



International
Trade
Centre

Terms of Reference

Provision of Catering Services for the 2nd ECOWAS Startup Awards

28 to 30 September 2026

ECOWAS Commission Headquarters | Airport Road | Abuja | Nigeria

Procurement information	Details
Contracting entity	ECOWAS Commission in collaboration with the International Trade Centre
Reference number	2200345586 MD
Issue date	11.09.2026
Offer submission deadline	18.09.2026
Submission method	mdoua@intracen.org
Contract type	Purchase Order for Catering services for a three-day event
Offer validity	90 days

Vendor action: Read the complete ToR, complete the technical response and the separate Excel financial offer workbook, sign the declarations, and submit every item in the checklist before the deadline.



1 Background and purpose

The 2nd ECOWAS Startup Awards is a regional initiative that promotes innovation, entrepreneurship, digital transformation and private-sector development across ECOWAS Member States. It will convene startups, government representatives, investors, development partners and other stakeholders at the ECOWAS Commission Headquarters in Abuja.

ECOWAS seeks a qualified catering provider to plan, prepare, deliver and serve safe, high-quality meals and refreshments throughout the programme. The provider will manage general participant service and protocol-sensitive VIP and VVIP service in close coordination with the ECOWAS Organising Team and Administration.

2 Objective

The assignment is to deliver reliable, timely and professionally presented catering services for the full event, while accommodating dietary needs, maintaining food safety and hygiene, preventing service disruption and providing transparent, comparable pricing.

3 Procurement basis and assumptions

Item	Bid basis	Instruction to vendors
General attendance	Approximately 500 participants per applicable service	Price using the quantities in the financial schedule.
VIP and VVIP attendance	Provisional maximum of 50 persons	This reconciles the source document references to 40 and 50 guests. Price 50; ECOWAS will confirm the guaranteed count.
Dates	28 to 30 September 2026	Service times will follow the final programme.
Evening cocktail	200 persons on 30 September 2026	Price separately from daily catering.
VVIP holding room	Two Heads of State, about 20 ministers and heads of institutions, plus special dignitaries within the provisional VIP/VVIP ceiling	Submit a separate service concept and unit pricing.

4 Scope of services

4.1 Required service schedule

No.	Service	Date or frequency	Planning quantity	Minimum requirement
1	Morning tea and coffee break	28, 29 and 30 September	500 general + up to 50 VIP/VVIP per day	Tea, coffee, juices and assorted light snacks; separate protocol service as directed.
2	Lunch	28, 29 and 30 September	500 general + up to 50 VIP/VVIP per day	Complete balanced lunch with vegetarian option, beverages and appropriate VIP/VVIP presentation.
3	Evening tea and coffee break	28 and 29 September	500 general + up to 50 VIP/VVIP per day	Tea, coffee, juices and assorted light snacks.
4	Evening cocktail and reception	30 September	200 persons	Alcoholic and non-alcoholic wines, signature non-alcoholic drinks, warm finger foods, substantial items and stationary food displays.



No.	Service	Date or frequency	Planning quantity	Minimum requirement
5	VVIP holding-room reception	As directed during the event	Up to 50 VIP/VVIP	Discreet, continuous light refreshments and beverages, with dedicated attendants and protocol-ready presentation.
6	Water and beverages	All three days	Venue-wide	Continuous replenishment at meeting rooms, dining/service areas and designated protocol spaces.

4.2 Menu planning and dietary requirements

- Submit a complete proposed menu for each service and each day. Avoid repeating the same main meal or snack combination unless justified.
- Provide a mix of West African and international dishes appropriate to the audience, with clearly identified vegetarian and vegan options.
- Identify all common allergens for every item and describe controls to prevent cross-contact. Accommodate medically necessary or religious dietary requirements notified before the agreed cut-off.
- Specify portion sizes, the number of menu choices, beverage brands or specifications, and whether alcoholic beverages are included.
- Arrange a menu review and tasting at no additional cost if requested before award or mobilization. Final menus require written approval.

4.3 Service, staffing and equipment

- Provide an experienced event manager as the single point of contact, supervisors, chefs, service staff, bartenders where applicable, stewards and cleaners in sufficient numbers. Include a staffing plan by service and venue area.
- Supply all preparation, transport, hot- and cold-holding, buffet, beverage, serving and clearing equipment; linens; crockery; cutlery; glassware; chafing dishes; dispensers; trays; waste bins and consumables unless ECOWAS confirms an item is available.
- Set up each service area early enough for inspection and open service at the programme time. Maintain replenishment, table clearing and clean presentation throughout.
- Provide dedicated, appropriately trained personnel and premium table settings for VIP/VVIP areas. Staff assigned to protocol spaces must be briefed on confidentiality and etiquette.
- Coordinate access, loading, storage, power, water and venue restrictions with the Organising Team. The vendor remains responsible for contingency equipment needed to prevent interruption.

4.4 Food safety, hygiene and sustainability

- Comply with all applicable Nigerian food-safety, public-health, labour, fire and environmental requirements and maintain valid licences and certifications.
- Use approved suppliers, potable water and safe ingredients; maintain a documented cold chain and safe holding temperatures from preparation through service.
- Ensure food handlers are medically fit, trained, uniformed and equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment. Maintain handwashing and sanitization controls.
- Retain traceability records and, where required by regulation or agreed with ECOWAS, labelled samples of prepared food for the prescribed period.
- Use reusable service ware where feasible, minimize single-use plastic and food waste, segregate waste and remove all catering waste promptly after each service.



- Immediately report any safety incident, contamination concern, injury or service failure and implement corrective action.

5 Deliverables and acceptance

Deliverable	Due date	Minimum contents and acceptance basis
Technical and financial offer	By submission deadline	Complete documents listed in Section 10; internally consistent and signed.
Inception and catering plan	Within 2 working days of award	Workplan, contacts, menus, sourcing, logistics, staffing, equipment, service layouts, hygiene controls and contingencies.
Menu tasting and finalization	By 27 September 2026	Approved menu, portions, presentation and substitutions documented in writing.
Final operational plan	At least 27 September 2026 hours before first service	Confirmed counts, timing, floor plan, staff roster, access and delivery sequence, dietary register and emergency contacts.
Daily service delivery	28 to 30 September 2026	On-time setup and service; sufficient quantities; compliant quality, hygiene and presentation.
Daily service report	Within 2 hours after each event day	Quantities served, dietary meals, waste, incidents, complaints and corrective action.
Final report and invoice pack	Within 5 working days after the event	Service summary, signed service confirmations, approved variations, final invoice and supporting evidence.

Acceptance will be based on approved menus and plans, conformity with this ToR, actual service observations, signed delivery or service records, and resolution of any documented deficiencies. Payment terms and any service-level deductions must be stated in the solicitation or resulting contract.

6 Contract management and responsibilities

6.1 Vendor responsibilities

- Obtain all permits, insurance and approvals required for its operations.
- Protect the venue and make good any damage caused by its personnel, equipment or subcontractors.
- Keep prices firm except for changes authorized in writing under the contract. No substitution of menu items, brands or key personnel is permitted without prior approval.
- Maintain a backup plan for staff absence, equipment failure, delayed supply, adverse weather and unexpected attendance changes.
- Treat attendee, protocol and dietary information as confidential and use it only for contract delivery.

6.2 ECOWAS responsibilities

- Provide the final programme, access rules, venue layouts and confirmed service times.
- Confirm guaranteed participant counts, VIP/VVIP arrangements and notified dietary requirements by the agreed cut-off.
- Facilitate reasonable venue access and designate authorized representatives for approvals and service confirmation.
- Review submitted plans, menus and deliverables within agreed timelines.



6.3 Site visit and clarifications

Vendors should inspect the venue where a site visit is offered and raise all questions through the procurement contact by the stated clarification deadline. Any information that changes the solicitation will be issued to all vendors through a formal clarification or amendment. Oral guidance does not amend the ToR.

7 Vendor eligibility and minimum qualifications

- Legal registration and authorization to provide catering services in Nigeria, with current tax and regulatory documentation.
- At least 5 years of relevant catering experience and evidence of at least 5 comparable assignments for large conferences, government events or protocol functions.
- Demonstrated operational capacity to serve the stated numbers concurrently, including suitable kitchen arrangements, transport, equipment and trained staff.
- A documented food-safety and hygiene system, valid food-handler documentation and an incident-response procedure.
- Relevant insurance coverage at the levels stated in the solicitation.
- No conflict of interest, prohibited practice or ineligibility under applicable ECOWAS and ITC procurement rules.

8 Technical offer instructions

The technical offer must follow the sequence below and must not contain price information. Vendors should answer each requirement directly and cross-reference supporting attachments.

Section	Required vendor response
A Executive summary	Understanding of the assignment, key commitments and any assumptions.
B Compliance matrix	Complete Annex A with Comply, Partially comply or Do not comply, plus evidence and page references.
C Catering methodology	Food sourcing and preparation, transport, setup, replenishment, clearing, quality control and complaint handling.
D Menus	Day-by-day menus for every service, portions, brands/specifications, vegetarian/vegan alternatives and allergen matrix.
E Staffing and organization	Named event manager, organogram, staff numbers by service, roles, experience and training.
F Logistics and equipment	Kitchen/production location, vehicles, holding equipment, tableware, layouts, backup power/equipment and waste plan.
G Food safety plan	Licences, certifications, HACCP or equivalent controls, temperature monitoring, handler fitness, traceability and incident response.
H Experience and references	Comparable contracts, client, dates, value, attendance, scope and verifiable contact details.
I Workplan and risks	Mobilization schedule, dependencies, risk register and contingency measures.
J Exceptions	A consolidated list of every deviation, qualification or proposed alternative. Silence means full compliance.



9 Evaluation approach

The contracting entity should confirm the final method and weights before issue. A clear two-stage evaluation is recommended: first assess eligibility and mandatory requirements; then score compliant technical offers before opening or comparing financial offers.

Criterion	Recommended weight	Evidence expected
Understanding and methodology	15	Clear, feasible approach tailored to the event and venue.
Menus, quality and dietary coverage	20	Varied menus, portions, presentation, allergen and dietary controls.
Food safety and hygiene	20	Documented system, certificates, monitoring and incident response.
Relevant experience and references	15	Comparable scale, protocol experience and successful references.
Staffing, logistics and equipment	15	Adequate resources, organization, venue flow and backup capacity.
Workplan, sustainability and risk controls	15	Practical schedule, waste reduction and credible contingencies.
Total technical score	100	Minimum technical score: 70/100.

Only offers meeting the mandatory and minimum technical requirements should proceed to financial evaluation. The award methodology, including any technical/financial weighting, arithmetic correction rules, treatment of taxes and tie-breaking process, must be stated in the solicitation. The lowest price alone does not guarantee award.

10 Submission requirements and checklist

No.	Document	Included	Vendor reference or comment
1	Signed offer submission form	☐	
2	Technical offer in the structure in Section 8	☐	
3	Completed technical compliance matrix in Annex A	☐	
4	Day-by-day menus and allergen/dietary matrix	☐	
5	Staffing plan, CVs of key personnel and organization chart	☐	
6	Food-safety, hygiene and contingency plans	☐	
7	Company registration, tax and required licences/certificates	☐	
8	Comparable experience and client references	☐	
9	Signed declarations on eligibility, conflicts and ethical conduct	☐	
10	Completed and signed separate Excel financial offer workbook	☐	
11	Any exceptions or assumptions, consolidated and clearly labelled	☐	



The technical and financial offers should be submitted as separate files by the procurement instructions. File names should include the procurement reference and vendor name. Late, unsigned, materially incomplete or improperly submitted offers may be rejected in accordance with the stated procurement rules.



Annex A Technical compliance matrix

Complete every row. Select one status and provide a concise explanation with the exact page or attachment reference. Add rows for any requirement not already listed.

Ref.	Requirement	Status	Vendor response and evidence	Offer page
4.1	All scheduled services and planning quantities	☐ C ☐ P ☐ N		
4.2	Complete menus, dietary alternatives and allergen information	☐ C ☐ P ☐ N		
4.3	Adequate staffing, equipment, tableware and service arrangements	☐ C ☐ P ☐ N		
4.4	Food safety, hygiene, traceability and waste controls	☐ C ☐ P ☐ N		
5	Deliverables and reporting	☐ C ☐ P ☐ N		
6	Contract management, backup and confidentiality requirements	☐ C ☐ P ☐ N		
7	Eligibility and minimum qualifications	☐ C ☐ P ☐ N		
Other	[Vendor to add requirement]	☐ C ☐ P ☐ N		

Status key: C = Comply; P = Partially comply; N = Do not comply. Every partial or non-compliance must appear in the consolidated exceptions list.



Annex B Reference assignment form

Provide one form for each comparable assignment and attach evidence where available.

Field	Vendor response
Client and country	
Assignment title and contract reference	
Dates and duration	
Contract value and currency	
Peak guests served per service	
Scope, including VIP/VVIP elements	
Vendor role and any subcontractors	
Outcome and relevance to this assignment	
Reference contact name, title, email and telephone	

Annex C Offer submission form

To: ECOWAS Commission

We, the undersigned, offer to provide catering services for the 2nd ECOWAS Startup Awards in accordance with this Terms of Reference and our technical and financial offers. We confirm that we have reviewed the complete solicitation, that our offer is valid for the period stated, and that all information supplied is true and complete.

- We accept the service dates and planning quantities, subject only to the exceptions expressly listed in our offer.
- We have disclosed all actual or potential conflicts of interest and any proposed subcontractors.
- We will comply with applicable law and with the procurement provisions on fraud, corruption, collusion, coercion, obstruction, exploitation, abuse and harassment.
- We understand that the contracting entity is not bound to accept the lowest-priced or any offer and may verify the information and references provided.

Field	Vendor completion
Legal vendor name	
Authorized representative	
Title	
Address	
Telephone and email	
Signature and date	