

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST **CONSULTING SERVICES**

Selection # as assigned by e-Tool: RG-T3270-P001

Selection Method: Simple Competitive Selection

Country: Regional

Sector: Competitiveness, Technology, and Innovation (IFD/CTI)

Funding – TC #: ATN/CO-16794-RG

Project #: RG-T3270

TC name: Institutional Strengthening to Promote the Development of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Description of Services: The objective of this consultancy is to make Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' business registration system available online through the digitization of all hard-copy records and completing the population of the CIPO database.

Link to TC document: <https://www.iadb.org/en/project/RG-T3270>

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is executing the above-mentioned operation. For this operation, the IDB intends to contract consulting services described in this Request for Expressions of Interest. Expressions of interest must be delivered using the IDB Portal for Bank Executed Operations: (<http://beo-procurement.iadb.org/home>) by: **September 5th, 2018, 5:00 P.M.** (Washington D.C. Time).

The consulting services ("the Services") include a review of the performance of the business registration system; the digitization of hard-copy records; validation of data; completion of the population of CIPO databases; transfer of knowledge on system maintenance to public sector IT technicians; assessment of end-user training needs including legal professionals, women, youth, rural residents and any groups that are under-represented in terms of business registrations; assessment of training needs for CIPO staff; design and delivery of training using approaches that are gender sensitive and inclusive and employing appropriate technology; recommendations for increasing access to CIPO's services by women and other underserved groups; and recommendations on the maintenance of the databases of digitized records and sustaining delivery of online services

Eligible consulting firms will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the Inter-American Development Bank: [Policy for the Selection and Contracting of Consulting firms for Bank-executed Operational Work](#) - GN-2765-1. All eligible consulting firms, as defined in the Policy may express an interest. If the Consulting Firm is presented in a Consortium, it will designate one of them as a representative, and the latter will be responsible for the communications, the registration in the portal and for submitting the corresponding documents.

The IDB now invites eligible consulting firms to indicate their interest in providing the services described below in the [draft summary](#) of the intended Terms of Reference for the assignment. Interested consulting firms must provide information establishing that they are qualified to perform the Services (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills among staff, etc.). Eligible consulting firms may associate in a form of a Joint Venture or a sub-consultancy agreement to enhance their qualifications. Such association or Joint Venture shall appoint one of the firms

as the representative.

Interested eligible consulting firms may obtain further information during office hours, 09:00 AM to 05:00 PM, (Washington D.C. Time) by sending an email to: Michael Hennessey at michaelhe@iadb.org.

Inter-American Development Bank

Division: Competitiveness, Technology, and Innovation (IFD/CTI)

Attn: Michael Hennessey, Project Team Leader

1300 New York Ave, NW, Washington DC 20577, USA

Tel. 1-202-623-0000

E-mail: claudiast@iadb.org

Web site: www.iadb.org

SUMMARY TOR

1. Background and Justification

- 1.1 Over the last 6 years, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' ranking on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index has steadily declined moving from 75 in 2013 to 129 in 2018. The country has fallen in all the Doing Business Thematic Areas except for Resolving Insolvency. Although efforts were made during the preceding years to reform the business climate these measures were not sufficient in their efficiency and delivery in improving the performance of various indicators and improving St. Vincent and the Grenadines overall doing business ranking.
- 1.2 Goal 1 of the National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) 2013-20125 is *Re-engineering Economic Growth*. One of the related strategic objectives is to enhance productivity and competitiveness, which the Government plans to achieve by, among other things, reducing the costs of doing business in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines through measures aimed at (i) improving energy efficiency; (ii) increasing productivity; (iii) enhancing public sector delivery of business-related services; and (iv) implementing a judicious mix of fiscal and monetary policies.
- 1.3 Various business climate reform initiatives are ongoing or imminent¹. These initiatives are being implemented with the support of various regional and international development agencies including

¹ Some of these include: (i) an ongoing ECCB-led initiative to establish a credit bureau for the eight-member Eastern Caribbean Currency Union; (ii) completion of a diagnostic assessment and towards reforming the Secured Transaction Legal Framework in the Member Countries of the OECS; (iii) the development of guidelines towards a regional approach to insolvency reform; (iv) establishment of the USD12m Eastern Caribbean Partial Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECPCGC) Agreement; (v) the completed Caribbean Regional Communications Infrastructure Program which improved the country's telecommunications infrastructure; (vi) implementation of risk management practices at Customs by optimizing the use of ASYCUDA World and significantly reducing container inspections; (vii) constructions of a new airport; (viii) ongoing efforts to improve preparedness and infrastructure resilience to natural disasters; (ix) the completed 10th EDF-financed CARICOM Online Companies Registries project, which provided a region-wide electronic platform for online name searches and name reservation, and business and company registration; and (x) diagnosis and development of action plans to improve Starting a Business, a recently initiated regional project by the

the CSME Unit, CARICOM Secretariat, 10th European Development Fund (EDF), World Bank Group, Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, Caribbean Development Bank, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

- 1.4 As a result of assistance provided under the CARICOM Online Companies Registries project (financed under the 10th EDF), an automated system for registering companies, business names, and other legal entities was established within the Commerce and Intellectual Property Office (CIPO). The automated system is designed to enable submission and processing of applications and electronic data exchanges with other registries within CARICOM. Despite design capability, most of the processes at CIPO are still conducted manually and are paper-based. The Final Report of the CARICOM project detailed actions, which CIPO had to implement to utilize the Online Registry, these were: (i) complete data entry of all historic records; (ii) enhance some of the CIPO forms; and (ii) increase its network bandwidth to avoid the poor performance currently being experienced. Since project completion, work was done to enhance the CIPO forms and to improve the reliability of the internet service at CIPO.
- 1.5 The database that underpins the automated business registration system was not populated as only a limited amount of records (7,000) were entered for testing purposes only. To date, CIPO has lacked the human resources and equipment to digitize the remaining hard-copy records (approximately 18,500). In addition, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is still working towards an agreement with the commercial banking sector to facilitate online payments related to registering a business. When this agreement is reached, some modifications must be made to the automated system to allow the online payment. Also, the processes for business registration would be further optimized if the CIPO database for registering businesses are linked to the CIPO database for registering intellectual property. Any effort to make the automated system fully operational, must also include user training (which was not done under the CARICOM project) and refresher training for staff of CIPO and the government's Information Technology Services Department (ITSD), who were trained in 2016 under the CARICOM project.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 The main objective of this consultancy is to make Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' business registration system available online through the digitization of all hard-copy records and completing the population of the CIPO database.

3. Key Activities

The contractual will carry out the following key activities that will facilitate the achievement of the objective:

- 3.1 Conduct a rapid review of the type and condition of documents to be scanned; and liaise with CIPO,

ITSD, a sample of users, and Compete Caribbean to develop a more in-depth understanding of the assignment.

- 3.2 Assess current performance of the business registration system, and training needs of CIPO staff, ITSD staff and end-users.
- 3.3 Prepare an Inception Report that details the consultants' findings; recommendations for establishing a sustainable online business registration system that meets end user needs; recommendations for increasing access to CIPO's services by women and other underserved groups; a Work Plan for completing the assignment; and a training plan to addressing staff and user training needs.
- 3.4 Set up a fully resourced digitization facility at CIPO to carry out the scanning of the records.
- 3.5 Digitize records, perform quality checks and data validation, populate database, link the business registration database to the CIPO intellectual property database; and support CIPO with going online.
- 3.6 Develop training materials and training manual, deliver training using approaches that are gender sensitive and inclusive and employ appropriate technology, and evaluate training delivered.
- 3.7 Prepare a Final Report that (i) evaluates the performance of the online services, and the success of the training/capacity building conducted; (ii) makes recommendations for maintaining the databases of digitized records and sustaining the delivery of online services; and (iii) includes user-friendly and Technical Manuals for end users, CIPO staff and ITSD.

4. Expected Outcome and Deliverables

The expected outcome for this consultancy is the use of the online registration system by a majority of businesses and companies.

The consultants will be responsible for the delivery of the following products:

- 4.1 A draft Inception Report within 3 weeks of contract signing. Comments to be received from CIPO, ITSD, and Compete Caribbean within 1 week of submission.
- 4.2 Finalized Inception Report within 1 week of receipt of comments from CIPO, ITSD, and Compete Caribbean.
- 4.3 Draft Training Materials and training manual for training targeted to CIPO staff, ITSD and end-users within 2 weeks of acceptance of the Inception Report. Comments to be received from CIPO, ITSD, and Compete Caribbean within 2 weeks of submission.
- 4.4 Finalized Training Materials and training manual within 1 week of receipt of comments from CIPO, ITSD, and Compete Caribbean.
- 4.5 Draft Final Report within 12 weeks of acceptance of the Inception Report. Comments to be received from CIPO, ITSD, and Compete Caribbean within 2 weeks of submission.
- 4.6 Revised Final Report within 2 weeks of receipt of comments from CIPO, ITSD, and Compete Caribbean.