RFP No: ASLM-ACDC-Biosafety-01/12/2020

RFP for Selection of Consultant to

Support African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM) - Africa Centres for Disease Control Biosafety and Biosecurity Capacity Building Project to develop a Training and Certification Program for Selection, Installation, Maintenance and Certification of Biological Safety Cabinets

December 2020
1 Acronyms

Africa CDC  African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
ASLM    African Society for Laboratory Medicine
BSC    Biological Safety Cabinet
BSCCP  Biological Safety Cabinets Certification Program
CoE     Centre of Excellence
COVID-19  Coronavirus disease 2019
HEPA  High-efficiency particulate air
MoU   Memorandum of Understanding
NSF  National Sanitation Foundation Standards
RFP  Request for Proposals
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3 Introduction

The Africa Centers for Disease Control (Africa CDC) launched the Biosafety and Security Initiative in April 2019 to strengthen the biosecurity and biosafety systems of African Union Member States and enable them to comply with international standards for safety. Recent events of public health concern—emergency of infectious diseases including the COVID-19 SARS pandemic and increased use of biocontainment laboratories, have heightened the need for effective implementation of biosafety and biosecurity programs that include installation and proper functioning of containment facilities, consistent use of primary containment equipment and good laboratory practices.

As the primary means for containing and protecting laboratory workers and the environment against potentially harmful and infectious microorganisms, Biological Safety Cabinets (BSCs) are required to function optimally. This requires appropriate selection, installation, proper use and regular scheduled maintenance and certification by suitably qualified personnel. Current certification requires compliance with international standards like the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) Standards. These highly skilled technicians are not readily available in the Africa Region resulting in Member States incurring unsustainable high costs for engaging international certifiers.

The proposed Biological Safety Cabinets Certification Program (BSCCP) seek to address the lack of trained and qualified personnel in to select, install, maintain, and certify BSCs.

4 Objective of the Request for Proposal

ASLM is soliciting a vendor (consultant, subject matter expert) to support ASLM-Africa CDC Biosafety and Biosecurity Project develop a “Training and Certification Program for Selection, Installation, Maintenance and Certification of Biological Safety Cabinets Program” that is inline with regional and international standards. The vendor is expected to be well versed with requirements for Biosafety and Biosecurity, selection, installation, use, maintenance and certification of BSCs and have a strong curriculum development background. Successful bidders will sign an agreement with ASLM to complete the work within 2 months.

5 Scope of Work

The aim of this consultancy is to develop a “Training and Certification Program for Selection, Installation, Maintenance and Certification of Biological Safety Cabinets Program” that will be presented to and adopted by African Union Member States for implementation across the Africa Region. The training program to be designed must follow regional and international standards including the NSF-49 Standard and be consistent with other training programs offered internationally.

The training program designed shall follow international standards of both theoretical and practical/competency assessment based training models, for example, a design with 2 Certification Levels;
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Level 1 - Theoretical and practical demonstrations and Level 2 - Practical and competency based evaluation. The level 1 training is proposed to be conducted at selected Centers of Excellence (CoE) for Laboratory Equipment Servicing and Maintenance within the Africa Region. Africa CDC, in collaboration with Member States, regional and international partners shall establish Regional CoEs using a defined standard selection criterion. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) shall be signed between Africa CDC and the host Member States. Level 2 practical and competency evaluations shall be conducted in-country using local or regional experts. Africa CDC, through its partners shall coordinate and support deployment of local or regional experts to conduct competency assessments in-country.

ASLM may, at its discretion, organize visits to existing Centres of Excellence for benchmarking during the development of the curriculum. Where this is indicated by ASLM, it shall be communicated to and jointly organized with the consultant.

5.1 Deliverables

- **Level 1 Training Curriculum.** This shall cover theoretical and demonstration content to be delivered over 10 days in areas that include, at minimum, the following
  - Downflow velocity
  - Inflow velocity test
  - Airflow smoke patterns test
  - HEPA filter leak test
  - Decontamination
  - Site installation assessment
  - Vibration
  - Noise level
  - Lighting intensity
  - Electrical leakage, ground circuit resistance, and polarity tests.
  - Generating a calibration and certification report

- **Level 2 Training Curriculum.** An in-country based competency assessment process, with successful completion of servicing and calibration of at least 10 BSCs and a recommendation from the certified person.

- **Competency evaluation Checklist.** A competency evaluation checklist and acceptance criteria for Level 2 certification that covers, at minimum the following areas
  - Downflow velocity
  - Inflow velocity (primary, direct inflow measurement)
  - Inflow velocity (secondary, exhaust velocity)
  - Calculating inflow/downflow velocity from volume
  - Smoke patterns
  - HEPA leak (Scan and gross probe)
  - Lighting intensity
  - Vibration test
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- Noise level test
- Electrical leakage, ground circuit resistance, and polarity tests.
- Site installation assessment
- Decontamination – paraformaldehyde method

- **Continued Professional Development.** Process for continued professional development and requirements for continued certification and maintenance of the Level 2 certificate.
- **Centres of Excellence.** Requirements for Regional BSC Training Centers of Excellence where Level 1 training and certification shall be implemented
- **Training Needs.** List of equipment and training needs for effective delivery of both Level 1 and Level 2 Certification

The review shall include checking deliverables in relation to the scope of work and feedback from the Project team.

**Period of performance:** 1 February 2021 to 31st March 2021

**Approximate total budget:** TBD

*N.B. This consultancy shall be paid on a task basis and is NOT a monthly consultancy; as such it shall be paid as and when the assigned deliverables are undertaken.*

### 6 Qualifications for the position

1. Strong Biosafety and Biosecurity background
2. Training and Experience in selection, installation, use, maintenance, calibration and certification of BSCs
3. Proven track record of supporting Laboratory Networks in BSCs maintenance and certification in the Africa Region
4. Experience in developing creative, interdisciplinary and interactive curriculum
5. Excellent proficiency in the English language

### 7 Instructions for submitting proposals

A. The format of the submission, in response to this RFP, must include, but is not limited, to the following:

   I. Background on the Respondent and qualification and experience. Indicate how these qualifications and experience relate to the proposed functional areas applied for.
   II. Capability Statement. The Capability Statement is a description of the Respondent’s work history and/or experience with similar projects in the past five (5) years. This should include but is not
limited to, a narrative description of the principal results achieved, how they were achieved and how those results related to the problem statement being addressed.

III. How the Respondent proposes to achieve the deliverables. Include specific activities and strategic approach that will be conducted under each area of delivery

B. Completed proposals shall consist of typewritten pages utilizing a minimum 12-point font. A maximum of 15 pages for the proposal is allowed.

C. An authorized individual representing the Respondent will sign and date the proposal cover sheet. The signatory agent’s printed name, title, name of the organization, address, phone and fax numbers and email address must be provided. Failure to provide a signed copy of the affirmation statement below will be cause for the proposal not to be considered.

I affirm that the information within this proposal, to the best of my knowledge, is true and accurate. Further, I am duly authorized to sign and submit this proposal on behalf of this agency. I fully affirm and understand that failure to meet the requirements of this proposal at the submitted price may result in my organization’s contract being terminated.

D. Include at least two (2) current references and their contact information from organizations that have used Respondent’s services within the last 3 years.

E. Send your completed application by email to: rfpsubmission@aslm.org, and copy tmaruta@aslm.org by 31st December 2020 (11:59 pm East African Time).

Point of contact:
Direct any written questions or request for information about this RFP to:

Talkmore Maruta
Senior Biosafety and Biosecurity Officer
Email: tmaruta@aslm.org
Phone Number: +260 960 982 127

8 Evaluation and Award Process
A team of ASLM staff and outside experts will evaluate the applications based on preset standards relevant to the specific project and its correlation with the RFP objectives. An evaluation matrix with assigned weighted numerical values will be used to rate each applicant. The following represents some, although not all, of the criteria that will be used to rate each Respondent.

1. Does the organization/individual have the right skillset and expertise to accomplish the required assignments?
2. Does the organization/individual demonstrate adequate and verifiable past experience in similar projects?
3. Are the Respondent’s proposed activities (strategy of implementation) current, feasible and cost-effective?
4. Are the proposed outcomes measurable and feasible?
5. Did the application include references that attest to the Respondents personal and professional integrity and competency?
6. Did the Respondent demonstrate knowledge of ASLM’s project needs and objectives?

ASLM reserves the right, but is under no obligation, to enter into discussions with one or more Respondents in order to obtain clarifications or additional details, to suggest service delivery refinements in the proposal or other aspects of the proposal, or to negotiate the cost of the proposal. Formal notification to award the contract and the actual execution of the contract are subject to receipt of funds from the Fleming Fund.

Each Respondent submitting a proposal will be notified in writing or via e-mail of ASLM’s decision concerning their proposal. Should you be recommended for acceptance, the contract shall be effective on the contract execution date and shall run until 31st March 2021. All work must be scheduled and completed within the contract period timeframe. Any modifications or extensions must be negotiated in advance and submitted to ASLM for review and approval. The selected Respondent's proposal, and any subsequent material submitted in response to requests for additional information, will become the basis of contractual agreements with said Respondent.

9 Contractual Terms and Conditions
Responses must be in accordance with the guidelines as specified in this RFP. This RFP does not commit ASLM to accept any proposals submitted, nor is ASLM responsible for any costs incurred in the preparation of responses to this RFP. All materials submitted in response to this RFP or developed during the life of the contract will become the property ASLM. The detailed itemized budget must be submitted in US dollars and will be evaluated in terms of best value to ASLM.

ASLM reserves the right to delay, amend, reissue or cancel all or part of this RFP at any time without prior notice. ASLM discourages ex parte communication with any Board member, the public and/or staff member after the deadline for the receipt of proposals. ASLM will be under no obligation to reveal, or discuss with any Respondent on how a proposal was assessed, or to provide any other information relative to the selection process. Respondents whose proposals are not selected will be notified in writing and shall have no claim whatsoever for any kind of compensation.