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AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

CLARIFICATION BULLETIN NO. 1

BPM1/QCBS/2026/001

Provision of Growth-Led Technical and Advisory Services

to 12 Innovative Women-Led Startups

"UNLEASHING THE BUSINESS GROWTH POTENTIAL OF INNOVATIVE WOMEN-LED STARTUPS IN AFRICA"

Question 1

Is a consulting firm registered in Belgium eligible to submit an Expression of Interest for this assignment?

RESPONSE

No. In accordance with the eligibility provisions applicable to this Grant, the proceeds of the Grant may be used only for the procurement of goods produced in, and services supplied from, the territories of the Regional Member States of the African Development Bank. Accordingly, a consulting firm registered in Belgium is not eligible to participate in this procurement.

For reference, the list of African Development Bank Regional Member Countries is available on the Bank's website:
AfDB – Regional Member Countries

Question 2

In which countries are the twelve (12) women-led startups that will benefit from the assignment located?

RESPONSE

No specific countries have been identified at this stage. The assignment is multi-country and covers twelve (12) innovative women-led technology startups operating across Africa. The final composition of the portfolio will be confirmed by the Project Implementation Unit in accordance with the project implementation arrangements.

Question 3

Is a consulting firm registered in Lebanon eligible to submit an Expression of Interest for this assignment?

RESPONSE

No. In accordance with the eligibility provisions applicable to this Grant, the proceeds of the Grant may be used only for the procurement of goods produced in, and services supplied from, the territories of the Regional Member States of the African Development Bank. Accordingly, a consulting firm registered in Lebanon is not eligible to participate in this procurement.

For reference, the list of African Development Bank Regional Member Countries is available on the Bank's website:
AfDB – Regional Member Countries

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Question 4

Where is the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) physically located, and would regular in-person coordination with the PIU be expected?

RESPONSE

The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) is based in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Regular in-person coordination with the PIU is not a requirement. Coordination may be conducted virtually, with in-person meetings arranged where necessary and mutually agreed during implementation.

Question 5

Is the consulting firm required to have an established physical presence in the participating African countries, or would demonstrate experience in managing multi-country assignments from an existing African office be considered sufficient?

RESPONSE

The Terms of Reference do not require the consulting firm to maintain an established physical presence in each participating country. Refer to Section 2.4 – Target Beneficiaries of the Terms of Reference, which provides further information regarding the participating startups and confirms that the final composition of the portfolio will be confirmed by the PIU.

Question 6

Have the 12 participating startups already been identified? If so, could you share their indicative country-wise distribution?

RESPONSE

No specific countries have been identified at this stage. The assignment is multi-country and covers twelve (12) innovative women-led technology startups operating across Africa. As indicated in Section 2.4 – Target Beneficiaries of the Terms of Reference, the final composition of the portfolio will be confirmed by the Project Implementation Unit (PIU).

Question 7

Would a predominantly virtual advisory delivery model be acceptable, with in-person engagements undertaken where necessary and mutually agreed?

RESPONSE

A predominantly virtual advisory delivery model would be acceptable, provided that the Firm remains able to undertake in-person engagements where necessary for effective delivery and as mutually agreed with the Client

Question 8

The TOR specifies four business opportunities, networking and mentorship sessions. Are these expected to be physical events, virtual sessions, or a combination? Is there any indicative expectation regarding their location, duration and number of participants?

RESPONSE

Refer to Sections 3.3, 4.5.4, 4.7 and 6.1 of the Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference require four (4) business opportunities, networking and mentorship sessions but do not prescribe whether these sessions must be physical, virtual or a combination, nor do they specify predetermined locations, duration or number of participants. As provided under Section 6.1, the Consultant has flexibility to propose appropriate advisory modalities consistent with the scope, objectives and required results of the assignment.

Question 9

Beyond the four networking sessions, is the consultant expected to organize any bootcamps, Demo Days or investor showcases independently, or would its responsibility be limited to preparing startups and facilitating their participation in events organized by Janngo Capital Partners or other stakeholders?

RESPONSE

Refer to Section 4.6 – Phase V: Investor Readiness and Ecosystem Engagement of the Terms of Reference. The Consultant is expected to prepare participating startups for engagement with investors, facilitate networking with investors and strategic partners and, where appropriate, facilitate startup founders' participation in relevant demonstration days, pitch events or investor forums identified by Janngo Capital Partners or the PIU.

Question 10

Travel and accommodation: For in-person advisory and networking activities, would the consultant be expected to budget for the travel and accommodation of participating startups, mentors, investors and other stakeholders, in addition to its own experts? Or would some of these costs be covered directly by the Client?

RESPONSE

Please refer to Section 5.7 of the Terms of Reference regarding the composition of the Contract Price. At the current REOI stage, consulting firms are not required to submit financial proposals.

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Question 11

Are there any predefined ceilings, eligible cost categories or restrictions on reimbursable expenses, particularly for event logistics, travel, accommodation and external mentor honoraria?

RESPONSE

Refer to Section 5.7 of the Terms of Reference regarding the composition of the Contract Price. No separate ceilings or reimbursable expense categories are specified in the Terms of Reference. At the current REOI stage, consulting firms are not required to submit financial proposals.

Question 12

Is there an estimated budget or maximum contract value allocated to this assignment, or are consulting firms expected to develop their own budgets based on their proposed methodology, team composition, level of effort, and implementation approach?

RESPONSE

No estimated budget or maximum contract value is specified in the Terms of Reference. Note that, at the current REOI stage, consulting firms are not required to submit financial proposals. The REOI is for the purpose of establishing a shortlist of qualified consulting firms based on the qualifications and experience specified therein.

Question 13

We would need clarity on the countries in which the 12 selected startups are going to be located? Will the list of participating startups and their locations be provided by the project implementation unit, or will the selected consultant be responsible for identifying, mapping, and selecting the startups across the relevant countries? This information will help us determine the appropriate delivery approach and resource requirements.

RESPONSE

The Consultant will not be responsible for identifying or selecting the twelve (12) participating startups. As indicated in Section 2.4 – Target Beneficiaries of the Terms of Reference, the final composition of the portfolio will be confirmed by the Project Implementation Unit (PIU).

No specific countries have been identified at this stage. The assignment is multi-country in nature and will cover twelve (12) innovative women-led technology startups operating across Africa. The list of participating startups and their respective locations will be provided to the selected Consultant once the portfolio has been finalized by the PIU.

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Question 14

The assignment will involve both virtual and in-person engagements of the 12 women led tech start ups across different african countries. We would need clarity on the expected balance between online and physical delivery, including the minimum number of mandatory in-person visits, training sessions, workshops, networking events, or mentorship engagements? Are there specific physical meetings or events that the consultant is required to organize or facilitate and where will be the physical location of the event considering that we will have the women across different countries?

RESPONSE

The Terms of Reference do not prescribe a specific balance between virtual and in-person delivery or a minimum number of mandatory in-person engagements. At this REOI stage, the evaluation is focused on the qualifications and relevant experience of interested consulting firms, as specified in the REOI.

Question 15

If the startups are required to converge at a central location for training or other activities, where will the location be, who will be responsible for their travel and accommodation costs? Are these expenses expected to be included in the consultant's proposed contract price, or will they be handled separately by the project?

RESPONSE

The Terms of Reference do not require the twelve (12) participating startups to converge at a predetermined central location for training or other activities, and no such location has been specified. Refer to Section 5.7 of the Terms of Reference regarding the composition of the Contract Price. At the current REOI stage, consulting firms are not required to submit financial proposals.

Question 16

Could you kindly share the Terms of Reference and any further information on the countries in which the 12 startups are located and the expected language(s) of delivery?

RESPONSE

No specific countries have been identified at this stage. The assignment is multi-country and covers twelve (12) innovative women-led technology startups operating across Africa. As indicated in Section 2.4 – Target Beneficiaries of the Terms of Reference, the final composition of the portfolio will be confirmed by the Project Implementation Unit (PIU).

Regarding language requirements, please refer to the relevant provisions of the Terms of Reference, including Section 7.7 – Language Requirements. Reports, presentations, training materials and advisory tools shall be prepared in English, unless otherwise approved by the Client. Where appropriate, selected advisory sessions may be delivered in French to accommodate participating startups. The proposed team shall collectively possess excellent

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written and oral communication skills in English, while proficiency in French will be considered an asset, particularly for assignments involving Francophone startups.

Question 17

Does startup selection form part of the assignment?

RESPONSE

No. The Consultant will not be responsible for the selection of the twelve (12) participating startups. As indicated in Section 2.4 – Target Beneficiaries of the Terms of Reference, the final composition of the portfolio will be confirmed by the Project Implementation Unit (PIU).

Question 18

Are there any required formats, forms or page limits for the EOI?

RESPONSE

No specific format, forms or page limits are prescribed for the Expression of Interest. Interested consulting firms should provide the information requested in the REOI to demonstrate their qualifications and relevant experience.

Question 19

Are applicants expected to submit a full Technical and Financial Proposal at this stage, or only an Expression of Interest demonstrating their qualifications and relevant experience? Are there any specific submission format requirements?

RESPONSE

At this stage of the procurement process, interested consulting firms are required to submit only an Expression of Interest (EOI) in accordance with the Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI). A Technical Proposal and Financial Proposal are not required at this stage.

The purpose of the REOI is to establish a shortlist of qualified consulting firms. Interested firms should therefore provide the information requested in the REOI demonstrating their qualifications and relevant experience, including information on similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, and the availability of appropriate skills among their staff.

No specific format, forms or page limits are prescribed for the EOI.

The provisions of the Terms of Reference concerning the Technical Proposal relate to the subsequent proposal stage and do not constitute submission requirements for the current REOI stage.