REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Laboratory Supplies, Laboratory Services, Molecular and Bioanalytical Solutions

SUPPRESS-LA-CRFP-001

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Classification	External procurement document
Procurement method	Open competitive tender
Other Documents	Technical Specifications Document

NB: This document is issued solely for the preparation and evaluation of proposals. It is not a clinical protocol, laboratory manual, purchase order or contract.

Contents

Executive Summary

The Africa Clinical Research Network (ACRN) invites proposals from qualified suppliers, clinical laboratories, bioanalytical reference laboratories, molecular diagnostic vendors and technology providers for laboratory supplies and services supporting a donor-funded, multicountry clinical research programme.

The procurement is divided into separately awardable lots covering laboratory consumables, routine and specialised laboratory services, molecular reagents, sequencing consumables and bioinformatics. Bidders may submit proposals for one or more lots and may propose compliant equivalents where a reference product or platform is mentioned.

Disclosure-minimised procurement: This open-stage package contains the information reasonably necessary to assess bidder capability and obtain comparable unit pricing. Detailed protocol information, forecast volumes, site addresses, named internal systems, exact instrument configurations, custom assay designs and internal evaluation methods are not included. These may be provided only to shortlisted bidders under a non-disclosure agreement (NDA), where genuinely required.

Part	Lots	Scope
A	A-G	Laboratory supplies, collection materials, storage/transport components, reagents, labels and PPE
B	H-J	Tiered laboratory network services, biorepository and specialised reference laboratory services
C	K1-K5	Molecular extraction, amplification, sequencing, quantification and bioinformatics components

No forecast volume, allocation, award split or minimum purchase commitment is created by this RFP. Awards may be made by lot, to one or more suppliers, and will be subject to successful due diligence, qualification and contract execution.

1. RFP Control Information

RFP number	SUPPRESS-LA-CRFP-001
RFP title	Laboratory Supplies, Laboratory Services, Molecular and Bioanalytical Solutions

Procurement method	Open competitive tender with NDA-controlled second-stage disclosure where required
Issue date	22 July 2026
Clarification deadline	3 August 2026, 17:00 CAT (UTC+2)
Proposal deadline	17 August 2026, 17:00 CAT (UTC+2)
Proposal validity	120 calendar days from the proposal deadline
Anticipated award period	September-October 2026, subject to completion of evaluation and due diligence
Submission and clarification contact	Procurement Portal | procurement@acrnhealth.com
Submission language	English
Pricing currency	United States dollars (USD)

2. Issuing Organisation and Procurement Context

ACRN is an African-led clinical research platform that supports the delivery of high-quality clinical trials through a connected network of research sites, laboratories and operational capabilities across Africa.

This procurement supports a multicountry HIV-related clinical research programme requiring routine clinical laboratory testing, specimen management, specialised bioanalytical and molecular services, and associated laboratory products. Services may be required in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Uganda. Exact site identities, delivery addresses, allocation assumptions and implementation schedules will be released only where necessary and under appropriate confidentiality controls.

The objective is to establish one or more qualified, competitively selected suppliers and service providers capable of meeting applicable regulatory, quality, technical, data integrity, logistics and business continuity requirements.

3. Scope and Lot Structure

Bidders may submit for any one lot, multiple lots or all lots. Each lot will be evaluated and may be awarded independently. A consortium or subcontracting arrangement is permitted only where fully disclosed and where the prime bidder accepts responsibility for all subcontracted performance.

Lot	Category	Public-stage scope
A	Blood collection tubes and venipuncture consumables	Supply of adult and paediatric blood collection devices and related consumables.
B	Dried blood spot collection cards and accessories	Supply of validated DBS collection media, desiccants, protective packaging and accessories.
C	Specimen storage and transport components	Supply of cryogenic storage consumables and compliant biological specimen transport packaging.
D	General laboratory reagents and analyser-compatible consumables	Supply of serology, molecular, haematology, chemistry and electrolyte reagents compatible with designated site systems.
E	Human milk and infant specimen collection components	Supply of sterile collection containers and single-patient-use collection accessories.
F	Specimen labelling materials	Supply of cryogenic labels, thermal media and tamper-evident materials compatible with designated printers and workflows.
G	Laboratory-grade personal protective equipment	Supply of examination gloves and related laboratory PPE where requested.
H	Tier 1 site laboratory services	Routine clinical laboratory testing, specimen receipt/processing and result reporting in programme countries.
I	Tier 2 regional hub and biorepository services	Specimen receipt, inventory, -80°C archiving, courier coordination and international shipment preparation.
J	Tier 3 central reference laboratory services	Specialised HIV drug concentration, resistance genotyping and optional pharmacogenetic services.
K1	Viral RNA extraction systems and reagents	Automated and backup manual extraction reagents suitable for downstream HIV molecular analysis.
K2	One-step RT-PCR reagents and custom oligonucleotides	High-fidelity amplification reagents and design/synthesis of protocol-specific primer sets.
K3	Long-read sequencing library preparation and consumables	Library preparation, barcoding and sequencing consumables for a designated long-read platform.
K4	Nucleic acid quantification reagents	High-sensitivity RNA and DNA quantification reagents and compatible assay vessels.
K5	HIV resistance bioinformatics solution	Validated or fit-for-purpose analysis, interpretation, reporting, audit trail and integration support.

Sensitive Lots K1-K5 and specialised services: Open-stage responses may consist of a capability statement, compliance matrix and indicative unit pricing. Shortlisted bidders may receive additional technical information under NDA and may then be asked to submit a final technical and commercial offer.

4. Instructions to Bidders

4.1 Communications and clarifications

- All communications must be sent to procurement@acrnhealth.com. Bidders must not contact ACRN employees, evaluators, consultants, laboratories, sites, funders or other stakeholders directly about this procurement.
- Clarification questions must identify the relevant RFP section, lot and requirement number. Responses of general relevance may be issued to all registered bidders by addendum without identifying the bidder that asked the question.
- Only written addenda issued by ACRN may amend this RFP. Oral statements do not modify the procurement.

4.2 Proposal submission

- Proposals must be submitted electronically via the ACRN Procurement Portal no later than the specified closing date and time.
- Prospective suppliers are required to register on the ACRN Procurement Portal before submitting a proposal.
- Submit the technical proposal and commercial proposal as separate PDF files. Editable pricing schedules may additionally be supplied in Microsoft Excel or Word.
- File names must clearly identify the bidder, lot and document type. Proposals must be signed by an authorised representative.
- Late, incomplete, corrupted or inaccessible proposals may be rejected. ACRN may request resubmission of a file only where the proposal was received on time and the defect is demonstrably technical rather than substantive.
- Bidders are responsible for all costs of preparing, submitting, clarifying and negotiating their proposals.

4.3 Confidential use and publicity

This RFP may be shared on a need-to-know basis with a bidder's employees, professional advisers and disclosed subcontractors solely for preparing a proposal. Bidders must not issue publicity, use ACRN's name or marks, identify any funder or sponsor, or publish information about the procurement without prior written approval.

5. Required Proposal Content

Volume	Required content
Volume 1 - Administrative and eligibility	Cover letter; bidder details; legal registration; tax status; beneficial ownership; banking confirmation; authorised signatory; consortium/subcontractor details; references; signed declarations.
Volume 2 - Technical and quality	Lot-specific response; completed compliance matrix; technical data; regulatory status; quality certifications; capacity; lead times/TAT; logistics; business continuity summary; quality and information security arrangements; deviations and assumptions.
Volume 3 - Commercial	Completed pricing schedule; price basis; taxes and duties; delivery terms; MOQ; pack size; setup/validation charges; volume tiers; recurring fees; price validity; proposed payment terms; exclusions.
Volume 4 - Supporting evidence	Product data sheets, certificates, accreditation schedules, EQA evidence, method summaries, service organisation chart, reference letters or contactable references, and any evidence specifically requested by the TSD.

A bidder must expressly identify every exception or deviation. Silence will be treated as confirmation that the bidder can comply, subject to any clarification requested by ACRN.

6. Eligibility and Mandatory Administrative Requirements

Requirement	Minimum evidence
Legal status	Current certificate of incorporation/registration and authority to trade in relevant jurisdictions.
Tax and statutory compliance	Current tax clearance or equivalent evidence, where available in the bidder's jurisdiction.
Ownership and control	Disclosure of legal owners, beneficial owners, parent entities, affiliates and any politically exposed person relevant to the bid.

Requirement	Minimum evidence
Financial and banking status	Bank confirmation and information sufficient to assess financial capacity. Audited financial statements may be requested during due diligence.
Experience	At least three relevant client references from the preceding five years, unless the bidder reasonably explains why fewer are available for a specialised or newly commercialised solution.
Quality credentials	Applicable certificates and scopes, such as ISO 9001, ISO 13485, ISO 15189, ISO/IEC 17025, CAP accreditation, GMP or equivalent. Only certifications relevant to the offered lot are required.
Regulatory standing	Disclosure of material regulatory, licensing, inspection, recall, enforcement or accreditation actions during the preceding five years.
Declarations	Signed conflict of interest, anti-bribery, sanctions/debarment, non-collusion, confidentiality and accuracy declarations.

7. Integrity, Conflicts, Sanctions and Responsible Business

By submitting a proposal, the bidder certifies and undertakes that:

- it has not offered, promised, authorised, requested or accepted any bribe, kickback, facilitation payment, gift, hospitality, employment opportunity or other advantage intended to influence this procurement;
- it has disclosed all actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest, including relationships with ACRN personnel, advisers, evaluators, sites, laboratories or competing bidders;
- it has not colluded, coordinated pricing, exchanged competitively sensitive information or otherwise restricted competition;
- neither the bidder nor, to its knowledge after reasonable enquiry, its beneficial owners, controlling persons or proposed key subcontractors are subject to applicable sanctions, debarment, exclusion or ineligibility that would prohibit or materially impair performance;
- it will promptly notify ACRN if any declaration becomes inaccurate before award or during contract performance;
- it complies with applicable labour, health and safety, environmental, anti-trafficking, anti-money laundering and responsible sourcing laws.

A false declaration, undisclosed conflict or integrity breach may result in rejection, termination, recovery of losses, referral to authorities and exclusion from future procurement, subject to applicable law and contract terms.

8. Technical Specifications and Equivalent Products

The Final Revised Technical Specifications Document, SUPPRESS-LA-CLTSD-001 External Issue v1.0, forms part of this RFP. Mandatory requirements are marked “M”. Desirable requirements are marked “D”.

Where a manufacturer, product family, technology or platform is referenced, the reference describes compatibility or performance needs and is followed by “or equivalent” unless technical interoperability genuinely requires a specified platform. A bidder proposing an equivalent must provide sufficient evidence of equivalence, including regulatory status, intended use, compatibility, analytical or functional performance, quality documentation, warranty/support and validation implications.

ACRN may request samples, demonstrations, proof-of-concept testing, method transfer evidence, compatibility testing or additional technical documentation before award. Such requests do not create an obligation to purchase.

9. Commercial and Delivery Requirements

- Quote in USD and identify all taxes, duties, freight, insurance, packaging, installation, validation, training, travel, licensing, support and other charges separately.
- For supplies, quote the manufacturer, catalogue number, country of origin, pack size, unit of measure, MOQ, lead time, shelf life at delivery, warranty and delivery temperature requirements.
- For services, quote unit rates, setup/method development or transfer fees, project management fees, storage, shipment, data transfer, repeat testing, archiving, destruction and any pass-through costs.
- Offer volume-tier pricing without assuming that any volume is guaranteed. Any discount conditions must be transparent and measurable.
- Supply prices should be quoted DDP to the designated ACRN delivery point(s), Incoterms 2020, unless an alternative is clearly stated. Exact delivery addresses and country allocations may be provided at shortlist or purchase-order stage.
- Unless otherwise agreed in the final contract, payment will be due within 30 days after accepted delivery or completed services and receipt of a correct, undisputed invoice and required supporting documentation.
- Prices must remain valid for the proposal validity period. Any proposed indexation or foreign exchange mechanism for later years must be clearly stated.

No volume commitment: Indicative forecasts, if later provided, are planning assumptions only. ACRN may purchase less, purchase more, make no purchase, phase orders, or use more than one supplier.

10. Evaluation and Award Process

Proposals will be evaluated using a documented best-value process. ACRN may evaluate lots independently and may use different technical factors for products, laboratory services and software.

Stage	Purpose
1. Administrative and mandatory compliance	Confirm timely submission, completeness, eligibility, signed declarations and compliance with mandatory requirements.
2. Technical, quality and delivery assessment	Assess fitness for purpose, regulatory status, quality systems, capability, capacity, interoperability, TAT/lead time, logistics, data integrity, information security, sustainability and business continuity.
3. Commercial assessment	Assess total evaluated cost, price reasonableness, transparency, lifecycle cost, payment and delivery terms, and commercial risk.
4. Due diligence and qualification	Reference checks, document verification, product/sample evaluation, financial review, remote or on-site audit, method review, system/security assessment and NDA-controlled clarification.
5. Negotiation and award	Clarify scope, request a best and final offer where appropriate, negotiate contract terms and make one or more awards by lot.

Detailed scoring weights, thresholds, evaluator guidance, internal approvals, budgets and allocation methods are confidential procurement information and are not part of the external RFP. The lowest-priced proposal will not necessarily be selected.

11. Shortlisting, NDA-Controlled Disclosure and Qualification

ACRN may invite one or more bidders to execute an NDA before receiving additional technical, operational, systems, site or volume information. Receipt of NDA-controlled information does not guarantee award.

- Shortlisted bidders may be required to complete supplier, laboratory, computerised systems, data protection and information security questionnaires.

- ACRN may conduct remote or on-site qualification audits and may require access to relevant facilities, records, personnel, equipment, quality systems and subcontractors on reasonable notice.
- Bidders must cooperate with reasonable due diligence requests from ACRN and, where legally or contractually required, authorised funder, sponsor, regulatory or independent audit representatives.
- Failure to provide requested evidence, material misrepresentation or an unacceptable qualification outcome may result in exclusion or withdrawal of a conditional award.

12. Contracting Requirements

No award is binding until authorised representatives execute the applicable contract documents. Depending on the lot, the contract package may include:

Document	Application
Master Services or Supply Agreement	Core commercial and legal terms.
Statement of Work / Purchase Order	Lot, scope, deliverables, prices, schedule and acceptance criteria.
Service Level Agreement	TAT, availability, support, reporting, escalation and remedies.
Quality Agreement	GxP responsibilities, deviations, CAPA, change control, complaints, recalls, audits, records and inspections.
NDA / Confidentiality Agreement	Protection and permitted use of confidential procurement, protocol and technical information.
Data Processing / Data Sharing Agreement	Roles, security controls, cross-border transfers, breach notification, retention, return and deletion.
Material Transfer Agreement	Transfer, permitted use, custody, storage, return/destruction and ownership of biological materials.
Insurance evidence	Coverage appropriate to the products/services and risk, with limits agreed at contract stage.
Intellectual property terms	Background IP, licences, study-specific deliverables, data, improvements and transition rights.

Bidders must identify material contractual assumptions in their proposal. ACRN is not required to accept a bidder's standard terms, click-wrap terms or licence conditions.

13. Confidentiality, Data Privacy and Information Security

- Use procurement and study information only for the permitted purpose and disclose it only to authorised persons with a need to know.
- Do not include unnecessary personal data in a proposal. Where personal data is included, the bidder must have a lawful basis and use appropriate security.
- Service and software providers must comply with applicable data protection laws in all relevant jurisdictions and with the final data processing or data sharing agreement.
- Electronic systems must support appropriate access control, audit trails, data integrity, backup and recovery, secure transmission, vulnerability and incident management, and validated or fit-for-purpose operation as applicable.
- Any actual or suspected loss, unauthorised access, disclosure, alteration, ransomware event or other security incident affecting ACRN, study or participant information must be reported without undue delay and within the contractual incident-notification period.
- Data location, subprocessors, cross-border transfers, retention, return, deletion and transition/exit arrangements must be disclosed and approved where applicable.

14. Quality, Audit and Records

- Suppliers must maintain an effective quality management system appropriate to the lot and must control documents, training, equipment, suppliers, deviations, complaints, recalls, corrective and preventive action, change control and records.
- ACRN may audit or inspect relevant facilities, systems, records and subcontractors before award and during the contract. Regulatory authorities and other authorised parties may exercise access rights where required by law or contract.
- Suppliers must promptly disclose material quality events, recalls, regulatory actions, critical deviations, data integrity concerns, service interruptions and changes that could affect supplied products or services.
- Records must be accurate, attributable, legible, contemporaneous, original or true copies, complete, consistent, enduring and available throughout the contractually required retention period.

15. Business Continuity and Supply Security

The technical proposal must include a concise, non-confidential summary of business continuity arrangements relevant to the offered lot, including alternate supply or testing

capacity, backup utilities, disaster recovery, cyber resilience, key-person coverage, inventory strategy, logistics contingencies and escalation. Detailed plans and sensitive facility information may be requested only during qualification or contract negotiations.

16. Performance Management

Final performance indicators will be agreed by lot in the applicable contract. Expected areas include on-time delivery, order accuracy, product conformity, sample integrity, TAT compliance, system availability, incident response, EQA/IQC performance, CAPA timeliness, data quality, cold-chain compliance and continuity of supply. Targets, reporting frequency, service credits or other remedies will be proportionate to risk and will be finalised at contract stage.

17. Reservation of Rights

To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law and donor requirements, ACRN reserves the right to:

- amend, suspend, extend, cancel or reissue the procurement;
- reject any proposal, reject all proposals, make no award or discontinue negotiations;
- waive or seek correction of immaterial irregularities where doing so does not compromise fairness;
- seek clarifications, verify information, contact references and request presentations, samples, demonstrations or best and final offers;
- award by lot or part of a lot, make single or multiple awards, phase awards, establish framework agreements or retain backup capacity;
- negotiate scope, price, delivery, service levels and contract terms with one or more bidders;
- exclude a bidder for non-compliance, unacceptable risk, integrity concerns, misrepresentation or failure of due diligence;

This RFP is an invitation to submit proposals and is not an offer or promise to contract. ACRN will not be liable for bidder costs or for decisions made in reliance on anticipated award.

18. Document Precedence and Proposal Checklist

If documents conflict, an issued addendum takes precedence over the original RFP and TSD. The final signed contract takes precedence over procurement documents for contract performance.

Checklist item	Included (Yes/No)	Proposal reference
Signed cover letter and authorised signatory evidence		
Bidder information and legal/ownership documents		
Tax and banking evidence		
Relevant quality certificates and accreditation scopes		
Three relevant references or explanation		
Lot-specific technical response and compliance matrix		
Lead times/TAT, capacity and business continuity summary		
Commercial pricing schedule with all assumptions		
Signed integrity, conflict, sanctions and non-collusion declaration		
List of deviations, exclusions and subcontractors		

Appendix R1 — Bidder Information Form

Field	Bidder response
Legal name	
Trading name	
Registration number and jurisdiction	
Registered address	
Primary contact name/title	
Email and telephone	
Website	
Parent company / ultimate beneficial owners	
Lots bid	
Consortium members / subcontractors	
Authorised signatory	

Appendix R2 — Technical Compliance Matrix

Complete one matrix for each lot. Use “Comply”, “Partially comply”, “Do not comply” or “Not applicable”. Cross-reference evidence rather than repeating marketing text.

Requirement ID	Requirement summary	M/D	Bidder response	Evidence / deviation reference

Appendix R3 — Commercial Pricing Schedule

Provide a separate schedule for each lot. Add rows as required. All prices must be in USD and must clearly state whether taxes and delivery are included.

Lot / item or service	Manufacturer / method / UOM	Unit price USD	MOQ or setup fee	Lead time / TAT	Shelf life / validity / notes

Volume-tier pricing (optional but encouraged):

Item/service	Tier 1 qty band	Tier 1 price	Tier 2 qty band	Tier 2 price	Tier 3 qty band	Tier 3 price

Appendix R4 — Bidder Declaration

Declaration: The undersigned, being duly authorised, certifies that the proposal is accurate and complete; the bidder accepts the proposal-validity period; all conflicts, subcontractors, sanctions/debarment matters, regulatory actions and material deviations have been disclosed; the bidder has not engaged in bribery, improper influence, collusion or procurement interference; and the bidder will promptly notify ACRN of any material change.

Field	Completion
Legal name of bidder	
Name and title of authorised signatory	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix R5 — NDA-Controlled Disclosure

The separate document SUPPRESS-LA-NDA-SCHEDULE-001 identifies information that may be provided only after NDA execution or at contract stage. It forms part of the procurement package.