



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

RFP No. ASLM/ACDC/PGI/CONS/GEN/09/01/26

FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE INTEGRATION OF ESCHERICHIA COLI GENOMIC DATA INTO THE AFRICA CDC AFRICAN GENOMES ARCHIVE FOR RESPONSE AND INSIGHTS

CLOSING DATE: 24 SEPTEMBER 2026

When submitting a response to this RFP, please include the RFP Number and your Organization Name in the email 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

2.1. Background:

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), through the Africa Pathogen Genomics Initiative (Africa PGI), supports the African Genomes Archive for Response and Insights (AGARI), a continental platform for the secure management, sharing, visualisation, and use of pathogen genomic data and associated metadata for public health surveillance and response.

Under the Integrated Genomic Surveillance and Data Sharing Platform (IGS) project, *Klebsiella pneumoniae* and *Escherichia coli* have been prioritised for integration into AGARI to strengthen genomic surveillance of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), including surveillance of bacterial pathogens associated with neonatal bloodstream infections. The integration of *K. pneumoniae* has been completed, while the integration of *E. coli* is the focus of this consultancy.

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ASLM therefore seeks qualified consultant(s) to support the integration of *E. coli* genomic data into AGARI through three complementary components: (1) development of an *E. coli* metadata standard; (2) front-end development to support data submission, visualisation, and dashboard functionality; and (3) back-end development and system administration to support database integration, user authentication, access permissions, data-sharing controls, and technical user support. The consultant(s) will work within the existing AGARI architecture and in coordination with Africa CDC/ASLM and designated technical stakeholders.

2.2. Objective of the Assignment

The objective of this consultancy is to integrate *Escherichia coli* genomic data and associated metadata into AGARI by developing and validating a pathogen-specific metadata standard, configuring the platform's front-end functionality, and implementing the required back-end, access-control, and technical-support functions.

1. Consultancy Component #01: *E. coli* Metadata Standard Development

Milestone 1: Development and validation of an *E. coli* metadata standard for AGARI

Estimated Duration: 3 months

The consultant will develop and validate a standardised metadata framework for the submission, management, sharing, and use of *Escherichia coli* genomic data within AGARI. The metadata standard should capture relevant genomic, laboratory, epidemiological, clinical, antimicrobial resistance, and contextual information and, where applicable, align with internationally recognised pathogen genomic metadata standards and existing AGARI metadata structures.

The consultant will work closely with Africa CDC/ASLM, relevant scientific and public health experts, and designated stakeholders to ensure that the metadata standard is scientifically appropriate, interoperable, and suitable for implementation within AGARI.

Deliverables:

D1.1: Draft *E. coli* metadata standard and data dictionary

- Review existing AGARI metadata structures and relevant *E. coli*/AMR genomic metadata standards.
- Define proposed metadata fields, field descriptions, data types, controlled vocabularies, required/optional fields, and validation requirements.

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- Develop a draft metadata standard and accompanying data dictionary suitable for technical implementation within AGARI.

D1.2: Stakeholder consultation and technical review

- Conduct a virtual consultation with relevant scientific, laboratory, bioinformatics, surveillance, and public health stakeholders to review the proposed metadata standard.
- Document stakeholder comments, recommendations, and agreed revisions.

D1.3: In-person validation of the metadata standard

- Facilitate an in-person technical review and validation meeting with designated stakeholders.
- Present the revised metadata standard and resolve outstanding technical and scientific requirements.
- Document agreed decisions and recommendations from the validation process.

D1.4: Final E. coli metadata standard

- Incorporate agreed stakeholder feedback and submit the final validated *E. coli* metadata standard.
- Provide the final data dictionary, controlled vocabularies, validation rules, and other technical specifications required for integration into AGARI.
- Provide the metadata standard in both human-readable and machine-readable formats, as agreed with Africa CDC/ASLM.

Acceptance criteria:

- Metadata fields and definitions are clearly documented.
- Required and optional fields are identified.
- Controlled vocabularies and validation requirements are defined where applicable.
- Stakeholder consultation and validation are documented.
- Final metadata standard is approved by Africa CDC/ASLM and is technically suitable for implementation under Consultancy Components #02 and #03.

2. Consultancy Component #02: Front-end Development

Milestone 2: Integration of E. coli functionality into the AGARI user interface and dashboard

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Estimated Duration: 3 months

The consultant will enhance the existing AGARI front-end to support the integration, submission, discovery, and visualisation of *Escherichia coli* genomic data. The development should follow the existing AGARI design and architecture and ensure consistency with other pathogen modules available on the platform.

The consultant will work in coordination with the metadata and back-end development teams to ensure that the approved *E. coli* metadata standard and associated functionality are appropriately represented within the user interface.

Deliverables:**D2.1: E. coli integration into the AGARI user interface**

- Update the relevant AGARI interface components to include *E. coli* as a supported pathogen.
- Ensure consistency with the existing design, navigation, and functionality of other pathogen modules.

D2.2: E. coli dashboard functionality

- Develop and configure dashboard functionality for the exploration and visualisation of *E. coli* genomic and associated metadata.
- Enable appropriate filtering, searching, and display of relevant *E. coli* data fields based on the approved metadata standard.

D2.3: Integration with existing AGARI pathogen dashboards

- Enable *E. coli* data to be displayed and explored alongside other supported pathogen datasets, where applicable.
- Ensure that relevant platform-wide search, filtering, and visualisation functions recognise the new *E. coli* module.

D2.4: E. coli data-upload interface

- Configure the user interface to support upload of the required *E. coli* genomic sequence and associated metadata files, including FASTA and TSV formats.
- Provide clear validation messages and user feedback for successful submissions and identified upload errors.

D2.5: Front-end testing and documentation

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- Conduct functional testing of the *E. coli* user interface, dashboard, search/filtering, and upload functionality.
- Address identified defects before final acceptance.
- Provide relevant technical and user documentation for the implemented functionality.

Acceptance criteria:

- *E. coli* is visible and accessible as a supported pathogen within the appropriate AGARI interface.
- Authorised users can access the *E. coli* submission workflow.
- FASTA and associated metadata files can be uploaded through the interface.
- *E. coli* data can be searched, filtered, and visualised through the relevant dashboard functionality.
- Appropriate user feedback is provided for successful and unsuccessful submissions.
- Functionality is successfully demonstrated and accepted by Africa CDC/ASLM in the agreed environment.
- Source code and relevant technical documentation are handed over in accordance with the contractual requirements.

3. Consultancy Component #03: System Administration and Back-end Development

Milestone 3: Back-end integration and operational support for the *E. coli* module on AGARI

Estimated Duration: 3 months

The consultant will configure and support the back-end services required for the integration and operational use of *Escherichia coli* genomic data within AGARI. This will include database integration, user authentication and permissions, data-access controls, platform functionality, technical testing, and user support. All work will be undertaken within the existing AGARI architecture and in coordination with Africa CDC/ASLM and the consultants responsible for Components #01 and #02.

Deliverables:

D3.1: Platform availability and operational functionality

- Ensure that the AGARI platform remains operational and accessible within the agreed environment during development and testing of the *E. coli* module.
- Identify, document, and address back-end issues affecting the functionality of the *E. coli* module.

D3.2: Integration of the *E. coli* metadata standard

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- Integrate the approved *E. coli* metadata standard developed under Component #01 into the AGARI database and submission workflow.
- Configure relevant metadata fields, validation requirements, and associated database functionality.
- Test the integration using representative *E. coli* datasets.

D3.3: User authentication and role-based access

- Configure and test appropriate user roles and permissions for *E. coli* data submission, review, management, and access.
- Ensure that authorised users can successfully authenticate and access functions appropriate to their assigned roles.

D3.4: Data-access and privacy controls

- Configure and test existing AGARI data-sharing and privacy controls for *E. coli* datasets.
- Ensure that authorised users can apply the appropriate access or privacy settings to submitted datasets in accordance with AGARI data-governance requirements.

D3.5: End-to-end system testing and technical handover

- Conduct end-to-end testing of the *E. coli* workflow, including authentication, data upload, metadata validation, storage, permissions, search/retrieval, and display.
- Document identified issues and corrective actions.
- Provide relevant back-end configuration and technical documentation to Africa CDC/ASLM.
- Conduct technical handover of the implemented functionality to the designated Africa CDC/ASLM technical team.

D3.6: Technical helpdesk and user support

- Provide technical support to AGARI users through a **designated Africa CDC/ASLM-managed helpdesk or support channel** during the consultancy period.
- Support shall cover account access, authentication, user permissions, *E. coli* data submission, metadata validation, and technical issues related to the functionality delivered under this consultancy.
- Maintain a simple record of support requests received, actions taken, resolution status, and issues requiring escalation.
- Escalate unresolved or critical technical issues to the designated Africa CDC/ASLM technical focal point.

Evidence of delivery for D3.6:

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- Designated AGARI helpdesk/support channel operational.
- Support requests documented.
- Resolved and outstanding issues recorded.
- Summary of helpdesk activities provided as part of the final consultancy report.

Acceptance Criteria

Consultancy Component #03 will be considered completed when:

- the approved *E. coli* metadata standard has been successfully integrated into the AGARI back-end;
- authorised users can authenticate and access the appropriate *E. coli* functionality;
- user roles, permissions, and data-access controls function as intended;
- *E. coli* genomic and metadata files can successfully pass through the agreed submission workflow;
- end-to-end functionality has been tested and demonstrated to Africa CDC/ASLM;
- technical documentation and relevant configurations have been handed over; and
- technical support provided during the consultancy period has been documented.

Interdependencies: The three consultancy components are technically interdependent. The approved *E. coli* metadata standard developed under Component #01 will inform implementation under Components #02 and #03. Consultants awarded separate components will therefore be required to coordinate closely and participate in joint technical review and integration activities as requested by Africa CDC/ASLM.

Bidders may submit proposals for one, multiple, or all three consultancy components. Where a bidder proposes to undertake more than one component, the technical and financial proposal should clearly distinguish the approach, deliverables, timelines, and costs associated with each component. ASLM reserves the right to award the components separately or collectively.

Ownership and Handover: All source code, configurations, metadata specifications, schemas, technical documentation, user documentation and other outputs developed specifically under this consultancy shall be appropriately documented and handed over to ASLM/Africa CDC in accordance with the contract. Consultants shall ensure that sufficient technical documentation is provided to enable continued operation, maintenance and future development of the implemented functionality.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE AND OPTIONAL PERIODS:

The anticipated period of performance is from 1 October 2026 to 31 December 2026. The

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consultancy components may be implemented concurrently, with sequencing of specific activities determined by technical dependencies, particularly the approval of the E. coli metadata standard.

ASLM may exercise its right to extend the contract subject to need, 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.

4.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

ASLM will evaluate proposals on the basis of **best value**, taking into consideration the bidder's relevant qualifications and experience, technical approach and methodology, proposed timeline, and financial proposal. 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.

Bidders may submit proposals for **one, multiple, or all three consultancy components**. Where a bidder applies for more than one component, the proposal must clearly demonstrate the relevant technical expertise, methodology, timelines, personnel, and costs for each component.

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4.1 Past Performance and Qualifications – 40%

Bidders shall demonstrate relevant experience and technical capacity appropriate to the consultancy component(s) for which they are applying.

Common requirements applicable to all components:

- Demonstrated relevant professional experience in health, public health, genomic, bioinformatics, or scientific data systems.
- Experience working with multidisciplinary and multi-institutional teams.
- Demonstrated ability to engage and coordinate with relevant stakeholders, including public health institutions, research organisations, government agencies, and/or regional or international organisations.
- Experience working in Africa or with African public health or research institutions is desirable.
- Demonstrated ability to deliver comparable assignments within agreed timelines.

Additional requirements by consultancy component:

Component #01 – E. coli Metadata Standard Development

- Demonstrated expertise in pathogen genomics, bioinformatics, microbiology, antimicrobial resistance, or related fields.
- Experience developing, adapting, or implementing genomic, laboratory, epidemiological, or health metadata standards.
- Familiarity with data dictionaries, controlled vocabularies, metadata validation, interoperability standards, and relevant ontologies.
- Experience facilitating technical consultations and translating scientific requirements into implementable metadata specifications is desirable.

Component #02 – Front-end Development

- Demonstrated experience in web application and front-end development.
- Experience developing dashboards, data visualisation, search/filtering interfaces, and data-upload workflows.
- Experience integrating front-end applications with APIs and back-end data services.
- Experience developing or maintaining health, genomic, scientific, or comparable data platforms is desirable.
- Demonstrated ability to work within and extend an established software architecture and user-interface design.

Component #03 – System Administration and Back-end Development

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- Demonstrated experience in back-end development, database management, system administration, and deployment of web-based data platforms.
- Experience with authentication, user management, role-based access control, data-access permissions, and secure data-management workflows.
- Experience integrating structured metadata and file-based data into databases and associated application services.
- Experience with system testing, technical documentation, troubleshooting, and user support.
- Experience supporting health, genomic, scientific, or comparable data-management platforms is desirable.

Submission requirements:

- Company/organisation profile, where applicable.
- CV(s) of the proposed key consultant(s).
- Description of relevant assignments completed within the past five years.
- At least two examples or references demonstrating experience relevant to the component(s) being proposed.
- Clear identification of the personnel responsible for each component where more than one component is proposed.

4.2 Technical Approach, Methodology and Timeline – 30%

Bidders shall provide a clear technical proposal describing how the assignment will be undertaken.

The technical proposal should include:

- Understanding of the assignment and proposed approach.
- Methodology for completing each proposed consultancy component.
- Proposed activities and sequence of implementation.
- Approach to coordination with Africa CDC/ASLM and, where applicable, consultants responsible for the other components.
- Identification of key technical dependencies, assumptions, and risks, together with proposed mitigation measures.
- Approach to testing, validation, documentation, and technical handover, where applicable.
- A clear and realistic implementation timeline aligned with the required period of performance.
- Expected inputs or support required from Africa CDC/ASLM.

For bidders proposing more than one component, the technical proposal should demonstrate how activities across the components will be coordinated and integrated.

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4.3 Financial Proposal – 30%

Bidders shall provide a **firm fixed-price financial proposal** for the consultancy component(s) for which they are applying.

The financial proposal shall:

- provide a separate cost for each consultancy component;
- provide a clear cost breakdown against the principal deliverables and activities;
- clearly identify any professional fees and other anticipated costs;
- state the currency of the quotation;
- include all applicable taxes or clearly indicate where taxes are excluded; and
- remain valid for the period specified in this RFP.

Where a bidder applies for multiple components, costs for each component must remain separately identifiable to allow independent technical and financial evaluation.

Evaluation Summary

Evaluation Criterion	Weight
Past Performance and Qualifications	40%
Technical Approach, Methodology and Timeline	30%
Financial Proposal	30%
Total	100%

ASLM reserves the right to award the consultancy components separately or collectively based on the evaluation results, technical requirements, best value, and organisational needs.

5.0 CONTRACT TYPE

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

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6.0 SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Completed proposals must be addressed to the Procurement Committee and sent electronically on or before the closing date and time to rfpsubmission@aslm.org **ONLY**.

7.0 PROPOSED TIMELINES

Date	Activity
27 August 2026	Release of RFP and publicly posted on ASLM website:
10 September 2026	Deadline for submission of inquiries related to this RFP directed to Email to: JShonhe@aslm.org , SMate@aslm.org , NVere@aslm.org 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.
14 September 2026	Response to all inquiries released and posted publicly on ASLM website
24 September 2026	Deadline for Proposal submission.
1 October 2026	Final decision announced and Bidders receive feedback
1 October 2026	Contract confirmed & issued out.

While ASLM is desirous of maintaining the proposed timelines, delays necessitated by unforeseen circumstances.

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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.

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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. 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 allowed to use their position 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 via email: ASLM@tips-offs.com or through the website: <http://www.tip-offs.com/>.

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