



Association of Caribbean States (ACS)

Request For Proposal (RFP)

Consultancy to Develop a Strategic Plan for the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) 2025-2035.

Reference:	RFP.OSG. Strategic Plan 2025-2035
RFP Release Date	July 5, 2024
Deadline for RFP Questions:	July 19, 2024
Deadline for RFP Submission:	August 5, 2024
Send RFP Questions and/or Submission to:	tenders@acs-aec.org

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1.0 Background

The Association of Caribbean States, hereinafter referred to as the “ACS”, is a regional intergovernmental organisation comprising nations centred on the Caribbean Sea Basin. It was formed via the Convention Establishing the Association of Caribbean States signed in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia on July 24, 1994 with the aim of promoting consultation, cooperation, and concerted action among countries of the Caribbean.

The Convention Establishing the Association of Caribbean States, hereinafter referred to as the “ACS” (attached) was signed on July 24, 1994 in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, to promote consultation, cooperation and concerted action among all countries of the Caribbean. It was conceptually introduced in the Time for Action Report commissioned by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and published by the West Indian Commission (WIC) in 1992. The ACS’ Membership comprises 25 Member States and 10 Associate Members.

In the framework of the 30th anniversary since its inception and the most recently agreed period of consultative cooperation and concerted action (2022-28), the ACS is facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities in the context of an external environment that is characterised by trends and phenomena that represent threats and opportunities for regional development.

Against this backdrop, it has been deemed necessary to carry out a systematic process of developing and implementing a strategic plan that outlines the updating of the vision and mission of the Association and mobilises resources, talent, knowledge, technologies, and relevant communication strategies to achieve Convention, Summit and Ministerial established goals and objectives for the sustainable development of the Greater Caribbean.

Prospective bidders are expected to carefully review this document before submitting their proposals and to consider all of the requirements stated within. Allowances will not be facilitated for amendments to those proposals resulting from any omissions or exclusion on the part of the bidder.

Accordingly, the ACS is pleased to issue an invitation for proposals from suitably qualified, experienced, responsible, and reputable service providers/contractors for the provision of the technical services which will be required as outlined in the scope of work contained in this document.

1.1 Project Description

The **Consultancy to Develop a Strategic Plan for the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) 2025-2035** seeks to facilitate the development of an updated Vision for the ACS as well as a revision of its Mission, Values, Principles and Strategic Objectives taking into account the current geopolitical landscape, the current challenges faced as well as the opportunities available for the Greater Caribbean Region.

The Consultancy is expected to achieve this through a process of two stages. Firstly, a **Global and Regional Foresight analysis for the ACS** will be developed and will detail three potential scenarios for ACS action and response with a view to maximising the sustainable development dividends and impact to be delivered by the ACS in its confirmed areas of intervention: Protection of the Caribbean Sea; coordinated disaster risk reduction policies, trade facilitation, sustainable tourism, and transport - air and maritime.

Secondly, the consultancy is expected to **facilitate meetings and workshops** with the representatives of Member States, Associate Members, and Observers of the ACS to analyse each of the three scenarios and reach conclusions on the possible roadmap to be followed, taking into account successive Declarations and Plans of Action. The Roadmap identified will ultimately provide the bedrock upon which the Strategic Plan for the ACS will evolve, outlining a clear Vision, Mission, Values, Principles and Strategic Objectives of the ACS for the next ten years.

Finally, in this regard, this Proposal should be accompanied by a framework Communications Strategy that disseminates the agreed Plan amongst stakeholders and promotes ownership.

1.2 Requirements Language

In many standards track documents or request for comments documents several words are used to signify the requirements in the specification or recommendation for consideration. These key words are often capitalized but in instances where these words are not capitalized, their interpretation shall remain the same as described below.

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL", when used in this document to Indicate Requirement Levels are to be interpreted as described below:

- I. **MUST** - This word, or the terms "REQUIRED" or "SHALL", mean that the definition is an absolute requirement of the specification or the directive.
- II. **MUST NOT** - This phrase, or the phrase "SHALL NOT", mean that the definition is an absolute prohibition of the specification or the directive.
- III. **SHOULD** - This word, or the adjective "RECOMMENDED", mean that there may exist valid reasons in particular circumstances to ignore a particular item, but the full implications must be understood and carefully weighed before choosing a different course.
- IV. **SHOULD NOT** - This phrase, or the phrase "NOT RECOMMENDED" mean that there may exist valid reasons in particular circumstances when the particular behavior is acceptable or even useful, but the full implications should be understood and the case carefully weighed before implementing any behavior described with this label.
- V. **MAY** - This word, or the adjective "OPTIONAL", mean that an item is truly optional. One vendor may choose to include the item because a particular marketplace requires it or because the vendor feels that it enhances the product while another vendor may omit the same item. An implementation which does not include a particular option **MUST** be prepared to interoperate with another implementation which does include the option, though perhaps with reduced functionality. In the same vein an implementation which does include a particular option **MUST** be prepared to interoperate with another implementation which does not include the option (except, of course, for the feature the option provides.)

2.0 Preliminaries

2.1 Copyright

This document and its contents belong to the ACS and must be used in confidence and solely for the purpose it was prepared and supplied. It must not be reproduced in whole or in part or used for any other purpose than which it was intended. No information relating to the contents of this document shall be given to or communicated in any manner to any third party without the prior consent or approval of the ACS.

2.2 Confidentiality

This document constitutes confidential and proprietary information of the ACS and shall not be disclosed in whole or in part by the bidder to any third party or to any other, other than those that would be required to have access to such information. The information contained within it shall not be duplicated or used for any other purpose than to supply a response to this Request for Proposal (RFP). This restriction does not however limit the bidder's right to use the information contained herein to obtain information or requirements from another source such as suppliers, contractors, insurance agents, financial institutions, or other service providers as may be necessary for the submission of a comprehensive proposal. The bidder shall however exercise a duty of care when exposing or sharing such information and ensure that confidentiality is communicated and maintained at all times.

2.3 Ethical Behaviour

The ACS requires that all bidders engaging in this process adhere to the highest ethical standards, both during the procurement process itself and throughout the performance of the contract arising from it. The participation in and encouragement of corrupt or illegal practices inclusive of but not limited to bribery, fraud, extortion, or collusion are all deemed unacceptable. If it is demonstrated or discovered that a bidder or an agent acting on its behalf, during the performance of the resulting contract committed or encouraged corrupt or illegal practices in relation to this project, the ACS will take appropriate measures including but not limited to the termination of any awarded contract and the cessation of all relationships with the relevant organisation or company and the agents or employees which would have been involved.

2.4 Terms & Conditions

2.4.1 The issuance of this document does not constitute an offer to trade and the ACS is not bound to conduct any business based on any submissions or responses to it. Any subsequent arrangements are subject to contract negotiation and such contracts must be issued and agreed upon prior to commencement of any business and with confirmation in writing from the Office of the Secretary General at the ACS Secretariat headquarters based in Trinidad and Tobago.

2.4.2 The ACS expects that in response to this request, all respondents will provide relevant and appropriate responses to the specific requirements in a concise and comprehensive manner. Any response which does not fully address or comply with the stated requirements may be considered incomplete and possibly rejected.

2.4.3 The respondent shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of its response and any attendant documentation supplied. The ACS will not be responsible or liable for any such costs, regardless of the outcome of this process.

2.4.4 This RFP is intended for informational purposes only. Submitted responses to this RFP will not be returned, including all submitted drawings, diagrams, literature, and documents, and shall become the property of the ACS upon receipt by the ACS.

2.4.5 Respondents submitting documents do so on the basis that the ACS may use, retain and copy the information contained in those documents for purposes related to RFP Background & Scope of Work details, including to assist the ACS identify, refine and determine cost capability options, develop any aspect of the acquisition and sustainment implementation strategy and / or prepare any future capability development and / or solicitation documentation.

2.4.6 Respondents should identify all materials that are Confidential or Trade Secrets that are included in their RFP responses as "Confidential", "Secret", etc. that they determine to be sensitive commercial information. Subject to the respondent's demonstrated compliance with this clause 2.4.6, the ACS may agree to treat this sensitive commercial information on different terms to those outlined in clause 2.4.7, including by obtaining an appropriate confidentiality undertaking from the third party prior to disclosure to that party.

2.4.7 Subject to clause 2.4.6, the ACS may disclose all or part of the response documents to a third party for the purposes described in clause 2.4.5.

2.4.8 Nothing in clause 2.4 and its sub clauses affects the ownership of the Intellectual Property in the information contained in a response.

2.4.9 To assist in the evaluation of all submitted proposals, the ACS may at its discretion, issue a Request for Clarification in writing, which shall also be responded to in writing. No amendments in the pricing or contents of the proposal shall be sought, offered, or permitted.

2.4.10 Any proposal or submission received by the ACS after the stated deadline date and time for submission may or may not be considered.

2.4.11 Respondents to this RFP consent to the ACS incorporating any ideas, concepts, approaches, or strategies into any design, procurement or contractual activities related to any aspect of the project scope without any liability or consideration on the part of the ACS.

2.4.12 Any question submitted by any respondent is submitted on the basis that the ACS may circulate the respondent's questions and the ACS's answers to all other respondents without disclosing the source of the questions or revealing Confidential Information or the substance of the proposed response.

2.4.13 All price estimates shall be quoted in United States Dollars (USD) with any applicable Value Added Tax (VAT) clearly identified in Trinidad and Tobago Dollars (TTD).

2.4.14 The ACS may at any time seek additional information on, or clarification of, a response from a respondent.

2.4.15 ACS reserves the right to undertake a due diligence exercise, aimed at determining to its satisfaction, the validity of the information provided by respondents. Such exercise shall be fully documented and may include, but need not be limited to, all or any combination of the following:

- a) Verification of accuracy, correctness and authenticity of information provided by the respondent;
- b) Validation of extent of compliance to the ACS requirements and evaluation criteria based on what has so far been found by the evaluation team;
- c) Inquiry and reference checking with Government entities with jurisdiction on the respondent, or with previous clients, or any other entity that may have done business with the respondent;
- d) Inquiry and reference checking with previous clients on the performance on ongoing or completed contracts, including physical inspections of previous works, as deemed necessary;
- e) Physical inspection of the respondent's offices, branches or other places where business transpires, with or without notice to the respondent;
- f) Any other means that ACS may deem appropriate, at any stage within the selection process, prior to awarding any contract if such contractual engagement is contemplated.

2.4.16 ACS shall be under no obligation to enter into any discussions or correspondence for the purpose of seeking clarification to the proposals of each respondent. However, ACS reserves the right to request any, or all, respondents to explain or elaborate their offers without incurring any obligations whatsoever.

2.4.17 No direct award of the contract will result from this RFP. The submission and evaluation of estimates and proposals in response to this RFP, is not to be construed or interpreted as a commitment to acceptance of any proposal.

2.4.18 Responses to this RFP will be competitively evaluated. Consistent with the terms of this RFP, responses will be reviewed and considered by the ACS as an information source for the purposes described in this RFP.

2.4.19 The ACS may add to, vary, modify or amend this RFP by giving the respondents timely written notice of such addition, variation, modification or amendment.

2.4.20 Responses to this RFP including all attachments and supporting documentation, should be written in English.

3.0 Scope of Work

To develop a **Strategic Plan for the ACS** which will detail the Vision, Mission, Values, Principles and Strategic Objectives of the ACS for the next ten (10) years.

- **Develop a Global and Regional Prospectus for the ACS** which is focused primarily on its possible impact in the region comprising the Member States and Associate Members of the ACS.
- **Comprehensive Consultation** with the representatives of Member States, Associate Members, and Observers to map and analyse potential scenarios and reach conclusions on the possible roadmap and strategies to be followed to ensure positive development impact and minimise risk.

The Contractor will be responsible for ensuring that the project is completed on time, within scope, budget, and in accordance with the performance requirements and expectations of the ACS. It is similarly expected that the selected Contractor would implement the minimum measures required to safeguard the health and well-being of all personnel, agents, visitors, and ACS staff during the execution and performance of the following Scope of Work.

While the selected firm will be given full autonomy to execute their Methodology which will ultimately deliver the main objectives outlined above - We propose that the **Consultancy to Develop a Strategic Plan for the ACS** may be conducted in the following components:

3.1 Component 1

Develop a Differential Analysis spanning 1992 to 2022 and a Global and Regional Foresight Prospectus for the ACS which is focused primarily on the potential impact of significant historic changes that have taken place in the last 30 years, and the mega-trends that are anticipated in the next ten years, in the greater Caribbean region comprising the Member States and Associate Members of the ACS using a Planning by Scenario Method.

Output 1: A Differential Analysis that would take as a base the “Time to Action” report and map the main differences between the regional landscape then and now. This document may constitute a baseline from which to develop the Regional Foresight Prospectus and should be presented in a preliminary presentation to the Ministerial Council to launch component 2 - meetings and workshops.

Output 2: A Global Regional Foresight Prospectus developed detailing three scenarios and the way in which the ACS could take advantage of opportunities and tackle the threats identified.

3.2 Component 2

Hold and **facilitate meetings and workshops** with the representatives of Member and Associate Member States to analyse the scenarios and reach conclusions on the possible roadmap to be followed. The sessions will entail a detailed assessment of the following:

- **Competitive Intelligence**

Identify the main drivers that can affect the region's resilience and its sustainability in economic, social, and environmental terms.

- **Institutional Development of the ACS**

The definition of an updated vision and mission must serve as the basis for the institutional analysis of the organisation and the existing processes, so that recommendations could be issued to align the Secretariat with the updated vision and mission on which there has been consensus. Those recommendations must include the institutionalisation of the planning process in such a manner as to establish the timeframes and frequency with which said processes must be revised and implemented, assigning responsibilities and accountability for reviews.

- **Gauges and Indicators**

The consultation must define the strategic objectives of the ACS and recommend performance gauges and indicators in order to measure the Secretariat's efficiency and efficacy.

- **Processes and systematisation**

The third mechanism must include the design and systematisation of processes so that the entity could institutionalise and continuously improve the performance indicators.

- **Technology**

The design and systematisation of processes must include recommendations concerning the technological platform and/or models to be developed, so that data could be gathered and analysed expeditiously and based on a technological platform that would include all users and stakeholders in the systems.

- **Human Resources**

Based on the foregoing, the consultant must recommend the base organisational structure and the additional training requirements that may be necessary for the processes to be improved in an ongoing manner. The consultant must also identify the features of staff permanency, according to the characteristics of an international organisation.

- **Coordination with Academia and the Private Sector**

The planning process must include recommendations regarding the role that must be played by technical training institutions and higher education bodies, in order for them to contribute with their analyses and studies to the updated objectives of the ACS. This plan must include coordination with the Private Sector that is related to research projects to join their capacities in order for the ACS to achieve its updated objectives.

Output 3: Identification of a Roadmap based on the best scenario to be applied for the achievement of a Global and Regional Foresight Prospectus for the ACS. The Roadmap should detail/include the Vision, Mission, Values, Principles and Strategic Objectives of the ACS for the next ten years (2025-2035) and will form the very foundation for the Strategic Plan for the ACS.

3.3 Component 3

This Proposal should be accompanied by a framework Communications Strategy that disseminates the agreed Plan amongst stakeholders and promotes ownership.

Output 4: A Framework Communications Strategy to socialise the Plan amongst ACS Stakeholders.

4.0 Estimated Cost and Duration

The budget for the Consultancy Project for the Development of the ACS Strategic Plan is **USD250,000**. The budget for the consultancy was determined based on the Scope of Work and deliverables outlined in the Project Description. The consultancy is expected to be completed within **twenty-eight (28) weeks**, with at least four (4) formalized updates throughout the project, to the ACS Secretariat throughout the duration of the project.

The reimbursement budget (payable to the contracted firm) for overseas travel directly related to the Consultancy Project for the Development of the ACS Strategic Plan is **USD30,000**.

Note: *With the exception of Meal per diem, all reimbursement requests must include the applicable supporting documentation (which may include - Airline tickets, Hotel accommodation, Ground transfers).*

The budget (pertaining to ACS personnel to facilitate the process) for overseas travel directly related to the Consultancy Project for the Development of the ACS Strategic Plan is **USD20,000**.

5.0 Project Management

Project Team

The ACS will work directly with a Consultant/Team to ensure the execution of the project. The Project Team for the Consultancy is expected to constitute:

- A Lead Consultant;
- A Project Manager;
- Two Senior Technical Leads.

6.0 Matrix of Responsibilities

The matrix of responsibilities indicates the role of the different actors (executing agencies, collaborating agencies, monitoring agencies, financing agencies...) in the project implementation.

	Consultant	ACS Coordinators	Country Contact Points
Component 1: Develop a Global and Regional Prospectus	R/A Responsible/ Accountable	A/C Accountable/ Consulted	C/I Consulted/ Informed
Component 2: Hold and facilitate meetings and workshops	R/A Responsible/ Accountable	A/C Accountable/ Consulted	C/I Consulted/ Informed

Table 1: RACI – Chart showing who will be Responsible (R), Accountable (A), Consulted (C) and Informed (I) of the differing components of the project.

7.0 Expected Deliverables to Stakeholders

Clarity of Vision and Mission:

By engaging in this consultancy, the ACS will be able to clearly update its vision, mission, values, and principles for the next decade. Having a well-articulated and updated vision and mission provides clarity and direction for the organisation and its stakeholders.

Strategic Objectives Alignment:

The Strategic Plan will help align the ACS' activities and objectives with the evolving needs and challenges of the Caribbean Region. This alignment will ensure that the ACS remains relevant and effective in addressing the region's priorities.

Risk Assessment and Scenario Planning:

Developing three potential scenarios for the ACS' impact in the region allows for proactive risk assessment and strategic planning. By considering different possibilities, the ACS can better anticipate challenges and capitalize on opportunities, thereby enhancing its resilience and adaptability.

Enhanced Branding and Visibility:

Addressing the identity deficit and overlapping areas of intervention through the strategic plan can enhance the ACS branding and visibility. A clear mission and distinct identity will strengthen the ACS positioning within the region and internationally, attracting attention, resources, and partnerships. In this regard this Proposal should be accompanied by a framework Communications Strategy that socialises the agreed Plan amongst stakeholders and promotes ownership.

Organisational improvement and accountability:

By addressing internal challenges such as organisational imbalance, lack of procedures, and a culture of accountability, the Strategic Plan can drive organisational improvement within the ACS. Clear procedures, processes, and accountability mechanisms enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and trust both internally and externally.

8.0 Milestones and Schedule of Activities

The Chart presented (below) encapsulates the various milestones of the project and will continue their progression throughout the Project's Lifecycle.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES																												
This annex aims at describing in detail the estimated time for each main activity, drawing the schedule for each task when its necessary.																												
Years	1																											
Months	1				2				3				4				5				6				7			
Weeks (approx)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Component 1	Develop the broader regional foresight prospectus for ACS Member States and Associate Members detailing three scenarios.																											
Develop a global regional foresight prospectus for the ACS																												
Component 2	Execution of workshop sessions to develop a roadmap strategy detailing: Vision, Mission, Values, Principles and Strategic Objectives of the ACS for the next 10 years.																											
Meetings and workshops																												

9.0 Critical Risks and Sustainability

The following are some factors which may impede the project's progress:

Political Changes: Changes in government leadership due to national elections in the Member States comprising the ACS region could result in changes in the leads and national entities designated as contact points for the project.

Lack of Stakeholder Engagement: Failure to effectively engage representatives from Member States and Associate Members in meetings and workshops could result in low participation, lack of consensus, and ultimately, ineffective decision-making.

Resource Constraints: Insufficient funding, human resources, or technological infrastructure may impede the project's ability to conduct thorough analysis and develop a comprehensive foresight prospectus and roadmap.

Technical Challenges: Technical issues such as connectivity problems, software failures, or inadequate technical expertise could hinder the smooth conduct of meetings and workshops, impacting the quality of discussions and conclusions reached.

Logistical Issues: Challenges related to travel restrictions, visa issues, or logistical arrangements for organizing meetings and workshops in multiple locations across the ACS region could disrupt planned activities.

10.0 Considerations

Regarding the ACS Strategic Plan for the period 2025 - 2035, the following should be considered:

1. In the context of the process, the fundamental purpose of the Association as an inter-governmental institution of the States of the Greater Caribbean must be safeguarded: "to identify and promote consultation, cooperation and concerted action among the countries of the Greater Caribbean".
2. The fundamental objectives of the actions of the ACS, although in each period and according to the circumstances, and by decision of its Member States, priority may be given to some over others, must be maintained, namely:
 - a. Support for the strengthening of regional cooperation to assist the integration process with a view to the creation of a common economic space.
 - b. The preservation and protection of the environmental integrity of the Caribbean Sea, considered as the common heritage of the peoples of the region; and
 - c. The promotion of the sustainable development of the Greater Caribbean.
3. The scope of the update and in particular, the status of full membership in the organisation must prevent extra-regional countries from acquiring effective capacity in ACS decisions.
4. To maintain without modifications the permanent organs of the Association of Caribbean States, as defined by its founders: i) Summits of Heads of State and/or Government; ii) the Chairmanship of the Council; c) the Executive Board; iv) the Ministerial Council; v) the General Secretariat; vi) the Special Committees in the areas of Trade, Transport, Sustainable Tourism, Disaster Risk Reduction, Budget and Administration, Special Fund for Cooperation and the Caribbean Sea.
5. To carefully analyse the scope and stipulations of all relevant Agreements of the ACS Ministerial Council, before defining possible modifications to the structure and work objectives of the three directorates within the ACS Secretariat: i) Transport, Trade and Sustainable Development; ii) Cooperation and Resource Mobilization; and iii) Disaster Risk Reduction, Sustainable Tourism, Caribbean Sea and the Environment.
6. To preserve the rotating representation of the Member States in the Secretariat of the Association.
7. To reaffirm the importance - for the future performance of the institution - of the work of the Secretary General as representative of the ACS for the fulfilment of the mandates arising from the Summits and the Ministerial Councils, and his role as coordinator of the efforts to achieve commitments from the international community, observers, external partners, etc., with a view to mobilizing financial resources for the development of the countries and peoples of the Greater Caribbean.

11.0 Timescale and Activity Schedule

The following timetable constitutes a tentative schedule for the pre-qualification and the RFP evaluation process. The ACS reserves the right to modify this schedule at any time.

Activity	Description	Date / Period
Publication	RFP is issued and published on the ACS's website and circulated to Member States;	July 5, 2024
Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference	Videoconference to address respondents inquiries and provide technical information;	July 17, 2024
Deadline for RFP Questions	Final date and time for respondents to submit their questions to this RFP;	July 19, 2024
Deadline for RFP Answers & Clarifications	Final date and time for issuance of answers, clarifications and addenda to this RFP;	July 23, 2024
Deadline for RFP Submission	Final date and time for respondents to submit their responses to this RFP;	August 5, 2024
Review of Submissions and Completion of Evaluations	Completion of Technical & Price Evaluations inclusive of any other ancillary RFP Technical assessment requirements;	August 12, 2024
Due Diligence of Ranked Finalists	Completion of Due Diligence for the top three (3) ranked respondents;	August 14, 2024
Expected date for Service Award	Notice of Award communicated to best ranked respondent. * Reply to notice requested within two (2) working days.	August 16, 2024
Contract Execution	Expected date to complete contract negotiation and formal execution	August 21, 2024
Expected date for Project Start	Expected Project Start Date	August 23, 2024
Maximum expected duration of contract	Maximum expected duration of contract	7 Months
Expected Deadline for Project Completion	Expected Project End Date	March 28, 2025

12.0 Proposal Outline

12.1 RFP Response

The responses to the RFP should be prepared in a manner that would aid in the making of an informed decision regarding the strategic plan. If a joint venture or consortium is submitting a response, the agreement between the parties relating to such joint venture or consortium should be submitted with the response. Authorized signatories from each party comprising the joint venture or consortium must complete a separate declaration included in the Request for Proposal (RFP) Response Form included with this document as Annex A and a Bid Submission Compliance and Risk Data Annex Form included with this document as Annex C.

12.2 RFP Response Form and Format

i. Completed Request for Information (RFP) Response Form | Annex A

All respondents should provide the following Corporate Information, Technical and Organisational Support and Experience information within the applicable sections of Request for Proposal (RFP) Response Form as part of their submission:

1. A Company Profile inclusive of the official name and address of the company;
2. Name(s), title(s), telephone number(s) and email address of all primary points of contact;
3. An outline of your company's experience in initiating and successfully completing similar projects and services highlighting any technical, organisational support and applicable experience or client references.;
4. The resources that will be assigned to the project, inclusive of roles, titles, numbers, and applicable experience;
5. A clear statement or list of exclusions and assumptions;
6. Duration breakdown (Timelines - Interviews & Report Finalisation);
7. Methodology;
8. A minimum of five (5) testimonials from current or past client engagements which are of a similar size and nature to scope of services potentially required for this effort.

ii. Completed Bid Submission Compliance and Risk Data Annex Form | Annex C

The respondent must provide a completed Bid Submission Compliance and Risk Data Annex C.

iii. Cost and Supporting Information

The respondent must provide a Cost proposal which is aligned to a proposed work breakdown schedule based on the Chart in Section 8.0. The respondent should also provide information related to its proposed project methodology including the tools to be used and sample reports.

12.3 RFP Response Delivery

Respondents are requested to submit their proposals via email to ACS at tenders@acs-aec.org. The subject of the email should be: "**Response to Strategic Plan RFP 2024**".

Respondents submitting responses are cautioned to allow adequate delivery time to ensure timely delivery of information and should request a delivery receipt in their email communication to verify successful delivery of your expressions of interest and accompanying information.

CAUTION: No hard copy postal or facsimile submissions will be entertained. The respondents are instructed to clearly identify any requirement of this RFP that the respondents cannot satisfy.

The response should be submitted as a combination of Microsoft Word, Excel and Adobe Acrobat PDF document formats no larger than four megabytes (4MB) in size. If your response exceeds this size you should submit your response in separate email messages not exceeding 4MB. The response should follow the format indicated in Section 12.2 of this RFP. The respondents should limit their response to one volume, if at all possible.

13.0 Events and Communication Protocols

All respondents should attend an online Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference identified in item 13.3 and scheduled for **July 17, 2024** via ZOOM/WebEx videoconference. Respondents must confirm their attendance via email to tenders@acs-aec.org on or before **July 15, 2024**. The email must have the subject heading "**Pre-Bid Conference for Strategic Plan 2025-2035**" and must state the name and contact details for the representatives that will be in attendance.

13.1 Deadline for inquiries

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference has been scheduled for this project; therefore, the cut-off date for submission of questions will be **two (2) business days** after the conclusion of the Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference. While all questions will be entertained at the Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference, it is strongly urged that questions be submitted in writing prior to the Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference. It is requested that respondents having long, complex or multiple part questions submit them via email as far in advance of the Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference as possible. This request is made so that answers can be prepared prior to the Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference and circulated to all potential respondents.

13.2 Question Protocol

Questions must be submitted in writing and should be directly tied to the RFP by the writer. Questions should be asked in consecutive order, from beginning to end, following the organisation of the RFP. Each question should begin by referencing the RFP page number and section number to which it relates. Please use **Annex B - Question Template** when submitting questions.

Respondent(s) shall **not** contact any person within ACS directly, in person, or by telephone concerning this RFP. All communication must be conducted via the designated email address identified in this RFP.

13.3 Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference

The purpose of the Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference is to provide a structured and formal opportunity for respondents to meet with Representatives of the ACS Secretariat to raise questions and clarify any of the proposal requirements prior to submission of Bids for Examination and Review by the Tenders Committee at the ACS Secretariat. The date, time and location are provided as follows:

DATE: July 17, 2024
TIME: To be confirmed
LOCATION: Virtual Meeting (Zoom/WebEx)

CAUTION: Proposal bids **may be** automatically rejected from any respondent that was not represented or failed to properly register at the Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference.

It is the responsibility of the bidder to identify and address any additional requirements or information needed to submit a proposal. No special consideration shall be given to any respondent, because of the bidder's failure to be knowledgeable of all the requirements of the proposal after the Mandatory Pre-Bid conference date.

14.0 Pricing and Payments

All estimates submitted should be valid for a period of at least **ninety (90) days** after the closing date of the request for proposal to allow for the evaluation of bids and the selection of the contract awardee.

All payments shall be made via cheque or wire transfer subject to any contract that arises from this procurement process.

15.0 Examination of RFP Contents

Respondents are responsible for examining, with appropriate care and attention, the invitation package and are also responsible for informing themselves with respect to all conditions that may, in any way, affect the cost or the performance of any proposed solutions. Failure to do so shall be at the sole risk of the respondents, and suppliers can be given no relief for error or omission.

In the event that it becomes necessary to clarify or revise this RFP, such clarification or revision will be by addendum. Any RFP addendum will be distributed as follows:

1. A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference has been scheduled for this procurement, any addendum issued before the Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be distributed to all prospective respondents who were sent the initial RFP.
2. Any addendum issued at the time of or after the Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be distributed **only** to those respondents represented and properly registered at the Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference.

16.0 Evaluation of Proposals and Correspondence

Proposals that meet the requirements will be given a thorough and objective review. Respondents are to assume that the Evaluation Panel has no previous knowledge of your organisation, its activities or experience. The tendered prices will be assessed together with qualitative and compliance criteria to determine the most economically advantageous outcome for the ACS.

A scoring system will be used as part of the assessment of the qualitative and pricing criteria. The extent to which a proposal demonstrates greater satisfaction of each of these criteria will result in a greater score. The aggregate score of each proposal will be used as one of the factors in the final assessment of the qualitative criteria and in the overall assessment of value for money. All submitted proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the table outlined below which details how each criterion will be weighted to indicate the relative degree of importance placed on the technical aspects of the goods or services requested.

Category	Description	Weight (%)
Experience of the Firm	Bidder has demonstrated years of experience and proven credible results in developing similar Strategic Plans.	20
Experience and Qualifications of the Members comprising the Core Team	Bidder has demonstrated that their Team Members are well experienced and qualified in initiating and undertaking similar works.	25
Methodology (including Tools and Sample Reports)	Bidder has demonstrated its capability to bring similar contracts to a satisfactory conclusion by describing the methodology of approach to accomplish the project's required outcomes.	50
Cost of Proposal (in US\$)	Bidder has demonstrated a competitive costing structure which will ensure the best value and outcome for the Client.	5

Note: Whilst pricing will be considered a part of the Evaluation Criteria, the submission of the lowest price is not essential for the award and, large pricing differentials between respondents will be carefully examined. Price may be used as a final indicator for determining an awardee when all other criteria have been normalised.

16.1 Contact Information

Respondents are requested to use the following contact details for all correspondence with the ACS concerning this RFP.

Attention: Mr. Rodolfo Sabonge
Secretary General
Association of Caribbean States
Office of the Secretary General | Strategic Plan 2025-2035
Tel: 622-9575
Email: tenders@acs-aec.org

Should there be the need for any clarification of information, discrepancies in or omissions from this Request for Proposal, or should the intent or meaning appear unclear or ambiguous, or should any other question arise relative to this Request for Proposal, the respondent must notify the ACS of such finding by email.

16.2 Contract Award and Notification

The selected Supplier(s) will be notified in writing by an authorized representative of ACS and will be invited to negotiate a contract.

16.3 Contract Award Requirements

Requirement	Description	Status
Liquidated Damages	Will be imposed as follows: Percentage of contract price per day of delay: 0.5% Maximum number of days of delay is 30 , after which ACS may terminate the contract.	Required

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