AFRICAN ECONOMIC RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

For Consultancy to Conduct Tracer Study of Graduates of the AERC’s Collaborative Training Programme

AERC/PROC/RFP/TMA/9702/2021-2022/015

A. Background

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), established in 1988, is a public not-for-profit organization devoted to the advancement of research and graduate training in economics to inform economic policies in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The mission of the AERC is to strengthen local capacity for conducting independent, rigorous inquiry into problems pertinent to the management of African economies. The AERC pursues its mission through a synergetic programme combining research with postgraduate training in economics and supported by an interactive communications and policy outreach, within a vast network of researchers, universities and policymakers across Africa and the globe.

The AERC Training Programme is designed to augment the pool of economic researchers in sub-Saharan Africa by supporting postgraduate studies in Economics and Agricultural Economics, and by enhancing the capacities of departments of Economics and departments of Agricultural Economics/Agribusiness in local public universities. AERC runs collaborative programme in both master’s and doctoral level studies comprising the Collaborative Masters Programme in Economics (CMAP) bringing together 25 public universities in 22 countries across sub-Saharan Africa, the Collaborative Masters in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE) comprising 17 public universities in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, and the Collaborative PhD Programme in Economics (CPP) comprising 8 public universities in sub-Saharan Africa covering both the Anglophone and Francophone countries. To date, AERC has produced over 4,000 masters and 400 PhD alumni.

The AERC seeks a consultant to undertake a tracer study of the CMAP, CMAAE and CPP alumni. The overall purpose of the tracer study is to provide a gendered perspective of an independent, systematic and objective assessment of the whereabouts and overall performance of the alumni in the labour market.

B. Specific Terms of References for the Consultant

The specific Terms of Reference for the consultant are to:

(a) Conduct a survey, with gender disaggregated data, to determine the current placement, professional development, job progression or upward mobility of CMAP, CMAAE and CPP alumni following their graduation, and their level of participation in policy relevant research in the continent as well as contribution to networking externalities. AERC requires an analysis detailing gender parity, or otherwise, in graduation rates, job placements, and professional development.
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(b) Gather information on former and current employment of the alumni across various sectors, their functions and level of responsibility.

c) Obtain views of the alumni on the adequacy of the graduate training acquired on their performance in the job market.

d) Determine alumni assessment of the curriculum of the graduate training, quality of teaching, learning infrastructure both at their degree awarding universities and the Joint/Shared Facilities for Electives and supervision of theses.

e) Conduct interviews with employers to assess their perception about the relative performance of the AERC graduates in comparison with similar graduates from other programmes. In addition, assess how many employers out of the total interviewed report that they are satisfied with the job performance of AERC graduates.

(f) Conduct interview with CMAP, CMAAE and CPP participating universities to assess quality of teaching, infrastructure and supervision of theses.

(g) Obtain feedback from the alumni, employers, participating universities and other stakeholders on the “success stories”, challenges as well as lessons learnt that could inform future improvement of the programme so as to continue meeting the development challenges in sub-Saharan Africa.

C. Scope of the Assignment

The tracer study of the CMAP, CMAAE and CPP alumni will cover all graduates since the inception of the programmes to date. The CMAP, CMAAE and CPP begun in 1993, 2005 and 2002, respectively. It is also intended to capture the views and perspectives of participating universities and current employers of the alumni across various sectors, and extract “success stories” and results from the programme.

D. Methodology and Process

The tracer study should be conducted as an in-depth reflection of AERC training programme performance progress and future priority actions. Consultations with AERC regarding any methodological and logistic issues can be made to properly conduct the tracer study under the framework and resources offered and basic principle of an independent review.

It is recommended that the tracer study adopts a methodology that fully involves all relevant stakeholders, promote ownership and buy-in of the process and the final product as well as ensure that findings, lessons and recommendations truly reflect the outcomes/results of the intervention and provide a reliable basis for making informed decisions. Therefore, the study will involve conducting interviews with a broad spectrum of all stakeholders (CMAP, CMAAE and CPP alumni, employers of the alumni across various sectors, heads of department of the participating universities, and AERC Secretariat). The consultant is expected to make a presentation on the detailed methodology to be adopted for the Tracer Study. She/he is expected to submit the draft Tracer Study report to AERC for comments. The final report is expected to be published and disseminated to all stakeholders.

E. Deliverables and Timeframe

The tracer study is expected to be undertaken in a period not exceeding four (4) months. The following deliverables will be expected from the Consultant:

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Inception Report: An inception report outlining the interpretation of the terms of reference, proposing a detailed assessment methodology and process that will guide the tracer study, including a detailed work plan is to be submitted within 7 days after contract signing.

Draft Tracer Study Report: The consultant will submit a draft tracer study report for review by AERC within three (3) months after commencement of assignment.

Draft Final Tracer Study Report: Within one (1) month after receiving AERC’s comments on the draft report, the Consultant will submit a comprehensive final tracer study report of findings on each of the specified points of study, outlining the methodology used, the key findings and specific recommendations (if any) on each of the questions of inquiry specified in the terms of reference of the study. Three hard copies and a soft copy are to be submitted to AERC.

F. Implementation and Reporting
The Review Team will comprise a Consultant (recruited by AERC), who will work closely with AERC’s Training Department. The Consultant will be responsible for the delivery, content, technical quality and accuracy of the evaluation, as well as the recommendations. AERC will provide all the logistical support required for the facilitation of the review exercise.

G. Expected Competencies of the Consultant
To implement this assignment, a consultant with the following qualifications, experience and competencies will be required:

Essential
a) Ph.D. in Economics or any other related areas;

b) Solid academic profile in development of policy analysis and management, with solid experience in academic training at the postgraduate and over Six (6) years’ experience in undertaking evaluation for development initiatives, particularly tertiary education programmes;

c) Experience with university systems in Africa; and

d) Demonstrated ability to assess complex projects/programmes and draw lessons and forward-looking conclusions and recommendations.

Desirable
a) Experience with AERC and related International Organizations.

b) Proven record of delivering professional results.

Application Procedure
Applications should be sent to the address below by 15 January 2022 at 1200 hrs (EAT) and must be clearly referenced as “Consultancy to Conduct Tracer Study of Graduates of the AERC’s Collaborative Training Programme”.

The Executive Director
African Economic Research Consortium (AERC)