

Terms of Reference

Blue economy specialist

Background

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is a joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization for trade-related technical cooperation in developing countries.

The Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (OLAC), as geographical section of the Division of Country Programmes (DCP), is responsible for defining the ITC strategy and coordinating all interventions in the region, either for individual countries or at the sub-regional and regional levels.

The Green & Inclusive Value Chains section (GIVC) within the Division for Sustainable and Inclusive Trade (DSIT) is responsible for sector-wide transformation, improving market linkages and private sector competitiveness linked to responsible production and consumption, climate resilience, food security, sustainable standards, and market systems. The section utilizes the Alliances for Action (A4A) methodologies to implement projects in its Inclusive and Sustainable Agribusiness value chains areas of work.

The A4A is a participatory partnership model that focuses on increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs, smallholder farmers and value chain actors while ensuring respect of environmental, economic, and social requirements. A4A seeks to develop responsible, inclusive and sustainable trade by aligning investment and coordination across the full ecosystem of VC actors and by building competitiveness especially in agribusiness. The establishment of partnerships and networks is an essential underlying element of the A4A approach as it contributes to mobilise collaboration, expertise and investment into the alliances along with sustainability of the approach over time.

The European Union (EU) funded project “Strengthening nutritious and sustainable value chains in the Caribbean through Alliances” aims to support agri-MSMEs, cooperatives and producers (smallholder farmers and fishers) to become more competitive and resilient through value addition, diversification, and new market development at the regional level.

The project is aligned with various EU and CARICOM strategies, including the CARICOM strategy related to “Regional Food Production and Productivity Towards a Sustainable Import Replacement Programme: 25% by 2025 Reduction in the Regional Food Bill”, which has developed a comprehensive import-replacement programme with accompanying targets for selected commodities, geared towards achieving the overall 25% by 2025 objective.

The purpose of this assignment is to engage a Blue Economy Specialist to identify best practices and opportunities in the Blue Economy sector in the Caribbean region, specifically focusing on fishery and aquaculture, marine and land resource conservation, economic, environmental social implications for local fisherfolk and communities. The analysis shall adopt a broad vision of the ecosystem, including coastal tourism, local fisherfolk, value chain operators, ridge and reef communities, alternative livelihoods, value addition and income generating activities.

This activity should consider experience of partnership between ITC and Jamaica’s Alligator Head Foundation and the Coconut Industry Board in the development of a ‘Ridge to Reef’ strategy of environmental conservation and sustainable community development that received a laureate for the Environmental category of the SIDS Partnerships Awards 2023.

The objective of this assignment is in line with the UN SDGs strategy to shift from a food system centred on agriculture and land, crops and livestock, to a more integrated vision of food systems that recognizes the role of blue foods¹ in addressing food and nutrition insecurity.

This approach is in line with the CARICOM green economy strategy according to which the support to the development of the Blue Economy sector will aim at the close engagement and close participation of the people who drive our food systems, such as farmers, herders, food workers, and fisher folk. In addition to governments, the business community — from Small and Medium Enterprises to Multinational Corporations — has an important role to play through responsible business practices and innovative solutions to make food systems more sustainable, resilient and equitable, while adapting their practices to ensure all people can access a nutritious and healthy diet).

Description of Duties/Responsibilities

The Consultant will work under the overall guidance and supervision of the Head of the Agribusiness team and the Senior Trade Promotion Officer and will:

1. Assess the socio-economic and environmental characteristics of Caribbean countries and fishing and coastal communities.
2. Conduct a review of best practices in the Blue Economy sector in the Caribbean region, with a specific focus on food systems, fisherfolk communities, conservation, and environmental stewardship, MSME and local community economic empowerment. The focus will be on selected economic activities such as fisheries, aquaculture, coastal tourism as well as local and regional markets and cruise shipping.
3. Map key ongoing projects and/or initiatives in blue economy and highlight most innovative and transformative practices.
4. Identify opportunities and challenges in the Caribbean region related to sustainable Blue Economy development. This analysis should include:
 - An assessment of the impact of the blue economy on Caribbean diets (healthier diets) / potential impact on regional food security.
 - An assessment of the potential for value addition and upgrading opportunities, including vertical aquaculture and sea farming, local processing, and connections to food systems.
5. Propose approaches to replicate and scale innovative and transformational initiatives ensuring economic, social and governance sustainability as well as resource conservation.
6. Provide recommendations on the selection of fishing communities and selection of VC operator partners, ridge to reef ecosystem for the Blue Economy development project, considering sustainability and inclusivity.
7. Contribute to the development of the comprehensive roadmap of potential activities for the selected fishing communities, consistently with the five pillars of the Alliances for Action methodology and the expected outputs of the EU-funded Food Security and Nutrition in the Caribbean program.

Expected Outputs and Timelines

The consultant will provide the following outputs:

- Output 1: Powerpoint slides with main findings of analysis of the blue economy sector with focus on fishing and coastal communities in the Caribbean, by 28 February 2024.

¹ All edible aquatic organisms, including fish, shellfish and algae from marine and freshwater production systems.

- Output 2: Written report in Word and PPT slides with review of best practices with focus on the following Blue Economy activities: fisheries, aquaculture, coastal tourism as well as local and regional markets (literature review and key informant interviews); by 15 March 2024.
- Output 3: Written report in Word and PPT slides with analysis of opportunities and challenges with focus on the nexus between food security and blue food systems and, value addition and upgrading opportunities (desk research, key informant interviews); by 31 March 2024
- Output 4: Written report in Word and PPT slides with recommendations of potential target countries and fishing and coastal communities. Written contribution to the roadmap; by 30 April 2024

Travel

Possible travel to the Caribbean

Skills

Ability to produce documents for official circulation among institutions and international stakeholders (memos, reports, business proposals).

Ability to design, develop, monitor and coordinate work plans.

Good understanding and direct knowledge of the Blue Economy sector in the Caribbean.

Good understanding of the agri-business sector.

Ability to respect deadlines and to work in a team.

Availability to travel for short periods to rural areas in the Caribbean.

Education

Post-graduate degree (BA/BSC or other)

Experience

At least 5 years of relevant professional experience

Experience working with ITC in different projects will be an asset.

Language

Advanced knowledge of English.