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Open Source DBA Services Questions & Answers

2021-11-05

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Questions and Answers

1. *I wonder if you'd consider using a company services, instead of a single DBA. [REDACTED] provides consulting for both PostgreSQL and MariaDB, as well as some PostgreSQL derivatives.*

ANSWER: Yes. By "DBA Services" we mean any company or individual that can provide these services, however they are structured.

2. *[We] wanted to ask if you can imagine working with a company based in [REDACTED] on consulting activities and / or a support contract, meaning we would have to arrange on the way to work together considering the time zone difference.*

ANSWER: Yes. We are a global organisation. Our contract will be under US (Delaware) law.

3. *Scheduled maintenance*
 - a. *Is there an existing template to be followed?*

ANSWER: No, we are looking to the vendor to define this.

- b. *Are there specific focus areas for our team in this area?*

ANSWER: We expect the vendor to define this.

- c. *Will we need to receive permission to "address as appropriate" or do we have access/authority to make changes?*

ANSWER: In general permission will be needed and changes scheduled, it depends on the risk to our operations posed by the changes.

4. *Ad-hoc advice and consultancy*
 - a. *If the problem at hand requires more than the maximum 10 hours per month, what does the process look like to get additional time approved?*

ANSWER: The 10 hours mentioned is not a limit but our estimate of the likely maximum hours of ad-hoc consultancy that we will require per month. Generally our process depends on the work required and for ad-hoc consultancy would normally be as simple as a one sentence estimate with an email agreement.

- b. *Will we have full system access and be able to provide hands-on help during a codesprint/emergency, or will it be consulting only?*

ANSWER: Codesprints are workshops where all the participants download and install local copies of the systems and work on those. We do not expect the vendor to have a role in emergency response - that is all handled by our IT support vendor - except when the emergency is in the immediate aftermath of a database change that the vendor has been involved in, where we may agree that the vendor is available for a specific number of hours after the change. The level of system access will be agreed with the chosen vendor and adjusted over time.

- c. *Will support for codesprints be expected on short notice or be scheduled in advance? If in advance, how many days in advance will we be given notice?*

ANSWER: When we return to [onsite meetings](#)¹ then the notice period will be 3-4 years as the codesprints are held the day before these meetings. In the current fully online world we aim to provide at least 4 weeks notice.

5. *Migration of database tables from MyISAM to InnoDB*
 - a. *Will we have a budget beyond the ten hours per month to put together the plan and risk mitigation summary?*

ANSWER: This RFP has four separate parts to the deliverables section and we require individual proposals for each part within a single response to the RFP. The ten hours per month is for a separate part of the deliverables. For the migration parts, we recommend that vendors estimate the time required for planning and include that in their proposals. We understand that it is hard to provide accurate estimates for the later stages of a migration without first doing some investigation and analysis and are comfortable with receiving proposals that take this into account.

- b. *What does support for system administrators look like? Consulting or hands-on?*

ANSWER: Probably a mix between the two.

- c. *Are there verification/testing templates that we're required to work with?*

ANSWER: No. We have no formal verification/validation plan. We do have a large set of regression tests for the application that use the databases that will be used to test the success of the migration.

- d. *Will we have access to a copy of the database to work with?*

¹ <https://www.ietf.org/how/meetings/upcoming/>

ANSWER: Yes.

e. *Are you using Full Text Search?*

ANSWER: Our in-house developed applications do not but they may do so in the future. At least one of our third party open source apps does but this contract is expected to have limited exposure to those.

6. *Migration from MariaDB to PostgreSQL*

a. *How large is the database?*

ANSWER: A development environment for Datatracker with full data (though the data is in InnoDB format) can be obtained by following these [instructions](#).² A development environment for MailArchive with dummy data can be obtained following these [instructions](#).³ We do not specify the database size in this RFP as that may change and because we do not want any bids restricted to a specific size of database.

b. *How many tables?*

ANSWER: See the answer above.

c. *Are there any special column types?*

ANSWER: See above about the development environment. As we don't know what constitutes a 'special' column type, vendors will need to ascertain this by examining the tables. We recommend that any such examination is included as part of the project proposal.

d. *Are there any other affected applications that we need to take into account?*

ANSWER: No.

e. *Is our team expected to manage Datatracker and Mailarchive, or will you take care of the app?*

ANSWER: All our apps are managed by our outsourced IT support team and our team of developers.

f. *What are the downtime limitations and maintenance windows?*

ANSWER: Our preference is to avoid Eastern Time working hours but recognising that we are a global organisation, we are flexible. We have the

² <https://trac.ietf.org/trac/ietfdb/wiki/SprintCoderSetup>

³ <https://trac.ietf.org/trac/ietfdb/browser/mailarch/trunk/INSTALL>

ability to schedule long (up to 8 hours) of downtime if required and more in exceptional circumstances.

g. What availability will the team have in order to answer our questions while putting the plan together?

ANSWER: Sufficient availability.

h. Will we have a test server?

ANSWER: Yes if required. See above about the development environment.

i. What kind of budget is available to put together this plan?

ANSWER: Sufficient budget.

j. What timeline is requested for this project?

ANSWER: No specific timeline but we would like the migration to PostgreSQL completed by say the middle of 2022 though that is open to negotiation.

k. There is another part that mentions MyISAM to InnoDB migration. Are both of them required? Is this for comparison of InnoDB and PostgreSQL, or are you expecting support for both?

ANSWER: Our hope is to carry out the MyISAM to InnoDB migration soon in order to eliminate that as a performance concern with the upgrade to PostgreSQL coming later as a larger and more detailed project.

l. Will we have collaboration with developers to do the necessary code changes, or will we be expected to provide development expertise as well?

ANSWER: We have the developers and development expertise.

7. *Are there any access restriction requirements? For example, is there a requirement for team members who are US-based only?*

ANSWER: The only restriction is compliance with our [policy on US OFAC legislation](#)⁴ and our [policies in general](#)⁵ but otherwise no. Our team has staff and volunteers all around the globe.

ENDS

⁴ https://www.ietf.org/media/documents/IETF_LLC_OFAC_Compliance_Policy_2020-10-06.pdf

⁵ <https://www.ietf.org/about/administration/policies-procedures/>