



EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

TO: Suitably Qualified Market Access Consultants

DATE: 8th September 2016

RFP No: CP 02 / 1617

SUBJECT: EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR CONSULTANT TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO MEMBER COUNTRIES WHEN NEEDED ON MARKET ACCESS

Attached herewith is an invitation to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the provision of technical assistance to FFA member countries on market access.

Note that the deadline for submission of these Expressions of Interest is 28th October 2016.

Should you have any questions, please email Jope Tamani on jope.tamani@ffa.int If you are not interested yourself, we would appreciate your assistance in disseminating this to interested parties/persons.

Yours Sincerely

James T. Movick
Director General

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

RFP No: CP 02/1617

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Background

The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) traces its origin to the South Pacific Forum meeting in Port Moresby in 1978 which adopted a Declaration on the Law of the Sea and the establishment of a regional fisheries agency and outlined its functions. In recent years FFA has been mandated to concentrate on the management, development and operational compliance of the tuna fishery in the Central and Western Pacific Ocean. This fishery is now one of the largest in the world, catching around 2 million tonnes annually. The Agency is responsible for assisting its 17 members to coordinate sustainable tuna fishery management policies in their exclusive economic zone waters, and for promoting the development of their tuna fishery resources while maintaining operational compliance with national and regional tuna fisheries arrangements.

FFA's Role for its Members

FFA consists of the Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC) of officials and FFC Ministerial Meeting, which are its governing bodies, and a Secretariat. The Secretariat, with a current establishment of approximately ninety-six positions, is organised into four divisions: Fisheries Management, Fisheries Development, Fisheries Operations, and Corporate Services. FFA is led by an executive management unit headed by the Director-General.

The Vision of the Members of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency is: "We will enjoy the highest levels of social and economic benefits for our people through the sustainable development of our fisheries resources".

The Mission of the Forum Fisheries Agency is: "To drive regional cooperation to create and enable the maximum long term social and economic benefit from the sustainable use of our shared offshore fishery resources".

The work of the Agency is delivered through three programs: Fisheries Management, Fisheries Development and Fisheries Operations.

Market Access

The international trade based on the fisheries of the Pacific Region is dominated by migratory tuna and other large pelagic fishes, which are caught mainly by two types of fishing gear – purse seine and longline. In 2015, the fishery was estimated to yield 2.7 million tonnes of fish worth US\$4.8 billion at first sale¹.

¹ Estimated by the Forum Fisheries Agency in 2015

Countries wishing to export tuna to the EU market (and increasingly to other markets like US and China) must comply with regulations designed to ensure that the fish was not taken by IUU fishing and the stringent sanitary control requirements for the seafood safety related competent authority (CA).

The Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency strengthens national capacity and regional solidarity so its 17 members can better manage, control and develop their tuna fisheries. Most of the Pacific Island Countries engage in such international trade in fishery products, and are at times required to certify the sanitary condition of fishery products consigned from their territories and vessels. For those countries which are dependent on fish trade, it is in their interest to establish effective controls, to ensure that such trade meets requirements for food product safety.

Currently only three countries (PNG, Solomon Islands and Fiji) have established systems which are considered to be equivalent to those of the EU, and which permit these countries to export to this market. All three have submitted to extensive audits of their control systems by the European Commission (Food and Veterinary office of DG SANTÉ) and have responded positively to their findings. Kiribati is now awaiting a visit by the FVO to determine their compliance and possibility for listing.

The Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency provides a range of technical assistance to member countries in the development and functional operation of EU certified food safety competent authorities. This has included legal assistance with CA regulations, technical assistance in the establishment of CA operational systems and documentation, training of personnel as well as industry training. The assistance covers both the SPS and IUU aspect of market access.

The provision of CA technical assistance is being further enhanced with CA development plans ongoing and anticipated to cover other member countries that now interested to increase their stake in the market shares and to come under the Regional Competent Authority Support Unit (RECAS). These countries includes Samoa, Vanuatu, FSM, RMI, Cook Island, Tonga etc. and support is still rendered to the other countries (Fiji, PNG, Solomon, Kiribati).

Processes to establish CAs are complex and require physical infrastructure, regulatory revisions, organisational restructuring, capacity building, training, monitoring and evaluation and audit.

In a related context, FFA has been providing technical assistance to several member countries in regard to the compliance of domestic flagged vessels with the catch certification requirements of the EU Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) regulations.

For the FFA member countries aspiring to establish a CA and export tuna to Europe there is an ongoing need to address both these matters and this requires a detailed understanding of requirements and procedures needed to ensure compliance with both CA and IUU standards.

Summary context

To date, only PNG, Solomon Islands and Fiji have authorised food safety CA's with Kiribati awaiting an audit by the Food and Veterinary Office to determine their eligibility status.

The development and running of a Competent Authority (CA) for seafood sanitary controls is a very onerous and difficult undertaking for any country, as the EU imposes compliance to its own requirements, hence requiring that the 3rd country proves that it operates a control structure applicable to its seafood exports equivalent to those existing in a member country.

A further challenge for FFA member countries is that in most cases they do not have processing sites in their territory, but do have a locally flagged fleet that operates in their own and regional waters, transshipping to, or unloading in, other 3rd countries for processing.

Hence its CA needs to be developed and run in a “vessel only” oriented manner (something not completely contemplated under the EU regulatory framework). This would imply a CA with officers either travelling to the foreign landing ports and/or establishing MoUs with the CAs of the unloading countries and with the RECAS unit under FFA. The work on the development of new competent authorities and the RECAS will be a key focus for 2017.

From the IUU CCS side, 3rd countries need to meet the requirements of Article 20(1) of Regulation (EC) 1005/2008 requirements.

The EU IUU regulation is very specific that the responsibility behind the validation of the CC is the sole responsibility of the flag state and that no regional body can take on this responsibility or be delegated any part of it, even if this organisation takes a crucial role in supporting the guarantees offered in the certificate.

However, there is an important role for FFA and associated technical specialists to provide technical assistance and advice in dealing with the EU in both CA and IUU matters and there is significant demand for such assistance.

Expression of Interest (EOI)

EOI is invited from interested Consultants who have technical expertise in assisting developing countries meet market access requirements with respect to Seafood Safety and other export certification processes (including the IUU regulation). The work requires key working competencies in CA development and very good people skills.

The advisory function associated with this contract often consists of relatively small tasks that occur at unpredictable intervals and involve aspects of projects, and projects themselves, that cannot be foreseen with any accuracy.

To accommodate this situation administratively, FFA seeks to create an “approved supplier” list of qualified consultants that may then be engaged without further competitive processes. FFA may also issue selected consultants with an ‘umbrella contract’ which provides for an agreed number of working days over a period of two years with each assignment detailed in a ‘tasking note’.

Prior to the commencement of any task commissioned under this contract, FFA and the Consultant will agree on a written summary Terms of Reference, work schedule, anticipated outputs and indicative budget for each such task, which shall be approved by Trade Development Advisor (Market Access) and counter-signed by the Director General and or Director Fisheries Development Division. This is known as the "Tasking Note".

FFA will evaluate the EOI submission received, and shortlist up to five consultants for our pool of “approved suppliers”.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

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General

The consultant will be a key member of an FFA team to implement a strategy to address national CA and IUU challenges and will be required from time to time to provide technical assistance including *inter alia*:

1. Scoping and development of new competent authorities including setting up of RECAS. This includes the development of system documents like National Control Plans, National Monitoring Plans, Regulations and standards etc.
2. Institutional Strengthening and capacity building of Pacific Island seafood Health Certification Competent Authorities
3. Advice and teaching inputs into FFA sponsored training programs for CA capacity building and also for industry training relating to CA standards compliance and monitoring.
4. Strategic inputs into CA development and capacity building strategies in FFA member countries including (but not limited to) FSM, RMI, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Cook Islands). These will include inputs to industry to assist in CA compliance.
5. Facilitation to aspirant CA's to gain EU accreditation within a context of minimal regulatory framework changes.
6. Strategic inputs in support of ongoing capacity building within established CA's. This will include (but not be limited to) training, systems and reporting review and external audit.
7. Evaluation of current initiatives and plan and implement further initiatives for assisting the establishment and strengthening of PICs CAs to gain EU authorised status for Fish and Fishery Products from a "vessel based industry" perspective.
9. Provide technical assistance at the national level to review and develop CA cost recovery and sustainability options
10. In consultation with FFA and members, examine options and opportunities for the potential development of e-certification capabilities via the EU TRACES system.
11. Provide strategic support and assistance for the development of a regional CA function

Evaluation and Assessment of EOI

The evaluation will be in accordance with the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting
Capability and experience in the type of work	30%
Experience of working in Developing Country settings	25%
Expected cost of service per day	25%
Demonstrated skills including verbal and written communication and references	20%
Total	100%

Submission of EOI

1. All EOIs shall be in English. The currency used for quotation of fees and other costs shall be US Dollars.
2. The EOI should comprise: (a) a detailed CV of the consultant providing information on qualifications, experience and contact details of at least two professional referees; (b) a statement of availability indicating the expected number of days that the consultant would be available in each of the next two years and any constraints on availability; (c) any preference for engagement under an umbrella contract or by separate engagement for each consultancy; (d) the daily fee rate to be charged (note that FFA also pays a per diem for days away from the consultant's home country and this should not be included in the quoted fee rate); and (e) a brief 2-page application letter summarising the candidate's claim for the work (key strengths and abilities).
3. Submission of EOIs responding to this invitation should be received by 5pm on the 28th October 2016 (Solomon Islands time and date). Late applications will not be considered. Hard copy applications shall be sealed and should comply with the directions contained herein and addressed to: The Director-General, Expression of Interest CP02/1617 Market Access, Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, PO Box 629, Honiara, SOLOMON ISLANDS. Submission of bids as electronic PDF files will be acceptable, sent by email to procurement@ffa.int, all EOIs must reference EOI CP02/1617 Market Access in the subject line of your email submission.

Award of Contract

FFA reserves the right to accept any EOI, and to annul the solicitation process and reject all proposals at any time prior to award of any contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder(s) or any obligation to inform the affected bidder(s) of the grounds for such action.

For further information regarding this invitation please contact the Forum Fisheries Agency.

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