

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

RECRUITMENT OF A FIRM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOWAS
EDUCATION POLICY AND ACTION PLAN.

I. CONTEXT

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) strongly prioritizes education, which is essential for human, social, economic, and technological development and for West Africa's regional integration, among others. However, the region faces persistent challenges despite efforts to improve access and quality education, including a lack of harmonized qualifications in all aspects of education and inadequate alignment with labor market needs. As a result, the issue of unemployment continues to affect the young population of the region, which is the youth.

In view of this, the ECOWAS Education Sector has a mandate to ensure the development of human capital and the socio-economic empowerment of ECOWAS citizens through the promotion and coordination of policies, programmes and activities relating to education and training in all its ramifications. The education sector, which falls under the Directorate of Education, Science and Culture of the Department of Human Development and Social Affairs, plays a crucial role in defining the educational landscape of West Africa. Through its various activities and programmes, the sector seeks to create a coherent and dynamic education and training system that promotes regional integration, economic growth, and social development.

As a result, ECOWAS has developed a strategic initiative to ensure a unified education system that transcends borders- Harmonisation of Education Systems in the member states, which is to ensure access to quality education and training through the harmonization of education policies and programmes with a view to strengthening human capital and promoting student and labour mobility in West Africa. The following are the sector's areas of policy intervention as far as this initiative is concerned:

- Basic Education;
- Secondary Education;
- Gender and inclusive Education;
- Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) / Entrepreneurship;
- Teacher Development;
- Education Management Information Systems (EMIS);
- Higher education;
- Quality in all its ramifications;
- Accreditation;
- Early childhood development;
- Equivalence of diplomas, certificates, and other qualifications.
- Family and Community Education

As part of the implementation process, the expertise of an education firm specialised in education, human, and capital development is required; hence, these terms of reference are to consult a firm for the successful implementation of the program. It outlines the expectations, roles, and responsibilities of the firm, among others. The purpose of consulting and engaging with the firm is to acquire the required expertise for the successful harmonisation of education policies in the region.

This consultancy seeks to address these challenges by providing expert guidance on harmonizing education policies, ensuring quality assurance, and reforming curricula to meet labor market demands. The consultancy will also support the implementation of regional strategies to enhance mutual recognition of qualifications and improve governance within the education sector.

II. OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen education systems across ECOWAS member states;
- Harmonize policy for the mutual recognition of qualifications, certificates, and diplomas in the region;
- Promote quality assurance and set minimum standards for education and training;
- Support curricula reforms to align education outcomes with labor market demands;
- Enhance education governance and institutional capacity for sustainable development.

III. JUSTIFICATION

The various documents justifying this project are presented as follows:

- Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025);
- ECOWAS Protocol on Education and Training ;
- Ecowas Benchmarks and the Framework for the Recognition and Equivalence of Certificates;
- ECOWAS Vision 2050;
- Recommendations of ECOWAS ministerial conferences on education and training.

IV. MISSIONS OF THE FIRM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STUDY

The firm is responsible for the following:

1. Needs Assessment:

- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of education systems, training programs, and governance structures in ECOWAS member states;
- Identify gaps and challenges related to curriculum in all its ramifications, certification, accreditation, and quality assurance.

2. Stakeholder Engagement:

- Organize consultations with key stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, regulatory agencies, and industry representatives;
- Facilitate regional workshops to validate findings and recommendations.

3. Framework Development:

- Design a harmonized framework for education and training, including standardized admission criteria, curriculum content, and certification processes;
- Develop quality assurance benchmarks and monitoring mechanisms.
- Develop a harmonized framework on family and community Education.

4. Policy Recommendations:

- Provide actionable recommendations to address identified gaps and challenges;
- Draft policies to support the recognition of qualifications and establish regional standards;
- Define a monitoring, evaluation, and financing framework.

5. Capacity Building:

- Propose strategies for strengthening the capacity of national and regional education institutions;
- Develop training materials and resources to support implementation.

V. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of the mission assigned to it, the firm will need to provide consultants who will work as a team with focal points for basic education, secondary education, higher education, gender, technical education, teacher capacity building and quality assurance.

The consultants will report to the ECOWAS Director of Education, Science and Culture. They will work on ECOWAS education system policies.

To this end, the consultants will:

1. Work closely with the focal points and the Directorate of Education, Science and Culture;
2. Present a working methodology for improving ECOWAS education system policies.

- **Month 1:** Inception phase and Consultations: Conduct broad stakeholder consultations (Ministries of Education, Accreditation Bodies, Private Education Sector, among others);
- **Month 2-3:** Needs assessment and data collection;
- **Month 4:** Draft framework development and validation workshops;
- **Month 5:** Policy recommendations and capacity-building proposals;
- **Month 6:** Submission of final report in the three languages (**English, French and Portuguese**) and presentation to ECOWAS stakeholders.

VI. MISSIONS OF THE FIRM

The firm's mission, in collaboration with the focal points, is to:

1. Needs Assessment:

- Conduct an in-depth analysis of education systems including family and community education, training programmes and governance structures within ECOWAS Member States;
- Identify gaps and challenges related to curricula, certification and quality assurance.

2. Stakeholder Engagement:

- Organize consultations with key stakeholders, including policy makers, educators, regulatory bodies and industry representatives;
- Facilitate regional workshops to validate the findings and recommendations.

3. Framework Development:

- Develop a harmonized framework for education and training, incorporating standardized admission criteria, educational content and certification processes;
- Design quality assurance benchmarks and effective monitoring mechanisms.

4. Policy Recommendations:

- Provide concrete recommendations to address identified gaps and challenges;
- Draft policies to support the recognition of qualifications and establish regional standards.

5. Capacity Building:

- Propose strategies to increase the capacity of educational institutions, both national and regional;
- Develop training materials and resources to support the implementation of initiatives.

VII. EXPECTED RESULTS

- Inception report outlining the consultancy's approach, methodology, and work plan;
- Comprehensive needs assessment report;
- Draft harmonized framework for education and training;
- Quality assurance benchmarks and certification processes;
- Final consultancy report with detailed recommendations and an implementation roadmap;
- A Regional Education Policy document in (French, English and portugese) validated by stakeholders.

VIII. RECRUITMENT AND REMUNERATION

1. DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The timeline for the assignment is six (6) months.

2. REMUNERATION MODE

The firm's remuneration will take the form below:

INSTALMENT PAYMENT	EXPECTED RESULTS	AMOUNT PAID TO THE CONSULTANT
1st	<i>Validation of the methodology to carry out the study</i>	30% of the budget
2nd	<i>Submission of a final report of the study translated into the official ECOWAS languages.</i>	30% of the budget
3rd	<i>Submission of a final document on ECOWAS Education Policy.</i>	40% of the budget

IX. PROFILE AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE FIRM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STUDY (50 POINTS)

1. Profile and main qualifications are as follows:

a. Specific Experience of the firm (20 points).

The firm responsible for the study must have the following required qualifications and experiences:

- Shall be a legal institution with expertise of more than 15 years in the field of strategic development in education, public education policy, and human capital development;
- Shall demonstrate of having successfully executed at least three (03) similar studies in the required field (design in Education policy) within the last fifteen (15) years at a national, ECOWAS regional or International level.

NB: The projects are taken into account only when evidences are provided and can be checked as follows:

- **First page of the contract ;**
 - **Signature page of the Contract (date of signature shall be visible).**
- OR
- **The Certificate of Completion issued by the client for the said contract.**

b. Adequacy of the proposed methodology and work plan in responding to the Terms of Reference: (30 points)

CRITERION	MARKS
Technical Approach and methodology	20
Work plan	5
Organization and staffing (with defined activity per staff)	5
Total points for criterion (ii)	30

Notes to Consultant Firm:

The Consultant firm must ensure that the proposed methodology is clear and consistent with the ToR, the work plan is realistic and achievable, the overall composition of the team is balanced, and time allocated to each expert is adequate.

X. KEY PROFESSIONAL STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCE FOR THE ASSIGNMENT (50 POINTS)

The successful completion of this assignment requires the mobilization of a team composed of at least:

1. A Team Leader specialized in Education Sciences (07 points)

- Holder of a Master's degree in Education Sciences or equivalent. A PhD would be an advantage;
- At least 15 years of professional experience in the field of Education and Training, including experience in developing educational policies;
- Proven participation as Team Leader in at least two (2) similar assignments, with at least one conducted in the region or in another region of Africa;
- Bilingual with strong command of English or French. Knowledge of Portuguese would be an asset;
- Proficiency in modern information and communication technologies;
- Additional skills in team management and in mobilizing human and financial resources.

2. A Specialist in Basic Education (05 points)

- Holder of at least a Master's degree in Education Sciences, specialized in Basic Education. A PhD would be an advantage;
- At least ten (10) years of professional experience in the design of educational programs specific to Basic Education;
- Proven participation in the implementation of a similar project at national and regional levels;
- Proficiency in at least one official ECOWAS language and ability to work in a second official language of the region;
- Proficiency in computer skills.

3. A Specialist in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (05 points)

- Holder of at least a Master's degree in Education Sciences, specialized in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). A PhD would be an advantage;
- At least ten (10) years of professional experience in the design of educational programs specific to TVET;
- Proven participation in the implementation of a similar project at national and regional levels;
- Proficiency in at least one official ECOWAS language and ability to work in a second official language of the region;
- Proficiency in computer skills.

4. A Specialist in Higher Education (05 points)

- Holder of at least a Master's degree in Education Sciences, specialized in Higher Education. A PhD would be an advantage;
- At least ten (10) years of professional experience in the design of educational programs specific to Higher Education;
- Proven participation in the implementation of a similar project at national and regional levels;
- Proficiency in at least one official ECOWAS language and ability to work in a second official language of the region;
- Proficiency in computer skills.

5. A Specialist in Secondary Education (05 points)

- Holder of at least a Master's degree in Education Sciences, specialized in Secondary Education. A PhD would be an advantage;
- At least ten (10) years of professional experience in the design of programs in this field;
- Proven participation in the implementation of a similar project at national and regional levels;
- Proficiency in at least one official ECOWAS language and ability to work in a second official language of the region;
- Proficiency in computer skills.

6. A Specialist in Gender Education (05 points)

- Holder of at least a Master's degree in Education Sciences, specialized in Gender Education. A PhD would be an advantage;
- At least ten (10) years of professional experience in the field of Gender Education;
- Proven participation in the implementation of a similar project at national and regional levels;
- Proficiency in at least one official ECOWAS language and ability to work in a second official language of the region;
- Proficiency in computer skills.

7. An Expert in Accreditation, Quality and Assurance (05 points)

- Holder of at least a Master's degree or equivalent, specialized in Accreditation, Quality and Assurance. A PhD would be an advantage;
- At least ten (10) years of professional experience in the design of programs in this field;
- Proven participation in the implementation of a similar project at national and regional levels;
- Proficiency in at least one official ECOWAS language and ability to work in a second official language of the region;
- Proficiency in computer skills.

8. An Expert in E-Learning (05 points)

- Holder of at least a Master's degree in Education Sciences, specialized in E-learning. A PhD would be an advantage;
- At least ten (10) years of professional experience in the field of E-Learning;
- Proven participation in the implementation of a similar project at national and regional levels;
- Proficiency in at least one official ECOWAS language and ability to work in a second official language of the region;
- Proficiency in computer skills.

9. An Expert in family and community education (04 points)

- Holder of at least a Master's degree in Education Sciences, specialized in family or community education. A PhD would be an advantage;
- At least ten (10) years of professional experience in the field of family or community education;
- Proven participation in the implementation of a similar project at national and regional levels;
- Proficiency in at least one official ECOWAS language and ability to work in a second official language of the region;
- Proficiency in computer skills.

10. An Expert in Artificial intelligent apply to Education (04 points)

- Holder of at least a Master's degree in Education Sciences, specialized in Artificial intelligent. A PhD would be an advantage;
- At least ten (10) years of professional experience in the field of Artificial intelligent;
- Proven participation in the implementation of a similar project at national and regional levels;
- Proficiency in at least one official ECOWAS language and ability to work in a second official language of the region;
- Proficiency in computer skills.

XI. SUPERVISION OF THE FIRM ACTIVITIES AND SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

- The ECOWAS Commission, through its Directorate of Education, Science and Culture (Project Coordinator) and the Internal Project Monitoring Committee set up by the ECOWAS Commission are responsible for the supervision of the conducting of the firm activities. The day-to-day management of the project will be done by the Education and Training Division of the Education Science and Culture Directorate;

- Any dispute that may arise during the execution of this project must be settled amicably.