

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

EOI No. ASLM/ACDC/EOI/ RCoEBB /08/29/25

To Host

A Regional Centre of Excellence for Biosafety and Biosecurity

(Africa CDC Biosafety and Biosecurity Initiative)

a. Background

Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), Officially launched in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2017 as a specialized technical institution of the African Union, is Africa's first continent-wide public health agency. Africa CDC envisions a safer, healthier, integrated, and stronger Africa, where the Member States can effectively respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases and other public health threats. The agency's mission is to strengthen Africa's public health institutions' capabilities to detect and respond quickly and effectively to disease outbreaks and other health burdens through an integrated network of continent-wide preparedness and response, surveillance, laboratory, and research programs.

The risk of a catastrophic biologic event has ever been increasing due to globalization, increase in travel and movement of humans and animals and increase in technology. However, this is happening at a time when African Union Member States have limited to no capacity to deal with such events as documented by the World Health Organization (WHO) Joint External Evaluation (JEE) of 2016-2019 and the Global Health Security Index report of 2021. In response Africa CDC in 2019 together with African Union Member States and its partners launched the Biosafety and Biosecurity Initiative. Under this Initiative, the Africa CDC, is strengthening Biosafety and Biosecurity capacities of Member States to enable them to comply with international Regulations including International Health Regulations of 2005, Biological Weapons Convention, United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR 1540) and the multi-country Global Health Security Agenda Action Package 3 on Prevention.

b. Establishment of Regional Centres of Excellence for Biosafety and Biosecurity (RCoEBB)

Under the Biosafety and Biosecurity Initiative, the Africa CDC developed a Regional Training and Certification Program for Biosafety and Biosecurity Professionals (RTCP-BBP)¹ covering four (4) specialized areas i.e. i. The Selection, Installation, Maintenance and Certification of Biological Safety Cabinets (BSC Certification); ii. Biorisk Management (BRM); iii. Design and Maintenance of Facilities Handling High Risk Pathogens (Biocontainment Engineering); and iv. Biological Waste Management (BWM). The training under this program will be implemented at Regional Centres of Excellence for Biosafety and Biosecurity (RCoEBB), with three (3) already established in the Africa Region.

c. Objective

The Africa CDC Biosafety and Biosecurity Initiative seeks to establish an additional two (2) RCoEBB, one (1) each in the Central and Northern Africa Regions, where the RTCP-BBP will be implemented. Applicant RCoEBBs with expressed support from their host country with the pre-requisite infrastructural requirements will be considered.

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the RCoEBB are attached

¹ Regional Training and Certification Program for Biosafety and Biosecurity Professionals: <https://africacdc.org/download/the-regional-training-and-certification-program-for-biosafety-and-biosecurity-professionals/>

The Africa CDC now invites eligible institutions/Member States to indicate their interest in hosting the RCoEBB. Interested institutions/Member States from the Central and Northern Africa Regions should provide information demonstrating that they have the required administrative and infrastructural requirements and relevant experience to host the RCoEBB. The shortlisting criteria are:

- a) Documented commitment by the host country government to support the RCoEBB**
- b) Existence of infrastructure required to host the RCoEBB in the selected specialized area**
- c) Relevant experience in implementing training and certification programs in the area of speciality selected for consideration**

NOTE: Institutions/Member States can express interest in hosting all four (4) of the areas of specialty. Onsite assessments will be conducted on shortlisted institutions/Member States before final selection is made. Further information can be obtained from Zibusiso Masuku, Africa CDC Senior Biosafety and Biosecurity Technical Officer at masukuz@africacdc.org

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form following the above shortlisting criteria via the below application form on or before **3rd of October 2025 at 17:00 Hours East Africa Time**.

Africa CDC Regional Biosafety and Biosecurity Initiative

TERMS OF REFERENCE

To Host

**A Regional Centre of Excellence for Biosafety and
Biosecurity**

August 2025

1.0 Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) Joint External Evaluation (JEE) technical assessments conducted between 2016-2019² and the Global Health Security Index (GHSI) of 2019³ highlighted Africa Union (AU) Member States limited capacities in Biosafety and Biosecurity. In response, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), supported by its regional and global partners, in collaboration with AU Member States, in 2019 launched the Regional Biosafety and Biosecurity Initiative (BBI).

The goal of the BBI is to strengthen the biosafety and biosecurity systems of AU Member States in order to build their capacities to meet requirements for biosafety and biosecurity as well as comply with the international requirements and regulations such as the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540. The Initiative's 2021-2025 Strategy implemented five (5) broad areas of (i) Developing a Regional BSBS Legal Framework (ii) Establishing multi-expert Regional BSBS Technical Working Groups to coordinate and monitor implementation (iii) Establish a regulatory and certification framework for institutions handling high risk pathogens (iv) Strengthen National Public Health Institutes (NPHI) and National Reference Laboratory (NRL) capacities to prevent, detect and respond to events of public health concern in each Member State and (v) Establish a regional training and certification program for BSBS experts.

² World Health Organization. Joint External evaluation mission reports. <https://www.who.int/ihr/procedures/mission-reports-africa/en/>

³ Global Health Security Index. <https://www.ghsindex.org/>

Africa CDC, working with AU Member States and regional and international experts developed a Regional Training and Certification Program that is sustainable, recognized and endorsed by African Union Member States. Four (4) areas of specialty were identified and developed, i.e. The Selection, Installation, Maintenance and Certification of Biological Safety Cabinets (BSC Certification); ii. Biorisk Management (BRM); iii. Design and Maintenance of Facilities Handling High Risk Pathogens (Biocontainment Engineering); and iv. Biological Waste Management (BWM). Graduates of the training program will receive recognition and certification that would be endorsed and accepted by the African Union Member States and would be incorporated into the African Union's Register of Biosafety and Biosecurity Professionals. The RTCP-BBP is coordinated by Regional Centres of Excellence for Biosafety and Biosecurity (RCoEBB).

2.0 Regional Centres of Excellence

Africa CDC, in collaboration with Member States will establish an additional two (2) RCoEBB, one (1) each in the Central and Northern Africa Regions. Africa CDC, working with its collaborating partners will support the establishment of the RCoEBBs, with a clear plan for its sustainability. Formal agreements with host country with clearly defined terms of reference will be established.

2.1 Organizational requirements

1. The RCoEBB must provide documented evidence of support by the host country government.
2. Host government must commit in writing to contribute towards operationalization and functioning of the RCoEBB e.g. provide and support with office and training space, contribute towards running costs of the RCoEBB (utilities, communication among others), contribute towards administrative staff (office cleaners, office secretary, driver among others).
3. Host government must identify and assign a ministry to host the RCoEBB.

2.2 Infrastructural Requirements

1. The RCoEBB must avail infrastructure to support delivery of in-person trainings all the RTCP-BBP areas of specialization, and should accommodate at least twenty (20) participants and upto five (5) course instructors and/or observers.

- Training laboratory/room
 - Suitable for twenty (20) students and upto five (5) course instructors and/or observers.
 - Approximately 60sqm in area;
 - Suitably air-conditioned space with adjustable ambient conditions (particularly temperature);
 - Basic laboratory fixtures, i.e. hand wash basin, eyewash station etc.;
 - Access to a dedicated PPE change room/area;
 - Data connectivity – network points or Wi-Fi available
 - Work benches/ workstations (tables and chairs) – for twenty-two (22) people
 - Projection and audio system facilities available.

- For the BSC Certification course, the RCoEBB should have the following minimum infrastructure requirements: BSC training laboratory (ideally adjacent to and visible from the training laboratory/room) - suitable for – for twenty-two (22) students and two (2) instructors:
 - Approximately 100sqm in area
 - Suitably air-conditioned space with adjustable ambient conditions (particularly temperature);
 - Ducted supply air terminal
 - Split air-conditioning unit
 - Facilitate ease of demonstration of various practical aspects of the course curriculum.
 - Basic laboratory fixtures, i.e. hand wash basin, eyewash station etc.;
 - Five (5) x Class II A2 BSC; and at least one (1) of each – Class III; Class II B2; Class I BSCs; Thimble connected exhaust demonstration station
 - Fridge/Freezer and storage cabinets
 - Enhanced video facilities to capture and project activities e.g. during virtual lectures;
- Connected to an uninterrupted power supply

For the Design and Maintenance of Facilities Handling High Risk Pathogens training program (Biocontainment Engineering), the RCoEBB should have the following minimum infrastructure requirements:

- Training laboratory/room
 - Suitable for twenty (20) students and upto five (5) course instructors and/or observers.
- High Containment Facility
 - Access to an operational high containment facility, for demonstration during activities and practicals.

NOTE: For the Biorisk Management and Waste Management training courses, there are no special infrastructural requirements besides availing a training facility capable of hosting up to twenty (20) students and five (5) course instructors and/or observers.

3.0 Scope of the Work

The RCoEBB is expected to host the didactic and practical components for the effective delivery of Level 1 training under the RTCP-BBP. The RCoEBB must meet the above stated organizational and infrastructural requirements to be considered.

3.1 Evaluation and Qualification Criteria

1. The potential RCoEBB must:

- Submit documented evidence of commitment by the host country government to support hosting of the RCoEBB. The government commitment must indicate proposed areas of support
- Submit evidence for ability to meet all administrative requirements as stated in Section 2.1 above
- Submit evidence of meeting all infrastructural requirements as stated in Section 2.2 above. Details of existing infrastructure that will be dedicated to the RCoEBB must be provided.

2. The potential RCoEBB must provide demonstratable experience in implementing/hosting trainings in the area(s) of expertise to be considered under the RTCP-BBP.