

Call for Expression of Interest (EOI)

EUROPEAN UNION FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMME FOR THE CARIBBEAN: **SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY (SPS) MEASURES PROJECT** *Addressing SPS Barriers to Agricultural and Fishery Trade in the Caribbean*

TITLE OF THE EOI:	
DEVELOPMENT OF A LAB RATIONALIZATION STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TO STRENGTHEN AGRICULTURAL/FISHERIES HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY TESTING SERVICES IN CARIFORUM COUNTRIES	
Date of this EOI: May 28, 2025	Closing Date for Receipt of EOI: July 25, 2025
EOI Reference: CaRC/BB/FSSPS-EOI/C3-01/25	
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION	
<p>The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) has been the specialized international agency for agriculture of the Inter-American System for more than 80 years, and its mission is to “<i>encourage, promote and support our Member States in their efforts to achieve agricultural development and rural well-being through international technical cooperation of excellence</i>”.</p> <p>The Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA) seeks to enhance regional development in agricultural health and food safety through the application of SPS Measures that meets the expectation of all stakeholders and contribute to the welfare of Caribbean citizens. CAHFSA is mandated to perform a coordinating and organizing role for the establishment of an effective and efficient regional sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regime and to execute on behalf of Member States such SPS actions and activities that can be more effectively and efficiently executed through a regional mechanism.</p> <p>The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) provides Regional cooperation in managing marine fisheries and aquaculture resources in CARIFORUM countries. The CRFM promotes and facilitates the responsible utilization of the Region’s fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the current and future population of the region.</p> <p>The EU’s Food Security Programme seeks to enhance the (environmental and social-economic) resilience and the sustainability of food systems in the Caribbean, in order to promote food and nutrition security, particularly for groups in vulnerable situations. The Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures Project “<i>Addressing SPS Barriers to Agricultural and Fishery Trade in the Caribbean</i>”, is one component of the European Union’s Food Security Programme and is being implemented by IICA, CAHFSA and CRFM. The Project aims to improve food-processing capabilities, so as to increase regional distribution through the removal of SPS bottlenecks. The areas of focus include: (i) enhancing the regulatory environment to improve enforcement and implementation of SPS</p>	

controls; (ii) improving efficiencies of competent authorities in the application of SPS controls, (iii) increasing food safety compliance capability and capacity of competent authorities and industry stakeholders and (iv) increasing fisheries SPS compliance in the public and private sectors.

Development of Lab Rationalization Strategy and Implementation Plan

Reliable and accessible testing services are fundamental for ensuring food safety, facilitating trade, and protecting public health. As CARIFORUM Countries work to improve the movement of safe food across borders, it is critical that the region's laboratories are equipped to conduct the necessary tests that meet both regional standards and the requirements of international importing countries. Currently, a range of public and private laboratories provide Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) testing services across the region; however, these services remain fragmented, resulting in inefficiencies, duplication, and limited responsiveness to the needs of the private sector.

To address these gaps, this consultancy will support the development of a regional laboratory rationalization strategy aimed at enhancing collaboration, improving harmonization of methods, enabling bulk procurement, strengthening capacities, and fostering information sharing among national and regional laboratories to better serve the agrifood sector.

Within the above context, IICA is seeking to hire a suitable consultant to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan for the rationalization of agricultural/fisheries health and food safety laboratory testing services across CARIFORUM countries. The strategy will aim to enhance regional collaboration, harmonize testing methodologies, and improve the economic sustainability, efficiency, and effectiveness of laboratory services in order to improve food safety, public health and intra-regional trade.

The main tasks/activities are as follows:

- i. Attend and participate in an inception meeting (virtual) with the SPS Measures Project Management Team as well as representatives from the Project Laboratory Working Group and other key stakeholders to clarify the consultancy's objectives, activities, approach, expected outputs and operational arrangements.
- ii. Within five (5) working days of the initial briefing meetings, prepare and submit an Inception Report outlining the proposed methodology, work plan, stakeholder engagement approach, and a timeline for delivery of the consultancy outputs.
- iii. Develop a situational analysis by conducting a comprehensive desk review of the operations and services of regional and national laboratories, national and regional agricultural health and food safety policies and legislation, other relevant regional studies, institutional mandates, and international best practices related to laboratory management and operations as well as data protection policies and guidelines within the agrifood sector. Where necessary design requisite instruments and conduct targeted stakeholder interviews and focus group meetings where there are gaps in the secondary information gathered. The data gathering activities should be guided by the conceptual elements for the model outlined in Section v. (b) below.

- iv. Host a series of national and regional consultations (virtual or in person) with laboratory practitioners, laboratory value chain service providers (input suppliers including equipment maintenance, logistics etc.), private and public sector stakeholders to further gather their perception and recommendations to rationalize AHFS testing services within the region.
- v. Draft a Lab Rationalization Strategy, which includes:
 - a) A contextual overview that supports the development of the strategy, including but not limited to, an analysis of the current landscape of AHFS laboratories in CARIFORUM, key regional and international factors driving the demand for services (e.g., trade requirements, SPS compliance), existing challenges and the rationale for adopting a coordinated rationalization approach.
 - b) A conceptual model for the rationalization of the laboratory services across CARIFORUM Countries. The model should provide a strategic framework to guide the optimization of laboratory operations and services, taking into account factors such as operational efficiency, geographic locations, testing demand and logistics. Specifically, the model should address in part:
 - *Testing service requirements for intra-regional trade (existing and potential)*
 - *Functional specialization among laboratories to reduce duplication and increase efficiency*
 - *Harmonization of testing methods and protocols*
 - *Resource and servicing optimization, including shared procurement of supplies and servicing equipment*
 - *Quality assurance and control systems*
 - *Efficient and sustainable logistics arrangements*
 - *Sustainability mechanisms*
 - *Financial sustainability, including viable business models, fee/pricing structures, and revenue-generating opportunities*
 - *Human resource and capacity-building needs*
 - *Data management and knowledge-sharing systems*
 - *Mechanisms to foster collaboration and information exchange across laboratories*
 - *Laboratory governance structures*
 - *A regional coordination mechanism to support oversight, alignment, and implementation*
 - *Communications and marketing*
 - c) An implementation plan/roadmap outlining the key tasks, expected outputs and outcomes, indicative budget, roles and responsibilities, and a realistic timeframe for execution. The plan should provide a clear pathway for operationalizing the laboratory rationalization strategy, including short-, medium-, and long-term actions.
- vi. Disseminate draft laboratory rationalization strategy and implementation plan to all key stakeholders, for review and feedback. Incorporate all comments received into draft strategy and implementation plan.
- vii. Facilitate a regional workshop in collaboration with IICA, CRFM, CAHFSA, the laboratory working group and relevant CARIFORUM stakeholders to present and validate the Lab Rationalization Strategy and the implementation plan and accompanying recommendations.
- viii. Finalize the Lab Rationalization Strategy and Implementation Plan based on the comments from the validation workshop and submit a comprehensive Final Report of the validation workshop.

- ix. Submit Progress Reports at agreed intervals and a Final Consultancy Report summarizing all activities, findings, deliverables, and recommendations.

The main deliverables are:

- i. Inception Report
- ii. Situational Analysis
- iii. Progress Report
- iv. Draft Laboratory Rationalization Strategy and Implementation Plan
- v. Validation Workshop Report
- vi. Finalised Lan Rationalization Strategy and Implementation Plan
- vii. Final Technical Report

The action should be conducted over seven months: August 2025 – February 2026.

1. Proposals must be written in **Standard English** and consist of a technical proposal, a financial proposal and Legal and Tax documents.
2. The Technical Proposal should provide the following information:
 - a. A description of the individual's/firm's/company's/consortium experience on comparable assignments.
 - b. At least three client references, with information regarding the provision of similar services along with contact information (name, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses).
 - c. A detailed description of work plan/schedule for performing the assignment
 - d. Recent CVs of principal/key staff members
 - e. A detailed description of the proposed methodology
3. The Financial Proposal should list all costs associated with the assignment in United States Dollars. Costs should be broken down by activity.
4. Legal and Tax Documents.
 - a. Record of incorporation of the natural or artificial person, or corporation.
 - b. Certification of legal status as a natural or artificial person or corporation, or the equivalent document in the country concerned, valid under national law.
 - c. Photocopy of identity documents of the representatives (natural or artificial person), according to the legal status presented in the bid.
 - d. Compliance documents required under the country's laws, such as certifications of social security payments, workers' insurance policy, certificate indicating up-to-date tax returns, etc.
 - e. A copy of the most recent audited financial statements, covering a fiscal year within the last three (3) years.
 - f. Tax documents required under the laws of the country that demonstrate that the person or corporation is legally entitled to operate.
 - g. A sworn statement authenticated by a notary public that indicates that no lawsuits have been filed against the company; otherwise, it should indicate and describe the nature of those legal proceedings.

- h. A Sworn statement indicating that no lawsuits have been filed against the professionals designated for the development of activities and outputs defined in the Call for Tenders; otherwise, it should indicate and describe the nature of those legal proceedings.
5. The following contact information must be provided:
- a. Legal Name of Company/Individual(s)
 - b. Company's Authorised Representative(s) (Name/Title) (in the case of a Firm)
 - c. Full address
 - d. Telephone and Fax numbers
 - e. Email address
 - f. Website
 - g. Number of technical persons in the company
6. The cost of preparing and submitting the proposal is not reimbursable as a direct cost of the assignment.
7. IICA is not bound to accept any of the proposals submitted.

IICA's policy requires that respondents provide professional, objective, impartial advice and at all times, hold IICA's interests paramount without any consideration for future work, and strictly avoid conflicts with other assignments or their own corporate interests. Respondents shall not be hired for any assignment that would be in conflict with their prior or current obligations to other clients, or that may place them in a position of not being able to carry out the assignment in the best interest of IICA.

EVALUATION AND SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Evaluation

Proposals shall be evaluated taking into consideration, but not limited to, the requirements listed below:

The Lead Consultant (or key personnel) should possess:

- i. Advanced university degree (Masters or equivalent) in Natural Sciences, Applied Sciences, Public Health, Food Science and Technology or any other related field. A first level university degree with a relevant combination of professional training, certification and experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree.
- ii. Specialized training or certification in quality management systems (e.g., ISO/IEC 17025), laboratory accreditation, or SPS-related disciplines will be considered an asset.
- iii. At least 10 years of relevant experience/knowledge in laboratory systems strengthening including laboratory diagnostics, inspection, laboratory testing, certification, Total Quality Management and Accreditation and institutional capacity development.
- iv. Demonstrated experience conducting technical assessments of laboratories in developing country contexts.
- v. At least 3 years of experience working with regional or international organizations on SPS-related or trade-related technical assistance projects in the Caribbean or similar regions.
- vi. Familiarity with CARIFORUM institutional frameworks, SPS policy implementation, and international trade standards.
- vii. Familiarity with the SPS agenda internationally as well as in CARICOM countries.

- viii. Knowledge of regional and international trade requirements as it relates to the testing of knowledge of agriculture sector in the CARIFORUM region.
- ix. Understanding of the legal, institutional, and regulatory environment for laboratory services in CARIFORUM countries.
- x. Facilitation of stakeholder consultations and preparation of technical workshop materials.
- xi. Experience in carrying out consultancy assignments for the EU or other equivalent international development partners would be an advantage.
- xii. Cultural sensitivity and demonstrated experience working across Caribbean contexts.

Submission

1. The completed proposal must be submitted by end of business **July 25, 2025, at 4:00 PM Eastern Caribbean Time**. Proposals should be submitted electronically as **three (3)** separate files to:

2. sps.project@iica.int AND iica.bb@iica.int

3. The files submitted should include: a) the technical bid; b) the financial bid; and c) the legal documents (only applicable for Firms/Companies).
4. The email subject line should indicate the Number of the EOI and the name of the Firm/Company/Consortium Leader.