



11th EDF - EPA Programme - TBT Component
“Support to CARIFORUM States in Furthering the Implementation of their Economic Partnership Agreement Commitments and in Meaningfully Reaping the Benefits of the Agreement”

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

CARICOM REGIONAL ORGANISATION FOR STANDARDS AND QUALITY

CONSULTANCY: FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FRAMEWORK FOR A VOLUNTARY REGIONAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME

1.0 BACKGROUND

The CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) was created as an Inter-Governmental Organisation by the signing of an Agreement between the fifteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CROSQ was formally launched at its first General Assembly in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in April 2002. The organisation's headquarters was established in Barbados in April 2003. The 15 National Bureau of Standards (NSBs) of CARICOM Member States are CROSQ's principal shareholder group and beneficiary base.

The primary objective of CROSQ is the development, implementation and promotion of an internationally recognized regional quality infrastructure for the enhanced efficiency and improved quality in the production of goods and services in the Community, thereby facilitating consumer and environmental protection and improved trade within the Community and with third states.

More specifically, CROSQ seeks to, inter alia:

- promote the development and harmonisation of standards, metrology, technical regulations and the mutual recognition of conformity assessment procedures covering goods and services produced or provided in the Community with the aim of facilitating trade and supporting the establishment of the CSME;
- encourage the mutual recognition of accreditation and certification systems which are based on internationally accepted criteria;
- facilitate the achievement of international competitiveness of regional goods and services by fostering a culture of quality in regional enterprises;
- support quality-infrastructure development at the national level;





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- promote consumer welfare and safety; and through its operations, contribute to the preservation of the environment and conservation of the natural resources of the Community;
- provide guidance to Community Organs and Bodies regarding matters within its competence, including disputes settlement;
- promote and protect the interests of States Parties in regional and international quality infrastructure fora, including external negotiations; and
- promote the awareness of standards and quality related matters in governments, industry and commerce

2.0 OBJECTIVE

Based on the above as guidelines, the CROSQ Secretariat, under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) - Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Programme, is seeking to conduct a feasibility study to investigate the possibility of developing a commercially viable voluntary regional certification programme for harmonized implementation of CARICOM Regional Standards (CRS) in CARICOM Member States by national actors.

3.0 SCOPE OF WORK

To carry out this consultancy, the consultant must display in-depth knowledge, experience and understanding of quality infrastructure development, and more specifically, conformity assessment principles and practices as well as an appreciation of the investment value of quality. The consultancy will be given oversight by the Technical Officer – Accreditation and Conformity Assessment at the CROSQ Secretariat. All activities are expected to be conducted in an online environment.

3.1 Specific Activities

Specifically, the Consultant should at least:





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3.1.1 Host an Inception Meeting and Present an Inception Report

An initial meeting is to be held with the CROSQ Secretariat to discuss and agree on a proposed **Scope, Workplan and Schedule of Deliverables**. A list of Caricom Regional Standards (CRSs) for contextual and prioritized consideration during the project will be provided.

Submit an **Inception Report** to the CROSQ Secretariat for approval within two (2) weeks of the inception meeting.

3.1.2 Develop Hypothesis¹ of a Solution and Present a Desk Review Research Report

Through interaction with the CROSQ secretariat, identify, source and review relevant and appropriate product/service certification standards, specifications, guides and other relevant documents appropriate for identifying potential certification programmes against CRSs and framing a Regional Certification Programme that will foster and promote resilience, sustainability, risk based management and pragmatic implementation. This will include but is not limited to the ISO/IEC 17065 and ISO/IEC 17067 requirements and current CASCO Guides on product/service certification programmes.

Review relevant quality assurance/quality control programmes in the fifteen (15) Member States of CARICOM, through introductions by CROSQ to the fifteen National Bureaux of Standards (NSBs) of CARICOM and interested regional organizations.

Present and then submit a **Desk Review Research Report** to the CROSQ Secretariat for discussion to approval consisting of, inter alia, objective, methodology followed, demand/supply findings, opinions and recommendations that can probalistically be supportive of identifying, prioritizing and designing a commercially viable regional certification programme, for harmonized implementation in CARICOM Member States

¹ A hypothesis is an assumption, an idea that is proposed for the sake of argument so that it can be tested to see if it might be true. In the scientific method, the hypothesis is constructed before any applicable research has been done, apart from a basic background review



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by national actors in alignment with the applicable requirements of the ISO/IEC 17065 and ISO/IEC 17067 Standards and CASCO Guides. This report should inter alia identify the top priority areas for certification against CRS in the main and the feasibility of a regional certification programme/s highlighting factors such as the:

- type of product, service or system to be certified
- level of development/maturity of the recommended industry sector
- the cost of quality (which may be impacted by development / maturity of the industry sector)
- perceived value by industry (for example - potential reduction of cost or increase in revenue)
- perceived value or benefit by industry customers
- key framework components of a certification programme/s for consideration

3.1.3 Test the Hypothesis and Present a Market Research Report

With the use of an approved stakeholder map, conduct interviews in CARICOM Member States (or groups of States) via the NSBs and regionally via CROSQ, with a view to capturing technical, administrative, financial and other working requirements and ideas that test the opinions and recommendations arising from the Desk Review Research Report.

Present and then submit a **Market Research Report** to the CROSQ Secretariat for discussion to approval consisting of, inter alia, assumptions, principles, parameters and recommendations that can assist in identifying priority areas for certification and in designing an appropriately relevant, workable and commercially viable regional certification programme for implementation in CARICOM Member States by national actors in alignment with the applicable requirements of the ISO/IEC 17065 and ISO/IEC 17067 Standard and CASCO Guides.

3.1.4 Generate Design Options - With Indicative Implementation Frameworks

Develop design options of a commercially viable regional certification programme/s against prioritized CRS in the main, with indicative implementation framework/s.





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Each option should contain inter alia, the recommended: objective; target market; relevant CRSs; market dynamics for success in member states; governance, administrative, operational and technical frameworks; member state institutional arrangements required; resource requirements; assumptions and other recommendations, aligned to international best practices inclusive of complimentary guides such as ISO/IEC 17065; ISO/IEC 17030; ISO/IEC TR 17032; and ISO/IEC 17067.

Options must consider a harmonized implementation approach in CARICOM Member States by national actors with a plausible chance of financial sustainability.

Present and then submit a **Design Options Report** to the CROSQ Secretariat for discussion to approval consisting of, inter alia, the options and their working requirements, including advantages and disadvantages of each option and any preferential model with recommendations.

3.1.5 Evaluate Design Options - Host a Regional Stakeholder Validation Workshop

Conduct a validation workshop with targeted stakeholder representatives sampled from across the region to review the draft design options, working requirements and pros and cons analysis and seek to build consensus to a preferred model/s.

Present and then submit a **Design Evaluation Report** to the CROSQ Secretariat for discussion to approval consisting of, inter alia, the nature of the Workshop itself and outputs / outcomes.

3.1.6 Submit a Project Completion Report

Present and then submit a **Project Completion Report** detailing the development process, lessons learnt and recommendations including inter alia :

- To what CRS and related standards if necessary the regional certification programme/s may be applicable
- The nature of the regional certification programme/s that is/are feasible
- Probably resource requirements for the regional certification programme/s



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- Any other information relevant including possible timeframe etc. that can assist in: (a) the design of a Final Regional Certification Programme along with its attendant policies, processes, procedures, and other materials; (b) complete harmonized implementation in CARICOM Member States by national actors with a plausible chance of financial sustainability.

4.0 OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

The consultant is required to deliver the following for approval:

- Inception Report
- Desk Review Research Report
- Market Research Report
- Design Options Report
- Design Evaluation Report
- Project Completion Report - including the recommended Regional Certification Programme/s with indicative implementation framework/s to named CRS and related standards if necessary and next steps.

5.0 CONSULTANT REQUIREMENTS

This consultancy is open to nationals of CARICOM and the European Union Member States.

The appointed consultant must meet the following minimum requirements:

- A postgraduate degree in any of the following: Trade Policy, Engineering, Natural Sciences, Quality Assurance or an equivalent discipline.
- At least 10-year experience in conformity assessment design and implementation especially certification in a value chain or market development program.
- Proven record of accomplishment of similar assignments and demonstrated experience.
- Experience working in the CARICOM region on implementation of standards and conformity procedures are highly desirable.
- Proficiency in the use of information technology tools.
- Fluency in oral and written English.
- Excellent communication and writing skills and ability to establish and maintain good working relationships with private sector, government and other organizations;





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6.0 DURATION

The consultancy is expected to be completed within six (6) months.

7.0 SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

A technical and a financial proposal are required in English; The deadline for submission of both the technical and financial proposals is no later than **1:00 pm Atlantic Standard Time (AST) on 3rd February 2023** and sent by email to Mr. Terry Hutchinson at terry.hutchinson@crossq.org and copied to Ms. Patrine Hinds at patrine.hinds@crossq.org . Any proposals received after this deadline will not be considered.

8.0 EVALUATION OF TECHNICAL PROPOSALS

Selection of consultant will be based on demonstrated competence, methodology and workplan. The quality of each proposal will be evaluated in accordance with the award criteria and the associated ratings as detailed below:

EVALUATION CRITERIA	
Qualifications, Skills and Professional Experience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A postgraduate degree in any of the following: trade policy, engineering, natural sciences, Quality Assurance or an equivalent discipline • At least 10-year experience in conformity assessment design and implementation especially certification in a value chain or market development program. • Proven record of accomplishment of similar assignments and demonstrated experience. • Experience working in the CARICOM region on implementation of standards and conformity procedures. • Proficiency in the use of information technology tools. • Fluency in oral and written English • Excellent communication and writing skills and ability to establish and maintain good working relationships with private sector, government and other organizations. 	
Quality of Technical Proposal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization and Methodology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consultants understanding of assignment - adequacy/appropriateness of proposed methodology and strategy • Work Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reasonableness of completion time estimates and work breakdown structure 	





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All proposals will be reviewed and scored using the above-mentioned criteria. Proposals obtaining a minimum technical score of 75 will be short-listed for further consideration.

The Technical Proposal is weighted at 80% of the overall score

9.0 EVALUATION OF FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

In preparing the Financial Proposal, consultants are expected to list all costs associated with the assignment including professional fees and reimbursable costs. Consultants are required to express the price of their services in United States Dollars (USD). Fees are not subject to taxes. CROSQ will directly pay for any travel expenses that may be required – travel, per diem, accommodation.

The Financial Proposal should be submitted separately, but at the same time, as the Technical Proposal.

The Financial Proposal is weighted at 20% of the overall score.

10.0 EVALUATION OF TECHNICAL – FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

CROSQ reserves the right to negotiate methodology and rates with the candidate achieving the highest weighted score on the combined technical and financial proposal and then negotiate with others in rank order, if the preceding negotiation is not fruitful.

10.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information, please contact Mr. Terry Hutchinson at terry.hutchinson@crosg.org and copied to Mr. Deryck Omar at deryck.omar@crosg.org.

11.0 COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

All information pertaining to this consultancy (documents etc.) belong to and remain the property of CROSQ as the sole owner of all content and material, and exclusive rights over its use developed under this RFP. Thus, must be availed to CROSQ upon completion and/or request at any time.

