

TERMS OF REFERENCE

CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE UPGRADE OF THE PACKHOUSE

1. BACKGROUND

1.01 Saint Lucia is located in the eastern Caribbean Sea and is part of the island chain forming the Lesser Antilles. The economy is largely dependent on tourism, however, fresh produce exports in particular banana exports have also been a big contributor to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Whilst banana exports remain a significant source of foreign exchange, the overall agricultural exports have diversified to other commodities, namely, plantains, breadfruits, mangoes, sweet potatoes, yams, and peppers.

1.02 Currently, Canada and the United Kingdom (UK) are the main markets for extra-regional exports of fresh produce (excluding bananas). The existence of large diaspora and ethnic markets in major cities in Canada and the UK, such as Toronto, Montreal, London, and Birmingham have created a significant demand for fresh produce from Saint Lucia. Over the five-year period 2016 to 2020, the export earnings for mango, sweet potato, yam, and hot pepper showed an increasing trend, but there were fluctuations in export earnings for plantain and breadfruit. In 2020, the total earnings from fresh produce exports (excluding bananas) were 13.7 million Eastern Caribbean dollars (XCD), which accounted for roughly 21% of total agricultural exports^{1/} and is therefore deemed as an important export growth sector for the country.

1.03 There are opportunities for Saint Lucia to increase fresh produce exports to existing markets in the UK, Canada and CARIFORUM countries, as well new markets in the EU made available under trading agreements such as the CARIFORUM–EU EPA. Saint Lucia has therefore embarked on a programme to increase exports, as articulated in the National Export Strategy (2020–2024). This Export Strategy outlines a trade development roadmap with an overall vision “Uniquely Saint Lucian with a Global Appeal”. One of the strategic objectives is “Expanding the national productive capacity and diversifying the export basket”. Further, there is a specified Plan of Action within the Export Strategy geared towards improving the Food Industry through increasing technical knowledge in the sector. Saint Lucia has embraced a value chain approach from ‘farm to fork’ and will therefore seek to strengthen the capacity of the value chain actors (i.e., farmers, exporters, pack houses^{2/}) to be more productive and more compliant with international quality standards. These initiatives will all seek to build the capacity of the support service provider *inter alia* Export Saint Lucia, Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards (SLBS) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Physical Planning, Natural Resources and Co-operatives.

Value Chain Actors

1.04 The main actors in the fresh produce value chain are farmers, exporters and operators of pack houses, Export Saint Lucia, SLBS, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Physical Planning, Natural Resources and Co-operatives, and Saint Lucia Air & Seaports Authority authorised service provider [Hewanorra Air Cargo Services (HACS)].

1.05 There are a total of 744 registered farmers (549 males and 195 females distributed mostly in Regions 1, 2, 4 and 5), 15 agri-produce exporters, and 4 pack houses registered with the Ministry of Agriculture. One of the pack houses is located in Odsan Castries and has been Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) compliant as of December 2020. This pack house is operated by the Marketing

^{1/} Annual Export Trade Data (2019). Retrieved from <https://trendeconomy.com/data/h2/SaintLucia/TOTAL>

^{2/} A packhouse is a facility where fruits and vegetables are received and processed prior to market distribution. The packhouse is the site where post-harvest treatments are applied, and quality standards are monitored.

Board, a state agency established in 1967 with a mandate to facilitate and improve the production, marketing, and processing of fresh agricultural produce, for local consumption and export. The other three pack houses are currently operated by farmers' cooperatives, which purchase from members and other farmers to meet export demand. These pack houses are located in Black Bay, Belle Vue and Micoud, and are all within close proximity to the Hewanorra International Airport in the south of the island, which is the main port for fresh food exports.

1.06 Export Saint Lucia is the national trade export and promotion agency mandated to spearhead the island's national export development effort and implement the recently approved National Export Strategy. The Agency's overall objective is to increase the volume and value of exports from Saint Lucia. In this regard, efforts are being made to increase exports to existing markets and identify and secure new markets, as articulated in the National Export Strategy (2020–2024). Export Saint Lucia is therefore charged with supporting the marketing efforts of fresh produce and oversees the operations of the pack houses to ensure readiness for meeting the export markets' food safety and other market access requirements. Export Saint Lucia has successfully implemented projects with international partners including the Food and Agriculture Organisation, Compete Caribbean and the Caribbean Development Bank under the 10th European Development Fund Standby Facility.

1.07 SLBS was established by the Standards Act (1990) and also responds to the mandate given under the Metrology Act (2000). The mission of SLBS is to strengthen the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI)^{3/} in order to contribute to the advancement of the national economy, support sustainable development, promote health and safety of consumers, protect the environment and to facilitate trade. SLBS serves as the national enquiry point and notification body under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), as well as the national contact point for the Codex Alimentarius Commission. SLBS is also a party to the International Plant Protection Convention. SLBS develops national standards that support trade, and also provides conformity assessment services (inspection, testing, and certification) in keeping with technical regulations, to guarantee food safety^{4/}. The organisation is also ISO^{5/} 9001:2015 certified^{6/}. SLBS has successfully implemented projects with international partners. More recently, the Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN) Project funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, is being implemented in collaboration with the British Standards Institute. The main objective of the CSN Project is to promote the use of standards as a tool to increase intra-commonwealth trade and to strengthen the quality infrastructure in Commonwealth countries. As a part of this project, SLBS implemented a train the trainer programme on the requirements and implementation of two international standards: ISO/IEC 17025:2017 – General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories; and ISO 15189:2012 Medical laboratories – Requirements for quality and competence. This helped to create a pool of trainers to drive the wider human resource capacity developmental agenda to support a national quality infrastructure.

^{3/} National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) refers to the ecosystem of public and private institutions together with the policies, legal and regulatory frameworks and practices needed to guarantee quality, consumer safety and protection for the environment, which are required for the production of goods and services and to facilitate trade.

^{4/} Food safety refers to routines in the preparation, handling and storage of food meant to prevent foodborne illness and injury. Safe food handling practices and procedures are thus implemented at every stage of the food production life cycle in order to curb these risks and prevent harm to consumers. To be effective, prerequisite programs such as pest control, traceability and recall, record keeping, hygiene and sanitation need to be developed and implemented.

^{5/} ISO (International Organisation for Standardisation) and IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission) – both organisations develop joint international standards.

^{6/} ISO 9001:2015 is an international standard dedicated to Quality Management Systems (QMS). It outlines a framework for improving quality and a vocabulary of understanding for any organisation looking to provide products and services that consistently meet the requirements and expectations of customers and other relevant interested parties in the most efficient manner possible.

1.08 The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Physical Planning, Natural Resources and Co-operatives is the WTO enquiry point on Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) matters. The Ministry has a certification programme for farmers; however, the programme presently focuses on the registration of farmers, rather than on certification to food safety standards such as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP), which were developed as national standards by SLBS in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture. Currently, there are approximately 250 banana farmers certified to GAP, however, for the non-banana farmers, the programme has not moved beyond the registration of farmers, due to lack of training and certification of farmers in the required food safety standards. Both SLBS and the Ministry of Agriculture collaborate and provide training in food safety standards and certification. The Ministry will be a key partner for this Technical Assistance (TA) intervention.

Importance of Food Safety Standards

1.09 The WTO Agreement on SPS Measures outlines basic rules for food safety and plant health standards, and therefore Member Countries are encouraged to implement acceptable standards to protect consumers from food-borne illnesses. Food safety is also important financially, due to the high costs associated with the consequences of failing to comply with food safety standards, such as, product recalls, rejection, or interceptions of exports at borders, public health costs related to issues arising from contaminated products entering the food chain, and also the fallout resulting from a lack of consumer trust of products.

1.10 It is against this background, that SLBS is providing capacity support towards strengthening the national food safety regime. SLBS is using a four-step building block approach to addressing food safety requirements. Step 1 covers the minimum hygiene, and some food safety requirements that are mandatory for food businesses and a condition for registered farmers to operate. Step 2 outlines prerequisite certification programmes (such as GAP^{7/} and Good Manufacturing Practices [GMP]^{8/}), that are voluntary and support market entry for exporters. Steps 3 and 4 outline advanced food safety certification schemes based on customer requirements in export markets (e.g., HACCP^{9/}).

Challenges with Food Safety in Fresh Produce Export Sector

1.11 There are several challenges being faced by fresh produce exporters that limit their ability to complete Steps 1 and 2 as previously outlined, which will better enable them to increase exports. These include:

- (a) Limited understanding of farmers (excluding banana farmers) in product selection, production planning, GAP, and GHP (such as use of pesticides and fungicides) to meet quality requirements of the export markets (EU and North America). This is due to difficulties experienced by the farmers to attend face-to-face training sessions and to further pursue certification. Other difficulties, some of which are being addressed by the Ministry of Agriculture, include use of modern-day farming technology, access to, and

^{7/} GAP standard certification addresses requirements pertaining to the following aspects of farm management: Pre-Harvest Management, Harvesting of fresh produce, Post-Harvesting, Storage and Transportation, Health and Safety of Workers.

^{8/} GMP standard addresses requirements pertaining to the following aspects: General Food Safety, Pest Control, Storage Areas and Packaging Material, Operational Practices, Employee Practices, Equipment and Equipment Cleaning, General Cleaning, Buildings and Grounds, Supplier Control.

^{9/} HACCP certification includes management support of HACCP, review of written HACCP Plan, execution of the HACCP Plan on the plant floor, and verification of HACCP Plan.

ability to navigate virtual devices, timely information on market access changes in export markets and access to finance.

- (b) Absence of a cold chain for fresh produce. Currently, there is no cold storage facility at farms. Non-refrigerated trucks are used to transport produce to pack houses, which also do not have cold storage capacity. The ports do not have cold storage facilities, and therefore any delays in shipping, can lead to increased respiration rates, water loss, reduced weight, and decreased quality of produce. This results in spoilage, food loss/waste and higher incidence of rejects. Some of these issues will be ameliorated through the facilities proposed in the designs of the new Hewanorra International Airport.
- (c) Some exporters or pack houses are not compliant with internationally accepted food safety standards, such as absence of GMP or HACCP. This is due in part, to infrastructural deficiencies at the pack houses, such as: absence of stainless-steel washing areas, insect meshing and traps, and lavatories; lack of drying and sorting racks; lack of roller conveyors; and inadequate lighting structures.
- (d) High cost of implementation and compliance with international standards requirements. This includes limited technical and financial support to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to implement quality standards (e.g., HACCP).

2. OBJECTIVE

2.01 The objective of the consultancy is to provide engineering and project management services for the upgrade of the packhouses.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

3.01 The Consultant is required to undertake all the necessary actions to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Project in a timely manner, with the supervision of the Project Coordinator. The tasks will include, but not be limited to:

- (a) Participating in a detailed briefing conducted by Export Saint Lucia to outline the specifications required for upgrade of the packhouses.
- (b) Preparing a Bill of Quantities, cost estimates.
- (c) Participate in pre-bid meetings (as observer) and requests for clarification and/or amendments to bidding documents.
- (d) Assisting Export Saint Lucia with preparation of bidding documents, conducting pre-bid meeting, evaluation of bids in accordance with the criteria set forth in the bidding documents, preparation of procurements reports and assisting them in the negotiation of contracts relative to the upgrade of the packhouses.
- (e) Providing construction management services, including, environmental monitoring, conducting technical inspections of the Project to ensure that the construction works are accomplished in accordance with the technical specifications and other contract documents.

- (f) Provide guidance to Export Saint Lucia on matters relating to the upgrading the packhouses
- (g) Sign off/certify on upgrades of the packhouses.
- (h) Prepare final report.

4. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

4.01 The Consultant will report to the Project Coordinator and will be required to submit/deliver the following:

Deliverables	When
An Inception Report in narrative form with the Consultant's understanding of the assignment.	One week after commencement of assignment.
Prepare and submit bid documents	Within four weeks of commencement of assignment.
Prepare bid evaluation reports	Within six weeks of commence of assignment.
Monthly reports on the progress of works, indicating any engineering difficulties affecting efficient and timely execution.	No later than 10 th day of each month, commencing one month after the start date until close of contract.
Completion Report on the upgrade of the packhouses	Within five months of commencement of assignment.
Prepare and submit Final Report	Within seven days of completing the assignment.

5. DURATION

5.01 The Consultant will undertake the tasks related to this assignment in a maximum of 25 person-days over a period of six (6) months and should report to the Project Coordinator.

6. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

6.01 The Consultant shall possess the following:

- (a) Minimum of a Bachelor's degree in Engineering, or a related field.
- (b) Professional registration with the relevant bodies in the above-mentioned area or related field.
- (c) A minimum of ten years' experience in engineering, and/or construction project management, with experience in at least three projects of similar size and scope within the last ten years.
- (d) A clearly demonstrated working knowledge of the procurement of goods under the rules of international financial institutions.