

**COMMON MARKET FOR  
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**



**REQUEST FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT PROPOSALS**

**CONSULTANCY SERVICE TO DEVELOP A STANDARDIZED  
OPERATION MANUAL FOR THE COMESA REGIONAL AUTHORIZED  
ECONOMIC OPERATOR SCHEME**

**RFP Ref: CS/ADM/TRADE/20/09/09.1/KJ**

**SEPTEMBER 2020**

## 1. BACKGROUND

The Thirty Seventh Council of Ministers meeting adopted a three- year customs and trade facilitation work program (2018 – 2020) which prioritized the development of harmonised criteria for granting the status of Authorised Economic Operator in line with the Customs Management Regulation (CMR) and WCO SAFE Framework and guidelines. The COMESA Member States have agreed in the CMR at 39 (1) (b-d) that Customs authorities in consultation with other competent authorities to grant, subject to the criteria, the status of Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) to any economic operator established in the customs territory. Similarly, the CMR regulation 39 (2) (b) stipulates that determining the type and extent of facilitation that may be granted to the AEO in respect of customs controls relating to security and safety, taking into account the customs rules for common risk management.

Twelve (12) Member States Namely; Burundi, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) have implemented the AEOs scheme while other Member States (such as Seychelles, DR Congo, and Malawi) are in the process of implementing the Scheme. Most of the Member States are implementing the AEO Program in a similar way in line with the spirit of the CMR and the international standards including the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and the WCO Guidelines.

A desk assessment done in 2018 by the Secretariat indicated that the implementation of AEO programmed varies from country to country on issues such as the names of the simplified programme, selection criteria, the scope of the sectors and the benefits that accruing to the AEO.

COMESA Member States have developed and adopted a **COMESA Regional AEO Programme Implementation Guideline**. The main objective of the guideline is to provide for regionally harmonised procedures and criteria for granting the status of AEO in line with the CMR, WCO guidelines and WTO TFA, and to facilitate the implementation of harmonised and standardised AEO Programme and Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) throughout the region and facilitate and secure the intra-regional trade. **The draft Guideline was adopted by Council in November 2019.**

COMESA Member States have also developed a **Regional and National Action Plan for the Implementation of the AEO Program** which was adopted by Council in November 2019. Under this plan there is a requirement that the Secretariat should develop Standard Operational Manuals for AEO Validators (including risk score rating) and post authorization management and training materials on the implementation of the AEO Scheme.

## **2. OBJECTIVE**

The broad objective of the consultancy is to provide technical assistance to the COMESA Secretariat and the Regional Working Group on AEO to develop a Standardized Operational Manual (SOM) and Training materials to facilitate implementation of the COMESA regional AEO Scheme.

## **3. SCOPE OF WORK**

The Consultant will be expected to:

- a) Review and analyze the COMESA trade facilitation instruments and COMESA Regional AEO Guidelines and determine additional operational information to be included in the SOM;
- b) Benchmark development of the SOM's on operational regional AEO schemes under EAC and SACU;
- c) Develop Standard Operational Manuals for AEO Validators (including risk score rating) and post authorization management and training materials on the implementation of the AEO Scheme;
- d) Facilitate a regional validation meeting of the Regional TWG on the AEO Scheme to review the draft SOM and Training materials; and
- e) Undertake other related tasks as may be required by the supervisor or the Trade and Customs Division of the Secretariat.

## **4. DELIVERABLES**

1. Standard Operational Manuals for AEO Validators and post authorization management;
2. Training materials on the implementation of the AEO Scheme; and
3. Draft and Final reports on the assignment supported by all required documentations and data.

## **5. Eligibility of Consultants**

This consultancy is open to reputable international and Local Consultants based in their respective COMESA member States which have sufficient experience in recruitment and selection to undertake this assignment. Proof of having undertaken similar assignments is critical.

## **6. Commencement and Completion of Work**

The Consultancy assignment is for a total duration of three (3) months effective from the date of signature.

## 7. REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Under the direct supervision of the Team Leader Trade Facilitation Programme and overall guidance of the Director of Trade and Customs

## 8. Criteria for Evaluation of Consultants

Bidders must provide Technical proposals. The evaluation shall be based on the following attributes:

- (i) The overall responsiveness and quality of the proposal in clearly stating an understanding of the work to be performed;
- (ii) Technical ability of the proposer to perform the required services;
- (iii) The experience and reputation of the consultant as represented in the response and the quality of the references;
- (iv) Technical proposal detailing understanding of the task, proposed approach, the individual consultant's profile (including CVs, links/documents to attest to AT LEAST three similar assignments previously undertaken);
- (v) The consultant must also indicate his/her monthly retainer rate.

	Evaluation attribute	Percentage Points
1	Consultant's Understanding of Client's requirements	20
2	Approach and methodology	15
3	Specific Experience of the consultant in carrying out similar assignments. Evidence in form of reference letters, offer letters, orders or copies of contracts should be presented	40
4	Qualifications and Experience of the consultant	25
	Total	100

Please note only candidates with a pass score of seventy per cent (70%) and above shall be considered for this assignment, and the award shall be based on the highest score attained.

## 9. QUALIFICATIONS/EXPERIENCE

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

- (i) Advanced University degree in Economics, International Trade, Business Administration or Customs Management;
- (ii) Proven extensive knowledge in COMESA Treaty, Customs Management Regulations, WCO instruments and WTO TFA measures on Trade Facilitation;
- (iii) Extensive knowledge on the Authorized Economic Operator Scheme (Possession of WCO Accreditation on the AEO Scheme would be an added advantage);
- (iv) Demonstrated experience of having supported implementation of AEO Schemes at national or regional level; and
- (v) Good communication skills and Good command in English language and knowledge of other COMESA official languages (Arabic or French) will be an advantage.

## 10. Submission of Applications

Interested consultants are free to submit either by courier services or by Email.

The bidder shall submit the proposal in **one external envelope containing inside three sealed envelopes** by the closing date set forth in point no. 11 through either email or physical delivery to:

**THE HEAD OF PROCUREMENT  
COMESA SECRETARIAT  
BEN BELLA ROAD  
P.O BOX 30051  
LUSAKA, ZAMBIA  
Tel: 260 211 229725 - 32  
Attention: Mr. Silver Mwesigwa**

Submission emails: [procurement@comesa.int](mailto:procurement@comesa.int), [smwesigwa@comesa.int](mailto:smwesigwa@comesa.int)

For physical/courier delivery, the outer envelope should be clearly marked in the top right-hand corner **“RFP: Ref: CS/ADM/TRADE/20/09/09.1/KJ - CONSULTANCY SERVICE TO DEVELOP A STANDARDIZED OPERATION MANUAL FOR THE COMESA REGIONAL AUTHORIZED ECONOMIC OPERATOR SCHEME” DO NOT OPEN BEFORE 22<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER 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.

This sealed envelope, which will be clearly marked “TECHNICAL PROPOSAL” must contain three (3) hard copies of the technical proposal with one marked ‘original’ and the other marked ‘copy’.

**For submissions made via email, please submit your documents in pdf format.**

In the event of any discrepancy between the original and the copy, the original shall govern.

#### **11. CLOSING DATE OF TENDER**

Tenders must be submitted to the COMESA Secretariat on or before **22<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020 at 15.00 HRS LUSAKA TIME.**

#### **12. AWARD OF CONTRACTS**

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

#### **13. Pricing**

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.

When travelling on duty for purposes of this contract, the Secretariat will meet the travel costs and 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.

#### **14. Payment:**

Payment terms and conditions shall be as per COMESA’s procurement Rules and Regulations payment guidelines.

#### **15. Technical Queries**

Technical queries related to this tender should be submitted in writing to [procurement@comesa.int](mailto:procurement@comesa.int) with a copy to [smwesigwa@comesa.int](mailto:smwesigwa@comesa.int)

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