

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CONSULTANT – VINCYFRESH LIMITED

#### 1. **BACKGROUND**

- 1.01. The Caribbean Community Single Market and Economy (CSME) was established in 1989 to provide more and better opportunities to produce and sell goods and services, increase competitiveness, provide employment and improved standards of living for the people of the Caribbean Community<sup>1</sup>(CARICOM). The CSME now boasts some successes in the areas of functional cooperation, economic integration and foreign policy coordination. Within these categories, the implementation of the common external tariff, free movement of skills and the establishment of regional quality and research institutions are of significance to trade.
- 1.02. Notwithstanding the achievements of the CSME, challenges in intra-regional trade still remain. Some of the key constraints (particularly for manufacturers, exporters and service providers) in CARICOM are related to challenges in overcoming Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTs<sup>2</sup>) in order to increase market access and penetrate new markets. Most of these TBTs are related to a weak quality infrastructure and developing related institutions in the CARICOM region.
- 1.03. A Quality Infrastructure (QI) is "the institutional framework that contains mechanisms for developing standards, ensuring accuracy of measurements (metrology), verifying conformity to standards through inspection, testing and certification (conformity assessment), assuring competence in conformity processes (accreditation), and promoting awareness through information and education campaigns. Some of the specific challenges identified in relation to quality infrastructure in the CSME are as follows:
- (a) Technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment<sup>3</sup> are not well known to all CARICOM manufacturers, exporters and service providers contributing to limited compliance with national, regional and international requirements.
  - (b) Key standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures are not harmonised regionally, contributing to imperfect regional and national quality infrastructure, legislative and regulatory framework.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://caricom.org/caricom-single-market-and-economy>

<sup>2</sup> "Technical Barriers to Trade" refers to the use of technical regulations, minimum standards and certification systems for health, safety and environmental protection to supply information about products and which may result in barriers to trade.

<sup>3</sup> Conformity Assessment refers to any activity to determine, directly or indirectly, that a process, product, or service meets relevant technical standards and fulfils relevant requirements.

- (c) Relatively low number of certified firms resulting in weaker competitive advantages in the extra regional trade arrangements. This also impacts the price and stability of trade arrangements.
  - (d) Inadequate mutual recognition of conformity assessment data due to inadequate accreditation regimes in Member States.
  - (e) A weak culture of quality due in part to limited awareness of quality and absence of a robust QI.
- 1.04. The aforementioned challenges have not only impacted intra-regional trade but have also constrained access to international markets, especially those liberalized through the European Union (EU) CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). For example, pepper sauces from the CARICOM region were denied entry into the European markets for the presence of a banned additive/chemical and were returned based on non-compliance with standard and conformity assessment requirements of the importing country. Having a quality management system supports appropriate quality assurance on inputs, in-process production as well as outputs. The use of accredited conformity assessment reduces the need for duplicative testing in target markets and reduces the likelihood of preventing the exports of low quality products.
- 1.05. Since its inception, the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) has been actively engaged in establishing regional systems and mechanisms for the development of a Regional Quality Infrastructure (RQI) as well as providing support through its programmes to Member States for their national quality infrastructure development. It is responsible for the development and/or harmonisation of a regional quality infrastructure to facilitate trade both intra and extra regionally; to ensure consumer safety and to protect the environment.
- 1.06. The effort to have private sector firms align their operations with international best practices and considering quality in all aspects of their production process is the first step to significantly enhancing the confidence in products and services for export markets. Additionally, it redounds to reducing operational cost and increasing efficiencies. The end result is improved competitiveness, increased revenue and improved product quality.
- 1.07. During the period July 2025 to May 2027, CROSQ will be supporting private sector companies to achieve international quality management system certification under the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Phase III Project, which is part of the new European Union's Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), which constitute the legal basis for programming EU cooperation in developing countries during the period 2021-2027. Consultants are being contracted to assist with this process and will facilitate the process in the identified and selected organisation.

## 2. OBJECTIVE

- 2.01 The objective of this assignment is to provide technical support to **Vincyfresh Limited (St. Vincent and the Grenadines)**, hereafter referred to as the Firm, towards the implementation of an internationally recognised Quality Management Systems (QMS); namely the **HACCP**. The aim is to enable the Firm to achieve **HACCP** certification, thereby enhancing its capacity to conduct its operations more effectively and in alignment with its mandate.

## 3. SCOPE OF WORK

- 3.01 The Consultant will carry out the activities described hereunder and any other activities deemed necessary to accomplish the stated objectives of the consultancy assignment, whether or not the specific activity is cited in these terms of reference. Throughout the assignment, the Consultant will liaise with a Project Team, which has been appointed to lead and monitor the Project. The Consultant is also required to provide monthly updates including precise information on progress made based on activities outlined in the terms of reference. These updates should be submitted no later than three weeks after the end of each month. **Note these updates are separate from the payable deliverables outlined in Section 5 below.**
- 3.02 The main tasks/activities are to facilitate the readiness for internationally recognised certification of the Firm as described below:
- (a) Carry out, during the process, a technical audit/gap analysis/internal audit of the Firm, to assess and compare its current operations to the requirements of the **HACCP Standard**.
  - (b) Prepare a technical audit/gap analysis/internal audit report, with recommendations for closing observed gaps, including any equipment (and other asset) listing as necessary and produce an implementation plan.
  - (c) Assess the training needs of staff in the Firm based on the gap analysis carried out and formulate an overall training programme. Ensure that training is competence-based and, where possible, gender-balanced, ensuring that the composition of teams is taken into account.
  - (d) Review and, as necessary, give recommendations as well as guide the implementation of the appropriate structures, procedures, and other activities that are aligned with the certification requirements of the **HACCP** standard.
  - (e) Advise on the establishment of an audit team to carry out future internal audits and mentor this team to ensure its competence and continuity.
  - (f) Design and deliver the required QMS training for the technical staff of the Firm on the application of the respective standard and on the conduct of internal

audits/management reviews. The workshops should be carried out on a ‘train-the-trainer’ basis, and topics should include but not limited to the following:

- (i) Developing and maintaining certification management systems (as applicable);
  - (ii) Internal auditing and Management Reviews;
  - (iii) Introduction to the **HACCP** and other relevant standards as required for certification;
  - (iv) Writing Procedures/Work Instructions for a QMS;
  - (v) Internal quality control;
  - (vi) Managing findings including root cause analysis;
  - (vii) Other relevant areas based on training needs identified in the gap analysis
- (g) In consultation with the Firm’s technical and managerial staff, create templates and other forms that comply with the respective standard and are acceptable to the Firm.
- (h) Review the preliminary and revised drafts of all documentation submitted by the Quality Manager or designate (e.g. the quality manual, standard operating procedures, work instructions and personnel records) provide detailed feedback and approve all final documentation.
- (i) Review and provide feedback on the Audit Plans; assess the performance of a few audits and the selection and performance of the internal auditors; review each Audit report and provide comments to the audit team. Provide feedback on the closure of findings and the monitoring framework.
- (j) Assist the Firm in preparing its application to an internationally recognised (preferably regional) Certification Body as approved by CROSQ.
- (k) Review the results of the pre-assessment audit conducted for the Firm by the Certification Body and assist the Firm to close the gap(s) to certification and prepare a final report, which includes recommendations on the way forward for the Firm.

3.03 In conducting the assignment, the Consultant is required to facilitate the participation and engagement of the relevant staff at the facility.

#### 4. **DURATION**

- 4.01 This assignment is for a total of 40 person-days over the period of the certification of the Firm. The Firm must be certified within a period not exceeding 24 months.

#### 5. **DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

- 5.01 The consultant will report to the Technical Officer – Conformity Assessment and Accreditation at CROSQ, and will be required to submit/deliver the following:
- (a) Within two weeks of commencing the assignment, an **Inception Report** containing a detailed work plan and schedule.
  - (b) Within 6 weeks of commencing the assignment, a **Gap Analysis/Internal Audit Report** and Implementation Plan for the Firm, including perspective and concept/plan for the governance structure.
  - (c) A Report containing detailed feedback on the **preliminary drafts of the QMS documentation** as per the timeline in the Implementation Plan. Drafts of the QMS documentation and any necessary changes to the work plan and schedule. Samples of the drafts may be included as annexes.
  - (d) A Report containing detailed feedback on the **final drafts of the QMS documentation** and progress of activities and achievements as per workplan.
  - (e) A **Training Report** that outlines all workshops conducted, participant post training survey, effectiveness of training analysis, a draft in-house training programme and related training materials, along with details of the assignment, including activities performed; results obtained; recommendations and follow-up actions required; number of persons trained; the participant's evaluation of the training.
  - (f) A Report showing detailed feedback on the **final preparation** for Certification of the Firm, along with any recommendations arising.
  - (g) A **Final Report** containing detailed feedback on the overall certification support to the certified Firm.

#### 6. **QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

- 6.01 The consultant should possess the following qualifications and experience:

- (a) At least a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree in Natural Sciences, Applied

Sciences, Engineering or any other related field.

- (b) At least 10 years' work experience in implementing Quality Management Systems (QMS), of which at least 5 years' experience implementing **HACCP** in a similar type of organisation.
- (c) Demonstrated competence in conducting an internal audit/gap analysis
- (d) Technical training and experience in QMS with Lead Auditor certification and skills in the CARICOM Region or in a developing country will be an asset.
- (e) Strong interpersonal and communication skills; ability to be tactful and flexible in dealing with personnel at all organisational levels.
- (f) Excellent command of the written and spoken official language(s) of the Firm's country.

## 7. **SUBMISSIONS**

7.01 Proposals and Curriculum Vitae(s) are to be sent to Mr. Terry Hutchinson at [terry.hutchinson@croseq.org](mailto:terry.hutchinson@croseq.org) and copied to Ms. Teyonna Delice-Mayers at [teyonna.delicemayers@croseq.org](mailto:teyonna.delicemayers@croseq.org) by **1:00 pm AST on Thursday, 31 July 2025**. The proposal will be evaluated on the following criteria: Education; Experience; Skills and Competences; Adequacy and Technical approach. The proposal must include a financial indication of man-day rates and consultancy charges. CROSEQ reserves the right to negotiate rates with the most technically eligible respondent.