Call for Expression of interest:
Development of the TB Laboratory manual for Global Laboratory Initiative (GLI) Consultants.

BACKGROUND

Strengthening TB laboratory services is one of the best means for overall improvement of laboratories as an essential part of health systems. Fundamental to this activity is collaboration between TB control programs and public health laboratory services at country level. Adequate laboratory capacity consists of several essential elements that must be addressed simultaneously within comprehensive strategies and national plans.

An unprecedented effort to improve and expand TB laboratory capacity is under way, spearheaded by WHO and the Stop TB Partnership Global Laboratory Initiative and its network of international collaborators (http://www.stoptb.org/wg/gli). At the same time, research on new TB diagnostic tools has been accelerated, and the diagnostic pipeline is expanding rapidly. Establishing, equipping and maintaining laboratory networks is challenging, complex and expensive. The introduction of new techniques is bound to fail if the core elements of laboratory services are not addressed at the same time. These include:

- laboratory infrastructure, appropriate bio-safety measures and maintenance;
- equipment validation and maintenance;
- specimen transport and referral mechanisms;
- management of laboratory commodities and supplies;
- laboratory information and data management systems;
- laboratory quality management systems; and appropriate, adequate strategies and funding for human resources.

Through WHO and the GLI, an extensive range of laboratory strengthening policy guidance and other TBCAP/TBCARE tools have been developed but awareness of these resources is not always made available to laboratory consultants providing technical assistance and guidance to National TB Programs. The GLI has established a roster of consultants who are familiar with GLI tools and WHO policy guidance but many consultants continue to provide sometimes conflicting advice to countries on TB laboratory strengthening. This project proposes to develop a simple TB laboratory consultant’s manual which contains important key messages on major aspects for TB laboratory strengthening including WHO policy guidance on new diagnostics, quality assurance and bio-safety in a concise easy to read format. The manual would be made available to all Stop TB Partnership partners providing technical advice on TB laboratories to help standardize the advice being delivered at country level.
The manual will be structured according to the following chapter titles.

A. Preface  
B. Organizations  
C. Pre-visit questionnaire  
D. Diagnostic technologies endorsed by WHO  
E. Laboratory Quality Management Systems  
F. Biosafety Guidance  
G. Approaches for lasting improvement  
H. Planning for follow-up  
I. Funding Mechanisms  
J. List of resources (Appendix)

**Adjudication of this Expression of Interest**

The closing date for the submission of the Expression of Interest is **09th November 2012** and the timeline for submitting the final manual will be **15th March 2013**.

Any requests for clarification on technical matters concerning this call for Expression of Interest should be addressed in writing to gli_secretariat@who.int ahead of the closing date.