

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ)

FOR SERVICES

Project Title:	Enhancing Cooperation on Soils in the Pacific
Nature of the services	Consultancy to develop a Pacific Soil Partnership Governance Framework and Pacific Soil Strategy (PSS)
Location:	Home based
Date of issue:	24/10/2024
Closing Date:	5/11/2024
SPC Reference:	RFQ24-7265

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Part 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 About the Pacific Community (SPC)

The Pacific Community (SPC) is the principal scientific and technical organisation of the Pacific region, established by treaty in 1947 with the signing of the *Agreement Establishing the South Pacific Commission* (the Canberra Agreement).

Our unique organisation covers more than 20 sectors and is renowned for knowledge and innovation in such areas as fisheries science, public health surveillance, geoscience and conservation of plant genetic resources for food security.

For more information about SPC and the work that we do, please visit our website: <https://www.spc.int/>.

1.2 SPC's procurement activities

SPC's procurement activities are guided by the principles of high ethical standards, value for money, open competition and social and environmental responsibility and are carried out under our Procurement Policy.

For further information or enquiries about SPC's procurement activities, please visit the procurement pages on our website: <https://www.spc.int/procurement> or email: procurement@spc.int

1.3 SPC's Request for Quotation (RFQ) Process

At SPC, procurement valued at more than EUR 2,000 and less than or equal to EUR 45,000 requires an evaluation of at least three quotations to determine the offer that provides the best value for money through a Request for Quotation (RFQ) process.

This RFQ sets out SPC's requirements for a project and it asks you, as a bidder, to respond in writing in a prescribed format with pricing and other required information.

Your participation confirms your acceptance of SPC's conditions of participation in the RFQ process.

Part 2: INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

2.1 Background

SPC invites you to submit a quotation to deliver the services as specified in [Part 3](#).

SPC has compiled these instructions to guide prospective bidders and to ensure that all bidders are given equal and fair consideration. Please read the instructions carefully before submitting your bid. For your quotation to be considered, it is important that you provide all the prescribed information by the closing date and in the format specified.

2.2 Submission Instructions

You must **submit your quotation and all supporting documents** in English and as an attachment to an email sent to bineshp@spc.int and with the subject line of your email as follows: **Submission RFQ24-7265 - Consultancy to develop a Pacific Soil Partnership Governance Framework and Pacific Soil Strategy (PSS)**. The email should also be copied to rfq@spc.int.

The supporting documents expected in this RFQ are:

- [The Conflict-of-Interest Declaration form](#) completed
- Part 5, Bidders Letter of Application, Technical Proposal Submission form, financial proposal submission form

- CV
- Draft workplan
- Business registration (if available)

Your submission must be clear, concise and complete and should only include a quotation and information that is necessary to respond effectively to this RFQ. Please note that you may be marked down or excluded from the procurement exercise if your submission contains any ambiguities or lacks clarity.

Bids will be evaluated on the basis of information received by **11.59pm Fiji time on 5/11/2024**.

2.3 Evaluation & Contract Award

Each quotation validly received will be assessed against the evaluation criteria matrix set out in [Part 4](#). Any changes in the evaluation criteria will result in the RFQ process being re-issued.

SPC may award the contract once it has determined that a bidder has met the prescribed requirements and the bidder’s proposal has been determined to be substantially responsive to the RFQ documents, provide the best value for money (highest cumulative score) and best serve the interests of SPC.

In the event of a bid being accepted, procurement will take place under SPC’s [General Terms and Conditions of Contract](#) and depending on the value or nature of the procurement, the award will be made by issuing a purchase order or a signed and dated contract, or both.

2.4 Key Contacts

Please contact SPC should you have any doubt as to what is required or if we can help answer any questions that you may have.

PSP coordinator Binesh Prasad will be your primary point of contact for this RFQ and can be contacted at bineshp@spc.int. You should copy any communications into rfq@spc.int.

Details will be kept of any communications between SPC and bidders. This assists SPC to ensure transparency of the procurement process. While SPC prefers written communication in the RFQ process, at any point where there is phone call or other conversation, SPC expects to keep a file note of the exchange, with all forms of communication with prospective bidders to be retained as source documents for the procurement of the services.

2.5 Key Dates

Please see the proposed procurement timetable in the table below. This timetable is intended as a guide only and while SPC does not intend to depart from the timetable, it reserves the right to do so at any stage.

STAGE	DATE
RFQ sent to potential vendors	24/10/2024
RFQ Closing Date	5/11/2024
Award of Contract	8/11/2024
Commencement of Contract	14/11/2024
Conclusion of Contract	1/04/2025

2.6 Legal and compliance

Confidentiality: Unless otherwise agreed by SPC in advance or where the contents of the RFQ are already in the public domain when shared with the bidder, bidders shall at all times treat the contents of the RFQ and

any related documents as confidential. SPC will also treat the information it receives from the bidders as confidential.

Conflict of interest: Bidders must take all necessary measures to prevent any situation of conflict of interest. You must notify SPC in writing as soon as possible of any situation that could constitute a conflict of interest during the RFQ process. If you have any familial connection with SPC staff, this must be declared, and approval will then be sought for you to engage in the RFQ process. **In support of your response to this RFQ, you must submit to SPC [the Conflict-of-Interest Declaration form](https://spc.int/procurement) available on our procurement page website: <https://spc.int/procurement>.**

Breach of this requirement can result in SPC terminating any contract with a successful bidder.

Currency, validity, duties, taxes: Unless specifically otherwise requested, all proposals should be in bidders' local currency and must be net of any direct or indirect taxes and duties, and shall remain valid for 120 days from the closing date. The successful bidder is bound by their proposal for a further 60 days following notification they are the preferred bidder so that the contract may be awarded. No price variation due to escalation, inflation, fluctuation in exchange rates, or any other market factors shall be accepted at any time during this period.

No offer of contract or invitation to contract: This RFQ is not an offer to contract or an invitation by SPC to enter into a contract with you.

Privacy: The bidder is to comply with the requirements of applicable legislation and regulatory requirements in force for the use of personal data that is disclosed for the purposes of this RFQ. SPC will handle any personal information it receives under the RFQ in line with its [Privacy Policy](#), and the [Guidelines for handling personal information of bidders and grantees](#).

Warranty, representation, assurance, undertaking: The bidder acknowledges and agrees that no person has any authority to give any warranty, representation, assurance or undertaking on behalf of SPC in connection with any contract which may (or may not) follow on from this RFQ process.

2.7 Complaints process

Bidders that consider they were not treated fairly during any SPC procurement process may lodge a protest. The protest should be addressed to complaints@spc.int. The bidder must provide the following information: (1) full contact details; (2) details of the relevant procurement; (3) reasons for the protest, including how the alleged behaviour negatively impacted the bidder; (4) copies of any documents supporting grounds for protest; (5) the relief that is sought.

Part 3: TERMS OF REFERENCE

A. Background/context

Soil is a valuable resource for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) and provides ecosystem services critical to life including food production. However, there is substantial variation in soil resources, threats to soil function, information, capacity, and environmental challenges across the Pacific region. These challenges were identified by the soil community including universities and research institutes from 12 Pacific countries, the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Food Agriculture Organization (FAO), in a meeting held in October 2014. Consequently, the Pacific Soil Partnership (PSP) formed in 2014 under the auspices of the Global Soil Partnership, <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/regional-partnerships/pacific/en/> agreed to collaboratively advance the sustainable soil management agenda in the Pacific through research, standard setting, education and awareness, and information and knowledge sharing on soils. Other focal areas agreed to were to develop/share appropriate soil management solutions; strengthen soil information systems and design efficient methods for soil analysis through sharing of capacity on laboratories.

In March 2023, the Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAFS) and the Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (PMOAF) endorsed a decision to reinvigorate PSP through an effective, coordinated governance structure and supported implementation plan to. In June 2023, ACIAR convened a regional gap analysis workshop in Darwin and countries recommended that SPC fast track the implementation of PHOAFS and MOAF decision.

The project aims to fast track the PHOAFS/MOAF decision through a consultancy to undertake the following activities undertake literature review and consultation with member countries to develop PSP governance framework and a Pacific Soils Strategy (PSS).

B. Purpose, objectives, scope of services

The project aims to review and identify key regional research and development priorities through literature review and in close consultation with the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), SPC and key national, regional and global stakeholders with interest in soil research and development activities. To achieve this, the activity will involve engaging a consultant to conduct a thorough review of available literature, consult key stakeholder and development of PSP governance framework and PSS to guide the PSP activities. The key deliverables include:

- Develop and submit an outline for the assessment process.
- Conduct a comprehensive literature review on soil research and development activities relevant for the Pacific using published and unpublished (technical reports), also any status reports that may be relevant and available for countries in the Pacific.
- Consult countries and the territories and identify research and development needs on soils.
- Submit a synthesis report of the literature review and country priorities.
- Conduct an analysis of the synthesis report to guide the development and submission of draft PSP governance framework and PSS.
- Consult countries to validate PSP's governance framework and draft Strategic Plan.
- Submit a final draft governance framework and PSS.

C. Timelines

The activity is expected to commence in September and is expected to commence in November 2024, and be completed before 1st April 2025. The consultancy is for a period of 60 working days.

D. Reporting and contracting arrangements

The consultancy will work under the supervision of LRD Sustainable Agriculture Program Leader.

Duty station:

- The consultant will be home based with possible travel as required. If travel is required, SPC will pay semi flexible economy airfares, meals, incidentals, and accommodation (DSA).
- SPC will not cover separate lines for overheads/running costs, contingencies. If these apply, the costs are to be considered in the fees charged for the delivery of the specific services.
- SPC will not cover any communication IT equipment for the duration of the assignment. The consultant is to ensure stable internet connection for zoom interactions when necessary.
- Any work-related expenses (software, tools, office supplies, etc.) shall be covered by the Consultant.
- SPC does not provide insurance for consultants' travel or health, professional indemnity or any other risks or liabilities that may arise during the consultancy (this includes any subcontractors or associates the consultant may hire).
- SPC is also not responsible for any arrangements or payments related to visas, taxes or duties for which the consultant may be liable.

E. Skills and qualifications

The consultant should have the following skills and qualifications:

- Post-graduate degree in agriculture, soil science, or related field
- At least 10 years' experience in conducting research activities in agriculture, soils or related field.
- Knowledge and experience in the farming systems including agroforestry systems across the Pacific Islands.
- Demonstrated experience in strategic planning, advocacy (including developing awareness and advocacy materials) and policy development.
- Demonstrated understanding on socio-economic and agricultural development challenges in atolls

F. Scope of Bid Price and Schedule of Payments

The contract price will be in lump sum payments based on milestones.

Applicants should include in the cost of contract price professional fees and all related cost to successfully achieve the milestones.

Milestone payments will be made in accordance with the payment schedules and the corresponding percentage of the contract price as outlined in the table below.

The terms of payment shall be in accordance with the provisions of Article 10 of the SPC General Conditions.

Milestone/deliverables	Deadline	% payment
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Submission of assessment outline	29 th November 2024	20%
Submit a synthesis report on priority soils research and development needs across the PICTs	15 th January 2025	30%
Submission of a draft PSP Governance Structure and PSS	8 th February, 2025	20%
Validate and submit final draft PSS Governance structure and PSS	25 th February, 2025	30%
Total		100%

G. Annexes to the Terms of Reference

The consultant will be required to conduct literature review (scientific and published reports) and other relevant assessment tools to collate the necessary baseline data required under this activity.

Part 4: PROPOSAL EVALUATION MATRIX

4.1 Competency Requirements & Score Weight

The evaluation matrix below reflects the obtainable score specified for each evaluation criterion (technical requirement) which indicates the relative significance or weight of the items in the overall evaluation process.

Evaluation criteria	Score Weight (%)	Points obtainable
Mandatory requirements		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Conflict-of-Interest Declaration form - Part 5, Bidders Letter of Application, Technical Proposal Submission form, financial proposal submission form - CV of specified consultants - Draft workplan 		Mandatory requirements. Bidders will be disqualified if any of the requirements are not met
Technical requirements		
Technical requirement 1: post-graduate degree in agriculture, soil science, or related field	10%	70
Technical requirement 2: At least 10 years' experience in conducting research activities in agriculture, soils or related field.	20%	140
Technical requirement 3: Knowledge and experience in the farming systems including agroforestry systems across the Pacific Islands.	20%	140
Technical requirement 4: Demonstrated experience in strategic planning, advocacy (including developing awareness and advocacy materials) and policy development	30%	210
Technical requirement 5: Demonstrated understanding on socio-economic and agricultural development challenges in atolls	20%	140
Total Score	100%	700

Financial Evaluation:

The financial evaluation carries 300 points. The maximum number of points is allocated to the lowest-priced proposal. All other financial proposals receive proportional scores based on how they compare with the lowest-priced proposal. These scores are calculated according to the formula below:

$$[Total\ financial\ component\ score] \times [Lowest\ price] / [Price\ under\ consideration] = Score\ for\ financial\ proposal$$

Part 5: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORMS

BIDDER'S LETTER OF APPLICATION FORM

Dear Sir /Madam:

Having examined the Solicitation Documents, the receipt of which is hereby duly acknowledged, we the undersigned, offer to supply the required services for the sum as may be ascertained in accordance with the Financial Proposal attached herewith and made part of this proposal.

We acknowledge that:

- SPC may exercise any of its rights set out in the RFP/RFQ documents, at any time;
- The statements, opinions, projections, forecasts, or other information contained in the Request for Proposal documents may change;
- The RFP/RFQ documents are a summary only of SPC's requirements and is not intended to be a comprehensive description of them;
- Neither the lodgement of the RFP/RFQ documents nor the acceptance of any tender nor any agreement made subsequent to the RFP/RFQ documents will imply any representation from or on behalf of SPC that there has been no material change since the date of the RFP/RFQ documents, or since the date as at which any information contained in the RFP/RFQ documents is stated to be applicable;
- Excepted as required by law and only to the extent so required, neither SPC, nor its respective officers, employees, advisers or agents will in any way be liable to any person or body for any loss, damage, cost or expense of any nature arising in any way out of or in connection with any representations, opinions, projections, forecasts or other statements, actual or implied, contained in or omitted from the RFP/RFQ documents.

We undertake, if our proposal is accepted, to commence and complete delivery of all items in the contract within the time frame stipulated.

We understand that you are not bound to accept any proposal you may receive and that a binding contract would result only after final negotiations are concluded based on the Technical and Financial Components proposed.

For the Bidder: *[insert name of the company]*

Signature:

Name of the Bidder's representative: *[insert name of the representative]*

Title: *[insert title of the representative]*

Address:

Date: *[Click or tap to enter a date]*

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION FORM

INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

What is a conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest may arise from economic or commercial interests, political, trade union or national affinities, family, cultural or sentimental ties, or **any other type of relationship or common interest between the bidder and any person connected with the contracting authority** (SPC staff member, consultant or any other expert or collaborator mandated by SPC).

Always declare a conflict

The existence of a potential or apparent conflict of interest does not necessarily prevent the bidder involved from taking part in a procurement process. **However, the declaration of the existence of such a conflict by the persons involved is essential and allows SPC to take appropriate measures to mitigate it and prevent the associated risks.**

Bidders are therefore invited to declare any situation, fact or link which, to their knowledge, could generate a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

Declaration at any time

Conflicts of interest may arise at any time during the procurement process or the implementation of a contract (e.g. new partner in the project) or as a result of a change in personal life (e.g. marriage, inheritance, financial transaction, creation of a company). If such a relationship is found and could be perceived by a reasonable person as likely to influence a decision, a declaration of the situation is necessary. In case of doubt, a conflict situation must be declared.

Declaration for any person involved

A declaration must be completed for each person involved in the tender (principal representative of the bidder, possible subcontractors, consultant, etc.).

Failure

Failing to declare a potential conflict of interest may result in the bidder being refused a contract or placed on SPC's list of non-responsible suppliers.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, *[name of the representative of the Bidder]*, acting in the name and on behalf of the company *[name of the company]*, declare that:

<input type="checkbox"/>	To my knowledge, I am not in a conflict-of-interest situation
<input type="checkbox"/>	There is a potential conflict of interest with regard to my <i>[Choose an item]</i> . relationship with <i>[name of the person concerned]</i> in his or her capacity as <i>[mention position/role/personal or family link with the person concerned]</i> , although, to the best of my knowledge, this person is not directly or indirectly involved in any stage of the procurement process
<input type="checkbox"/>	I may be in a conflict of interest with regard to my <i>[Choose an item]</i> relationship with <i>[name of the person concerned]</i> in his or her capacity as <i>position/role/personal or family link with the person concerned]</i> , as this person is, to the best of my knowledge, directly or indirectly linked to the procurement process
<input type="checkbox"/>	To my knowledge, there is another situation that could potentially constitute a conflict of interest: <i>[Describe the situation that may constitute a conflict of interest]</i>

In addition, I undertake to:

- declare, without delay, to SPC any situation that constitutes a potential conflict of interest or is likely to lead to a conflict-of-interest;
- not to grant, seek, obtain or accept any advantage, whether financial or in kind, to or from any person where such advantage constitutes an unfair practice or an attempt at fraud or corruption, directly or indirectly, or constitutes a gratuity or reward related to the award of the contract;
- to provide accurate, truthful and complete information to SPC in connection with this procurement process.

I acknowledge that I and/or my company and/or my business partners who are jointly and severally bidding on the *[Select RFQ or RFP] [SPC Reference number]* may be subject to sanctions such as being placed on SPC's list of non-responsible vendors, if it is established that false statements have been made or false information has been provided.

For the Bidder: *[insert name of the company]*

Signature:

Name of the Bidder's representative: *[insert name of the representative]*

Title: *[insert title of the representative]*

Date: *[Click or tap to enter a date]*

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORM – SERVICES

INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

The Technical Proposal Submission Form is a table that includes the technical criteria (set out in Part 4) on which bidders will be scored and allows the bidder to respond to them. This table is then used by the technical evaluation committee to score the technical proposals received.

Technical Requirements		
Evaluation criteria	Response by Bidder	
References (provide documents to support where possible)		
Details for three references:		
1. Client's name: <i>[insert name of client 1]</i>		
Contact name:	<i>[insert name of contact]</i>	
Contact details:	<i>[insert contact details]</i>	
Value contract:	<i>[insert value of contract]</i>	
2. Client's name: <i>[insert name of client 2]</i>		
Contact name:	<i>[insert name of contact]</i>	
Contact details:	<i>[insert contact details]</i>	
Value contract:	<i>[insert value of contract]</i>	
3. Client's name: <i>[insert name of client 3]</i>		
Contact name:	<i>[insert name of contact]</i>	
Contact details:	<i>[insert contact details]</i>	
Value contract:	<i>[insert value of contract]</i>	
Personnel: <i>[insert details of the personnel/sub-contractors required]</i>	Details about personnel/sub-contractors	
	Leads Consultant/Manager's experience:	<i>[insert details about manager's experience]</i>
	Consultants' experience (if applicable & add more personnels if necessary:	<i>[insert details about consultants' experience]</i>
Technical requirement 1:		
post-graduate degree in agriculture, soil science, or related field	<i>[Bidder's answer]</i>	
Technical requirement 2:		
At least 10 years' experience in conducting research activities in agriculture, soils or related field.	<i>[Bidder's answer]</i>	
Technical requirement 3:		
Knowledge and experience in the farming systems including agroforestry systems across the Pacific Islands.	<i>[Bidder's answer]</i>	
Technical requirement 4:		
Demonstrated experience in strategic planning, advocacy (including developing awareness and advocacy materials) and policy development	<i>[Bidder's answer]</i>	
Technical requirement 5:		
Demonstrated understanding on socio-economic and agricultural development challenges in atolls.	<i>[Bidder's answer]</i>	

Key Notes

- ❖ Must provide current CV to support the responses to the technical requirements
- ❖ Bidders must provide a draft workplan
- ❖ Business Registration Certificate if available

For the Bidder: *[insert name of the company]*

Signature:

Name of the representative: *[insert name of the representative]*

Title: *[insert Title of the representative]*

Date: *[Click or tap to enter a date]*

BIDDER’S FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

All costs indicated on the Financial Proposal should be **inclusive** of all applicable taxes.

The format shown below should be used in preparing the price schedule. All prices in the proposal must be presented in bidders’ local currency.

Particulars	Amount (STATE CURRENCY)
Professional fees	Daily rate: _____
Total professional fees	
Other expenses (please specify)	
TOTAL [Insert Currency]	

Professional fees: Staff salaries, consultant fees and any other professional costs (with details on the level of effort of each person on the team if applicable. i.e., 50% full time, full-time, etc.).

Other expenses: if any, that are directly related to the delivery of the services will be reimbursable based on actuals (receipts and other supporting documents will be required). Such expenses will need prior approval before it is incurred and paid.

SPC does not provide or reimburse insurance for consultant’s travel or health, professional indemnity or any other risks or liabilities that may arise during the consultancy (this includes any subcontractors or associates the consultant may hire). SPC is also not responsible for any arrangements or payments related to visas, taxes, or duties for which the consultant may be liable.

The Contractor’s duty station is their home country with travel. If travel is required, SPC will pay semi flexible economy airfares, meals, incidentals, and accommodation (DSA).

SPC will not cover any IT and communication equipment for the duration of the assignment. The consultant is to ensure stable internet connection for virtual interactions when necessary.

No payment will be made for items which have not been priced. Such items are deemed to be covered by the financial offer.

Bidders will be deemed to have satisfied themselves, before submitting their proposal and to its correctness and completeness, considering of all that is required for the full and proper performance of the contract and to have included all costs in their rates and prices.

For the Bidder:
Signature: _____
Name of the representative: _____

Title: