



RFP No. ASLM/RFP/1213/19

RFP for Selection of Consultant

Grant writing for

Fleming Fund External Quality Assurance (EQA) for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

1 Acronyms

ASLM	African Society for Laboratory Medicine
AMR	Antimicrobial resistance
FF	Fleming Fund
RFP	Request for Proposals
SSA	sub-Saharan Africa
SME	Subject Matter Expert
US	United States

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3 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. Medical laboratories play a pivotal role in global disease diagnosis, surveillance, outbreak investigation, initiation and monitoring of therapy, as well as research and development. Unfortunately, medical laboratories in Africa are underdeveloped and cannot meet the testing demands of rapidly growing health delivery services in the 21st century. Inadequate resources and diagnostic services compromise the quality of patient care due to misdiagnosis and consequently under or over treatment of disease, which presents significant economic and public health challenges.

Through a Fleming Fund Grant, ASLM will develop a full proposal to support improving the quality of bacteriology diagnostics for AMR by strengthening EQA in pathogen identification and antimicrobial susceptibility.

ASLM works in close collaboration with governments, local and international organizations, implementing partners, and the private sector in these countries by focusing on four strategic goals:

- Strengthening the laboratory workforce by training and certifying laboratory professionals and clinicians through standardized frameworks
- Transforming laboratory testing quality by enrolling laboratories in quality improvement programs to achieve accreditation by international standards
- Developing strong, harmonized regulatory systems for diagnostic products as defined by the Global Harmonization Taskforce
- Building a network of national public health reference laboratories to improve early disease detection and collaborative research

4 Objective of the Request for Proposal

On behalf of the consortium formed to respond to the needs for strengthening bacteriology diagnostics for AMR identified by the Fleming Fund, ASLM is soliciting vendors [contractors, consultants, subject matter experts (SMEs)] to support the write up of the full proposal in close collaboration with all consortium members. The vendor is expected to be well versed in current AMR priorities and Fleming Fund funding programs. Successful bidders will sign an agreement with ASLM to complete the work within 3 weeks (15 working days).

5 Scope of Work

Quality-assured antimicrobial resistance (AMR) testing is key to the appropriate management of drug-resistant bacterial infections and the establishment of reliable, laboratory-based surveillance systems in support of the control and prevention of AMR. Many clinical laboratories in Africa continue to struggle to implement laboratory quality management systems, due but not limited to resource shortages, competing priorities or the lack of enabling policies. In resource-limited settings, external quality assurance (EQA) programmes are often considered a minimal requirement for quality-assured testing in clinical laboratories. EQA provides an opportunity to objectively assess laboratory performance through an external agency. By comparing the performance of an assessed laboratory to a peer-group laboratory, EQA programmes contribute to identifying areas for improvement (such as staff competencies, equipment functionality or test result turn-around times) and is central to the quality assurance cycle. An effective EQA programme supports participating laboratories to correct deficiencies and maintain their proficiency. We propose through this grant to strengthen EQA for pathogen identification and antimicrobial susceptibility testing through:

- strengthening or building of regional capacity to prepare, purchase and distribute international proficiency testing panels for bacterial identification and antibiotic susceptibility testing across the different regions of Africa.
- Increasing the participation of reference and public health laboratories under One health to international Africa-based AMR EQA PT programs.
- Identifying and supporting national public health or reference laboratories with capacity to produce AMR EQA PT panel for laboratories for their respective national AMR laboratory network.
- Developing a business case for the sustainability of international and national provision of EQA PT panels

6 Deliverables

6.1 Three-day Consortium workshop

- Assist ASLM in organizing and conducting a three-day consortium writing workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa, during the month of February 2020. Travel logistics will be taken care of by ASLM.
- Translate the outcomes of the consortium writing workshop into a coherent draft work plan.
- Provide expert input into proposed activities on key objectives outlined in section 3 (introduction) and 5 (scope of work), to ensure alignment with objectives of Fleming fund and overall expected outcomes.

6.2 Full proposal

- Lead and coordinate the write up of the full proposal, against the criteria in the RFP published by the Fleming Fund and within the deadline of 30th March 2020.
- Ensure that the proposal includes clear goals, deliverables and outcomes that can be easily translated into pricing by the ASLM grant and budget team.
- Set clear timelines and deliverables for all activities related to the grant writing.
- Respect the principle of confidentiality.
- Allow for at least two rounds of review by the consortium writing task force, including proofreading of the proposal in collaboration with the ASLM communications team.

Period of performance: 12th February 2020 – 30th March 2020

Approximate total budget: 15,000 USD

N.B. This consultancy shall be paid on a task basis and is NOT a monthly consultancy; as such it shall be paid as and when the assigned tasks are undertaken.

7 Qualifications for the position

1. Strong track record of successful grant writing for health system strengthening and quality management systems
2. Experience with facilitating brainstorming and planning meetings
3. Knowledge related to developing and executing training programs in low- and middle-income countries
4. Excellent proficiency in English language
5. Publication track record
6. Knowledge and experience in global health security, One Health, AMR global action plans and surveillance systems

7. Resume that documents work in SSA countries
8. Experience working for/with Fleming Fund projects
9. Individual(s) should be able to start immediately
10. Individual(s) should have at least seven years' experience in laboratory strengthening in low- and middle-income countries

The review shall include checking deliverables in relation to the scope of work and feedback from consortium members.

8 Instructions for submitting proposals

- A. The format of the submission, in response to this RFP, must include, but is not limited, to the following:
 - I. Background on the Respondent (organization or individual) and staffing qualifications and experience. Indicate how these qualifications and experience relate to the proposed functional areas applied for. Where the organization is affiliated/has partnerships with other institutions, a description of how this will result in effective implementation of the proposed areas of work should be included.
 - II. Capability Statement. The Capability Statement is a description of the Respondent's work history and/or experience with similar projects in the past five (5) years. This should include, but is not limited to, a narrative description of the principal results achieved, how they were achieved and how those results related to the problem statement being addressed.
 - III. How the Respondent proposes to achieve the deliverables. Include specific activities and strategic approach that will be conducted under each objective.
- B. Completed proposals shall consist of typewritten pages utilizing a minimum 12-point font. A maximum of 10 pages for the proposal is allowed.
- C. An authorized individual representing the Respondent will sign and date the proposal cover sheet. The signatory agent's printed name, title, name of the organization, address, phone and fax numbers and email address must be provided. Failure to provide a signed copy of the affirmation statement below will be cause for the proposal not to be considered.

I affirm that the information within this proposal, to the best of my knowledge, is true and accurate. Further, I am duly authorized to sign and submit this proposal on behalf of this agency. I fully affirm and understand that failure to meet the requirements of this proposal at the submitted price may result in my organization's contract being terminated.

- D. Include at least two (2) current references and their contact information from organizations that have used Respondent's services within the last twelve (12) months.
- E. Send your completed application by email to the point of contact indicated below as early as **16th December 2019 and no later than 23rd December 2019 (11:59 pm East African Time).**

Point of contact:

Direct any written questions or request for information about this RFP to:

Pascale Ondoa
Director of Science and New Initiatives
Email: pondoa@aslm.org
Phone Number: +31 6394 758 18

9 Evaluation and Award Process

A team of ASLM staff and outside experts will evaluate the applications based on preset standards relevant to the specific project and its correlation with the RFP objectives. An evaluation matrix with assigned weighted numerical values will be used to rate each applicant. The following represents some, although not all, of the criteria that will be used to the assessed feasibility of each Respondent.

1. Does the organization / individual have the right skill set and expertise to accomplish the required assignments?
2. Does the organization / individual demonstrate adequate and verifiable past experience in similar projects?
3. Are the Respondent's proposed activities (strategy of implementation) current, feasible and cost effective?
4. Are the proposed outcomes measurable and feasible?
5. Did the application include references that attest to the Respondents personal and professional integrity and competency?
6. Did the Respondent demonstrate knowledge of ASLM's project needs and objectives?

ASLM reserves the right, but is under no obligation, 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 of the proposal. Formal notification to award the contract and the actual execution of the contract are subject to receipt of funds from the Fleming Fund.

Each Respondent submitting a proposal will be notified in writing or via e-mail of ASLM's decision concerning their proposal. Should your organization be recommended for acceptance, the contract shall be effective on the contract execution date and shall run until 6th March 2020. All work must be scheduled and completed within the contract period timeframe. Any modifications or extensions must be negotiated in advance and submitted to ASLM for review and approval. The selected Respondent's proposal, and any subsequent material submitted in response to requests for additional information, will become the basis of contractual agreements with said Respondent.

10 Contractual Terms and Conditions

Responses must be in accordance with the guidelines as specified in this RFP. This RFP does not commit ASLM to accept any proposals submitted, nor is ASLM responsible for any costs incurred in the preparation of responses to this RFP. All materials submitted in response to this RFP or developed during the life of the contract will become the property ASLM. The detailed itemized budget must be submitted in US dollars and will be evaluated in terms of best value to ASLM.

ASLM reserves the right to delay, amend, reissue or cancel all or part of this RFP at any time without prior notice. ASLM discourages ex parte communication with any Board member, the public and/or staff member after the deadline for the receipt of proposals. ASLM will be under no obligation to reveal or discuss with any Respondent

on how a proposal was assessed, or to provide any other information relative to the selection process. Respondents whose proposals are not selected will be notified in writing and shall have no claim whatsoever for any kind of compensation.