway in Noumea or Lotus, while users in Australia, New Zealand, the US, or France should use the closest cloud-based endpoint in their region. The solution should also allow temporary deployment of cloud VPN gateways as needed for short-term assignments, such as delegations. Local VPN gateways are required in Noumea and Fiji.

   b) **Technical requirement:**

   - **TR.02 – Is the throughout of 40 gbps required with SSL decryption or without SSL decryption? Also what is the percentage of SSL traffic passing through this firewall for future proofing?**
     Since this is for east-west communication between relatively trusted VLANs, achieving 40 Gbps without SSL decryption should be sufficient. However, a lower SSL decryption throughput can be proposed as part of the solution to protect some key internal traffic to critical services (finances for instance), an approximation of 2-3Gbp would be a good baseline. Of course, cost considerations may also play a role in deciding between full 40 Gbps SSL decryption and a lower throughput option.

   - **TR.11 – do you need redundant power supply on all the firewalls, DC and sites ?**
     Yes.

2. **In the RFP Site Details are given as:**

J. Annexes to the Term of Reference

Number of Users per site:

Site Name	Number of User (approx)
GEM	70
Nabua	140
Lotus	150
Narere	105
Noumea	574
Solomon	10
Pohnpei	22

In the subsequent response to clarification (on 29.10.2024) it was given few site details as:

Site	ISP	Internet Bandwidth	Public IP Available?	Users per Site
Nabua	Digicel (main), Connect/TFL	500 Mbps, 20 Mbps	Yes, 2x/24	140 approx + remote site users; total ~465 approx
Noumea	OPT (main), Lagoon	200 Mbps (soon 500), 250 Mbps	Yes, 2x/24	~574 approx
Tonga	Digicel	10 Mbps	Yes, /30	~7 approx
FSM	2 x FSM Tel	20 Mbps ADSL, 10 Mbps ADSL	Yes, /30 and /29	~22 approx
Solomon	Satsol	Unknown, couple of mb, ADSL	Probably dynamic IP	~10 approx

Where we can map Nabua (Philippines), Noumea (NC), Pohnpei (FSM) but details of GEM, Lotus, Narere are not given in the clarification response. Can we have details of these sites (GEM, Lotus, Narere)?

Nabua is actually Fiji : VFH6+H4 Suva, Fiji
Gem is Fiji: VFM3+X84, Suva, Fiji
Lotus is Fiji: VFH5+FJX, Suva, Fiji
Narere is Fiji: WGC3+RJV, FNTC Road, Vatoa Rd, Nasinu, Fiji

3. **Please outline the required port density of the firewall, specify the required port count along with the required throughputs of the ports. This would allow us to understand the requirement better and align to meet the throughput requirement and capabilities of the HCI Switch. If possible, please mention the throughput of the uplink (SFP+/QSFP) connectivity from the HCI switch.**

Current Firewall ports, it doesn't mean that it is the desired/required density as with this design we cannot control the east-west communication.

Noumea FW (2 FW with High Availability): each: 2x4 10G SFP+ ports + 4 1g SFP ports
Lotus FW (2 FW with Hight availability): each: 2x4 10G SFP+ ports + 4 1g SFP ports,

HCI Switches
Noumea HCI Switches ports: 2 switches in VPC with each: 6 x 100G to the ESXes Backend, for 3 vlans, Q28-PC03 3 x 25Gx4 breakout cables (Q-4S28PC02) to the ESXes Frontend with 6 etherchannels, for 22 vlans

Lotus HCI Switches ports:
2 switches in VPC with each:
6 x 100g to the ESXes Backend, for 6 vlans
6 x 100g to the ESXes Frontend with 6 etherchannels, for 22 vlans

4. **The East-West link is connecting Noumea and Nabus, what about North-South (which cities connecting)?**
   East-west refer to traffic between the same internal networks or data-center. North-south traffic refers traffic internal networks and external network (internet / cloud ... ie out of the data center).

5. **Could you please share the forecasted budget for this project to design the solution accordingly without exceeding your expectations?**
   This is an RFP process, and as such, the forecasted budget is undisclosed, The RFP outlines the requirements for the Next-Generation Firewall Solution and invites vendors to submit proposals with their pricing and other required information. The Pacific Community (SPC) will then evaluate the proposals and select the vendor whose offer provides the best value for money.

6. **Will SPC assist us to get necessary VISA done in each assigned regions?**
   No.

7. **What is your expectation on Warranty Period?**
   5 years, we will also buy spare sparts to minimise outages.

8. **Is post-sales training expected to be conducted at each specified location, or could it be arranged at a centralized venue where SPC assists in gathering key stakeholders for these sessions?**
   The only 2 Locations where there is technical staff are Lotus (Suva Fiji) and Noumea (New-Caledonia). Live Training or virtual class is preferable and can potentially be remotely performed.

9. **Will there be a Public Bid Opening for this Tender after the submission?**
   No.

10. **Could the east-west firewall throughput be a physical Cluster instead of a Virtual One?**
    Yes.

11. **How many cores maximum cores your HCI servers are populated with?**
    Noumea: 6 x ThinkAgile VX7531 Node with 2 x Intel(R) Xeon(R) Gold 6326 CPU @ 2.90GHz - 16 cores each.
    Lotus: 6 x ThinkAgile VX7531 Node with 2 x Intel(R) Xeon(R) Gold 6326 CPU @ 2.90GHz - 16 cores each.

12. **Are all 4 Fiji sites interconnected in between? With one unique door to Internet? On which site among the 4?**
    Yes they are, the main Internet route is located in Lotus (multiple providers).

13. **Always for Fiji: do you expect one FW per site or a centralized one? This is related to FR.16, in term of design, we need further information to determine the targeted architecture.**
    A centralized in Lotus one ideally.

14. **FR.15 calls for a VPN endpoint solution. How many clients should we quote for?**
    It says "so staff abroad can connect to a close VPN gateway"- how many staff will that be?
    Is there any requirement to do SD-WAN and if so which site/s would be the 'hub/s' (data centre/s)?
    On the technical point of view, every user should be able to work remotely from anywhere, especially in the Pacific Region, but not only. We have staff based in Europe (France), in the US, and had staff in Africa…), plus our staff often travel to various location in Asia, including China (this might be treated as an exception however).
    The current remote user population could vary a lot depending on external factors, hard to give an exact figure as it is out of our control, however it seems that a baseline of 400 remote VPN users concurrently connected is adequate for most of our needs.
    But we should be able to add more capacity (ie add/buy more VPN licences) if an external factor come to change the VPN needs.
    The solution should also allow temporary deployment of cloud VPN gateways as needed for short-term assignments, such as delegations. Local VPN gateways are required in Noumea and Fiji who are our main data hubs.

15. **How many servers and related cores are included in all your HCI Clusters?**
    Noumea: 6 x ThinkAgile VX7531 Node with 2 x Intel(R) Xeon(R) Gold 6326 CPU @ 2.90GHz - 16 cores each.
    Lotus: 6 x ThinkAgile VX7531 Node with 2 x Intel(R) Xeon(R) Gold 6326 CPU @ 2.90GHz - 16 cores each.

16. **<u>Do we need to include in our proposal travel and configuration on the various sites, or only the supply and maintenance of the equipment?</u>**
    Please include all the costs associated with the solution, however detailing them by type would be even more beneficial.