



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Integrated Electoral Management System (IEMS) Programme Design and Feasibility Consultancy

Commissioning modality: NEC direct commissioning

Duration: 28 working days

Start: 21 July 2026



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1. Background

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) of Somaliland has conducted national elections since 2002—presidential elections in 2003, 2010, 2017 and 2024 (along with political party elections), parliamentary elections in 2005 and 2021, and local council elections in 2002, 2012 and 2021. NEC operated an IRIS-based biometric voter registration system (IBVR) since 2016 and with biometric verification (BVVS) at polling stations in 2024. The independent systems audit (June 2024) found the 2016 system at end-of-life and recommended replacement, not repair; the 2025 assessments, NEC's post-election evaluation, the departmental challenges register and the 2024 institutional capacity assessment confirmed material data-integrity weaknesses in the voter register, disconnected modules across registration, update, verification, card printing and results tabulation, and operational service-delivery gaps (detailed findings at Annex A). On this evidence NEC adopted the Concept Note on the New Voter Registration System and Integrated Electoral Management System (IEMS) Direction: replace rather than repair, beginning with fresh voter registration as the first module of a full Integrated Electoral Management System (IEMS), sequenced over 27 months to the October 2028 Parliamentary and Local Council elections. As part of this direction, NEC is transitioning to on-the-spot card printing and issuance at the point of registration, requiring the IEMS to support real-time online deduplication, printing and card issuance.

Thus, NEC requires a technical feasibility study before procurement; this TOR commissions that study. The direction is decided. This consultancy does not revisit whether Somaliland should adopt an IEMS or which registration model to use. It determines how the approved direction is implemented: the institutional reforms required, the technical architecture, the investment, the procurement approach, the implementation roadmap, and the management of risk.

2. Objectives

The consultancy delivers an implementation-ready programme design package enabling the Commission to (a) adopt an IEMS Transformation Blueprint, (b) approve a costed, evidence-based feasibility study and business case, and (c) launch procurement on a complete tender-ready documentation set.

Specific objectives:

1. Assess current hardware and infrastructure by physical inspection (BVVS kits, registration kits, servers, network, storage, *server room*, software and licensing), determining condition, remaining useful life and an upgrade/replacement recommendation per asset class, and establish the capability maturity baseline.
2. Design the future state: business processes, target operating model, and the voter registration model confirmed by the Concept Note, including the transition to on-the-spot card printing and issuance and the real-time online deduplication this requires.
3. Produce the enterprise architecture, IEMS module catalogue, enterprise data model, interoperability framework, and functional, non-functional, cybersecurity, data governance and data protection requirements.
4. Conduct a market assessment of commercial, cloud, on-premises and hybrid IEMS solutions with full source-code handover required to avoid vendor lock-in—indicative pricing, and a defensible ten-year total cost of ownership.
5. Deliver the IEMS Transformation Blueprint, feasibility study and business case, including the challenge traceability matrix and legacy data policy.
6. Draft the tender document: technical, hardware and software specifications; indicative bill of quantities; vendor qualification and evaluation criteria including a pre-award demonstration stage; and service level, ownership, *full source-code handover*, warranty and knowledge-transfer requirements.
7. Create the IEMS system *implementation roadmap and deployment timeline*.
8. Establish the programme governance model, capacity and staffing transition plan, and benefits realization plan.
9. Assess and recommend the shift from server room to a comprehensive data centre.
10. Review the voter registration lifecycle from enrolment through verification to on-the-spot card issuance, including the real-time online deduplication this requires. (*see D3 — future voter registration model*)

3. Scope of work

3.1 Phase 1 — Inception and desk review

- Kick-off meeting with the Commission, Director General and NEC counterpart team.
- Review of the complete knowledge base and evidence-gap protocol (Annex A).
- Evidence synthesis: consolidated findings from the KPMG assessments, post-election evaluation, challenges register and observation reports—the consultancy builds on this record and does not repeat completed analysis.
- Validation of the IEMS Transformation Vision with the Commission.
- Methodology, work plan, stakeholder engagement plan and data collection instruments.

Output: **Deliverable 1 (Inception report).**



3.2 Phase 2—Field assessment

- **Stakeholder consultations:** Commissioners, NEC departments, regional electoral officers (if needed), political parties task force, the Ministry of Interior and telecommunications companies.
- **Physical inspection of ICT infrastructure:** server room, servers, network, storage, BVVS kits, registration kits, printers, peripherals, software and licensing, including assessment of connectivity and infrastructure readiness for real-time online deduplication and on-the-spot card printing and issuance.
- Business process observation across the departments in the challenges register.
- Capability maturity scoring with NEC counterpart input.
- Debriefing current state and capability assessment with stakeholders before leaving the field.

Output: **Deliverable 2 (Current state and capability assessment).**

3.3 Phase 3—Analysis, design and reporting

- Parallel workstream production of deliverables 3–9 under a single integration editor.
- Draft IEMS Transformation Blueprint, feasibility study and business case (day 22).
- Validation workshop with NEC and stakeholders.
- Final versions of all deliverables and final presentation to the Commission (virtual), by day 28.

Output: **Deliverables 3–10.**

NEC has a comprehensive existing legal framework that already permits the IEMS direction; no legal gap analysis or legal reform work is in scope. The consultancy team focuses exclusively on the IEMS programme design: institutional, technical, procurement and implementation aspects.

The 28-working-day duration is fixed and feasible only through the parallel workstreams and expert-day commitments in Section 5; the consultant's work plan must demonstrate this explicitly. Residual schedule risk rests with the Commission's scheduling decision.

4. Deliverables, components and acceptance criteria

The consultancy delivers ten integrated deliverables, summarised below with due date, payment linkage, components and acceptance criteria.

No.	Deliverable / components	Acceptance criteria
D1	Inception report Work plan; methodology; evidence synthesis; IEMS Transformation Vision (Commission-validated); stakeholder engagement plan; data collection instruments.	Work plan names an expert per task per day and proves parallel-track feasibility; evidence synthesis cites every knowledge-base document or records why not relevant; Vision bears Commission validation record.
D2	Current state and capability assessment Capability maturity assessment (8 capabilities, 1–5 scale, current/target, evidence-scored); institutional readiness; as-is process review; ICT infrastructure and asset assessment with condition, remaining life and upgrade/replace recommendation per asset class; hardware lifecycle strategy; stakeholder consultation report.	Every asset class physically inspected or sampling justified; every maturity score cites evidence; every stakeholder group listed with date and participants; upgrade-vs-replace stated per asset class with cost basis.
D3	Future state design Future process maps; BPR recommendations; target operating and capability model; future voter registration model (continuous plus mass campaign, per Concept Note, including the transition to on-the-spot card printing and issuance and the real-time online deduplication this requires); electoral operations recommendations (results, candidate/party management, election calendar, GIS, polling operations).	Every future process map traces to an as-is process and a challenge; registration-model arithmetic reconciles with Concept Note capacity scenarios or states why revised.
D4	Enterprise architecture and requirements Enterprise architecture; IEMS module catalogue (purpose, users, functions, I/O, dependencies, interfaces, priority, phase, cost/effort); enterprise data model; interoperability framework; functional, non-functional, integration, cybersecurity, data governance and data protection requirements, including requirements for real-time online deduplication supporting on-the-spot card printing and issuance.	Module catalogue covers all Concept Note modules; every requirement numbered, testable and traceable; data model defines ownership, lifecycle and retention; interoperability framework claims no integration with systems that do not yet exist.



No.	Deliverable / components	Acceptance criteria
D5	Market assessment Vendor scan (commercial, cloud, on-premise, hybrid — <i>all requiring full source-code handover</i>); indicative pricing; ten-year TCO with sustainability analysis.	At least eight vendors/solutions profiled against the module catalogue, <i>each confirming full source-code handover</i> ; TCO separates capital from recurring cost with licence, hosting, maintenance and support lines and sources for every price point.
D6	IEMS Transformation Blueprint, feasibility study and business case Vol.1 Blueprint (vision, target architecture, operating model, capabilities, governance, investment plan, roadmap, benefits, risks). Vol.2 Feasibility study and business case (bilingual executive summary; business case; challenge traceability matrix; legacy data policy; register remediation and disposal plan; consolidated risk register).	Blueprint readable standalone by Commissioners in under one hour; every module justified by a traceability-matrix row; workshop comments dispositioned in a comment log.
D7	Procurement package: technical, hardware and software specifications Procurement strategy comparing five models (COTS, open source, hybrid, custom, government-owned) — <i>every model culminates in the required tender-ready package</i> ; Statement of Requirements; draft tender document; technical, hardware and software specifications; indicative bill of quantities; vendor qualification and evaluation criteria with mandatory pre-award demonstration stage; service level, ownership, <i>full source-code handover</i> , warranty and knowledge-transfer requirements.	Requirements chain unbroken from business requirement to tender clause; tender issuable with only dates and contacts to complete; evaluation methodology scores the demonstration stage; ownership, <i>full source-code handover</i> , open API, exit and lock-in safeguards appear as contract conditions.
D8	IEMS system implementation roadmap Phased rollout plan validating the 27-month schedule; timeline; dependency matrix; critical path; quick wins; pilot strategy including the registration-rate field test protocol; national rollout strategy.	Critical path names every dependency including the funding decision; field test protocol specifies sample size, sites, duration and decision rule; includes a compression scenario for a changed election date.
D9	Governance, change, capacity and benefits framework Programme governance model (Board, Commission, DG, ICT Steering Committee, PMO, vendor, independent QA, escalation path); change management strategy; capacity and staffing transition plan; training plan framework; stakeholder engagement strategy; benefits realization plan; future capability register (post-2028, excluded from current procurement).	Every governance body has stated membership, mandate, cadence and decision rights; staffing plan is costed and phased; every benefit has a named NEC owner and measurable indicator with baseline.
D10	Validation workshop and final presentation Validation workshop with NEC and stakeholders; final presentation to the Commission; consolidated recommendations and decision log.	Workshop attendance includes all NEC departments in the challenges register plus party and civil society representatives; decision log states each Commission decision with options and consequence.

5. Team composition and qualifications

The assignment may be delivered by a firm or a constituted team of individual experts. All experts are based in Hargeisa for the full field assignment and perform the committed work themselves; sub-delegation to personnel not named in the proposal is not permitted. Field days (Phase 2) are scheduled for concurrent, not sequential, specialist deployment, so days below reflect overlapping travel and site work, not separate visits.

Role	Days	Phase allocation	Minimum qualifications
Team Leader / Voter Registration Specialist (integration editor)	28	Phases 1–3 (days 1–28)	- Relevant Qualification in ICT, information systems or related field; 15+ years in electoral technology or voter registration. - Led at least 2 EMB voter-registration or technology assignments, including 1 biometric or IEMS programme. - Produced at least 1 national blueprint, feasibility study, business case or tender package. - Sole integration editor; accountable for D1–D10 consistency, evidence traceability and human oversight of AI and biometric decisions.



Role	Days	Phase allocation	Minimum qualifications
			• Demonstrated experience converting biometric accuracy, AI-governance, interoperability and security requirements into at least 1 tender-ready procurement package. • Provide 2 verifiable client references, including 1 EMB and 1 biometric identity or ABIS assignment.
Enterprise Architect (Biometrics)	24	Phase 1 (days 2–5); Phases 2–3 (days 6–25)	• 10+ years in enterprise architecture; TOGAF or equivalent. • Designed at least 1 national-scale voter-registration, national-ID or public-sector identity architecture. • Direct iris-led ABIS experience covering enrolment, 1:N deduplication, candidate generation and human adjudication. • AI integration focal point; must define testable accuracy metrics, AI decision boundaries, iris interoperability, open APIs, template portability and vendor-exit requirements. • Defined measurable ABIS acceptance thresholds in at least 1 deployment or procurement, including FMR/FNMR, FPIR/FNIR, failure-to-enroll, liveness and throughput. • Applied recognized iris interchange standards and delivered documented API, template-portability and data-migration requirements for at least 1 system.
Hardware and Data Centre Specialist	18	Phase 2 (days 6–12); Phase 3 (days 13–23)	• 10+ years in ICT hardware, data-centre and enterprise infrastructure. • Designed or assessed at least 1 secure data centre supporting biometric or sensitive public-sector data. • Practical experience with iris capture kits, printers, power, connectivity and field operating conditions. • Must produce quantified ABIS and AI capacity, storage, availability, backup, disaster-recovery and lifecycle requirements. • Produced at least 1 quantified capacity model for 500,000+ biometric identities or a technically comparable ABIS and AI workload. • Defined and tested availability, RTO/RPO, encrypted backup, disaster recovery and secure device-lifecycle controls for at least 1 sensitive system.
Cybersecurity and Networking Specialist	9	Phase 2 (days 9–12); Phase 3 (days 18–22)	• 10+ years in security and network architecture; NIST CSF or ISO 27001. • Secured at least 1 election, national-ID, biometric or comparable high-risk public-sector system. • Oversaw at least 1 penetration test, vulnerability assessment or red-team exercise. • Must define zero-trust controls, AI and biometric threat protection, encryption, PKI/HSM key management, iris-template protection, immutable logging and incident response. • Implemented biometric cryptography using PKI/HSM controls, key rotation, separation of duties and auditable key administration in at least 1 system. • Assessed biometric attack paths, including image injection, device tampering, template theft, insider abuse, AI-model compromise and vendor remote access.

Total committed input: 79 *expert-days* delivered in the field within the 28-working-day assignment through parallel and overlapping working. The consultant's work plan (D1) presents the expert-day schedule against this allocation; any deviation requires the NEC's written approval.



6. Methodology requirements

These are mandatory conditions the applicant's own proposed methodology (submitted per Section 11 and scored per Section 10) must satisfy; they are not a substitute for that methodology.

- **Evidence discipline:** every finding, recommendation and requirement cites its evidence source; a challenge traceability matrix is maintained from the inception report onward.
- **Build on the record, don't repeat it:** the systems audit, institutional capacity assessment, KPMG assessments, post-election evaluation and challenges register are accepted inputs; the consultancy verifies and extends them.
- **Standards and principles:** recommendations align with IFES, International IDEA, ACE and UNDP guidance and with TOGAF, NIST CSF and ISO 27001 as applicable, adapted to Somaliland's context rather than applied mechanically. Programme principles apply throughout—institutional reform before automation, process improvement before digitisation, election integrity before convenience, sustainability before innovation, evidence before assumptions, simplicity before complexity, vendor independence, open standards, and security and privacy by design and any other context related standards.
- **Consultation and integration:** findings affecting a department are validated with that department before the draft feasibility study; political parties task force and NEC are consulted on register-sharing and transparency provisions; one editor (the Team Leader) owns terminology and consistency across all ten deliverables, and contradictory deliverables are not accepted.
- **Proposed timeline:** Based on the baseline duration (28 days) consultant is expected to submit detailed timeline with explicit deliverables and due date based on the assignment needs. Final duration will be approved during the inception.

7. Institutional arrangements and reporting

Commissioning authority is the NEC, through the Director General, to whom the consultant reports. A NEC counterpart team—ICT/voter registration, operations, finance, HR and communications—is appointed before contract signature; it provides documents and access under the evidence-gap protocol (Annex A), joins field inspections, reviews deliverables and recommends acceptance. Counterpart participation is a capacity-development mechanism, not only quality control.

The consultant submits a bi-weekly written progress summary to the NEC and Director General (work completed, blockers, decisions required) and a mid-assignment briefing to the Commission at the end of Phase 2. The consultancy is advisory: all decisions remain with the NEC, and the consultant has no authority to represent NEC to third parties.

8. Inputs provided by NEC

NEC provides: the complete knowledge base and evidence-gap protocol (Annex A) at contract signature and during inception, with a declaration of documents that do not exist so the consultant prices data collection rather than discovering gaps mid-assignment; access to premises, the *server room* and warehouses; scheduling of stakeholder consultations, the validation workshop and meeting facilities; and counterpart team availability per Section 7. NEC delays in providing inputs extend deadlines day-for-day but do not increase the fee.

9. Contract type and payment schedule

Lump-sum contract, deliverable-based. Payments:

Milestone	Percentage	Acceptance condition
Milestone 1	20%	Acceptance of D1 (inception report).
Milestone 2	40%	Acceptance of D2, D3, D4 and D5 and submission of draft D6.
Milestone 3	40%	Acceptance of all final deliverables including the validation workshop and final presentation (D6–D10).

The consultant bears its own travel, subsistence, insurance and equipment costs within the lump sum. NEC provides no advance payment.

10. Selection under direct commissioning

NEC commissions this assignment directly from a firm or constituted team of experts. Before award, NEC and the Director General documents: the justification for direct commissioning; compliance with the qualification requirements in Section 5; a CV compliance check against each role's minimum qualifications; a technical proposal review confirming the work plan demonstrates



parallel-workstream feasibility within 28 working days (and proposed timeline from the consultants) with full field presence; and a fee-reasonableness assessment against the deliverables scope. The award record is retained for audit.

If NEC invite more than one candidate, applications are evaluated against the marking scheme below. Entity-level credentials without named experts score nothing.

Evaluation criterion	Weight
Technical proposal	75%
Key experts' qualifications and experience (subtotal)	50%
— General qualifications	10%
— General voter registration experience	10%
— Relevant and specialist competence and experience	35%
Methodology	20%
Financial proposal	25%
Total	100%

11. Submission of applications

Applicants (firms or constituted teams of individual experts) submit a technical proposal and financial proposal in separate, clearly labelled files, comprising: a proposed methodology addressing the requirements in Section 6; a work plan demonstrating parallel-workstream baseline feasibility within the 28 working days (and proposing timeline); CVs of all named experts mapped to the roles in Section 5; at least two reference EMB technology, feasibility or programme design assignments completed in the last ten years; and a lump-sum financial proposal against the deliverables in Section 4.

Submission item	Placeholder / required information
Submission deadline	18/8/2026; 17:00 East African Time
Submission email	procurementnec6@gmail.com , dg@slnec.com ; cc: saeedmosman11@gmail.com , timacade463@gmail.com , musahassany@hotmail.com
Subject line	Application - NEC IEMS Feasibility Study Consultancy - [Applicant/Firm Name]
Contact for clarification	Same email as submitted to
Format	Technical and financial proposals in PDF; CVs and supporting documents attached separately.
Tender opening date	Each applicant password-protects both the technical and financial proposal files and submits the passwords separately to the Commission; passwords are to send at 11:00 a.m. East African Time on 19/08/2026.

Late, incomplete or non-compliant submissions are not evaluated. NEC may request clarification from an applicant during evaluation but not a change of substance to the proposal.

12. Confidentiality, data protection and IP

- All NEC data and documents are confidential; the consultant signs a confidentiality undertaking at contract signature.
- Voter data encountered during the assignment is accessed read-only, on NEC premises or NEC-controlled systems, and never copied off NEC infrastructure.
- NEC owns all intellectual property in all deliverables and working materials.
- No public statements about the assignment without the NEC's written approval.

Annex A. Available document to the consultants for desk review

Provided to the consultant at for desk review; the consultancy builds on these documents and does not re-perform their analysis.

- NEC Concept Note—New Voter Registration System and IEMS Direction (decision paper)
- KPMG—Comprehensive assessment of Somaliland's biometric voter registration system (April 2025)
- KPMG—Options and feasibility analysis (April 2025)
- NEC Strategic Plan (2025)
- Independent Systems Audit and Review—R. McDermott (June 2024)



- Institutional Capacity Assessment of NEC (2024)
- NEC Post-Election Evaluation Report (December 2024)
- NEC challenges register (all departments December 2024)
- Creative Associates—Somaliland Voter Registration Options Analysis (2014)
- Election observation reports 2016–2024 (domestic and international)