



Original language: English
Last updated: October 8th, 2024

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
CONSULTING SERVICES - Development of an E-commerce Readiness Capacity-
Building Programme

Institution: Association of Caribbean States (ACS)

Country: Multiple – Barbados, Belize, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Trinidad & Tobago

Project: Micro, small and medium-sized Enterprises International Trade and Development Project

Sector: Trade and Sustainable Development

Abstract: Development of an E-commerce Readiness Capacity-Building Programme

Loan/Credit/Grant No.: ATN/OC-19778-RG

Deadline: 17 October, 2024 at 23:59 (AST)

The ACS received financing from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) through the Regional Public Goods (RPG) Initiative to implement the Micro, small and medium-sized Enterprises International Trade and Development Project. Under this project, the ACS is seeking eligible consulting firms to provide consulting services (“the Services”) to develop an E-commerce Readiness Capacity-Building Programme described in this Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI). The scope of the consultancy is detailed below.

General Scope: The consulting firms are responsible for the development of an e-commerce readiness programme and the operationalization of same through targeted training sessions for MSMEs in three target sectors: **community-based tourism, agribusiness and creative industries**. To operationalize this programme, the delivery of online training sessions to two broad stakeholder groups – officials in business support organisations (BSO) and MSMEs from the three target sectors – is required. The work described hereunder will comprise a combination of desk research, virtual consultations and training.

A. Mapping/Situational Analysis: The mapping/situational analysis will identify recommendations and areas of need that the e-commerce readiness handbook will address.

The capacity of BSOs and MSMEs in the target sectors to reap the benefits from digital business should be assessed by carrying out the following activities, among others:

1. Carry out a mapping and situational analysis of the capacity of MSMEs and business support organizations (including SBDCs), to support MSMEs' digitalization efforts, and to adopt the use of e-commerce in their business operations; the analysis should focus on nuances within the three target sectors;
2. Identify and collate key characteristics, challenges and potential solutions for increasing online presence of MSMEs in the target sectors of the beneficiary countries;
3. Conduct a gap analysis on e-commerce usage amongst MSMEs in the target sectors to be compared against international counterparts;
4. Recommend concrete solutions that help to encourage use of e-commerce solutions within MSMEs' business operations;

B. Development of an E-Commerce Readiness Handbook: The Handbook will address the findings in the situational analysis and must detail hands-on methods for the practical application of ICT tools, improving digital literacy and entrepreneurship skills. It must be applicable to MSMEs in the three target sectors. In this light, the consulting firms will be required to develop a comprehensive E-Commerce Readiness Handbook **(in Spanish and English)** that:

1. Directly targets the issues and digital solutions to be employed by BSOs and MSMEs in the three target sectors in the beneficiary countries;
2. Identifies specific online platforms on which the MSMEs in the target sectors can market their products/services;
3. Identifies digital solutions and actionable guidance for BSOs/MSMEs to digitalize specific functional areas of their business (e.g. financial transactions, marketing, product/service development and delivery, productivity etc.);
4. Offers comprehensive guidance and step-by-step instructions on how MSMEs can initiate and successfully implement digitalisation initiatives across various functional areas of their businesses;

5. Details tailored solutions that addresses the unique needs and challenges faced by MSMEs operating within the local context, taking into consideration the three sectors and industries that are the focus of this consultancy;
6. Identifies solutions to encourage a higher rate of digital adoption among MSMEs through actionable strategies to overcome potential barriers to digitalisation;
7. Provides clear and actionable guidance on digitalising different areas of MSME operations shall be provided in the Handbook;
8. Provides guidance on selecting and implementing digital tools relevant to MSMEs in the target sectors;
9. Incorporates relevant case studies and examples of successful digitalisation in MSMEs;

C. Development and Delivery of E-Commerce Readiness Program: This component focuses on the development and delivery of a series of online training sessions to the BSOs and MSMEs in the target sectors of the beneficiary countries. Based on the Handbook developed, the Consulting firms will be required to design and coordinate the delivery of a comprehensive training programme for at least three online seminars (one per target sector)

This programme should include:

1. Detailed methodology/approach for delivering the training, focussing on , content breakdown, interactive and flexible learning formats, adult learning techniques, and personalized services like coaching, creating a self-sustaining cycle of change and fostering peer learning and networking among the participants;
2. Visually appealing and user-friendly training materials adapted to each of the three target sectors;
3. Curated reading lists, target audience for each sector, key facilitators, and training schedule;
4. The online training platform to be used
5. Learning outcomes, recommendations etc.

The Consulting firms will develop a post-training evaluation and impact assessment template, facilitate the collection of monitoring and evaluation data from seminar trainees online and



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provide a Training Summary Report (TSR) from the online seminars, detailing learning objectives, trainee recommendations for content improvement, participant demographics, assessment activities, and variations in pre and post seminar knowledge. All deliverables must be submitted in English and Spanish.

Duration: The Services are expected to start in March 2025 and should be delivered within **12 months** from the start date of the contract. The Consultant 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 and IDB.

Submission Guidelines: The ACS now invites eligible consulting firms to indicate their interest in providing the services described in this REOI. Interested Consulting firms should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services. Responses should include at least the following information:

1. Background of the firm
2. General experience/specialities of the firm
3. Description and length of experience in undertaking assignments similar to the scope of activities described in this REOI. Please indicate the time per project in years/months
4. Skills and qualifications of staff/personnel for the assignment. Please indicate the length of experience for each team member in years/months

To ensure consistency and efficiency in the evaluation process, all bidders are required to adhere to the following guidelines when submitting their Expressions of Interest (EOI):

1. **Page Limit:** The EOI submission **must not exceed 60 pages in total**, including all supporting documents, annexes, and appendices.
2. **Content Prioritization:** Ensure that all necessary information, including the firm's experience, team's qualifications and relevant experience, is clearly outlined within the 60-page limit. Focus on providing concise and relevant details that directly address the requirements outlined in the REOI.



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3. **Non-Compliance:** EOIs that exceed the 60-page limit may be considered non-compliant and may not be evaluated.

Short lists shall comprise **not fewer than five and not more than eight eligible firms** with a wide geographic spread. Consulting firms will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the [IDB procurement policies](#). This REOI is open to all eligible bidders from IDB countries as defined in these policies.

Consulting firms may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications. For the purpose of establishing the short list, the nationality of a firm is that of the country in which it is legally incorporated or constituted and in the case of a joint venture, the nationality of the firm appointed to represent it.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the **Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)** method set out in the Consultant Policies. Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours: **Monday to Friday 09:00 - 17:00 (AST)**.

Expressions of interest must be emailed **in a written form in English** to acsmsme@acs-aec.org by **17 October, 2024 at 23:59 (AST)** and should be addressed to:

Association of Caribbean States

Attn: Ms. Safiya Reid, Advisor, Directorate for Transport, Trade and Sustainable Development

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To ensure that we receive your proposal, we encourage firms to transmit large files (any file exceeding 4 MB) via a downloadable link (e.g. Google Drive, OneDrive, wetransfer etc.)