**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 DEVELOP A TECHNICAL PAPER ON BILATERAL VS REGIONAL COMMON LISTS OF ELIGIBLE PRODUCTS 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 DEVELOP A TECHNICAL PAPER ON BILATERAL VS REGIONAL COMMON LISTS OF ELIGIBLE PRODUCTS 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 **USD 10,000 *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/8.3/10/2020/10TPL -CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO DEVELOP A TECHNICAL PAPER ON BILATERAL VS REGIONAL COMMON LISTS OF ELIGIBLE PRODUCTS 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 develop a technical paper on bilateral vs regional common lists of eligible products for the Simplified Trade Regime (STR)***

1. **Introduction**

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) designed the Simplified Trade Regime (STR) in 2009. The main objective of the STR is to enable the small-scale cross border traders to benefit from the COMESA preferential tariffs and to simplify the process of clearing goods under COMESA trade regime. COMESA attained free trade status in November 2000 and the large and established companies which could obtain certificates of origin were the major FTA beneficiaries. The small-scale cross border traders were not able to do the same hence were not benefitting even though they were also entitled; hence the development of the STR.

Currently, eight COMESA Member States are implementing the STR, namely: Burundi, D R Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

COMESA has received funding from the European Union under the 11th EDF to support activities under the COMESA Cross Border Trade Initiative- Facilitating Small-Scale Trade across borders programme. Activity 1.1 of the programme is on facilitating policy dialogue on small-scale cross border trade at COMESA (in the context of the Trade and Customs Committee) and tripartite levels with a view to harmonizing the different STR regimes (EAC, COMESA, and SADC). The main beneficiaries of the programme are the small-scale cross border traders.

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 or less. 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 that has been 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 therefore eligible for Common Market preferential tariff treatment;
3. Simplified Customs Declaration Document; and
4. The Simplified Certificate of origin.

The Simplified Certificate of Origin is no longer a requirement since the products on the Common Lists are assumed to be originating in the COMESA region.

1. **Historical Background to the bilateral Common Lists as well as Regional Common list and rationale for the Study**

One of the key characteristics of the STR is the Common List of eligible products. Member States with common borders agree on a list of originating goods that are commonly traded by the small-scale cross border traders. The goods can either be “wholly produced” or meet any of the other criteria of the COMESA rules of origin. Consequently, neighbouring Member States implementing the STR negotiate and agree on a Common list of eligible products.

The common list of products is distributed to all offices of the Designated Issuing Authorities (Customs offices) of the concerned member States who use this information to identify the goods that are eligible to be traded under the Simplified Trade Regime and thus declared using on the simplified customs declaration form. The list is also used by small scale traders as information on eligible products that can be traded under the STR.

The East African Community (EAC) has a regional common list of eligible products for the STR which is negotiated and agreed regionally as opposed to bilateral common lists that exist under COMESA. At the Policy Dialogue on the STR which was held on 8-9 October 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya, the issue of bilateral vs regional common list was briefly discussed with a view to harmonization of the implementation of the STR within the Tripartite but no analysis had been done to inform a recommendation as to which approach was preferable. Hence the Dialogue recommended that a technical paper be developed to inform discussion on the matter. The recommendation was upheld by Council at its 40th meeting which decided that a technical paper on bilateral vs regional common list be developed. The same Council meeting also decided that for goods that are on the bilateral list, even if they are from other COMESA Member States, but have originating status, they should be allowed to be traded under the STR.

1. **Objective**

The aim of the assignment is to analyze the bilateral common lists for the eight COMESA Member States implementing the STR (Burundi, D R Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and assess the merits and demerits of bilateral as opposed to regional Common Lists. This will enable the consultant to recommend whether COMESA should consider a regional common list or continue with bilateral common lists.

1. **Specific tasks**

The specific tasks expected of the consultant will be to: -

1. Analyze the bilateral common lists for countries that are implementing the STR to establish the similarities and differences among the bilateral lists as well as the challenges that Member States could have in implementing the bilateral common lists;
2. Analyze the regional Common list of the EAC in terms of product coverage and compare it with the bilateral common lists between COMESA-EAC common Member States.
3. Establish the conditions that would favour a regional common list as well as those that would favour bilateral common lists (level of integration, similarity of the bilateral common lists, customs coordination and information sharing, etc.);
4. Undertake a comparative analysis of bilateral common lists and regional lists clearly stating the advantages and disadvantages of each; and
5. Make recommendations on the best approach to establishing lists for COMESA and Tripartite STR to adopt.
6. **Expected deliverables and timelines for 2 months working period**

The key outputs expected from the consultant include the following:

1. **Inception Report** – This will include critical details of how the assignment will be executed including the methodology, work plan and the study tools (5 days after signing the contract);
2. **Draft Study Report**: **-** This will include literature review, analysis of common lists, comparative analysis of the bilateral common lists, analysis of the EAC regional lists, drawing best practices and the recommendations (40 days after signing the contract); and
3. **Final Study Report -** This will be a refined version of the draft report incorporating the comments of the client/stakeholders (within 15 days of receiving comments from the client/stakeholders);

In addition to the above core outputs, the consultant will also deliver other outputs as may be required by the client including regular assignment progress reports, field documents, study tools, PowerPoint summary, and an executive summary (which can double as a policy brief), among others.

1. **Qualifications and experience**

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

1. Possess a Master’s degree in Economics, Customs management, and International Trade;
2. Minimum of 5 years’ experience in the area of cross border clearance and trade 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; EAC and/or SADC
7. Proven experience and skills in conducting research fieldworks and quantitative/qualitative analysis;
8. Strong interpersonal and communications skills;
9. Strong computer skills especially in Microsoft office;
10. 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.

**Location and Duration**

The duty station will be Home based. The assignment is for a total duration of two (2) months. No travel is envisaged in developing this technical paper.

1. **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 the COMESA Secretariat in Lusaka.

**8. Payment Schedule**

The consultant will be paid a lumpsum of USD10 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 final report (after validation).acceptable COMESA standards

**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/8.3/10/2020/10TPL

REQUEST FOR SERVICES TITLE: **CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO DEVELOP A TECHNICAL PAPER ON BILATERAL VS REGIONAL COMMON LISTS OF ELIGIBLE PRODUCTS 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 DEVELOP A TECHNICAL PAPER ON BILATERAL VS REGIONAL COMMON LISTS OF ELIGIBLE PRODUCTS FOR THE SIMPLIFIED TRADE REGIME (STR)*** in accordance with your Request for Expression of Interests number *CS/PROC/EDF/8.3/10/2020/10TPL,* 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/8.3/10/2020/10TPL - CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO DEVELOP A TECHNICAL PAPER ON BILATERAL VS REGIONAL COMMON LISTS OF ELIGIBLE PRODUCTS 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)