

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR EVENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR THE SARA RAIL CONFERENCE

Procurement No: SARA/ 01/RFP/2023

1. The Southern African Railways Association (SARA) would like to engage a reputable company on an annual framework contract to act as the Event Manager for the international SARA Rail Conference and Exhibition. This is a “self funding project” and therefore the Event Management Services shall cover (i) resource mobilization for Conference funding, (ii) identification of Conference venues, (iii) technical & administrative management including decoration of conference exhibition stands, and (iv) effective engagement and continuous dialogue with Conference/event sponsors, exhibitors, delegates.
2. The SARA now invites experienced and eligible Event Management / Organising firms to submit RFPs via e-mail with clearly referenced subject matter: “SARA/ 01/RFP/2023: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: Provision of Event Management Services”.
3. The RFP must include but not limited to the following information:
 - i. General Profile and background of the firm
 - ii. Trade Licences
 - iii. Contact details (Physical address, Phone number, fax number, email address)
 - iv. Demonstration of experience in successful provision of similar services in the last five years.
 - v. CVs of Key Personal in the Event Management Team
 - vi. At Least 3 Reference Letters.

Note: See **Annexure A** article 4.2: **The Conference Event Manager** under the **FORMAT AND STRUCTURE OF THE RESPONSE TO THE RFP** for more details.

4. Interested firms are required to submit certified copies of their Proposal clearly marked as original and copies. The Technical and Financial proposals must be jointly submitted but, as separately marked complementing documents. The E:mail subject matter which must be CLEARLY stated as “SARA/ 01/RFP/2023: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: Provision of Event Management Services”.
5. Interested firms may obtain detailed Terms of Reference by writing to bcbotana@sararail.org and lmsakanga@sararail.org.
6. The deadline for submission of Proposals is 17hr00 local Harare time (CAT) on Friday 23 June 2023 CAT. Late Bids will not be accepted.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FROM CONFERENCE EVENT MANAGERS (CEM) FOR THE PROVISION OF EVENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR THE ANNUAL SARA RAIL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

KEY DATES	
ACTION	DATE
RFP Released	10 May 2023
Amendment 0001	31 May 2023
Deadline for RFP Questions	15 June 2023
Deadline for Proposals	23 June 2023
Presentation date for shortlisted Firms	13 July 2023
Award date to preferred bidder	20 July 2023
Contract signing and Projected Start Date—Conference and Event Management Support Services	1 August 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

- We have the pleasure to inform you that the Southern African Railways Association (SARA), (the Client) requires the Services of a Conference Event Manager (CEM) for the following assignment:
 - ***PROVISION OF CONFERENCE EVENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR THE ANNUAL SARA RAIL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION***
- You are requested to submit your proposal to provide the above mentioned services by email no later than 17:00 hrs (CAT) on **23rd June 2023** to the email addresses stated below:

sara@sararail.org

or

bcbotana@sararail.org

or

imsakanga@sararail.org

Opportunity Snapshot

- The Southern African Railways Association (SARA) is a regional organization formed through the SADC Protocol on Transport, Communications and Meteorology (PTCM), Article 13.13 as per its constitution whose mandate is to bring about fair intermodal competition among surface transport modes through lobbying for surface transport policy shift to promote intermodal equity between road and rail. It is headquartered in Harare, Zimbabwe. SARA promotes the development of railway industry for its stakeholder, for the

facilitation of regional trade, development and integration towards a sustained SADC economy.

2. In furthering its mandate, the SARA has been hosting the International Railways Conference and Exhibition for more than 10 years. The Conference is a self-funding event and also serves as an alternative source of revenue for the organization. The Conference provides a platform for rail industry stakeholders to share expertise and experiences with the view to improve railway performance and its contribution to regional economic development in line with the provisions of the SADC Protocol on Transport, Communications and Meteorology. As SARA, we are convinced that the Conference outcomes impact positively on regional railways, the railway industry and the regional economy.
3. The purpose of this procurement is to employ support for the conference and event planning required to execute the various events needed for continuity and sustainable hosting of profitable annual SARA International Railways Conference and Exhibition. The scope of the engagement will include event planning, conference management, and a professional approach to producing the most efficient, cost-effective, and technologically advanced events possible.
4. SARA requires a Conference and Event Management (CEM) support services contractor that will establish sound CEM processes and meet its functional, technical, and logistical requirements. Key elements of a successful CEM proposal should include:
 - Provision of a web-based, self-service CEM registration solution
 - Experienced, on-site coordination and management of all conferences and events
 - Ability to coordinate facility logistics, including audio-visual, web broadcast, and social media technologies
5. SARA expects to make one award to a single Contractor. Organizations must provide a pricing proposal that supports the entire scope of work outlined in the RFP. The CEM is expected to undertake the assignment in such a manner that the Conference becomes a major financial resource mobilizing activity for SARA. This means that the CEM must make the Conference to generate profits of such magnitude that it becomes the major financing source of the Association for both the financing of regional priority projects as well as funding the day to day operations of the Association's Secretariat.
6. The CEM must allow SARA to realize significant cost savings; improve employee productivity; and provide a simplified approach to event management through automation, cutting-edge technologies, and hands-on support services.
7. The performance period of this contract is from the start date established in the Notice to Proceed and continue for 12 months subject to renewal for the next year (12months) based on each year's Conference performance evaluation.

Organizational Eligibility

8. Proposals may be submitted by any private sector organization based in the Republic of South Africa.

9. You will find in Attachment “A”, the Terms of Reference (TOR) showing the Scope of Work (SOW) to be conducted and the Services requested from the CEM.
10. You are expected to, among other things, comment on how you intend undertaking the assignment and delivering on the TOR of the assignment, state your relevant qualifications and experience and provide an updated Curriculum Vitae (CV). In addition, please present your Financial Proposal regarding the fees for your services. Please see **Section 4** of the TOR (**Format and Structure of the Response to the RFP**)
11. You are further requested to note that the proposal to be submitted by the CEMs shall be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

a. Staff Qualifications and suitability for the task to be performed	20%
b. Firm Experience in similar assignments as described in the TOR	15%
c. Firm Experience in dealing with Executives/CEOs of different companies	15%
d. Firm Experience in marketing for and sourcing event sponsorships	15%
e. Comprehensiveness of Approach/Methodology/Marketing plan	10%
f. Clarity in the Work Plan and Deliverables	10%
g. Attractiveness of the Financial proposal	10%
h. Knowledge of the transport industry and rail industry in particular	5%
TOTAL SCORE	100%
12. The CEM with the highest marks, and in any case scoring not less than 75%, shall be considered for the assignment. All the CEMs will be ranked and first on the list shall be selected for the provision of the provision of event management services for the annual SARA Rail Conference and Exhibition.
13. The CEM shall meet all the costs associated with their response to this Request for Proposals (RFP)
14. The CEM shall be expected to meet all the costs of visas and other associated costs that may arise in the performance of his/her Services
15. All queries/requests for clarifications on the TOR must be addressed to the email addresses indicated in paragraph 2 above

The Southern African Railways Association takes this opportunity to thank you in advance for your consideration of this RFP and we accordingly look forward to receiving a detailed proposal from you.

Yours faithfully



Babe Botana
Executive Director

ATTACHMENT “A”

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR THE PROVISION OF EVENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR THE ANNUAL SARA RAIL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

1. BACKGROUND

The Southern African Railways Association (SARA) is a non-profit organization with its Secretariat headquartered in Harare, Zimbabwe. The Association was formed in April 1996.

At its formation, SARA was to originally provide the SADC railways with a strong lobbying voice and to pursue advocacy for fair surface transport competition which was to be achieved through “levelling of the playing field” between road and rail in terms of both policy and regulatory regimes. Modal equity was to be achieved by enforcing the User Pays Principle where the road pays the full cost of road infrastructure or infrastructure support to Railways by Governments.

The mandate of SARA is defined in Article 7 of the SADC Protocol on Transport, Communications and Meteorology.

Members of SARA are predominantly railways in the SADC region, some major railway customers and suppliers as well as other organisations with special interest in railways. In line with this broad philosophy, there are three categories of members of the Association. The categories are Full Members who are railways in the SADC region, the Associate Members who are allied to railway industry and Special Members who are organizations or groups with vested interest in the railway industry.

There was a major shift in the SARA strategy in 2004 leading to the review of its functions and strategies. This review was primarily to strengthen SARA’s effectiveness in infrastructure development, commercial, operational and policy activities.

Following this review, SARA’s activities now extend beyond coordination, lobbying and advocacy to initiating and playing a leading role in the implementation of regional projects for the benefit of regional railways. The current strategic focus areas of SARA can be broadly defined as follows:

- ❖ Advocacy and Lobbying

The advocacy agenda pursues funding issues, surface policy equity between road and rail, and creation of an appropriate institutional framework for the transport industry.

- ❖ Infrastructure Development

The infrastructure development includes the generation of additional track capacity through elimination of missing links and upgrading of existing networks.

- ❖ Railway Operations

The main thrust of this strategic focus area involves the alignment of railway operations to be efficient, safe, cost effective, predictable and seamless. This will be achieved through optimal utilisation of resources supported by standardisation and harmonisation of equipment and policies.

❖ Resource Mobilisation

Mobilisation of resources ensures provision of adequate capacity for the Association for it to effectively execute its mandate within a dynamic business environment. Maintenance and rehabilitation of rolling stock is a pre-requisite for meeting growing demand. The resultant effect is expected to be improved services and railway market share.

❖ Marketing and Publicity

Effective projection of SARA will create the much-needed economic space and stakeholder support for railways.

❖ Safety

Management of safety and environmental aspects of railway business imposes additional obligations on the part of railways and has positive effects on service delivery and corporate citizenry.

2. THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE ANNUAL SARA RAIL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

It is worth mentioning that while the Conference is already competing fairly well with some well-established rail conferences in the region, SARA would want to position itself appropriately and consolidate the SARA Rail Conference's position in the market. For the past 11 editions of the Conference however, key railway stakeholders have been the dominant participants. The intention is therefore to open up for meaningful diversity in the Conference stakeholders. See www.sararailconference.org to appreciate scope.

Some of the main objectives of the SARA Rail Conference and Exhibition are outlined below:

- ❖ The SARA Rail Conference and Exhibition is an information and expertise exchange platform where key railway stakeholders interact on an annual basis and 11 editions of this Conference have been held since 2010.
- ❖ The Conference provides a platform for the promotion of strategic alliances with other modes of transport through exchange of technical information for the achievement of synergy and provision of total logistical solutions.
- ❖ The Conference facilitates the development of transport integration strategies
- ❖ The Conference facilitates the development and harmonization of regional transport policies.
- ❖ The Conference provides SARA with opportunities to market itself and lobby policy makers
- ❖ The Conference is a major source of income for the Association with a huge growth potential. It is projected that the Conference and Exhibition must become a major financial resource mobilising activity for SARA in the next five years.

3. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF WORK OF THE CONFERENCE EVENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The Conference Event Management CEM is expected to undertake his/her assignment in such a manner that, over and above the achievement of the above listed major objectives of the Conference, the Conference is expected to become a major financial resource mobilizing activity for SARA. This means that the CEM must make the Conference to generate profits of such magnitude that it becomes the major financing source of the Association for both the financing of regional priority projects as well as funding the day to day operations of the Association's Secretariat.

In terms of specific assignments of the CEM, the expected main activities are described hereunder:

- ❖ Drafting and submission of the Conference budget to ensure maximum profitability for the Client
- ❖ Identification of and concluding deals with event Sponsors and ensuring that enough sponsors are targeted in order to achieve the budget targets and profitability levels to the satisfaction of the Client
- ❖ Management of all supplier interactions
- ❖ Ensuring that all technical requirements of the Client and Sponsors are fully aligned to ensure that the event is a success
- ❖ Marketing, publicising and undertaking appropriate public relations exercise to ensure the conference is widely known to all relevant stakeholders to ensure the event is a success
- ❖ Managing all event invitations and marketing flyers
- ❖ Managing web-based, self-service conference event registration solution
- ❖ Managing and co-ordinating Media coverage and interviews
- ❖ Sourcing and managing event venues
- ❖ Preparing, designing and marketing exhibition site and floor plans to ensure maximum profitability for the Client
- ❖ Identification and management of and concluding deals with Exhibitors and ensuring maximum utilization of floor plans to ensure maximum profitability for the Client
- ❖ Identification, management and confirmation of crowd pulling Speakers for the event to ensure maximum profitability for the Client
- ❖ Managing all VIP delegates including monitoring of RSVPs
- ❖ Preparing and managing all technical, sound and safety requirements from the event venue
- ❖ Managing all the event logistics including registration processes, accreditation, Speakers facilitation arrangements, seating plan, clear labelling, conference packs, time keeping for easy and smooth running of the event programme
- ❖ Arranging, selecting and concluding deals with Catering suppliers for the various segments of the event to ensure maximum profitability for the Client
- ❖ Arrange and manage appropriate décor and entertainment befitting the event to ensure maximum profitability for the Client
- ❖ Managing and coordination of all Conference documentation and presentations
- ❖ Managing and designing of Conference magazine and/or newsletters and ensuring timely publication thereof
- ❖ Managing and designing event programme
- ❖ Preparation and circulation of Weekly Progress Reports for consideration and discussion with the Client

- ❖ Maintaining and submission of the Conference Income and Expenditure statements to the Client
- ❖ Design, administer and manage Conference feedback processes
- ❖ Ensure that a user-friendly database of Sponsors, Exhibitors, Speakers, Delegates, etc. with all necessary contact details is made available to the Client
- ❖ Coordinating and ensuring that Conference “thank you” letters are issued as required to Sponsors, Exhibitors, Speakers, Delegates, etc.

4. FORMAT AND STRUCTURE OF THE RESPONSE TO THE RFP

The CEM is expected to prepare a detailed response to this RFP giving a clearly documented strategy on how he/she expects to deliver the TOR to meet the expectations of the Client. In response to this RFP, the CEM must therefore submit a detailed proposal, with the following elements, for the consideration of the Client:

4.1. Introduction:

This should capture the understanding of the CEM in terms of the requirements of the TORs and the expectations of the Client

4.2. The Conference Event Manager:

This section should give information about the CEM in terms of relevant qualifications, previous relevant experience and engagements. The qualifications & experience of the Firm and, the Event Management Team shall ensure to comply with the following minimum requirements

- 4.2.1 Qualifications of the Firm: The Firm to Manage the SARA Rail Conference should have the following qualifications and experience
- Registered company under the Company’s Act of the Republic of South Africa;
 - A minimum of 5 years industry firm experience with proven and current statutory compliances for trading in the industry;
 - verifiable experience of managing at least 2 similar assignments.

- 4.2.2 Qualifications of the Key Personnel: The key personnel of the Firm to Manage the SARA Rail Conference should include

Team Leader

Education: Must have a minimum of bachelor’s degree in a related field, such as business administration, marketing or communications or similar. Or a related degree or relevant work experience in lieu of a bachelor’s degree. Relevant coursework includes marketing, public relations, business and communications. Certifications & Licences in Conference Management will be an added advantage

Skills: Proven competence in: leadership; time management, problem-solving

Experience: Verifiable experience in managing similar national and international Conferences and events. A minimum of 5 years experience in Conference Event Management.

Support Staff

- At least one staff with Financial Accounting qualification and experience;
- At least one staff with knowledge of audio/visual equipment and production qualification and experience;

- Demonstrated experience of working with high-profile clients and VIPs including international organizations;
- At least one staff with qualification and experience in web design and management;
- At least one staff with a minimum of a certificate in project management qualification;
- Staff with bilingual ability (english, portugues and french) will be an added advantage.

Note: More than one attribute may be possessed by an indivudal key support staff.

4.3. Approach and Methodology:

This section should clearly define and outline the approach, methodology and the marketing strategy/plan to be adopted by the CEM.

4.4. Resource Requirements:

This section must outline the resources that will be engaged by the CEM for the execution of the tasks.

4.5. Work Plan and Deliverables:

This section must give an outline of key milestones and tasks, specific activities and actions as well as work plan with time bound deliverables and clearly defined responsibilities for the parties.

4.6. Financial Proposal:

Under this section a fee structure proposal for the services to be rendered must made clearly indicating when those fees will be due and payable aligned to the Work plan and deliverables as well as aligned to the Income budget. In this section, the CEM is also expected to give an outline of Reimbursable Expenses directly related to the primary business of the Service provider when he/she travels on business outside his/her home Country.

5. REPORTING MODALITIES

The CEM is expected to render his/her event management services from his/her established offices and shall report to the Executive Director of SARA. For periodic review and necessary guidance, the CEM expected to make reports and to guide the sub-committee of the SARA Board which has been established called the SARA Rail Conference Steering Committee which is charged with the responsibility of assisting the SARA Secretariat to ensure that the SARA Rail Conference and Exhibition continues to be a success from year to year.

6. CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

The contractual obligations of the parties will be stipulated in a Contract to be signed between the CEM and the Client. The proposal by the CEM, when finally agreed with the Client, shall be part and parcel of the Contract as an Annexure thereof as an agreed Scope of Work (SOW).