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**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO** **CONDUCT AN ASSESSMENT OF MONEY LAUNDERING, TERRORIST FINANCING AND ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS LINKED TO MARITIME CRIMINALITY IN THE GULF OF GUINEA**

**BACKGROUND**

1. The wider Gulf of Guinea, stretching from Cape Verde to Angola, is a major transit hub and facilitator of the region’s rapid economic growth which has averaged 7 percent since 2012. The Gulf of Guinea has also become a hub for global energy supplies with significant quantities of all petroleum products consumed in Europe, North America, and Asia transiting this waterway. **This economic boom, however, has come with severe security threats, particularly in the maritime space of the Gulf of Guinea.**

1. The number of attacks on shipping in the Gulf of Guinea is alarmingly high, with the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) reporting a total of 82 piracy incidents and 130 abductions of seafarers, the largest by far in the world. While the trend has abated slightly in 2021, the region remains treacherous, accounting “for all 50 kidnapped crew and the single crew fatality recorded by the IMB” in 2021. **It is assumed that a good many of the robberies from ships are opportunistic, particularly in the larger port areas like Lagos in Nigeria.**
2. A range of different players may be involved, including corrupt members of the security forces and the regional militant groups such as the Niger Delta Avengers, sometimes working in collusion. Much of the stolen oil that is processed in artisanal “bush refineries” is then sold directly to wholesalers, petrol stations, or along the roadside. Though illicit Nigerian petrol products are widely sold to motorists in Benin, Togo, and Nigeria itself, **little is known about the financial circuits underpinning this trade and its links to the wider maritime criminality in the Gulf.**
3. The European Union (EU) is implementing the Support of West Africa Integrated Maritime Security (SWAIMS) programme, in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), as part of the EU Gulf of Guinea Strategy. The strategy recognises that ECOWAS and EU interests are aligned in promoting the security of the region, as the EU has supported security through a number of other similar initiatives. GIABA is the institution of ECOWAS that is responsible for strengthening the capacity of member states towards the prevention and control of money laundering and terrorist financing (ML/TF). It supports the work of National Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs inside each member state in the reporting of suspicious transactions and the follow-up investigations).
4. The SWAIMS programme is a coherent response designed to increase the capacity of security and non-security actors in the fight against maritime crime such as sea piracy, oil theft and illegal fishing. One component focuses on the laundering of the proceeds of crimes committed at sea by criminal networks. **However, the lack of knowledge on financial proceeds of these crimes, as earlier mentioned, impedes effective investigations into piracy, oil bunkering, illegal fishing and the associated incidents of corruption.**
5. The overall objective of this exercise **is to understand the laundering mechanisms by which the financial proceeds from different forms of maritime crime enter the economy, and the significance and impact these financial flows have in regional economies.** The research should further identify the nodal points where criminal groups engaging in maritime crime connect with the formal economy.
6. In view of the above, GIABA now plans to recruit Individual Consultants to conduct country-specific studies on money laundering, terrorist financing and illicit financial flows linked to maritime criminality in the Gulf of Guinea.

**Nature of the Assignment**

1. The Nature and scope of the assignment is as follows:

* Situation analysis of maritime criminality in West Africa, including a description of the different types of criminal economies and the different actors involved ;
* Identification of country-specific case examples that uncover the linkages between the maritime criminality and illicit financial flows in the region ;
* Clear identification of the operational gaps in each country’s responses to maritime criminality and associated illicit financial flows; and
* Formulation of policy and operational recommendations on how to effectively address the identified challenges;
* Assess the gender dimension, taking into account the impact that these criminal actions have on, and the role played in criminal networks by men and women respectively.

**Sequence of deliverables**

1. The Individual Consultant is expected to produce a minimum of 50-pages report, excluding attachments and references in accordance with the following timeline:

* An inception report to be submitted **two (02) weeks after signing** the contract;
* First draft report to be submitted to GIABA Secretariat **within two (02) months after** submitting the inception report;
* GIABA Secretariat to review and revert to country researcher in a maximum deadline **of one month from receiving** the first draft report;
* Second draft report to be submitted to GIABA Secretariat **two (02) weeks after** receiving the comments from the GIABA Secretariat.

1. Individual Consultants are hereby invited to express interest in providing the above services. Interested Consultants must submit their expression of interest accompanied with their Curriculum Vitae, indicating that they are qualified to perform the services. Applicants are further required to **submit a brief (one-page maximum) on how they understand the assignment** **and how they plan to go about it**. They are also encouraged to support their application with any further information, where they exist (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in similar contexts, etc.).
2. Consultants will be selected in full compliance with the ECOWAS Procurement Code. A lump sum of **five thousand US dollars ($5000)** shall be paid to the consultant, subject to the terms of a mutually agreed contract.
3. Expressions of interest must be delivered by e-mail to the address below by **Thursday 30 September 2021** noon GMT, with the consultancy title clearly identified on the submission.

**The Director General**

Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA)

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