REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) RFP No. ASLM/SAO/01/03/24
FOR CONSULTANCY TO SUPPORT THE OPERATIONALIZATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF SPECIMEN REFERRAL SYSTEMS FOR THE DETECTION OF PRIORITY PATHOGENS TO NATIONAL LABORATORIES AND ACROSS BORDERS IN SAO TOME E PRINCIPE

CLOSING DATE: 8 JANUARY 2024 @1pm CAT - Extended to March 14, 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:

The WHO Joint External Evaluation tool (JEE) provide benchmarks and a clear roadmap for the stepwise advancement of health systems towards the capacity needed for effective prevention, detection, and response of health threats, supporting the containment of outbreaks before they become epidemics. The JEE assessments conducted between 2017 and 2019 underscored the overall lack of outbreak response preparedness in African countries and more specifically in the area of laboratory systems and diagnostics. The 7-1-7 pilot (RTSL data) identified that most critical gaps of laboratory systems in the continuum of detection to response were in in the areas of a) Specimen transportation and referral systems (JEE indicator D1.1); b) Laboratory testing capacity modalities (JEE indicator D1.3) and c) Effective diagnostic network (JEE indicator D1.4). Articulating country interventions toward the improvement of D1.1, D1.3 and D1.4, provides a useful framework for effective laboratory system strengthening in support of health security.

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Scope of the assignment:
The consultant will support the setup and capacity building of the national Sample transportation System (STS) TWG as well as the operationalization of the STS (via national STS strategy, SOPs and training of TWG) in Sao Tomé e Principe.

The consultant will also monitor and evaluate the performance of integrated sample transportation network based on 7/1/7 indicators.

Specific Tasks:
1. Conduct a cross-sectional situational assessment and analysis of the current Sample Transportation Systems in the country.
2. Collaborate with the Division of Laboratories and relevant stakeholders to develop an evidence-based national strategy, operational workplan and SOPs for a specimen transport system supporting confirmatory testing/sequencing of selected priority pathogens in Sao Tome e Principe, based on findings and recommendations from the situational assessment. This should include:
   • Approaches and strategies for effective STS implementation.
   • Required diagnostic technologies and infrastructure needs.
   • Mechanisms for resource pooling and centralized coordination for STS.
3. Support training of in country experts using the Africa CDC/ASLM sample management and referral ToT certification curriculum (including template SOPs).
4. Develop an M&E framework for the STS.

Deliverables:
Upon completion of the consultancy, the following deliverables will be provided:

1. An approved concept note for the STS, including detailed information on approaches, strategies, required resources, and infrastructure
2. One (1) national strategy organizing referral of specimens from subnational to national level, operationalized under the oversight of 5 certified national experts, to expand access to diagnostic services in support of clinical care and public health response in Sao Tome e Principe.
3. An approved Situational Assessment Report on sample transportation systems, presented and submitted to the Sao Tome e Principe’s MoH.
4. An M&E framework with defined quality indicators to monitor continuous improvement.
Consultant will be reporting to the ASLM project lead but all technical deliverables and outputs will have to be validated by the ASLM Science lead during implementation and in reports.

**INITIAL TERM AND OPTIONAL PERIODS:**

The initial term (or period of performance) of the service shall be from the 9th January 2024–29th February 2024.

ASLM may exercise its right to extend the contract subject to the performance of the consultant and availability of funding.

### 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.
- Individual consultants can also participate, and the above requirements may not be applicable but should conform to in-country tax requirements.
- Proficiency in French and English is required (in that order) and additional proficiency in Portuguese or Spanish is desirable.

### 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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Submission Requirements</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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| 1. Qualifications and Experience (current & past) | o Strong track record in conducting STS country support.  
 o Excellent proficiency in French and English.  
 o Resume those documents similar work in SSA countries. | 40% |

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2. Technical Approach and Methodology

A maximum 5-page written proposal on the technical approach and methodology explaining how the consultant proposes to highlight the scope of work and deliverables. Include detailed outline of the methodology, specific activities and approach to address the scope of work and timelines.

3. Price

Provide the consultancy fees

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2. Technical Approach and Methodology</th>
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<tr>
<td>3. Price</td>
<td>Provide the consultancy fees</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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### 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 ONLY.
7.0 PROPOSED TIMELINES

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>3 January 2024</td>
<td>Release of RFP and publicly posted on ASLM website:</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 January 2024</td>
<td>Deadline for submission of inquiries related to this RFP directed to Email:<a href="mailto:Nkrystina@aslm.org">Nkrystina@aslm.org</a> and <a href="mailto:JShonhe@aslm.org">JShonhe@aslm.org</a> and all questions must clearly identified with the solicitation # Indicate the RFP number indicated at the top of this RFP (i.e. RFQ #) in your proposals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 January 2024</td>
<td>Response to all inquiries released and posted publicly on ASLM website</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 January 2024</td>
<td>Deadline for Proposal submission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 January 2024</td>
<td>Final decision announced and Bidders receive feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 January 2024</td>
<td>Contract confirmed &amp; issued out.</td>
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While ASLM is desirous of maintaining the proposed timelines, delays necessitated by unforeseen circumstances.
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.

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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

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