

COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

MARCHE COMMUN



السوق المشتركة للشرق والجنوب
الأفريقي

SHORT TERM IT EXPERT (INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT) FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMESA ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN

TENDER NO. CS/PRO/CSM /SS/06/08/20

1. INTRODUCTION

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, COMESA is a regional economic body comprising 21 Member Countries. COMESA's current strategy can be summed up in the phrase "economic prosperity through regional integration". With a population of over 540 million and global trade in goods worth more than US\$ 235 billion, COMESA forms a major marketplace for both internal and external trading.

2. Background

The COMESA Secretariat has designed a Trade Facilitation Programme under the EDF 11 Programme which aims at removal of non-tariff barriers (NTBs), lowering of trading costs at borders, improving trade infrastructure and automation of customs and transit systems. The actions planned under this Programme specifically complement COMESA's plans to be a single trade and investment area in which tariffs, NTBs and other impediments to the movement of goods, services, capital and people will be removed. The general objective of the Programme is to contribute to deepening regional integration, improving inclusive regional economic growth and enhancing competitiveness of the COMESA region. The specific objectives include: to increase intra-regional trade flows of goods, persons and services by reducing the costs/delays of imports/exports by reducing NTBs across the borders, implementing the WTO TFA and COMESA Digital FTA Action Plan including the electronic certificate of origin (eCO), improving the coordinated border management (CBM) and trade and transport facilitation, liberalizing the trade in services and movement of persons and supporting trade negotiations and trade promotion activities in the region.

The manual procedures of certificate of origin is among the main challenges of trade facilitation identified by several studies in the COMESA region. This is not only bureaucratic but also costly to exporters, importers and clearing agents in facilitating intra-regional trade. As a result, developing and implementing the electronic certification origin (eCO) system was recommended to address these challenges and increase intra-regional trade flows of goods by reducing the costs/delays of imports/exports at border posts.

The COMESA Secretariat has developed a web-based eCO system to eventually replace the manual certificate of origin currently in use by the Member States. The prototype of the System was presented to Member States at various technical meetings organized by the Secretariat and the Member States indicated their readiness to pilot and implement the system. In addition, Regulations for Implementation of the eCO system was developed by the Secretariat which was then adopted by the 40th Council of Ministers in November 2019. Further, in light of the Council decisions, the activities planned to implement the eCO system include: the Secretariat to undertake situational assessments on eCO; develop capacity building and awareness programmes to enhance the capacity of the Member States; and

piloting and rolling out the eCO system either directly or through interfacing or integrating with existing eCO systems or Customs Management Systems in all Member States.

In order to achieve the above mentioned plan, as part of the Result Area 3 of Trade Facilitation Programme under EDF 11, the Secretariat will need to contract one (1) Professional IT Expert for six (6) Months to assist in the areas of developing and implementing the eCO system in the region. The IT expert is expected to have proven extensive knowledge and previous experience in COMESA Protocol on Rules of Origin, Implementation Manuals and Guidelines of COMESA RoO, eCO system, Customs Automated Management Systems and interfacing/integrating with other systems, e-signature, digital signature, and Public Key Infrastructure (PKI), development and deployment of mobile applications and other related areas.

3. Objective of the Consultancy Service

The main objective of the consultancy service is to provide expertise and technical support to the Secretariat in developing, situational assessment and identification of needs of the Member States, piloting and implementing the ongoing project of the COMESA electronic certificate of origin (eCO) system as planned under the EDF11-COMESA Trade Facilitation Programme.

4. Expected Results

The expected key results of the consultancy service include the following:

- a) Finalized development and operationalized the web-based eCO system and mobile apps supported by technical guidelines and training materials and other required documentations;
- b) Country specific situational assessment and action plans to deploy and start piloting and implementing the COMESA eCO System.
- c) Operational eCO System deployed, Integrated/Interfaced with other Member States ICT and Customs Management Systems, tested and piloted and rollout in all Member States who are ready;
- d) Provided technical assistance and capacity building support to Member States to implement the Rules of origin and eCO System Member States.

5. Duties and Tasks

Under the direct supervision of the Team leader of the Programme and the overall supervision of the Directors of Trade and Customs and **Information Technology and Networking**, the Expert shall undertake the following duties:

- a) Work closely with the COMESA staff and EDF11 - Trade Facilitation Programme Experts as well as the Member States under the guidance and supervision of the Trade and Customs and **Information Technology and Networking** Divisions in developing, piloting and implementing the eCO system;
- b) Provide expertise assistance in finalizing the development of COMESA eCO System including activities such as developing and operationalizing user-friendly Mobile Application for eCO in line with the COMESA and International Standards;
- c) Jointly with the COMESA Staff and Programme officers, undertake situational assessments (business and technical) on Member States related to the eCO system including their readiness and needs of capacity building assistance and prepare country specific action plan to deploy and start piloting and implementing the COMESA eCO System;
- d) Prepare and submit Technical Implementation Guidelines, Training Manuals and Presentations and necessary technical documentations on eCO System in line with the COMESA Protocol on Rules of Origin, Regulations, and Implementation Manuals;

- e) Develop and submit a standard application programming interface (API) for interfacing/integration of the eCO system with other systems at the Member States and handover to the COMESA Secretariat any source code that may be applicable related to development of the system;
- f) Assist in piloting and implement the COMESA eCO system with the aim of establishing a standardized and harmonized regional eCO system. These include, but not limited to, deploy or Interface/integrate the eCO system with national and regional systems, test and pilot and rollout the eCO system in the Member States who are ready; and make necessary improvements in the system;
- g) Provide expertise advise and support on public key infrastructure (PKI) to Member States who need to establish, Modality for interfacing of eCO system and other external systems, process and modalities to implement e-payment and digital signature in the system, required legislative amendments and ICT equipment and infrastructure for full implementation of eCO system based on international best practices and standards;
- h) Provide technical assistance and capacity building support to Member States to implement the Rules of origin and eCO System;
- i) Assist in preparing progress report of implementation of the eCO system; monitoring and evaluation of the impact of eCO system implementation and prepare recommendations to improve the implementation and a sustainability strategy and plan after the end of the project;
- j) Assist in organizing regional and national meetings on eCO systems and other rules of origin related matters; and
- k) Undertake other related tasks as may be required by the supervisor or the Divisions of the Secretariat.

6. Key Deliverables

The Consultant will deliver the following outputs:

- a) Finalize and handover a Web-based eCO system supported by Mobile Application including any source codes used in developing the system based on the inputs from the Member States and the Secretariat;
- b) A Report on situational assessments on Member States related to the eCO system and Country specific action plan to deploy and start piloting and implementing the COMESA eCO System;
- c) Developed Technical Implementation Guidelines and Training Manuals;
- d) Report of capacity building training and technical support provided to Member States on eCO system related activities;
- e) Presentations (in ppt supported by video) for technical and business training activities;
- f) Report on status of interfacing/integrating, piloting and implementation of the COMESA eCO system;
- g) Reports recommending the required legislative amendments and ICT equipment and infrastructure as well as systems to be considered for better implementation of the COMESA eCO system;
- h) Report on monitoring and evaluation of the impact of eCO system piloting and implementation and recommendations for improvement supported by necessary documentations;
- i) Report on a sustainability strategy and plan after the end of the project based on lessons learned from piloting the system;
- j) A final report on the assignment including progress of the eCO piloting and implementation in the region, success stories, lessons learned, challenges and mitigation measures. These shall be supported by all required documentations and data.

7. Qualifications and Experience Required

The Expert to undertake the Consultancy service should have at least the following qualifications and experience:

- a) University graduate degree in Computer Science, Software Engineering or related fields who possess at least 10 years relevant professional experience in Software Development and deployment related areas at national, regional or international levels;
- b) Proven experience in open source development tools, developing web-based systems and mobile applications such as electronic certificate of origin (eCO) system and in delivering specialist training courses on the subject;
- c) Ability to understand and design distributed systems and proven hands-on experience in developing and implementation of PKI Infrastructure including e-signature/digital signature and cyber security;
- d) Prior operational experience in information communication technology (ICT) systems in a customs and trade environment such as ASYCUDA system and proven in-depth knowledge on implementing electronic Single Window Systems and e-payment system;
- e) Proven extensive knowledge in COMESA Treaty, COMESA Protocol on Rules of Origin Guidelines and eCO Regulations, Customs Management Regulations (CMRs) as well as import and export trade and customs procedures will be an added advantage;
- f) Good knowledge and experience in project planning and management, leadership in implementation of ICT related projects, business process analysis and reporting writing; and
- g) Good communication skills and Good command in English language and knowledge of other COMESA official languages (Arabic or French) will be an advantage.

8. Official Duty Station

The Consultant will be stationed at the Headquarters of the Secretariat, in Lusaka, Zambia with travel to Member States. However, the Secretariat may allow the Consultant to work from home or online due to the COVID-19 pandemic situations provided that the expected deliverables of the assignment will not be affected.

9. Duration of the Contract and Working Schedule

The Consultancy assignment is for a total duration of four (4) months effective from the date of signature. During his contract period, the Consultant shall observe official working hours of the duty station. However, he may be expected to work beyond the official working hours at no extra cost.

10. Supervision

The Consultant works under the direct supervision of the Team Leader of Trade Facilitation Programme under the guidance of the Director of Information Technology and Network (ITN) and the Director of Trade & Customs Division.

11. Reporting Requirements

The Consultant will prepare and submit weekly and monthly progress reports and final report to the Team Leader of the Trade Facilitation Programme through the Coordinated Border Management Expert and the System Analyst Officer and copy to the Directors of ITN and Trade and Customs.

12. Payment

For the services rendered under this contract, the COMESA Secretariat will pay the Consultant an all-inclusive fee of EURO 5000 (Five Thousand Euros) per month which will be paid on satisfactory accomplishment of the tasks. The Secretariat will pay for the travel to Lusaka for assumption of duty. In addition, when travelling on duty for purposes of this contract, the Consultant will be entitled to per diem allowance at the COMESA ruling rate for missions that will be undertaken as per the Terms of Reference. Where an authorized travel is sponsored by another organization or institution, the ruling rate of that institution shall apply.

13. Submission of Applications

The bidder shall submit their CVs through either email or physical delivery to:

**THE CHAIRMAN -PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE
COMESA SECRETARIAT
BEN BELLA ROAD
P.O BOX 30051
LUSAKA, ZAMBIA
Tel: 260 211 229725 - 32
Attention: Mr. Simatengo Simatengo**

Submission emails: procurement@comesa.int, ssimatengo@comesa.int

For physical/courier delivery, the outer envelope should be clearly marked in the top right-hand corner **“RFP: NO. CS/PRO/CSM /SS/06/08/20 SHORT TERM EXPERT IT CONSULTANT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMESA ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN**

DO NOT OPEN BEFORE 27th AUGUST 2020 at 15.00 HRS Lusaka time.

NOTE: If the envelopes are not sealed and marked as per the instructions in this clause, COMESA will not assume responsibility for the proposal's misplacement or premature opening and may – at its discretion – reject the proposal.

14. CLOSING DATE OF TENDER

CVs must be submitted to the COMESA Secretariat on or before **27th AUGUST 2020 at 15:00 hours LUSAKA TIME.**

15. AWARD OF CONTRACTS

COMESA reserves the right to wholly or partially reject or award these contracts to any bidder and has no obligation to award this tender to the lowest bidder

16. Technical Queries

Technical queries related to this tender should be submitted in writing to procurement@comesa.int with a copy to smwesigwa@comesa.int

END