



RFP/019/2025

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR CONSULTANCY FOR COMMUNITY OF
PRACTICE -COP**

MAY 2025

1.0 Introduction

The Science for Africa Foundation (SFA Foundation) is a pan-African, non-profit, and public charity organisation that supports, strengthens, and promotes science and innovation in Africa. The SFA Foundation is committed to improving African people's quality of life and promoting research uptake in communities, industry, and the public sector. We serve the African research ecosystem by designing, funding, and managing programmes that support excellent science and innovation; and that build and reinforce environments that are conducive for scientists to thrive and produce quality research that impacts development. SFA Foundation is distinctive in that it focuses on the ecosystem surrounding research and the production of research itself. It also supports initiatives that directly influence the quantity, quality, and impact of research. SFA Foundation operations are hosted within the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (icipe) as a programme in the Republic of Kenya.

2.0 Project Overview

The SFA Foundation is inviting proposals from qualified software vendors for the design and development of a Community of Practice for Research Managers. This initiative, led by the Africa Research Management Capacity Strengthening Programme (REMACS), marks the first phase of a broader effort to create a central digital hub that will facilitate collaboration across the Foundation's various programmes.

The platform is envisioned as the central access point for the Foundation's digital initiatives, enabling stakeholders to seamlessly navigate between program-specific subsites and communities while discovering cross-programmatic opportunities. It will ensure smooth transitions between subsites based on user roles and permissions, governed by a centralised identity access management system. This system will apply standard security controls and include robust monitoring and reporting features to ensure the highest level of security and compliance.

By integrating shared resources, intelligent recommendations, and actionable insights within a scalable infrastructure, the platform aims to break down silos, reduce administrative burdens, and foster a truly collaborative ecosystem. Importantly, this will be achieved while maintaining the unique identity and specific needs of each programme.

About REMACS

The REMACS programme aims to strengthen the capacity of research managers across Africa. A central element of this goal is to create a digital platform that fosters professional networking, shared learning, and collaboration among research management professionals.

The Community of Practice will serve as an online space where research managers can:

- Share resources and best practices.
- Discuss common challenges and opportunities.
- Access training, tools, and events.
- Build a collective knowledge base.

In the long term, this platform will evolve into a central hub connecting multiple programmes and digital communities, maintaining both integration and individual programme identities.

3.0 Project Objectives

The primary objectives of this RFP are:

- To design and develop a user-friendly, scalable, and secure digital platform for the Community of Practice.
- To facilitate structured engagement through forums, resource libraries, event calendars, discussion threads, user groups, and knowledge-sharing tools.
- To ensure the platform is modular, allowing future integration with onboarding tools, Learning Management Systems (LMS), and other programme-specific features.
- To support intelligent features such as content recommendations and analytics for user engagement and resource usage.

4.0 Scope of Work

The selected vendor will be responsible for the end-to-end design, development, and implementation of the CoP platform. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Develop an intuitive, accessible, and mobile-responsive interface with multilingual support where applicable.
- Ensure compliance with security best practices and data protection standards.
- Enable modular architecture to support future integrations and scalability.

5.0 Deliverables of the assignment

Core Features of the COP

The platform must include the following key features to meet the needs of the Community of Practice

a) Discussion Forums

- Structured, moderated forums organised by topic or thematic area.
- Features such as tagging, threaded replies, notifications, and moderation tools.

b) Resource Repository

- A searchable, categorised library for various content types, including:
- Reports, case studies, and success stories
- Best practices and guidelines
- Templates, toolkits, and regulatory information
- Support for metadata tagging, filtering, and version control.

c) Networking Tools

- Member directory with searchable profiles
- Options for direct messaging, following, or joining user groups
- Virtual spaces for interest-based or regional networking

d) Mentorship and Expert Collaboration

- Mentor-mentee matching functionality
- Private collaboration spaces or channels
- Features to host “Ask the Expert” sessions and knowledge exchanges

e) Capacity Building

- Integration with webinar and virtual workshop tools
- Event scheduling and registration
- Ability to track participation and issue certificates or badges

f) Publications and Knowledge Sharing

- Section for member-contributed articles, blog posts, and newsletters
- Workflow for content submission, review, and publication
- Visibility controls (public vs. members-only)

6.0 Proposal Submission Requirements

Consultants are requested to submit a proposal containing:

- a) Mandatory/ Statutory requirements/ Company Profile.
- b) A one-page cover letter with contact details.
- c) The proposal should not be more than five (5) pages (including the budget.)
- d) A project plan that demonstrates a clear understanding of the assignment.
- e) An executive summary providing an overview of :
 - i. Project Approach and methodology,
 - ii. Relevant experience and Case Studies,
 - iii. Tools and detailed **work plan**: timeline and deliverables
 - iv. Proposed Technology Stack
- f) References of similar clients i.e. (submit at least three (3) reference letters or recommendations from similar clients).
- g) Detailed description of the role of team members – competencies, relevant skill sets and experience on the (subject of the RFP):
 - a. **Team Composition**: Names and roles of the project team members, including their qualifications and diversity in past projects. Experience working with diverse organisations, including non-profits, public sector entities, and private corporations.
- h) Cost projections- The financial proposal shall clearly indicate the total cost disaggregated to enable partial payments and/or scaling of services. The Prices quoted should be inclusive of all taxes and delivery costs, must be in US Dollars (\$) and shall remain valid for (120) days. The budget should include including licensing, development, and maintenance costs)
- i) Companies are encouraged to include any additional information they believe demonstrates added value within the scope of this assignment.
- j) Vendor Qualifications
 - i. Proven experience in designing and developing community or collaboration platforms.
 - ii. Experience working with nonprofit, academic, or international development organisations (preferred).
 - iii. Strong UX/UI capabilities with a user-centred design approach.
 - iv. Demonstrated ability to deliver secure, scalable, and accessible platforms.
 - v. Capacity to provide ongoing support and improvements

7.0 Duration of the Assignment

The consultancy assignment is expected to be completed over a period of **one year**. Key milestones and deliverable due dates will be agreed upon during the inception phase.

RFP Timelines

Action	Date
Circulation of RFP	28 th May 2025
Deadline for receipt of questions relating to the RFP and confirmation of participation	3 rd June 2025
Response to Vendors' Queries	5 th June 2025
Deadline for submission of the proposals	17 th June 2025
Deadline for submission of the password for the proposals	18 th June 2025 at 8.00 am (EAT)
Project start date	After contracting

8.0 Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Mandatory Requirements of the Consultant
a) Tax compliance certificate and PIN Certificate (if Kenyan) where applicable.

Only Bidders who meet the mandatory requirements will proceed to Technical Evaluation and will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

8.1 Technical Score* (Weight 80%)

Criteria	Score
Clear understanding of terms of reference with realistic technical approach, methodology, and workplan.	40%
Evidence of similar assignments in last five (5) years and at least three (3) references/recommendations. Demonstrate UX/UI design capabilities	25%
Composition and verifiable competencies of the proposed project team for the assignment, proposed support and maintenance	15%

* Minimum score of 80% is required per category- (overall minimum scores-64 marks)

8.2 Financial Scores (Weight 20%)

Criteria	Score
Cost and Value (20%) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost-effectiveness and value for money based on the proposed budget, with a clear breakdown of fees by project phase.• Justification of costs, ensuring alignment with the scope	20 marks

9.0 Terms and Conditions

This document contains proprietary and confidential information. Bidders may use or reproduce the information detailed within this document and any other supporting information only to provide a response to this request for proposal. No commitment will be made to any bidder unless a contract has been awarded and signed by both parties.

SFA Foundation reserves the right to cease this exercise at any time. During the period of this activity, no contact should occur between any members of the bidder's staff and SFA Foundation staff in relation to this exercise other than through the designated contact points as detailed within this request for proposal. It is however recognised that pre-existing relationships if any, will be respected.

10.0 Ethics

Bidders are required to observe our procurement ethical code of conduct which includes but is not limited to observing the highest standard of ethics regarding corruption, collusion, conflict of interest, and fraud. If the bidder does not observe confidentiality or ethical practices, they shall be disqualified from any future work.

11.0 Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality

The information contained within this document or subsequently made available to the consultant is deemed confidential and must not be disclosed without prior written consent unless required by law.

12.0 Independent Proposal

By submitting a proposal, the bidder warrants that the fees in the proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, agreement or understanding for the purpose of restricting competition as to any matter relating to such fees, with any other potential consultant or with any competitor.

13.0 Proposal Submission Process

It should be noted that this document relates to a request for proposal only and not a commitment to enter into a contractual agreement. In addition, SFA Foundation will not be held responsible for any costs associated with the production of a response to this request for proposal.

13.1 Instructions on the Proposal Submission Process

1. Proposal to be sent by email to: procurement@scienceforafrica.foundation on or before 17th June 2025 at 5.00 pm (EAT)
2. **Protect your proposal with a password and share the password on 18th June 2025 by 8.00 am (EAT)**
3. The proposal to be marked as follows on the subject line:

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