

CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM) SECRETARIAT

CALL FOR CONSULTANTS

**CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO UPGRADE AND MANAGE THE REGIONAL
AGRIBUSINESS INFORMATION PLATFORM AND SUPPORT CAPACITY OF PRODUCERS TO
THE INFORMATION PLATFORM FOR BUSINESS AND TRADE-RELATED
INFORMATION: WEBSITE CONTENT MANAGEMENT**

CONTRACT REFERENCE no.:10TH EDF/AAP/SER/01/15

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat intends to award a service contract to *manage the content of the upgraded Caribbean Agribusiness Information Platform*. The contract will be implemented by the CARICOM Secretariat, Guyana, with financial assistance funded under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF), Agriculture Policy Programme (APP) with focus on the Caribbean and Pacific, and executed through a Contribution Agreement signed between the European Union (EU) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). The APP is being implemented in collaboration with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the CARICOM Secretariat (CCS).

The CARICOM Secretariat, the Implementation Agency, now wishes to procure consultancy services to Upgrade and Manage the Regional Agribusiness Information Platform and Support Capacity of Producers to use the Information Platform for Business and Trade Relation Information.

Qualified individual consultants are invited to submit their Curricula Vitae (CVs) electronically by Monday, **October 19, 2015** for the attention of :

Programme Manager
Administrative Services
CARICOM Secretariat
Turkeyen, Greater Georgetown
Guyana
procurement@caricom.org

The contract will be awarded based on an assessment of the qualifications, relevant general and specific professional experience of individual consultants, in relation to the requirements that are specified in the Terms of Reference. All CVs must be submitted in English.

Intra-ACP APP

TOR: Upgrade the regional agribusiness platform and support capacity of producers to use same for business and trade-related information: website content management

TERMS OF REFERENCE

UPGRADE THE REGIONAL AGRIBUSINESS PLATFORM AND SUPPORT CAPACITY OF PRODUCERS TO USE SAME FOR BUSINESS AND TRADE-RELATED INFORMATION: WEBSITE CONTENT MANAGEMENT

CONTENTS

1 CONTEXT5

1.1 The APP Project5

1.2 Justification8

1.3 Current Situation in the sector or the institutional/ thematic area8

1.4 Related programmes and other donor activities8

1.5 Contracting Authority9

2 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY/CONSULTANCY/CONTRACT9

2.1 Purpose9

2.2 Expected result to be achieved by the Contractor9

2.3 Assumptions & Risks9

2.4 Scope Of The Work 10

2.4.1 General 10

2.4.2 Target group 10

2.4.3 Geographical area to be covered 10

2.4.4 Specific Work 10

3 Management of the Activity/Consultancy/Contact 11

3.1 Responsible Body 11

3.2 Management structure 11

3.3 Facilities to be provided by the Contracting Authority and/or other parties 11

3.4 Logistics And Timing 11

3.4.1 Location 11

3.4.2 Start date & Period of implementation of tasks 11

4 REQUIREMENTS 12

4.1 Expertise Required 12

4.1.1 Qualifications and skills 12

4.1.2 General professional experience 12

4.1.3 Specific professional experience and qualifications 12

4.2 Facilities to be provided by the Contractor 12

4.3	Reporting requirements	12
4.4	Submission and approval of reports	13
4.5	Changes to the Terms of References (TOR)	13
5	MONITORING AND EVALUATION	13
5.1	Definition of indicators	13
5.2	Special requirements	13
6	Annex 1: Format for Monthly Reports	14

UPGRADE THE REGIONAL AGRIBUSINESS PLATFORM AND SUPPORT CAPACITY OF PRODUCERS TO USE SAME FOR BUSINESS AND TRADE-RELATED INFORMATION: WEBSITE CONTENT MANAGEMENT

1 CONTEXT

1.1 THE APP PROJECT

The "Caribbean Action under the Programme entitled Agriculture Policy Programme (APP) with focus on the Caribbean and Pacific" is funded under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) and executed through a Contribution Agreement signed between the European Union (EU) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). The APP is being implemented in collaboration with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the CARICOM Secretariat (CCS).

The specific objective of the Action is to contribute to enhanced regional (Caribbean and Pacific) and interregional capabilities of the agricultural sectors in eradicating poverty. The specific objective is to increase the capability of Regional Agricultural Development Organizations of the Caribbean and Pacific regions to address the development needs of smallholder agriculture.

The outcomes of the Action are expected to improve:

1. Policy regimes and incentive schemes for smallholders in the regional development strategies.
2. Food security at national and local level by increasing production and productivity of selected commercial and nutritionally valuable agricultural produce by using technological and organizational solutions that address specific development constraints of smallholder groups and rural communities.
3. Regional institutional capacity.

These Outcomes are to be achieved through actions taken in three Components namely:

1. Component 1: Strengthening regional agricultural development policy and strategy
2. Component 2: Improving the Transfer/Adoption of Research/ Technologies
3. Component 3: Contribute To Agricultural Enterprises Development through Improved Market Linkages

The main beneficiaries are the following stakeholders in the fifteen (15) CARIFORUM countries (CARICOM1 plus the Dominican Republic), namely:

1. Small producers/Entrepreneurs (including MSMEs) in the Caribbean, particularly those organized associations and networks, including but not limited to Caribbean Farmers Network (CAFAN) Caribbean AgriBusiness Association (CABA), Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CANROP) and Caribbean Agricultural Forum for Youth (CAFY) to enhance their technical and managerial capacities;

¹ CARICOM states comprise Antigua & Barbuda; the Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Dominica; Grenada; Guyana; Haiti; Jamaica; Montserrat; Saint Lucia; St. Kitts & Nevis; St. Vincent & the Grenadines; Suriname; and, Trinidad & Tobago.

2. Policy advisors, technicians, and Extension Services in the Ministries of Agriculture and producer organizations in CARIFORUM to enhance capacity for creating the enabling policy environment for small producers.
3. Regional Agricultural Development Institutions, including, but not limited to CARICOM, CARDI, IICA and the University of the West Indies (UWI) to strengthen capacity for delivering support services to small producers and processors.

The implementation period of the APP project starts on 1st September 2015 and end on 31st December 2016, with all actions identified for implementation falling within this period. This period was established in a new APP Scaled-down plan, accepted by the Delegation of the European Union to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean on 14 September, 2015.

The Scaled-Down APP Plan establishes two Phases, the:

1. Operational Phase 1st September 2015 – 30 September 2016, during which time the bulk of technical actions will be scheduled for completion to deliver the results as defined; and
2. Close-Out of the Operational Phase 1st October – 30 December 2016, which will conclude all technical works and focus on a series of engagements with stakeholders and knowledge management activities to promote, validate and disseminate information on results achieved/products generated.

The New APP Plan, responds to an established set of priorities for countries in CARIFORUM that collectively contribute to the regional goals of food and nutrition security, deepening regional integration through agri-food intra-regional trade, and enhancing integration of countries into global food and agricultural markets. It is built on well-defined interventions at the:

1. regional level, with a focus on strengthening regional coordination mechanisms established for more effective institutional collaboration and delivery of support and technical advice to stakeholders, related to development of both priority themes and commodity-based industries;
2. national level, with emphasis on strengthening the enabling environment through direct engagement and support with Ministries of Agriculture for the development and/or strengthening of national plans in keeping with national policy/strategic frameworks, and aligned with regional policies and strategies;
3. producer group level, with emphasis on adding value to their existing initiatives to strengthen group governance, operational efficiency and impact on membership, particularly as it relates to, inter-alia, expanding business and market opportunities.

Credible and accessible information for decision making is important for sustaining the results already achieved in agriculture development initiatives at all operational levels in the Region. Through support under the APP, this initiative will address the fact that there was no regional site/portal that acted as a major conduit for agricultural information in all its dimensions. An existing portal is currently

² ARES (2015) 3798474 – 14/09/2015 re EDF/2012/310015 Intra ACP Agriculture Policy Programme for the Caribbean

Intra-ACP APP

TOR: Upgrade the regional agribusiness platform and support capacity of producers to use same for business and trade-related information: website content management

being revamped and there is need to ensure that there is a high level of content management put in place, which will assist in the achievement of the overall objectives of the initiative.

1.2 JUSTIFICATION

Application of advances in information technology (IT) for the more efficient management of information generated from the various initiatives at the regional, industry and national levels will be essential to furthering the goals of the agriculture sector in a post-2015 development agenda. Having a dedicated web-site content manager will therefore be critical to ensuring that knowledge derived from developmental actions in agriculture is documented in an accessible format by ensuring that this APP activity delivers a well-built, well-populated website and systems for its continuous functioning.

In addition to strengthening the platform for documenting the wealth of information that will be generated from APP activities in general, including that of the Thematic and Commodity Groups, a dedicated website content manager is a direct requirement to add value to the support already being provided under the APP to:

- (i) enhance the Caribbean Agribusiness Information Platform with Specific Focus on the Needs of Small Farmers, which will upgrade the present web portal – www.agricarib.org - and provide a framework for the integration of a range of stakeholders, including farmer's organizations, into the on-going management of the portal; and
- (ii) assess Business Facilitation Mechanisms with focus on (i) recommendations to reduce limiting impacts of trade policy measures and (ii) inventory of transportation services/development of organizational mechanisms, which entails work on the identification and removal of barriers to intra-regional trade agricultural products; recommendations on the Common External Tariff and the Rules of Origin; and the development of an IT tool for producers in respect of transportation information.

1.3 CURRENT SITUATION IN THE SECTOR OR THE INSTITUTIONAL/ THEMATIC AREA

One of the main challenges faced by the small farming sector (and larger scale operations as well) is in terms of bridging the information gap as it relates to markets, sources of technology and business support. Modern information and communications technologies can help to fill these gaps as long as the required support is provided. The speed with which cellular networks have spread throughout the developing world, and the variety of uses to which they have been put, are indicative of the pent-up demand that exists for more rapid and effective communication at the level of the smallest and poorest units of society. These technological changes must therefore be harnessed to help bring about changes in production structures that will lift millions out of poverty and assist and providing sustainable livelihoods for large swathes of the population.

While support has traditionally been provided to the construction of IT systems, attention to building capacity for the continuous operations and management of these systems has lagged. The Caribbean Agribusiness Information Platform will be the central hub for information exchange with producers, buyers and sellers of agricultural commodities, other service providers, policy makers and researchers, and will therefore integrate other information initiatives.

1.4 RELATED PROGRAMMES AND OTHER DONOR ACTIVITIES

CARICOM, with assistance from UNDP-CARUTA and the EU-funded Caribbean Integration Support Programme (CISP), has put online the *Caribbean Agribusiness* web site, at <http://www.agricarib.org/>.

1.5 CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

This Terms of Reference pertains to Component One and is being administered by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

2 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY/CONSULTANCY/CONTRACT

2.1 PURPOSE

The purposes of this contract are to:

1. manage the content of the upgraded Caribbean Agribusiness Information Platform, including, identification (through research), refinement and uploading of content to the Platform. It is the expectation that the live Platform will: be well-promoted to relevant stakeholders; have active use through social media and other mechanisms; provide a marketplace for buyers and sellers; deliver a variety of information targeted to producers, service suppliers and consumers; and will be a useful catalyst to the integration of small farmers into the local, regional and international markets.

2.2 EXPECTED RESULT TO BE ACHIEVED BY THE CONTRACTOR

1. A well-populated and promoted Caribbean Agri-business Platform, which provides up to date and relevant information to facilitate activities of all CARICOM agricultural/agri-business stakeholders.

2.3 ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

The following assumptions are necessary for the success of the consultancy:

- Stakeholder institutions and other bodies are willing to share data and information on a continual basis;
- Buyers and sellers of agricultural commodities are willing to use the Platform on a regular basis in order to narrow existing and emerging gaps in demand for and supply of commodities in the Region;
- Key stakeholder institutions maintain commitment to the on-going upkeep and development of the Platform; and
- An adequate level of knowledge regarding the management of content is transferred to personnel within the key stakeholder institutions responsible for managing the Platform.

The key risks are that:

- Stakeholders may not become fully engaged with the Platform and thus underestimate its value.
- Some required information may not be forthcoming in a timely manner or may be withheld
- Capacity problems may prevent the full engagement of some stakeholder institutions in the upkeep of the Platform.

2.4 SCOPE OF THE WORK

2.4.1 General

This is a fixed-price service contract. The maximum sum allocated to this consultancy is US\$27,000.00

The Contractor will manage the content of the Caribbean Agri-business information Platform. This will entail: identification, refinement and uploading of content to the Platform, managing other aspects of the website, such as the buyers' and sellers' forum and related media. The Contractor will also be responsible for ensuring coordination of various stakeholders who will play a part in providing content for the Platform, as well as ensuring that the Platform is well-promoted to its target audience.

This contract will result in a fully-populated and managed Caribbean Agri-Business Platform which serves as a hub for all matters in which all stakeholders in the agriculture sector have an interest – historical as well as up to date information, statistics, trade, access to financing and developmental support and investment opportunities, policy issues, etc. Use would be made of a variety of internet-based methods as a means of creating a dynamic on-line community that considers itself loyal to the Platform.

2.4.2 Target group

It is expected that stakeholders of the Region's agriculture sector will use the enhanced Caribbean Agribusiness Platform. Ministries of Agriculture in the Region will have access to the site as Administrators, and will use the Platform to initiate and hold discussions, and to share information on developments in their sector. Producers, producer groups, sellers and buyers will be able to access the Platform in order to share and receive information of relevance to their operations, and will be able to meet business folk and exchange information for active trading.

2.4.3 Geographical area to be covered

All CARICOM Member States³, as a collective.

2.4.4 SPECIFIC WORK

The Contractor is expected to carry out the following activities:

1. Initially be integrally involved in the work of the Consultant assigned to upgrade the Caribbean Agribusiness Website;
2. Gathering of information, as identified, for input and appropriate formatting to ensure proper display on the Platform;

³ Member States of CARICOM are: Antigua and Barbuda; the Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Dominica; Grenada; Guyana; Haiti; Jamaica; Montserrat; St. Lucia; St. Kitts and Nevis; St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Suriname; and, Trinidad and Tobago.

3. Validate, edit and upload information to the Platform;
4. Manage social networking accounts;
5. Develop and implement, in consultation with Supervisor, a strategy for regular promotion of the content of the Platform;
6. Generate a mailing list and disseminate updates to the site to list members as agreed by Supervisor;
7. Provide support to the management of the email accounts that are aligned to the site and provide appropriate feedback;
8. Recommend to Supervisor, additional materials for uploading and/or enhancements to the site;
9. Monitor and report on traffic to the website; and
10. Provide training, as required, to other identified personnel within and outside of the Secretariat.

3 MANAGEMENT OF THE ACTIVITY/CONSULTANCY/CONTACT

3.1 RESPONSIBLE BODY

Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

3.2 MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The Caribbean Community Secretariat is responsible for the management of the activity/consultancy/contract. However overall project coordination is the responsibility of the Project Management Unit (PMU) based in IICA Trinidad and Tobago.

3.3 FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY AND/OR OTHER PARTIES

The CARICOM Secretariat will accommodate the Contractor in its offices for the duration of the Consultancy. He/she will be provided with equipment for the execution of the assignment.

3.4 LOGISTICS AND TIMING

3.4.1 Location

Work will be executed from the CARICOM Secretariat, Guyana.

3.4.2 Start date & Period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is 15 November 2015 and the period of implementation of the contract will be nine months from this date. In the event that additional time is required to complete the assignment, this will be negotiated with the Consultant on a no-cost basis.

4 REQUIREMENTS

This activity requires an individual with the following qualifications, expertise and experience.

4.1 EXPERTISE REQUIRED

4.1.1 Qualifications and skills

1. A Bachelor's Degree in Communication Studies, or a related field;
2. Proficiency in the use of major social media platforms (e.g. Facebook™ and Twitter™);
3. Exceptional communication and organizational skills;
4. Ability to manage multiple activities in a face-paced deadline-driven environment;
5. Proven ability to work effectively across departments and institutions; and
6. Proven ability to write content directed at both technical and non-technical readerships.

4.1.2 General professional experience

1. At least three (3) years' experience in managing content-driven websites and managing content uploads to high-traffic websites; and
2. At least three (3) years' experience in using content management systems e.g. ExpressionEngine™.

4.1.3 Specific professional experience and qualifications

The following will be considered distinct assets:

1. Professional qualifications in Information Technology;
2. Knowledge of Caribbean economy and society;
3. Experience in research and report writing in the English language;
4. Professional experience in business or economic/social development work

4.2 FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTOR

The Contracting Authority will ensure that the Contractor is adequately supported and equipped through the provision of sufficient administrative support. The Contracting Authority will provide the Consultant with access to contact persons, an email account, and equipment for executing the assignment.

4.3 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Contractor will report to Mr. Nigel Durrant, Agricultural Trade Specialist, and shall submit the following progress reports in English in electronic format:

1. **Inception Report** of maximum 12 pages to be produced after four weeks from the start of implementation. In the report, the Contractor shall describe e.g. initial findings, progress in collecting data, any difficulties encountered or expected in addition to the work programme

and schedule of activities, and staff travel. The Contractor should proceed with his/her work unless the Contracting Authority sends comments on the inception report.

2. **Monthly Reports** for the duration of the Consultancy, each with a maximum of two pages (main text, excluding annexes) in the format given in annex 1. This report shall be submitted at the end of every month.
3. **Final report** which will include handover notes and recommendations. The deadline for sending the final report is ten working days prior to the end of the contract. The final report must be provided along with the corresponding invoice.

4.4 SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF REPORTS

All reports referred to above in section 7.1 must be submitted by the Contractor in English in electronic format to Mr. Nigel Durrant based in the CARICOM Secretariat. Mr. Nigel Durrant is responsible for the requisite approvals of the Consultant's reports and will provide feedback to the consultant within ten days of receipt of reports.

4.5 CHANGES TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCES (TOR)

Changes to the ToR may be made only in accordance to the needs subject to mutual written agreement between the Contractor and the Contracting Authority with the endorsement of the APP Project Management Unit (PMU).

5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

5.1 DEFINITION OF INDICATORS

The following indicators are anticipated and are to be reported on:

1. Content identified, validated, edited, formatted and uploaded to the Platform, covering all components of the Platform;
2. Key stakeholders contacted once per month and encouraged to provide content for the Platform;
3. Related social media managed and promoted to key stakeholders;
4. A mailing list with at least 200 persons created and managed;
5. Initial activities of the promotion strategy for the portal implemented; and
6. At least two records of web usage statistics for the site generated.

5.2 SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

None

6 ANNEX 1: FORMAT FOR MONTHLY REPORTS

COMPONENT 1 ACTIVITY #/TITLE: _____

REPORTING PERIOD: _____

Activity	Planned Outputs	Update	Challenges/ Recommendations#
Initially be integrally involved in the work of the Consultant assigned to upgrade the Caribbean Agribusiness Website			
Gathering of information for input and appropriate formatting to ensure proper display on the Platform			
Validate, Edit and upload information to the Platform			
Manage social networking sites			
Develop and implement, in consultation with Supervisor, a strategy for regular promotion of the content of the Platform			
Generate a mailing list and disseminate updates to the site to list members as agreed by Supervisor			
Provide support to the management of the email accounts that are aligned to the site and provide appropriate feedback			
Recommend to Supervisor, additional materials for uploading and/or enhancements to the site			
Monitor and report on traffic to the website			
Provide training, as required, to other identified personnel within and outside of the Secretariat			

Activity	Planned Outputs	Update	Challenges/ Recommendations#
Other			

*Should include any planned adjustments to the programme for the next period

PREPARED BY: _____

Date: _____

(name of consultant)

SUBMITTED TO: _____

Date: _____

(name of supervisor)