TERMS OF REFERENCE

CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR

INTRA-REGIONAL MARKETING AND EXPORT FACILITATION

1. BACKGROUND
	1. Micro and small enterprises (MSEs) are widely regarded as the backbone of the private sector in both developed and developing countries. In the Caribbean, a significant percentage of these MSEs operate within the agriculture sector as AgriMSEs, playing a critical role in job creation, cost reduction, enhanced purchasing power, and convenience. Their contributions to poverty reduction and financial inclusion, particularly among women and youth, are vital for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
	2. In CARICOM, MSEs comprise over 60-75% of firms, contribute approximately 50% of GDP, and provide 45% of regional employment, with an expanding presence in agri-food value chains. Despite their importance, these enterprises face persistent challenges, including weak policy frameworks, limited access to financing, inadequate infrastructure, and management capacity gaps, which disproportionately affect youth and women.
	3. The 2019 CDB and FAO report “The State of Agriculture in the Caribbean” highlights the critical need for targeted support to strengthen financing mechanisms, product development, and service delivery for AgriMSEs, enabling them to scale and integrate into domestic and regional markets. Addressing these challenges requires strengthening policies, regulations, and business services, alongside interventions such as improved access to financing, ICT-driven operational efficiencies, and enhanced buyer engagement.
	4. While development partners actively support MSME growth through strategic initiatives, significant opportunities remain to uplift AgriMSEs with high potential for scaling. This project will focus on AgriMSEs from marginalised groups in five BMCs, namely Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago. The Project will employ specialised and target-specific tools and approaches, with a focus on: (1) business-specific training, coaching and networking; (2) literacy building to enhance resource accessibility and operational efficiencies; and (3) advocacy and facilitation for more structured and coordinated business ecosystems.
	5. The Project aligns with key priorities outlined in CDB’s Agriculture Sector Policy and Strategy (ASPS) 2020 and the Bank’s Private Sector Policy and Strategy, CARICOM’s “25 by 2030” initiative, and the Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy. These frameworks collectively aim to boost agri-food production, reduce imports, and promote inclusive growth, poverty reduction, and gender equality in the agriculture sector across the region.
2. OBJECTIVE
	1. The main objective of the consultancy is to foster AgriMSE Intra-Regional Trade through export facilitation and product export trials, as envisaged in Component 3 of the project document.
3. SCOPE OF SERVICE
	1. To achieve CARICOM's goal of reducing extra-regional imports by 25% by 2025, leveraging the potential of AgriMSEs is essential. However, high intra-regional logistics and transaction costs hinder their competitiveness, despite interest from sectors like hospitality to source regional products.
	2. There is a need to assess the trade environment by building on existing studies on trade flows, logistics, and procurement within CARICOM to determine its viability and recommend strategies to facilitate AgriMSE intra-regional trade. In that regard, the consultancy will focus on increasing AgriMSEs participation in intra-regional trade through export facilitation and product trials. The consultancy will target three (3) AgriMSEs in five (5) BMCs, namely Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago.
	3. The Key Intervention Areas are:
* AgriMSE Integration in Intra-Regional Trade
* AgriMSE Export Facilitation and Product Trials
* Post export trail business-to-business development
	1. For the above key intervention areas, the Consultant should undertake the following:

KIA3.1: AgriMSE Integration in Intra-Regional Trade

This will focus on undertaking a critical assessment of the dynamics and logistics of intra-regional trade and include inter-alia:

* + 1. current status of existing studies on extra-regional imports, intra-regional trade flows, and trade logistics within CARICOM countries, with a special focus on product movement to markets of products of interest for AgriMSEs[[1]](#footnote-1).
		2. assessment of the comparative availability, quality and pricing of AgriMSE products relative to similar extra-regional imports.
		3. evaluation of existing and pipeline transport logistics options and barriers, relative transaction costs of these available options, and current trade facilitation services and support mechanisms to better enable AgriMSE integration in intra-regional trade.

KIA3.2: AgriMSE Export Facilitation and Product Trials

This will focus on actually moving export-ready AgriMSE products into markets within the region, including:

* + 1. determining the current status and results of export facilitation recommendations and strategies to address identified trade and logistics barriers to intra-regional for small-volume AgriMSE products
		2. identifying, engaging and negotiating with potential buyers (hotels, restaurants, gourmet retailers, etc., committed to sourcing AgriMSEs’ value-added food and non-food products) for commitment in principle to product trials and testing, in collaboration with IICA’s in-country offices, as necessary.
		3. Pilot Product Export Trials[[2]](#footnote-2), including developing a framework to undertake the export trials to test the feasibility of proposed strategies, coordinating the selection, preparation, and movement of product samples for initial buyer evaluation, and facilitating product compliance checks to meet country- and buyer-specific requirements for quality, safety, and branding.
		4. based on trial outcomes, provide hands-on support to successful AgriMSEs to build their negotiation skills and finalize sales contracts to regularise the first two post-trial export cycles to ensure smooth execution.

KIA3.3: Post-Export Trial Analysis of Trade Logistics and Economic Viability for AgriMSEs

This effort will be essential to capture, document and evaluate the entire project, with respect to genuine market opportunities and facilitative nature of existing trade logistics and market entry regulations for boosting business and marketing of products from the AgriMSE sector within the region.

This should consider, inter alia the:

* + 1. efficacy of existing inter-regional trade corridors in moving AgriMSE products, including the logistics, including shipping, customs, and distribution processes, re their efficiency and cost-effectiveness.
		2. transactions costs for intra-regional trade and implications for AgriMSE products’ relative competitiveness and business viability vis a vis existing business and export development support services for capacity building and financing.
		3. economic feasibility for AgriMSEs of scaling-up output to extract greater advantages on export markets and gaps in current systems to enable same and the potential impact on profitability and export sustainability.
	1. The Consultant will undertake all the activities necessary to accomplish the Project's stated objectives under the general guidance/direction of IICA. Key tasks include but are not limited to the following:
		1. Information Review: Conduct a comprehensive review of relevant national and regional data and documentation related to the assignment, along with an analysis of global best practices, to inform the design of effective interventions.
		2. Methodology Development: Develop and finalise an appropriate methodology for executing the assignment in consultation with IICA relevant collaborators/stakeholders.
		3. Stakeholder Engagement: Facilitate national and regional consultations with potential collaborators and maintain ongoing engagement with AgriMSE beneficiaries to sustain their interest and active participation in the project.
		4. Regulatory and Policy Review: Examine intellectual property agreements and branding/crediting regulations to ensure that interventions comply with applicable standards (applicable for AgriMSEs and collaborators).
		5. Confidentiality and Data Protection: Establish and adhere to confidentiality and data protection protocols to ensure that all information shared by AgriMSEs and collaborators is securely managed and used strictly within the scope of the assignment, in compliance with applicable legal and ethical standards.
		6. Support for Communication and Information Sharing: Collaborate with IICA to develop targeted information and communication products tailored for AgriMSEs and other stakeholders.
		7. Project Management Support: Facilitate project cohesiveness by participating in cross-consultancy meetings within this project and other complementary projects, as required for enhanced impact, by engaging partners and collaborators, assisting in planning and implementation, and supporting reporting and communication. These meetings will be convened and manged by the Project Executing Agency.
1. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND DELIVERABLES
	1. The Consultant will be required to submit the following reports:
		1. **Inception Report:** Work plan including the methodology and the approach to be adopted. Detailed timeline for project activities, a report format and a preliminary list of secondary data sources and draft instrument to obtain commitment from potential buyers. The Report should be submitted within **one (1) month** of the commencement of the assignment.
		2. **Progress Report 1:** Update on assignment including the activities commenced, progress to date and any challenges with project implementation. The report should also include proposed solutions to challenges articulated and related timeframes. Progress Report 1 will be submitted **four (4) months after submission and acceptance of the Inception report** and should include the following deliverables:
* Draft report on Status and Outlook for AgriMSEs within the Inter-Regional Trade Dynamics
* Indicative plan for export trials and initial cost analysis and economic viability
* Indicative strategy to identify, negotiate with and obtain commitment from potential buyers
	+ 1. **Progress Report 2:** Update on assignment including progress to date of milestone activities, any challenges with project implementation, and proposed solutions to challenges articulated and related timeframes. Progress Report 2 will be submitted **four (4) months** after submission and acceptance of Progress Report #1 and should include the following deliverables:
* Final draft report on Status and Outlook for AgriMSEs within the Inter-Regional Trade Dynamics, including actionable export facilitation recommendations and strategies to address identified trade barriers and enhance the logistics and cost-efficiency of intra-regional AgriMSE trade
* Results of engagement with potential buyers including an indicative list of buyer commitments, products of interest and alignment to products of participating AgriMSEs.
* Revised, more detailed plan, including indicative schedules for export trials and initial cost analysis and economic viability.
	+ 1. **Progress Report 3:** Country-specific product export trials update, including specific challenges encountered, and actions taken to mitigate same, assessment of the quality of engagement and participation of: (i) the targeted buyers and (ii) the participating AgriMSEs, and confirmed contracts for the two post-trial export cycles for successful AgriMSEs. Progress Report 3 will be submitted **six (6) months** after submission and acceptance of the Progress Report #2.
		2. **Draft Final Report** - Document including all major outputs. The Report should also contain: (a) country-based mission reports on the trade environment dynamics, and cost and economic analysis as well as product export trials; (b) lessons learned and recommendations for follow-up actions. The draft Final Report will be submitted **two** (**2) months** after the commencement of the assignment. Comments by IICA and relevant partners will be provided within **one (1) month** of receipt of the report.
		3. **Final Report** - A final report incorporating comments by IICA and relevant partners will be submitted within **one (1) month** of receipt of comments.
	1. All reports and supporting documents should be produced in Microsoft Word and submitted electronically to the Project Coordinator IICA.
1. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS
	1. The Consultant will work under the guidance of the Project Coordinator – IICA, as it pertains to the execution and logistics of the assignment. This will include remote work and planned travel to BMCs, and the required participation in project meetings to coordinate the approaches, exchange relevant documentation and interim results, and undertake activities jointly, as necessary, across the three TORs.
2. DURATION, QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE
	1. The assignment will be executed over 18 months. The Consultancy Firm should have:
* Key expert: Agriculture Marketing and Trade Specialist, with at least a master’s degree and ten (10) years’ relevant professional experience and at least five years’ consulting experience, particularly relevant to AgriMSE development in BMCs.
	1. More specific details as it relates to qualifications and experience are as follows:
* Expertise in regional agricultural trade and marketing research.
* Competence in trade and policy analysis.
* Strong skills in data collection and analysis.
* Evidence of past work with AgriMSEs/MSMEs in the region.
* Knowledge of ethical standards related to marginalised groups and gender equity.
* Proven stakeholder engagement and negotiation skills.
* Experience in export logistics and supply chain management.
* Competence in project management and facilitation.
	1. Other technical competencies include:
* Proficiency in report writing.
* Excellent analytical skills.
* Excellent oral and written skills.
	1. Key Experts Required:
* Agriculture Trade and Marketing Specialist
1. Note, while the products are generally known, the specific products of interest for the AgriMSE category will be better defined from the results of the Needs Assessments to be completed in under TOR2 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The project will support product export trials for two cycles at a cost of USD1500 for shipping/handling and other associated cost. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)