

TERMS OF REFERENCE

CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL STANDARDS TO FACILITATE INTRA-REGIONAL TRADE IN AGRICULTURE COMMODITIES

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.01 According to CDB and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) 2019 Report on 'The State of Agriculture in the Caribbean' CDB/FAO 2019, several factors are hindering the trade of agricultural products within the Region. Among them are unjustified sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures due primarily to the absence of regionally harmonised SPS standards, guidelines and protocols. As a result, exporters face considerable uncertainty and high and sometimes prohibitive costs when trading agricultural products within the Region. The situation contradicts the principles enshrined in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).
- 1.02 The CARICOM Heads of Government have expressed their intention to increase regional food production and trade and, through the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED - Agriculture), have launched the Road Map for Food Security in support of the 25 by 2025 initiative – the reduction of food imports by 25% by 2025¹.
- 1.03 The absence of standardised agricultural trade practices and harmonised SPS measures within CARICOM poses a myriad of challenges and risks to the regional agri-food system, agri-enterprises, consumers, and the environment. These challenges include uncertainty, market access difficulties, increased business costs, safety concerns, and hindrances to growth and enhancement of the regional agri-food system/value chain.
- 1.04 Considering these challenges, establishing and adhering to uniform standards within the CARICOM community is crucial. Standardisation can streamline trade processes, reduce compliance costs, enhance consumer confidence, and facilitate the smooth functioning of regional supply chains. Moreover, standardised practices can strengthen CARICOM's collective bargaining power, enabling the Region to negotiate more favourable trade agreements on the international stage. By addressing these issues, CARICOM can foster a secure, competitive, and sustainable regional agri-food system and trading environment.
- 1.05 In 2021, CDB supported the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFS) by financing a Technical Assistance Grant for developing guidelines² to facilitate intra-regional trade in selected plant and animal products. The Guidelines were adopted during the 104th Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED Agriculture) held on July 8, 2022.
- 1.06 COTED also reached a unanimous consensus on the necessity for further efforts, specifically

¹ The CARICOM Ministerial Taskforce (MTF) on Food Production and Food Security reported that in 2022 Member States were collectively able to achieve 57% of the target set in keeping with realising 'Vision 25 by 2025'. The MTF report highlighted production data for targeted commodities (ginger, turmeric, corn, soya bean, root crops, fruits, cocoa, poultry, meat, fish, table eggs, and dairy) as CARICOM moves towards lowering the regional import bill.

² Animal Products (Eggs, Sheep and Goat Meat, Dairy Products, Beef and Honey) and Plant Products (Banana and Plantain, Onions and Escallions, Crucifers (Broccoli, Cauliflower, Lettuce, Cabbage, Pak choi), Cucurbits (Cucumber, Watermelon, Pumpkin, Squash), Legumes (Peas and Beans), Spices (Ginger and Turmeric), Solanaceous crops (Tomatoes, Peppers, Eggplant), Taro (Dasheen) and Eddo, Yam, Cassava, White Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Pineapple and Corn.

requesting: (1) the development of regional standards based on the approved guidelines, and (2) assistance to BMCs in auditing their national SPS systems. In response, CDB will support this crucial initiative, which involves developing regional SPS standards and initiating a pilot programme to audit national systems. This aims to strengthen the SPS regime and build human capital (public and private sector), particularly for those involved in the intra-regional trade of agricultural commodities.

2. OBJECTIVE

- 2.01 The main objective of the consultancy is to strengthen the framework for intra-regional trade in agricultural products, which includes development of regional commodity standards to harmonise SPS measures and enhance the framework for intra-regional trade in agricultural commodities among BMCs.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICE

- 3.01 The consultancy will develop regional standards for commodities prioritised by BMCs and includes those for which guidelines were produced under the regional project - *Development of Guidelines to Facilitate Intra-regional Trade in Selected Plant and Animal Products* as well as guidelines/protocols developed by the CRFM for the fisheries subsector. The list will be finalised following consultations with BMCs and relevant regional institutions³.
- 3.02 The Consultant should undertake the following:
- (a) Prepare a prioritised list of 10 commodities for which standards will be developed by consulting with BMCs, CAHFSA, CRFM and other regional institutions as relevant.
 - (b) Review adopted commodity standards (either from other regions or international standard-setting bodies) and recommend to CAHFSA an appropriate format and content for the CARICOM commodity standards.
 - (c) Draft the commodity standards as prioritised by BMCs and present them to CAHFSA, CRFM and the Technical Advisory Committee to review further validation by the BMC⁴.
 - (d) Consider the potential use of commodity standards by BMC and identify possible impediments to operational and technical implementation. Provide information on these impediments and feasible recommendations for overcoming them to CAHFSA⁵.
 - (e) Provide the requisite support to CAHFSA in presenting the standards for COTED Agriculture.
- 3.03 The Consultant will be required to undertake all the activities necessary to accomplish the Project's stated objectives.

³ The list includes products critical to regional food and nutrition security as outlined in the CARICOM Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan. It will also consider products prioritised by the Special Ministerial Task Force to enhance trade arrangements for 25% by 2025 initiative

⁴ When drafting a commodity standard: (i) Focus on the specific commodity and the pests and diseases associated with it according to the intended use so that the standard is practical and feasible; (ii.) Consider scientific evidence, such as existing pest risk analyses, existing phytosanitary measures, and related information (e.g., regional, and national standards) that are relevant to the standard under development, together with production practices that may inform the development of the standard, according to the submissions made by BMCs; (iii.) Evaluate technical information on the commodity, relevant pests and phytosanitary measures and identify which pests and measures should be included in the standard

⁵ This will also contribute to Component 2 – Audit of national SPS system

This will be done under the general direction of CAHFS A and CRFM with support from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)⁶. The main tasks/activities of the Consultant include but are not limited to the following

- (a) Review all relevant documentation, including guidelines produced by CAHFS A and CRFM for specific commodities.
- (b) Consult with all relevant technical experts at the national and regional levels regarding the occurrence, monitoring, surveillance and management of regional pests and diseases.
- (c) Review all national and regional documentation on conditions for importing and exporting the specified commodities
- (d) Consult with all relevant technical experts from the public and private sectors at national and regional levels regarding trade conditions for specified commodities.
- (e) Support the countries, as needed, in conducting national stakeholder consultations.
- (f) Conduct two regional validation sessions with the relevant stakeholders - CAHFS A will advise on the membership and modality for engagement, with specific considerations for the participation of women and relevant national experts with the view to augmenting and finalising draft commodity standards.
- (g) In collaboration with CAHFS A and CRFM, present the consultancy outputs to relevant regional authorities via two virtual meetings.
- (h) Support CAHFS A and CRFM in developing publication/information and communication products for targeted distribution to all BMCs and relevant regional stakeholders.

4. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

4.01 The Consultant will be required to submit the following reports:

- (a) **Inception Report**—Work plan including the methodology and approach to be adopted. Detailed timeline for project activities, report format, and preliminary list of secondary data sources. The Report should be submitted within **one (1) month** of the commencement of the assignment.
- (b) **Preliminary Report** - List of the 10 priorities commodities with a justification for their selection and a draft annotated template for the CARICOM Commodity Standards. This Report is submitted **three (3) months** after the start of the assignment and should include a list of perceived risks and proposed risk management options.
- (c) **Progress Report** - Update on assignment, including the completed draft of the standards on 50% of the selected commodities. This will be submitted **nine (9) months** after the commencement of the assignment.
- (d) **Draft Final Report** - Document including all major outputs. The Report should also contain lessons learned and recommendations⁷ for follow-up actions. The Report will follow the validation exercise and will be reviewed by TAC, and the technical specialist, through a peer review process. The draft Final Report will be submitted **15 months** after the commencement of the assignment. Comments by CAHFS A, CRFM and TAC will be provided within **one month** of receipt of the report.
- (e) **Final Report** - A Final Report incorporating comments and completed regional standards will be submitted within **one month** of receipt of comments.

⁶ Committee of regional agency experts that provides technical support to CAHFS A on SPS-related activities and deliverables from consultants - CARICOM Secretariat, FAO, Caribbean Plant Health Directors (CPHD) Forum, CARICOM Chief Veterinary Officers (CCVOs).

⁷ Inclusive of resource gaps (human and financial) and infrastructure requirements

5. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

5.01 The Consultant will work under the guidance of the Project Coordinator - CAHFSA, as it pertains to the execution and logistics of the assignment.

6. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

6.01 The Firm should have the following:

- (a) At least five years overall consulting experience, with specific experience in SPS standards international/regional trade and in preparing technical and analytical reports.
- (b) Combined expertise in:
 - commodity risk assessment
 - commodity risk management
 - development and management of SPS import requirements.
 - selection and implementation of SPS measures for use in trade
 - development of regional and international phytosanitary standards
 - evaluation of commodity production practices in relation to SPS risk management.
- (c) Have completed at least one similar assignment.
- (d) Key experts as outlined at 6.03.

6.02 Key experts should have a master's degree and 10 years of relevant professional experience. In addition, the Team Leader should have at least five (5) years of experience leading multidisciplinary teams involved in similar interventions.

- (a) More specific details as it relates to qualifications and experience are as follows:
 - (i) Solid, proven professional experience in analysing policies, strategies, and approaches of regional plant, animal and agri-food systems.
 - (ii) Proven experience in the development of standards, protocols and guidelines, particularly as elaborated by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH).
 - (iii) Proven experience in designing, implementing and monitoring plant and animal health and food safety systems.
 - (iv) Proven professional experience in planning/advisory functions in programmes/projects dealing with the regional import/export trade in plant and animal products.
- (b) Other technical competencies include:
 - (i) Proficiency in report writing.
 - (ii) Excellent analytical skills.
 - (iii) Experience in executing gender-responsive and participatory stakeholder consultation.
 - (iv) Gender analysis of policies and programmes.
 - (v) Excellent oral and written skills.

6.03 Key Experts Required:

- (a) Crop Protection /Plant Health Specialist - Team Leader.
- (b) Veterinary/Livestock Development Specialist.
- (c) Fisheries Development Specialist
- (d) Agri-food Safety Specialist