

AFRICAN UNION



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ECOSOCC Secretariat
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REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI)

TO DEVELOP AN AU CSO ONLINE ACCREDITATION PLATFORM

Procurement Reference No. ECOSOCC/03/11/241.21

SECTION I: LETTER OF INVITATION

15th October 2021

Dear Applicants,

REF: CONSULTANCY TO DEVELOP AU CSO ONLINE ACCREDITATION PLATFORM

1. The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) an advisory organ of the African Union wishes to recruit highly qualified African experts to undertake the above assignment. The ECOSOCC now invites interested Individual Consultants to submit CVs for the assignment as per attached Terms of Reference (TORS).
2. The Consultant will be selected under the fixed budget Selection method and the pass mark shall be 70%.
3. The Eols must include the following:
 - (i) A Cover Letter outlining the understanding of the assignment, methodology, work plan and maintenance plans. It should also include the following;
 - A list of executed assignments similar to this project. This list must include complete website addresses and the name and contact information of the client representative.
 - A brief implementation plan demonstrating the time frame and milestones for the design, development, testing, debugging and the launch.
 - Solution architecture and system features and functionalities.
 - (ii) CV demonstrating experience with similar assignments
4. The Eols must be submitted to the following e-mail address: tender@aeecosocc.org
5. The title of the Procurement must appear as the subject of e-mail submissions.
6. The Deadline for submission of Eols is on 31st October 2021 at 1500 hours Lusaka (Zambia) Time. Late submissions will not be considered.
7. This call for Request for Expressions of Interest comprise of the following:
 - Section I – This Letter of Invitation
 - Section II - Terms of Reference

Yours sincerely,

Head of Administration, Finance and Procurement Department.

1.0 Background

The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) is an advisory organ of the African Union (AU) established as a policy development interface that will harness civil society expertise to the work of various Departments of the African Union Commission and the AU at large.

ECOSOCC is composed of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), cultural, social and professional groups duly registered in AU Member States and contributes to the effective translation of the objectives, principles and policies of the Union into concrete programmes.

ECOSOCC's mandate includes:

- Contributing, through advice, to the effective translation of the AU's objectives, principles and policies into concrete programmes, as well as evaluating those programmes
- Undertaking studies and making recommendations
- Contributing to the promotion and realization of the AU's vision and objectives
- Contributing to the promotion of human rights, the rule of law, good governance, democratic principles, gender equality and child rights
- Promoting and supporting the efforts of institutions engaged in reviewing the future of Africa and forging pan-African values in order to enhance an African social model and way of life
- Fostering and consolidating partnership between the AU and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)
- Assuming functions referred to it by other AU organs.

CSO members include but are not limited to:

- Social groups: e.g. those representing women, children, youth, the elderly and people with disabilities and special needs
- Professional groups: e.g. associations of artists, engineers, health practitioners, social workers, media, teachers, sport associations, legal professionals, social scientists, academia, business organizations, national chambers of commerce, workers, employers, industry and agriculture, and other private sector interest groups
- NGOs, Community-based Organizations (CBOs) and voluntary organizations
- Cultural organizations
- Social and professional organizations in the African Diaspora (in accordance with the definition approved by the Executive Council)

Executive Council Decisions EX/CL/Dec. 869 (XXVI) of 23-27 January 2015 and Dec. EX/CL 924 (XXVI) of June 2015 called upon ECOSOCC to collaborate with the Commission and Member States to mobilize national and regional CSOs and grassroots organizations to facilitate their constant interaction as well as the establishment of National Chapters of ECOSOCC within Member States, to achieve a people-centred Union in line with Agenda 2063 framework. A well-established accreditation mechanism is a prerequisite to facilitate and harmonise this engagement of African CSOs with the African Union.

In this endeavour, a consultancy has been commissioned for the development of a holistic framework that will provide an institutional mechanism for civil society organizations participation within the ecosystem of the African Union. The outcomes of this study will provide the founding principles that will enable the development of the 'soft infrastructure' for the effective translation of the proposed framework into an 'Online Accreditation Platform' (OAP) for African CSOs wishing to engage with the African Union. The OAP shall also factor for organizations which to apply for consultative and observer status within the AU framework.

In its quest to enhance and improve the delivery of its mandate especially regarding to the accreditation of CSOs, ECOSOCC hereby calls for a qualified ICT /Technology Solutions company to develop the OAP; an open source platform that will allow ECOSOCC to better manage CSOs interacting with the AU through a secure online profile directory with in-built communication support.

The ICT/technology solutions provider shall henceforth be referred to as the consultant will work with relevant stakeholders including the ECOSOCC Secretariat, MIS and IT Desk at the AUC and the consultant assigned to develop the National Chapter and Accreditation frameworks for the design, pilot testing and implementation of the OAP.

2.0 Objectives

The overall objective of this exercise is to develop an Online Accreditation Platform that provides a credible institutional mechanism for civil society organizations participation within the framework of AU and further strengthen the AU CSOs engagement in the promotion, popularization and implementation of AU policies and programmes in the continent.

The consultant (s) will be responsible for developing a state-of-the-art, secured and user-friendly OAP (Intuitive Information Architecture) that provides a holistic platform for the full participation of civil society organizations to interface with the AU in the implementation of the AU Policies and programmes as specified in 3.0 below

The specific objectives of this assignment will be to further provide:

- a) A digest of the best practices from other regional and continental Online Accreditation Platforms regarding the accreditation mechanism for CSOs engagement;
- b) User-manual and 'presentation' about the administering the platform
- c) Technical training for dedicated staff of the ECOSOCC Secretariat for the management of the OAP;
- d) Annual hosting and system maintenance plan; and
- e) Promotional materials including animated video highlighting the features of the OAP.

3.0 User Requirements for OAP

The consultant will be required to deliver as per the below listed user requirements within the timeline specified. The table below identifies the minimum requirements that the consultants solution must meet. The requirements are not listed in any particular priority. The project would be amenable to a phased approach to the requirements, if or as appropriate and the client is open to provide recommendations related to best of their knowledge and experience.

Feature	Details
Responsive design template	User friendly/easy to use design
	Usable on mobile/small screens
Organization features	Organization sign up
	Organization login/log out/password reset, etc.
	Organization profile
	Organization contact details
	Organization activities/areas of expertise/funding structure
	Organization documents/documents upload
	Organization directory / filter by type, country
	Organization management by an administrator
Meeting/conferences	Meeting/conference creation by an administrator

management	Registration for ECOSOCC-led events/activities
	Organisation registration to participate in meeting/conference
	List of current meetings/conferences
	Meetings participated in organisation profile
	Manage list of participants/registration
Multi-lingual	Content available in English and French
Content management system	Creation of text content, upload of media/documents by an administrator
Search functionality	Search content
	Search organisation
User management	Add/edit/delete administrators
Administration	Administration of list of values for various fields like organisation type, areas of expertise, geographical scope, funding structure so that organisation can select appropriate values during form submission
Group System	Notifications/Mailing.

4.0 Transfer of Knowledge/Training

The individual consultant(s) liaison with the ECOSOCC Secretariat will organize a number of virtual meetings, as required, to present the Online Accreditation Platform to the relevant departments of the African Union Commission and discuss the recommendations for tweaking the system for implementation.

5.0 Deliverables

- The final deliverable of this assignment shall be the **AU-CSO Online Accreditation Platform** that provides a secured and state-of-the-art platform for the full participation of civil society organizations to interface with the AU in the implementation of the AU Policies and programmes and a clear criteria for the granting of AU consultative and observer status to CSOs in Africa
- User-manual and 'presentation' about the administering the platform.

- Technical training for dedicated staff of the ECOSOCC Secretariat for the management of the OAP;
- Annual hosting and system maintenance plan; and
- Promotional materials including animated video highlighting the features of the OAP.
- Successful launch of the web platform which satisfies the secretariat's needs.
- Handover of a secure and tested user- friendly platform and transfer of all user rights and installation to the secretariat.
- Submission of all required documents such as reports in English based on challenges, obstacles and observation of testing and implementing the platform.
- The vendor ensures that the web platform is secure through various tests
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6.0. Methodology

The consultant is expected to propose the preferred methodology for this assignment. However, due to the current dynamics with the COVID-19 pandemic, travelling will be restricted to the bare minimum and virtual meetings through Zoom platform are highly recommended.

6.0 Assignment Reports and Schedule of Reports

The consultant is expected to prepare and present the following report and document to the ECOSOCC Secretariat within the set timelines as follows:

Activity/Task	Proposed Timeline
Digest of Best Practices for OAP	One week (1) after signing the contract.
Detailed Implementation Plan	Two weeks (2) after signature of contract
Pilot Architecture/OAP	Ten weeks (10) after signing of the contract.
Staff orientation /training	One week (1) after presentation of the pilot platform
Presentation of OAP to Stakeholders	Two weeks (2) after presentation of the pilot framework
Final Framework/ OAP	Four weeks (4) after presentation of pilot OAP
Staff training & provision of other deliverables as specified in 2.0 above	Two weeks (2) after submission of the final OAP

7.0 Facilities, Services and Resources to be provided by the Client

The client ECOSOCC shall facilitate the use of a premium Zoom platform for the consultant to engage with the various stakeholders with sufficient notice. The client shall also provide relevant documents like (a) national chapter framework, (b) accreditation framework, (c) geographical distribution of Member States and (d) any other documentation as solicited by the firm.

In the event that physical meetings are required between ECOSOCC and the consultants in the course of the assignment, the client will facilitate it in entirety (venue, stationery and equipment).

8.0 Assignment Period

The consultant is expected to undertake this assignment within a period of twelve weeks after signing of the contract. The consultant shall provide a breakdown (Gantt Chart) of the period within which the various activities for this assignment are expected to complete within the specified time frame.

9.0 Assignment Management & Administration

9.1 This assignment will be managed by the ECOSOCC Secretariat, Lusaka, Zambia. This includes servicing the consultant, support with setting-up appointments with stakeholders, ensuring that payments are made on time, facilitating meetings and tracking the work plan of the consultant.

9.2 Desk Officers or ICT officers of the Secretariat will be assigned to help in increasing expert opinion in the process. The consultant will also report to the designated focal point on all matters pertaining to the assignment.

10.0 Documents for Review

All relevant AU instruments and policy related reports of the commission and ECOSOCC

11.0 Selection /Qualification Criteria

- At least an MSc in Computer Science or Information System or closely related field.
- At least (5) successful (i.e. signed off and accepted as fully operational systems) during the last three (3) years.
- The consultant (s) must demonstrate a track record in developing of similar work. Overall experience of not less than 10 years.
- Demonstrated experience in developing online platforms in low-bandwidth environments.
- have a strong project management ability and excellent communication skills

- References and examples of past work are required and should be included in the cover letter.
- Proven experience in the development of information business solutions;
- Has the legal capacity to enter into a contract to execute the assignment;
- Not have had suspension of business activities;
- Have an appropriate operation permit and Business Registration Card which is based in Africa or within the African Diaspora.
- The secretariat will own copyright for all materials developed or included in the online platform. All source materials for the developed products must be delivered upon completion of the project.
- Must be an African, from the continent or Diaspora
- Fluency in spoken and written English. Knowledge of French will be an added advantage

12.0 Budget and Payment

The total cost of this assignment shall be a fixed lumpsum of **fifteen thousand United State Dollars (\$USD 15,000).**

13.0 Duty station and Travel requirements

The assignment will be 80% home based and 20% travel to conduct the face-to-face and consultative interactions with the relevant stakeholders in cases where virtual interaction prove impractical. Travel will only be approved if there is a motivated reason where virtual engagements are impractical or insufficient. In any eventuality, that the Secretariat feels the need to have an in-person working session with the Consultant or any other travel requirements; a DSA (daily substance allowance) and economy class travel ticket will be covered by the former in accordance with AU rules and regulations.

14.0 Language: Fluency in spoken and written English will be the language requirement for conducting this task however Knowledge of French will be an added advantage.

Also the bid, as well as all correspondence and documents relating to the bid shall be written in English language. Supporting documents and literature furnished by the Bidder may be in another language provided they are accompanied by an accurate translation of the relevant passages in the English language.

Business & financial health of the consultant/company	10
Specific experience of the consultant relevant to the assignment	40
Adequacy and quality of the proposed methodology, and work plan in responding to the Terms of Reference (TORs) -Technical approach and methodology -Work plan	40 10
Total Weight	100