



RFP No. ASLM/ACDC/21/12/2020

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 Regulatory and Certification Framework for Institutions Handling High Risk Pathogens

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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1 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 Ebola outbreaks in West Africa, the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and increased use of biocontainment laboratories, have heightened the need for building local capacity in Biosafety and Biosecurity. Current capacity in biosafety and biosecurity is very low as shown by the World Health Organization (WHO) Joint External Evaluation (JEE) and the Global Health Security Index (GHS Index).

Biosafety aims to prevent the unintentional or accidental release of pathogens and toxins to personnel handling the pathogens, the general population, and the environment, while biosecurity aims to prevent the deliberate theft or diversion of high-risk biological agents or toxins for use for harmful purposes including bioterrorism or biological weapons proliferation. Hence, high containment facilities (Biosafety Level 3 and 4 - BSL-3&4) play a critical role in ensuring protection of the workers, the communities, and the environment .

To secure the agents and toxins there is need for appropriate physical security measures and technologies. The facilities should have specific design features (engineering and structural) and follow set standards for their maintenance that match the type of organisms manipulated or stored and procedures undertaken.

In the Africa Region, there is currently no harmonized set of minimum standards for biosafety and Biorisk that high containment facilities must comply to. In addition, there is also no agreed system for assessment and certifying the high containment facilities to operate. Consequently, most Member States do not have full inventories of which facilities meet required standards of biosafety and biosecurity and type and stock levels of high-risk pathogens they maintain.

The proposed ***Regulatory and Certification Framework for Institutions Handling High Risk Pathogens*** seek to establish minimum standards for compliance and establish a certification program for high containment facilities in the Africa Region.

2 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 ***“Regulatory and Certification Framework for Institutions Handling High Risk Pathogens”*** that is in line with international standards. The vendor is expected to be well versed with requirements and standards for design, construction, certification, and maintenance of

high containment facilities (BSL3&4). Successful bidder will sign an agreement with ASLM to complete the work within 2 months.

3 Scope of Work

The aim of this consultancy is to develop a **“Regulatory and Certification Framework for Institutions Handling High Risk Pathogens”** that will be presented to and adopted by African Union Member States for implementation across the Africa Region. The framework proposed must be consistent with international standards.

The proposed **Regulatory and Certification Framework for Institutions Handling High Risk Pathogens** shall comprise of:

- Establishing minimum standards for biosafety and biosecurity based on international requirements for compliance by High-Level Containment institutions e.g., ISO 35001
- Establishing a Regional Certification and Recognition Framework for High Containment Institutions (BSL 3&4).
 - Framework will provide for incremental recognition using an agreed scale (levels or stars) as a bridge towards full compliance to international ISO requirements e.g., ISO 35001.
 - The Certification shall involve systematic review of all safety features and processes associated with the facility to validate that all facility controls and practices are in place to minimize the risks associated handling of hazardous materials
- Developing a standard checklist for assessing High Containment Facilities compliance to agreed minimum standards for biosafety and Biosecurity.

3.1 Deliverables

- Minimum standards for Biosafety and Biosecurity for High Containment Facilities (BSL-3&4) that are in line with international standards e.g., ISO 35001
- Certification and recognition framework for High Containment Facilities
- Standard Checklist for assessment High Containment Facilities

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

Period of performance: 1st March to 30th April 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.

4 Qualifications for the position

1. Strong Biosafety and Biosecurity background
2. Proven experience in BSL 3 & 4 facility design, certification, and maintenance
3. Proven track record of supporting Laboratory Networks in areas of Biosafety and Biosecurity in the Africa Region
4. Excellent proficiency in the English language

5 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 January 2021 (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**

6 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 the assessed feasibility of 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.

7 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.