

AGARI E. coli Integration RFP - Vendor Clarification Questions and Responses

RFP: Consultancy Services for the Integration of Escherichia coli Genomic Data into the Africa CDC African Genomes Archive for Response and Insights (AGARI)
RFP No. ASLM/ACDC/PGI/CONS/GEN/09/01/26

Source RFP: <https://aslm.org/opportunities/rfp-for-consultancy-services-for-the-integration-of-escherichia-coli-genomic-data-into-the-africa-cdc-african-genomes-archive-for-response-and-insights/>

No.	Question / Clarification Request	Response
1	Could ASLM confirm the current AGARI technical architecture and technology stack, particularly the front-end framework, back-end/API technologies, database, authentication/authorization and deployment/hosting environment, and whether relevant technical/configuration documentation will be provided to the successful consultant(s)?	The current high-level AGARI architecture comprises a React-based web interface; Flask/FOLIO application and API services; PostgreSQL for structured platform data; Keycloak for identity, authentication and role-based access; Elasticsearch for search and indexing; MinIO for genomic sequence and data-object storage; and containerised deployment using Kubernetes and Helm. Relevant technical documentation required for the awarded scope will be made available to the successful consultant(s), subject to applicable access, confidentiality and security controls.
2	Will the successful consultant(s) receive access to the existing AGARI source-code repositories, technical/API documentation, database schema and relevant development/staging or test environments and deployment/configuration information required for the awarded scope?	Yes. Successful consultant(s) will be provided with the access reasonably required to perform the awarded component(s), including relevant source-code repositories, technical/API documentation and development or staging resources. Access to database configuration, schemas and deployment information will be provided where required for the assigned scope. All access will be role-based and subject to Africa CDC/ASLM onboarding, confidentiality and security requirements. Production access, if required, will be separately authorised.
3	As the RFP notes that K. pneumoniae integration has already been completed, will the existing implementation—including relevant metadata structures, submission/upload workflows and interface/dashboard conventions—be available to the selected consultant(s) as a reference pattern for the E. coli integration?	Yes. The existing Klebsiella pneumoniae implementation will be used, where appropriate, as a reference pattern for the E. coli integration, including relevant metadata structures, submission workflows and interface/dashboard conventions. The E. coli implementation must nevertheless follow the approved E. coli-specific metadata standard and functional requirements.
4	What is the anticipated date for availability/approval of the Component #01 E. coli metadata standard? If approval occurs after commencement, should Components #02/#03 initially proceed using a draft specification?	Components #02 and #03 may commence preparatory activities that do not depend on the final metadata specification. Where necessary, development may use the working draft agreed with Africa CDC/ASLM. However, final configuration, validation and acceptance of the E. coli module will be based on the approved metadata standard. The detailed sequencing of activities across the three components will be agreed with the selected consultant(s) during inception.
5	Regarding FASTA and TSV uploads, is the scope limited to upload, validation, storage and integration with existing AGARI processing services, or is development/modification of genomic/bioinformatics processing pipelines also expected under Components #02/#03?	No new standalone genomic or bioinformatics analysis pipeline is required under Components #02 and #03. The scope is the integration of E. coli into the existing AGARI platform, including upload, validation, storage, retrieval, display and interaction with existing platform services. Any modification to an existing processing service that is technically necessary for the agreed E. coli workflow will be reviewed and authorised by Africa CDC/ASLM before implementation.
6	Are specific E. coli/AMR dashboard indicators and visualisations already defined, or will these be implementation based on the approved metadata standard?	The RFP does not prescribe a final set of E. coli/AMR dashboard indicators. The selected consultant will implement visualisations and dashboard functionality based on the approved metadata standard and requirements agreed with the Africa CDC/ASLM scientific and technical teams. Existing AGARI pathogen modules, including the K. pneumoniae implementation, may be used as reference patterns where appropriate.
7	Will representative/de-identified E. coli genomic and metadata datasets be provided for development and acceptance testing?	Representative test datasets appropriate for development, integration and acceptance testing will be agreed with the selected consultant(s) during technical inception. Depending on availability and applicable data-governance requirements, these may comprise synthetic, publicly available, de-identified, or other approved non-production E. coli genomic and metadata datasets. The selected consultant may also be requested to support preparation of suitable test data.
8	Is the Component #03 consultant expected to deploy changes directly to the production environment, or will deployment be performed by the existing Africa CDC/ASLM technical team following technical handover?	Production deployment will be coordinated with and specifically authorised by the designated Africa CDC/ASLM AGARI technical team. The Component #03 consultant will be expected to prepare, test, document and support deployment of the agreed changes. No consultant should make unilateral changes to the production environment. The precise deployment process, responsibilities and access privileges will be agreed during technical onboarding and will be subject to applicable security and change-control procedures.

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9	Does D3.1 require general operational/system-administration responsibility for the entire AGARI platform, or primarily the platform functionality associated with the E. coli integration? For Component #03, is the consultant expected to administer the underlying production infrastructure, or primarily configure and support the AGARI application and associated services within infrastructure managed by Africa CDC/ASLM?	D3.1 relates primarily to the operational functionality and back-end services necessary to implement and support the E. coli integration. The primary expectation under Component #03 is to configure, integrate, test and support the AGARI application and associated back-end services required for the E. coli module within the existing managed infrastructure. The consultancy does not transfer general, unrestricted or 24/7 system-administration responsibility for the entire AGARI platform or production infrastructure to the consultant. The consultant will, however, be expected to identify, troubleshoot and, within the agreed scope, address or escalate platform-level issues that directly affect the E. coli functionality. Any
10	For the D3.6 technical helpdesk, are there defined support hours or response/resolution SLAs that bidders should factor into their financial proposals?	The consultancy does not require a 24/7 helpdesk, and no additional formal response/resolution SLA is prescribed through this clarification. Under D3.6, the selected consultant will provide technical user support through a designated Africa CDC/ASLM-managed helpdesk or support channel during the consultancy period. Bidders should include reasonable business-hours technical support within their proposed level of effort and financial proposal. Support requests should be documented, appropriately prioritised, resolved where within scope, or escalated to the designated Africa CDC/ASLM technical team where necessary. Detailed support and escalation procedures will be agreed during inception.
11	Are any in-person activities or international travel anticipated for Components #02/#03? If so, should related travel and accommodation costs be included in the firm fixed price or will these be arranged/reimbursed separately by ASLM?	Components #02 and #03 are expected to be delivered primarily remotely in coordination with Africa CDC/ASLM. Bidders should not include international travel costs unless such travel is specifically proposed as necessary for their technical approach and is clearly identified in the financial proposal. Any additional travel subsequently requested by ASLM/Africa CDC would be subject to prior written agreement and applicable ASLM procedures.
12	The RFP requires bidders to state their quotation currency. Does ASLM have a preferred quotation/contracting currency such as USD or NGN?	Bidders should clearly state the currency used in their financial proposal and present all costs consistently in that currency, in accordance with the RFP requirements. This clarification does not prescribe an additional preferred quotation currency. Contracting and payment arrangements will be governed by ASLM's procurement and contracting procedures.
13	Component #02/#03 boundary: Could you clarify the expected division of responsibility between the front-end consultant under Component #02 and the back-end consultant under Component #03, particularly for API modifications required to support data upload, validation, search and filtering?	Component #02 is responsible primarily for user-facing functionality, including the interface, upload experience, dashboards, visualisation, search/filter controls and user feedback. Component #03 is responsible for the supporting back-end/API services, database and metadata integration, validation, authentication and authorisation, access controls, storage/retrieval and system integration. Where a front-end requirement necessitates an API or back-end modification, the Component #03 consultant will implement or support that change in coordination with Component #02. Joint integration and acceptance testing will be required.
14	Indicative budget: Is there an indicative budget range or maximum budget allocation for Components #02 and #03 that bidders should consider when preparing their firm fixed-price financial proposals?	No indicative or maximum budget for Components #02 and #03 is being disclosed through this clarification. Bidders should submit a competitive firm fixed-price proposal based on the published scope, deliverables, required expertise and estimated level of effort. Costs should be clearly separated by component and, where practical, by principal deliverable to support technical and financial evaluation.
15	For a partnership/consortium bid covering all three consultancy components, should direct costs associated with Component #01 in-person validation activities (e.g. flights, venue and related costs) be included within the Component #01 budget, with separate budget sheets for Components #02 and #03 and a joint summary sheet; or may bidders submit a single coordinated budget that separates direct costs from human-resource costs? How should shared project-management costs across components be presented?	The proposal should remain readily reviewable by component. Bidders proposing for more than one component may submit separate component-level budget sheets supported by a consolidated summary budget. Direct costs that are specifically attributable to Component #01 should be clearly identified under that component, while any genuinely shared costs should be transparently identified and allocated across the relevant components using a clear and reasonable basis, without duplication. A single coordinated budget may also be included as a summary, provided that the costs, deliverables and level of effort for each component remain clearly distinguishable. Whether travel, venue or other in-person validation costs should be included in the financial proposal remains subject to ASLM Procurement/Programme