

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF A CUSTOMS ADVISOR on ECOWAS TRANSIT SYSTEM and SIGMAT

BACKGROUND

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional organization comprising 12 West African countries: Benin, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, and Togo. ECOWAS was established in 1975 with the primary aim of promoting economic integration, regional cooperation, and development among its member states. The organization is committed to creating a unified market, facilitating trade, and fostering sustainable economic growth through various initiatives aimed at harmonizing policies, and establishing a common market through the establishment of a customs union, among others.

In accordance with Article 3 of the ECOWAS Revised Treaty, this objective is to be achieved through the liberalization of trade and the establishment of a common external tariff (CET) and a common trade policy.

CONTEXT

To achieve the objectives for the creation of ECOWAS therefore, several integration-related initiatives have been undertaken. These include:

- The ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), which serves as the main mechanism for the free movement of Community goods in the region;
- The Common External Tariff (CET), which establishes uniform tariffs on goods imported from outside the region;
- The ECOWAS Customs Code which seeks to reform and harmonize customs legislation and procedures across member states;
- The ECOWAS Customs cooperation and mutual assistance Supplementary act, etc.

With the establishment and implementation of the ECOWAS CET in 2015, the Community migrated from a Free Trade Area (FTA) to a Customs Union.

ECOWAS Commission therefore seeks an experienced Customs professional with the requisite knowledge and experience to support its efforts at consolidating the ECOWAS Customs union.



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GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The general objective of the assignment is to support the Directorate of Customs Union and Taxation to consolidate the ECOWAS Customs union.

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Specifically, the Consultant will be required to provide support in the key areas listed below as well as other areas of support that might be deemed necessary during the duration of this assignment:

- i. Provide technical support in the implementation of the ECOWAS Community Transit Procedure in member states;
- ii. Support the finalization and adoption of the ECOWAS Transit Manual of Procedures;
- iii. Provide technical support in the establishment and operationalization of the Community transit guarantee mechanism;
- iv. Work towards the effective implementation of the ECOWAS Customs Code in Member States.
- v. Assist the Commission in the development and implementation of trade facilitation measures to facilitate the free movement of goods in the region.
- vi. Support the development of policies to ensure more favorable conditions for economic operators in line with the trade facilitation agenda of ECOWAS;
- vii. Support the Directorate of Customs union & Taxation in the preparation of relevant technical reports and presentations to enhance its programme delivery capacity on transit.

DURATION

The Consultant will be contracted for an initial period of twelve (12) months, renewable based on performance and the availability of funds.

REPORTING & DUTY STATION

- The Consultant will be based at the Directorate of Customs Union & Taxation, ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, Nigeria with travels outside the duty station as and when required by the assignment and approved in accordance with ECOWAS rules and regulations.
- The Consultant shall work under the terms and conditions as provided for by ECOWAS Commission and will provide monthly report on executed activities and work plan for each upcoming month



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- The Consultant will report to the Director on Customs Union & Taxation through the Head of Division, Tariff and Customs Procedures.

QUALIFICATIONS, KEY SKILLS, AND COMPETENCES

a. Academic / Professional Qualifications

The Consultant must meet the following requirements:

- An advanced degree (at least a master's degree) from a recognized university in International Trade, Commerce, Economics, Business Administration, Finance, Public Policy, International Customs Law and Administration with equivalent experience in areas of Customs/International trade.
- At least ten (10) years' experience in Customs administration, international trade and trade facilitation.
- At least eight (8) years' experience and demonstrable knowledge in the management of Customs unions in West Africa.
- Extensive knowledge and experience of not less than ten (10) years of ECOWAS Customs instruments: CET, ETLS, SIGMAT.
- Extensive knowledge of the new ECOWAS Community Transit Procedure
- At least ten (10) years' working experience at Supervisory or Managerial/ Senior level in Customs and Trade Facilitation related issues.
- Experience working with regional economic communities, with a proven track record of working at the ECOWAS Commission.
- A good understanding of trade facilitation and customs context under regional integration in West Africa.
- Significant work experience with cross border agencies and at least ten (10) years' work experience in an international multicultural environment.
- Good understanding of the multilateral trading systems and their implication on regional integration.
- Must possess excellent skills with computers, especially in the use of various MS Office applications (e.g., Excel, Word, PowerPoint, etc.).

b. Key Competencies of Individual Consultant

In addition to the above academic and professional qualifications, the individual consultant must have the following key competencies:



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- i. Fluency in either English, French or Portuguese with a very good working knowledge of at least one other.
- ii. Good listening and communication skills.
- iii. Ability to work in a team under minimum supervision.
- iv. Ability to work with people of diverse cultural, education, socio-economic, and
- v. linguistic/ethnic backgrounds.
- vi. Ability to multi-task and must be a quick learner who focuses on high productivity and results.