SADC SECRETARIAT RESPONSES TO REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATIONS

REFERENCE: SADC/3/5/2/452

CONSULTANCY FOR ASSESSMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF SADC REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN (RIDMP) 2012-2027

DATE OF ISSUE OF RESPONSES: 3 NOVEMBER 2026

Question №	Question	SADC Secretariat Response
Nr.1	**Source 1:** SADC's official procurement webpage for this opportunity indicates **11 November 2026 at 12:00 PM** under the fields *Closing Date* and *Closing Time*. **Source 2:** *Specific Procurement Notice*, dated 12 October 2026, **paragraph 4, page 2**, states that proposals must be submitted by midnight on 11 November 2026, Botswana time. **Source 3:** *Bidding Documents*, **Section 2 – Data Sheet, Clause 4.5, page 29**, also specifies **11 November 2026 by midnight Botswana time**. Could you kindly confirm whether the binding submission deadline is **12:00 PM (noon)** or **12:00 AM (midnight)** on 11 November 2026, Botswana time?	Closing time for this bid is **11 November 2026, at or before 00:00 midnight local Botswana time.**

Nr.2	Form Tech-6 requires bidders to confirm "24/7 Availability of Staff". Please clarify what this requirement entails, and how bidders are expected to demostrate compliance.	Key experts can sign off their CVs with a statement committing to be available for the assignment once awarded to the firm. Key experts do not have to be direct employees of the firm but will have to have contracts with the firm and commit to being fully available for the duration of the assignment – change of key experts will not be acceptable once contract is awarded unless under extreme circumstance beyond control after approval by both parties.
Nr.3	Section 3.7 of the Data Sheet states that the Financial Proposal should include all applicable taxes. However, Form FIN-1 requires the that the proposed amounts be stated, "exclusive of applicable taxes, duties, fees, levies and other charges, and provides separate fields for reimbursable expenses and taxes". Please clarify whether the total financial offer should be stated inclusive or exclusive of applicable taxes.	Inclusive of all applicable taxes.
Nr.4	We would appreciate clarification regarding the proposal submission method. Specifically, could you please confirm whether proposals are required to be submitted in hard-copy format at the SADC Secretariat?	Proposals will be submitted electronically as per ITB 4.4 in the bidding documents
Nr.5	In addition, we kindly request consideration of an extension to the proposal submission deadline. Given the complexity of the assignment and the time required to coordinate inputs from our technical experts and partners, an extension would assist us in preparing the most comprehensive and competitive proposal possible.	No extension will be granted

Nr.6	Arena Partners is a South African-based company and is familiar with the South African legal and regulatory environment. Would the contracting authority be amenable to the agreement being governed by the laws of South Africa rather than the laws of another jurisdiction	SADC Contracts are governed by the Law of Botswana where SADC is based. The Agreement cannot therefore be governed by Laws of South Africa.
Nr.7	3.3 of the Bidding Document states that "The Bidder shall not subcontract any portion of the assignment." Arena Partners was established in 2019 and has been active across the SADC region since 2022. To provide clients with both cost-effective solutions and access to highly specialised expertise, Arena Partners operates a network-based consulting model rather than maintaining a permanent employee complement. For each engagement, bespoke project teams are assembled from a network of more than 180 independent and affiliated experts, selected based on the specific skills required for the assignment. Given this operating model, would Arena Partners be eligible to submit a bid for this assignment and be evaluated on an equal basis with other bidders, notwithstanding the restriction on subcontracting	Key experts do not have to be direct employees of the firm but will have to have contracts with the firm and commit to being fully available for the duration of the assignment – change of key experts will not be acceptable once contract is awarded.

Nr.8	Please clarify the relationship between logistics and incidental costs. Section 5.1 indicates: "The consultant is not expected to be based in Botswana but may be required to travel to SADC Member States for stakeholder consultation and information gathering. The consultant will also be required to facilitate the consultancy consultations and workshops either face-to-face or virtually. However, section 6.5 states that: "6.5 Incidental expenditure: There shall be no provision for incidental expenditure for this contract. This amount must be included in the Global price. The consultant is therefore encouraged to engage all sixteen (16) SADC Member States, including the SADC Secretariat, virtually and through questionnaires, emails, direct phone calls in undertaking the assignment except during the validation meeting which may be held physically in Johannesburg, South Africa." Please clarify.	The consulting firm is encouraged to engage all sixteen (16) SADC Member States, including the SADC Secretariat, virtually through teams, zoom, questionnaires, emails, and direct phone calls in undertaking the assignment. The consulting firm will only be required to facilitate one consultative validation workshop face-to-face with SADC Member States in Johannesburg, South Africa and this should be part of your financial proposal.
Nr.9	Regarding the **Facilities to be provided by the contracting authority and/or other parties** (p11), will SADC be able to provide support with the stakeholder databases and any questions the Consulting Team may have such as non-responses from SADC members, given the time constraints of the assignment?	Yes, the SADC Secretariat will provide support and introduction of the successful bidder to Member States to facilitate data and information capturing.
Nr.10	What is the expected turnaround time for deliverables? Given the six-month period, can SADC confirm a timeous (two week) turnaround period. Please clarify.	Two weeks for interim reports. The final report may require more time as it will require validation by SADC Member States. This will be part of key negotiation item with the successful bidder.
Nr.11	Regarding the Expert requirements (section 6.1.1): (a)Are the Qualifications limited to Engineering, Economics, Project Management (with focus on regional integration and infrastructure), or can equivalent degrees be considered?	(a) The expert will be evaluated according to the requirements issued in the bidding documents

	(b)What is an example of organisational development trainings/certifications? (c)For the other Key Experts, can equivalent degrees be accepted (i.e. an energy expert may have an Environmental Planning/Management or Economic degree)? Please clarify?	(b) These are additional training certification aligned to the scope of work to compliment the degrees that the expert possesses. (c) No, the experts will be evaluated according to the requirements issued in the bidding documents
Nr.12	**Source 1:** *Specific Procurement Notice*, **page 1**, identifies the reference number as **SADC/3/5/2/452**. **Source 2:** *Bidding Documents*, **Section 2 – Data Sheet, Clause 1.2, page 26**, also identifies the contract reference as **SADC/3/5/2/452**. **Source 3:** *Bidding Documents*, **cover page (page 1 of the PDF)**, indicates **SADC/3/2/5/452**. Could you please confirm the correct and official contract reference to be used in all proposal documentation?	SADC/3/5/2/452 See Addendum 1
Nr.13	**Reference Documentation – RIDMP STAP I and STAP II** The Terms of Reference expressly identify the previous RIDMP implementation assessments and action plans as essential background for the assignment. Relevant references include: (a)Terms of Reference, Section 1.2 – Country Background, page 4: identifies the RIDMP Short-Term Action Plan (STAP I), covering 2012–2018, and states that its implementation assessment was concluded in August 2019. (b)Terms of Reference, Section 2.1 – Overall Objective, page 8: requires the consultancy to take account of the RIDMP STAP I assessment report and the re-prioritised RIDMP STAP II, approved in August 2023 by the Council of Ministers in Luanda, Angola.	Access to the requested documents are presented through links below: https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/2021-07/SADC_Regional_Infrastruture_Development.pdf https://collab.sadc.int/s/g4Dx6oT7jqsTbkS

	(c)Terms of Reference, Section 4.1 – General Scope of Work, page 10: reiterates the importance of the STAP I assessment and re-prioritised STAP II for evaluating RIDMP implementation. In this regard, we would appreciate it if the SADC Secretariat could kindly provide electronic copies of the following documents: (d)RIDMP STAP I Assessment Report – August 2019; (e)Re-prioritised RIDMP STAP II – approved in August 2023. These documents would be particularly valuable for establishing an accurate assessment baseline and ensuring that our proposed methodology appropriately reflects previous implementation findings, project reprioritisation and lessons learned. If available, we would also appreciate access to any updated RIDMP project portfolio or implementation monitoring reports.	
Nr.14	We would appreciate clarification regarding the sectoral scope of the assessment. • Source 1: *Terms of Reference, Section 1.2 – Country Background, page 4*, identifies Tourism among the infrastructure development challenges addressed by the RIDMP, alongside Energy, Transport, ICT, Meteorology and Water. • Source 2: *Terms of Reference, Section 4.4.1 – Responsible Body, page 11*, identifies the RIDMP Oversight Committee as covering Energy, ICT, Meteorology, Transport and Water. • Source 3: *Terms of Reference, Section 4.4.2 – Management Structure, page 11*, likewise identifies the five sectoral areas involved in providing information and technical oversight	Tourism is **not included** in the scope of works and the assignment is limited to the five sectors of Energy, ICT, Meteorology, Transport and Water.

	Could you please confirm whether **Tourism** is included within the operational scope of the current assessment or whether the assignment is limited to the five sectors identified under Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2?	
Nr.15	Paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Specific Procurement Notice provide that: *(a)The procurement method used for this contract is Open Bidding, as defined in the SADC Secretariat Guidelines for Procurement and Grants, edition June 2025 available at the following website: www.sadc.int* *(b)The Request for Proposal (RFP) is **open to firms who satisfy the eligibility and qualification requirements** stated in the Bidding Documents.* Further, the Bidding Documents, in section 1 (Invitation Letter), in Paragraph 2, state: *The Bidding Documents have been addressed to **all eligible** Bidders.* However, Paragraph 1.2 (Introduction) of the Bidding Documents provides that: *The shortlisted Bidders are invited to submit a Technical Proposal and a Financial Proposal for global price services required for the assignment named in **the Data Sheet** and presented in detail in the Terms of Reference*. Has there been a shortlisting of bidders before this RfP? If so, can we submit our proposal even if we have not participated in an EOI or pre-shortlisting?	The procurement method is open bidding and open to all eligible bidders. There has not been any shortlisting of bidders before this. You are therefore free to participate.

End of Responses

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