**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

**SELECTION OF INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS**

**REFERENCE NUMBER:** CS/PROC/EDF/8.3/10/2020/09TPL

**REQUEST FOR SERVICES TITLE:** CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO REVIEW THE CURRENT THRESHOLD FOR THE SIMPLIFIED TRADE REGIME (STR)

1. ***The COMESA Secretariat*** is inviting Individual Consultants to submit their CV and Financial Proposal for the following services:

**CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO REVIEW THE CURRENT THRESHOLD FOR THE SIMPLIFIED TRADE REGIME (STR)**

The Terms of Reference defining the minimum technical requirements for these services are attached as Annex 1 to this Request for Expression of Interest.

**2. Only Individual Consultants are eligible for this assignment**

**3.** The maximum budget for this contract is **US$15,000 *for expert service/consultants’ fees only.*** Proposals exceeding this budget will not be accepted.

**4**. Your Expression of Interest must be presented as per Expression of Interest Forms attached as Annex 2 to this Request for Expression of Interest, in the English language and be accompanied by copies of all the indicated supporting documents. If the supporting documents are not in English, these shall be accompanied by a certified translation into English.

**5.** Your application documents clearly marked and email bearing the subject **“****CS/PROC/EDF/8.3/10/2020/09TPL -CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO REVIEW THE CURRENT THRESHOLD FOR THE SIMPLIFIED TRADE REGIME (STR)*”***, should be emailed to the following address:

***procurement@comesa.int***

6. The deadline for submission of your application, to the address indicated in Paragraph 5 above, is:

***15TH JANUARY 2021 AT 16:00 hours***

7. ***Physical submission of applications is NOT allowed.***

**8.** Your CV will be evaluated against the following criteria.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Criteria**  | **Maximum points allocated**  |
| **1** | General qualifications | 20 |
| 2 | Adequacy for the assignment | 60 |
| 3 | Experience in the region | 20 |
|  | **Total** | **100** |

**9.** Your proposal should be submitted as per the following instructions:

(i) PRICES:

The financial proposal shall be inclusive of all expenses deemed necessary by the Individual Consultant for the performance of the contract.

(ii) EVALUATION AND AWARD OF THE CONTRACT:

Expressions of Interest determined to be formally compliant to the requirements will be further evaluated technically.

An Expression of Interest is considered compliant to the requirements if:

* It fulfils the formal requirements (see Paragraphs 2,3,4,5,6 and 7 above),
* The financial proposal does not exceed the maximum available budget for the contract.

The award will be made to the applicant who obtains the highest technical score. Expressions of Interest not obtaining a minimum score of 70% will be rejected.

(iii) VALIDITY OF THE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST:

Your Expression of Interest should be valid for a period of 90 days from the date of deadline for submission indicated in Paragraph 6 above.

10. The assignment is expected to commence within two (2) weeks from the signature of the contract.

11. Additional requests for information and clarifications can be made until 7 working days prior to deadline indicated in the paragraph 6 above, from:

The Procuring entity: ***COMESA Secretariat***

 Contact person: ***Ted Peter Luka***

E-mail: ***tluka@comesa.int******;***  ***smwesigwa@comesa.int******;***

The answers on the questions received will be sent to the Consultant and all questions received as well as the answers to them will be posted on the COMESA Secretariat’s website at the latest 3 working days before the deadline for submission of applications.

**ANNEXES:**

ANNEX 1: **Terms of Reference**

ANNEX 2**: Expression of Interest Forms**

**Sincerely,**

**Name:** Silver Mwesigwa

**Title:** Head of Procurement

**Date:** 30 NOVEMBER 2020

**ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO REVIEW THE CURRENT** **THRESHOLD FOR THE SIMPLIFIED TRADE REGIME (STR)**

**1. Introduction**

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) attained the free trade status in November 2000 and the large and established companies who could obtain the certificates of origin were the major beneficiaries of the FTA. The small scale cross border traders were not benefiting as expected despite being eligible hence the development of the STR to bring them on board.

COMESA is implementing the Simplified Trade Regime (STR) in eight Member States namely: Burundi, D R Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The aim of STR is to facilitate small-scale cross border trade at selected border posts, enable them to benefit from the COMESA preferential tariffs and simplify the process of goods clearing at the borders.

COMESA has received funding under the 11th EDF to support activities under the COMESA Cross Border Trade Initiative - Facilitating Small Scale Trade across borders. The aim of this programme is to increase formal small-scale cross border trade flows in the COMESA/tripartite region leading to higher revenue collection by governments at the borders as well as increased security and higher incomes for small scale cross border traders. The main beneficiaries of the programme are the small-scale cross border traders, majority of which are women.

The main pillars of the STR are:

1. The threshold value of goods that can be traded per transaction under the regime which currently stands at USD 2000. This value has changed over time and is determined through the COMESA Policy Organs processes;
2. Common List of Goods to be traded under the regime which is agreed upon by the trading partners at bilateral level. The common list consists of goods that are known to originate in the countries concerned and meet the COMESA rules of origin; and
3. Simplified Customs Declaration Document.

In 2011, Council decided to further simplify the STR by making the Simplified Certificate of Origin not a requirement for the goods that are on the Common List.

**2. Historical Background to the current Threshold level of USD Two Thousand (2,000) and rationale for the Study**

The first threshold level at the launch of the STR in 2010 was USD 500. However, small scale traders complained that this amount was too low and did not allow them an opportunity to grow their businesses and incomes, and hence requested for an increase to USD1000. The Council decided that the threshold be raised to USD1000 in 2011. The threshold was further raised to USD2000 by a Council of Ministers Decision in the year 2014 in Kinshasa, D R Congo.

The Policy Dialogue on the STR attended by COMESA STR implementing countries in October 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya discussed the STR threshold and recommended that a study be conducted to determine the appropriate threshold for the STR. Consequently, the 40th Council of Ministers meeting, held in Lusaka, Zambia, in November 2019 decided that the COMESA Secretariat should undertake a study to review the suitability of the current threshold of USD2,000 to inform the Council in deciding the appropriate STR threshold.

**2. Objectives**

The aim of the assignment is to review the current STR threshold of USD 2000.

**3. Geographical Scope**

The study will focus on the following borders:

1. Kasindi (DRC) / Mpondwe (Uganda)
2. Goma (DRC) / Petite Barrière Rubavu (Rwanda)
3. Chirundu (Zambia/Zimbabwe)
4. Mchinji/Mwami (Malawi/Zambia)
5. Malaba (Kenya/Uganda)
6. Kasumbalesa (D R Congo/Zambia)

**4. Specific tasks**

The specific tasks will be to: -

1. Establish the current scope of goods traded under the STR at each of the targeted borders;
2. Engage small scale cross border traders, border agency officials and relevant policy makers on the suitability of the current STR threshold at the selected borders;
3. Determine the average value of consignments declared by small scale cross border traders;
4. Assess the impact of the current STR threshold on trade flows by direction (imports/exports) volume, value, traders’ incomes and government revenues between selected countries.
5. Determine the suitability of the current STR threshold in facilitating regional trade and integration in countries implementing the STR.
6. Use an objective method to determine and propose adjustments if any, to the current threshold that would be appropriate for enhanced implementation of the STR.
7. Recommend an appropriate level of the STR threshold and strategies as well as actions required to be taken by COMESA Policy organs in order to streamline and enhance implementation of the STR.

**5. Expected deliverables and timelines during 3 months working period**

The key outputs will include:

1. **Inception Report** – This will provide critical details of how the assignment will be executed including the interpretation and understanding of the ToRs, methodology, work plan and the study tools (5 days after signing the contract);
2. Monthly progress reports on execution of the assignment;
3. ***Draft Study Report-*** *This will include literature review, fieldwork, draft findings* and the recommendations (75 days after signing the contract);
4. **Final Study Report -** This will be a refined version of the draft report incorporating the comments of the client/stakeholders (within 10 days of receiving comments from the client/stakeholders);
5. **Policy Brief for Enhancing Implementation of the STR through appropriate levels of the STR threshold and other measures.–** This will be a stand-alone ***high level summary*** based on the findings and recommendations of the study for the consideration of COMESA Policy Organs and other policy makers of the countries implementing the STR (together with the final report, within 5 days of receiving comments from the client/stakeholders).

**6. Qualifications and experience**

The suitable consultant should be an individual with the following qualifications and experience:

1. Possess a Masters degree in Economics, Customs, International Trade Law and International Trade;
2. Minimum of 5 years experience in the area of cross border trade clearance and facilitation;
3. Thorough knowledge and understanding of the COMESA STR;
4. Knowledge of small-scale cross-border trade;
5. Knowledge of gender issues in cross border trade;
6. Knowledge of regional integration issues in COMESA;
7. Proven experience and skills in conducting field works and quantitative/qualitative analysis;
8. Proven experience in formulating policy briefs and advocacy frameworks;
9. Strong interpersonal and communications skills;
10. Strong computer skills especially in Microsoft packages and applications; and
11. Fluent in both written and spoken English. Ability to communicate in French or any of the local languages on the project border communities will be an added advantage.

**7. Location and Duration**

The assignment is for a total duration of three (3) months. The duty station will be Home based with possibility of travel to COMESA Secretariat and the study countries as and when necessary upon discussion and agreement with the client.

**8. Reporting**

The consultant shall be under the overall supervision of the Director, Trade and Customs and direct supervision of the Team Leader/Cross Border Trade Expert under the Cross Border Trade Initiative with support from, Senior Research Fellow and Project Coordinator, Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project at COMESA Secretariat in Lusaka.

**9. Payment Schedule**

The consultant will be paid a lumpsum of US$15 000 for the service. For travel outside the duty station the consultant will be paid DSA according to COMESA rates.

The contract is set and payable as follows;

20% after submission of Inception report which is of acceptable COMESA standards

30% after submission of draft report which is of acceptable COMESA standards

50% after submission of acceptable COMESA standards final report (after validation).

**ANNEX 2: Expression of Interest Forms**

[A. COVER LETTER FOR THE EXPESSION OF INTEREST FOR THE PROJECT 11](#_Toc267927845)

[B. CURRICULUM VITAE 13](#_Toc267927846)

[C. FINANCIAL PROPOSAL 17](#_Toc267927847)

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# A. COVER LETTER FOR THE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR THE PROJECT

REFERENCE NUMBER: CS/PROC/EDF/8.3/10/2020/09TPL

REQUEST FOR SERVICES TITLE: **CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO REVIEW THE CURRENT THRESHOLD FOR THE SIMPLIFIED TRADE REGIME (STR)**

[*Location, Date*]

To: COMESA Secretariat

Dear Sirs:

I, the undersigned, offer to provide the consulting services for the ***CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO REVIEW THE CURRENT THRESHOLD FOR THE SIMPLIFIED TRADE REGIME (STR)*** in accordance with your Request for Expression of Interests number *CS/PROC/EDF/8.3/10/2020/09TPL,* dated [*insert date*] for the sum of [*Insert amount(s) in words and figures*]. This amount is inclusive of all expenses deemed necessary for the performance of the contract in accordance with the Terms of Reference requirements.

I hereby declare that all the information and statements made in my CV are true and accept that any misinterpretation contained in it may lead to my disqualification.

My proposal is binding upon me for the period indicated in Paragraph 9(iii) of this Request for Expression of Interest.

I undertake, if my Proposal is accepted, to initiate the consulting services related to the assignment not later than the date indicated in Paragraph 10 of the Request for Expression of Interest, and to be available for the entire duration of the contract as specified in the Terms of Reference.

I understand you are not bound to accept any Proposal you receive.

Yours sincerely,

Signature [*In full and initials*]:

Name and Title of Signatory:

B. CURRICULUM VITAE

***[insert full name]***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Family name:**
 | *[insert the name]* |
| 1. **First names:**
 | *[insert the names in full]* |
| 1. **Date of birth:**
 | *[insert the date]* |
| 1. **Nationality:**
 | *[insert the country or countries of citizenship]* |
|  |  |
| 1. **Physical address:**
2. **Postal address**
3. **Phone:**
4. **E-mail:**
 | *[insert the physical address]**[Insert Postal Address]**[insert the phone and mobile no.]**[Insert E-mail address(es)* |
| 1. **Education:**
 |  |
|  |  |
| **Institution:****[Date from – Date to]** | **Degree(s) or Diploma(s) obtained:** |
| *[indicate the month and the year]* | *[insert the name of the diploma and the specialty/major]* |
| *[indicate the month and the year]* | *[insert the name of the diploma and the specialty/major]* |

**10. Language skills:** (Indicate competence on a scale of 1 to 5) (1 – excellent; 5 – basic)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Language** | **Reading** | **Speaking** | **Writing** |
| *[insert the language]* | *[insert the no.]* | *[insert the no.]* | *[insert the no.]* |
| *[insert the no.]* | *[insert the no.]* | *[insert the no.]* | *[insert the no.]* |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **11. Membership of professional bodies:**  | *[indicate the name of the professional body]* |
| **12. Other skills:** | *[insert the skills]* |
| **13. Present position:** | *[insert the name]* |
| **14. Years of experience:** | *[insert the no]* |
| **15. Key qualifications:** (Relevant to the assignment)*[insert the key qualifications]* |

**16. Specific experience in the region:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Date from - Date to** |
| *[insert the country]* | *[indicate the month and the year]* |
| *................* | *......................* |
| *[insert the country]* | *[indicate the month and the year]* |

**17. Professional experience:**

| **Date from – Date to** | **Location of the assignment** | **Company& reference person (name & contact details)** | **Position** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *[indicate the month and the year]* | *[indicate the country and the city]* | ***Name of the Company:******Address of the company:******Phone:******Fax:******Email:*** ***Name and title of the reference person from the company:*** | *[indicate the exact name and title and if it was a short term or a long term position]* | ***Name of the Assignment:*** ***Beneficiary of the Assignment:******Brief description of the Assignment:*** ***Responsibilities:*** |
| ................ | …………….. | ……………………. | …………… | ………………………………………………………………………….. |
| *[indicate the month and the year]* | *[indicate the country and the city]* | ***Name of the Company:******Address of the company:******Phone:******Fax:******Email:*** ***Name and title of the reference person from the company:*** | *[indicate the exact name and title and if it was a short term or a long term position]* | ***Name of the Assignment:*** ***Beneficiary of the Assignment:******Brief description of the Assignment:*** ***Responsibilities:*** |

1. **Other relevant information:** (e.g. Publications)

***[insert the details]***

***19. Statement:***

I, the undersigned, certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief, this CV correctly describes myself, my qualifications, and my experience. I understand that any wilful misstatement described herein may lead to my disqualification or dismissal, if engaged.

I hereby declare that at any point in time, at the COMESA Secretariat’s request, I will provide certified copies of all documents to prove that I have the qualifications and the professional experience as indicated in points 8 and 14 above**[[1]](#footnote-1),** documents which are attached to this CV as photocopies.

By signing this statement, I also authorize the COMESA Secretariat to contact my previous or current employers indicated at point 14 above, to obtain directly reference about my professional conduct and achievements.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Date: |  |

**ATTACHMENTS:** ***1) Proof of qualifications indicated at point 9***
 ***2) Proof of working experience indicated at point 15***

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# C. FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

**REFERENCE NUMBER:** CS/PROC/EDF/8.3/10/2020/09TPL - CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO REVIEW THE CURRENT THRESHOLD FOR THE SIMPLIFIED TRADE REGIME (STR)

Please insert your Total Financial Offer in both words and figures.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TOTAL FINANCIAL OFFER**  |  |

*[Please insert the Total Financial Offer in words]*.

Signature [*In full and initials*]:

Name and Title of Signatory:

1. ***The proof of stated qualifications shall be in the form of the copies of the degrees and diploma obtained, while for the professional experience the proof shall be either acknowledgement letters from the previous employers or copies of the Purchase Order/ Contract signed with them.***  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)