

TERMS OF REFERENCE NATIONAL LABORATORY POLICY CONSULTANT

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 Community¹ (CARICOM). The CSME now boast 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 (TBTs²) 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. It is generally recognised that a number of laboratories in the CARICOM region are unable to meet the requirements of clients and the wider trading community as well as accreditation due to several reasons, including:
- (a) Poor laboratory facility design that sometimes affects the ability of the laboratory to produce accurate and repeatable results.
 - (b) Inadequate scoping of laboratory business plans, especially where the laboratories were designed for one business strategy or mandate but then added new testing services so as to best meet the clients' needs. The laboratory may then find that their location, equipment or other infrastructure requirements are not suited for expansion.
 - (c) Poor market research and guidance when the laboratories were established. This becomes evident when customers and the trade supply chains begin to demand accredited test results, and the laboratories begin to lose clients or market share.
 - (d) Lack of proper quality assurance and control systems in the application of measurements and calibration and the need for Proficiency Testing.

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

² "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.

- (e) Limited competence in matters associated with the variation of results, including the application of appropriate uncertainty of measurement and;
 - (f) Laboratories operating with issues such as limited access to Certified Reference Materials (CRM).
- 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/and were returned based on non-compliance to standard and conformity assessment requirements of the importing country. The inability of the region to test for some of these banned additives resulted in the exporting CARICOM member countries having to perform the analytical test at accredited facilities located outside of the region at far higher costs.
- 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) and by extension a robust regional Laboratory Infrastructure. As such, CROSQ is 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 presence and use of internationally recognised conformity assessment bodies in the region reduces the costs associated with obtaining testing, certification and inspection from outside the region. These regionally available internationally recognised conformity assessment bodies also reduce the risk of products being rejected at the border of the destination country by providing credible data before shipment.
- 1.07. During the period November 2025 to June 2027, CROSQ will be supporting the Commonwealth of Dominica to adopt/adapt and use the CARICOM Regional Non-Medical Laboratory Policy as a base to develop their own National Laboratory Policy. **A consultant is being engaged to lead this process in Dominica.** This activity falls under the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Phase III Project, which is part of the new European Partnership Agreement Support Programme, which constitutes the legal basis for programming EU cooperation in developing countries during the period 2021-2027.

2. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this assignment is to develop Dominica's National Laboratory Policy (NLP) in alignment with the CARICOM Regional Non -Medical Laboratory Policy.

3. **SCOPE OF WORK**

- 3.01 The Consultant will carry out the activities described hereunder and any other activities necessary to accomplish the stated objectives of the consultancy assignment, whether or not a 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 that these updates are separate from the payable deliverables outlined in Section 5 below.
- 3.02 The main tasks/activities to lead the development of an NLP based on the adoption/adaptation and use of the CARICOM Regional Non-Medical Laboratory Policy are described below:
- (a) Conduct preparatory work to include in the inception meeting with the CROSQ Secretariat, the Dominica's National Standards Bureau (NSB) and relevant Ministry Representative(s) in Dominica.
 - (b) Conduct a stakeholder analysis.
 - (c) Sensitize major stakeholders in collaboration with Dominica's NSB.
 - (d) Conduct a detailed situational analysis of the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) and testing regimes in Dominica including an examination of the relevant and supporting legal framework. The analysis should involve consultations with CROSQ and other relevant stakeholders in-country, including laboratory personnel, private sector associations; a representative sample of businesses including micro-enterprises, regulatory agencies; and quality institutions.
 - (e) Assess the demands placed on the testing infrastructure and its suitability to respond to the demands and the regulatory framework/institutions. Examine the testing infrastructure issues relating to human safety, health and the environment and the country/regional development objectives.
 - (f) Liaise with the respective representatives to assess current versus required resources (economic and human) for the development of a sustainable national laboratory infrastructure.
 - (g) Prepare a draft National Laboratory Policy inclusive of implementation plans based on CROSQ Regional Non-Medical Laboratory Policy and informed by the assessments above.
 - (h) Sensitize stakeholders through appropriate engagements to obtain feedback on the draft National Laboratory Policy and Implementation Plan.

- (i) Prepare the final draft National Laboratory Policy and engage stakeholders to ratify the contents of the said NLP.
- (j) Submit a final report covering all activities and including recommendations for further action.

3.03 In conducting the assignment, the Consultant is required to facilitate the participation and engagement of relevant stakeholders in Dominica.

4. **DURATION**

4.01 This assignment is for a total of 20 person-days over the period of 8 months for the development of the National Laboratory Policy.

5. **DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

5.01 The consultant will report to the Technical Officer – Conformity Assessment and Accreditation, CROSQ and will be required to submit/deliver the following:

- (a) Within three weeks of commencing the assignment, an **Inception Report** outlining:
 - i. Tasks/duties to be undertaken
 - ii. Reporting relationships
 - iii. Methodology/approach
- (b) A stakeholder map including:
 - i. Relevant stakeholders
 - ii. Relationships
 - iii. The roles and commitment
 - iv. Formation of stakeholder committees
- (c) Sensitisation report including stakeholders sensitized, champions identified, and stakeholder groups formed.
- (d) Situational analysis report of the NQI and testing regimes in Dominica, conducted to include assumptions derived for regional applicability as well as recommendations. The report should also highlight:
 - i. The demands placed on testing infrastructure including related issues of human safety, health and environment;
 - ii. The required resources (economic and human) to support the development of a sustainable national laboratory infrastructure.
- (e) One (1) draft National Laboratory Policy prepared.

- (f) Workshop conducted and stakeholder comments obtained and presented in a Workshop Report.
- (g) Final Draft National Laboratory Policy contents ratified.
- (h) A Final Report covering all activities and including recommendations for further action.

6. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

6.01 The consultant should possess the following qualifications and experience:

- (a) Postgraduate university degree in Natural Sciences, Applied Sciences, Engineering, Economics, International Trade, Law, Business Studies or other relevant discipline.
- (b) A minimum of 10 years practical experience in the field of **quality infrastructure** development, including specific experience in **trade-related policies**. Provide details evidencing the experience and knowledge in the specified areas.
- (c) Demonstrated knowledge of the needs, conditions and problems in developing countries relating to the scope of this assignment is required.
- (d) Excellent command of written and spoken English.
- (e) Previous working experience in the CARICOM/developing countries.

7. SUBMISSIONS

7.01 Proposals and Curriculum Vitae(s) are to be sent to Ms. Marsha Dennie, Interim Project Coordinator for the TBT Phase III Project at marsha.dennie@crosq.org and copied to Ms. Teyonna Delice-Mayers at teyonna.delicemayers@crosq.org by **4:00 pm AST on Friday, 14 November 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. CROSQ reserves the right to negotiate rates with the most technically eligible respondent.

***** Note: Only the successful applicants will be contacted.**