Ministry of Tourism, Economy, Transport, and Telecommunication

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

for the

Funding research to create stimulation finance instruments for local entrepreneurs in Sint Maarten

In connection with Country Package Activity E6,

Sint Maarten

Department of Economy, Transport and Telecommunication
Government Building
Soualiga Road 1
Philipsburg, Sint Maarten
June 2, 2025

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Proposal Submitted Deadline: September 1, 2025, 5.00 pm.

Prerequisites:

I. Bidder should have verifiable experience in setting up (subsidy) entrepreneurial financial instruments.
II. Bidder should have verifiable working experience and knowledge of the processes with regards to (subsidy) funding opportunities, at organizations (e.g. NGO's, EU, UN, regionally, internationally, etc.) that are available to 'local' Small and Middle Enterprise (SME).
III. Bidder should not be involved in any litigation that may compromise the delivery of services as proposed.

Questions may be submitted in written form to:

Shervin Frederick
Department Head- Economy, Transport and Telecommunication
Government Building
Soualiga Road 1
Philipsburg, Sint Maarten
Shervin.Fredercik@sintmaartengov.org and cc Vanessa.Mathew@sintmaartengov.org

A. Introduction

The Government of Sint Maarten, namely the Department of Economic Affairs, Transportation, & Telecommunication (ETT) is seeking proposals from qualified organizations interested in providing funds advisory services pertaining to improving the entrepreneurial climate on Sint Maarten.

Please take the time to carefully read and become familiar with the requirements below. All proposals for consideration must be received by the specified date above under "***Proposal Submitted Deadline*.**"

**** Bidders should note that all work intended to be sub-contracted as part of the bid submittal must be accompanied by background materials and references. ****

B. Background

Recently, agreements were concluded between the Caribbean Countries of the Kingdom and the Netherlands on the national packages, in accordance with articles 36, 37 and 38 of the Kingdom

Charter. To help the Countries achieve these reforms, the Temporary Work Organization (TWO) was created. The TWO is part of the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) and supports the agreed reforms in Aruba, Curacao, and St. Maarten.

The TWO aims, together with the Dutch Ministries/departments and the Countries, is to implement the reform plans and activities in the very short term. The activities, from the national packages[1] set out for the countries, shall be implemented through thematic projects. The results of the projects contribute in their entirety to the welfare promotion of the population through reforms of an administrative nature, the achievement of sustainable public finances, strengthening the resilience of the economy and, where required, the creation of national organizations.

The overarching results of these projects aim to promote the well-being of the population by facilitating governance reforms, securing sustainable economic development and when needed, forming national organizations. In this context, the Ministry of TEATT has identified several projects essential for improving the business environment and fostering sustainable economic development. Consequently, the research for SME (subsidy) funding opportunities and alternative financial instruments has been integrated into the thematic components of the country package.

C. Required proposals

The Ministry of TEATT acknowledging the critical role SMEs play in fostering economic growth and job creation in Sint Maarten. Consequently, the necessity for research into financial funding options has been emphasized as essential for stimulating and developing the local economy as part of the country package. The research aims to explore funding opportunities within the e.g. European Union (EU) market, Netherlands, NGO's and or in the surrounding region. The goal is to identify potential or alternate funding mechanisms that could facilitate, stimulate or support the establishment of local SME's.

As stated, the primary goal of this research is to identify viable funding mechanisms that could facilitate the establishment of SME stimulation funds dedicated to local entrepreneurs. In Sint Maarten, it is widely acknowledged that many entrepreneurs require loans to successfully launch and sustain their businesses. Unfortunately, the current situation reveals a lack of developed tools aimed at promoting sector growth through crucial initiatives such as feasibility studies and research and development programs. This gap in support calls for a comprehensive re-evaluation of existing resources and strategies.

Furthermore, there is an opportunity to reassess certain tax incentives that may further stimulate the development of key sectors within the local economy. To fully comprehend the

[1] Landspakket Sint Maarten *(Country Package Sint Maarten)*

spectrum of financial instruments necessary to support SMEs beyond traditional loan programs, the Ministry of TEATT is seeking a dedicated experienced researcher.

The main objectives and project scope activities of this research are:

1. **Identify Funding Sources**
   To identify potential EU, UN, regional, funding programs, grants, and investment opportunities that are specifically aimed at supporting SMEs.

2. **Analyze and Identify Regional Opportunities**
   To assess funding possibilities available in the Caribbean region that could be advantageous for entrepreneurs in Sint Maarten.

3. **Develop Recommendations**
   To provide actionable recommendations on how Sint Maarten can effectively access and leverage these funding opportunities.

4. **Engagement with Stakeholders**
   To involve local entrepreneurs and business organizations in the research process, ensuring the findings are relevant and applicable.

5. **Mapping of Funding Opportunities**
   To create a comprehensive map of available funding programs per region or organization, detailing eligibility criteria, application processes, and timelines.

6. **Case Studies**
   To analyze successful case studies of SMEs in Sint Maarten or similar regions that have successfully benefited from EU or regional funding.

7. **Reporting**
   To prepare a detailed report summarizing findings, analyses, and recommendations for the Ministry of TEATT.

8. **Stakeholder Interviews**
   To conduct interviews with EU, Dutch, UN, or Regional, funding entities and or financial institutions to gather insights on the requirements and opportunities for the government of or local entrepreneurs of Sint Maarten to access these funds. Additionally, interviews with the tax office will be carried out to evaluate how a tax incentive system could bolster the financial positions of local entrepreneurs.

Through the project objectives and project scope activities outlined above, we aim to generate a deeper understanding of the funding opportunities and mechanisms available to empower entrepreneurs in Sint Maarten. The anticipated findings will equip the Ministry of TEATT with actionable strategies tailored to foster entrepreneurial growth, ultimately

contributing to the broader economic advancement of the island. By investing in this research, we not only seek to alleviate the financial constraints faced by the Ministry but also aim to build a robust ecosystem that nurtures and sustains the entrepreneurial spirit that is essential for our community's prosperity

D. Phased approach

Proposals must include a phased approach to execute the above-mentioned project scope activities.

E. Duration of the Agreement

An Agreement will be with one (1) Supplier and will be entered into for the period from October, 2025, for a period of maximum eight (8) months with a total budget of 50,000 Caribbean guilders.

F. Project Proposal Deliverables

The Ministry of TEATT shall award the contract to the proposal that best meets the various project objectives and requirements. The Ministry reserves the right to refuse any proposal or contract. The contract will be with the Ministry of TEATT in Sint Maarten.

G. Deadline to submit the proposal

All proposals must be received by the Government of Sint Maarten no later than **September 1st, 2025**, **5.00 pm**, for consideration in the project proposal selection. Proposals may be sent electronically to Shervin.Frederick@sintmaartengov.org or Vanessa.Mathew@sintmaartengov.org.

H. Evaluation Criteria

Only those proposals received by the deadline date will be considered. All proposals submitted by the deadline will be reviewed and evaluated based upon the information provided in the submitted proposal. In addition, consideration will be given to cost, quality and performance projections. Furthermore, the following criteria will be given considerable weight in the proposal selection process:

1. The bidder's track record and demonstrated ability to deliver services on time.
2. The bidder's capacity to provide qualified personnel with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively and efficiently execute the proposed services.
3. Proven experience in researching (subsidy) funding possibilities and alternative financial instruments.

4. Strong analytical capabilities and prior experience in conducting research and assessments.
5. Familiarity with the economic landscape of Sint Maarten or the Caribbean region is an asset.
6. Familiarity with subsidy funding instruments and alternative funding instruments for the entrepreneurial industry. A well-defined phased approach for project execution.
7. The overall cost-effectiveness of the proposal.

The Government of Sint Maarten reserves the right to cancel, suspend, and/or discontinue any proposal at any time, without obligation or notice to the proposing bidder.

I. Proposal Submission Format

The following is a list of information that the Bidder should include in their proposal submission:

1. Bidder's name
2. Bidder's address
3. Bidder's contact information (including e-mail).
4. Description of Bidder's company in terms of size, range and types of services offered.
5. Bidder's Crib and Chamber of Commerce number.
6. Manpower, Skill Set, Team Composition & Deployment Composition of the project team and details of specific qualifications, skills/ competencies/ expertise of the key professional staff resumes of team members to give details of education qualification, implementation of similar assignments, relevant services carried out in the last 5 years.
7. Evidence of an established record of accomplishment for providing services and/or deliverables is the subject of this proposal.

J. Proposed Outcome

Comprehensiveness and robustness of Project Plan (level of detail of activities, risk mitigation and practicality). This criterion will be evaluated based on the following parameters:

- Comprehensive plan with respect to all activities that need to be undertaken to meet the requirements specified in the scope of work.
- Quality of the solution including innovations.
- Resource planning and allocation with a timeline.

K. Cost Proposal Summary and Breakdown

- A detailed list of any expected costs or expenses related to the proposed project.

- Summary and explanation of any other contributing expenses to the total cost.
- Summary of the total cost of the proposal.
- NOTE: All Financial Proposals must be capped to a maximum of 50,000 guilders for a maximum period of 8 months. If the company believes the project deliverables can be completed in a shorter timeframe based on its experience, this should also be indicated in the proposal.

L. Ownership Rights

Ownership of all new artifacts (data, reports, presentations, and other publications) will rest with the Ministry of TEATT, and based on mutual agreement, it will have the right to resell/ implement the same with any other organization.

M. Confidentiality

Information relating to the evaluation of Proposals and recommendations concerning awards shall not be disclosed to the bidders who submitted the Proposals or to other persons not officially concerned with the process. The undue use by any bidder of confidential information related to the process may result in the rejection of its Proposal and adversely affect its prospects.

N. Authorization of signatory

The Bid may be signed either by the Principal Officer of the Agency or his/her duly Authorized Representative, in which case he/she shall submit a certificate of authority. All certificates and documents (including any clarifications sought and any subsequent correspondence) received hereby shall, as far as possible, be furnished and signed by the Representative or the Principal Officer. The Principal Officer/ authorized representative of the Agency shall sign the proposal and initial all pages of the original Technical and Financial Proposals. The authorization shall be in the form of a written power of attorney accompanying the Proposal or in any other form demonstrating that the representative has been duly authorized to sign. The power or authorization, or any other document consisting of adequate proof of the ability of the signatory to bind the Bidder shall be annexed to the Bid.

O. Taxes

The bidder shall include in Bid Price all local taxes as applicable in amounts payable by the Agency under the Contract. All taxes and other impositions as applicable on Sint Maarten shall always be deemed to be included in the Financial Proposal.