



**WORLD BANK/IFAD PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION UNIT
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE TRANSFORMATION AND AGRIBUSINESS
REVITALIZATION PROJECT (STAR-P)**

**1st Floor LIBSUCO Building Japan Freeway (Formerly Somalia Drive), Gardnersville –
Monrovia, Liberia**

IDA 63600, PROJECT NO. 160945

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

(CONSULTANCY SERVICE – FIRM SELECTION)

Assignment Title: Consultancy Service for Technical Assistance to the Food Microbiology Laboratory of the National Standards Laboratory of Ministry of Commerce and Industry for Accreditation Against ISO 17025:2017 (International Standard for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories)

REOI Reference No.: LR-PMU-MOA-346787-CS-CQS

Background

The STAR-P was approved by the World Bank Board of Directors on January 15, 2019. The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to increase agricultural productivity and commercialization of smallholder farmers for selected value chains in selected counties. The USD 25 million financing agreement was signed on February 15, 2019, and the project became effective on June 28, 2019. The project is co-financed on a pari-passu basis with IFAD. The USD 23 million co-financing was approved by the IFAD Board in September 2019 and the Financing Agreement was signed on 21 November 2019.

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to increase agricultural productivity and commercialization of smallholder farmers for rice, oil palm, and horticulture value chains in selected counties of Liberia.

Objective of the Assignment

The aim of the consultancy is to strengthen the capacities of NSL (National Standards Laboratory) in Liberia, specifically by focusing on the technical upgrading of selected laboratories. This objective will be accomplished through the assistance of experienced consulting firm that possess the necessary managerial and technical expertise in accordance with the ISO/IEC 17025:2017 standard requirements. The assignment, to be carried out by the consulting firm, is intended to provide technical assistance for the upgrading of National Standard Laboratory labs to be accredited according to ISO/IEC 17025:2017 including food microbiology laboratories against ISO 17025:2017.



The shortlisting criteria, based on Qualitative Assessment methodology, are:

Core Business of the firm and Number of Years in Business

Technical and Managerial Organization of the Firm

Description of Similar Assignments (in the last 8 years) to recognized laboratories of the same nature

Experience in Similar Conditions

Availability of Appropriate Skills among Staff or within the firm that are competent lead auditors and assessors in accreditation of food microbiology lab

Legally Registered Firm in Home Country (Evidence of Business Registration)

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment can be found at the following website:

- a. Executive Mansion (www.emansion.gov.lr)
- b. Ministry of Agriculture (www.moa.gov.lr) or directly requested via email from rglaydor@moa.gov.lr

The attention of interested individual Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" dated July 2016, revised November 2017, August 2018 and January 2020, setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest. Please refer to paragraph 3.17 of the Procurement Regulations on conflict of interest related to this assignment which is available on the Bank's website at <http://projects-beta.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/brief/procurement-new-framework>.

A consulting firm will be selected in accordance with the Consultants Qualification Selection (CQS) method set out in the Procurement Regulations.

Expressions of interest must be submitted electronically in a format that cannot be altered (pdf format is preferred) to the email address below by 10th July 2023 @ 5:00pm local time.

Galah Toto

National Program Coordinator

Project Implementation Unit (PIU), Ministry of Agriculture

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Signed by: Galah Toto

National Program Coordinator – STAR-P/RETRAP

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy Service for Technical Assistance to the Food Microbiology Laboratory of the National Standards Laboratory of Ministry of Commerce and Industry for Accreditation Against ISO 17025:2017 (International Standard for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories)

Introduction

The Smallholders Agriculture Transformation and Agriculture Revitalization Project (The STAR-Project) is a Ministry of Agriculture initiative funded by the World Bank. Its primary objective is to revitalize the agricultural sector, with a special focus on supporting smallholders and strengthening selected government ministries, departments, and agencies.

As part of the project, the National Standards Laboratory (NSL), which operates under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), is a beneficiary. Recognizing the importance of enhancing access to national, regional, and international markets for food and agricultural traded products, the NSL has identified the accreditation of its microbiology laboratory to ISO 17025:2017 as a key intervention.

ii. Background

The proposed initiative aligns with the Government's Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), specifically focusing on the second pillar of the PAPD which emphasizes the economy and job creation. This pillar highlights the importance of improving infrastructure quality to enhance competitiveness and includes a commitment to fully accredit and align the National Standards Laboratory (NSL) with the 15 requirements of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

Considering these objectives, the NSL recognizes the need for external consultancy services to provide technical support and expertise to achieve its goals.

III. Goal

Upgrading of NSL labs to be accredited according to ISO/IEC 17025:2017 including food microbiology laboratories against ISO 17025:2017.

IV. Objective:

The aim of the consultancy is to strengthen the capacities of NSL (National Standards Laboratory) in Liberia, specifically by focusing on the technical upgrading of selected laboratories. This objective will be accomplished through the assistance of experienced consultants who possess the necessary managerial and technical expertise in accordance with the ISO/IEC 17025:2017 standard requirements.

V. Deliverables

1. Ensure the setting up of the accreditation process lead and project team by NSL;
2. Create awareness on ISO 17025:2017 amongst staff of NSL;
3. Prepare relevant processes in reference to the Quality Manual (QM) and SOPs to address relevant requirements of ISO 17025:2017;
4. Train and certify four selected staff as internal quality auditors who will assess the effectiveness and adequacy of the management system to be installed;
5. Perform a comprehensive assessment of the laboratory documentation system for testing to identify any gaps in meeting the requirements specified by ISO/IEC 17025;
6. Create a detailed implementation plan for the management system and technical requirements based on the findings from the gap analysis conducted in accordance with the ISO 17025 standard;
7. Identify with the acquiescence of the NSL a suitable and recognized Regional or International Accreditation Body that will provide needed accreditation service;
8. Ensure the payment of accreditation fees
9. Regularly perform system monitoring activities to improve its maturity in anticipation of the initial assessment within the timeframe of the accreditation process;
10. Arrange an initial external audit before proceeding with the accreditation audit.
11. Facilitate the implementation of corrective actions by the microbiology lab;
12. Conduct a final review and simulation assessment before the accreditation body assessment;
13. Address the relevant corrective actions identified by the accreditation body;
14. Obtain the accreditation of the microbiology

VI. Basic requirements

To be qualify for the consultancy, interested individual entity must:

1. Have explicit international recognition preferably with ISO certifications in similar ISO 17025:2017 international standard;
2. The consultant must have a good track record of certifying government agencies against quality management;
3. Have an experience of more than ten years in similar services to recognized laboratories of the same nature;
4. Have a profile of providing such support that led to the accreditation of laboratories within the region and especially Liberia;
5. Have personnel that are competent lead auditors and assessors within the scope of accreditation of the food microbiology lab.

VII. Qualification of Consultant

1. The Consultant must possess a proven record of assisting corporations and/or organizations in developing, implementing, and achieving ISO certification or facilitating accreditation for ISO 9001:2015 and ISO/IEC 17025:2018 in accordance with the intended objectives.
2. It is necessary for the Consultant to be actively engaged in providing consulting and training services for the establishment of quality management systems to meet the certification or accreditation requirements of ISO 9001:2015 and ISO/IEC 17025:2018 standards.
3. The Consultant should have facilitated ISO certification in various institutions, including private and/or government entities, agencies, bureaus, educational institutions (particularly the UN, national conformity assessment bodies, corporations and Universities), and similar organizations.
4. The Lead Consultant must be able to substantiate their qualifications, which should include the following:
 - Possession of a Master's Degree, preferably in quality management, business management, engineering, or a related field.
 - Completion of at least forty (40) hours of relevant training or seminars on ISO standards, including ISO 9001:2015 and ISO/IEC 17025:2018.
 - Must possess at least 10 years of experience in accordance with the intended objectives
5. The Consultant should have prior experience providing similar consulting services, particularly in Liberia, within the last ten (10) years. This experience should have been delivered to a minimum of three (3) institutions, including at least one government agency, and should be supported by a certificate of satisfactory service, certificate of acceptance, or any comparable document indicating successful completion of the provided services.
6. The Consultant must possess training and experience in third-party auditing for ISO 9001:2015 and ISO/IEC 17025:2018 certification.

VIII. Time Schedule of Deliverables (Sample)

S/No.	Deliverable	Timeline	Delivery Format	Percentage Payment
1	Inception Report Detailed work plan acceptable to STAR-P Gap assessment report	Fifteen (15) calendar days after the contract signing	Three (3) hard copies and soft copies in MS Word and PDF	15%

	Set the accreditation process lead and project team by NSL;					M O U
	Complete awareness creation on ISO 17025:2017 amongst staff of NSL;					f o r
	Complete Quality Manual (QM) and SOPs to address relevant requirements of ISO 17025:2017;					N S L
	Complete Training and certification of four selected staff as internal quality auditors who will assess the effectiveness and adequacy of the installed management system;					a n d
2.	Assessment report of the laboratory documentation system for testing to identify any gaps in meeting the requirements specified by ISO/IEC 17025;	Sixty (60)	Three (3)	hard		a
	Implementation plan for the management system and technical requirements based on the findings from the gap analysis after conducted in accordance with the ISO 17025 standard;	calendar days after contract signing	copies and	soft	35%	s u i t a
	able and recognized Regional or International Accreditation Body that will provide needed accreditation service;					
	Fully functional system implemented External audit report before proceeding with the accreditation audit. Report on implementation of corrective actions by the microbiology lab; and final review and simulation assessment before the accreditation body assessment;					
	Draft report on accreditation and accreditation certificate of the microbiology					
3	Final Report Presentation of Report to the PIU/NSL for validation	Ninety (90) calendar days after contract signing	Six (6) (90) MS Word, the summarized PowerPoint and a PDF of the report	hard copies and soft copies in	one	50%

IX. Facilities to be Provided by the Client

The consultant will be provided with necessary documents that may be required, office space, and access to the relevant staff and key stakeholders.

