RFP/023/2025

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR BASELINE ASSESSMENT.

AUGUST 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 Overview

The Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a profound challenge globally and to the continent of Africa specifically. The initial focus was naturally on the burden of disease and impacts on fragile health systems and vulnerable populations. Several years on, the focus is now widening to recognise the deep societal and economic consequences, including decreases in production, increased unemployment rates, reduced family incomes and consumption, and impacts on livelihoods, education and societal interactions.

At any one time, the African continent has 100 or more ongoing disease outbreaks. These risks will only increase as Africa undergoes rapid demographic growth, as the continent becomes increasingly connected, and as environmental degradation continues. Investment in African pandemic sciences will protect and enhance the healthcare system, improve health and help protect African economic stability through the mitigation of future adverse socio-economic impacts from epidemic and pandemic diseases.

Although Africa represents 17% of the global population, the continent produces just 1-2% of global health research, a gap driven by systemic under-investment and structural challenges. There are roughly 200 researchers per 1 million people in Africa, compared to over 4,000 per million in high-income countries (UNESCO, 2021). In addition, only ~15% of early-career researchers access structured mentorship, according to systematic reviews across 12 African countries (TENET, 2019).

To respond to this need, a unique, high-impact multi-year partnership has been formed between the Pandemic Sciences Institute at the University of Oxford, the Science for Africa Foundation, and Mastercard Foundation. This partnership, known as the Africa Pandemic Sciences Collaborative (The Collaborative) will achieve its goals by strengthening African research and higher education institutions to enable them to conduct world-class, innovative research, and translate findings into impactful, locally relevant solutions that contribute to shaping and strengthening pandemic resilience and, ultimately, the health ecosystem on the continent for the benefit of future generations.

The Intervention of the Africa Pandemic Sciences Collaborative

The Africa Pandemic Sciences Collaborative seeks to nurture and equip the emerging generation of young African scientists and researchers to address current and future health

challenges, contribute to strengthening the continent's health ecosystem and pandemic preparedness and response capabilities, and to create pathways to dignified and fulfilling careers in pandemic sciences. A thriving research ecosystem in Africa will be essential for achieving this goal and retaining a critical mass of high-calibre young scientists across the continent, ensuring knowledge continuity between generations of researchers.

Over the next seven years, the Collaborative aims to advance the continent's preparedness for, and response to, epidemic and pandemic in the following ways:

- One of the investments is the **Epidemic and Pandemic Sciences Innovation and Leadership Networks (EPSILONs).** Following a competitive selection process between late 2023 and early 2025, seven successful EPSILON consortia were selected from a total of 230 applications. Each EPSILON consortia is led by an outstanding African investigator and comprises up to six institutions, majority of which are based in Africa. The lead institution in each consortium has recently signed an award letter with SFA Foundation and work will start in earnest in the coming months. Each EPSILON will undertake a research programme in one of seven thematic areas:
    I.   Vaccinology / early-stage vaccine research for epidemic- and pandemic-prone infections
    II.   Virology – genotype to phenotype
    III. Clinical research and clinical trials on epidemic and pandemic-prone infections
    IV.   Epidemic and pandemic public health policy research
    V.   Climate change, biodiversity and pandemic prevention
    VI.   Advanced data assembly and analytics for threat assessment and mitigation
    VII. Social and behavioural sciences

- Beyond funding scientific research (EPSILONs), the collaborative supports a substantial portfolio of capacity-strengthening, knowledge exchange and policy engagement activities including:
    I.   Developing young African scientists and professionals through training and capacity-strengthening initiatives, under the mentorship of senior African scientists, thus expanding and retaining the research workforce to improve public health in Africa.
    II.   Strengthening African higher education and research institutions to build their capacity for conducting world-class, locally led research that shapes public policy and practice, fostering scientific excellence, innovation and leadership in pandemic sciences.
    III. Fostering partnerships and collaborative exchanges among scientists, policymakers, public health institutions, industry and global peers.
    IV.   Enhancing research institutions' capacity to nurture environments where research careers and innovation thrive.

These interventions align with and contribute to the Mastercard Foundation's Young Africa Works strategy, which aims to enable 30 million young Africans, of whom 70% are young women, to access dignified and fulfilling work by 2030.

3.0 Objectives of the Assignment

The purpose of the baseline assessment is to generate a structured, evidence-based understanding of each EPSILON consortium and the Collaborative's broader operating ecosystem. This baseline is essential to grounding the Collaborative's approach in operational realities and anchoring its ambition to close Africa's global health research gap with current, context-aware insights.

It will serve as a critical foundation for the Collaborative's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEAL) workstream, informing performance benchmarks and adaptive learning strategies. It will also act as a reference point for future midline and endline evaluations and tracking progress across key domains, including the inclusion of youth and underrepresented populations, policy engagement, innovation, and institutional strengthening. Additionally, this assessment will refine the strategic positioning of the Collaborative and its EPSILONs within Africa's pandemic sciences landscape by identifying strengths, gaps, enabling networks, and opportunities for collective action to achieve the Collaborative's objectives (Establishing the Epidemic and Pandemic Sciences Leadership and Innovation Networks and the Africa Pandemic Science Knowledge Exchange).

Building on existing work, such as due diligence conducted by SFA Foundation on the lead institutions in each EPSILON consortium, and landscaping analyses to be conducted by the workstream implementation teams, the baseline will examine both internal capacities and external contextual factors (affecting institutional operations and governance, and the broader operating environment) related to epidemic and pandemic research excellence and its translation, equitable career pathways for young scientists, institutional support structures, and the Collaborative's potential for impact.

Focusing on elements of the Collaborative's Theory of Change (Increased translation and uptake of Epidemics and Pandemics research outputs into contextually relevant solutions, regulations, approaches and policies; Sustainable career pathways for young researchers and professionals working on Epidemics and Pandemics, and Enhanced professionalism and a well-resourced (financial and human resource) Epidemics and Pandemics sector to support research in Africa), the assessment will include:

- Assessment of EPSILON consortiums' research and institutional capacity, and systems for capacity-strengthening and inclusion, research translation (to policy and/or innovation), and monitoring and learning.
- Landscape analysis of the Collaborative's broader operating ecosystems (e.g., policy, economic, social, technical (research), environmental, market (research topic, competition, etc)).
- Development of a structured framework to assess EPSILONs' capabilities and capacities to function as a "networked centre of excellence" within their field.

The purpose of the baseline assessment is therefore expected to establish a contextual performance benchmark for the EPSILONs, assess institutional and programmatic readiness, inform strategic learning and adaptive implementation, map the broader operating environment of the EPSILONS and inform accountability and reporting.

Specifically, the baseline assessment is expected to:

3.1 Establish a Contextual Performance Benchmark

The Baseline Assessment will not only document key programmatic indicators – such as research capacity, staffing, MEAL systems, communications capacity, and consortium

governance – but will do so in a way that is deeply informed by the programme's strategic intent.

The baseline evaluation will therefore set the contextual performance benchmark for:

- Supporting and retaining young African scientists through fellowships, mentorship, and leadership pathways;
- Promoting inclusive participation and gender equity in pandemic sciences;
- Enhancing institutional and regional pipeline readiness for producing and absorbing emerging talent;
- Building sustainable research-to-policy and research-to-innovation pathways;
- Enabling interconnected networks across African research institutions, policy platforms, and public health systems.
- Contributing to high-quality/cutting-edge research and innovations.

Beyond these, the evaluation will also collect quantitative and qualitative data to establish the pre-intervention status of key programme indicators across the seven EPSILON thematic areas highlighted. This will ensure that progress is measured not only by institutional performance but also by the degree to which the EPSILONs contribute to the broader, transformative goals of the Collaborative.

3.2 Assess Institutional and Programmatic Readiness

The evaluation will map the existing capacities of participating institutions (both lead and partner institutions within the EPSILONs) to identify both strengths and capacity gaps, which will be used to tailor technical support, including:

- Internal capacity for interdisciplinary research and training.
- Operational readiness to deliver on thematic focus areas;
- Inclusivity and diversity in staffing, leadership, and recruitment.
- Systems for research translation, community engagement, and MEAL
- Visibility and integration within current active research and policy networks.

From the results of a structured framework assessment of EPSILONs' capabilities and capacities to function as a "networked centre of excellence", we will be able to benchmark what "good" looks like for centres of excellence, identify where the EPSILONs can plug into or elevate existing systems, and flag structural enablers or binding constraints early.

3.3 Support Strategic Learning and Adaptive Implementation

By grounding the programme's assumptions in empirical evidence, the baseline will inform the refinement of the Collaborative's Theory of Change as well as the EPSILONs' individual theories of change (where relevant), by testing whether the assumed linkages between inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impacts are realistic and supported by contextual data. This includes understanding the enabling environment, risks, barriers, and drivers of change relevant to pandemic research, capacity strengthening, and policy engagement.

Specifically, the evaluation will:

- Inform the refinement of the Theory of Change and Results Framework;
- Provide a reference point for measuring institutional development, systems change, and social impact;
- Guide the prioritisation of investments in capacity, partnerships, and innovation;

- Strengthen the programme's ability to monitor progress toward the Collaborative's core commitments such as youth empowerment, African-led research, policy engagement, and sustainable science careers.

3.4 Map the Broader Operating Environment

The baseline will also include a macro-level assessment of the enabling ecosystem for pandemic sciences in Africa, including:

- Regional and national policy and regulatory frameworks (e.g., Africa CDC R&D priorities, WHO regional strategies, national health research plans).
- Existing research networks and centres of excellence, to identify complementarity, potential duplication, or partnership opportunities.
- Key funding flows and financial sustainability mechanisms.
- Institutional regulatory, ethics, and data governance environments.
- Platforms for knowledge exchange and science policy engagement.

This component will serve to surface structural barriers or enablers that could shape EPSILON success and inform the design of the Collaborative's activities such as the policy exchange and learning component.

3.5 Inform Accountability and Reporting

By providing validated baseline data aligned to the Collaborative's log frame and MEAL indicators, the evaluation will support transparent reporting to the Mastercard Foundation and other stakeholders. It will also provide a foundation for measuring programme impact on workforce development, institutional capacity strengthening, and Africa-led pandemic preparedness.

4.0 Scope of Work

The baseline evaluation will assess the operating ecosystems, starting conditions, institutional capacities, and readiness of the seven EPSILONs to function as "networked centres of excellence" under the Africa Pandemic Sciences Collaborative. It will generate evidence across four core areas: **Research Capacity and Partnerships, Capacity-strengthening and Workforce Development, Institutional Operations and Governance, and the Broader Operating Environment.** It will also build on previous landscaping analyses and assessments (examples will be shared by the partners, with the successful consultant encouraged to identify wider relevant publications), while addressing activity-level learning needs related to the research-to-impact pipeline in pandemic and epidemic sciences.

4.1 Baseline Assessment of EPSILON Research and Institutional Capacities

4.1.1 Thematic Research Readiness and Infrastructure

- Assess the thematic alignment and preparedness of each EPSILON based on its proposed research focus.
- Document existing research facilities, laboratory and data infrastructure, and (relevant?) scientific equipment at consortium lead (hub) and partner (spoke) institutions.
- Map the existing research pipelines, including ongoing or recent projects, partnerships, and areas of expertise relevant to the EPSILON themes.

4.1.2 Consortium Governance and Partnerships

- Analyse the structure, composition, and functionality of each EPSILON consortium, including the roles of lead and partner institutions.

- Building on the due diligence activities conducted by SFA Foundation in early 2025, assess the presence and quality of institutional governance, decision-making frameworks, and internal coordination mechanisms.

- Identify levels of collaboration across institutions, including planned and existing south-south and international partnerships.

4.2 Baseline Assessment of Capacity-Strengthening and Inclusion

4.2.1 Workforce Development and Talent Pipelines

- Map existing staffing levels, qualifications, and research leadership at each EPSILON, disaggregated by seniority, role, gender, age and disability (MEAL, PM, Policy, Comms, etc.).
- Assess institutional readiness to implement workforce development initiatives including:
  - I.   Scientific leadership training
  - II. Research management and professional services training
  - III. Mentorship systems for early-career researchers
- Establish a baseline for the number and types of training programs currently available and their success or impact.

4.2.2 Gender and Social Inclusion Systems

- Assess the number and strength of policies and practices in place to support the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women, youth, and historically marginalised groups (e.g., persons with disabilities, displaced youth) and their effectiveness.
- Identify existing mechanisms for inclusive participation in decision-making, research leadership, and program governance.
- Evaluate the capacity of EPSILON lead institutions to implement gender-sensitive programming, measure intersectional equity, and respond to systemic barriers.
- Assess the extent to which the EPSILONs are co-designing programme governance with the target groups - women, youth, displaced persons and persons living with disability.

4.3 Baseline Assessment of Institutional Operations and Governance

4.3.1 Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Systems

- Document baseline MEAL systems and staffing at the EPSILON and institutional levels.
- Assess the existence and quality of MEAL frameworks, indicators, data collection practices, and feedback loops.
- Identify gaps in data systems, reporting standards, and integration with programme-level MEAL frameworks (PSI/SFA Foundation).

4.3.2 Knowledge Management and Learning Systems

- Examine knowledge exchange systems in place within and between EPSILONs, including platforms for collaborative learning and good practice sharing.

- Identify existing communities of practice, peer-to-peer learning mechanisms, and mechanisms for tracking institutional learning.

4.3.3 Community Engagement and Research-to-Policy Translation

- Assess institutional linkages to policymakers, civil society, and public health stakeholders, private sector, academia (other researchers and systems, on both the global scale and those based in Sub-Saharan Africa).
- Document the baseline capacities for engaging with policy makers and capacities for science communication.
- Identify existing channels and strategies for translating evidence into policy, particularly in applied themes (e.g., social sciences, public health policy).
- Assess Community Engagement frameworks in place to ensure rapid uptake and adherence to ethical conduct of pandemic/emergency research, including transferability of the Community Engagement best practices.
- Map the availability of emergency research Community Engagement frameworks in the region to leverage, for expedited uptake during research emergencies.

4.4 Baseline Assessment of the Broader Operating Environment

4.4.1 Policy and Regulatory Frameworks

- Map and analyse national and regional pandemic research and health innovation policies relevant to each EPSILON's thematic area (e.g., Africa CDC research priorities, WHO R&D blueprints, national STI strategies).
- Assess alignment between EPSILON mandates and government/public health agency priorities.
- Identify opportunities for research policy co-production, uptake, and joint agenda-setting.

4.4.2 Research Ecosystems and Networks

- Map key existing centres of excellence, academic consortia, and research networks (e.g., DELTAS Africa, EDCTP, H3Africa, regional universities).
- Benchmark what "excellence" looks like using recognised characteristics (e.g., multidisciplinary research capacity, policy influence, training impact, sustainability mechanisms).
- Identify areas where EPSILONs can plug into, complement, or elevate existing networks, and where there may be duplication or gaps.

4.4.3 Governance and Regulatory Systems

- Assess the research regulatory landscape in key countries, including ethics approval systems, cross-border research protocols, and data governance frameworks.
- Identify structural enablers or blockers affecting multi-country collaboration, open data sharing, and innovation pipelines.
- Assess the existence of adaptable SOPs or protocols for emergency or pandemic research and how adaptable the existing ethical and regulatory frameworks are in the face of an emergency.

5.0 Deliverables of the assignment

The successful consultant for the Baseline Assessment for the Collaborative will be expected to provide a structured set of deliverables to support evidence-based decision-making, program learning, and performance tracking. The deliverables will span the entire evaluation cycle - from inception and data collection to reporting, validation, and dissemination - and will align with the Collaborative's MEAL framework. All outputs must meet high standards of rigour and be responsive to feedback from key partners, including the SFA Foundation and PSI. Where required, final products must be delivered in both English and French to ensure accessibility across the Collaborative's multilingual stakeholder base. Translations should preserve technical accuracy and reflect context-appropriate terminology.

The following table details each of the expected deliverables, the content, and timeline

Deliverable	Description	Expected Content	Timeline
Inception Report	A foundational document that outlines how the baseline will be conducted	• Refined evaluation objectives and questions • Detailed methodology • Data collection tools and sampling framework • Deliverables' content • Key informants and/or focus groups listing • Workplan with Gantt chart and evaluation matrix • Roles, responsibilities, and risk mitigation plan • Client communication plan • Ethical protocols	Week 2 (after Contracting and agreement on the baseline approach, methodology and baseline questions in Week 1).
Baseline Toolkits	Standardised tools for consistent data collection across the EPSILONs	• Institutional Capacity Assessment Framework • Operating ecosystem review framework / tool • KII and FGD guides (French translation where required) • Inclusion audit templates • MEAL systems review framework / tool • Survey instruments (if applicable)	Week 3
Desk Review	A rapid review of Collaborative and EPSILON operating environment	• Rapid review of Collaborative documents/products and academic and grey literature related to African pandemic sciences • Map of existing efforts, actors, networks, and interventions related to African pandemic sciences • Key concepts, types of evidence, and knowledge gaps • Insights on how and why interventions (do not) work, for whom, and in what contexts	Week 4

Data Collection Brief	A real-time synthesis of progress during fieldwork	• Summary of sites visited, interviews conducted, and institutions engaged • Emerging themes and operational issues • Summary of adaptations and mitigations • Log of issues requiring SFA Foundation/PSI coordination	Week 6
Draft Baseline Evaluation Report	Comprehensive analytical report presenting initial findings, insights, and baseline values	• Executive summary and key insights • Description of evaluation methodology and limitations • Results by each Evaluation work package and workstream • Gender and inclusion analysis • Baseline values for key MEAL indicators • Findings mapped to Theory of Change and programme outcomes • Institutional and thematic readiness scores • Recommendations for programme adjustment and MEAL focus	Week 9
Validation Workshop and Stakeholder Briefing	Facilitated participatory session to present, verify, and enrich preliminary findings (English and French)	• Workshop slide deck summarising key findings and data visualizations • Facilitated discussion guides for SFA Foundation, PSI, and EPSILONs • Participant feedback summaries • Documented responses and refinements to findings	Week 10
Final Baseline Evaluation Report	Finalised version of the draft report, incorporating feedback from stakeholders and technical reviewers (English and French)	• All content from the draft, revised based on validation feedback • Summary of changes made compared to the draft • High-quality charts and tables • Annexes: toolkits, list of institutions, interview lists, raw baseline indicator table, ethics documentation	Week 13
Summary Slide Deck	High-level, accessible outputs for use in advocacy, donor reporting, and internal strategy (English and French)	• 10 to15-page popular version of the report with core findings, gaps, and implications • Executive slide deck for SFA Foundation/PSI & key stakeholders • Infographics (e.g., inclusion baselines, EPSILON readiness ratings)	Week 13
Baseline Data Pack	All cleaned, organised, and labelled quantitative and qualitative data from the evaluation	• Excel database with disaggregated data (by EPSILON, gender, institution type, theme) • Codebook and data dictionary • Audio transcripts, cleaned notes, and thematic coding (for the qualitative data included) • Institutional capacity scores and readiness ratings	Week 14

6.0 Proposal Submission Requirements

Bidders are requested to submit a proposal containing:
   a) Mandatory/ Statutory requirements.
   b) Tax clearance certificate issued by KRA,
   c) Consultant Registration
   d) Consultant profile and contact details
   e) Others (Registration with relevant bodies if applicable)

b) The Proposal that should include:
   Approach and Methodology: A detailed project plan that provides an overview of the project approach, the methodology to be followed, detailed timelines, deliverables, and tools.
   Detailed work plan: Detailed timeline and plan with deliverables and timelines.
   References from previous clients where similar work was completed (at least 3 letters on company letterhead).

Team Composition: **Detailed description of the role of team members – competencies, relevant skill sets and experience on the (subject of the RFP). 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.**

Detailed budget or costing of the project or price indicating costs for each phase.

The financial proposal shall clearly indicate the total cost disaggregated to enable milestone-based payment, where applicable.

Prices shall be inclusive of all project costs such as delivery, insurance, licenses, support, reimbursements, etc

The Prices quoted should be inclusive of all applicable taxes and shall remain valid for (120) days.

Companies are encouraged to include any additional information they believe demonstrates added value within the scope of this assignment.

Team Composition, Qualification and experience:

The lead evaluator and/or firm must meet the following essential criteria:

Area	Required Qualifications
Evaluation Expertise	Minimum of 7 years of experience in designing and conducting evaluations of large-scale, multi-stakeholder programmes in Africa. Proven ability to lead baseline, midterm, or final evaluations using mixed methods approaches.
Health and/or Science Sector Knowledge	Strong understanding of public health, pandemic preparedness, or biomedical research systems in Africa. Experience evaluating scientific, health-based programmes is required.
Institutional Capacity Assessment	Demonstrated experience in assessing institutional capacity, governance, research infrastructure, and grants management systems in higher education or research consortia.
MEAL Systems and Results-Based Management	Expertise in assessing MEAL systems, indicators, and data management tools, including familiarity with log frames, theories of change, and adaptive learning frameworks.

Equity and Inclusion Competency	Proven ability to integrate Gender, Equity, and Social Inclusion (GESI) perspectives into evaluation design, data collection, and reporting. Experience conducting inclusion audits and disaggregated analysis is essential.
African Contextual Experience	Substantial evaluation experience across multiple African countries. Familiarity with regional institutions, local research networks, and diverse linguistic, cultural, and institutional contexts.
French Language Expertise	Fluency in French, familiarity with Francophone African institutional, cultural, and linguistic dynamics, and ability to produce high-quality bilingual outputs (English and French).
Stakeholder Engagement and Facilitation	Skilled in facilitating participatory processes with diverse stakeholders, including senior scientists, early-career researchers, policy actors, community engagement leads, and funders.
Data Collection and Analysis Tools	Demonstrated ability to design and manage data collection across multiple sites and languages. Proficiency in using tools such as NVivo, MAXQDA, STATA, SPSS, Python, R, or Power BI is preferred.
Communication and Reporting	Excellent written and verbal communication skills. Proven ability to produce high-quality reports, data visualisations, policy briefs, and presentations for technical and non-technical audiences.

6.1 Team Composition (for Firm or Consortium Applying)

The evaluation team should ideally include the following roles and skills:

Suggested Roles	Required Competencies
Team Lead / Principal Evaluator	Advanced degree (MSc or PhD), with demonstrated experience in developing strategy and leading medium to large-scale programme assessments and/or evaluations. Strong analytical skills and the ability to identify patterns, draw connections, and generate insight across complex or fragmented systems.
Health or Research Sector Specialist	Deep understanding of pandemic sciences, research ecosystems, and/or academic research capacity strengthening in Africa.
MEAL and Quantitative Methods Specialist	Skilled in survey design, indicator baselining, MEAL systems review, and statistical analysis.
Qualitative Researcher / Inclusion Specialist	Experienced in facilitating Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and conducting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) assessments using participatory approaches.
Local Coordinators / Country Researchers	Fluent in local official languages (English, French, Portuguese and Swahili) and contexts; able to support access, coordination, and culturally sensitive data collection in selected countries.

6.2 Additional Qualifications

Perspective applicants also need to possess the following additional competencies:

- Familiarity with the Mastercard Foundation's Young Africa Works strategy or similar initiatives.

- Prior engagement with Good Financial Grant Practice (GFGP), research ethics, or professional services training is an asset.
- Experience working with or evaluating scientific research networks or scientific regional research institutions.

7.0 Duration of the Assignment

The consultancy assignment is expected to be completed over a period of 14 Weeks Key milestones and deliverable due dates will be agreed upon during the inception phase.

8.0 RFP Timelines

Action	Date
Circulation of RFP	21st August 2025
Deadline for receipt of questions relating to the RFP and confirmation of participation	26th August 2025
Response to Vendors' Queries	27th August 2025
Extended closing date for Proposals Submission	18th September 2025
Project start date	After issue of the contract

9.0 Evaluation Criteria
The proposal evaluation criteria shall be based on below Requirements:

I.   Mandatory requirements
II.   Technical Requirements
III.   Financial requirements

9.1 Mandatory Evaluation
The mandatory evaluation shall be conducted based on the below criteria. Any bidder who does not meet the mandatory requirements will be disqualified from proceeding to technical evaluation.

Table 2: Mandatory Criteria

Mandatory Requirements of the Bidder
a) Tax compliance certificate and PIN Certificate (if Kenyan) where applicable. b) Evidence of having conducted similar assignments. (list and provide recommendation letters, stating the similar assignment done) c) Registration with relevant bodies (where applicable)

9.2 Technical Evaluation * (Weight 80%)

Only bidders who meets all mandatory requirements will proceed to technical evaluation stage. The evaluation will be based on the below criteria.

Table 3: Technical Evaluation Criteria

Criteria (indicative)	Weighted Percentage	Minimum Scores (80% per Section	Bid Score

Technical Proposal & Methodology: Clarity, relevance, and soundness of the proposed approach, including the proposed evaluation design, tools, analysis plan, value proposition and ethical considerations.	25%		
Understanding of Assignment & Context: Demonstrated understanding of the Collaborative's goal and objectives, operational context, and purpose of the baseline evaluation.	20%		
Relevant Experience: Proven track record of similar baseline/evaluation assignments for scientific research networks or scientific regional research institutions	15%		
Relevant Expertise: Key qualifications and roles of the key personnel and team members tasked to deliver on this assignment.	15%		
Work Plan & Deliverability: Realistic timeline, logical sequencing, clear deliverables, and quality assurance mechanisms.	5%		
Total Score	100%		
Total Scores out of 80	80		
Minimum Score (64/80)	64		

Bidders must meet 80% minimum scores for each category and must attain a pass mark of 64% to be considered for the next steps.

9.3 Financial Scores (Weight 20%)

Only bidders who will attain the minimum technical scores requirement will be considered for Financial Analysis.

Table 4: Financial Criteria

Criteria	Weighting
Cost and Value (20%) Appropriateness and justification of the budget relative to the scope, methodology, and expected	20 marks

Any quoted price above 10% of the budget estimates, will not be considered for financial analysis.

9.4 Determination of the winning bidder

The winning bidder shall be determined based on the combined scores for Technical and Financial scores as per the below formula:

Final Score (FS)= TS x T% + FS x F%,

where T% + F% shall always be equal to 100%.

- *Final Score (FS) is the total combined scores of Technical and Financial scores.*
- *T% is the weighting given to the technical proposal.*
- *F% is the weighting given to the financial proposal*

T% shall be 80% and F% shall be 20% respectively

The bidder with the highest combined scores shall be considered for negotiations on cost and scope of work for the award.
The best bidders as outlined above may further be invited for presentation on their proposals for further decision making.

10.0   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.

11.0   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.

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

13.0   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 bidder or with any competitor.

14.0   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.

Instructions on the Proposal Submission Process

1. Proposal to be sent by email to:
   procurement@scienceforafrica.foundation on or before
   18 September 2025 at 5.00 pm (EAT).
2. Protect your proposal with a password and share the password on 19
   September 2025 by 8.00 am (EAT) .
3. The proposal to be marked as follows on the subject line:

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR
BASELINE ASSESSMENT RFP/023/2025:**