

**Request for proposals (RFP) for**

**Recruitment of an Individual Consultant for Program Development and Delivery of the Smart Africa VC Lab.**

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| **RFP#:**  | **133/SA/RFP/09/2025** |
| **Release date:**  | **22th September 2024** |
| **Closing date:**  | **15th October 2025; 5pm (Local time, Kigali)**  |
| **Contact**  | For any questions or enquiries, please write to: tenderenquiries@smartafrica.org For Proposal Submissions: procurement@smartafrica.org |

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# **Introduction**

These Terms of Reference (ToR) outline the recruitment of an Individual Consultant to serve as the Program Development & Delivery Expert for the inaugural cohort of the Smart Africa VC Lab (SA VC Lab). This role combines critical responsibilities, including scouting and evaluating participants to curriculum design and content delivery. The consultant will play a central role in setting up, launching, and facilitating a pan-African capacity-building program for emerging venture capital fund managers (GPs) and limited partners (LPs), based on VC Lab’s program design developed during the build phase.

# **Organization Background**

Smart Africa is a bold and innovative commitment from African Heads of State and Government and a wide range of stakeholders, including the private sector, international organizations, and academia, to accelerate sustainable socio-economic development on the continent, ushering Africa into a knowledge economy through affordable access to broadband and usage of Information and Communications Technologies.

The Smart Africa agenda leverages ICT to drive Africa’s transformation by delivering infrastructure, services, local content, jobs, and economic opportunities.

# **SANIA & SA VC Lab**

To foster Africa’s innovation-driven economy, the Smart Africa Alliance launched the Smart Africa Network for Incubators and Accelerators (SANIA) as its vehicle for building robust ecosystems that enable startups to grow across Africa. SANIA focuses on three areas:

* Policies that create enabling environments for startups,
* Support and capacity building for incubators, accelerators, and hubs,
* Expanding access to early-stage capital.

The SA VC Lab is a pan-African program designed to equip 10 LPs and 10 GPs with the capacity to mobilize capital, with LPs committing funds and GPs deploying them to scale African startups.

More importantly, the SA VC Lab contributes to Smart Africa’s broader vision of a Single Digital Market by strengthening the early-stage funding ecosystem needed to scale innovation across borders. By equipping local fund managers and institutional investors with the tools to support scalable digital ventures, the VC Lab helps ensure startups can grow beyond national markets and plug into a unified continental ecosystem.

The SA VC Lab has completed a comprehensive needs assessment, program design, and implementation plan. It now enters the execution phase with its inaugural pilot cohort. To ensure a seamless rollout, a Program Development & Delivery expert is required to oversee the full lifecycle of the pilot cohort. This pilot cohort will serve as a blueprint for future cohorts and drive long-term capacity-building across the continent’s venture capital landscape.

# **Scope of Work**

The consultant will support the launch and delivery of the inaugural 6-month pilotcohort of the Smart Africa VC Lab. The scope spans across participants' selection, curriculum alignment, delivery, mentors' selection and matchmaking, and stakeholder coordination. All responsibilities must align with the Needs Assessment, Program Design, and Implementation Plan developed during the SA VC Lab’s build phase.

## **Scouting and Evaluation**

* Define eligibility criteria and design assessment tools aligned with the program's learning objectives.
* Manage the call for applications and evaluate submissions.
* Conduct interviews, finalize cohort selection (10 GPs and 10LPs).
* Document the entire selection process for transparency and future replication.

## **Program Structuring and Curriculum Development**

* Tailor the curriculum to fit the 6-month structure and the African early-stage investment context, aligned with the Program Design and Implementation Plan from the SA VC Lab’s build phase.
* Design thematic learning modules with clear outcomes, formats (live, recorded, case-based), and engagement approaches.
* Integrate mentors into the 6-month learning journey through structured touchpoints, including office hours, expert panels, and fireside chats.
* Deliver a comprehensive Program Structure Document including the calendar, session flow, and engagement mechanisms for the full 6-month cohort.

## **Content Facilitation & Delivery**

* Deliver the core curriculum sessions over the 6-month program period, either virtually or in hybrid formats.
* Coordinate and manage guest speakers, ecosystem experts, and session logistics.
* Design assessments, feedback mechanisms, and participant engagement tracking tools.
* Host office hours and provide one-on-one support to selected cohort members throughout the 6-month journey.

## **Mentor Mapping & Integration**

* Define mentor selection criteria aligned with the program’s learning objectives and diversity goals.
* Identify and onboard mentors in collaboration with Smart Africa and partners
* Integrate mentors into the **6-month learning journey** through structured touchpoints office hours, expert panels, and fireside chats.
* Match Mentors with participants

## **Stakeholder Engagement & Wrap-Up**

* Liaise with key partners to ensure curriculum and content align with strategic opportunities and events.
* Produce a final Learning Summary Report, highlighting lessons learned and future improvements for subsequent cohorts.
* Support the development of an alumni engagement strategy for post-cohort knowledge sharing and Community building on Smart Africa’s web-based platform (the SANIA platform).

# **Deliverables**

* Recruitment and Selection Report (shortlist and final cohort)
* Program Kickoff
* Facilitated content delivery across sessions
* Learning Journey Assessment Toolkit
* Mentor Map and Engagement Plan
* Final Learning Report and Recommendations

# **Performance Metrics and KPIs**

The Consultant will be expected to support the delivery of key outcomes aligned with the SA VC Lab’s strategic objectives. As part of program implementation and monitoring, the following

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** will serve as benchmarks to measure success:

**Program Execution & Delivery**

* 10 GPs and 10 LPs selected and onboarded into the pilot cohort.
* 1,000+ mentorship hours delivered across the program duration.
* 3 LP-GP engagement events facilitated during the 6-month program.

**Participant Learning & Capacity Building**

* At least 40% of GPs demonstrate improved fundraising skills
* At least 20% of participating GPs raise capital post-program (Year 1 target).
* At least 5% of LPs commit capital to VC for the first time as a result of the program.

**Investment Mobilization & Ecosystem Impact**

* Facilitate pathways to mobilize $30M in capital by program alumni in Year 1.
* Support the launch of at least 2 new VC funds through participating GPs.
* Ensure active tracking of LP-GP co-investments and deal flow facilitation.

The Consultant will be responsible for :

* Designing and integrating assessment tools to capture these KPIs.
* Contributing to quarterly performance tracking reports.
* Supporting the creation of a baseline for long-term alumni tracking.

# **Consultant Profile and Experience**

The assignment will be carried out by an individual consultant with the following qualifications and experience:

* **Educational Background**
	+ A Master’s Degree in business administration, finance, entrepreneurship, economics, innovation management, or a related field.
* **Professional Experience**
	+ At least 7 years of relevant professional experience in venture capital, private equity, fund management, or investment ecosystems.
	+ Demonstrated expertise in designing and delivering training programs, accelerators, or fellowships focused on early stage investing or startup ecosystem development.
	+ Strong knowledge of the African VCs, innovation, and investment landscape, including key players and market dynamics.
	+ Experience working with diverse stakeholders such as DFIs, institutional investors, accelerators, and entrepreneurs.
* **Skills and Competencies**
	+ Excellent analytical, facilitation, and interviewing skills, with the ability to assess potential fund managers and institutional investors.
	+ Strong communication and reporting skills, with the ability to prepare structured evaluation reports and program documents.

Ability to deliver results within short timelines and in coordination with multi-stakeholders

* **References**
	+ The consultant should provide three (3) signed recommendation letters from previous clients or assignments of a similar nature (one must be from an Africa-based project).
	+ A brief presentation or portfolio highlighting similar assignments completed in scouting/evaluation for accelerators, labs, or VC-related programs.

# **Duration of the Consultancy**

The consultancy will span a period of **six (6) months** from the date of contract signature, aligned with the rollout of the inaugural Smart Africa VC Lab pilot cohort. This assignment will be governed under a lump sum contract, with payments tied to the achievement of clearly defined milestones and deliverables.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Timeline  | Activities  | Deliverable  |
| Month 1 | -Define recruitment criteria-Conduct outreach & applications-Screen candidates-Shortlist + select final cohort | Recruitment & Selection Report |
| Month 2  | -Onboarding of cohort-Confirm mentors & guest speakers-Final prep of content (pre-reads, handouts, decks) | Program Kickoff |
| Month 3  | -Facilitate core program sessions- Deliver structured content- Capture feedback from learners | Facilitated Content Delivery |
| Month 4  | -Continue session delivery -Map mentors to participants-Define engagement frequency & methods-Finalize mentor onboarding | Mentor Map & Engagement Plan |
| Month 5  | - Continue session delivery- Design learning assessment tools- Pilot test with small group- Finalize metrics & formats | Learning Journey Assessment Toolkit |
| Month 6  | - Collect program data & feedback- Analyze cohort performance-Document insights & future recommendations | Final Learning Report & Recommendations |

This timetable provides a structured approach to ensure the timely completion of each deliverable over the 6-month program period, aligning with key milestones and the overall objectives of the assignment.

**Location :** Remote

**Reporting Line:**

The Consultant will report to Director of Digital Transformation and Services at the Smart Africa Secretariat.

# **Evaluation Criteria**

All bidders should note that the evaluation method is Quality Cost-based selection (QCBS) for consultants. The technical and financial scores are 0.8 and 0.2, respectively (0.8 + 0.2=1).

The following model will be used to evaluate all respondents and proposals submitted :

## **a) Technical Criteria**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Items** | **Point Range** |
| **Approach, Methodology and Work Plan** |
| 1. Methodology and Approach
2. Work Plan and timelines for assignment execution
 | /25/5 |
| **Consultant’s Experience and Qualifications**  |
|

|  |
| --- |
| 1. A Master’s Degree in business administration, finance, entrepreneurship, economics, innovation management, or a related field.
2. At least 7 years of relevant professional experience in venture capital, private equity, fund management, or investment ecosystems.
3. Demonstrated expertise in designing and delivering training programs, accelerators, or fellowships focused on early stage investing or startup ecosystem development.
 |
| 1. Three (03) similar projects implemented in Africa
 |

 | /10/10/10/10 |
| **References**  |
| * Three (3) signed recommendation letters (signed and stamped) from previous clients accompanied by a concise presentation highlighting projects undertaken in VC fund building and management or related fields. Letters that are not accompanied by a project presentation will not be accepted):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. 3 similar assignments
 |  |
| 1. 2 similar assignments
 |   |
| 1. 1 similar assignment

  |    |

 | /30/ 20/10 |

The financial proposal of only those firms will be opened which secure a minimum score of 70/100 in the technical evaluation.

St= Score for the Technical Evaluation

## **b) Financial Criteria**

Once the technical criteria have been evaluated, the costs of all bids will be listed from low to high. Computing the cost criteria score will be accomplished by use of the following formula:

$$\frac{Lowest Cost of All Proposals}{Cost of Bid for Respective Firm}×100=Financial Score=sf$$

The Applicant getting maximum marks on 80-20 weightage (80% for technical and 20% for financial) will be selected as Consultants for the Client. The weights given to the Technical (T) and Financial Proposals (F) are T = 0.80 and F = 0.20

The Final Score (S) is calculated as follows: S = St\*T + Sf\*F

# **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL PROPOSALS**

All technical and financial proposals must be submitted in English.

## **Administrative documents**

* (ID or passport certificates).

## **Technical Requirements**

* Duly signed submission Letter confirming the consultant’s interest to provide the services required.
* Detailed description of methodology and Approach, work plan
* Consultancy references with contacts.
* Detailed and updated Curriculum Vitae with valid Industry certifications.
* Consultant’s Recommendation letters signed and stamped.

## **Financial Requirements**

* Summarized Total Cost inclusive of applicable taxes
* Breakdown of a remuneration package.
* Breakdown of reimbursable expenses.

**Notes:**

1. *All Financial Proposals/offers should be password protected, and Smart Africa will request it for bidders who have been qualified in the technical evaluation.*
2. *Only individual consultants are eligible to apply to this assignment*
3. *All Financial Offers should be quoted and submitted in USD Currency*
4. *A withholding tax of 15% will be deducted from payments for consultant not VAT-registered with Rwanda Tax Administration (RRA) and 18% VAT will be applicable for VAT registered consultants in Rwanda*

# **SUBMISSION PROCESS**

Soft copies of both Technical and Financial Offers in PDF format must be submitted via email to: procurement@smartafrica.org showing each the nature of the offer concerned (technical or financial offer **in separate files**) with mention:  **133/SA/RFP/09/2025, “Recruitment of an Individual Consultant for Program Development and Delivery of the Smart Africa VC Lab »** not later than **15th Octoer 2025 at, 05:00 pm local time (Kigali)**

Late proposals will be rejected.

# **RIGHTS RESERVED**

* This RFP does not obligate the Smart Africa Secretariat (SAS) to complete the RFP process.
* SAS reserves the right to amend any segment of the RFP prior to the announcement of a selected firm.
* SAS also reserves the right to remove one or more of the services from consideration for this contract should the evaluation show that it is in SAS’s best interest to do so.
* SAS also may, at its discretion, issue a separate contract for any service or groups of services included in this RFP. SAS may negotiate a compensation package and additional provisions to the contract awarded under this RFP.
* The Smart Africa reserves the right to debrief the applicants after the completion of the process due to expected high volume of applications and avoiding the compromise of the process.

# **VALIDITY**

Proposals and quotes must remain valid for a period of 180 days after the date of closing noted above. After the closing date and time, all proposals received by the Smart Africa Secretariat become its property.

# **ENQUIRIES**

Any enquiries will only be received and addressed 3 days or more prior to the bid submission deadline. Prospective respondents who may have questions regarding this RFP may submit their enquiries to tenderenquiries@smartafrica.org

# **ANTI-CORRUPTION**

Smart Africa is committed to preventing and not tolerating any act of corruption and other malpractices and expects that all bidders will adhere to the same ethical principles.