



## Request For Proposals (RFP)

### 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”*

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| <b>TITLE OF THE RFP:</b><br><b>ENHANCING FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION READINESS IN AGRO-PROCESSING SMES</b>  |   |
| <b>Date of this RFP:</b> January 07, 2026   | <b>Closing Date for Receipt of RFP:</b> February 09, 2026 |
| <b>RFP Reference:</b> CaRC/BB/FSSPS-RFP/C3-01/26  |   |
| <b>DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION</b>  |   |
| <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 European Union’s (EU) 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 EU’s Food Security Programme and is being implemented by the IICA along with regional partners, CAHFSA and the CRFM. The Project aims to improve food-processing capabilities, so as to increase regional distribution through</p> |   |

the removal of SPS bottlenecks. The areas of focus include: (i) enhancing the regulatory environment to improve enforcement and implementation of SPS 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.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE CONSULTANCY**

### *Strengthening Food Safety Systems for Enhanced Trade Competitiveness*

Within the context of the SPS regime, the responsibility of the private sector (food industry, private sector producers, processors, traders, and exporters) is to adhere to standards and guidelines that ensure the production and processing of high-quality, safe food. Specifically, they are required to ensure that production steps are well managed, that national regulations are met, and, in the case of exporters, there is compliance with SPS standards set by their destination markets. However, a limitation towards accessing new markets is the limited capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to respond to international and regional SPS requirements.

Within this context, this consultancy seeks to improve the technical capacity of private sector stakeholders to implement the systems, processes, and procedures required for trade. Strengthened compliance with food safety standards, including HACCP, GMPs, ISO 22000, and traceability systems, will enhance market readiness while fostering greater alignment between regulatory agencies and the enterprises they support. Building these capabilities is critical not only for meeting importers' requirements but also for reducing non-compliance risks, improving operational efficiency, and enhancing consumer confidence in locally produced foods.

By supporting agro-processors in adopting robust food safety management systems and reinforcing the capacity of public sector partners, the consultancy aims to unlock new market opportunities and catalyze private-sector growth. The initiative will contribute to a more competitive regional agro-processing sector, improved export performance, and a more responsive institutional environment that effectively facilitates trade and supports long-term sustainability.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE CONSULTANCY**

In this context, IICA is seeking to hire a Consultant to design and implement a targeted food safety capacity-building programme for agro-processing SMEs in the roots and tubers and vegetables value chains across CARIFORUM countries. Specifically, the consultancy is aimed at strengthening food safety management systems and supporting alignment with international trade requirements to drive export readiness and market expansion.

### ***The main tasks/activities are as follows:***

- i. Participate in an initial virtual briefing with the SPS Measures Project Management Team, IICA and CAHFSA to clarify the consultancy's objectives, deliverables, methodology, and operational arrangements.
- ii. Within five (5) working days of the briefing, prepare and submit an Inception Report detailing the proposed methodology, workplan, implementation schedule, stakeholder engagement approach for the completion of the key activities.

- iii. Develop detailed selection criteria and eligibility framework for agro-processors in the roots and tubers and vegetables value chains. Support the identification and selection of a minimum of 20 agro-processing SMEs across CARIFORUM in collaboration with the EU and IICA.

Conduct comprehensive food safety gap analyses for each selected firm, covering compliance with GMP, HACCP, traceability systems, and ISO 22000 requirements. This kick-off activity with companies should consist of a series of virtual and/or face-to-face meetings with each participating company to undertake the gap analyses and to collaboratively determine a series of agreed actions by the company to implement an improved Food Safety Management System. The gap analysis should be initiated by the administration of a questionnaire to ascertain the status of the food safety management system of the company (e.g., processes, implementation challenges). The action plan developed should include areas where technical guidance will be provided and a training programme outlined which includes the content to be covered and timeframe.

- iv. Develop tailored Action Plans for each agro-processor to guide corrective actions and system upgrades. A blended approach (face-to-face and virtual) should be taken in the provision of the technical assistance (training and technical guidance) to the companies that are selected. For each company there should be at least two (2) face-to-face activities conducted.

Agreement and commitment by management and key staff to the proposed Action Plan and the allocation of the necessary human and physical resources, as well as the appointment of a Food Safety Team and Leader, should be important outputs of this phase.

- v. Deliver targeted training for the Food Safety Team in Food Safety Management in each company covering in part:
  - a) Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs)
  - b) Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)
  - c) Traceability and ISO 22000 requirements

The training should be focused on the elements which are most relevant to the facility in question.

- vi. Guide firms through the practical implementation of corrective actions, including documentation, process controls, hygiene systems, and traceability mechanisms. Provide specialized advisory support for certification readiness, including audit preparation and pre-certification assessments. Support firms in aligning with export market food safety and regulatory requirements.
- vii. Deliver virtual and on-demand technical support during implementation of Action Plans. The consultants will establish ongoing regular scheduled reviews with participating companies to assess the progress of implementation of the Actions Plans. Where possible the Consultants will provide guidance documents and templates to assist the company in the implementation of the action plan. These reviews will assess progress, identify constraints and solutions to resolve them. Consultants should also be available for ad hoc advice should the need arise.
- viii. Conduct follow-up assessments to measure progress and reinforce compliance through the design and implement a project-level Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system to track:
  - a) Compliance improvements

- b) Implementation progress
- c) Sustainability of food safety systems

For each of the participating companies, assessments should be conducted on (but not limited to), the usefulness of the training provided, the knowledge and skill acquired, and attainment of objectives set out in Action Plans. Factors impacting the sustainability of the action should also be identified and recommendations made on future actions towards implementation of FSM systems.

- ix. Produce periodic progress reports capturing activities completed, challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations.
- x. At the end of the action, a debriefing meeting will be held with the Project Management Team. The Final Report of the action will form the basis for the discussions.
- xi. Prepare a Final Technical Report summarizing the full implementation process, results achieved, lessons learned, recommendations for sustaining food safety culture improvements, and a comprehensive set of all final training materials and communication products.

***The main deliverables are:***

- 1. Inception Report
- 2. Beneficiary Selection Report
- 3. Firm-Level Food Safety Gap Analysis Reports (20 Reports)
- 4. Customized Firm-Level Action Plans (20 Action Plans)
- 5. Progress Reports which outline the specific actions that will be undertaken for each company using the Action Plan as the guide (2)
- 6. Overall report on training workshops executed (minimum of 2 trainings per company inclusive of training materials used at the workshops) and technical assistance provided.
- 7. Final Technical Report

The action should be conducted over eighteen months: April 2026 –October 2027.

### **SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS/INFORMATION**

- 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. Copy of the latest financial statements.
- 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. 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:

- Qualifications of the Team - Advanced university degree (Masters or equivalent), preferably in Food Technology, Agri-business with a background in Food Safety or related field with at least 10 years working experience in developing Food Safety Systems.
- Knowledge of and experience in national, regional, international (EU, US, Canada) standards and guidelines; including CODEX Alimentarius standards, HACCP, Traceability, Private Standards.
- Experience developing food safety systems and conducting Food Safety capacity building actions in the Caribbean (minimum of 8 years);
- Experience working with Private Sector Firms in Agro-processing/ food manufacturing;
- Experience in the development of SOPs, protocols and guidelines.
- The firm/company/consortium's approach and methodology for implementing the project.
- Experience in carrying out consultancy assignments for the EU or other equivalent international development partners would be an advantage.
- Knowledge and experience using e-platforms for implementing actions virtually e.g. meetings, workshops.

**Submission**

- i. The completed proposal must be submitted by end of business **February 09, 2026, at 4:00 PM Eastern Caribbean Time**. Proposals should be submitted electronically as **three (3)** separate files to:  
[sps.project@iica.int](mailto:sps.project@iica.int) AND [iica.bb@iica.int](mailto:iica.bb@iica.int)
- ii. The files submitted should include: a) the technical bid; b) the financial bid; and c) the legal documents (only applicable for Firms/Companies).
- iii. The email subject line should indicate the Number of the RFP and the name of the Firm/Company/Consortium Leader.
- iv. The proposal submissions will be reviewed and a selection made within two months of the close of the Call for Proposals.