



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”

TITLE OF THE RFP:	
DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL FRESH PRODUCE SAFETY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK AND CAPACITY BUILDING IN SELECTED PILOT COUNTRIES	
Date of this RFP: January 07, 2026	Closing Date for Receipt of RFP: March 27, 2026
RFP Reference: CaRC/BB/FSSPS-RFP/C3-02/26	
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 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

Addressing Gaps in Fresh Produce Safety and Quality Systems Across the Region

Towards meeting regional food and nutrition security goals, currently there is a thrust to increase the production and trade of fresh produce. However, due to the susceptibility of fresh produce to contamination, spoilage, and quality loss due to gaps in production practices, handling, packaging, and transportation systems, it is important for countries to adopt fresh produce safety and quality schemes to address these shortcomings. IN the medium term, countries without fresh produce safety and quality assurance schemes, not only limit their access to markets (local, regional and international) but also undermine consumer confidence in locally grown products, creating barriers to achieving regional food and nutrition security goals.

Within the Caribbean, ensuring the safety and quality of fresh produce remains a critical challenge for both domestic markets as well as regional and international trade. While substantial work has been done at the policy and regulatory levels, the implementation of food safety and quality standards for fresh produce is limited.

Recognizing these challenges, the SPS Measures project will focus on developing a practical and regionally tailored framework to support countries in strengthening their fresh produce safety and quality assurance systems. The framework will adopt global best practices such as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) but will be adapted to the realities of the Caribbean context, including smallholder production systems, resource constraints, and the unique policy and market environment. This effort is intended to bridge the gap between regulatory frameworks and on-the-ground practices, creating a replicable model that can be scaled across the Region.

OBJECTIVE OF THE CONSULTANCY

In this context, IICA is seeking to hire a Consultant (Individual/Firm) to develop a regionally tailored framework to strengthen the safety and quality of fresh produce produced for domestic and regional consumption. In addition, the framework will be piloted in three (3) CARICOM Member States, through training, technical guidance, certification support, and the provision of small equipment and supplies to improve compliance with quality standards.

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, and data collection tools.

Development of Fresh Produce Safety and Quality Assurance Scheme

- iii. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing fresh produce quality assurance frameworks across CARICOM countries, including relevant legislation, policies, programmes, standards, infrastructure, and operational practices.

In addition, the assessment should include the mapping of the fresh produce value chains for commodities for which the scheme is being applied, identifying key actors, their roles, critical control points, and current practices across production, post-harvest handling, transportation, and packaging. This assessment, should be benchmarked against Global GAP and other internationally recognized quality assurance standards, identifying priority risks, weaknesses, and capacity needs.

The assessment should include engagements with relevant value chain stakeholders as well as development institutions who mandate covers food safety and quality (e.g. CAHFSA and CROSQ)

- iv. Develop a regionally tailored Fresh Produce Safety and Quality Assurance Framework that is compliant with international standards and adapted to Caribbean realities, including smallholder production and marketing systems and prevailing socio-economic conditions.
- v. Ensure the framework incorporates key components such as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), certification/accreditation pathways, national-level quality assurance system requirements, marketing and operational guidelines for producers and supply chain actors.
- vi. Present the draft Framework to IICA, CAHFSA, CROSQ, other relevant development partners and private sector entities for review, and feedback.
- vii. Present the second draft of the framework to CARICOM countries for feedback. The comments received should be incorporated for the finalisation and validation of the scheme by CARICOM countries.
- viii. Present the final scheme to CARICOM countries for validation. This will be conducted through a virtual meeting which will be facilitated by IICA and CAHFSA and will include public and private sector stakeholders. Please note that the validation will be undertaken once the pilot outlined below is completed.

Pilot of the Fresh Produce Safety and Quality Assurance Scheme

- ix. Develop criteria for selecting pilot countries, commodities, producer groups, and participating stakeholders, aligned with regional priorities and feasibility considerations. The criteria development will be conducted in collaboration with the EU and IICA.

Based on the agreed criteria, identify and confirm pilot commodities and stakeholder groups in three (3) CARICOM Member States, ensuring engagement of a minimum of twenty-five (25) stakeholders per country (producers, post-harvest workers, and transport operators). Facilitate (in collaboration with IICA), an introductory meeting with the key stakeholders outlining the pilot programme. Agreement and commitment by stakeholders to the proposed intervention should be important outputs of this phase.

- x. Design and deliver tailored capacity-building programmes in each pilot country based on the Fresh Produce Safety and Quality Assurance Scheme developed. covering, at minimum:
- Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) (with emphasis on traceability)
 - Post-harvest handling, storage, and transportation
 - Labelling and packaging requirements
 - Quality assurance, certification, and record-keeping procedures
- xi. Provide ongoing technical guidance, mentorship, and advisory support (virtual and/or on-site) to participating stakeholders throughout the pilot period.
- xii. Facilitate the identification of small equipment and supplies necessary to support compliance with quality assurance requirements (e.g., packaging/labelling materials, basic post-harvest tools, hygiene supplies, record keeping tools).
- xiii. Develop and implement an M&E system to track pilot implementation, outputs, and early outcomes, (including baseline and endline data collection tools), challenges and sustainability.
- xiv. Based on the results of pilot monitoring, refine and strengthen the Framework and implementation guidance as needed.
- xv. Produce periodic progress reports capturing activities completed, challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations.
- xvi. Conduct debriefing sessions with IICA and regional partners and submit a Final Report incorporating the final Framework, pilot results, capacity-building outputs, and recommendations for regional scale-up.

The main deliverables are:

1. Inception Report
2. Gap Analysis Report of Current Regional Fresh Produce Safety and Quality Assurance Schemes
3. Draft Regional Fresh Produce Safety and Quality Assurance Framework
4. Progress Report 1
5. Validated Regional Fresh Produce Safety and Quality Assurance Framework

6. Capacity Building Action Plans for the implementation of Fresh Produce Safety and Quality Assurance Framework in 3 countries
7. Progress Report 2
8. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Mid-Pilot M&E Report
9. Final validated Regional Fresh Produce Safety and Quality Assurance Framework
10. Final Technical Report

The action should be conducted over eighteen months: April 2026 –September 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:

Professional Experience:

- At least 10 years of experience in agricultural health, food safety, or SPS systems within the Caribbean or comparable regions.
- Demonstrated experience working with regional organizations, governments, or private sector actors to strengthen quality assurance frameworks.
- Proven experience in project management, stakeholder engagement, and capacity-building initiatives in agriculture, fisheries, or food safety sectors.

Specific Experience:

- Experience in conducting assessments, gap analyses, and value chain mapping for agricultural or fisheries products.
- Development of regionally relevant frameworks, guidelines, or standards for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), food safety, or SPS compliance.
- Practical experience in designing and delivering training programs for regulatory authorities, producers, or value chain actors.
- Familiarity with harmonization of SPS measures across multiple countries or jurisdictions.

Education:

- Advanced degree (Master's or higher) in Food Safety, Agriculture, Plant Health, Public Health, or related field.
- Relevant professional certifications in food safety, quality assurance, or SPS measures are an advantage.

Technical Skills:

- Knowledge of international standards and best practices in SPS measures, GAP, and quality assurance systems.
- Strong analytical skills, including the ability to assess legislation, regulations, and practices against regional and international requirements.
- Experience in developing and facilitating training sessions, workshops, and capacity-building activities.
- Excellent report writing, documentation, and presentation skills.
- Proficiency in using digital tools for surveys, data collection, and reporting.
- Strong stakeholder engagement, communication, and coordination skills.

Submission

- i. The completed proposal must be submitted by end of business **March 27, 2026, at 4:00 PM Eastern Caribbean Time**. Proposals should be submitted electronically as **three (3)** separate files to:
sps.project@iica.int **AND** 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.