

TERMS OF REFERENCE

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME ON STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION FOR SMES TO ENHANCE MARKET ENTRY INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Relevant background

The CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), signed in 2008, aimed to enhance trade and investment between CARIFORUM states (The Caribbean Community and the Dominican Republic) and the European Union (EU). Despite its goals and the market access provided under this agreement, CARIFORUM's exports to the EU are increasing marginally. This highlights a significant challenge faced by CARIFORUM firms, especially SMEs, in accessing the EU market due to factors like small market size, production capacity, and technical barriers.

Caribbean Export, the regional agency supporting SMEs in export development, has focused on improving SMEs' technical capacity through various initiatives under European Development Fund (EDF) programmes. These initiatives include meeting international standards, addressing phytosanitary requirements, packaging, labelling, and certifications vital for EU market access. Caribbean Export has also facilitated Caribbean firms' participation in international trade shows, expanding their global reach and potential.

The Agency is currently implementing the Global Gateway Regional Private Sector Development Programme III (RPSDP). The overall objective of the RPSDP is to increase employment creation, inclusiveness, and overall poverty reduction in CARIFORUM countries through targeted interventions that provide new and innovative frameworks for growth and development. A critical component of this programme is the enhancement of the Caribbean private sector's technical competencies. This will be accomplished through the proposed Standards and Certification Programme which will address the challenges faced by SMEs through regional workshops and a technical support programme, focusing on international mandatory and voluntary certifications, as well as packaging and labelling standards. By improving access to these certifications, the programme seeks to boost the competitiveness of Caribbean SMEs for the global market.

The CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) and the National Standards Bureaus have been identified as partners under this initiative. Technical experts will provide tailored support, workshop materials, and guidance on certification processes, ensuring SMEs receive comprehensive assistance to navigate international trade complexities.

It is envisaged that the Standards and Certification Programme will leverage EPA opportunities and address the challenges faced by Caribbean SMEs in penetrating the EU market. Moreover, the programme will also focus on creating strategic business to business (B2B) linkages between Caribbean firms and EU counterparts with the aim of fostering trade and investment flows.

By focusing on standards, certifications, and market linkages, this programme of work aims to unlock the Caribbean private sector's potential, driving sustainable economic growth and development.

1.1 Contracting Authority

The contracting authority for this assignment is the Caribbean Export Development Agency.

1.2 Beneficiary Countries

The primary beneficiaries under this project are the private sector SMEs in CARIFORUM countries: (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and, Trinidad and Tobago).

1.3 Target Groups

The primary target groups for this program are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) within the Caribbean region.

2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE AND EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1 Overall Objective

The overall objective of the Standards and Certification Programme is to enhance the global competitiveness of Caribbean SMEs by equipping them with the necessary certifications and technical knowledge required to access and succeed in the EU market. This programme will be undertaken in two phases.

Phase 1: Capacity Building Workshops

- Design and deliver workshops to raise awareness among SMEs about the importance of international standards and certifications.

Phase 2: Technical Assistance Program

- Provide targeted technical assistance to SMEs, helping them achieve the necessary certifications and comply with EU market requirements.
- Work with SMEs to create action plans addressing their specific challenges in obtaining certification.

2.2 Specific Objectives

- To provide capacity-building training focused on the importance of international standards and certifications in the export process.
- To enhance SMEs' understanding and compliance with packaging, labeling, and sanitary and phytosanitary standards required for the EU market.

2.3 Purpose of consultancy and expected results

The purpose of the consultancy is to deliver specialized training and technical assistance that will enable Caribbean SMEs to achieve the necessary certifications and meet the compliance requirements for the EU market. The expected results include:

- Increased awareness and understanding among Caribbean SMEs of the importance of international standards and certifications.
- Enhanced technical capacity of SMEs, enabling them to obtain necessary certifications and comply with EU market regulations.

- Strengthened market access for Caribbean SMEs through improved compliance with international standards and successful certification.

3. ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS AND MITIGATION

3.1 Assumptions

- Caribbean SMEs have the basic infrastructure and willingness to engage in the process of obtaining international certifications and improving their compliance with EU standards.
- There will be active participation and cooperation from key stakeholders, including SMEs, government agencies responsible for standards and quality assurance, and regional organizations such as CROSOQ.
- The necessary financial and technical resources will be available throughout the duration of the program to support the capacity-building and technical assistance initiatives.

3.2 Risks

- SMEs may lack the capacity or resources to fully implement the changes necessary to achieve certifications or meet compliance standards.
- Low participation or engagement from SMEs due to perceived complexity or cost of the certification processes.
- External factors, such as changes in EU market regulations or global economic conditions, may impact the program's effectiveness.

3.3 Mitigation

- To mitigate the risk of limited SME capacity, the program will provide targeted technical assistance tailored to the specific needs and capabilities of each SME.
- Regular communication and coordination with certification bodies and other stakeholders will be maintained to ensure smooth and timely implementation of the program.
- The program will include a flexible design that allows for adjustments based on changing market conditions or regulatory updates to maintain relevance and effectiveness.

4. SCOPE OF WORK

4.1 Specific Activities

Caribbean Export is seeking the professional services of a consultant/ firm who will be responsible for implementing phase 1 of the Standards and Certification Programme. This phase will be focused on implementing a comprehensive technical capacity building programme focused on standards and certification for the private sector in CARIFORUM.

To achieve the objectives of this consultancy, the consultant will be required to undertake the following activities:

Research and Analysis

- Conduct research on EU market access requirements, focusing on packaging, labeling, and certification standards, particularly for pre-packaged food products.
- Analyze the current capabilities of Caribbean SMEs in relation to these standards and identify areas for improvement.

Capacity Building Workshops

- Customise existing training materials covering key topics for food safety, packaging and labeling, sanitary and phytosanitary regulations and other technical standards/certifications.
- Design and deliver four capacity building exercises to raise awareness among SMEs about the importance of international standards and certifications. Workshop locations will be decided in consultation with Caribbean Export, and will be for a maximum of 30/35 participants over 3 days, in person.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Monitor SME progress throughout the program, providing ongoing support and making adjustments as needed.
- Prepare detailed progress reports, including recommendations for follow-up activities and improvements.

5. DELIVERABLES and REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Management Structure

The Executive Director will retain overall responsibility for the overall project. Day-to-day supervision of this specific programme is the responsibility of the Manager (Ag.), Competitiveness and Export Promotion, who will communicate progress to the Executive Director. Additionally, the Manager, or designated representative, will act as the primary point of contact between the consultant and any other stakeholders involved in the program, including regional organizations such as CROSQ.

5.2 Reporting

Report outlining key activities undertaken, progress made and results achieved must be submitted to Ms. Mikaela Stoute, Export Development and Promotion Officer at mstoute@carib-export.com and copied to Mrs. Natasha Edwin-Walcott, Manager (Ag)- Competitiveness and Export Promotion at nwalcott@carib-export.com.

6. Logistics and Timing

6.1 Commencement date and period of implementation of tasks

The consultancy is expected to be completed over a period of six (6) months, the expected start date is October 2024. Four countries will be selected for the capacity building workshops in consultation with Caribbean Export.

7. Payment Terms

All services must be completed to the satisfaction of the Agency and payments will be contingent on submission and approval of the progress report and appropriate invoice. Payments will be made in accordance with the terms and conditions outlined in the contract between the contracting authority and the consultant.

The following payment terms are proposed:

- Upon presentation and acceptance of Report 1, 30% of the total cost will be paid
- Upon presentation and acceptance of Report 2, 50% of the total cost will be paid
- Upon presentation and acceptance of Report 3, 20% of the total cost will be paid

8. REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Qualifications and Work Experience

This consultancy requires the services of a key expert. The appointed consultant must meet the following minimum requirements:

- A postgraduate degree in at least one of the following relevant fields of study: trade policy, engineering or natural sciences.
- At least five (7) years' experience in the field of Quality infrastructure.
- Knowledge of relevant international standards including; ISO standards as well as voluntary sustainability standards.
- Demonstrated knowledge of EU market access requirements, including technical barriers to trade, labelling and packaging regulations/requirements for market access.
- Demonstrated knowledge of the CARIFORUM- EU Economic Partnership Agreement.
- Demonstrated experience working in the Caribbean and with CARIFORUM SMEs
- A minimum of five (5) years' experience in delivering professional training to SMEs.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Excellent command of written and spoken English.
- Excellent technical and report-writing skills.

8.2 WORK EXPERIENCE

- At least 7 years of relevant professional experience

Required Documentation

- Technical proposal/concept design for delivery of services requested.
- Financial proposal in EURO
- Applicant Declaration form in paragraph 12.

Required documentation should be submitted to Ms. Mikaela Stoute, Export Promotion and Development Officer at with a copy to Mrs. Natasha Edwin- Walcott Manager (Ag) Competitiveness and Export Promotion nwalcott@carib-export.com no later than **4:00pm AST on 30th September, 2024**

8.3 Office Accommodation

N/A

8.4 Facilities to be provided by the consultant

N/A

8.5 Equipment

The consultant is expected to utilize resources to ensure the adequate fulfilment of the scope of services.

8.6 Travel

Travel for the trainer is expected for this consultancy. Thus, the overall budget must include all travel expenses anticipated to meet the scope of works. Reimbursement will not be considered. Costs associated with workshop venue will be met by Caribbean Export.

9 REPORTS

9.1 Reporting documents

An Inception Report (Report 1) that includes a proposed project design and work plan, as well as timelines, to be presented within 10 working days of the commencement of the consultancy. Prior to the submission of the Inception Report and the commencement of the contract, the consultant will be required to attend an inception meeting with the Caribbean Export team. The meeting will be conducted virtually if the consultant is not present in Barbados. .

The Inception Report shall include:

- The methodology and approach for conducting the consultancy
- Desk research on EU market access requirements, focusing on packaging, labeling, and certification standards, particularly for pre-packaged food products.
- Proposed modules including detailed content outlines, learning objectives,
- Intervention Assessment Framework: Description of the assessment framework to evaluate the effectiveness of the training intervention, including the pre and post training questionnaires, the criteria for success and the methodology for measuring impact;
- Any issues or possible risks and remedies or mitigating actions that will be undertaken
- Timelines for actions to ensure proper execution of the consultancy

Progress report (Report 2) shall include:

The delivery of the four (4) workshops including the content covered, the methodologies used and the participant engagement strategies. Include specific challenges identified by firms in getting certified and complying with respective standards for entry into the EU market.

Final report (Report 3) which builds on the foregoing reports, activities undertaken, identifies lessons learned from implementation and makes recommendations on the scope of works and deliverables.

9.2 Submission and Approval of Reports

The reports and deliverables as referred to above must be submitted to Ms. Mikaela Stoute, Export Development and Promotion Officer at mstoute@carib-export.com with a copy to Mrs. Natasha Edwin-Walcott, Manager (Ag)- Competitiveness and Export Promotion at nwalcott@carib-export.com for approval.

10 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Consultancy will be monitored and evaluated by Caribbean Export over the duration of the project. Performance on the project will be measured by satisfactory completion and timely submission of the deliverables outlined in Sections 3 and 5. Feedback, other than acceptance, on each submitted deliverable is not a requirement for the continuation of the project. However, in some instances the Consultant may need to integrate any feedback into the subsequent deliverables. The Contracting Authority will provide feedback to the consultant within ten (10) working days of receipt of the final report.

11 PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION

To participate in any activity executed or supported by Caribbean Export, you hereby agree that any information and personal data that you share and is collected by the Agency will be processed for the purpose of reporting the outcomes and impact of your projects and/or participation. Please note that Caribbean Export reserves the right to publish the Contractor's/Participant's name and address, the

purpose and nature of the activity, and financial arrangements, in accordance with Caribbean Export's Personal Data Protection Policy. [Personal Data Protection Policy](https://content.carib-export.com/download/personal-data-protectionpolicy/).(https://content.carib-export.com/download/personal-data-protectionpolicy/). Derogation from publication of this information may be granted if it could endanger the Contractor/Participant or harm his/her commercial interests

12 DECLARATION

To participate in any procurement undertaken by Caribbean Export, all applicants must complete and submit to the agency the Applicant Declaration Form. <https://content.carib-export.com/download/applicant-declaration-form/>

All queries relating to this activity should be directed to Ms. Mikaela Stoute, Export Development and Promotion Officer at mstoute@carib-export.com.