

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Development of a Business to Business (B2B) Portal for CARIFORUM Firms

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Beneficiaries

The primary beneficiaries under this project are firms in the 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) that are exporting or are export ready.

1.2 Contracting Authority

The contracting authority for this assignment is the Caribbean Export Development Agency (*hereinafter* Caribbean Export/the Agency).

1.3 Relevant background

As Caribbean Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) seek to maximize their potential in niche sectors and diversify into new markets, some challenges remain that prevent these firms from truly establishing themselves as global competitors. One of these challenges is the lack of strong, sustainable linkages between buyers, sellers and other intermediaries in the global supply chain to support trade and export success at the regional and international level. CARIFORUM firms' inability to penetrate their markets of interest is severely hampered by their unfamiliarity with these new markets and the significant difficulty experienced in acquiring reputable contacts with whom they can do business. Similarly, overseas buyers are unaware of the plethora of high quality products and services offered here in the region and the exporting companies with the ability to meet their demand.

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.

Caribbean Export, in implementing the Regional Private Sector Development Programme (RPSDP) under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), has made it a priority to increase market penetration by CARIFORUM firms in new markets, as well as to assist in the fostering and development of strategic in-market partnerships. It is envisaged that a B2B platform that is accessible via the existing CE Intelligence Portal (<http://ceintelligence.com>) will provide firms with a single, easy to use, web-based platform 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 in-market distributors and potential buyers.

Additionally, Caribbean Export has engaged a consultant under a Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Business Linkages project, and a key deliverable of the Linkages project is the development of a database of buyers in the hotel and resort sector as well as other channels such as supermarkets and wholesalers and other qualified Caribbean buyers. This database will form the first set of content to be placed on the B2B portal. It is therefore expected that the consultant selected to develop the B2B portal will work closely with the expert contracted for the linkages project.

2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1 General objective

The overall objective of this project is:

To increase the potential client base and opportunities for business linkages for CARIFORUM firms by providing an online platform through which they can interact with potential buyers, distributors and other intermediaries/strategic partners.

2.2 Results to be achieved by the consultant:

The consultant is expected to deliver the following:

A. The development of a B2B electronic platform that demonstrates the following features:

- A user friendly and attractive system design or architecture based on:

- An evaluation of B2B platforms based on research conducted on international best practices.
 - A review of information that is readily available within the region; and
 - Information provided by the consultant undertaking the Business Linkages consultancy (that is being performed under a separate contract)
 - An appropriate front-end for user interface that collects information on the visitor to the site and a back-end that allows for the uploading of data by multiple users (including firms). The front-end must contain a search feature for users and a feature on the back-end that allows for an analysis of website traffic;
 - System build-out based on an agreed upon design and functionalities to include upload of company information, namely:
 - Industry/sector, country, type of business, brief company description
 - Contact information – contact person, email, address, telephone number, website
 - Main affiliates – membership in BSOs, chambers of commerce, industry associations etc.
 - Products exported/distributed with images
 - Ability of firms to make business contacts and communicate with each other;
 - A discussion forum;
 - Calls for proposals or tenders allowing firms to post verified business opportunities for other firms to supply;
 - Mechanism for firms to filter and create a list of potential clients for targeting; and
 - The placement of hyperlinks to users' websites.
- B. To provide a single platform where the host (Caribbean Export) can:
- Upload and maintain business information specific to firms;
 - Verify registered businesses and Caribbean Export clients;
 - Monitor and moderate the discussion forum;
 - Survey registered members and promote upcoming events to members; and
 - Manage campaigns and/or public relations blitz
- C. Provide recommendations for the maintenance and sustainability of the platform.

3. ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS

3.1 Assumptions underlying the project intervention

- Buyers and sellers are interested in utilizing a B2B matchmaking platform
- Firms are willing to submit company and product information and commit to keeping their profiles up to date

3.2 Risks

- The major risk is that the above-mentioned assumptions are not fulfilled and therefore the anticipated results and objectives of the project are not realized.

4. SCOPE OF THE WORK

4.1 Specific Activities

The consultant is expected to complete the following activities:

- A. Develop the B2B platform to meet the requirements outlined in 2.2 above.
- B. Incorporate key features of the B2B platform based on research conducted on international best practices.
- C. Incorporate Caribbean Export's existing Business Register into the B2B platform (to be provided by Caribbean Export).
- D. When necessary, meet with the Business Linkages consultant to discuss the progress of the development of that database and its incorporation into the B2B platform.
- E. Provide training to Caribbean Export staff on the use of the B2B platform (to ensure sustainability), as well as develop a manual to guide system administrators and users in the use of the platform.

4.2 Project Management

4.2.1 Responsible Body

The Caribbean Export Development Agency will be responsible for contracting the consultant and ensuring the required outputs are achieved.

4.2.2 Management structure

The Manager, Competitiveness and Export Promotion will retain overall responsibility for the project and will report the performance of the project to the Executive Director. The Manager, Competitiveness and Export Promotion will ensure day-to-day supervision of project activities.

5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

5.1 Commencement date & Period of implementation

The intended commencement date of this project is **24 September 2018**.

6. REQUIREMENTS

6.1 Personnel

Qualifications and Experience Required

- I. At least a Master's Degree in Information System Management (ISM) or Computer Science from a recognized tertiary institution or equivalent qualification;
- II. At least five (5) years post-qualification experience;
- III. In-depth knowledge of current web design trends and techniques;
- IV. Demonstrated experience in ICT planning and IS analysis and design;
- V. Demonstrated knowledge or use of any of the following; Microsoft SQL Server 2008, MySQL, PostgreSQL;
- VI. Good understanding of web server, application server, load balancing, sizing, clustering, access management, single sign-on, session management, and related technologies;
- VII. Good understanding of key database concepts as applicable to application architecture;
- VIII. Proven experience in working in a participatory and consultative environment;
- IX. Analytical skills, particularly the ability to conduct research and prepare appropriate findings and conclusions.

6.1 Required Documentation

The Applicant will at a minimum submit the following:

Technical and financial proposal for services addressed to the Manager – Competitiveness and Export Promotion. The proposal should be sent by email to CMcNair@carib-export.com copied to shudson@carib-export.com and dsinanan@carib-export.com no later than **13 September 2018**.

6.2. Office accommodation

No office accommodation at the Caribbean Export is required.

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 he/she shall ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable him/her 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 country as part of this service contract or transferred to the Contracting Authority / beneficiary country at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract, which is to be acquired by the beneficiary country must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

7. REPORTS

7.1. Reporting requirements

The consultant will submit the following reports:

- (a) **Inception Report** to be produced no later than **one week** after the inception meeting. In this report the consultant shall capture the key elements of the project discussed in the inception meeting, including, but not limited to, any suggested changes or adjustments to either project design or execution. The consultant shall also highlight any difficulties encountered and/or foreseen difficulties in addition to submitting a detailed work schedule. The consultant is advised

to proceed with his/ her work in absence of comments by the Contracting Authority to the inception report.

- (b) **Progress Report #1** which includes proposed portal design based on Caribbean Export requirements and international best practices; as well as recommendations on how to incorporate existing Business Register with the B2B portal **no later than three weeks** after submission of the inception report
- (c) **Progress Report #2** which includes developed system for feedback from Caribbean Export **no later than four weeks** after submission of Progress Report #1
- (d) Final Report which includes all completed deliverables for final approval from Caribbean Export **no later than four weeks** after submission of Progress Report #2

7.2 Submission & approval of reports

The reports referred to in 7.1 above must be submitted to the Manager, Competitiveness and Export Promotion at: cmcnair@carib-export.com with copy to the dsinanan@carib-export.com and shudson@carib-export.com. All reports must be submitted in English and in electronic format. The Manager, Competitiveness and Export Promotion is responsible for approving all reports.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8.1 Definition of Indicators

Performance on this assignment will be measured by timely and pertinent submission of completed deliverables outlined in Section 7 above and as outlined within the work plan and that meet or exceed the expectations of the Executing Agency. Feedback on each submitted deliverable is not a requirement for the continuation of the project, however, comments will be provided in a timely manner. The Contracting Authority will provide feedback to the consultant **within 7 days of receipt** of the final report.

8.2 Special Requirements

None.