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| **Terms of Reference**  **CONSULTANCY TO UNDERTAKE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PUBLIC SECTOR COLLABORATION PLATFORM WITHIN AND ACROSS COUNTRIES IN AFRICA** |

1. **Background**

The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF or the Foundation) is Africa’s premier institution in capacity building. Established in February 1991, ACBF builds human and institutional capacity for good governance and economic development in Africa. The Foundation has empowered governments, parliaments, civil society, private sector, and higher education institutions in more than 45 countries and six regional economic communities over the past three decades.

To sustain successful interventions in developing human capital and strengthening institutional capacities, ACBF is implementing its Strategic Plan 2023-2027. The Strategic Plan focuses on four (4) key impact areas, including (1) climate change and energy for productive use; (2) agribusiness and food sovereignty; (3) trade as an engine of economic development; and (4) economic and social governance.

To deliver on its Strategic Plan 2023-2027, ACBF is committed to working closely with stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of Economic and Social Governance initiatives in Africa. In this vein, ACBF is developing a Public Sector Collaboration (PSC) Platform for public service officials in Africa for purposes of enhancing cooperation, fostering peer learning, and facilitating the exchange of best practices across countries and regions. ACBF recognizes the critical importance of promoting effective governance and service delivery through strategic collaboration and knowledge sharing among public sector leaders, which is the aim of this initiative.

We invite qualified consultancy firms to submit proposals for collection and management of data on best practice in Public Financial Management in Africa and across the globe, as well as the design, development, and implementation of PSC digital platform while incorporating collaborative technologies.

1. **Justification**

The governance landscape in Africa is rapidly evolving, with increasing demands for transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness in public service delivery. Public officials play a crucial role in shaping policies and implementing programs that directly impact socio-economic development. However, the complexity of governance challenges requires more than individual effort; it necessitates collective learning and cooperation across borders. The need for enhanced information exchange and peer learning among public officials across African countries is vital for fostering collaboration, sharing best practices, and ultimately improving governance and public service delivery. In response to this need, ACBF seeks to develop and implement improved mechanisms to enable effective information exchange and peer learning within and across African nations. Peer-to-peer learning alliances will provide a safe space for public officials across the African continent to share experiences, and discuss practical questions of mutual interest, all related to Economic and Social Governance.

The PSC Platform will contribute to the goals of the new ACBF Strategy (2023-27), particularly the Economic and Social Governance Key Impact Area which emphasizes domestic resource mobilization, public finance management performance, and evidence-based economic policy formulation and implementation. A digital collaboration Platform will provide a structured platform for senior public officials to access resources, exchange ideas, and learn from each other’s experiences. This initiative will address the current gaps in communication, knowledge sharing, and collaborative policymaking, leading to improved governance outcomes across the continent. While the PSC Platform will target the wider public sector, the pilot phase will focus on supporting the implementation of public finance management initiatives.

1. **Objectives of the Assignment**

The main objective is to establish a collaboration platform to enhance the capacity, coordination, and effectiveness of the African public sector through sharing of best practice, convening professionals and building in-country and cross-country partnerships. The specific objectives of the PSC Platform are to:

1. To collect and manage data on best practices in Public Financial Management (PFM) in Africa and globally.
2. To implement a robust, user-friendly digital platform tailored to the needs of public service officials and professionals. The platform will showcase and distil results, share best practices from the African and Global context, on the implementation of Economic and Social Governance policies and frameworks across all the AU member states.
3. To facilitate effective mechanisms for information exchange, peer learning, and collaboration among users through real-time dialogue on good practices, the successes, bottlenecks, or issues in implementing Economic and Social Governance policies and frameworks.
4. Promote training sessions, workshops, webinars, and courses launched by the ACB Academy, around capacity-building initiatives for public sector professionals.

**4.** **Scope of Work**

The consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

a. Needs Assessment:

* Conduct comprehensive research to identify best practices and dynamics in Public Financial Management in Africa and globally using PFM performance evaluations tools
* Engage with key stakeholders through surveys, interviews, and focus groups to gather input and feedback to ensure the platform meets diverse needs.

b. **Platform Architecture and Development**

* Develop a detailed design architecture for the digital platform, ensuring it is scalable, secure, and user-friendly.
* Identify, compare and justify alternative technologies for the digital platform and its components.
* Acquire, customize, and implement the chosen digital platform and its components.
* Incorporate essential features based on the accepted solution design document.

**c. Feature Development and Integration**

* Implement core functionalities as per signed off solution design document, including user authentication, data privacy, secure communication channels, collaborative workspaces, document sharing and management, discussion forums, and knowledge repositories.
* Where applicable, integration with existing partner/government systems.
* Integrate advanced tools for data analytics, real-time collaboration, and performance tracking to enhance decision-making and efficiency.

**d. Content Curation and Management**

* Develop and curate high-quality content relevant to public financial management, governance, and leadership.
* Establish a content management system that allows for easy updates and access to resources such as best practices, policy guidelines, and training materials.

**e. User Training and Support**

* Design and deliver comprehensive training programs for platform users, focusing on effective utilization of the platform's features and functionalities.
* Provide ongoing technical support and user assistance to ensure smooth operation and user satisfaction.

**f. Pilot Testing and Feedback Collection**

* Conduct pilot testing of the platform with a selected group of users to identify any issues and gather feedback.
* Refine and improve the platform based on pilot feedback to ensure it meets user expectations and requirements.

**g. Platform Launch and Promotion**

* Develop and execute a detailed launch plan to promote the platform to potential users and stakeholders.
* Propose the format of the Organization of launch events, webinars, and promotional campaigns to raise awareness and drive adoption.

**h. Monitoring and Evaluation**

* Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to track platform performance, user engagement, and impact.
* Regularly review and update the platform based on user feedback and evolving needs.

**i. Post Implementation Support and Maintenance**

* Establish a robust users support case management system for quick and efficient issues resolution
* Incorporate self-help knowledge management for automated and self-service users’ support.
* Service Level Agreement-backed system support for troubleshooting and feature enhancement
* Provide a risk matrix

**5. Methodology**

The development of the PSC Platform will ensure that (i) relevant content on public finance management standards is available to support the platform’s key functionalities, (ii) stakeholder engagement and buy-in is achieved, and (iii) the platform is adapted to all AU countries.

The PSC Platform will also be an evolving platform where feedback from users can be obtained through surveys, accessible both online and offline.

The methodology for implementing this initiative will involve the following steps:

* Identify and analyse PFM best practices in Africa using PFM assessment tools
* Engage with stakeholders through surveys, interviews, and focus groups to gather and validate requirements.
* Apply user-centred design principles to ensure the platform meets user needs.
* Use agile development processes to build and iterate the platform.
* Implement robust testing procedures to ensure functionality and usability.
* Develop comprehensive training materials and conduct user training sessions.
* Establish a helpdesk or support system for ongoing assistance.

**6. Expected Outputs and Deliverables**

The following deliverables are expected from this initiative:

1. A comprehensive report on best practices in Public Financial Management using PFM performance assessment tools.
2. A fully functional PSC digital platform with all core features implemented, tested, and ready for use by public service officials.
3. User manuals and training materials for the platform
4. A well-organized repository of curated content, including best practices, policy guidelines, training materials, and other relevant resources.
5. A detailed plan for the platform’s launch, including promotional materials and strategies for raising awareness and adoption.
6. A framework for monitoring and evaluating the platform’s performance, including key performance indicators (KPIs) and regular reporting schedules.
7. Periodic project progress reports detailing the status of the implementation, milestones achieved, and any challenges encountered.
8. A proposition of the platform management framework as well as the needs human resource
9. Detailed plan for the sustainability of the platform
10. A service-level agreement for post-implementation support and maintenance.

**7. Assignment duration and schedule**

The PSC Platform will be implemented over a total duration 5 months, from October 2024 – February 2024 including the following schedule breakdown:

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|  | Description | Duration | Deadline |
| 1 | Inception report submission | 5 days | 11th October 2024 |
| 2 | Report on best practice in PFM | 20 days | 8th November 2024 |
| 3 | Fully functional PSC digital platform | 2 months | 3rd January 2025 |
| 4 | Content curation, user training and pilot testing | 1month | 3rd January 2025 |
| 5 | Final adjustments based on pilot feedback | 14 days | 17th January 2025 |
| 6 | Platform launch and promotion | 1 month | 14th January 2025 |
| 7 | Monitoring & Evaluation framework | 1month | 28th February 2025 |

**8. Qualifications**

The required qualification, competencies and experience for this role include:

Applications must cover beneficiary countries with the possibility of having a team of consultants / a consortium with Team leader.

**Consulting Firm/Consortium**

* Experience in implementing digital platforms, with a proven track record of successful project implementations. This should be evidenced by at least 2 similar platforms developed over the last 5 years.
* Experience developing/implementing collaboration platforms and communities of practice.

**Team Lead**

* A minimum of a master's degree in Public Administration, Public Policy, or a related social science discipline will be an added advantage.
* Proven experience in public financial management and governance.
* Experience in conducting PFM performance assessments, needs assessments and stakeholder consultations.
* Good knowledge on Govtech and digital PFM
* Minimum 15 (fifteen) years of professional experience in conducting similar assignments in an African context.
* Strong understanding of public sector governance, policy-making, and capacity-building.
* Awareness and understanding of the cultural diversity within Africa, with the ability to work sensitively and respectfully across different cultural contexts.

**Digital Platform Expert**

* A minimum of a master's degree in Computer Science, Information Technology, Software Engineering, or a related field.
* Demonstrated expertise in developing collaborative technologies with integrated multimedia capabilities (video, audio, text, etc.)
* Proven track record in designing and implementing digital platforms, preferably in the public sector.
* Technical expertise in web development, user experience design, and cybersecurity.
* Experience with data integration techniques and API development to enable seamless interaction between different data sources and functionalities.
* Knowledge of cloud computing platforms (e.g., AWS, Azure, Google Cloud) and integration capabilities.
* Excellent project management and communication skills.

**9.** **Consultancy firm Input and Reporting Requirements**

The selected consultancy firm will work closely with staff of ACBF and will report to the Director of Programs and Impact Department or his designated person.

**10. Evaluation of Proposals**

The evaluation committee shall evaluate the technical Proposals based on their responsiveness to the Terms of Reference, applying the evaluation criteria, and point system specified below.  A technical proposal shall be rejected at this stage if it does not respond to key aspects of the Terms of Reference or if it fails to achieve the minimum technical score indicated.

The minimum technical score required to pass is: 70 Points.

The financial proposal will be evaluated at 30 points.

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|  | Criteria | Max Points (100) |
|  | Specific experience of the consulting firm relevant to the assignment | 10 |
|  | Proposed consultants’ general qualifications (education) and experience:  **Lead consultant -** Minimum 15 (fifteen) years of professional experience in conducting similar assignments in the African context.  **Digital Platform Expert -** Minimum 10 (ten) years of professional experience in conducting similar assignments in the African context. | 20 |
|  | Demonstrated expertise in developing collaborative technologies with integrated multimedia capabilities (video, audio, text, etc.) | 30 |
|  | Proven track record in designing and implementing similar digital platforms, preferably in the public sector. | 20 |
|  | Adequacy and quality of proposed methodology and work plan in responding to the Terms of Reference (TOR) | 20 |
|  | **Total** | 100 |

* 1. **Duration of the Assignment and Remuneration**

The provisional start of this assignment is **1st October 2024**, with the expected end date being the 28th of February 2025. ACBF will pay all travel expenses in accordance with ACBF’s Travel Policy. Additionally, ACBF will take care of the costs associated with interpretation, editing, designing, and formatting reports, and all logistical costs associated with workshops.

* 1. **Submission Process**

Consultancy firms that are interested in applying for the consultancy must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications:

* A technical proposal includes a brief methodology on how they will approach and conduct the assignment concerning the specifications in the TOR.
* A financial Proposal which aligns with the technical approach ***encrypted with a password.***
* Rationale for their suitability for the role, including their experience in similar jobs  and evidence of similar work.
* Curriculum vitae of proposed consultants for the assignment, as per the criteria outlined in the TOR.
* The name and contact information of three referees for contact regarding relevant experience of the consultancy firm.
  1. **Location and Working Arrangements**

This assignment is both a field and home-based consultancy. The consultancy firm/consultants will be given access to ACBF relevant information such as project information and reports as well as online research resources. They will be responsible for providing their own workstation (i.e., laptop, internet, phone, scanner/printer, etc.) and access to reliable internet connection.

* 1. **Content, Timing and Submission**

The outputs must match quality standards. The text of the reports should be illustrated as appropriate, with images, audio and video recommendations. The final deliverable of the PSC Platform along with all other relevant attachments is expected to be submitted on the 28th of February 2025.

* 1. **Language**

All reports should be written in English and French, single spacing font size 12, Times New Roman and submitted as both word and pdf versions.

Consultancy firms are being requested to submit their technical & Financial proposals with the subject clearly marked, RFP Process No.: **ACBF/RFP/005/24/ELG-PFM/BMGF** Consultancy Services to undertake Coaching in the ‘***Public Sector Collaboration Platform for public service officials***” to email **address:** [**submission@acbf-pact.org**](mailto:submission@acbf-pact.org) on or before 17.00 hours (local Harare time), **on 25th September 2024**