Terms of Reference

Capacity Building Directorate

Assignment Reference:
Sida-WCO Trade Facilitation and Customs Modernization Programme

Call for Proposals:
Development of a Customs and Trade Connectivity Solution for Eswatini Revenue Service

Deadline for application: 7th September 2022
To submit by email to: program.Sida-WCOTFCM@wcoomd.org
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1. **BACKGROUND**

   **i. Beneficiaries**
   The Eswatini Revenue Service (ERS) is seeking to establish an IT connectivity solution that would assure the integrity of Customs Declaration data on import and export of goods, and further streamline the declaration and clearance process for Importing and Exporting Traders’ at the borders.

   **ii. Contracting Authority**
   The World Customs Organization (WCO), through the Sida WCO Trade Facilitation and Customs Modernisation Programme for Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa (Sida-WCO TFCM Programme) will provide programme support, with funding by the Government of Sweden.

   **iii. Background**
   Eswatini has made significant achievement to establish automatic exchange of Customs data with some Southern African Customs Union (SACU) countries, including South Africa. This is an outcome from the previous Sweden and WCO partnership programme for the “SACU Connect Project 2014-2018”, that delivered the SACU IT Connectivity framework for uniform and harmonized regional implementation of Customs systems interconnectivity and exchange of Customs data, based on WCO standards for a Globally Networked Customs (GNC).

   The regional framework has defined how export declaration data could be exchanged between the SACU Member States, and what data elements can be exchanged, supported by a legal framework adopted by the Member States. Thus, the implementation of a successful Customs-to-Customs (C2C) Declaration data exchange between the Eswatini Revenue Service (ERS) and South African Revenue Service (SARS) during 2017/2018, also termed “Customs Connect”, using the applications of the WCO Data Model (DM), and the Unique Consignment Reference (UCR) number, has enabled export declaration data to be linked with the import declarations between the two trading nations, to support Customs risk analysis and decision-making.

   **iv. Overall Concept – Trader Connect**
   It was always envisaged that once the Customs Connect project had been successfully implemented from an IT perspective, further enhancement could be done by widening the overall scope to include a Customs-to-Trade Declaration Data Exchange, termed as “Trader Connect” to leverage traders in the functionality of the C2C Declaration Data Exchange. Private sector traders; Importers and Exporters in that regard, play an important role in the quality of Customs data that is exchanged and would be in a position to submit more accurate Customs declarations that enable Customs to deliver additional trade facilitation benefits.

   In principle, Trader Connect should enable a trader (Importer) to access and utilize the same Export Customs Declaration data/information submitted by an Exporter, and pre-populate it as Import Declarations to Customs. In other words, the ERS needs a Trader Connect solution that will enable the Eswatini trader (Importer) to access South African Export Customs Declarations to Eswatini, and be utilized by the Eswatini importer to pre-populate the corresponding Import Customs Declaration in Eswatini, and vice versa.

   The expected benefits of the Trader Connect solution include:
   - reduced time for submission of import Customs declaration;
   - improved accuracy of the Customs declaration data by eliminating manual errors;
- improved percentage matching between export and import Customs declarations data as a result of compliance with UCR number; and
- reduction in the declaration costs, which serves as non-tariff barrier to trade, and hindrance especially to the trading activities of micro medium and small enterprises.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

i. Overall objective

The overall objective of this assignment is to develop and implement a Trader Connect IT software that integrates the traders’ system with the Customs Connect software (already operational in ERS) to enable automatic use of traders data in the C2C data exchange functionality.

ii. Specific objective

The specific objectives of this assignment are to ensure:

i. technical development and testing of Trader Connect solution that is integrated with the C2C declaration data exchange functionality;
ii. sensitization and capacity building of ERS staff and traders on the administration and use of both Customs Connect and Trader Connect solutions;
iii. pilot the implementation and roll-out of Trader Connect solution;
iv. change Management and launch of Trader Connect project; and
v. ERS operational alignment and close out report.

iii. Outputs

Web-based Trader Connect solution integrated with the Customs Connect and Customs Management System, enabling pre-population of import declarations from export declaration data.

All outputs will be delivered in English language.

iv. Requested services

The selected contractor will work with an established ERS Project Team and the WCO Secretariat to deliver the required services. In that regard, the Contractor will report to a Joint ERS-WCO Steering Team for the Trader Connect Solution project.

The Contractor will be responsible for:

(a) developing a Trader Connect software adaptable to the WCO Globally Networked Customs framework implemented by ERS;

(b) delivering the technical implementation, integration and testing of the Trader Connect software with the Customs Connect, Customs Management System, and Microsoft Biztalk;

(c) building the capacity of ERS officers and the traders, on the functionalities of the Trader Connect solution, analytical dashboards and reporting, as well as, on maintenance of the solution;

(d) Developing re-usable training manuals and systems support guidelines to sustain the system beyond the project phase;
(e) Piloting the Trader Connect solution ensuring the involvement of relevant stakeholders; including monitoring and stabilization of the pilot to ensure the functionality performs according to expectation; and

(f) Supporting the change management and execution plan for the Trader Connect utilization and promotion.

3. PROFILE, EVALUATION AND SELECTION

The WCO is seeking services of a competent and suitably qualified contractor to deliver the above services. The applicant should have the requisite expertise and must demonstrate the professional experience to undertake responsibility to deliver the Eswatini Trader Connect solution as prescribed above, working in cooperation with the ERS Management and relevant stakeholders, and the WCO to deliver the requested outputs.

i. Professional Profile

Profile and skills

- Expertise in the application and roll-out of the WCO data model and UCR functionality in a Customs data exchange project;
- Portfolio of having successfully delivered IT projects for statistical analysis, databases and information management (knowledge of functional Customs-to-Customs connectivity tools and database management tools will be a strong asset);
- Familiarity with projects related to the ERS Customs data exchange, and trader systems connectivity with other Customs administrations; and
- Familiarity with cross-border Customs data exchange between two or more countries;

The relevant professional experience below will be of advantage:

- Working experience in providing operational support to ERS ICT landscape, especially on Customs data exchange;
- Any other collaborative relationship with the ERS and/or Eswatini Traders;
- Successful completion of Customs connectivity assignment between any two SACU Customs administrations;
- Proven track record of successfully designing and delivering web-based databases and tools;
- Successful delivery of an assignment for the WCO, or other international organizations and academia; and
- Practical knowledge of the trading environment between Eswatini and neighboring countries.

ii. Evaluation and selection

Selection will be made based on evaluation of the proposal submitted by the applicant to the WCO, on how to deliver this assignment. In no particular format, the proposal may include:

- Business profile showing capacity of expertise and demonstrated experience;
- Appropriate definition of scope of work regarding the technical development of Solution prescribed, integration and the implementation;
- Adequate project management and proposed milestones; and
- Proposed Cost of engagement, including payment schedule.

4. LOCATION AND DURATION

Part of the assignment is expected to be undertaken in-country, at Eswatini, by the contractor in collaboration with the ERS and other stakeholders, as well as working remotely.
The assignment is expected to commence on 1 October 2022 and end on 31 December 2022.

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS IS, 7TH September 2022.**

Please, use the assignment reference: “Sida-WCO TFCM Programme: Eswatini Trader Connect” and submit your proposal by Email to: program.Sida-WCOTFCM@wcoomd.org