Terms of Reference

International Expert on Testing and laboratories providing services for fishery sector under the framework of the Programme for Improving Fisheries Governance and Blue Economy Trade Corridors in SADC (PROFISHBLUE).

ARSO Central Secretariat
Nairobi, Kenya
April 2024
1. Background

ARSO coordinates continent-wide harmonisation of standards to promote intra-African and global trade and recognises that maintaining standards of quality are important to the businesses and consumers in the region and beyond. As a result, it has established a formal framework – the Standardisation and African Conformity Assessment Programme – to oversee standardisation of policies and procedures for ensuring the quality and safety of trade in the region.

To implement this framework, the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) signed on 30th August 2022 a framework on Harmonization of Fish Value Chain Standards, Quality Assurance, Packaging, SPS and Eco-Certification for Improving Fisheries Governance and Blue Economy Trade Corridors in SADC (PROFISHBLUE).

The objectives of the framework are: (i) Facilitating trade through the harmonisation of standards based on international standards; (ii) Ensuring the protection of consumers through the use of regulations based on international best practices for quality, safety, and conformity assessment and; (iii) Alignment of the region’s approach to ensuring food, animal, and health safety across the region (link to sanitary and phytosanitary measures).

Under this framework, ARSO is to carry out the following:

a) Develop and harmonize marine fish products standards in addition to the freshwater commercial fish species in the SADC region,
b) Develop and implement the conformity assessment framework,
c) Promote eco-labeling certification of products using Eco-Mark Africa label,
d) Leverage equipment support to eco-certification of products institutes (Bureau of Standards); and
e) Training on the domestication of Regional African Standards.

2. Objectives and Scope of the ToR

Within this context and in order to have a complete vision of conformity assessment bodies offering services to the Fishery sector in SADC region as main QI component to facilitate the trade and that would help decision makers in investing for the upgrade of this sector, ARSO is seeking to procure the services of an international expert to do a gap analysis study on the technical potentials and capacities of testing laboratories and their related calibration laboratories.
The main purpose of the assignment is to establish a data base for Conformity assessment Bodies in SADC region, their services and their technical capacities in order to assess the needs for a specific assistance to be complied with the TBT and SPS requirements and propose additional support for technical and capacity building within the framework of this collaboration.

The target of this study should be the analytical laboratories, biochemistry, pesticide and veterinary drug residue labs, microbiology laboratories and radiological monitoring contamination laboratories, when needed. Worth to note that calibration laboratories offering metrological services for the listed categories of laboratories should be as well considered e.g calibration of mass, temperature, volume and pressure units.

The following data on fishery sector service providers shall be collected by the expert:

a. The testing and calibration capabilities of existing laboratories, including the number of labs in each SADC MS, briefing on infrastructure and environmental conditions, analytical/calibration parameters covered (nutrient, contaminant) with reference to the requirements in the related fish standards, available and operational equipment, and the applied analytical / calibration method.

b. The staff competencies in the laboratories including the number of technical staff with their academic level and expertise in the field of fish testing, fish health and quality inspection, the training and continuous improvement policy.

c. The management system implemented if any, including the scope of accreditation of the laboratories, date of first accreditation certificate, and last date of assessment. If the lab is not officially accredited the following information has to be collected as basic:

- Method validation/verification data, including the uncertainty measurement
- Quality Control data for internal and external schemes (PT data)
- Calibration schemes, performance checks and maintenance plan of equipment
- Staff competence evidence
d. Detailed proposal for capacity needs (human and technical) to the laboratories in order for them to offer testing/calibration services meeting mutual recognition requirements.

Based on the collected data, the expert has to prepare a report on the actual status of Fishery service providers labs, their potential, their needs and a proposal for supporting actions to upgrade and leverage the quality of their services.

The expert to be recruited has to have a good knowledge and understanding of the TBT and SPS requirements for fisheries trade, in addition to the SADC (national & regional) standards and regulations which govern the fishery industry, in addition to a very good knowledge and expertise in the ISO 17025:2017 and related food safety details.

The expert will be working under the full supervision of the ARSO Technical Director

3. The selected countries for study
The Gap analysis study is targeting the countries in SADC Member States focusing on laboratories designated by the relevant Authority to perform the testing services.

4. Roles and responsibilities
The expert to be recruited has to work closely with the NSBs from SADC member states and the SADC Fishery Association, who will help in establishing the link with national laboratories.

This assignment will be executed within a period of 2 months as a home-based assignment for 20 working days, during which the expert has to be in direct contact with laboratories to provide guidance and facilitate the collection of information.

The consultant will have the following responsibilities:

1. To develop the methodology for data collection as per the objective of the Gap assessment (see clause 2), including the method of communication with target labs and strategy or data source for selecting the concerned laboratories

2. To present this methodology including the developed questionnaire to the ARSO validation purposes before sharing it with concerned labs

3. To analyse the data collected
4. To prepare and submit the report on the findings
5. To propose for technical and capacity building for the laboratories under the study scope within a defined time frame
6. To present the outcome of the study within an online seminar for the project stakeholders (ARSO, SADC MS concerned institutions, UNIDO)
7. To update/ modify/ add info on the report raised during the online discussion with stakeholders
8. Organize or arrange for the translation of the report into other official SADC languages

The expert will be working under the overall supervision of the ARSO Technical Director.

5. Key overall deliverables:
   1. Validated questionnaire for data collection
   2. Inception report submitted including database collected
   3. Report on the gap assessment
   4. Proposal for technical and human capacity building relevant to fishery sector service providers and mainly to the targeted laboratories

6. Qualifications

The consultants have to fulfill the below requirements, having been registered in the ARSO database of experts could be an added value.

- Advanced university degree in agriculture, biochemistry, microbiology, environmental chemistry, natural sciences, food safety management sciences, food sciences technology, and engineering-related sciences.
- Minimum of 5 years of professional experience working in conformity assessment bodies (testing & calibration labs), standardization, or other related field.
- Experience in conducting surveys and data analysis by using statistical tools. Specific expertise in food safety would be an asset.
- Good computer skills with adequate knowledge of PowerPoint and graphical presentations
- Fluency in English and French and knowledge of Portuguese is an added asset.
7. Dates for the submission of the study report

The final report is to be submitted to ARSO after 2 months from the date of contract signature.

8. Remuneration

The expert remuneration will be done according to ARSO scales with consideration of the level of expertise in the related field.

Interested and qualified consultants should submit their applications latest by 19 April 2024 before 5:00 p.m.

Applications should be addressed to:

Secretary General
African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) Central Secretariat
International House 3rd Floor
P.O. Box 57363-00200 Nairobi-Kenya
Tel. +254-20-2224561, +254-20-311608

Preferably by e-mail to: info@arso-oran.org, arso@arso-oran.org, and arsopit@arso-oran.org