**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Strengthening OF RegIONAL QUALITY Infrastructure Programme**

**cariCOM REGIONAL ORGANISATION FOR STANDARDS AND QUALITY**

**DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL QUALITY POLICY**

**FOR ST. KITTS AND NEVIS**

* + - 1. **BACKGROUND**

1.01 The CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) was established in 2001 with a primary objective of providing 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 (CARICOM) [[1]](#footnote-1)/. The CSME is also considered to be a platform on which economies of the Region can be successfully integrated into global trade – especially through plurilateral trade and development agreements such as the CARIFORUM-European Union (EU) Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

1.02 Notwithstanding the removal of tariffs or duties on goods of community origin, increased intra-regional trade and access to the CARICOM market (and beyond) is still very much dependent on producers being able to meet non-tariff measures such as Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS)[[2]](#footnote-2)/ and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)[[3]](#footnote-3)/. These measures include not only substantive regulatory requirements, but also the conformity assessment[[4]](#footnote-4)/ procedures used to determine compliance with these regulations or standards.

1.03 Quality infrastructure (QI) refers to the public and private institutional framework needed to implement standardisation, accreditation and conformity assessment services (including inspection, testing, laboratory and product certification). A well-functioning QI will not only open doors for producers in the CARICOM countries to the regional and international markets, but it will also help the regional producers to raise the standard of their production processes, thereby enhancing their competitiveness.

1.04 In recognising the need to harmonise its approach to and use of standards and technical regulations, CARICOM established the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) in 2002 to facilitate the development of a harmonised regional quality infrastructure (RQI). CROSQ is an inter-governmental agency established under the Industrial Protocol of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. This Treaty commits CARICOM countries to adherence to international standards and to the establishment of a regional standards organisation. CROSQ is the successor to the Caribbean Common Market Standards Council created in 1976. In this regard, key functions of CROSQ are to:

1. promote the development of standards and recognition of technical regulations;
2. encourage the recognition of internationally accredited certification systems;
3. facilitate the achievement of international competitiveness of regional goods and services by fostering a culture of quality in regional enterprises; and
4. contribute, through its operations, to the preservation of the environment and conservation of the national resources of the CSME.

1.05 The development of the RQI is driven by the regional quality policy (RQP)[[5]](#footnote-5)/ but operationalised through the internationally recognised QI services in each country. Taking into account the varying capacity at the national level and the priorities, the development of RQI has proceeded along the following pillars:

1. Adaptation of the RQP through the development of national quality policies (NQPs).
2. Strengthening Conformity Assessment.
3. Development and implementation of regional standardisation strategy, with concomitant and complementary national standardisation strategies[[6]](#footnote-6)/.

1.06 Over the last decade, CROSQ has made great strides in the Region through several projects and crucial partnerships with regional and international bodies. One such project was with the African Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and the European Union, Technical Barriers to Trade (ACP-EU TBT) Programme, which focused on development and roll-out of an e-learning programme on metrology and was successfully completed in 2017[[7]](#footnote-7)/. Additionally, CROSQ recently completed across several CARICOM Member States namely: Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, work on the development and implementation of technical regulations and methods of referencing standards.

1.07 Due to the limited customer base and resources in most CARICOM Member States these NSBs are also responsible for ensuring the accuracy of measurements in the country and the traceability of these measurements to the International System of Units. While an international recognised and harmonised metrology system at the national level is a critical component of the RQI, its development can be a challenge to some Member States due to the heavy capital investment and technical assistance that is often required[[8]](#footnote-8)/. Under the 10th EDF-EPA Caribbean Regional Indicative Programme - TBT Programme, CROSQ commenced the development of the regional foundation for arguably the three most basic measurement quantities of mass, volume, and temperature. This was achieved by developing three regional metrology reference laboratories as a sustainable means of ensuring that CARICOM NMIs can have their national standards calibrated at a reasonable cost without having to transport these standards outside the Region. Through the TBT Component of the 11th EDF-EPA Programme, there will be the development of three additional regional metrology reference laboratories, and two new measurement quantities developed towards accreditation at two CARIFORUM NMIs.

**CDB-CROSQ RQI Project**

1.08 In 2018, CDB approved a Grant to CROSQ to strengthen the Regional Quality Infrastructure Programme (CROSQ-CDB RQI). The Grant focused on enhancing national and regional QI across CARICOM through three (3) primary interventions in five (5) Member States, namely: Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Lucia, and Suriname. To date, three (3) National Quality Policies and requisite implementation roadmaps were developed in Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, and Suriname, setting the framework in place for an enhanced QI in those Member States and by extension, the Region. In addition, a regional quality promotions campaign was executed, which stretched across eleven (11) CARICOM Member States; six (6) more than originally planned, promoting the importance of QI through several media platforms and workshops, and designed information materials and animation.

1.09 Equipment and technical assistance were also provided to Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards (SLBS) Metrology Laboratory and Central Laboratory of Suriname (CLS) in support of achieving accreditation to their respective scopes. SLBS Metrology lab is on the brink of achieving accreditation through the Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation (JANAAC) having successfully completed 99% of required activities. Since the SLBS lab focused on calibration, accreditation by JANAAC will allow the regional accreditation body to expand the scope under the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) with respect to ISO/IEC 17025:2017 for calibration laboratories. This intervention facilitated the enhancement of capacity in the Region as it relates to accreditation bodies, in addition to expanding regional capacity of calibration services by SLBS.

* + - 1. **OBJECTIVE**

2.01 The objective of the assignment is the formulation of a National Quality Policy (NQP) for St. Kitts and Nevis, which will guide the establishment of NQI and technical regulations regime; support the competitiveness of the respective countries; and enhance consumer protection.

* + - 1. **SCOPE OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES**

3.01 The Consultants 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. The main tasks/activities are described below:

1. Review relevant background documents and interview relevant public and private sector stakeholders to develop a preliminary understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the current NQI and technical regulation regime in the context of best practice and country development objectives in areas such as private sector development, investment promotion, export diversification, consumer protection, poverty reduction, gender equality, and environmental protection. Regarding gender equality, examine the main barriers for women-owned as compared to men-owned businesses and how they can be addressed in the NQI.
2. Prepare an Inception Report that presents the findings based on the data collected at item (a) above; the proposed format for the NQP; a data collection plan; and a detailed work plan for completing the assignment.
3. Conduct a detailed situational analysis of the NQI and technical regulation regime in each country, covering the areas of Metrology; Standards; Testing; Inspections, Certification; and Accreditation. The analysis should involve consultations with CROSQ and other relevant stakeholders in-country, including private sector associations; a representative sample of businesses including women-owned enterprises, micro-enterprises, and regulatory agencies; and quality bodies/agencies.
4. Identify and analyse gaps (and overlaps) in the existing NQI and technical regulation regime by benchmarking against international best practices in NQI and by evaluating against the demands placed on NQI by the regulatory framework/agencies (e.g. related to human safety, health and the environment) and the country’s development objectives.
5. Liaise with the respective government representatives to assess the resources (financial and human) available for the development of an effective NQI and technical regulation regime; and to determine the priority services to be provided by NQI in its initial stages of development.
6. Prepare an Interim Report detailing the findings based on the analysis at items (c) to (e) above.
7. Prepare a draft NQP for each country that:
8. is based on a limited number of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound objectives;
9. differentiates immediate, short and longer-term priorities based on resource availability;
10. addresses appropriate arrangements for coordinating the implementation of the NQP;
11. recommends the legislation required to support the implementation of the NQP;
12. recommends capacity building for public and private sector personnel and enterprises to support the development and adoption of standards;
13. recommends specific measures to increase participation of small and women-owned businesses in trade; and
14. presents realistic Implementation Plan/Roadmap and Budget to guide the implementation process.
15. Present the draft NQP and an Implementation Plan/Road Map and Budget to and obtain feedback from stakeholders at a specially convened stakeholders’ workshop.
16. Train QI professionals and members from the quality institutions on relevant QI practices and activities related to the NQPs and Road Map
17. Finalise the NQP and an Implementation Plan/Road Map and Budget incorporating stakeholder feedback.
	* + 1. **DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

4.01 The Consultants will report to the Project Officer, CROSQ and will be required to submit/deliver the following:

1. Within two months of commencing the assignment, the Inception Report referred to at item 3.01 (b) of the above Scope of Work.
2. Within two months of CROSQ’s acceptance of the Inception Report, the Interim Report referred to at item 3.01 (f) of the above Scope of Work.
3. Within three months of CROSQ’s acceptance of the Interim Report, the draft NQP and Implementation Plan/Road Map and Budget, and facilitation of the stakeholders’ workshop referred to at items 3.01 (g) and (h), respectively of the above Scope of Work.
4. Within two months of the completion of the stakeholders’ workshop, the final NQP and Implementation Plans/Road Map and Budgets referred to at item 3.01 (j) of the above Scope of Work.
5. **QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**
	1. The assignment will be carried out by a firm whose team should possess the following:

**Team Leader**

1. At least a Postgraduate degree in Economics, Natural Sciences, Applied Sciences, Engineering or any other related field.
2. At least five (5) years’ work/consulting experience in Standardisation, Metrology, Testing and Quality Management Environment and significant hands-on experience in developing NQPs and strategies.
3. At least five (5) years’ experience in conducting quality management training or coaching on standards related subjects.
4. Demonstrated ability to present technical findings in succinct reports for a wide public and making oral public presentations.
5. Excellent understanding International Trade matters.
6. Sound knowledge of the linkages between the various components of an NQI and international best practices of NQIs.
7. Good communications, facilitation and change management skills.
8. Excellent technical and report-writing skills.
9. Fluency in written and spoken English.

**Quality Infrastructure Expert**

1. Bachelor’s degree in Natural Sciences, Applied Sciences, Engineering or any other related field.
2. At least three (3) years’ experience in managing and/or executing Quality Management Systems and related activities.
3. At least two (2) years’ experience in conducting quality management training or coaching on standards related subjects.
4. Sound knowledge of the linkages between the various components of an NQI and international best practices of NQIs.
5. Good communications, facilitation and change management skills.
6. Excellent technical and report-writing skills.
7. Fluency in written and spoken English and as well as working knowledge of another CARICOM language will be an asset.
8. **SUPERVISION OF THE CONSULTANT**

6.01 CROSQ will facilitate the work of the consultant and work with the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, through the St. Kitts and Nevis Bureau of Standards (SKNBS), to make available all studies, reports, and data relevant to the Project. The Project Officer, CROSQ will be assigned to be the liaison between CROSQ, the country and the consultant. The Head of the SKNBS will be the project’s national focal point.

6.02 It is estimated that this consultancy will require 65 person-days per year over a period of 12 calendar months.

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

 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. / SPS can be seen as a sub-category of technical regulations in that they may also take the form of regulations or standards, laying down product-related requirements. However, the sub-category of SPS measures is defined according to the purpose of the measure, namely the protection of human or animal health against risks in food or feed; the protection of human, animal or plant health against risks from pests or diseases of plants or animals; and the protection of the territory of a country against other damage from the entry, establishment or spread of pests. This sub-category of technical regulations is often addressed separately in trade agreements. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. / TBT is the term used to refer to technical regulations and standards. These measures lay down substantive requirements relating to product characteristics or their related processes and production methods. They also include labelling requirements applicable to products, processes, and production methods. The difference between technical regulations and standards is that the former is mandatory while the latter is not. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. / Conformity assessment comprises testing, inspection, and certification of products or services. Testing is the determination of a product’s characteristics against the requirements of the standard. Inspection encompasses the examination of a product design, end-product or process, and the determination of its conformity with requirements. Certification is the formal substantiation by a certification body after an evaluation, testing, inspection, or assessment, that a product, service, organisation, or individual meets the requirements of a standard. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. / Approved by the CARICOM Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) in November 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. / Standards are used to codify the technical characteristics and market preferences for products and processes, facilitating knowledge absorption and technological change. Standards have proven effective in promoting the adoption of desirable process and product characteristics (reliability, durability, and so on) and providing roadmaps to improve quality. For example, the International Standards Organisation (ISO) 9001 standard provides an organisation with a model to follow for the design, implementation, and assessment of quality management systems. The regional approach to standardisation has been adopted to reduce the extent to which country-specific standards can constrain the realisation of regional and global economies of scale. Harmonisation of standards also improves trade facilitation by reducing compliance costs. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. / Metrology provides reliable measurements as a basis for scientific research, technical development and production. Metrology is also needed to ensure goods, services and processes comply with quality, environmental, health and safety requirements, as well as meeting consumers’ needs and expectations. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. / Developing an effective QI poses many challenges for CARICOM countries. QI facilities, such as laboratories, are expensive to develop and operate. Not only is the equipment costly, specialised technicians are needed to undertake QI work. It therefore is unsustainable for any country in CARICOM to develop and maintain an entire range of QI services. In this regard, the RQP is based on the best practice approach of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) to developing RQI. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)