

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Strengthening Business Linkages in the Caribbean

#### 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

##### 1.1. Beneficiary countries

CARIFORUM Region: 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.

##### 1.2. Contracting Authority

Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export)

##### 1.3. Relevant background

The term “business linkages” generally refers to any upstream or downstream business relationship that takes place between a foreign investing firm and their local business partners in a country where the foreign investing firm operates. One of the major challenges in the Caribbean is the limited absorption of the benefits of foreign direct investment (FDI) by the local economies. This has been attributed to several factors, including the inability of local Small Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to meet quality, quantity, performance, delivery and standards compliance. Where these criteria are met, there is however limited information on these available sources of supply (of goods and services). This challenge is not faced by foreign investors only. All buyers in the Caribbean are faced with challenges in securing supplier information, particularly on regional suppliers in order to make the necessary business linkages.

During a Regional Consultation on Market Intelligence hosted by the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) in June 2014, firms indicated the need for a basic online platform which would provide initial matchmaking support by enabling Business to Business (B2B)

interactions with potential buyers, distributors and other strategic partners, allowing them to showcase their product/service offerings in real time, prior to face to face discussion and further transactions. Such a platform would allow investors the opportunity to search for suitable suppliers within the region.

It is envisaged that a B2B platform will provide firms with a single, easy to use, web-based mechanism that will facilitate the introduction of potential business contacts, company profiling and viewing of available products/services, and provide a unique location for preliminary business discussions to take place. It will also include a market place where firms can identify products and services that they demand, or are able to supply, making it easier to source regional goods and services. With this platform, it is expected that CARIFORUM SMEs will increase their engagement with investors, in-market distributors and other potential buyers.

The identification of these buyers, their needs and demands is critical to the success of a B2B matchmaking portal. This business linkages initiative will seek to identify the supply needs and requirements of 2 major investor groups in the Caribbean – investors in the hotel and resort development sector and major distributors (e.g. supermarkets and wholesalers). Once these needs have been identified, securing potential suppliers for the platform will allow for dynamic interaction, engagement and business linkages.

The development of the B2B Portal will be undertaken under a separate consultancy that will work in tandem with the Business Linkages consultancy.

#### **1.4 Related programmes and other donor activities:**

None

## **2. OBJECTIVE, ACTIVITIES & EXPECTED RESULTS**

### **2.1 General objective**

The overall objective is increased linkages between major investors in the Caribbean and Caribbean SMEs leading to contract sales. The core elements in developing the programme will include:

- **Constituting a critical mass of purchasing companies:** Given the need to create real opportunities for domestic supply, the project will focus attention on identifying a core number of buyers that can constitute the critical mass necessary for a linkages programme to function. In the Caribbean, the tourism sector and distributor companies are main buyers of goods and services and present an excellent opportunity for piloting a regional linkages programme. The identification of buyers in the hotel sector and major distributors like supermarkets, their requirements (in terms of goods and services, as well as standards) and their commitment to inclusion in this programme would be a primary objective of this initiative.
  
- **Creating a pool of qualified suppliers:** The next phase would be the identification of firms capable of supplying the goods and services required by the identified buyers in terms of quality, performance, delivery and standards compliance. Developing criteria for the participation of suppliers in this programme is critical to the successful outcome of the programme.
  
- **Building an effective match-making mechanism:** Caribbean Export will be developing a B2B web-portal under a separate project, and this portal will facilitate the easy access of buyers to information on suppliers who meet their requirements. The information garnered under this linkages project will form the content for the B2B portal.
  
- **Identifying support mechanisms to the linkages programme:** One of the challenges faced in the development of this regional initiative is the associated intra-regional logistics issues. This project will also seek to include a critical mass of logistics companies on the platform increasing the ease of access to logistics related solutions. Recommendations to ensure the sustainability of the linkages programme is envisaged.

## **2.2 Results to be achieved by the Consultant**

The consultant is expected to deliver a database of buyers, sellers and logistics firms integral to the development of a regional business linkages programme. In addition, the consultant will be required to provide recommendations on the most suitable elements of a B2B matchmaking online portal, as well as the sustainability and success of the portal and the regional linkages programme.

### **3. ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS**

#### **3.1. Assumptions underlying the project intervention**

- Tourism sector buyers and major distributors are interested in sourcing goods and services within the region;
- Tourism sector buyers and major distributors are able to source competitively priced goods and services in the region at the required quality standards;
- The Tourism sector buyers and major distributors are interested in utilizing a B2B platform for match-making; and
- The logistics firms can offer cost effective solutions to sellers in the region

#### **3.2. Risks**

The above assumptions are not met.

### **4. SCOPE OF THE WORK**

Caribbean Export is seeking the professional services of a consultant whose primary goal will be to develop a regional business linkages programme for the Caribbean focused on the tourism and distribution sectors, providing recommendations for the sustainability of the programme and for the proposed online B2B matchmaking portal.

#### **4.1. Specific Activities**

The consultant should conduct the relevant research to develop the regional linkages programme and make recommendations for its sustainability. Activities should include:

## **A. Database Development**

The consultant will be required to develop 4 databases under this project of a minimum of 230 Caribbean firms. These will include:

- Buyers from the hotel and resorts development sector (50)
- Major Distributors (50)
- Suppliers of Goods and Services (100 firms) and
- Logistics companies (30)

These firms must indicate an interest in being a part of a regional business linkages programme and a B2B e-portal. A profile on the firms should also be collected based on an agreed data template (that is, an agreement between the consultant and Caribbean Export) but should include (and not be limited to): contact information, data on products and services supplied/demanded and website information. The data should be collected in a manner that allows for filtering and easy uploading to an online portal.

The consultant is expected to:

- Survey buyers and suppliers in the Caribbean in an effort to collect the required information and make recommendations on the kind of information they would require from such a portal;
- Review good practices in the development of B2B portals to identify proposed data-fields
- Closely collaborate with the consultants contracted to Develop a B2B Portal (which will be under a separate contract), including
  - Participation in the kick-off meeting with the B2B Platform Consultant
  - Participation in meetings with the B2B Platform Consultant to discuss progress with the development of the platform

## **B. Provide Recommendations**

The consultant should identify challenges and risks to the execution of a successful regional business linkages programme providing recommendations on mitigation efforts.

These recommendations should also cover proposals for the sustainability of the proposed B2B portal for matchmaking (which will be developed under a separate consultancy) and for the inclusion of additional suppliers and buyers to the platform.

#### **4.1.2. Geographical area to be covered by the Consultant**

CARIFORUM Region

#### **4.1.3. Target groups**

This activity is targeted at Caribbean based enterprises.

### **4.2 Project management**

#### **4.2.1. Responsible body**

The Caribbean Export Development Agency will be responsible for the management and coordination of this project.

#### **4.3.2. Management structure**

The Manager, Competitiveness and Export Development will retain overall responsibility for the project and will report the performance of the project to the Executive Director. Day-to-day supervision of the activities of the project is the responsibility of the Senior Advisor for Investment Promotion (based in the Dominican Republic).

#### **4.3.3. Facilities to be provided by the Contracting Authority and/or other parties**

Not applicable.

## **5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING**

### **5.1. Location**

The CARIFORUM region

## **5.2. Commencement Date and Period of implementation of tasks**

The intended duration for this consultancy is 100-man days with an expected start date of 9 June 2018.

## **6. REQUIREMENTS**

### **6.1. Personnel**

#### **6.1.1. Key expert**

All experts who have a crucial role in implementing the contract are referred to as key experts. The profiles of the experts for this contract are as follows: **Qualifications, Skills and General Professional Experience**

- a. At least a Master's Degree in a Social Sciences, from a recognized tertiary institution or equivalent qualification;
- b. At least five (10) years post-qualification experience;
- c. Demonstrated experience in database development;
- d. Proven experience in working with commercial actors such as buyers and sellers; and
- e. Analytical skills, particularly the ability to conduct research and prepare appropriate findings and conclusions.

### **6.2. Office accommodation**

No office accommodation at the Caribbean Export Development Agency is required for the key expert.

### **6.3. Facilities to be provided by the Consultant**

The Consultant shall ensure that additional experts, if required, are adequately supported and equipped. In particular, the Consultant shall ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and general support for each additional expert to enable the Consultant to concentrate on his/her primary responsibilities. The Consultant must also transfer funds as necessary to support the activities under the contract and to ensure that all employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

### **6.4. Equipment**

**No** equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the Contracting Authority/beneficiary countries as part of this service contract or transferred to the Contracting Authority/beneficiary countries at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract, which is to be acquired by the Contracting Authority/beneficiary countries must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

## **7. REPORTS**

### **7.1. Reporting requirements**

The consultant will submit the following deliverables:

- **Report 1/Inception meeting report:** This report will capture agreed timelines, approach and any potential changes to project design, that are discussed at the inception meeting;
- **Report 2** – This report will include the following deliverables: A review of B2B Platforms and proposed data fields for the platform; survey instruments for buyers and sellers; a long-list of 500 potential buyers in the Caribbean; draft selection criteria for buyers and sellers in the linkages programme; and an outline of the linkages programme components and operation.

- **Report 3/Final Report** – This Report will include the selection criteria for buyers and sellers in the linkages programme; database of selected buyers, sellers and logistics firms to be included in the programme and on the B2B portal; final survey results and the defined linkages programme. The final report will also provide the key recommendations for the sustainability of the linkages programme and the success of the B2B portal.

## **7.2. Submission & approval of deliverables**

The deliverables referred to above must be submitted to the Senior Advisor, Investment Promotion. All reports must be submitted in English. The Manager, Competitiveness & Export Promotion is responsible for approving all deliverables.

## **8. Special requirements**

None.