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**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

**SELECTION OF INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS**

**REFERENCE NUMBER:** **CS/PROC/TRADE/02.8.2022/ 01 KJ**

**REQUEST FOR SERVICES TITLE:** **SHORT TERM CONSULTANCY CONTRACT TO FINALIZE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMESA REGIONAL AUTHORIZED ECONOMIC OPERATOR PROGRAMME**

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

**SHORT TERM CONSULTANCY CONTRACT TO FINALIZE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMESA REGIONAL AUTHORIZED ECONOMIC OPERATOR PROGRAMME**

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

1. **Only Individual Consultants are eligible for this assignment**
2. The maximum budget for this contract is **Euro 36,000.00 *for expert service/consultants’ fees only.*** Proposals exceeding this budget will not be accepted.
3. 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.
4. Your application documents clearly marked and email bearing the subject **“****:** **CS/PROC/TRADE/29.7.2022/ 01 KJ - SHORT TERM CONSULTANCY CONTRACT TO FINALIZE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMESA REGIONAL AUTHORIZED ECONOMIC OPERATOR PROGRAMME*”***, should be emailed to the following address:

[***tenders@comesa.int***](mailto:tenders@comesa.int) ***or procurement@comesa.int***

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

***22 AUGUST 2022 AT 15:00 hours***

1. ***Physical submission of applications is NOT allowed.***
2. 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** |

1. 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 Paragraphs2,3,4,5,6 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.

1. The assignment is expected to commence within two (2) weeks from the signature of the contract.
2. Additional requests for information and clarifications can be made until7working days prior to deadline indicated in the paragraph 6 above, from:

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

Contact person: ***Kheliza Jumbe***

E-mail: [***kjumbe@comesa.int***](mailto:kjumbe@comesa.int)***;*** [***smwesigwa@comesa.int***](mailto:smwesigwa@comesa.int)***;*** [***cchaitezvi@comesa.int***](mailto:%20cchaitezvi@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:** 02 August 2022

**ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**SHORT TERM CONSULTANCY - TO FINALIZE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMESA REGIONAL AUTHORIZED ECONOMIC OPERATOR PROGRAMME**

**BACKGROUND**

The Thirty SeventhCouncil 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. This commitment was retained in the Revised customs and trade facilitation work programme (2021 to 2025) adopted by the 41st Council in November 2021. 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 Programme in a similar way in line with the spirit of the CMR and the international standards including the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards and the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

A desk assessment done in 2018 by the Secretariat indicated that the implementation of AEO programmes 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 the **COMESA Regional AEO Programme Implementation Guidelines.** The main objective of the guidelines is to provide for regionally harmonised procedures and criteria for granting the status of AEO in line with the CMR, WCO Safe Framework of Standards 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 AEO Guidelines** were adopted by Council in November 2019**. A Standard Operating Procédures Manual** has also been developed which is awaiting formal adoption by Council.

COMESA Member States have also developed the **COMESA Regional AEO implementation roadmap** which was adopted by the 42nd meeting of the Council of Ministers in November 2021. Under this roadmap there is a requirement that the Secretariat should conduct AEO diagnostics in COMESA Member States.

The Secretariat intends to recruit an AEO Expert for six (6) months to support the Regional Technical Working Group on the COMESA AEO to finalize the remaining activities under the development phase of the COMESA Regional AEO Programme.

This assignment will be funded by the EU-COMESA EDF 11 Trade Facilitation Programme under Result Area 2.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The main objective of the consultancy service is to provide technical assistance to the COMESA Secretariat and the Regional Working Group on AEO to finalize the development of the COMESA Regional Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programme by ensuring that all the requirements for launching the AEO pilot phase are in place including the AEO diagnostic report on AEO implementation in COMESA Member States.

**Scope of work Methodology**

Under the direct supervision of the Team Leader Trade Facilitation Programme and overall guidance of the Director of Trade and Customs, the consultant shall:

1. Facilitate activities of the COMESA Regional Technical Working Group on AEO and the Customs-Industry Consultative Group to finalize the development of and implement the COMESA Regional AEO Programme;
2. Develop terms of reference for the Customs-Industry Consultative Group on the COMESA AEO programme;
3. Conduct AEO diagnostics in COMESA Member States to identify challenges hindering implementation of AEO programmes and develop AEO upgrade plans;
4. Develop the Regional Risk Management strategy and Regional Post Clearance Audit Manual to support the implementation of an AEO programme;
5. Benchmark development of a centralized AEO IT platform and develop COMESA Regional IT platform user requirements;
6. Undertake capacity building activities as required to support implementation of the COMESA Regional AEO Scheme; and
7. Undertake other related tasks as may be required by the supervisor or the Trade and Customs Division of the Secretariat.

**DELIVERABLES**

1. Report of Workshop to engage COMESA AEO stakeholders;
2. Terms of Reference for the Customs-Industry Consultative Group on the COMESA AEO programme;
3. AEO diagnostics report;
4. Draft Regional Risk Management strategy and Regional Post Clearance Audit Manual
5. Draft COMESA Regional IT platform user requirements; and
6. Draft and Final reports on the assignment supported by all required documentations and data.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED**

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

1. University degree in Economics, International Trade, Business Administration or Customs Management;
2. At least 10 years in Customs 3 of which should be in the implementation of AEO programmes;
3. Proven extensive knowledge in the COMESA Treaty, Customs Management Regulations, WCO instruments and tools relevant to AEO, including the SAFE Framework of Standards and WTO TFA measures on Trade Facilitation.
4. Extensive knowledge on the Authorized Economic Operator Scheme (Possession of WCO Accreditation on the AEO Scheme required);
5. Demonstrated working experience in developing international (WCO) tools and instruments in the area of SAFE and AEO as well as in developing and implementing AEO programmes (experience in the design of the COMESA Regional AEO programme desired);
6. Experience in delivery of capacity building and technical assistance support to countries (at least 3 countries) in the area of AEO;
7. Preference may be given to experts with complementary experience in international/regional organizations; and
8. Good communication skills and good command in English language and knowledge of other COMESA official languages (Arabic or French) will be an advantage.

**OFFICIAL DUTY STATION**

The Consultant will work from home with travel to the Member States.

**DURATION OF THE CONTRACT**

The Consultancy assignment is for a total duration of six (6) months effective from the date of signature of contract with a possibility of extension under phase 2 of the pilot phase.

**SUPERVISION**

The Consultant works under the direct supervision of the Team Leader of Trade Facilitation Programme under the guidance of the Director of Trade & Customs Division.

**REMUNERATION**

1. The fee budget available for the assignment is Eur 36,000.00;
2. 20% of the consultancy fee upon submission of the Inception Report;
3. 30% of the consultancy upon production of the AEO Diagnostics report;
4. 50% upon completing the assignment and submission of final report; and
5. The COMESA Secretariat will cover the costs of tickets and subsistence allowances for approved travel in the region.

**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/TRADE/29.7.2022/ 01 KJ

REQUEST FOR SERVICES TITLE: **SHORT TERM CONSULTANCY CONTRACT TO FINALIZE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMESA REGIONAL AUTHORIZED ECONOMIC OPERATOR PROGRAMME**

*Country, Date*

To: COMESA Secretariat

Dear Sirs:

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_the undersigned, offer to provide the consulting services for the ***SHORT-TERM CONSULTANCY CONTRACT TO FINALIZE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMESA REGIONAL AUTHORIZED ECONOMIC OPERATOR PROGRAMME*** in accordance with your Request for Expression of Interests number *CS/PROC/TRADE/29.7.2022/ 01 KJ,* dated 2nd August, 2022 for the sum of Thirty-Six Thousand Euros (36,000). 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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Family name:** |  |
| 1. **First names:** |  |
| 1. **Date of birth:** |  |
| 1. **Nationality:** |  |
|  |  |
| 1. **Physical address:** 2. **Postal address** 3. **Phone:** 4. **E-mail:** 5. **Education:** |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Institution:**  **[Date from – Date to]** | **Degree(s) or Diploma(s) obtained:** |
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**10. Language skills:** (Indicate competence on a scale of 1 to 5) (1 – excellent; 5 – basic)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Language** | **Reading** | **Speaking** | **Writing** |
| English |  |  |  |
| Arabic |  |  |  |
| Hausa |  |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **11. Membership of professional bodies:** |  |
| **12. Other skills:** |  |
| **13. Present position:** |  |
| **14. Years of experience:** |  |
| **15. Key qualifications:** | |

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Date from - Date to** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
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**17. Professional experience:**

| **Date from – Date to** | **Location of the assignment** | **Company& reference person (name & contact details)** | **Position** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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1. **Other relevant information:**

***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/TRADE/29.7.2022/ 01 KJ - SHORT TERM CONSULTANCY CONTRACT TO FINALIZE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMESA REGIONAL AUTHORIZED ECONOMIC OPERATOR PROGRAMME

Please sign off to confirm your acceptance of the Total Financial Offer.

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

Thirty Thousand Euros all-inclusive fee for the consultancy.

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)