

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST CONSULTING SERVICES

Selection #: BH-T1082-P001

Selection Method: Simplified Competitive Selection

Country: Bahamas

Sector: Environment, Rural Development and Disaster Risk Management Division (CSD/RND)

Funding – TC #: ATN/OC-18369-BH

Project #: BH-T1082

TC name: Recommendations for the Implementation of Sustainable and Climate Resilient Tourism Certifications in the Bahamas

Description of Services: Analysis, recommendations, and operational plan for implementing a sustainable tourism certification program in The Bahamas

Link to TC document: <https://www.iadb.org/projects/document/EZSHARE-592494046-15?project=BH-T1082>

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 February 17th, 2021, 5:00 P.M. (Washington D.C. Time).

The consulting services (“the Services”) include the development of a comprehensive analysis, recommendations, operational guidelines and plan for implementing a sustainable tourism certification program in The Bahamas. The estimated timeframe to the performance of such services is 6 months, during the year of 2021.

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 by sending an email to Juliana Bettini (julianab@iadb.org) from February 3rd to February 17th.

Inter-American Development Bank

Division: Environment, Rural Development and Disaster Risk Management Division (CSD/RND)

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DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Analysis, recommendations, and operational plan for implementing a sustainable tourism certification program in The Bahamas

1. Background and Justification

- 1.1. The Bahamas economy is highly dependent on Tourism: in 2019, 43.3% of the country's GDP was related to tourism and travel activities and international visitors expenditures in The Bahamas accounted for more than 80% of its total exports ([WTTC, 2020](#)). The concentration of The Bahamas economy in the tourism sector and its lack of diversification makes the country highly vulnerable to crises such as the COVID-19 ([UNDP, 2020](#)) and the local economy is estimated to shrink by as much as 14% to 20% overall in 2020 ([Government of The Bahamas, 2020](#)).
- 1.2. The destruction caused by Hurricane Dorian added to the COVID-19 pandemic have highly impacted the country, specifically the tourism sector. Despite the negative impacts of those crises, they have opened an opportunity for destinations to "build back better" tourism, emphasizing the need to strengthen the climate resilience of the sector and highlighting both the fragility of the natural environment and its central role as source of attraction of visitors ([UNWTO, 2020](#)). Recent market trends suggest that sustainability and the adequate use of natural resources will be more valued by tourists in the post-pandemic scenario. In the Bahamas many tourism properties currently lie in a storm surge zone and the extent of properties at risk increases with a future scenario of a 1 m rise in sea level. While sea level rise (SLR) by itself only threatens a small number of properties, when combined with weak (Category 1), moderate (Category 3) and strong (Category 5) storms the resulting coastal flooding impacts 34%, 69%, and 83% of the tourism infrastructure (hotels and resorts), respectively. Therefore, resilience and sustainability arise as key factors to provide competitiveness and longevity for The Bahamas tourism sector.
- 1.3. Eco-labels and sustainable certifications have been more popular in the tourism sector in the last decade. As Buckley (2001) points out, they might be an effective component of a policy, if coupled with environmental regulations¹. Sustainability certification may also be a tool for improving the competitiveness of destinations and lessening the environmental impacts of tourism development (Font and Harris, 2004)². They can also be a stepping-stone for local enterprises to put the principles of sustainability into action (Agyeiwaah et al., 2017)³. Nonetheless, in order for labels and certifications of this kind to be effective, some criteria should be met, such as: administrated by a reputable organization, recognized by consumers, utilizes transparent criteria, has an effective audit processes, , among others (Buckely, 2001). The adoption of global certification should also be congruent with local practices, cultural context and social particularities in order to be effective (Duffy and Moore, 2011). Some local entrepreneurs consulted in research also widely mention that tourism standards would be more valuable for destinations and enterprises if they shifted from normative codes to practical tools, and were more adaptable to the idiosyncratic characteristics of host communities and the emerging trends of the tourism market overall (Gkoumas, 2019)⁴.
- 1.4. Aware of the changes in the hospitality industry driven by a discerning travelling public that is demanding better stewardship of the environment, The Bahamas Government has been implementing actions aimed at increasing the sector's resilience and sustainability. Prior to the setbacks imposed by the pandemic, as part of the strengthening of the Tourism sector, measures were undertaken such as the launch of the Tourism Development Corporation (TDC) in 2018. One of the initiatives envisioned as relevant by the Ministry of Tourism and Aviation of The Bahamas and designated to the TDC was the design and future implementation of sustainable tourism certification programs, aimed at providing guidelines for businesses and attractions to improve their environmental sustainability and their resilience to climate change and crises. With the proper set of guidelines and reinforcement tools, along with the adequate environmental legislation, certifications may be an effective complement on the pathway towards sustainability and resilience in The Bahamas

¹ BUCKLEY, R. (2001). [Major Issues In Tourism Ecolabelling](#).

² FONT, X., HARRIS, C. (2004). "[Rethinking standards from green to sustainable](#)". In: Annals of Tourism Research. 31 (4), 986–1007.

³ AGYEIWAH, E. et al. (2017). "[Identifying core indicators of sustainable tourism: a path forward?](#)" In: Tourism Management Perspectives. 24, 26-33.

⁴ GKOUMAS, A. (2019) "[Evaluating a Standard for Sustainable Tourism through the Lenses of Local Industry](#)" In: Heliyon. 5 (11).

tourism sector. In this context, the Ministry of Tourism and Aviation of The Bahamas has asked the support of the Bank to develop guidelines that allow this effort to take place. It is worth mentioning the previous efforts already developed by the Ministry and the TDC in creating the general outline of a certification program, that should be incorporated under the execution of this project.

- 1.5. The objective of this TC is to support The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism and Aviation with (i) recommendations for the implementation of sustainable and climate resilient tourism certification program, as well as (ii) a governance framework to sustain this implementation. Sustainable and climate resilient tourism certificates are an adaptable tool that can positively complement environmental regulation and increase the attractiveness of destinations to a discerning public. In The Bahamas, these certificates could be an important element in “building back better” the tourism sector, post-COVID-19.
- 1.6. The TC lines up with the critical need of support for LAC’s countries to provide a sustainable recovery from the crisis generated by the pandemic. It is also aligned with the IDB’s second update to the Institutional Strategy, as it contributes to the (i) increase of productivity and innovation in The Bahamas, given that certification processes may support a better quality of services provided by tourism companies, contributing to an increase in the sector’s productivity; it is also aligned with the cross cutting theme (ii) climate change and environmental sustainability, as sustainable certifications, if effectively implemented, are one of the tools that can aid tourist destinations in achieving a more sustainable development. The technical cooperation is also aligned with the Country Strategy with The Bahamas 2018-2022 (GN-2920), as it promotes innovation and innovative practices in traditional sectors, such as sustainable tourism. The TC is also aligned with the Ordinary Capital Strategic Development Program for Sustainability (OC-SUS) (GN-2819-1) objectives since it contributes to strengthen institutional capacities focused on environmental sustainability.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. The objective of the consulting services is to develop a comprehensive analysis, recommendations and operational guidelines and plan for implementing a sustainable tourism certification program in The Bahamas.

3. Scope of Services

- 3.1. The services should aim at the following specific objectives, in order to achieve the final result previously stated:
 - (1) Provide a comprehensive compilation of data related to existing tourism sustainability and resilience certifications programs or schemes, and present a, critical and systematic analysis of its characteristics.
 - (2) Develop a complete set of recommendations for the future adoption and implementation of a certification system for sustainable and resilient tourism in The Bahamas, based on the previous analysis and stakeholder consultation.
 - (3) Deliver a strategic and operational plan for the implementation of the recommendations previously developed, including the proposition of a governance scheme for the implementation and monitoring of such certification.

4. Key Activities

- 4.1. The following activities should be developed by the consultancy firm in order to conduct the analysis and recommendations aimed at by this Terms of Reference. It is worth mentioning that this is not an exhaustive list and it might be adjusted by the hired in the Workplan, upon the approval of both IDB and the TDC.
 - (i). Provide a comprehensive analysis of existing sustainability certification programs, including the compilation of data related to existing tourism sustainability and resilience certifications programs or schemes, and present a, critical and systematic analysis of its characteristics. The analysis must include:
 - (a) a brief diagnosis of the sustainability performance of the tourism sector in The Bahamas, including an assessment of the current status and anticipated levels of climate-related risks and opportunities for

tourism operations within its value chain; (b) an overview of available eco-label, sustainability and resiliency certifications applicable to the tourism sector and applied worldwide, (c) selection of at least 10 initiatives previously used worldwide, and a description of their selection criteria; (d) a systematic analysis of those initiatives, considering at least the following aspects: technical design, subsectors/ businesses that could be certified, costs associated with implementation, lessons learned with the implementation of certification schemes, implementation framework (including the capacity of tourism stakeholders to adopt and implement certifications), recognition in consumer source-markets, overall pros and cons, applicability in The Bahamas scenario. The list of initiatives to be part of the analysis should be submitted to the IDB and TDC's teams for previous validation. The analysis should be executed through desk research and include key-stakeholder's interviews when appropriate. It is important that previous efforts already developed by the TDC, especially the general outline of the Sea Stars Seal of Approval, are considered in this analysis. The outcome expected is a comprehensive and critical analysis of certifications of sustainable and resilient tourism available at the market and their applicability to The Bahamas.

- (ii). Develop a complete set of recommendations for the future adoption and implementation of a certification system for sustainable and resilient tourism in The Bahamas, based on the previous analysis and stakeholder consultation. The recommendations should build on the findings of the previous activity, and be complemented by (a) a survey with companies in the tourism sector value chain – considering the multiple subsectors of tourism that could be part of a certification process, and (b) structured qualitative interviews with key-leaders from the tourism sector in The Bahamas, public and private sector representatives, as well as NGOs. Adjusting the best practices analysed into the needs and characteristics of the local market, provided by the survey and interviews, it will be possible to develop a set of recommendations for implementing a program of such characteristics in the Bahamas. The recommendations should include aspects such as: objectives and indicators of success, usage of existing certifications/ labels or development of a new one, subsectors to be certified, responsibility and obligation of engagement (voluntary or enforced), engagement and promoting strategies, general policy for costs associated with implementation, framework for implementation, executing agents, changes in the normative framework necessary, etc. They should also indicate the preferential approach for including resiliency and environmental sustainability – either by a joint certification or by separate schemes. The recommendations should be prepared based on existing information on each of the aspects and will include additional research and/or collection of data whenever needed. The list of key-stakeholders, as well as the sample of businesses that should be consulted will be previously validated by the IDB and TDC's teams. The TDC will provide for the communication with those stakeholders, if relevant. The recommendations will be validated by local stakeholders in a virtual webinar. The expected outcome is a set of recommendations and guidelines to put in place a sustainable tourism certification program/ system in The Bahamas.
- (iii). Deliver a strategic and operational plan for the implementation of the recommendations previously developed. The plan should include the delimitation of objectives, monitoring indicators, strategies, and its associated operational plans. Some of the strategic thematic areas that should be focused are (a) institutional structure and governance framework, (b) communication and engagement of players (including supply-chain), (c) strategic alliances, (d) operational implementation, (e) monitoring and evaluation. Each of the strategies will be refined in operational plans that provide information on activities, responsibilities, timetables, and costs for the implementation of those strategies, providing specific guidance for the setting in motion of the certification program. The activity should include at least 3 webinars/ events for the dissemination of information and engagement of local businesses, putting in place part of the communication strategies developed. The calendar and scope of those events will be jointly decided with the IDB and TDC teams. The expected outcome is an operational plan for the implementation of a sustainable tourism certification program in The Bahamas.

(iv). Design the framework of a governance scheme for the implementation and monitoring of the certification program/ system. The governance design should be in synergy with the previous analysis and recommendations and consider the institutional organization of the Ministry of Tourism and Aviation and the TDC. It should not solely rely on the TDC for the program implementation, but consider its role and mark out adjustments necessary, related to personnel, training, resources, etc. The expected outcome is governance framework and its associated operational plan for the implementation of a sustainable tourism certification program in The Bahamas.

5. **Expected Outcome and Deliverables**

5.1. The following deliverables are expected from this project:

- Product 1 – Workplan, with the planning of activities and tasks that will be developed, including a project schedule, methodology, communication scheme, information to be provided by the IDB, etc.
- Product 2 – Analysis of certifications of sustainable and resilient tourism available at the market and their applicability to The Bahamas
- Product 3 – Recommendations and guidelines to put in place a sustainable tourism certification program/ system in The Bahamas
- Product 4 – Strategic and operational plan for the implementation of a sustainable tourism certification program in The Bahamas (preliminary version). This version should include: an executive summary, and presentation (ppt or similar), as well as a full report.
- Product 5 – Strategic and operational plan for the implementation of a sustainable tourism certification program in The Bahamas (stakeholder validated version). This version should include: an executive summary, and presentation (ppt or similar), as well as a full report.
- Product 6 – Governance framework and its associated operational plan for the implementation of a sustainable tourism certification program in The Bahamas
- Product 7 – Dissemination webinar reports.

6. **Project Schedule and Milestones**

6.1. It is expected that the project has a total duration of 24 weeks. The following table indicates the deadline estimated for each one of the deliverables.

Product	Deadline
Product 1 – Workplan	1 week after signing contract
Product 2 – Analysis of certifications and their applicability to The Bahamas	5 weeks after signing contract
Product 3 – Recommendations and guidelines for a sustainable tourism certification program	7 weeks after signing contract
Product 4 – Strategic and operational plan for the implementation of the program (preliminary version)	10 weeks after signing contract
Product 5 – Strategic and operational plan for the implementation of the program (stakeholder validated version)	14 weeks after signing contract
Product 6 – Governance framework and operational plan	16 weeks after signing contract
Product 7 – Dissemination webinar reports	24 weeks after signing contract

7. **Reporting Requirements and Acceptance Criteria**

7.1. The consulting company will present its reports to the IDB in digital format and in English. Partial and final reports should be submitted to the IDB technical team for validation and comments, to be further incorporated. The TDC will jointly comment and validate all products. Any additional support from both institutions needed must be defined in the Workplan (Product 1). The outcomes and deliverables of the project must observe the technical scope and activities described in this Terms of Reference in order to be

approved.

8. Other Requirements

8.1. The team proposed to execute the consultancy should present the following expertise:

- (i) Project coordinator, with at least 10 years of experience in coordinating projects related to tourism planning and management.
- (ii) Certification specialist, with at least 8 years of experience in developing, implementing, and evaluating certification processes related to sustainability in services sector (preferably tourism).
- (iii) Tourism certification specialist, with at least 8 years of experience in developing, implementing, and evaluating certifications and standards related to sustainability in the tourism sector.
- (iv) Environment and sustainability specialist, with at least 5 years of experience in developing, standards and guidelines to improve sustainability in businesses (preferably tourism).
- (v) Climate change specialist, with at least 5 years of experience in developing, standards and guidelines to improve climate change adaptability in destinations and/or business sectors (preferably tourism).

9. Supervision and Reporting

9.1. The job will be performed in English and take place in the place of residence of the consulting firm, in accordance with displacement restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Videoconferences, audioconferences and other telematic contacts with the IDB and TDC representatives will be possible whenever necessary.

10. Schedule of Payments

Payment Schedule	
Product	%
1. Product 1 – Workplan	10%
2. Product 2 – Analysis of certifications and their applicability to The Bahamas	25%
3. Product 3 – Recommendations and guidelines for a sustainable tourism certification program	
4. Product 4 – Strategic and operational plan for the implementation of the program (preliminary version)	35%
5. Product 5 – Strategic and operational plan for the implementation of the program (stakeholder validated version)	
6. Product 6 – Governance framework and operational plan	20%
7. Product 7 – Dissemination webinar reports	10%
TOTAL	100%