REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

for the

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT & LABOR (VSA)

Project Name	**Labor Market and Social Security Reforms**
Activity	**Engagement Specialist**
Contract Type	Project-Based Consultancy Agreement
Duration of Contract	12 months *(with the option of extension based on performance and institutional requirements)*
Location	Sint Maarten; commitment to on-site availability when necessary
Effort	On average 16 hours per week
Contracting Authority	Government of Sint Maarten, represented by the Minister of VSA
Publication Date	February 16, 2026
Submission Deadline	March 13, 2026
Contract Award	April 2026
Contact Person	Secretary General VSA, Joy Arnell, joy.arnell@sintmaartengov.org Program Secretary, Candia Joseph, candia.joseph@sintmaartengov.org

1. Background and rationale

In 2020, the Netherlands reached an agreement with Sint Maarten on the implementation of reform packages (referred to as "the Country Packages") aimed at improving the overall welfare of the populations of the country. Agreed-upon measures are being implemented through theme-based projects. The projects include administrative reforms, sustainable public finances, greater economic resilience, and the establishment of the necessary institutional frameworks.

The socio-economic reforms focused on the labor market and social security system of Sint Maarten are part of theme E. In 2022 and 2023, several assessments were carried out of the labor market (E1) and social security system (E4) of Sint Maarten. These assessments revealed various bottlenecks and gaps in the existing policies and resulted in recommendations for improving the functioning of the labor market and strengthening the social security system.

The Government of Sint Maarten, through the Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labor (VSA), is implementing a set of prioritized labor market and social security reforms as part of a comprehensive socio-economic program. These reforms focus on enhancing income protection, improving labor mobility, strengthening the AOV and social assistance systems, and combating poverty by improving efficiency and governance in the labor market.

Because these reforms impact workers, employers, unions, regulatory bodies, and government entities, structured and continuous consultation is essential. The general approach explicitly states that stakeholder engagement should remain a core requirement at every stage of development, decision-making, legislation, and implementation.

In line with this objective, the Ministry of VSA seeks to source an **Engagement Specialist** to engage the public and affected stakeholders to shape, improve and embed reforms. This includes setting up and maintaining an engagement framework, translating and support in communicating key reform implications in clear, accessible language; assisting with legal clarity by simplifying and contextualizing legislative and policy content; facilitating engagement sessions with employers and unions; ensuring that affected individuals are meaningfully informed and able to provide input; and monitoring feedback loops to inform decision-making.

2. Assignment

The Engagement Specialist will be responsible for designing, coordinating, and executing the stakeholder consultation and engagement framework for the labor market and social security reforms. The Engagement Specialist will design the engagement process, lead stakeholder discussions, simplify complex information, ensure broad participation, and turn feedback into clear guidance for decision makers. The consultant ensures that:

- Stakeholder concerns are accurately captured and communicated to the projects;
- Legal and technical reform information is translated into accessible language and be available;
- Employer and employee representatives receive consistent and correct updates;
- Consultation processes comply with governance expectations and reform timelines;
- Feedback from consultations informs decision-making across the projects.

This role is critical to ensuring inclusion, acceptance, transparency, and smooth implementation across all reform areas.

2.1. Responsibilities

Key responsibilities of the Engagement Specialist include:

a) ***Stakeholder Identification & Analysis***

- Map stakeholders to understand their engagement needs, influence, potential resistance, and the issues that matter most to them.
- Identify key underrepresented or vulnerable groups (e.g. informal workers, gig workers, disabled persons, women in precarious jobs) and map their engagement needs, influence, potential resistance, and priority concerns.

- Develop tailored engagement approaches and partner with community organizations to ensure marginalized voices are reached and included..
- Assess power dynamics, interests, and levels of impact, then prioritize stakeholders for appropriate stages of the reform process.

b) ***Design and Management of Consultation Processes***

- Develop and execute a comprehensive stakeholder consultation strategy and plan that define engagement objectives, methods, and timelines (e.g. interviews, workshops, focus groups, tripartite negotiations).
- Create a stakeholder mapping that identifies impact groups in collaboration with the Communications Consultant.
- Establish clear consultation frameworks, protocols, and rules of engagement to guide all interactions.
- Facilitate collaborative sessions to surface issues, test policy options, and build shared understanding.
- Coordinate formal and informal consultation across the reform phases as required.
- Ensure alignment and consistency across multi-stakeholder engagement processes.
- Brief the Minister, Secretary General and Project Managers on emerging issues, risks, and opportunities.

c) ***Organizing and Facilitating Dialogues, Workshops & Negotiations***

- Lead consultations with:
  - trade unions
  - employer organizations
  - civil society groups
  - pensioner associations
  - vulnerable groups
  - private sector and industry bodies
- Moderate discussions, manage power dynamic and sensitivities and ensure all groups can contribute meaningfully.
- Help clarify issues, resolve differences where possible, document points of agreement and disagreements to inform decision-making.

d) ***Gathering and Synthesizing Stakeholder Feedback***

- Collect qualitative input through interviews, focus groups, and listening sessions to understand concerns, expectations, risks, needs, recommendations.
- Produce session minutes, stakeholder summaries, and post-meeting briefs for policymakers and technical experts.
- Validate key findings with stakeholders.
- Translate stakeholder feedback into policy-relevant insights.
- Identify areas where reform proposals need adjustment due to stakeholder concerns.
- Advise policymakers on feasibility, acceptability, and risks of proposed measures.
- Recommend mitigation strategies for contested measures.

e) ***Public Translation & Information Filtering***

- Work closely with the technical experts to translate legislative and technical concepts and procedural changes into clear, non-technical language for the public.

- Ensure explanation tools are developed and disseminated appropriately (i.e. reform summaries, FAQs, legal briefs, employer/employee guidance sheets).
- Ensure effected persons and groups understand their rights, responsibilities, and expected procedural changes.
- Filter and structure reform information to avoid misinterpretation or misinformation.

*f) **Managing Sensitive and High-Risk Stakeholder Relations***

- Anticipate potential sources of resistance, conflict, or misinformation and recommend strategies to address them.
- Conduct early outreach to clarify intentions and reduce potential conflict.
- Develop trust-building measures with skeptical or high-opposition groups.

g) Feedback Monitoring, Reporting & Knowledge Management

- Document stakeholder feedback, identify key themes and classify issues by legal, operational, social and risk categories.
- Produce monthly or quarterly consultation reports with key findings, and recommendations that guide policy and legislative decisions.
- Maintain an up-to-date stakeholder database and consultation log.
- Ensure lessons learned feed into ongoing reform improvements and legislative drafts.

2.2. Qualifications and Experience

✓ Bachelor's or Master's in Public Policy, Public Administration, Sociology, Political Science, Industrial Relations, Development Studies, Communication, or related field.

✓ Experience in leading or facilitating stakeholder consultation processes in public sector reform, social policy, governance, labor market reforms, or social protection systems.
- Candidates with a Master's degree require 5 to 7 years of relevant experience.
- Candidates with a Bachelor's degree require 7 to 10 years of relevant experience

✓ Technical Expertise:
- Proven experience managing structured consultations with government ministries and agencies, social partners (trade unions and employer organizations), civil society organizations, private sector and industry representatives, vulnerable or marginalized groups.
- Prior experience in managing politically sensitive or high-stakes consultations is an advantage.
- Strong ability to interpret, summarize, and translate legal or technical reform content.
- Skilled in designing and executing consultation strategies for complex reforms.
- Ability to analyze, synthesize, and report stakeholder positions and risks.
- Familiarity with Sint Maarten's labor laws, social security systems, and socio-economic environment.

✓ Fluency in English (spoken and written) required. Proficiency in Dutch and Spanish and/or Creole are highly desirable.

✓ Strong understanding of Sint Maarten's institutional framework, labor landscape, and socio-economic dynamics.

2.3. Core Competencies & Skills

- Stakeholder Facilitation – Strong expertise in stakeholder analysis, power mapping, and consultation planning.
- Stakeholder Engagement – Skilled in executing constructive communication between government, employers, unions, vulnerable groups and the public.
- Synthesizing Feedback & Analytical Thinking – Ability to interpret and integrate complex stakeholder feedback into clear, actionable insights for policymakers, including assessments of risks, acceptability, and feasibility of reform measures.
- Research & Analysis – Demonstrated skill in conducting qualitative research, including interviews, focus groups, participatory methods.
- Collaboration & Negotiation – Ability to build trust and maintain constructive relationships with diverse stakeholders. Strong interpersonal and negotiation skills, especially in environments with conflicting interests.
- Communication Clarity – Strong ability to simplify complex reform topics for various groups.
- Process Management – Ability to plan, coordinate, and document consultation activities across multiple phases of reform.
- Conflict Sensitivity – Ability to identify emerging tensions, manage sensitivities, and adjust engagement approaches to prevent escalation.

3. Proposal Submission Requirements

Interested consultants or companies must submit a proposal that includes the following:

- Technical Proposal outlining:
  - Understanding of the assignment, approach, and methodology.
  - Work plan, milestones, risk mitigation, and expected deliverables.
- Curriculum Vitae (CV) demonstrating relevant qualifications and experience.
- Financial Proposal including hourly rate (in XCG, inclusive of fees and turnover tax or equivalent taxes).
  - Non-resident consultants must include estimates for travel and accommodation costs per trip.
- Proof of Registration:
  - Valid Chamber of Commerce extract of registered country (not older than 6 months).
  - Valid Tax Authority registration of registered country (not older than 6 months).

4. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals that meet all submission requirements will be further evaluated on qualitative criteria. Each criterion is scored from 1 (low) to 4 (high). Each criterion also carries a weight, resulting in a total weighted score.

No.	Criteria	Description	Weight
1.	Relevant Experience	Demonstrated experience in designing, managing, and facilitating stakeholder consultations for government reform, or development projects. Proven track record in conducting social dialogue, moderating multi-stakeholder engagements, and gathering structured stakeholder input.	25%
2.	Technical Knowledge	Strong understanding of participatory methodologies, stakeholder mapping, consensus-building techniques, qualitative data collection tools, and integration of stakeholder feedback into policy processes.	20%
3.	Qualifications	Academic and professional credentials in Public Policy, Public Administration, Sociology, Political Science, Industrial Relations, Development Studies or related fields. Additional training/ certification in facilitation, negotiation, mediation, or participatory governance is an advantage.	20%
4.	Methodology & Approach	Clarity and feasibility of the proposed approach to achieving objectives.	15%
5.	Knowledge of local context	Familiarity with Sint Maarten's diverse audiences and cultural nuances.	10%
6.	Financial Proposal	Value for money of the proposed fee. Price scoring is based on the difference between the proposed price and the lowest proposed price, taking the price cap into consideration.	10%
		Total	**100%**

5. Submission Instructions

The submissions must be prepared in accordance with the terms and specifications set forth in this document. All submissions must be in English and delivered electronically as a single document in PDF format to:

- Joy.Arnell@sintmaartengov.org, and
- Candia.joseph@sintmaartengov.org

The proposal must remain valid for a minimum period of four (4) months from the date of submission.

6. Other Legal Conditions

The following additional legal conditions govern this procurement and the work that will follow the decision which Tenderer will be given the assignment.

1. Governing law: This procurement is governed by the laws of Sint Maarten.
2. Contractual Agreement: The Supplier shall enter into a formal agreement with the Contracting Authority.
3. No Obligation Upon Award Announcement: The announcement of the award decision shall not, under any circumstances, be construed as creating any contractual obligation on the part of the Government. The assignment shall only be deemed validly awarded, and any rights or obligations shall arise, upon the execution of a written contract duly signed by both the Contracting Authority and the successful Consultant.
4. Confidentiality and non-disclosure: All parties agree to keep confidential and not to disclose any confidential or proprietary information that is disclosed or made available to them during the project, except as necessary to perform their respective obligations. The parties shall take all necessary measures to protect such information from unauthorized access, disclosure, or use.
5. Liability and indemnity: The Supplier shall be liable for any loss, damage, or injury arising from its performance of the project, except to the extent caused by the negligence or willful misconduct of the Government of Sint Maarten. The Supplier shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Government, and its employees from and against all claims, liabilities, damages, and expenses, including reasonable attorneys' fees, arising out of or in connection with the Supplier's performance of the project.
6. Dispute resolution: Any disputes arising out of or in connection with the project shall be resolved through arbitration. The arbitration shall take place in Sint Maarten by a qualified arbitrator. The parties shall equally share the costs of the arbitration.
7. Compliance with laws and regulations: The Supplier must comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and industry standards in performing the project.
8. Changes: Any changes to the scope, objectives, or deliverables of the project shall be documented in writing and approved by both parties. The parties shall work together in good faith to manage such changes in a timely and efficient manner, without unduly affecting the project schedule. In case the scope decreases or increases meaningfully with a considerable effect on people and costs, the project pricing will be reviewed and renegotiated to find a new price that reflects the additional or less work required. This will be done through a change order or a contract amendment, which documents the scope change and the new pricing arrangement or budget.
9. Evaluation and transparency: The evaluation process will be conducted in a fair, transparent, and impartial manner. All evaluation criteria and procedures will be applied consistently and objectively, without bias or favoritism. The procurement process will also include measures to prevent fraud, corruption, and any other form of misconduct.
10. Objections/complaints procurement: Any objections must be submitted in writing to the Minister of VSA, clearly outlining the grounds, relevant procurement stage where the objection arises, and any supporting evidence or documentation. The authority responsible for the tender must respond to the objection and make a decision within one (1) month of receiving the objection. The decision, along with the reasons supporting it, will be communicated in writing to all relevant parties.