**Terms of Reference**

**Consultant Engagement - Support for Solomon Islands on PSR (Product Specific Rules) under iEPA (Interim Economic Partnership Agreement)**

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**1.Background**

1.1 The Oceania Customs Organization (OCO) has 23 independent, self-governing and territories Customs jurisdictions in the Pacific. Established in 1986, its mandate is to promote effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations in the harmonization and simplification of Customs procedures, facilitation of trade, law enforcement and building the capacity of members in meeting the development objectives of their Government. The Secretariat is responsible for delivering the OCO’s work program and current Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027, and details of its activities can be found on the OCO website: [www.oco.org](http://www.oco.org).

1.2 OCO in partnership with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) through the European Union (EU) funded Improving Pacific Islands Customs and Trade (IMPACT) Project aims to improve customs and trade facilitation across the PACP[[1]](#footnote-1) membership.

1.3 The Solomon Islands, as a signatory to the Interim Economic Partnership Agreement (iEPA), has committed to comply with the Product Specific Rules (PSR) outlined in the agreement. The PSR defines the specific criteria that products must meet in order to qualify for preferential treatment under the iEPA.

1.4 In order to enhance the capacity of the Solomon Islands to effectively implement and comply with the PSR, the European Union (EU) funded IMPACT project, in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), seeks to engage a consultant to provide technical assistance and support to the Solomon Islands.

**2. Terms of Reference**

2.1 The main objective of this consultancy is to support the Solomon Islands in understanding and implementing the PSR under the iEPA, in order to maximize the benefits of the agreement and promote sustainable economic development. Specifically, the consultant will:

a) Conduct an assessment of the current capacity and readiness of the Solomon Islands to comply with the PSR.

b) Provide technical advice and guidance on the interpretation and application of the PSR, including any updates or amendments.

c) Assist in developing strategies and action plans to enhance compliance with the PSR.

d) Conduct training workshops and capacity-building activities for relevant stakeholders on the PSR requirements.

e) Provide ongoing support and advice to the Solomon Islands in addressing any challenges or issues related to the PSR.

2.2 The consultant will undertake the following tasks:

a) Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current capacity and readiness of the Solomon Islands to comply with the PSR. This assessment should identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and areas for improvement.

b) Review the PSR under the iEPA and provide technical advice and guidance to the Solomon Islands on the interpretation and application of the rules.

c) Develop a detailed implementation plan, including strategies, action plans, and timelines, to enhance compliance with the PSR.

d) Organize and conduct training workshops and capacity-building activities for relevant stakeholders, including government officials, private sector representatives, and civil society organizations, on the PSR requirements.

e) Provide ongoing support and advice to the Solomon Islands in addressing any challenges or issues related to the PSR, including assisting in the development of systems and procedures to ensure effective compliance.

**3.** The consultant will be responsible for delivering the following outputs:

a) Comprehensive assessment report on the current capacity and readiness of the Solomon Islands to comply with the PSR.

b) Technical advice and guidance notes on the interpretation and application of the PSR.

c) Detailed implementation plan, including strategies, action plans, and timelines, to enhance compliance with the PSR.

d) Training materials and workshop reports from capacity-building activities conducted.

e) Ongoing support and advice provided to the Solomon Islands, including documentation of challenges and solutions.

**4. Evaluation Criteria**

4.1 Applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:

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| **Content of Application** | **Percentage** |
| Relevant Qualification with 10 years professional experience | **20%** |
| Have excellent knowledge and understanding of Product Specific Rules that impact on Free Trade Agreements | **40%** |
| Demonstrated relevant experience in the application of Product Specific Rules applicable in Free Trade Agreements | **25%** |
| Cost | **15%** |

The consultant will submit a detailed budget proposal, including professional fees, travel expenses, and any other costs associated with the implementation of the consultancy.

**5. Qualifications & Skills**

5.1 The consultant should possess the following qualifications and expertise:

a) Advanced degree in trade, economics, international development, or a related field.

b) Proven experience and expertise in trade policy, specifically in the interpretation and application of product-specific rules.

c) Familiarity with the iEPA and its PSR provisions is highly desirable.

d) Demonstrated experience in providing technical assistance and capacity-building support to developing countries.

e) Strong analytical and report writing skills.

f) Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

**6. Governance and Management**

6.1 The consultant will report to the Project Manager of the EU funded IMPACT project and collaborate closely with the UNCTAD team. Regular coordination meetings will be held to monitor progress and provide guidance.

6.2 All intellectual property rights arising from the consultancy, including reports, training materials, and other deliverables, shall be the property of the EU funded IMPACT project and UNCTAD.

6.3 The evaluation committee will review and evaluate the submitted proposals based on the evaluation criteria outlined above. The selected consultant will be notified within [number of weeks] weeks from the submission deadline.

**7. Contract Duration:**

7.1 The consultancy is expected to commence on March 2024 and be completed within 2 months.

7.2 Interested consultants are requested to submit a technical and financial proposal, along with their CV and references, through the OCO website tender portal page before 31st January 2024.

**Contact**

For further information, please contact:

Mr. John Sam [JohnS@ocosec.org](mailto:JohnS@ocosec.org)

1. Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu [↑](#footnote-ref-1)