

Invitation for Expression of Interest (IEOI – Individual Consultant

Date: 13 October 2025

Lead Consultant for the Sahel Regional Program

1. The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) has approved an administrative budget for financing consulting services (the Services) for the above project. The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Services is in Appendix A. The Services will be provided by consulting firm. IsDB will select and engage the Consultant in accordance with the IsDB Corporate Procurement Policy (Policy).
2. IsDB now invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from potential individual applicants for consideration by IsDB in determining a shortlist of candidates to be invited to submit proposals. Depending on the number of the EOIs received and the qualifications of the applicants, IsDB may or may not short list all potentials who have submitted EOIs.
3. Applicants who wish to submit an EOI should complete the EOI Form in Appendix B and submit it through IsDB's online IEOI facility or by email, fax or courier to the following authorized representative of IsDB:

Consultant Selection Panel
Islamic Development Bank
Email: Designated email address

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

Appendix B: EOI Form

Annex A

October 2025

I. Background

The Sahel region represents a vast geographic belt that extends along the southern periphery of the Sahara Desert, encompassing ten Member Countries (MCs) of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB): Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and The Gambia. With a population exceeding 300 million, the region is endowed with substantial natural and human resources, as well as significant potential for development. Nonetheless, it is confronted with a series of complex and interrelated challenges, including conflict, inadequate infrastructure, climate vulnerability, and insufficient levels of regional economic integration.

Despite the presence of shared cultural and economic ties, regional integration in the Sahel has historically encountered impediments attributed to weak institutional frameworks, limited cross-border infrastructure, regulatory fragmentation, and underdeveloped trade corridors. These constraints hinder collective development efforts, deter investment, and limit the capacity of Sahelian nations to effectively utilize economies of scale.

The IsDB, a multilateral development institution founded in 1975, is committed to fostering economic development and social progress within its 57 Member Countries, adhering to the principles of Islamic finance. The Bank has consistently supported developmental initiatives in the Sahel through investments in infrastructure, education, health, and capacity development activities.

In collaboration with the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel (OSCDS) and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), the IsDB has initiated preparations for a regional program aimed at addressing both the "hard" (infrastructure and finance) and "soft" (policy and institutional capacity) dimensions of regional integration in the Sahel. The proposed Sahel Regional Program is envisioned as a transformative platform to unlock cross-border opportunities, catalyze resource mobilization, and drive inclusive, sustainable development across the region.

The program's objectives center on enhancing cross-border connectivity, institutional capacity, investment climate, and regional collaboration. A mapping study and regional consultation workshop convened in Dakar in June 2024 facilitated the identification of a comprehensive list of priority projects, which now require further refinement, costing, and operationalization.

To support this subsequent phase, the IsDB seeks to hire a Lead Consultant to coordinate a team of experts and ensure the timely and high-quality achievement of the proposed program's design and preparation milestones.

II. Objectives

The objective of this assignment is to lead the design and preparation of the proposed Sahel Regional Program by coordinating technical inputs, facilitating stakeholder engagement, overseeing the project concept note, and producing key program documentation.

The Lead Consultant will work under the supervision of the IsDB Cooperation and Capacity Development (CCD) Department. A dedicated task team, led by the CCD Department Regional Integration Section, will include representatives from the Economic and Social Infrastructure Department and relevant Regional Hubs of the IsDB. All activities will be undertaken in close coordination OSCDS and BADEA.

It is worth noting that another key development partner will be the Multilateral Cooperation Center for Development Finance (MCDF), which supports the proposed Sahel Regional Program by providing grants aimed at strengthening institutional capacity and facilitating cross-border coordination in the Sahel region.

Meanwhile, the IsDB, through its sector and thematic experts based at headquarters and Regional Hubs, will contribute specialized knowledge and technical expertise to ensure the program is aligned with regional priorities and global best practices. This collaborative approach is expected to enhance the program's effectiveness, sustainability, and impact across the Sahel.

III. Scope of Work

The Lead Consultant shall undertake the following responsibilities:

Strategic Coordination

- Act as the principal coordinator for the formulation process of the proposed Sahel Regional Program.
- Manage a multidisciplinary consultant team of 6-7 sector experts, ensuring quality and consistency across all deliverables.
- Draft the Terms of Reference for additional consultants (sector experts) to ensure the alignment and quality of all technical contributions to the program.

Program Design & Documentation

- Refine and finalize the comprehensive regional program strategy and results framework in coordination with the team of technical experts.
- Oversee the development of 5-10 costed pilot project concept notes, aligned with regional priorities and stakeholder input.
- Coordinate with a team of technical experts across various domains to draft the Sahel Regional Program Document, including the implementation roadmap and performance monitoring indicators.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Lead the organization of two workshops in close coordination with partners, ensuring effective planning, facilitation, and alignment with program objectives.
- Organize and facilitate consultations at both national and regional levels with governments, United Nations agencies, regional bodies, and development partners.
- Coordinate with country focal points and experts to validate and refine project concepts and ensure compliance with national strategies.

Technical Oversight

- Guide the preparation of training and capacity development materials.
- Ensure consistency with pertinent regional strategies
- Incorporate cross-cutting themes such as Islamic finance, women and youth empowerment, inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

IV. Deliverables of the Consultancy

Below are the five deliverables of the assignment:

- Deliverable 1: Inception Report and Work Plan
 - An inception report explaining how the Lead Consultant will carry out the work.
 - The report shall include a timeline, team roles, and how coordination will happen with partners.
- Deliverable 2: Sahel Regional Program Document
 - A full program document with:
 - Strategy and goals.
 - 5-10 detailed pilot project ideas, mostly focused on cross-border infrastructure.
 - A roadmap for implementation.

- Deliverable 3: Training and Knowledge Materials on Regional Program Design and Implementation
 - Easy-to-use training materials (online and offline) for government and partner officials.
 - The materials shall include guides and examples from the pilot projects.
- Deliverable 4: Final Package and Reports
 - A complete set of documents including:
 - Final program and pilot projects documents.
 - Communication and resource mobilization strategy.
 - Reports from workshops and missions.
 - A final summary report with lessons learned and recommendations.

The assignment will be carried out over a total period of 18 months. As an indication, the assignment will require a total of 140 person days.

The further breakdown of the 140-person day work along with a detailed task list shall be included in the Lead Consultant's technical offer.

V. Reporting and Administrative Arrangements

The Lead Consultant will report directly to the IsDB Task Team and will coordinate closely with the OSCDS, BADEA and other key development partners.

The Lead Consultant will be responsible for:

- Providing regular progress updates to the IsDB that will be shared with key partners.
- Supporting the preparation of meeting minutes, workshop reports, and coordination briefings.
- Ensuring timely submission of deliverables and alignment with the agreed implementation roadmap.

The assignment will be conducted primarily from the consultant's country of residence, and is therefore considered an "off-site" engagement. However, specific tasks may require the consultant's physical presence at designated locations. The total number of on-site working days under this contract shall not exceed 132 working days, which is equivalent to approximately six (6) months. The consultant will be required to provide regular updates to the IsDB, including detailed reporting on the time spent on both off-site and on-site activities throughout the duration of the assignment.

All deliverables must be submitted in the English language and in editable Microsoft Word/Excel formats.

Payments will be made in four tranches based on successful completion and approval of each key deliverable:

- Tranche 1: Inception Report and Work Plan: 20% of total fee after approval of the initial plan and timelines.
- Tranche 2 – Sahel Regional Program Document: 30% of total fee after approval of the draft program document, including strategy and pilot project concepts.
- Tranche 3 – Training and Knowledge Materials: 30% of total fee after approval of the training materials.
- Tranche 4 – Final Package and Reports: 20% of total fee after approval of all final documents, including the full program, communication strategy, and final report including 5-10 project concept notes.

VI. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

This is a fixed budget assignment. The IsDB will provide a lump sum of US\$126,000 (one hundred twenty-six thousand U.S. dollars) for the duration of the assignment. Proposals exceeding this budget will not be considered

The Lead Consultant must possess a strong blend of academic qualifications, professional experience, and contextual knowledge. The following qualifications and competencies are required:

- Advanced degree in Development Economics, Public Policy, International Relations, or a closely related field.
- At least 15 years of progressive experience in international development, with a strong track record in designing and implementing regional programs, cross-border collaboration projects, and policy reform initiatives.
- Proven experience working in the Sahel region or comparable fragile and conflict-affected settings or in the African context, with a deep understanding of the political, economic, and institutional dynamics.
- Excellent command of English is required. Proficiency in French is highly desirable; knowledge of Arabic is considered an asset.
- Strong competencies in program design, stakeholder coordination, and regional integration, with demonstrated ability to navigate complex multi-partner environments.
- Exceptional analytical, communication, and organizational skills, with the ability to produce high-quality deliverables under tight timelines.

In accordance with the IsDB's relevant procedures, the technical evaluation of the Lead Consultant's capacity to undertake the assignment will be based on the C.V. and the methodology sheet according to the following criteria:

Criteria and Questions for Technical Evaluation		
Criteria	Questions for each criterion	Weight (Out of 100)
Educational and Professional Background	Experience with Multilateral Development Banks and Regional Cooperation Organizations	20% of total points
	Relevant school degree	
	Language (English) – French and Arabic are considered as additional assets	
Regional Experience	Specific experience in the Sahel region	30% of total points
	Specific experience in fragile and conflict-affected socioeconomic development contexts	
	General experience in designing multi-sectoral programs in developing countries	
Thematic Experience (Regional Integration)	Experience in cross-border connectivity	30% of total points
	Experience in institutional capacity development	
	Experience in market integration (e.g., harmonization of regulatory frameworks)	
Methodology	Conformity with ToR	20% of total points
	Work plan and conception	
	Duration	

The minimum passing score for qualifying the technical criteria is 70%.

The consultant who achieves the highest score in the evaluation will be awarded the contract.

VII. Request for Expression of Interest

Interested and qualified consultants are invited to submit a comprehensive technical proposal in response to this Invitation for Expression of Interest (IEOI). The proposal should demonstrate the consultant's capacity to deliver the assignment as outlined in the scope of work and deliverables.

The proposal must include the following components:

- An up-to-date Curriculum Vitae (C.V.), highlighting relevant experience and qualifications.
- Technical Proposal, including:
 - A detailed approach and methodology for delivering the assignment.
 - A work plan and timeline aligned with the 18-month duration and 140 person-day allocation.
 - A breakdown of tasks and roles, including coordination mechanisms with partners.
- Relevant Experience, including examples of similar assignments, particularly in the Sahel region or comparable contexts.
- Additional Supporting Documents, such as references, certifications, or any material that demonstrates the consultant's suitability for the assignment.

VIII. EOI Submission

Important Consultant Instruction: It is essential for all consultants to adhere to the designated email address provided below for any questions, queries, and proposal submissions. Emails sent to any other address listed below may not be acknowledged or considered as a submission from the consultant.

- Deadline for Clarification Requests: **27 October 2025**
- Deadline for EOI/Proposal Submission: **03 November 2025**
- Contact for Clarification Email: General - Proposal Submission and Clarification - BCC2025-062 Lead Consultant for the Sahel Regional Program
a6bc53cd.isdb.org@emea.teams.ms
- Expression of Interest Submission Email: EOI Submission - Proposal Submission and Clarification - BCC2025-062 Lead Consultant for the Sahel Regional Program
a6bc53cd.isdb.org@emea.teams.ms

Appendix B

Expression of Interest (EOI) by Applicant

[Copy the Name of the Assignment/Project from the IEOI]

Date: _____

Consultant Selection Panel

Islamic Development Bank

Email: Designated email address

I have read carefully your Invitation for Expression of Interest for the captioned assignment/project and find the Terms of References (TOR) and Scope of Work match my skill mix and experiences for providing the services required in the TOR. I would like to express my interest for our firm being considered for the Shortlist. I understand that IsDB does not have an obligation that I must be shortlisted.

I have attached to this EOI supporting documents highlighting the relevant expertise and Experience for your consideration. Some of the key information is highlighted below:

Personal Profile

Nationality:

Date of Birth:

Permanent Address:

Phone No.:

Email:

Past Consultancy Assignment References

[Notes to consultant: Please select most relevant consultancy assignments you have recently completed to demonstrate your technical qualifications and experience.]

Period	Client	Project	Country	Your role (As lead consultant or as member of a team?)	Value of the Contract

III. Availability

I shall be available for the services from _____ to _____.

IV. Eligibility Declaration

I, the undersigned, certify to the best of my knowledge and belief:

☐ I have read terms of reference (TOR) and Scope of Work (Appendix A), for this assignment.

☐ I confirm that the project references submitted as part of this EOI accurately reflect the experience of myself.

☐

I confirm that I have never been convicted of an integrity-related offense or crime related to theft, corruption and fraud.

☐

I understand that any misrepresentations that knowingly or recklessly mislead, or attempt to mislead may lead to the automatic rejection of the proposal or cancellation of the contract, if awarded, and may result in further remedial action, in accordance with IsDB's Integrity and Anti-corruption Policy.

Name of the Applicant:

Signature: