

COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANCY: TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SCOPE AND COMPETENCES OF ACCREDITATION ASSESSORS IN THE COMESA REGION

Tender Ref: EH/16/10/20

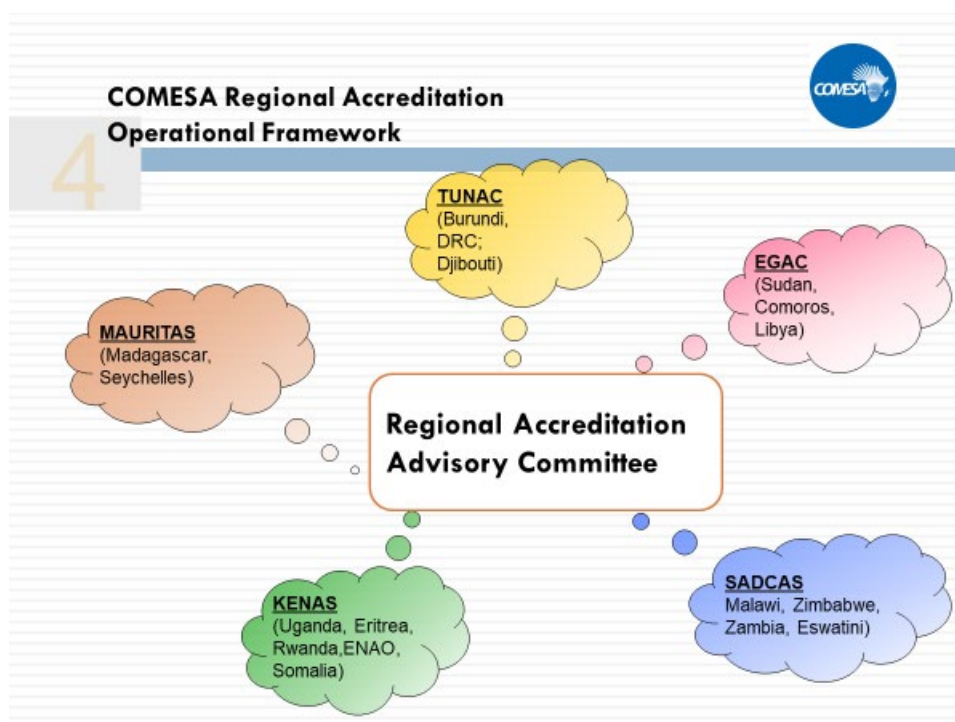
Closing Date: 12th November 2020

A. BACKGROUND

Background

Technical regulations, standards, metrology, **accreditation**, inspection, testing and certification are utilized by societies to address issues related to the optimization of production, safety and health, consumer protection, environmental control as well as to manage risks and market failures. Their sound development and effective implementation enable sustainable development, build welfare and facilitate trade.

Competitiveness of goods on the market is underpinned by market confidence in the quality of conformity assessment services which is attained through accreditation. By simple definition, accreditation is the third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body conveying the formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific conformity assessment task (testing including medical laboratories, calibration laboratories, proficiency testing providers, and certified reference material producers). Accessibility to accreditation services is therefore essential for products competitiveness in markets. However, in COMESA region, few member states have established internationally recognized National Accreditation Bodies for provision of such services (EGAC-Egyptian Accreditation Council; KENAS-Kenya Accreditation Service; MAURITAS-Mauritius Accreditation Service; and TUNAC-Tunisian Accreditation Council). The reason why most Member States have still not yet established national accreditation bodies lies in the prohibitive costs associated with the establishment of fully-fledged and internationally recognized national accreditation bodies (which can take up to 9 years), but also because one key pre-requisite is the need for a critical mass of skilled technical and lead assessors across the various accreditation scopes and fields at national level. Further, sustainability of an accreditation body (AB) requires a critical mass of laboratories for a demand-pull effect for the services of the AB otherwise it would require large subsidies from Treasury. One option that some regions such as SADC have opted for given the fact that the region had only one internationally recognized accreditation body (SANAS of South Africa) was to establish a multi-economy accreditation body to cater for the needs of the region. Since COMESA already has 4 internationally recognized ABs, an appropriate option under consideration for the 21 Member Group entails a cluster grouping regional accreditation operational framework linking the 5 key ABs (including SADCAS) geographically to surrounding countries in their sub-region or language grouping for provision of accreditation services as illustrated below.



In this regard, the 11 EDF Trade Facilitation programme under TBT Component (4.2), aims at elaboration of a regional accreditation collaboration framework comprising existing Accreditation Bodies that would utilize a pool of trained accreditation assessors in each Member State. This would result in affordable accreditation across the region but as well as ensuring greater access to accreditation services by a wider cross-section of the regional economy (regulators, private sector, academic and research institutions). Successful implementation of the Framework hinges on capacity building of regional technical/lead assessors in key identified scopes and establishment of a database of Regional but country-based “**corps**” of assessors available for sharing and access amongst the 5 ABs.

The process for the establishment of the Regional Accreditation Collaboration Framework encompasses the following:

- Status assessment of the scope and competences of accreditation assessors in the COMESA Region vis-a-vie the required areas for accreditation services to inform capacity development of a pool of assessors to support the implementation of the regional accreditation collaboration framework.
- Round-Table Caucus Negotiations between the 5 COMESA Accreditation Bodies to discuss and agree on modalities for establishment of the COMESA Accreditation Collaboration and Operational Framework under the overall AFRAC framework
- Capacity development of a pool of accreditation assessors to match up to the accreditation needs of the region to support the implementation and sustainability of the regional accreditation collaboration framework

In this regard, it is imperative that activity (1) focusing on status assessment of the scope and competences of accreditation assessors in the COMESA Region be embarked upon immediately as subsequent activities hinge on its outcome/results.

B. OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT

2.1 Objective and scope of the consultancy

- a) Carry-out gap assessment of the numbers, scope/field and competences of existing accreditation assessors and peer evaluators in the COMESA Region, including their registration details/requirements.
- b) Undertake an inventory of institutions/organisations where assessors are currently based/housed (public; semi-public; private sector; consultancy; research/academia etc)
- c) Establish regional capacity building requirements/needs to cover the gap
- d) Facilitate a regional validation workshop on the gap assessment results and needs/requirements matrix
- e) Prepare final report

2.2. Deliverables

- a) Inception report, incorporating the methodology and draft work-plan to undertake the assignment;
- b) Evaluation matrix on the regional gap assessment results and capacity building requirements/needs
- c) Inventory of institutions and organisations where assessors are currently based
- d) Draft report and facilitation of a Regional validation workshop on the gap assessment results and needs/requirements
- e) Final report

C. EXPERT REQUIRED

Qualifications and skills

- a) A university degree in a field of natural/physical sciences, engineering or economics
- b) Relevant post-graduate degree would be an added advantage
- c) At least ten (10) years' experience working in a national/regional accreditation body at a senior/management level
- d) Registered accreditation assessor
- e) Strong participation and leadership in regional and/or international accreditation fora
- f) Sound knowledge of the WTO TBT Agreement
- g) Knowledge of the COMESA region and familiarity with regional trade issues

D. SUPERVISION AND REPORTING:

The regional consultant will work closely with the COMESA TBT Expert, the Trade Facilitation Team Leader and Member States Institutions/Organisations responsible for accreditation and report to the Director for Industry and Agriculture at the Secretariat

E. DELIVERABLES

The consultant is expected to carry out the following activities in order to deliver the expected results of the assignment:

No	Description of Activities	Number of days
1	Inception Report	5
2	Methodology elaboration (questionnaire design; establishment of relevant contacts in Member States)	10
3	Assessment/Evaluation of data; matrix development	18
4	Draft report formulation and power point presentation	6
5	Validation workshop facilitation	1
6	Final report	5
7	Total	45

The tasks will be carried out over a 45 day period between November to December 2020 by virtual means.

F. AMENDMENTS OF PROPOSAL DOCUMENTS

At any time prior to the deadline for submission of Bids, COMESA, for any reason, whether at its own initiative or in response to a clarification requested by a prospective Bidder, may modify the Proposal Documents by issuing an addendum.

All addenda shall send to the shortlisted firms.

In order to afford shortlisted Bidders reasonable time in which to take the amendments into account in preparing their offers, COMESA may, at its discretion, extend the deadline for the submission of Proposals.

G. FORMAT AND SEALING OF BIDS

The bidder shall submit the proposal by either **physical delivery or by email**. For physical or courier delivery, bids must be submitted in **one external envelope containing inside two sealed envelopes** by the closing date set forth in paragraph no. H below to the following address:

Chairman - Procurement Committee,
 COMESA Secretariat,
 Ben Bella Road,
 P.O. Box 30051,
 Lusaka, Zambia,
 Attention: Procurement Unit
 Email: procurement@comesa.int

The outer envelope should be clearly marked in the top right-hand corner “CONSULTANCY TO DEVELOP COMESA COORDINATED BORDER MANAGEMENT – RFP No. EH/18/08/20” DO NOT OPEN BEFORE **12th November 2020** at 15.00 Hours **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.*

For Physical delivery, the first internal sealed envelope, which will be clearly marked “TECHNICAL PROPOSAL” must contain two (2) hard copies of the technical proposal with one marked ‘original’ and the other marked ‘copy’. The second internal envelope, which will be clearly marked “FINANCIAL PROPOSAL”, should contain the original and copy of the financial proposal. The envelope containing the financial proposal will ONLY be opened if the technical offer attains the pass score of seventy per cent (70%).

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

H. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

The deadline for the submission of proposals is **12th November 2020** at 15.00 Hours Lusaka Time (GMT+2). The tenders will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidder’s representative who choose to attend.

I. LATE TENDERS

Any Tender received by COMESA after the deadline for submission of Bids shall be rejected. There shall be no exception to this requirement.

J. EVALUATION AND COMPARISON OF PROPOSALS

To assist in the examination, evaluation and comparison of Bids, COMESA may ask the Bidder for clarification of its Bid. The request for clarification and the response shall be in writing and no change in price or substance of the Proposal shall be sought, offered or permitted.

COMESA will examine the Proposals to determine whether they are complete, whether any computational errors have been made, whether the documents have been properly signed, and whether the Proposals are generally in order.

Arithmetical errors will be rectified on the following basis: If there is a discrepancy between the unit price and the total price that is obtained by multiplying the unit price and quantity, the unit price shall prevail, and the total price shall be corrected. If the Bidder does not accept the correction of errors, its Proposal will be rejected. If there is a discrepancy between words and figures, the amount in words will prevail.

Prior to the detailed evaluation, the Procurement Committee will determine the substantial responsiveness of each Proposal to the Request for Proposals (RFP).

For purposes of these Clauses, a substantially responsive Proposal is one, which conforms to all the terms and conditions of the RFP without material deviations. COMESA's determination of a Proposal's responsiveness is based on the contents of the Proposal itself without recourse to extrinsic evidence.

A Proposal determined as not substantially responsive will be rejected by the COMESA and may not subsequently be made responsive by the Bidder by correction of the non-conformity.

The bids will be evaluated as follows:

- The envelopes containing the sealed technical and financial offers will be opened.
- The envelope marked "TECHNICAL PROPOSAL" will be opened and the technical proposal will be evaluated.
- If the technical proposal is evaluated as 70 per cent or above the envelope marked "FINANCIAL PROPOSAL" will be opened.
- The Bidder that has offered what is adjudged to be the best technical and financial offer will be offered the contract.
- If the Bidder that offered what was adjudged to be the best technical and financial offer declines to accept the offer, then the Bidder that is adjudged to have offered the second best technical and financial offer will be offered the contract.

Table 1: Criteria for Overall Technical Evaluation

Criteria		%
T1	Understanding of the Terms of Reference	10
T2	Relevant experience in similar assignments	30
T3	Proposed methodology, approach and implementation plan	20
T4	Qualifications and professional experience	40
	Total	100

The tender shall be awarded to the best technical responsive candidate, with a score of 70% and above and with the lowest financial proposal.

COMESA Secretariat does not bind itself to accept any bid and reserves the right to accept the whole or partially any of the submitted bids.

K. TECHNICAL QUERIES

For any technical queries related to terms of reference, kindly contact the Procurement Unit on the following email: procurement@comesa.int.