

REQUEST FOR TENDERS

RFT: 2023/062
File: AP_2/46
Date: 23 November, 2023
To: Interested consultants
From: Stuart Chape, Director Island and Ocean Ecosystems

Subject: Request for tenders (RFT): Consultancy services to conduct Blue Carbon Ecosystems Assessments for SPREP component of the MACBLUE project

1. Background

- 1.1. The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is an intergovernmental organisation charged with promoting cooperation among Pacific islands countries and territories to protect and improve their environment and ensure sustainable development.
- 1.2. SPREP approaches the environmental challenges faced by the Pacific guided by four simple Values. These values guide all aspects of our work:
 - We value the Environment
 - We value our People
 - We value high quality and targeted Service Delivery
 - We value Integrity
- 1.3. For more information, see: www.sprep.org.

2. Specifications: statement of requirement

- 2.1. SPREP wishes to call for tenders from qualified and experienced consultants who can offer their services to undertake Blue Carbon assessments in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.
- 2.2. The Terms of Reference of the consultancy are set out in Annex A.
- 2.3. The successful consultant must supply the services to the extent applicable, in compliance with SPREP's Values and Code of Conduct: <https://library.sprep.org/sites/default/files/sprep-organisational-values-code-of-conduct.pdf>. Including SPREP's policy on Child Protection, Environmental Social Safeguards, Fraud Prevention & Whistleblower Protection and Gender and Social Inclusion.
- 2.4. SPREP Standard Contract Terms and Conditions are non-negotiable.

3. Conditions: information for applicants

- 3.1. To be considered for this tender, interested consultants must meet the following conditions:
 - i. Submit a detailed Curriculum vitae detailing qualification and previous relevant experience for each proposed personnel.
 - ii. Provide three referees relevant to this tender submission, including the most recent work completed.

- iii. Complete the **tender application form** provided (*Please note you are required to complete in full all areas requested in the Form, particularly the Statements to demonstrate you meet the selection criteria – DO NOT refer us to your CV. Failure to do this will mean your application will **not** be considered*).
Provide examples of past related work outputs
For the Technical and Financial proposals, you may attach these separately.
 - iv. Provide a copy of valid business registration/license.
- 3.2 Tenderers must declare any areas that may constitute conflict of interest related to this tender and sign the **conflict of interest form** provided.
- 3.3 **Tenderer is deemed ineligible due to association with exclusion criteria, including** bankruptcy, insolvency or winding up procedures, breach of obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions, fraudulent or negligent practice, violation of intellectual property rights, under a judgment by the court, grave professional misconduct including misrepresentation, corruption, participation in a criminal organisation, money laundering or terrorist financing, child labour and other trafficking in human beings, deficiency in capability in complying main obligations, creating a shell company, and being a shell company.
- 3.4 Tenderer must sign a declaration of **honour form** together with their application, certifying that they do not fall into any of the exclusion situations cited in 3.3 above and where applicable, that they have taken adequate measures to remedy the situation.

4. Submission guidelines

- 4.1. Tender documentation should demonstrate that the interested consultant satisfies the conditions stated above and in the Terms of Reference and is capable of meeting the specifications and timeframes. Documentation must also include supporting examples to address the evaluation criteria.
- 4.2. Tender documentation should be submitted in English and outline the interested consultant's complete proposal:
- a) **SPREP Tender Application form and conflict of interest form.** (*Please note you are required to complete in full all areas requested in the Form, particularly the Statements to demonstrate you meet the selection criteria – DO NOT refer us to your CV. Failure to do this will mean your application will **not** be considered*).
Provide examples of past related work outputs
For the Technical and Financial proposals, you may attach these separately.
 - b) **Honour form**
 - c) **Curriculum Vitae** of the proposed personnel to demonstrate that they have the requisite skills and experience to carry out this contract successfully.
 - d) **Technical Proposal** which contains the details to achieve the tasks outlined in the Terms of Reference.
 - e) **Financial Proposal** – provide a detailed outline of the costs involved in successfully delivering this project submitted in United States Dollars (USD) and inclusive of all associated taxes, using the form in **Annex B**.
- 4.3. Provide three referees relevant to this tender submission, including the most recent work completed.
- 4.4. Tenderers/bidders shall bear all costs associated with preparing and submitting a proposal, including cost relating to contract award; SPREP will, in no case, be responsible or liable for those costs, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the bidding process.

- 4.5. The tenderer/bidder might be requested to provide additional information relating to their submitted proposal, if the Tender Evaluation Committee requests further information for the purposes of tender evaluation. SPREP may shortlist one or more Tenderers and seek further information from them.
- 4.6. The submitted tender proposal must be for the entirety of the Terms of Reference and not divided into portions which a potential tenderer/bidder can provide services for.
- 4.7. The Proposal must remain valid for 90 days from date of submission.
- 4.8. Tenderers must insist on an acknowledgement of receipt of tender.

5. Tender Clarification

- 5.1. a. Any clarification questions from applicants must be submitted by email to procurement@sprep.org before 18 December 2023. A summary of all questions received complete with an associated response posted on the SPREP website www.sprep.org/tender by 20 December 2023.
- b. The only point of contact for all matters relating to the RFT and the RFT process is the SPREP Procurement Officer.
- c. SPREP will determine what, if any, response should be given to a Tenderer question. SPREP will circulate Tenderer questions and SPREP's response to those questions to all other Tenderers using the SPREP Tenders page (<https://www.sprep.org/tenders>) without disclosing the source of the questions or revealing any confidential information of a Tenderer.
- d. Tenderers should identify in their question what, if any, information in the question the Tenderer considers is confidential.
- e. If a Tenderer believes they have found a discrepancy, error, ambiguity, inconsistency or omission in this RFT or any other information given or made available by SPREP, the Tenderer should promptly notify the Procurement Officer setting out the error in sufficient detail so that SPREP may take the corrective action, if any, it considers appropriate.

6. Evaluation criteria

- 6.1. SPREP will select a preferred consultant on the basis of SPREP's evaluation of the extent to which the documentation demonstrates that the tenderer offers the best value for money, and that the tender satisfies the following criteria:
- 6.2. A proposal will be rejected if it fails to achieve 70% or more in the technical criteria and its accompanying financial proposal shall not be evaluated.

I. Technical Score – 80%

Criteria	Detail	Weighting
Qualifications	PhD or Masters level with extensive experience in a field relevant to successful execution of the tender (ecology, environment and other related fields).	15
	Extensive knowledge of Seagrass and Mangroves (SaM) ecosystems ecology, hydrodynamics and geomorphological	20

	<p>evolution of mangrove and seagrasses and function and ecosystem services assessments of these ecosystems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated knowledge of catchment land use processes and downstream impacts on SaM ecosystems • Demonstrated knowledge on techniques and capacity to conduct soil samplings and carbon stock assessments including laboratory facilities. • Established partnerships in each of the partner countries to build local capacity and to implement the work at the local scale. • Capacity, resources and eligibility to conduct work in the partner countries. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 10 years-experience working in the Pacific Islands region, particularly in the field of carbon stock assessments. • Demonstrated past work in assessing carbon stocks. • Extensive experience in remote sensing assessments of mangrove and seagrass ecosystems, catchment land use assessments and a proven track record for monitoring of carbon stocks. 	20
Technical Proposal / Methodology	<p>Detailed technical proposal outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the methodology for the identification of sites, identification of threats, and ecosystem services evaluations for local communities and national governments, • a detailed technical proposal and methodology for carbon stock assessments, capacity building approach and identification of local partners, including baseline carbon stock assessments (ten-year baseline), spatial and temporal sampling design of treatment and control (reference plots) for ongoing sampling. • logistical considerations 	35

II. Financial Score – 10%

The following formula shall be used to calculate the financial score for ONLY the proposals which score 70% or more in the technical criteria:

$$\text{Financial Score} = a \times \frac{b}{c}$$

Where:

a = maximum number of points allocated for the Financial Score

b = Lowest bid amount

c = Total bidding amount of the proposal

7. Variation or Termination of the Request for Tender

- 7.1 a. SPREP may amend, suspend or terminate the RFT process at any time.
- b. In the event that SPREP amends the RFT or the conditions of tender, it will inform potential Tenderers using the SPREP Tenders page (<https://www.sprep.org/tenders>).

- c. Tenderers are responsible to regularly check the SPREP website Tenders page for any updates and downloading the relevant RFT documentation and addendum for the RFT if it is interested in providing a Tender Response.
- d. If SPREP determines that none of the Tenders submitted represents value for money, that it is otherwise in the public interest or SPREP's interest to do so, SPREP may terminate this RFT process at any time. In such cases SPREP will cancel the tender, issue a cancellation notice and inform unsuccessful bidders accordingly.

8. Deadline

8.1. **The due date for submission of the tender is: 19 January 2024, midnight (Apia, Samoa local time).**

8.2. Late submissions will be returned unopened to the sender.

8.3 Please send all tenders clearly marked 'RFT 2023/062: **Consultancy services to conduct Blue Carbon Ecosystems Assessments for SPREP component of the MACBLUE project**'

Mail: SPREP

Attention: Procurement Officer

PO Box 240

Apia, SAMOA

Email: tenders@sprep.org (MOST PREFERRED OPTION)

Fax: 685 20231

Person: Submit by hand in the tenders' box at SPREP reception, Vailima, Samoa.

Note: Submissions made to the incorrect portal will not be considered by SPREP. If SPREP is made aware of the error in submission prior to the deadline, the applicant will be advised to resubmit their application to the correct portal. However, if SPREP is not made aware of the error in submission until after the deadline, then the application is considered late and will be returned unopened to the sender.

SPREP reserves the right to reject any or all tenders and the lowest or any tender will not necessarily be accepted.

SPREP reserves the right to enter into negotiation with respect to one or more proposals prior to the award of a contract, split an award/awards and to consider localised award/awards between any proposers in any combination, as it may deem appropriate without prior written acceptance of the proposers.

A binding contract is in effect, once signed by both SPREP and the successful tenderer. Any contractual discussion/work carried out/goods supplied prior to a contract being signed does not constitute a binding contract.

For any complaints regarding the Secretariat's tenders please refer to the Complaints section on the SPREP website <http://www.sprep.org/accountability/complaints>

Annex A: Terms of Reference

Consultancy services to conduct Blue Carbon Ecosystems Assessments for SPREP component of the MACBLUE project

Background

1. Blue Carbon Ecosystems (BCEs) such as seagrass, mangroves and salt marshes sequester carbon significantly faster than terrestrial forests and store up to 5 times more CO₂ equivalent GHG emissions per hectare. A number of Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) possess important BCEs resources, providing ecosystem services related to shoreline protection, habitats, marine species nurseries, food security, tourism revenue and water quality. Habitat loss has been increasing rapidly, yet no adequate baselines exist to determine extent of habitats, rates of loss, or design of targeted management solutions.
2. Methods for the assessment of carbon stocks and emissions in BCEs areas have not been applied consistently in PICTs. Policy makers and researchers note the urgent need to collect nationally relevant BCEs data based on consistent methods, that ensure transparency, traceability and replicability to mitigate the loss of the world's coastal carbon sinks and reduce the decline of coastal biodiversity.
3. The “Strengthening coastal biodiversity conservation and management through protection and rehabilitation incentives for coastal carbon sinks in Pacific Island countries” (MACBLUE) is an agreement between the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the Pacific Community (SPC), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, with funding from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection under the International Climate Initiative (IKI).
4. In a joint effort by GIZ, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and The Pacific Community (SPC) as regional implementing partners, MACBLUE will utilise innovative remote sensing approaches to map the extent of BCEs in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and will assess and model related carbon storage capacity, emission potential and ecosystem services. The resulting data will allow inventories of associated natural capital and will support government partners in their efforts to strategically develop and implement conservation, management and rehabilitation efforts. Based on effective mapping and analysis of the carbon sequestration and storage of BCEs, Governments will be assisted to establish nationally appropriate incentives for sustainable management as part of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and other policy and strategic documents.
5. Within the MACBLUE project, the SPREP component “Management of Blue Carbon Ecosystems in Pacific Islands Countries” aims to contribute to human and technical capacity to the mapping, management and rehabilitation of coastal ecosystems, until September 2025.

Scope of Work

6. SPREP is seeking a suitably qualified Consultant (qualified consortia and organisations can apply) to undertake Blue Carbon Ecosystems assessments in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The contract will specifically cover satellite mapping verification, carbon sequestration rates assessments, carbon stock and ecosystem service valuation, threat assessments as well as local training and capacity building.
7. The contractor will be responsible for the following tasks:

- **Task 1: Identification** of large, representative, nationally unique or sensitive **seagrass and mangrove populations** at national level. In cooperation with SPREP, SPC and GIZ, as well as the respective political partners of the partner country, identify priority sites for assessments of carbon stocks in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu based upon existing knowledge, data and available remote sensing as well as learnings from previous MACBLUE project activities. Site selection shall include both seagrass and mangrove environments. Sites should be selected to be representative of typical mangrove ecosystem types for the country. The final criteria for site selection will be determined in consultation with SPREP, SPC and GIZ.
- **Task 2: Detailed surveys and measurements on Blue Carbon Ecosystem services, focusing on carbon stock and emission measurement, while strengthening national capacity at identified priority sites.** The contractor will be required to make on-ground measurements to assess the carbon stocks and emission measurements at priority sites within each country. This includes Above ground Biomass (AGB), Below Ground Biomass (BGB) and Soil Organic Carbon (SOC). Adequate samples shall be taken to suitably account for spatial variability within each site. The methodology shall follow IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventory (2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands) and other international best practices as promoted by the International Partnership for Blue Carbon (the IPBC) or the Global Forest Observation Initiative (GFOI), e.g. SWAMP methodology for mangrove assessment which has been applied previously in other PICTs. In addition to carbon stock assessments the contractor shall collect adequate georeferenced data as an Input for SPC's mapping exercises and to verify the remote sensing products which will be produced by SPC under this project. To this end, close collaboration in developing the data collection methods and in collecting the field data with SPC needs to be ensured. The in-country work will also be conducted in collaboration with the in-country coordinator in each country to include local contractors or government officers to build local capacity for the techniques. Additionally, in coordination with SPC and GIZ, the consultant will conduct at least one Capacity Building workshop in each country, covering surveys in both mangrove and seagrass ecosystems.
- **Task 3: Identification, mapping and prioritisation of anthropogenic threats for SaM ecosystems and their services at national level, combined with simultaneous strengthening of national capacities.** At priority sites the contractor shall review existing remote sensing products provided e.g. by SPC, conduct stakeholder interviews and community consultations to include indigenous/local knowledge and work with the national coordinator to identify key threats to mangrove and seagrass ecosystems. The threats assessment should also include a national scale assessment of the range of threats to ecological integrity of mangrove and seagrass. This will enable assessment of how representative the threats at priority sites are.
- **Task 4: Broadscale biodiversity assessments** associated with BCEs, including identification of key species and potentially threatened species. The contractor shall make a broad rapid biodiversity assessment and mapping of key species that make up mangrove and seagrass habitats and the species that are known to depend on these systems.

8. In those countries where high quality inventory data in mangrove and seagrass ecosystems has already occurred then that data can be incorporated with new surveys undertaken by this project. The consultants should incorporate where available, and complete, relevant data on BCEs (e.g. existing maps, carbon sequestration rates and stocks, inventory data), building on best available science and knowledge.

9. The Contractor will work closely with SPREP, SPC and GIZ to refine the selection of sites and implementation of the project component.

10. The outputs of this component should feed directly into on-ground conservation interventions and support national environment and climate change policies and strategies, including but not limited to NDCs Greenhouse Gas Inventories and NAPs.

Deliverables and timeline

11. The total expected duration of the engagement is of 18 months. All activities should be completed by 31st August 2025.

12. The Consultant will be responsible for the following deliverables:

Deliverable	Description	Indicative timeline
D1 Inception Meeting Report	Report of the inception meeting with SPREP, SPC and GIZ, outlining workplan and timeline for the engagement and confirming in-country partnerships and national governments agreements.	By February 2024
D2 Priority sites identification report	Report on mapping and identification of priority sites (large, representative, nationally unique or sensitive seagrass and mangrove populations at national level) for assessments of carbon stocks in four target counties, and associated climate change and other anthropogenic threats.	By September 2024
D3 SaM ecosystems reports	Country reports (4) outlining each morphological types of Blue Carbon Ecosystems and their distribution (based upon interpretation of SPC mapping or on contractor's own data) including results from the rapid biodiversity assessments.	By November 2024
D4 Carbon assessments reports	Reports on the carbon stocks assessments and verification of SPC mapping products at the identified priority sites.	By March 2025
D5 Report on capacity-building	Report on stakeholders' engagement and capacity-building activities, including recommendations for sustainability and future capacity development.	By April 2025
D6 National carbon stock assessments	Extrapolation of carbon rates in mangrove and seagrass ecosystems to a national average, creation of Tier 2 Emission Factors for Seagrass and Mangrove Ecosystems in each country (following IPCC Guidelines) and providing recommendations as to further research needed to make a national assessment of carbon stock.	By August 2025

13. The consultant should explain in the Technical Proposal how the timeline will be met.

Requirements

14. The successful applicant should meet the following requirements:

Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PhD or Masters level with extensive experience in a field relevant to successful execution of the tender (ecology, environment and other related fields).
Expertise and capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive knowledge of Seagrass and Mangroves (SaM) ecosystems ecology, hydrodynamics and geomorphological evolution of mangrove and seagrasses and function and ecosystem services assessments of these ecosystems.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated knowledge of catchment land use processes and downstream impacts on SaM ecosystems • Demonstrated knowledge on techniques and capacity to conduct soil samplings and carbon stock assessments including laboratory facilities. • Established partnerships in each of the partner countries to build local capacity and to implement the work at the local scale. • Capacity, resources and eligibility to conduct work in the partner countries.
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 10 years-experience working in the Pacific Islands region, particularly in the field of carbon stock assessments. • Demonstrated past work in assessing carbon stocks. • Extensive experience in remote sensing assessments of mangrove and seagrass ecosystems and catchment land use assessments, including a track record of carbon stock monitoring.

Work arrangements

15. The contractor will report to the SPREP Project Coordinator, MACBLUE, based in SPREP Office in Suva, and work closely with the Director of Island and Ocean Ecosystems and the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Adviser at SPREP.

16. The contractor will work closely with MACBLUE implementing partners GIZ and SPC, in-country coordinators, and national governments in each partner country.

17. The consultant will be responsible for the delivery of the activities in a coherent manner, scheduling meetings with SPREP team, and all travel arrangements to the sites.

Evaluation criteria and submission guidelines

18. Bidders should outline in their Technical Proposal:

- Relevant qualifications and experience of the team,
- Suggested timeline for the delivery of the tasks,
- the methodology for identification of sites, identification of threats, ecosystem services evaluations for local communities and national governments,
- a detailed technical proposal and methodology for carbon stock assessments,
- the proposed capacity building approach and a local stakeholders' analysis,
- all logistical considerations to demonstrate ability to execute the work.

19. The Financial proposal should use the template provided in Annex B, and be inclusive of all costs and applicable taxes in the target countries, including:

- All travel costs
- All technical sampling and laboratory analyses

20. Offers above USD 850,000.00 will not be considered.