



ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) invites interested eligible consultants to submit proposal for the provision of consultancy services for the **CREATION OF A TRADE DATABASE AND INFORMATION SYSTEM ON THE ACS WEBPAGE**

The Terms of Reference and Guidelines for the Submission of Proposals for this consultancy are provided below.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANT TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL SERVICES TO THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS) DIRECTORATE OF TRADE DEVELOPMENT AND EXTERNAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS FOR THE PROJECT INTERCONNECTIVITY FOR IMPROVED TRADE FACILITATION AND SHORT DISTANCE MARITIME TRANSPORT IN THE GREATER CARIBBEAN

1.0 CONTEXT

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) is a regional intergovernmental organisation that was established by virtue of the Convention Establishing the Association of Caribbean States done in Cartagena de Indias in July 1994. Article III of the Convention identifies its purpose as that of “consultation, cooperation and concerted action” in order “to identify and promote the implementation of policies and programmes”. In pursuing this mandate the Convention also points the ACS to focal areas of work, one of which is the “the creation of an enhanced economic space for trade and investment through the Directorate of Trade Development and External Economic Relations,” hereinafter referred to as the Directorate of Trade

The promotion of trade, and an enhanced economic space for investment and economic sustainability is a major pillar upon which the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) was founded. The Directorate of Trade is charged with addressing the expansion of intra-ACS trade through the presenting of opportunities for co-operation and concerted action that would allow an increase in the benefits offered by the synergies of trade integration and liberalization to the countries of the Greater Caribbean. One of the pillars upon which the Work programme of the Directorate is based is: **Gradual Reduction and Elimination of Obstacles to Trade and Investment in the Greater Caribbean**. A critical area in which these obstacles and barriers are most evident is that of Trade Facilitation and Interconnectivity, and those elements which exist to ensure the optimum running of the regional trading system. Within this programmatic area issues of Trade Facilitation and Innterconnectivity are being addressed.

It was envisioned by the crafters of this organization that the barriers and challenges of the trading system in the Greater Caribbean would be eliminated in order that each Member and Associate Member of the ACS could benefit from opportunities existing within our Greater Caribbean Region. Though there have been major efforts made in addressing issues and obstacle that exist, the trading environment within the Greater is still plagued by hurdles which continue to threaten the consolidation of an economic space which supports and bolsters the investment capacity and potential of the stakeholders and actors of the ACS Region.

The absence of connectivity has been a key issue throughout the Greater Caribbean, with poor links among Caribbean islands as well as South American and Central American countries. To contribute to developing more trade links among territories, it is important to analyze obstacles and identify concrete actions that will help improve operational efficiency at ports in the Region, seeking to boost intra-regional trade by means of short-distance maritime transport, placing emphasis on supporting small ports.

Arising from the XIX Intercessional Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the ACS with the objective of strengthening trade facilitation in the Greater Caribbean, the project **Interconnectivity for Improved Trade Facilitation and Short Distance Maritime Transport in the Greater Caribbean (TMCD)**, funded by the Government of Mexico through the Mexican Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AMEXCID) was approved. This project is aimed at the promotion of trade development, particularly in the terms of short distance maritime transport among countries of the Greater Caribbean.

Component Three (3) of this project entails the creation of a database on the ACS webpage on the trade in imports and exports by countries of the Greater Caribbean. This is of great important, as it has been noted that among most fundamental obstacles to trade, experienced by Member States, Associate Members and economic entities within these territories are those of access to information; statistics; data, and lack of knowledge regarding intra-regional trade issues regulations, procedures and processes. The access or non-access to information is critical in determining effective participation in the trade environment, an information system which provides all stakeholders with a platform to access information and data, therefore is critical.

It is anticipated that the outcomes of this consultancy will provide the ACS with the necessary considerations and responses to the aforementioned issues as required for the establishment and maintenance of this database.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this consultancy is to provide comprehensive technical expertise in the creation of a Trade Database and Information system which supports the collection and transfer of import, export and other relevant trade data of each Member and Associate member country of the ACS.

Specific Objectives

The Consultant will provide services to:

- Develop a database of economic and trade information, as well as an electronic system that would allow the immediate acquisition of information, regarding the different topics of interest for the exports and

imports (e.g. steps, procedures and prerequisites,) of each Member Country.

- Develop an electronic list of goods produced in the Region, as well as tariffs applicable by country. To improve the generation, reliability, quality and timely availability of the trade information and data from countries in the Greater Caribbean.
- Maintain trade statistics and an inventory of economic and trade studies on the website.

3.0 SCOPE OF WORK

The Consultant will:

- 3.1 Review all the relevant documentation pertaining to the objectives of the ACS and the **Interconnectivity for Improved Trade facilitation and Short Distance Maritime Transport in the Greater Caribbean (TMCD)** to obtain an understanding of the goal of the organisation as it relates to this project and the access to information in the Region.
- 3.2 Prepare an inception report which details the methodology /approach to the project and a related work implementation plan. This report shall be circulated to member states for their comments ;
- 3.3 Prepare an interim report on the progress and status of the project in accordance with the terms of the contract. In this regard the names and/or institutions with whom there has been collaboration must be identified;
- 3.4 Create a database for the gathering and arranging of information pertaining to trade movement (importation/exportation) in ACS member and associate member countries.
- 3.5 Implement the technical process to create the computerised platform that would support the information.
- 3.6 Implementation of operability on the webpage
- 3.7 Design an Information System, which responds to the specific information and data needs of each country, the institutions involved, the Business Community, and the public in general.
- 3.8 Provide final Report and Database Operation Manual

4.0 OUTPUT/DELIVERABLES:

The Consultant will submit to the Directorate of Trade and AMEXCID for approval the following:

Outputs	Timeframe for Delivery
Inception Report to include, <i>inter alia</i> , the detailed proposed methodology and a Work	Within of contract signature

Implementation Plan	
Interim report on progress and status of project	Within of the contract signature
Final Report and Created Database along with database operation Manual	Within of the contract signature

5.0 DURATION

The terms and conditions of the CONTRACT shall apply for the duration of the CONTRACT which shall be two (2) months, beginning on the date of this assignment – **1st September 2015**, or the actual date of commencement of the WORK whichever is earlier, and the COMPLETION DATE of **31st October 2015**.

6.0 FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

6.1 Financial proposal should be submitted separately and should include all administration costs including overheads, printing, posting, copying, and presentation.

7.0 PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Funding Available - \$20,000 USD
Payment of the Consultant for the provision of deliverables outlined in clause 4.0 above shall be according to the following schedule:

Acceptance of the Inception Report	10%
Acceptance of the Interim Report	30%
Acceptance of the Final Report	60%
Total	100%

8.0 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is being offered via open tender and Consultants/Consulting firms/Organizations are hereby invited to submit a Proposal. A Consultant will be selected under *selection based on consideration of quality and cost (SBQC)*, and procedures described in this TOR. Eligible Consultants/Consulting firms/Organizations should have the following Qualifications and Experience:

Key Expert 1: International Trade Specialist

- Master degree or equivalent in economics, international trade, business administration or other relevant social sciences disciplines such as

international development and political science with specialisation in international trade and development.

- Knowledge of the effective use of trade databases
- Knowledge of import and export law is also an asset. Knowledge and experience working in the Greater Caribbean Region.
- Experience carrying out consultative research and in producing high quality and analytical reports;
- Excellent communication and presentation skills;
- Competence in two (2) of the three official languages of the ACS (English, Spanish and French) will be considered an asset.

Key Expert 2: Information Technology Specialist

- A minimum first Associate degree in Computer Science/MIS, Information Technology, Database Management, Computer Applications and/or relevant Courses in Information and Communications Technologies.
- Proficiency in database management, modern standard software and Operating System will be an advantage
- Minimum five (5) years working experience in ICT as a systems administrator, Software development, IT systems or in administering a medium to large size IT network. Working knowledge of IT equipment installation, management of servers hardware, software /database, web interface, good understanding of transmission control protocol; in depth knowledge of systems configuration.
- Experience carrying out consultative research and in producing high quality and analytical reports;
- Excellent communication and presentation skills;
- Competence in two (2) of the three official languages of the ACS (English, Spanish and French) will be considered an asset.

9.0 Additional Information

This document constitutes only a solicitation of interest in and proposal for providing technical trade expertise services to ACS/AMEXCID and shall not be interpreted as an offer by the ACS/AMEXCID to enter into a retainer agreement for such services. Your response will be treated as an offer to provide such services and not an acceptance of any offer made by the ACS/AMEXCID.

10.0 Submission of Proposal

Eligible Consultant(s) should submit technical and financial proposals in electronic format. Proposals should also include *inter alia*:

- 10.1 Statement of relevant experience that includes similar assignments executed in/under execution in the last (5) five years;
- 10.2 Description of Approach: Measurable goals and objectives and methodology and work plan;
- 10.3 Indication of availability to carry out the Consultancy during the period;
- 10.4 Supporting documents such as curriculum vitae are to be attached as appendices.

11.0 Submission

The entire set of tender documents should be completed in accordance with the provisions of the Request for Proposals and returned to the address indicated below.

**Directorate of Trade Development and External Economic
Relations
Association of Caribbean States
5-7 Sweet Briar Road, St. Clair
Port of Spain,
Trinidad and Tobago**