RFP No. 01/04/22

RFP for Selection of Contractor

Laboratory System Strengthening
## 1 Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASLM</td>
<td>African Society for Laboratory Medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMR</td>
<td>Antimicrobial Resistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>EQuAFRICA</td>
<td>Regional External Quality Grant for Africa</td>
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<td>FF</td>
<td>Fleming Fund</td>
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<td>NLQP</td>
<td>National Laboratory Quality Policy</td>
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<td>QWArS</td>
<td>Qualifying the Workforce for Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance in Africa and Asia</td>
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<td>RFP</td>
<td>Request for Proposals</td>
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<td>SSA</td>
<td>sub-Saharan Africa</td>
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<td>SME</td>
<td>Subject Matter Expert</td>
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3 Introduction

The African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM) is a Pan-African professional body, working to advocate for the critical role and needs of laboratory medicine and networks throughout Africa. Medical laboratories play a pivotal role in global disease diagnosis, surveillance, outbreak investigation, initiation and monitoring of therapy, as well as research and development. Unfortunately, medical laboratories in Africa are underdeveloped and cannot meet the testing demands of rapidly growing health delivery services in the 21st century. Inadequate resources and diagnostic services compromise the quality of patient care due to misdiagnosis and consequently under or over treatment of disease, which presents significant economic and public health challenges.

With funding from the Fleming Fund and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, ASLM is leading the implementation of activities aimed at strengthening Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) surveillance and laboratory systems in Africa.

Through the Fleming Fund Grant, ASLM is leading a consortium of international organizations in the implementation of activities aimed at improving the quality of bacteriology diagnostics for AMR and qualifying laboratory professionals in Africa and Asia to support national and regional AMR surveillance actions plans. The Laboratory Systems Strengthening Community of Practice (LabCoP) is made up of a diverse group of stakeholders and country teams (currently 16) comprised of laboratorians, lab managers, clinicians, ministries of health, civil society, and others. LabCoP fosters a south-south knowledge exchange and joint learning by linking together country teams from across Africa with global experts, and sharing the knowledge and best practices of laboratory systems strengthening amongst ministries of health. Topics include monitoring and evaluation (M&E), HIV viral load testing scale up, tuberculosis (TB), COVID-19 and more.

Objective of the Request for Proposal

Through this RFP, ASLM is soliciting proposals from organizations and subject matter experts to support the implementation of activities aimed at strengthening laboratory quality management systems. Specifically, the contractor will lead activities to:

- Roll out of a National Laboratory Quality Framework in the form of a workshop, including capacity building of ASLM and/or Africa CDC staff to provide similar workshops.
- Provide the LabNet Lead course in 2 countries, including training of trainers for ASLM staff for roll-out of the course in other countries.
- Provision of support to the QWArS project lead in the form of developing and implementing a mentoring program and M&E framework.

The contractor is expected to be experienced in laboratory system strengthening and policy development, Successful bidders will sign an agreement with ASLM to complete the work within 6 months.
4 Scope of Work

ROLL OUT OF THE NLQF WORKSHOP
In November 2021, Africa CDC and ASLM launched the National Laboratory Quality Framework (NLQF) under the Fleming Fund Regional EQA grant for Africa (EQuFRICA) project. This document was developed to guide countries in establishing their national laboratory quality policies and frameworks. The contractor will be expected to develop and support a 5-day face to face workshop on the use of the NLQF for participants from 14 target countries across sub-Saharan Africa to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa. ToR will include:

- Performing an initial analysis of existing materials provided by the 14 African Fleming Fund countries to decide how to best proceed with NLQF implementation in each country.
- Design of all training materials for a five-day workshop on the use of the NLQF for delegations from the 14 African target countries.
- Facilitate a 5-day face to face workshop on the implementation of the NLQF.

FACILITATION OF THE LABNET LEAD COURSE
The Laboratory Network Leadership Course (“LabNet Lead”) is aimed at National Laboratory Working Groups (NLWGs) and managers of selected large laboratories. An NLWG serves as a national laboratory expert forum that informs and assists the governments national laboratory policy, regulation, and planning activities. The contractor will be expected to support the delivery of the course in two African countries and to train a group of ASLM experts to provide the course. ToR will include:

- Assisting with the identification and training of NLWG members and mentors
- Development of the facilitator guide
- Provision of a 5-day face-to-face training in 2 countries by 2 trainers
- Provision of ToT to ASLM staff

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A MENTORING PROGRAM AND M&E FRAMEWORK FOR QWARS
Since 2021, the Qualifying the Workforce for AMR Surveillance in Asia and Africa (QWArS) project has supported the training and qualification of over 300 laboratory professionals in Asia and Africa on AMR surveillance. As the project nears its end ASLM is seeking a contractor to support the development a system of mentorship of the participants and the framework to monitor and evaluate the mentors. The contractor will also support implementation of the system in 17 countries over a period of 6 months. ToR will include:

- Assisting the QWArS leadership with the design of the mentorship program
- Developing a mentorship M&E framework with key performance indicators in close consultation with the QWArS leadership
- Assisting the QWArS leadership with the selection of regional or in-country mentors, possibly from the pool of QWArS module trainers and technical partners.
- Provision of an online workshop for mentors to inform them about the required activities.
- Monitoring the mentorship activities based on the M&E framework and flag ([potential) problems to the QWArS leadership for action.
5 Prerequisite

- Contractor should have experience working on similar activities within sub-Saharan Africa.

6 Deliverables

ROLL OUT OF THE NLQF WORKSHOP

- Landscape Analysis completed and report disseminated.
- 5-day face to face training workshop completed
- Report completed and disseminated

FACILITATION OF THE LABNET LEAD COURSE

- Facilitator guide completed
- 5-day face to face workshop completed for 2 countries
- ToT for ASLM staff completed.

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A MENTORING PROGRAM AND M&E FRAMEWORK FOR QWARS

- Mentorship system and monitoring framework completed
- System and framework successfully implemented in 17 countries.

Relative costs of each method will be assessed and included as well as relevant contact information.

Period of performance: February 1, 2022 – 30th June 2022

Approximate total budget: $170,000.00 (One Hundred and Seventy Thousand US Dollars, including travel)

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 tasks are undertaken.

7 Qualifications for the position

1. Strong preference for submitters with experience in laboratory System strengthening and policy development in sub-Saharan Africa.
2. Knowledge and experience in AMR global action plans and surveillance systems.
3. Resume that documents work in SSA countries.
4. Should be able to start immediately.
5. Should have at least five years’ experience working in low- and middle-income countries.
8 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 (organization) and staffing qualifications and experience. Indicate how these qualifications and experience relate to the proposed functional areas applied for. Where the organization is affiliated/has partnerships with other institutions, a description of how this will result in effective implementation of the proposed areas of work should be included.
   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 objective.

B. Completed proposals shall consist of typewritten pages utilizing a minimum 12-point font. A maximum of 10 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 twelve (12) months.

E. Send your completed application by email to (BPuije@aslm.org and CC rfpsubmission@aslm.org) as early as 5th January 2022 and no later than 12th January 2022 (11:59 pm East African Time).

Point of contact:
Direct any written questions or request for information about this RFP to:
   Beatrice van der Puije
   Program Manager
   Email: BPuije@aslm.org
   Phone Number: +233 20 5180708
9 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 assess the feasibility of each Respondent.

1. Does the organization have the right skill set and expertise to accomplish the required assignments?
2. Does the organization 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 Respondent’s 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.

Each Respondent submitting a proposal will be notified in writing or via e-mail of ASLM’s decision concerning their proposal. Should your organization be recommended for acceptance, the contract shall be effective on the contract execution date and shall run until 30th June 2022. 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.

10 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 of 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.