REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

RFP NO. ASLM/ACDC/QMS/11/03/23

FOR CONSULTANCY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FRAMEWORK FOR AFRICA CDC PATHOGEN GENOMICS AND BIOINFORMATICS LABORATORY NETWORK

CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2023 – Extended to 29th February 2024

When replying to the RFP, please mention the RFP No in the subject line

1.0 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. For more information, please visit our website at https://aslm.org.

2.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT | SCOPE OF WORK | EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

Background:

Public health laboratories are integrating genomics and bioinformatics for diagnostics, disease surveillance, outbreak investigations, and research. Ensuring the highest standards of quality and accuracy in laboratory testing is essential to maintaining public health and safety. Integration of genomics and bioinformatics in public health laboratories however, presents a novel challenge for quality management. To strengthen the quality management systems and enhance the proficiency of these laboratories, we are seeking a qualified consultant to develop a Quality Management System (QMS) framework document that will guide implementation of QMS activities including EQA within the Africa CDC genomics and bioinformatics laboratory network.
Objective of the Assignment:

The primary objectives of this consultancy are as follows:

2.1. Develop a Quality Management Systems (QMS) Framework:

The consultant will develop a comprehensive Quality Management Systems framework document tailored to the specific needs of genomics and bioinformatics laboratories in the public health sector. This framework should include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Quality policy and objectives
- Organizational structure and responsibilities of key functions
- Personnel management
- Documented procedures and processes
- Risk assessment and management
- Equipment and infrastructure management
- Data and information management
- Continuous improvement and corrective/preventive actions
- Training and competency assessments
- Compliance with relevant regulations and standards
- Internal and external audits
- Incident reporting and investigation
- Strategies for coordination, collaboration and communication amongst with stakeholders and other facilities

2.2. Within the QMS framework, develop EQA Guidance for Molecular Tests, Genomics & Bioinformatics Analysis:

The consultant will develop detailed guidance on the production and administration of External Quality Assessments (EQA) specifically designed for molecular tests, genomics, and bioinformatics analysis. The guidance should address the following aspects:

- Development of EQA materials and samples
- EQA program administration
- Participant selection and registration
- Orientation and training provision
- Sample distribution and result submission
- Data analysis and reporting
- Feedback and improvement recommendations
2.3 Adapt all QMS tools for Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) and bioinformatics using the following materials:

- Africa CDC laboratory quality guidance and frameworks
- Laboratory quality management system: handbook ([https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241548274](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241548274))
- Applicable ISO/IEC standards for various sequencing and bioinformatics facilities

The consultant will also develop all QMS tools for NGS and bioinformatics which include but are not limited to:

- QMS assessment tools for NGS and bioinformatics
- QMS training materials for NGS and bioinformatics
- Templates for documentation of NGS and bioinformatics procedures

**Methodology:**

The consultant is expected to use a participatory and consultative approach, engaging Africa CDC, ASLM and other relevant stakeholders, laboratory personnel, and public health experts to tailor the QMS framework and EQA guidance to the specific needs of the Africa CDC genomics and bioinformatics laboratory network.

The consultant will be required to participate in the ASLM and Africa CDC Africa PGI biweekly update meeting for review of progress.

**Deliverables:**

The consultant is expected to produce the following deliverables:

1. **Africa CDC genomics and bioinformatics laboratory Quality Management Systems Framework and all QMS NGS tools**

   A comprehensive QMS framework and EQA guidance document that includes all the necessary components as specified in Section 2.1 and 2.2. The document should be comprehensive, well-structured, easy to understand, and practical for implementation.

2. **Monthly progress update and final report of the consultancy work**

**Deliverables:**

The consultant is expected to produce the following deliverables:
1. Africa CDC genomics and bioinformatics laboratory Quality Management Systems Framework and all QMS NGS tools

A comprehensive QMS framework and EQA guidance document that includes all the necessary components as specified in Section 2.1 and 2.2. The document should be comprehensive, well-structured, easy to understand, and practical for implementation.

2. Monthly progress update and final report of the consultancy work

**Period of Performance:**

The consultancy should be completed within 4 months (non-extendable) from the contract's commencement.

**Qualifications:**

The prospective consultant should possess the following qualifications and experience:

- Proven expertise in quality management systems and laboratory quality assurance.
- A background or experience in genomics, bioinformatics, or a related field.
- Knowledge in the applicable ISO/IEC standards
- Knowledgeable in current quality management developments in genomics and bioinformatics including the US CDC NGS quality initiative guidelines.
- Experience in developing QMS frameworks and EQA guidance for similar laboratory settings.
- Experience working in public health laboratories in Africa or low- and middle-income countries.
- Knowledge of international quality standards and best practices in public health laboratories.
- Proven expertise in writing of guidance and published documents

**Reporting:**

The consultant will regularly report (bi-weekly) to African Society for Laboratory Medicine and collaborate closely with Africa CDC Africa Pathogen Genomics Initiative throughout the consultancy.
3.0 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

- Company profile with Certificate of Incorporation, Tax Clearance and all other applicable licenses, permit, authorizations, affiliations and certifications required per applicable laws and regulations. The company profile should provide additional information such as Registration name and trading name if applicable, physical address, telephone, contact person, period in business, key personnel/management and line of business.

4.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

ASLM will accept proposals from bidders that provide Best Value and satisfy the requirements stipulated in the solicitation. All submissions/proposals will be evaluated against the set Evaluation Criteria provided below. Each proposal should contain the items listed in the Submission Requirements column in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Submission Requirements</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience       | • Proven expertise in quality management systems and laboratory quality assurance.  
• A background or experience in genomics, bioinformatics, or a related field.  
• Knowledge in the applicable ISO/IEC standards  
• Knowledgeable in current quality management developments in genomics and bioinformatics including the US CDC NGS quality initiative guidelines.  
• Experience in developing QMS frameworks and EQA guidance for similar laboratory settings.  
• Experience working in public health laboratories in Africa or low- and middle-income countries.  
• Knowledge of international quality standards and best practices in public health laboratories.  
• Proven expertise in writing of guidance and published documents | 60%    |
| 2. Technical Approach Methodology and Timelines   | A maximum 5-page written proposal explaining how the consultant proposes to achieve the deliverables. Include detailed outline of the methodology, specific   | 20%    |
### 3. Price

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.Price</td>
<td>Provide the consultancy fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5.0 CONTRACT TYPE

For this procurement, ASLM will issue out a Firm Fixed Price Contract on its terms and conditions indicating the service provider’s quoted firm fixed price, scope of work, deliverables, timelines duration of contract and other instructions.

#### 6.0 SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Completed proposals must be addressed to the Procurement Committee and send electronically on or before the closing date and time to [rfpsubmission@aslm.org](mailto:rfpsubmission@aslm.org) ONLY.

#### 7.0 PROPOSED TIMELINES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 November 2023</td>
<td>Release of RFP and publicly posted on ASLM website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 November 2023</td>
<td>Deadline for submission of inquiries related to this RFP directed to Email to:<a href="mailto:rfpsubmission@aslm.org">rfpsubmission@aslm.org</a> and all questions must clearly identified with the solicitation #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indicate the RFP number indicated at the top of this RFP (i.e. RFQ #) in your proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 November 2023</td>
<td>Response to all inquiries released and posted publicly on ASLM website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 November 2023</td>
<td>Deadline for Proposal submission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 November 2023</td>
<td>Final decision announced and Bidders receive feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Physical Office Address: Joseph Tito Street, Nega City Mall, Suite 800, P.O.Box 5487 Kirkos Subcity, Kebele 08, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (+251) 11-557-1021
The Pivot, Block E, Third floor, Montecasino Boulevard, Fourways, 2055, Gauteng, South Africa (+271) 08-808-592 info@aslm.org www.ASLM.org
8.0 ASLM TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The following are the terms and conditions of ASLM and any exceptions to these should be noted in writing at submission:

8.1. This RFP is not an offer to enter into agreement with any party, but rather a request to receive proposals from companies interested in providing the goods or services outlined in this RFP.

8.2. The specifications prescribed are not in any way limited to any specific tenderer as they are based on generally achievable requirements and thus, participation in this solicitation is open to all legal vendors that are registered and comply with the laws of doing business in the applicable country(ies) where services will be rendered. The necessary legal, commercial, technical and financial requirements should be satisfied.

8.3. ASLM does not bind itself to accept the lowest tender price and reserves the right to reject all submissions, in whole or in part, enter into negotiations with any party, and/or award multiple contracts.

8.4. ASLM reserves the right (but is not under obligation to do so) 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 quotation.

8.5. All quotations MUST be typed, on company official letterhead with full contact details including physical address, contact phone, email. Submissions MUST be received on or before the closing date and time and all bids received after the closing date and time may not be considered.

8.6. ASLM shall NOT be responsible for any costs involved in the preparation and submission of bids or proposals. All costs to be borne by the bidder and this is irrespective of the outcome.

8.7. Bid validity of quotation/proposals shall be 90 days.

8.8. Unless otherwise specified in the final contract, full payment will be made by ASLM to the Vendor within 30 days of receipt of invoice from the Vendor and either delivery of goods or completion of required deliverable.
8.9 ASLM provides an equal opportunity for any vendor/supplier to participate irrespective of race, colour, religion, sex, or national origin and will receive equal treatment.

8.10. By participating, preparation and submitting this quotation or proposal, you represent that none from your organization has any conflict of interests.

8.11. To the maximum extent practical and possible, ASLM will strive to ensure that the finances provided in this procurement do not support organisations, companies and individuals associated with acts of terrorism, prostitution and drug trafficking.

8.12. ASLM reserves the right to delay, amend, reissue, or cancel all or part of this RFP at any time but feedback will be provided to the vendors who participated. Additionally, ASLM will be under no obligation to reveal, or discuss with any bidder how a quotation/proposal was assessed, or to provide any other information relative to the selection process. Respondents whose quotations are not selected will be notified in writing and shall have no claim whatsoever for any kind of compensation.

8.13. ASLM reserves the right to waive or permit cure of non-material variances in the bid proposal if, in the judgment of ASLM, it is in ASLM’s best interest to do so. Non-material variances include minor informalities that do not affect responsiveness; that are merely a matter of form or format; that do not change the relative standing or otherwise prejudice other vendors; that do not change the meaning or scope of the RFP; or that do not reflect a material change in the services. In the event ASLM waives or permits cure of nonmaterial variances, such waiver or cure will not modify the RFP requirements or excuse the vendor from full compliance with RFP specifications or other contract requirements if the vendor is awarded the contract. The determination of materiality is in the sole discretion of ASLM.

8.14. Failure to provide any of the above specifications and requirements may be considered non-responsive and disqualify the bidder from final selection.

8.15. **ASLM ETHICAL STATEMENT:** As part of its commitment to engrain a culture of honesty and integrity in all its business processes, unethical conduct such as undisclosed conflict of interests, bribes and kickbacks and other corrupt activities are strictly prohibited and denounced. No employees at ASLM are not allowed to use their position(s) to pursue personal and unethical gain. In the same vein, bidders or potential suppliers and contractors are proscribed from offering bribes aimed at influencing the process and the outcome(s). ASLM implore vendors to embrace this culture in their interactions with us. Violation of this ethical principle and requirement will result in the supplier or service provider disqualified and ASLM will not solicit or accept bids in the future from the same. Should you experience or suspect unethical behaviour by an ASLM employee, please reach out to: ethics@aslm.org