

Public document to be completed by the Contracting Authority

SERVICE CONTRACT NOTICE

Restricted International Tender

Strengthening Regional Collaboration among the
Caribbean Overseas Countries and Territories, EU and CARIFORUM

Location - Caribbean Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) - *Anguilla, Aruba, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Montserrat, Saba, Saint Barthélemy, St. Eustatius, St Maarten, the British Virgin Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands -*

1. Publication reference

Europeaid/136392/IH/SER/Multi

2. Procedure

Restricted

3. Programme title

“Strengthening the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises of the OCTs in the Caribbean Region” (COSME Programme).

4. Financing

Financing agreement N° EDF/2012/022-912

5. Contracting Authority

The Deputy Regional Authorizing Officer (DRAO)/Territorial Authorizing Officer (TAO) for the British Virgin Islands

CONTRACT SPECIFICATION

6. Nature of contract

Fee-based

7. Contract description

The assignment fits under the third programme purpose namely, to promote stronger collaboration, trade and investment relations among the EU, CARIFORUM and the Caribbean OCTs in the wider Caribbean Region.

The Contractor shall undertake activities aimed to:

1. Facilitate the creation of an umbrella organisation/association for Trade and Investment and private sector development among Caribbean OCTs.
2. Explore opportunities for collaboration, trade and investment between the OCTs and the wider Caribbean.
3. Create a regional skills platform to develop priority sectors.
4. Formulate comprehensive frameworks for trade and investment expansions that are consistent with the multilateral trading system have to be developed to guide the consolidation of the various FTAs to the benefits of OCTs.

5. Improve and strengthen the SME service providers at the export management level providing relevant export knowledge and support.
6. Promote regional networking events for BSO and SMEs

8. Number and titles of lots

One lot only

9. Maximum budget

EUR 1,200,000.00

10. Scope for additional services

The Contracting Authority may, at its own discretion, extend the project in duration and/or scope subject to the availability of funding up to a maximum not exceeding the length and value of the initial contract . Any extension of the contract would be subject to satisfactory performance by the Contractor.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

11. Eligibility

Participation in tendering is open on equal terms to natural and legal persons (participating either individually or in a grouping (consortium) of tenderers which are established in a Member State of the European Union, ACP States or in a country or territory authorised by the ACP_EC Partnership Agreement under which the contract is financed (see also item 29 below). Participation is also open to international organisations.

12. Candidature

All eligible natural and legal persons (as per item 11 above) or groupings of such persons (consortia) may apply.

A consortium may be a permanent, legally-established grouping or a grouping which has been constituted informally for a specific tender procedure. All members of a consortium (ie, the leader and all other members) are jointly and severally liable to the Contracting Authority.

The participation of an ineligible natural or legal person (as per item 11) will result in the automatic exclusion of that person. In particular, if that ineligible person belongs to a consortium, the whole consortium will be excluded.

13. Number of applications

No more than one application can be submitted by a natural or legal person whatever the form of participation (as an individual legal entity or as leader or member of a consortium submitting an application). In the event that a natural or legal person submits more than one application, all applications in which that person has participated will be excluded.

14. Shortlist alliances prohibited

Any tenders received from tenderers comprising firms other than those mentioned in the short-listed application forms will be excluded from this restricted tender procedure unless prior approval from the Contracting Authority has been obtained (see Practical Guide – PRAG- 2.4.3.). Short-listed candidates may not form alliances or subcontract to each other for the contract in question.

15. Grounds for exclusion

As part of the application form, candidates must submit a signed declaration, included in the

standard application form, to the effect that they are not in any of the exclusion situations listed in Section 2.3.3 of the PRAG

16. Sub-contracting

Subcontracting is allowed

17. Number of candidates to be short-listed

On the basis of the applications received, between 4 and 8 candidates will be invited to submit detailed tenders for this contract. If the number of eligible candidates meeting the selection criteria is less than the minimum of 4, the Contracting Authority may invite the candidates who satisfy the criteria to submit a tender.

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

18. Provisional date of invitation to tender

February 24, 2015

19. Provisional commencement date of the contract

September 15, 2015

20. Initial period of implementation of tasks

Duration in months – 18 months

SELECTION AND AWARD CRITERIA

21. Selection criteria

The following selection criteria will be applied to candidates. In the case of applications submitted by a consortium, these selection criteria will be applied to the consortium as a whole:

- 1) Economic and financial capacity of the tenderer** (based on item 3 of the tender form). In case of tenderer being a public body, equivalent information should be provided.

Criteria for legal and natural persons:

- The average annual turnover of the tenderer must exceed 800.000 EUR and
- Current ratio (current assets/current liabilities) must be between 1.5 and 3.

- 2) Professional capacity of the tenderer** (based on items 4 of the tender form)

Criteria for legal and natural persons:

- at least 5 staff currently work for the tenderer in fields of trade/private sector/SME development
- at least 20% of all staff working for the application this year in the fields of trade/private sector development are permanent

- 3) Technical capacity of candidate** (based on items 5 and 6 of the application form)

(a) The tenderer has worked successfully on at least 2 projects with a budget of at least 1.200.000 EUR in the field of trade/private sector/SME development 3 years from the submission deadline (2014, 2013, and 2012).

This means that the project the candidate refers to could have been started or completed at any

time during the indicated period but it does not necessarily have to be started and completed during that period, nor implemented during the entire period. Candidates/tenderers are allowed to refer either to projects completed within the reference period (although started earlier) or to projects not yet completed. In the first case the project will be considered in its whole if proper evidence of performance is provided (statement or certificate from the entity which awarded the contract, proof of final payment). In case of projects still on-going only the portion satisfactorily completed during the reference period will be taken into consideration. This portion will have to be supported by documentary evidence (similarly to projects completed) also detailing its value. If a candidate/tenderer has implemented the project in a consortium, the percentage that the candidate/tenderer has successfully completed must be clear from the documentary evidence, together with a description of the nature of the services provided if the selection criteria relating to the pertinence of the experience have been used.

(b) experience in implementing similar donor-financed programme in ACP countries;

(c) the number of similar projects implemented in the Caribbean region over the past 5 years

Previous experience which caused breach of contract and termination by a Contracting Authority shall not be used as reference.

An economic operator may, where appropriate and for a particular contract, rely on the capacities of other entities, regardless of the legal nature of the links which it has with them. It must in that case prove to the Contracting Authority that it will have at its disposal the resources necessary for performance of the contract, for example by producing an undertaking on the part of those entities to place those resources at its disposal. Such entities, for instance the parent company of the economic operator, must respect the same rules of eligibility and notably that of nationality, as the economic operator.

If more than 8 eligible candidates meet the above selection criteria, the relative strengths and weaknesses of the applications of these candidates must be re-examined to identify the eight best candidates. The only factors which will be taken into consideration during this re-examination are:

- the highest number of projects in criteria 3.a
- Preference will be given to experience in the Caribbean region

22. Award criteria

Best value for money.

APPLICATION

23. Deadline for receipt of applications

January 22, 2015, at 16:00 local time of the Contracting Authority.

Any application received by the Contracting Authority after this deadline will not be considered.

24. Application format and details to be provided

Applications must be submitted using the standard application form, the format and instructions of which must be strictly observed. The application form is available from the following Internet address: <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/annexes.do?group=B>

Any additional documentation (brochure, letter, etc) sent with an application will not be taken

into consideration.

25. How applications may be submitted

Applications must be submitted in English exclusively to the Contracting Authority in a sealed envelope:

- **EITHER** by recorded delivery (courier services e.g. DHL or FEDEX) to:

**Mr. Neil Smith, Deputy Regional Authorising Officer
c/o Diane Parsons, Imprest Account Officer
10th EDF Caribbean OCTs SME (COSME) Programme
SME Regional Project Office, Qwomar Building No. 2
Road Town, Tortola, BVI
VG1110**

- **OR** hand delivered directly to the Contracting Authority against a signed and dated receipt to:

**Mr. Neil Smith, Deputy Regional Authorising Officer
c/o Diane Parsons, Imprest Account Officer
10th EDF Caribbean OCTs SME (COSME) Programme
SME Regional Project Office, Qwomar Building No. 2
Road Town, Tortola, BVI
VG1110**

The Contract title and the Publication reference (see item 1 above) must be clearly marked on the envelope containing the application and must always be mentioned in all subsequent correspondence with the Contracting Authority.

Applications submitted by any other means will not be considered.

26. Alteration or withdrawal of applications

Candidates may alter or withdraw their applications by written notification prior to the deadline for submission of applications. No application may be altered after this deadline.

Any such notification of alteration or withdrawal shall be prepared and submitted in accordance with Item 25. The outer envelope (and the relevant inner envelope if used) must be marked 'Alteration' or 'Withdrawal' as appropriate.

27. Operational language

All written communications for this tender procedure and contract must be in English.

28. Date of publication of prior information notice

October 28, 2014.

29. Legal basis¹

¹ Please state any specificity that might have an impact on rules on participation (such as geographic or thematic or long/short term).

ACP-EC Partnership Agreement signed at Cotonou on 23/06/2000 as amended on 25 June 2005 and on 22 June 2010 (Annex IV).