Since 1910
SACU
SOUTHERN AFRICAN CUSTOMS UNION

BID NUMBER: SACU/041/2027/PB

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SHORT-TERM CONSULTANCY TO REVIEW THE DRAFT SACU REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR TRADE DIGITALISATION AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

CLOSING DATE & TIME

13 NOVEMBER 2026

16:00 hrs

POSTAL & PHYSICAL ADDRESS FOR BID SUBMISSION

Southern African Customs Union (SACU) - Secretariat
Private Bag 13285
Corner Julius K. Nyerere and Sir Seretse Khama Street
Windhoek, Namibia, 9000

COMMERCIAL ENQUIRIES

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TECHNICAL ENQUIRIES

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Submit the Bid electronically to: procurement@sacu.int

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) comprises five (5) Member States, namely Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa. The SACU Secretariat, established in 2004, is mandated to administer and coordinate SACU activities. Further information is available on the official website: (http://www.sacu.int).

1.2 The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) is implementing the Trade Facilitation and Logistics Programme as part of the SACU Strategic Plan (2022–2027). The Strategic Plan is accessible on https://www.sacu.int/what-we-do/strategic-priorities. The Programme seeks to enhance regional trade competitiveness by improving the efficiency of cross-border trade processes and logistics systems within the SACU Common Customs Area.

1.3 The Trade Facilitation and Logistic Programme has six (6) focus areas including (i) Customs Cooperation; (ii) Border Coordination; (iii) Behind the Border Measures; (iv) Coordinated implementation of Trade Agreements; (v) Transport and Logistics; and (vi) Cross-Cutting Imperatives inclusive of Legal Frameworks, Policy and Procedures, and Standard Operating Procedures;

1.4 The six focus areas for the SACU Trade Facilitation and Logistics Programme are supported through: (i) Capacity Building (schools of Excellence, Exchange of Experts, and Training and Technical Assistance); (ii) Gender Mainstreaming (Gender Mainstreaming Plan and Initiatives Inclusivity Plans for Women and those with Disability); (iii) Legal & Policy Frameworks (Border level cooperation frameworks, Standard Operating Procedures, Service Level Agreements, Guidelines, Manuals and other frameworks that might be required for collaboration); (iv) Operational Resilience (Regional Business Continuity Plan, Regional Redundancy Plan (cross-border operations), and Change Management Plan)

1.5 An Operational Plan was developed to support operationalisation of the Trade Facilitation and Logistics Programme. It is envisaged that the collaboration between the government and private sector will be strengthened as part of implementation of the SACU Trade Facilitation and Logistics Programme. As outlined in the Operational Plan, Government is expected to improve efficiencies by reducing paper transactions, automation, digitalization, streamlining documentary requirements, avail trade information and resolve queries expeditiously. The Private Sector is expected to ensure compliance, with all government rules and regulations, ensure safety and security of the supply chain and train employees to comply with government regulations. Both government and Private Sector are expected to collaborate to co-train personnel about government regulations and private sector specialties required by government officials, and to work together to improve efficiency, compliance and security of the supply chain.

1.6 Efficient trade logistics and infrastructure are essential for supporting regional value chains, reducing trade costs, and enhancing the competitiveness of firms operating within the SACU Common Customs Area. The SACU Trade Facilitation and Logistics Programme seeks to address bottlenecks affecting cross-border trade through coordinated interventions across several areas, including regulatory procedures, border management systems, digital trade systems, infrastructure development, and institutional cooperation.

1.7 The Programme identifies several constraints affecting cross-border trade, including:

(a) Administrative inefficiencies associated with paper-based trade processes;

(b) Limited coordination among government agencies responsible for facilitating trade;

(c) Insufficient digitalisation of trade systems; and

(d) Inadequate infrastructure at border posts and along transport corridors.

1.8 To address these challenges, the Operational Plan for the Trade Facilitation and Logistics Programme identifies three major projects for impleementation:

(a) **Trade Digitalisation and Digital Transformation Project** – focusing on automation, connectivity, and digitalisation of the agreed administrative, procedural and documentation processes;

(b) **Risk Management, Compliance, and Enforcement Project** – focusing on identification, management, and mitigation of common regional risks associated with trade facilitation and logistics. The key initiatives under this Project are development of the Risk Management Strategy for Trade Facilitation and Logistics, development and implementation of the SACU Single Government Regional AEO Programme, and conducting Joint Enforcement Operations to respond to identified risks; and

(c) **Infrastructure Development Project** – focusing on hard and soft infrastructure initiatives such as One Stop Border Posts, development of Single Windows, Regional Cargo Conveyancer Decontamination Centres, and Rehabilitation of ailing road infrastructure.

1.9 The SACU Strategic Plan 2022-2027 envisaged results from implementation of the SACU Trade Facilitation and Logistics Programme are:

(a) improved administrative efficiencies through digitisation, as well as automation of data exchange;

(b) reduction of time and cost associated with cross-border trade;

(c) improved compliance and security of the supply chain; and

(d) enhanced competitiveness of the SACU Member States.

1.10 Several digital initiatives have already been undertaken within SACU Member States, particularly for customs modernisation programme, including interconnectivity of Customs Management Systems, automated exchange of data, and import and export data matching. These initiatives provide an important foundation for the development of a regional digital ecosystem that supports trade facilitation and logistics. However, the existing initiatives remain for customs and are not yet integrated into a coherent regional framework that ensures interoperability with Other Government Agencies as well as across the trade facilitation ecosystem that ensures coordinated implementation across the SACU region.

1.11 SACU therefore is undertaking the assignment to develop a **Regional Framework for Digital Trade and Digital Transformation Projects** that will guide and standardise deployment of technology to digitise the trade environment as part of the soft infrastructure development projects to be pursued collectively in SACU.

1.12 These Terms of Reference set out the background, objectives, scope of services, key deliverables, and timelines that will guide the provision of technical support for the assignment.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SACU REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR TRADE DIGITALISATION AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

2.1 The purpose of developing a Regional Framework for Trade Digitalisation and Digital Transformation is to create a streamlined, future-ready digital ecosystem that modernises and integrates cross-border trade processes across the SACU region to enhance efficiency, transparency, predictability, and security of the SACU supply chain.

2.2 Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

(a) **Assess the Current State of Digital Trade Readiness in SACU:** Conduct a detailed situational analysis of Member States' digitalisation levels, including existing systems, legal frameworks, ICT infrastructure, institutional capabilities, and ongoing digital initiatives in Customs and Other Government Agencies.

(b) **Identify Gaps, Challenges, and Opportunities:** Examine systemic, regulatory, technological, and operational barriers hindering digital transformation in cross-border trade, and identify opportunities for harmonisation, innovation, and regional collaboration, and Business Analysis to outline the as is processes.

(c) **Benchmark Against International and Continental Best Practices:** Review relevant global standards, instruments, and practices such as the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, WCO guidelines, UNCITRAL digital trade instruments,

and AfCFTA digital trade commitments to inform a robust and future-aligned regional framework.

(d) **Propose a Harmonised Regional Digital Trade Architecture:** Develop a conceptual and operational model outlining digital processes, data standards, interoperability requirements, governance structures, and systems integration needed to support seamless, predictable, and secure trade flows across SACU.

(e) **Define Priority Areas for Digital Transformation:** Identify key trade processes and functions that should be prioritised for digitalisation, including but not limited to single window systems, e-certificates, transit management, customs-to-customs data exchange, risk management, and integrated border management tools.

(f) **Recommend Policy, Legal, and Regulatory Reforms:** Outline the reforms needed to enable a harmonised digital trade environment such as e-transactions laws, data governance policies, cyber-security frameworks, and mutual recognition of digital documents.

(g) **Develop a Strategic Roadmap and Implementation Plan:** Provide a phased, actionable roadmap detailing short-, medium-, and long-term actions required to operationalise the framework, including milestones, resource needs, institutional arrangements, and potential financing options.

(h) **Propose Capacity-Building and Change-Management Measures:** Recommend interventions to strengthen institutional capacity, human resources, and stakeholder readiness to implement and sustain digital transformation initiatives across the region.

(i) **Proposal for Private Sector and Cross-Agency Collaboration:** Suggest mechanisms that encourage effective participation of the private sector, logistics actors, and Other Government Agencies in regional digitalisation efforts, ensuring inclusiveness and sustainability.

(j) **Support SACU's Regional Integration and AfCFTA Commitments:** Ensure that the digitalisation framework aligns with and strengthens SACU's Trade Facilitation and Logistics Programme, the regional industrialisation agenda, and obligations under the AfCFTA, including the Protocol on Digital Trade.

3. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

A. Scope of Work

3.1 The Consultant shall provide technical and advisory support to the SACU Secretariat to review, refine, and finalise the SACU Regional Framework for Trade Digitalisation and Digital Transformation and its associated Implementation Roadmap.

B. Methodological Approach

3.2 The Consultant shall adopt a technical advisory and quality assurance approach focused on the review, validation, refinement, and finalisation of the SACU Regional Framework for Trade Digitalisation and Digital Transformation and the associated Implementation Roadmap. The assignment shall not involve the development of the Framework from inception, as the substantive analytical and drafting work will have been undertaken by the Secretariat. The Consultant's role shall be to provide independent expert review and strategic advisory support to ensure that the final outputs are technically robust, coherent, practical, implementable, and aligned with regional and international best practices.

3.3 **The methodology shall focus on:**

3.4 **Technical Review and Validation**

(a) Review the proposed vision, strategic objectives, pillars, interventions, governance arrangements, and implementation mechanisms contained in the Framework.

(b) Assess the adequacy and relevance of the analysis underpinning the Framework, including identified digitalisation challenges, opportunities, and priority interventions.

(c) Evaluate the extent to which the Framework addresses key trade digitalisation enablers, including interoperability, data exchange, digital trade systems, customs modernisation, coordinated border management, cybersecurity, digital identity, data governance, and emerging technologies.

(d) Validate the alignment of the Framework with SACU priorities, regional integration objectives, the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol, international standards, and global best practices in trade digitalisation and digital transformation.

(e) Review the proposed Implementation Roadmap to ensure that interventions are realistic, sequenced appropriately, and supported by clear institutional responsibilities, timelines, and monitoring indicators.

3.5 **Quality Assurance and Refinement**

(a) Verify that comments and inputs received from SACU Member States and relevant stakeholders have been adequately considered and incorporated.

(b) Ensure that recommendations and proposed interventions are practical, implementable, evidence-based, and capable of delivering measurable impact.

(c) Provide technical guidance to strengthen the clarity, quality, and policy relevance of the Framework and associated Implementation Roadmap.

(d) Advise on the presentation and structuring of findings to ensure that the final Framework is accessible, credible, and suitable for consideration by SACU governance structures.

4. KEY OUTCOME OF THE ASSIGNMENT

4.1 The Consultant's primary role is not to duplicate the work of the Secretariat, nor to develop the Framework on behalf of the Secretariat. Rather, the Consultant shall provide independent technical expertise, quality assurance, and strategic advisory support to review, refine, validate, and finalise the SACU Regional Framework for Trade Digitalisation and Digital Transformation and its associated Implementation Roadmap.

4.2 The assignment is expected to ensure that the final Framework and Implementation Roadmap are technically sound, evidence-based, internally coherent, aligned with SACU strategic priorities, responsive to emerging regional and global digital transformation trends, and informed by international best practices. The final outputs should provide SACU region with a practical and implementable framework for advancing trade digitalisation and digital transformation across the region.

5. SUCCESS CRITERIA

5.1 The following criteria shall guide the Consultant's overall focus during the review and finalisation of the assignment:

SUCCESS AREA	*MEASURE OF SUCCESS*
Strategic Alignment	The final Framework is aligned with SACU strategic priorities, regional integration objectives, and emerging trade digitalisation requirements.
Technical Robustness	The Framework presents a coherent, evidence-based, and technically sound approach to trade digitalisation and digital transformation within SACU.
Coverage of Key Digitalisation Enablers	The Framework adequately addresses interoperability, data exchange, digital trade systems, customs modernisation, coordinated border management, digital identity, cybersecurity, data governance, and emerging technologies.
Alignment with International Standards and Best Practices	The Framework aligns with relevant international instruments and best practices, including the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol, WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, WCO instruments, and other global trade digitalisation frameworks.
Practicality and Implementability	The proposed interventions are realistic, sequenced appropriately, and capable of implementation within the institutional and operational realities of SACU Member States.

Implementation Roadmap	A clear and prioritised Implementation Roadmap is provided, including interventions, sequencing, institutional responsibilities, timelines, resource considerations, and monitoring indicators.
Regional Coordination and Interoperability	The Framework supports regional cooperation, interoperability, and cross-border information exchange among SACU Member States and relevant stakeholders.
Stakeholder Validation	Comments and inputs received from SACU Member States and relevant stakeholders are adequately considered and reflected in the final Framework.
Policy Relevance	The Framework provides practical guidance for supporting customs modernisation, digital trade, paperless trade, and broader digital transformation initiatives across the SACU region.
Quality Assurance	The final Framework and associated Implementation Roadmap are internally consistent, technically credible, and ready for consideration by SACU governance structures.

6. DELIVERABLE SCHEDULE

Deliverable	***Expected Output***	***Timeline***
Deliverable 1	Inception Report detailing the review methodology, work plan, quality assurance approach, and stakeholder engagement strategy.	End of Week 1
Deliverable 2	Technical Review and Validation Report outlining key observations, identified gaps, enhancement opportunities, and recommendations to strengthen the Framework and Implementation Roadmap.	End of Week 2
Deliverable 3	Consolidated Technical Comments and Recommendations Matrix, including validation of stakeholder inputs, benchmarking findings, and proposed revisions.	End of Week 3
Deliverable 4	Final Technical Review and Quality Assurance Report, including validation of revisions, final recommendations, and a reviewed and quality-assured SACU Regional Framework for Trade Digitalisation and Digital Transformation and associated Implementation Roadmap.	End of Week 4

7. EXPERTISE REQUIRED

7.1 Academic Qualifications

An advanced university degree (Master's degree or PhD) in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Digital Transformation, or related discipline.

7.2 Professional Experience

The Consultant should possess:

- At least 10 years of progressively responsible professional experience in trade digitalisation, digital transformation, or related fields.
- Demonstrated experience in the development, review, or implementation of digital trade, or digital transformation strategies, frameworks, policies, or programmes for governments, regional, continental or multilateral organisation to simplify cross border trade.
- Proven experience in providing technical advisory services, quality assurance, and peer review of strategic policy documents, frameworks, roadmaps, or regional development programmes for trade digitalisation and digital transformation.
- Experience working with regional economic communities, customs unions, governments, international organisations, or development partners involved in trade digitalisation and digital transformation initiatives.
- Strong understanding of regional integration processes and cross-border trade facilitation challenges.
- Experience supporting policy and institutional reforms related to digital trade, paperless trade, interoperability, data exchange, single windows, and coordinated border management.

7.3 Technical Competencies

The Consultant should demonstrate expertise in:

- Trade digitalisation and digital transformation strategies.
- Digital trade ecosystems and paperless trade implementation.
- National and regional Single Window systems.
- Cross-border data exchange and interoperability frameworks.
- Digital identity, trust services, and electronic transactions.
- Data governance, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure considerations.
- Emerging technologies relevant to trade and border management, including artificial intelligence, blockchain, big data, and digital platforms.

7.4 Knowledge of one or two of the Regional and International Frameworks outlined below will be an added advantage

The Consultant should possess a strong understanding of:

- SACU trade facilitation and regional integration objectives.
- The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).
- The AfCFTA Agreement and the Digital Trade Protocol.
- WCO standards and instruments, including the SAFE Framework of Standards and Data Model.
- UNECE recommendations on paperless trade and digital trade facilitation.
- International best practices relating to digital government, digital trade, and cross-border interoperability.

8. SUBMISSION OF BID PROPOSALS

8.1 All bidding proposals must be submitted electronically to: procurement@sacu.int.

8.2 The SACU Secretariat requires one (1) electronic copy of the bidding proposal, comprising of a Technical and Financial Proposal in PDF format, to be attached separately to the submission.

8.3 The deadline for submission of bids is 4:00 pm, Namibian time, 13 November 2026.

8.4 The SACU Secretariat will schedule a pre-bid meeting to clarify the requirements of the bid submission. Bidders should submit their email contact details electronically to: procurement@sacu.int for the SACU Secretariat to make the arrangements.

9. BID FORMAT: TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

1.1 The Technical Proposal should be arranged and referenced in a format as per the following categories:

a) Title (Cover) Page;

b) Letter of Introduction (See Appendix A);

c) Compliance Documents (e.g., Good Standing Certificate, Registration, etc);

d) Audited Annual Financial Statements, where applicable;

e) Legal agreement for partnerships, consortiums and joint ventures, where applicable; and

f) Profile of bidder;

g) Technical Proposal for the assignment; and

h) References of similar work previously undertaken.

1.2 The Financial Proposal should contain all costs and must be quoted in **South African Rands (ZAR)**. The schedule must take the following format:

a) The total cost of the proposal;

b) A full breakdown of the cost/price and any assumptions made, where necessary;

c) An itemised breakdown of the cost of any options being proposed beyond that specified Request for Bid;
d) The applicable rate of VAT in respect of each product and service being proposed;
e) Details of any other costs or reimbursables, taxes or duties which may be incurred; and
f) Confirmation that the Financial Proposal remains valid for 90 (ninety) days from the Bid Closing date.

9. EVALUATION OF BIDS

The evaluation of the bidding proposal shall comprise three sequential parts where the following specific criteria must be met:

(a) Eligibility – all the required documents, as listed in Section 9.2 below must be submitted. This will ensure a consistent standard and comparable basis for evaluation;

(b) Qualification – the compliance documents are assessed to ensure that the bidder is legally registered within one of the SACU Member States, majority owned by SACU citizens, compliant with the relevant regulatory authorities, free of any conflict of interest, financially stable and adequately capacitated to undertake the assignment; and

(c) Award – the technical aspects of the bid demonstrate an understanding of the scope of works and the proposed resources have the necessary technical specifications or skills and competence to deliver the work on time. In this regard, the bidder's profile and reputation, as well as similar work previously undertaken, will be considered. The latter will be verified through references.

10. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

(a) The Technical and Financial Proposals should be submitted digitally as an email attachment or a link to a cloud storage or file-sharing service, in PDF format (or as a zip archive containing the PDF file).

(b) The Technical Proposal should contain a:

(i) Title (Cover) Page listing the Bid Number, Bid Description, Bid Closing Date, Bidding Organisation Name, Postal Address, Physical Address, Telephone No., Fax No., Mobile No., Email Address, Website and Full Names of two Contact Persons;

(ii) One page Letter of Introduction that identifies the bidder with a corporate letterhead. This Letter of Introduction (See Appendix A) should also contain:

aa. A signature by the person(s) authorised to bid the organisation to statements made in the proposal;

bb. Confirmation of the name of the bidder and acceptance by the bidder and any third parties of the conditions of the Request for Bid;

cc. Written declaration that the bidder's current or past corporate or other interests does not give rise to a conflict of interest in connection with this Request for Bid;

dd. Full Contact Details of any third-party involved in the proposal; and

ee. Description of the role or element of proposal to be fulfilled by any third-party;

(iii) Profile of the bidder or consortium;

(iv) Certified copy of the Certificate of Registration or Incorporation with the relevant national authorities;

(v) Certified copy of identity cards/documents or passports showing that the majority owner(s) or shareholders of the organisation or consortium are citizens of a SACU Member State. If the shareholder is not a natural person, then an official letter from the external auditors or duly appointed company secretary confirming that the ultimate holding company is majority (51%) owned by SACU citizens;

(vi) Certified copy of a current Good Standing Certificate or Tax Clearance Certificate from the relevant national authorities, or exemption thereof;

(vii) Certified copy of a current Good Standing Certificate with Social Security (Namibia), registration with Unemployment Insurance (South Africa only), where applicable, or exemption thereof;

(viii) Certified copy of the latest audited Annual Financial Statements in the case of private or public companies, or for close corporations the latest Annual Financial Statements. In either case, the reporting date is within 20 months from the Bid Closing Date. The audit report on the Annual Financial Statements should be issued by a current member of the applicable regulatory authority in any SACU Member State and quote the membership number. For close corporations, the latest Annual Financial Statements should be submitted and prepared by a current member of the applicable regulatory authority in any SACU Member State and quote the membership number;

(ix) Certified copy of a legal agreement for partnerships, consortiums and joint ventures, where applicable; and

(c) In the case of partnerships, consortiums and joint ventures, all documents required in Section 9.2 above, for each party in the arrangement and legal entities, must be submitted.

(d) The Technical Proposal should provide a schedule of:

(i) Three (3) or more clients (contact names, physical addresses and telephone numbers) who may be contacted for references in connection with the proposed assignment; and

For example:

CLIENT	CONTACT NAME	TELEPHONE	PHYSICAL ADDRESS
ABC Corporation	*Mr J. Doe*	*061-999 9999*	*20 ABC Street, Windhoek*

(ii) Three (3) or more clients where similar assignments were recently undertaken by the bidder. This schedule must indicate the client, the assignment that was undertaken, the year, the client's geographical location and the financial value.

For example:

CLIENT	SERVICES PROVIDED	YEAR	LOCATION	FINANCIAL VALUE
ABC Corporation	*Development of BCP*	*2011*	*Windhoek*	*R49,950*

11. QUALIFYING CRITERIA

(a) The Technical Proposal will then be assessed and disqualified if any of the eligibility criteria are not complied with, such as:

(i) The Proposal is not emailed or submitted in PDF format;

(ii) Any document requested above is omitted from the bid submission;

(iii) Any Eligibility Criteria content in the one-page Letter of Introduction is omitted;

(iv) Any document under 9.2 above ((iv) to (ix) is not certified within six (6) months of the Bid Closing Date;

(v) Less than three (3) references are provided to be contacted;

(vi) Less than three (3) clients where similar assignments were recently undertaken by the bidder were provided;

(vii) The Good Standing Certificate or Tax Clearance Certificate from the relevant national authorities, is not valid at the Bid Closing Date;

(viii) The Good Standing Certificate with Social Security (Namibia), registration with Unemployment Insurance (South Africa), where applicable, or exemption thereof, is not valid at the Bid Closing Date;

(ix) The bidder, or third party if a consortium, is not majority (51%) owned by citizen(s) of a SACU Member State (with proof of shareholding) and registered within a SACU Member State. Proof of majority SACU Citizen ownership may be proven by any of the following methods:

aa. A certified copy of each shareholding certificate currently in issue (the total shareholding certificates must aggregate 100% of all issued share capital); and proof of SACU citizenship by providing a certified copy of shareholders national identity card document or valid passport; or

bb. A certified copy of the shareholder register issued by the duly appointed Company Secretary or external auditors; and proof of SACU citizenship by providing a certified copy of shareholders national identity card/document or valid passport; or

cc. An official letter from the external auditors or company secretary, describing the group structure and confirming that the ultimate holding company is majority (51%) owned by SACU citizens. This is only required where any shareholder is not a natural person;

(x) The latest audited Annual Financial Statements, or for close corporations the latest Annual Financial Statements has a:

aa. reporting date that exceeds 20 months from the Bid Closing Date; or

bb. qualified audit opinion (related to the audited Annual Financial Statements);

(xi) The latest audited Annual Financial Statements, or for close corporations the latest Annual Financial Statements also demonstrates that the organisation may be:

aa. a going concern risk (the organisation may not be able to operate in the foreseeable future) through reducing revenue or incurring operating losses; or

bb. factually insolvent where the liabilities exceed the assets, and it is not able to settle debts; or

cc. commercially insolvent and unable to pay debts or liabilities as they arise in the ordinary course of business; or

dd. limited with the financial capacity to complete the assignment due to the size of the organisation; or

(xii) The latest audited Annual Financial Statements or for close corporations the latest Annual Financial Statements was not prepared by a current member of the applicable regulatory authority in any SACU Member State. In this regard, the membership number will validate the status of the practitioner with the applicable regulatory authority in the relevant SACU Member State.

12. AWARD CRITERIA

(a) After the bidder has met the eligibility and qualifying criteria, the technical evaluation is undertaken and awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous proposal applying the following award criteria, listed in order of priority:

(i) Proof of understanding the scope, approach and methodology to undertake the assignment;

(ii) Proof of qualifications, technical knowledge, relevant previous experience and the skills composition of the team who will undertake the assignment;

(iii) Project Plan demonstrating how the deliverables and targets will be met; and

(iv) Company Profile and Reputation of the bidder.

(b) The allocation and weighting of the award criteria is pre-determined by the Bid Leader when drafting the Request for Bid.

13. PRIME CONTRACTOR RELATIONSHIP

13.1 The SACU Secretariat will enter into a contract with only one successful bidder.

13.2 The selected bidder shall be solely responsible for the deliverables as specified in this document.

14. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENT

14.1 Bidders are solely responsible for their own costs in preparing the Bid.

14.2 Payments for all services covered by this bid shall be made within 30 (thirty) days subject to receipt of appropriate invoices, the satisfactory completion of work, and adherence to the SACU Secretariat's Financial Policies and Guidelines.

14.3 SACU shall not be liable for any losses, damages, costs, charges or expenses caused by injuries to the bidder's personnel during the execution of their duties.

15. CONFIDENTIALITY

15.1 Bids submitted will not be revealed to any other bidders and will be treated as contractually binding.

15.2 The SACU Secretariat reserves the right to seek clarification or verification of any information in the Bids.

15.3 All information pertaining to the SACU Secretariat obtained by the bidder as a result of participation in this Request for Bid is confidential and must not be disclosed without written authorisation from the Executive Secretary of the SACU.

15.4 The SACU Secretariat reserves the right to undertake a full background check on all references submitted prior to awarding the contract.

16. OWNERSHIP OF BIDS

16.1 All Bids, including supporting documents, submitted to the SACU Secretariat become the property of the SACU Secretariat.

16.2 Ownership of all data belonging to SACU whether under its control or the bidder's control shall continue to vest in SACU. Any data of whatever nature resulting from the provision of the Products and Services shall be the property of SACU and may be used by SACU without restriction. All data or information that may be shared with the successful bidder during the provision of the Products and Services shall upon termination of the contract, be returned to the SACU Secretariat.

17. MODIFICATION OF TERMS

17.1 The SACU Secretariat reserves the right to add, modify or omit certain portions of the Bids' scope at any time at its sole discretion. This includes the right to cancel this Request for Bid at any time prior to entering into a contract with the successful bidder.

18. CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION

18.1 The award will be subject to the successful conclusion of a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

18.2 The SACU Secretariat reserves the right to negotiate the terms of the proposal and the value of any financial proposal submitted.

19. DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST

Have you submitted the following required information?	**YES**	**NO**
The Technical and Financial Proposals are emailed as one PDF file.		
Title (Cover) Page listing the Bid Number, Bid Description, Bid Closing Date, Bidding Organisation Name, Postal Address, Physical Address, Telephone No., Fax No., Mobile No., Email Address, Website and Full Names of two Contact Persons.		
One page Letter of Introduction identifying the bidder with a corporate letterhead. It is signed by the person(s) authorised to bind the organisation to statements made in the proposal. This Letter should also contain a confirmation of acceptance by the bidder and any third parties of the conditions of the Request for Bid; written declaration that the bidder's current or past corporate or other interests does not give rise to a conflict of interest in connection with this Request for Bid; full contact details of any third-party involved in the proposal and a description of the role or element of proposal to be fulfilled by any third-party.		
Profile of the bidder or consortium.		
Certified copy of the Certificate of Registration or Incorporation with the relevant national authorities.		
Certified copy of identity cards/documents or passports showing that the majority owner(s) or shareholders of the organisation or consortium are citizens of a SACU Member State. If the shareholder is not a natural person, then an official letter from the external auditors or company secretary confirming that the ultimate holding company is majority (51%) owned by SACU citizens.		
Certified copy of a current Good Standing Certificate or Tax Clearance Certificate from the relevant national authorities, or exemption thereof.		
Certified copy of a current Good Standing Certificate with Social Security (Namibia), registration with Unemployment Insurance (South Africa), where applicable, or exemption thereof.		
Certified copy of the latest audited Annual Financial Statements in the case of private or public companies, or for close corporations the latest Annual Financial Statements.		

Have you submitted the following required information?	**YES**	**NO**
Certified copy of a legal agreement for partnerships, consortiums and joint ventures, where applicable; and all documents of each party in the arrangement and legal entities, must be submitted.		
Technical Proposal to complete the assignment with: • Proof of qualifications and experience of the team that will carry out the assignment. • A detailed methodology that will be used to complete the assignment. • Project Plan demonstrating how the deliverables and targets will be met.		
A schedule of three (3) references that are contactable.		
A schedule of three (3) clients where similar assignments were recently undertaken by the bidder.		
The Financial Proposal is quoted in South African Rand (ZAR).		
Written confirmation that the Financial Proposal remains valid for 90 days.		

Additional documents required from Consortiums or Partnerships	**YES**	**NO**
Written identification of the Primary Contracting Party.		
Full details and eligibility criteria documents of all legal entities involved in the bid.		
Certified copy of a legally binding partnership or consortium agreement.		
Certified Proof that the majority owner(s) of the company or consortium are citizens of a SACU Member State (copy of ID's or Passports will suffice).		
Description of the role or element fulfilled by each legal entity.		

APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TEMPLATE

Private and confidential

TITLE OF THE ASSIGNMENT | BID NUMBER: SACU/001/20XX/PB

Name of Bidder (and Partner, if applicable) is pleased to submit this proposal. We believe we are uniquely equipped to assist the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) Secretariat with the provision of xxx.

Provide a brief motivation or summary of the assignment and the Bidder's skills, experience and track record.

Name of Bidder (and Partner, if applicable) hereby:

1. confirms acceptance of the terms and conditions of this Request for Bid.
2. declares that our current or past corporate or other interests do not give rise to a conflict of interest on this assignment.

The contact details, role and any work to be undertaken by any third party involved in the proposal are as follows[1]:

1. xxx
2. xxx
3. xxx

I hereby declare that I am authorised to bind the organisation to statements made in this proposal.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this proposal or require any clarification, you are most welcome to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely,

(Name and Position)

[1] Delete this section if not applicable.