



AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

TERMS OF REFERENCE

THE APPOINTMENT OF A QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED SERVICE PROVIDER FOR SCIENTIFIC WRITING, EDITING, AND DESIGN OF e-LEARNING MANUALS/MODULES FOR THE ARC TRAINING PROGRAMME ON CSA AND NRM.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) is leading a project that aims to develop an e-learning programme on Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) and climate-resilient Natural Resource Management (NRM). The project aims at building the capacity of extension practitioners, farmers, as well as students pursuing agriculture and agriculture related programmes in the SADC region to respond to the impact of climate change and sustainability to continue production while preserving natural resources, biodiversity, and life-supporting ecosystems.

Researchers and educators of agriculture and natural resources management from South Africa, Zambia, and Eswatini collaborated to develop online training modules on various aspects of Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) and Natural Resources Management (NRM). The e-learning programme consists of five modules, and each module weighs 12 credits. Each module is designed to provide learners with a substantial learning experience and a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter covered. It encompasses a range of learning activities, including reading materials, watching instructional videos, interacting with multimedia content, engaging in online discussions or group projects, and completing various forms of assessments. The online delivery format should allow learners to access course materials and participate in learning activities at their convenience, provided they meet any specified deadlines or participation requirements.

Five training modules dealing with CSA and NRM have already been developed, and they need to be edited and designed to be e-learning manuals. Hence, the call for a scientific editor to edit and prepare the modules to be e-learning manuals, as per the specifications below.

2. PURPOSE OF THE BID

The purpose of this bid is to appoint a qualified and experienced scientific writer, editor, and instructional designer with proven experience in agricultural and natural resources management. Subjects to develop e-learning modules and manuals; aligned with stakeholder corporate branding.

3. SCOPE OF WORK FOR SCIENTIFIC EDITING

3.1. Edit, improve, and compile an e-learning manual on CSA and NRM for Extension practitioners and agricultural



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students in the SADC region for readability and consistency. The manual is to be then reformatted into an eBook (see Section 4).

3.2. As a point of departure, five training modules dealing with CSA and NRM will be provided. The already compiled individual modules will be provided as MS Word documents. These training modules contain text, tables, figures, and visuals. Ensure the scientific rigour of the content of the e-Learning modules.

These modules need to be used to prepare one comprehensive and consolidated e-learning manual. The respective modules focus on:

- a. Foundation for CSA and climate-sensitive NRM
- b. Climate-smart crop production
- c. Climate-smart livestock production
- d. Climate-sensitive Water Resource Management
- e. Risk Management for Agriculture and Natural Resources

3.3. Extension practitioners, students, and other relevant stakeholders need to be able to utilize the e-learning manual as a learning tool to equip them with knowledge of CSA and NRM and how it applies to the farming communities they serve.

3.4. The content of the e-learning manual should be of high scientific standard, to get it accredited as a formal academic qualification at a higher institution of learning.

3.5. The individual modules provided were compiled by various authors using different styles and formats. The integrated e-learning manual should be uniform using the same scientific style and consistency throughout the manual. For example, one standardized definition for CSA should be used throughout the manual.

3.6. Although the manual will consist of various modules, it should have an overarching focus on CSA and NRM, especially for small-scale farming in the SADC region.

3.7. There should be a reference to other topics in the e-learning programme, encouraging the learner to further engage with other modules within the programme.

3.8. After the Title page there should be a Table of contents with links to the various sections within each module for easy reference.

3.9. Grammar and scientific writing format should be of a high quality. The correct scientific style for Tables, Figures, References, Units of measure, Numbers and Percentages, etc. should be used.

3.10. There should be no repetition between the various modules. Each module should flow well and must be easy to read with a clear message on CSA and NRM flowing through.

3.11. There should be a good balance between the respective modules where each module corresponds to 120 notional hours (12 credits).



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- a) Each module should contain:
- b) Introduction and Course Overview (including module aim, objectives & learning outcome)
- c) Topic content
- d) Practical activities
- e) Tutorials / Assessments
- f) Revision
- g) Icons that serve as indicators or guides that tell what the learner should do.

3.12. The science writer should produce an eBook, needed to consolidate the training modules into a single e-Learning book. The e-Book should follow the specifications outlined in Section 4 of the terms of reference.

AI Use Declaration:

"The Consultant must declare any use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools or systems in the development and packaging of the teaching material, including the purpose and extent of such use."

Restriction on Training:

"No AI system may be trained on the Client's material or data without the Client's prior written authorisation."

4. SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE e-LEARNING MANUALS

- 4.1. Compile an eBook that is informative, engaging, and accessible for an e-Learning programme on CSA and NRM for Extension practitioners and agricultural students in the SADC region.
- 4.2. The eBook should be available in PDF, EPUB, HTML5 and MOBI formats to ensure compatibility with various e-readers and devices.
- 4.3. Each module should have a professional '*look and feel*' with easily readable, colourful pages, embedded multimedia interactive features such as video, audio, images, assignment widgets, and more.
- 4.4. The cover should have a professional design that reflects the theme of sustainability and agriculture.
- 4.5. High-quality images, infographics, and charts should be used to illustrate key points.
- 4.6. Consistent formatting with headers, sub-headers, and bullet points for easy navigation is needed.
- 4.7. Use colour schemes that are easy on the eyes and align with the theme of nature (greens, browns, blues).
- 4.8. A legible serif font for the body text (e.g., Arial, Georgia) and a sans-serif font for headings (e.g., Arial, Helvetica) should be used. A font size of 11-12pt for body text and 14-16pt for headings is advisable. The eBook should be visually attractive.
- 4.9. Although the various modules within the e-Learning programme should be linked and cross-referenced, they should also have the flexibility to be accessed as loose-standing and downloadable modules, allowing for offline reading.
- 4.10. To ensure accessibility the text should be selectable and searchable.



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4.11. A responsive design for mobile and tablet compatibility should be used.

4.12. A dedicated project management team will be available to assist with any queries.

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Restriction on Training:

“No AI system may be trained on the Client’s material or data without the Client’s prior written authorisation.”

5. DELIVERABLES

- **Deliverable 1:** An Inception report. The report should include a detailed plan of how the service provider will conduct the task including time frame per phase and a clear outline.
- **Deliverable 2:** Edit, improve, and compile (5 Modules) e-Learning manuals on CSA and NRM for extension practitioners and agricultural students in the SADC region for readability and consistency.
- **Deliverable 3:** Compile an eBook that is informative, engaging, and accessible for an e-Learning programme on CSA and NRM for Extension practitioners and agricultural students in the SADC region.

6. QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS OF PROPOSED KEY STAFF

- a) A multi-disciplinary team with scientific editing and creative skills to provide contemporary and engaging training material.
- b) A formal university degree in Agriculture, Natural Resources Management, Science Communication, or related field.
- c) Mandatory minimum five years’ experience in scientific writing and editing.
- d) Mandatory minimum five years’ experience in producing educational material.
- e) Experience in project management.
- f) Knowledge of agricultural production systems, climate change, climate variability, and natural resources management.
- g) Demonstrable research and publishing ability.
- h) Excellent writing and communication skills in English.
- i) Ability to work independently and meet deadlines.
- j) Excellent interpersonal skills

7. DETERMINATION OF COMPETENCE IN PERFORMANCE OF TASK

Some stipulations are recommended to ensure quality and to guide service provision.

7.1 Service providers seeking to bid for this Task should provide competence by providing the following:

7.1.1. Proof of documented evidence in science writing, consisting of reference letters and traceable references for service rendered by past clients



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- 7.1.2. Track record/s of conducting similar work through Curriculum Vitae
- 7.1.3. An example/sample of a well-written or co-authored work, e.g. articles, etc.
- 7.1.4. Service providers should submit a detailed programme stipulating how they propose to deliver on the task.
- 7.1.5. Bidders must submit a portfolio of previous work relevant to scientific writing, editing and instructional design including e-learning modules, manuals or similar educational materials. Samples should demonstrate quality, clarity and sector specific standards.
- 7.1.6. Methodological plan must be submitted.

8. PROPRIETY RIGHTS OF CLIENT IN REPORTS AND RECORDS

All manuals, e-learning modules and other outputs developed under this bid shall be the sole property of the ARC and GIZ. The bidder/contractor shall not claim any rights over the content. No commercial or unauthorised use shall be made of such materials without prior written authorization from the Client.

9. DURATION OF SERVICES

- The scientific editing of the consolidated modules and the creation of an eBook should be completed within three months of the appointment date.

10. PRICING SCHEDULE

- Bidders are requested to provide a detailed pricing proposal as per the pricing schedule below.

Deliverables/ Milestone	Cost per Deliverable / Milestone (VAT Exclusive)	Total Cost Per Milestone (VAT Inclusive)
Phase 1: Edit, improve, and compile (5 Modules) e-Learning manuals on CSA and NRM for Extension practitioners and agricultural students in the SADC region for readability and consistency.		
Phase 2: Compile an eBook that is informative, engaging, and accessible for an e-Learning programme on CSA and NRM for Extension practitioners and agricultural students in the SADC region.		



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11. BID EVALUATION CRITERIA

This bid will be evaluated in four phases. The bid evaluation process will be conducted, and the bidder must qualify at each stage to be eligible to proceed to the next stage of the evaluation as follows:

- Phase 1: Compliance with the administrative bid requirements.
- Phase 2: Mandatory requirements.
- Phase 3: Technical/Functionality
- Phase 4: Price and BBEE.

11.1 PHASE 1: ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The following shall be submitted with the bid proposal or adhered to throughout the tender:

- Valid Tax Pin number from SARS
- Valid B-BBEE certificate or affidavit
- CSD report (Central Supplier Database report)
- Complete and sign all SBD forms

11.2 PHASE 2: MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Bidders will be evaluated on mandatory requirements as indicated below, and failure to meet these requirements will result in disqualification, and bidders will not proceed to be evaluated on functionality.

1. CVs of proposed key staff (Project Lead and team members), with proven experience in agricultural and natural resources management subjects to develop e-learning modules and manuals; aligned with stakeholder corporate branding.
2. Minimum five years' experience in scientific writing and editing.
3. Minimum five years' experience in producing educational material.

11.3 PHASE 3: FUNCTIONAL/TECHNICAL EVALUATION

- The bidder must meet the following functional/technical criteria. Bidders who do not meet all the functional/technical criteria will be disqualified from further evaluation:
- Bidders who do not obtain a minimum score of **70% or more out of 100** threshold on functionality will be disqualified and will not be evaluated for price and B-BBEE.

The functionality of the proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria below:



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FUNCTIONALITY EVALUATION CRITERIA The rating will be as follows: Non-submission-1=poor; 2=Average;3=Good;4= Very Good and 5= Excellent	WEIGHT
<p>1. Provide CVs and qualifications of key staff that will be allocated to this project to enable evaluation of their qualifications (formal university degree) and experiences. CVs of the proposed members (Project Lead and team members), with proven experience in agricultural and natural resources management subjects to develop e-learning modules and manuals; aligned with stakeholder corporate branding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVs submitted with Matric = 1 point. • CVs submitted with Highest Certificate or National Diploma = 2 points • CVs submitted with Degree and 5 years up to 6 years' experience = 3 points • CVs submitted with Degree and 6 to 8 years' experience = 4 points • Degree and more than 8 years' experience = 5 points 	<p style="text-align: center;">35</p>
<p>2. The bidder must demonstrate that they can render the required service. Proof of experience in similar projects. Must provide three (3) signed reference letters for similar work done that should contain the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name of the client • The letterhead • Contact Person • Contact e-mail/telephone • Description of the service • Duration of the contract (start-end date) Value of the contract <p>N.B. Reference letters that do not contain all the above requirements will not be considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reference letters =1 point • One-Two reference letters for projects = 2 points • Three-Four reference letters for projects = 3 points • Five-Six reference letters for projects =4 points • Seven and above reference letters =5 points 	<p style="text-align: center;">30</p>



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3. Detailed project and methodological plan (The project plan should include a detailed plan of how the service provider will conduct the task including time frame per phase and a clear outline). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No plan provided = 1 point Plan provided with limited information = 2 points Plan provided with details as required - 3 points Plan provided with substantially more than required - 4 points Plan provided with value added services - 5 points 	35
Functional Total	100
Threshold	70%

11.4 PHASE 4: PRICE AND B-BBEE

Bidders that do not meet the minimum threshold as indicated above will not be evaluated for pricing and B-BBEE.

Technical Functional Criteria	Weightings
Total technical/functional	100
Minimum threshold	70
Points allocated for price	80
Points allocated for specific goals	20
Total points for price and specific goals	100

The 80/20 principle will apply in terms of the Preferential Procurement Policy FRAMEWORK Act.

Specific Goals

Specific Goals	Percentage Ownership (1%)	Points (20)	Points (10)
Ownership by HDIs	51%+	6	3



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Ownership by Women	51%+	4	2
Ownership by Youth	51%+	4	2
Ownership by PwD	51%+	2	1
BEE Status	Level 1 – 4	2	1
RDP Goals	Points will be allocated to enterprises located in rural areas.	2	1
TOTAL POINTS		20	10