

Technical assistance for mainstreaming gender in a regional programme on sargassum management in the Caribbean

**Terms of Reference**

**March 2023**

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# General information

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| **Title of the assignment** | Technical assistance in mainstreaming gender a in regional programme on sargassum management in the Caribbean |
| **Expert sector** | Technical study |
| **Activity** | Analysis of gender issues and sex-specific inequalities in the Caribbean region.  Proposal of relevant interventions ensuring gender mainstreaming in the programme. |
| **Beneficiaries** | Expertise France (Programme Management Team)  Partners identified during the consultancy |
| **Countries** | Barbados, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Mexico, Saint Lucia, Saint-Vincent and Grenadines. |
| **Foreseen period for the realization of assignment** | Up to 25 days (depending on the financial offer) between April 18th and June 15th |
| **Location** | Hybrid (virtual and face-to-face meetings / on-site missions) |
| **Languages** | English, Spanish |

# Context and justification

1. **Presentation of Expertise France**

Expertise France (EF) is a public agency and the French interministerial actor for international technical cooperation, within the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) group. As the second largest agency in Europe, it designs and implements projects that sustainably strengthen public policies in developing and emerging countries in areas such as governance, security, environment, health, and education. It operates in key development areas and contributes with its partners to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Expertise France plays a role as an assembler and facilitates synergies to increase the impact of its projects.

EF supports, advises and trains national and local authorities in the definition and implementation of quality public policies adapted to the needs of the population. Focusing on the transfer of dialogue between peers, our interventions aim to strengthen the capacities of partner countries. We contribute to the emergence of innovative solutions adapted to the local context by bringing together the best know-how.

1. **Context of the project**

Since 2011, Caribbean islands and few countries in Central America, notably Mexico and Belize, have grappled with massive accumulations of sargassum seaweed on their coastlines, causing significant disruptions on the environment, on local economies and raising serious concerns on public health. When stranded on the coastline, sargassum seaweed erodes coastal ecosystems, including mangroves, coral reefs, and seagrass beds, through several mechanisms: hindering the photosynthesis process and causing increased mortality of pelagic biodiversity through suffocation or poisoning due to the release of heavy metals as they decompose. The methods of collecting sargassum seaweed on beaches, using heavy machinery, also contribute to coastal erosion.

The decomposition of sargassum seaweed on beaches emits hydrogen sulphide, degrading the quality of life of coastal populations and posing a potential threat to human health – still under study. Moreover, the seaweed influxes cause several disturbances on key sectors of Caribbean economies: tourism due to reduced beach access, potential health risks, and loss of attractiveness. Many Caribbean countries have experienced a sharp decline in tourism, with significant consequences for their overall economy, as tourism constitutes an essential pillar, representing approximately 18% of GDP in several countries in the region. The fishing industry is also affected by sargassum seaweed banks, as they provoke the corrosion of boats and ship engines and a decrease in fish population.

At the national and regional level, several initiatives have been launched to assist small islands states in formulating management strategies, developing methods for collecting, storing, and utilizing sargassum seaweed biomass. Numerous opportunities for transforming sargassum into a marketable product exist, notably in agriculture, as an organic fertilizer, a livestock feed, or as biofuel. Nevertheless, the utilization of sargassum poses several risks on human, animal and ecosystem’s health as most of the sargassum are loaded with heavy metals such as arsenic and cadmium. The high cost of decontamination cannot be fully bore by private actors and public actors struggle to manage sargassum treatment on all its life cycle due to limited capacities in the face of the phenomenon's magnitude. Similarly, the lack of data on its impacts and the irregular nature of the strandings requires public planning and a chain of mobilized actors to ensure sargassum treatment from collection, transportation, characterization, treatment and storage.

In this context, AFD is crafting a new programme which aimed at providing a regional response to the phenomenon of sargassum seaweed and commissioned Expertise France to conduct the feasibility study. Note that a Diagnosis study is ongoing to support the design of the programme.

1. **Description of the project**

The project seeks to provide a regional response to the issue of sargassum blooms in the Caribbean by strengthening regional coordination among affected countries, supporting both public and private actors in the integrated management of this biomass to create an environment conducive to the development of sargassum value chains. At this stage of development, the intervention logic of the programme is articulated into three components and one cross-cutting component.

1. **Support the regional coordination** by establishing or strengthening a network of expertise, to facilitate public decision-making through knowledge sharing, experience capitalization in sargassum management, and exchange of best practices among sargassum managers in Caribbean countries and territories.
2. **Support an enabling framework for value chain structuring** in three or four Caribbean states to facilitate the development of an environment conducive to scaling up sargassum valorisation chains with high replicability potential. This component also aims at building the resilience of communities to extreme climatic events.
3. **Strengthen regional scientific cooperation** to enrich knowledge on sargassum and produce data and capitalization materials to better assist the policy-makers and affected communities.
4. **Mainstream gender in the sargassum management and valorisation activities by public and private actors. The scope of this cross-cutting component is to be defined through** this consultancy. Note that the project aims at a gender marker DAC 1 according to the OECD classification of gender equality[[1]](#footnote-1).

The geographical scope of the program will vary depending on the components. The first and the third component axis will cover a larger scope and include countries in the Lesser Antilles, member states of the Organization of the East Caribbean States - OECS, Barbados, the Dominican Republic, and potentially Mexico. The second component focusing on promoting an enabling framework for value chain structuring will have a narrower focus, targeting the Dominican Republic, Saint-Lucia and one or two other islands (currently under delineation in the diagnosis study).

# Description of the consultancy

1. **Context of the consultancy**

Women are particularly vulnerable to sargassum influxes on different levels. The differentiated impacts on human health could vary between gender and are still under investigation. For instance, a 2022 study has suggested that pregnant women are at higher risk of developing complications during pregnancy when exposed to gases emitted from decomposing sargassum[[2]](#footnote-2). More gender-specific data and information are needed to support the development of effective public response policies and risk reduction measures. The project envisages to contribute to the production of knowledge on gender aspects to ensure the sensitization of affected communities and develop resilience mechanisms for coastal communities with full consideration of women’s roles.

On the economic aspect, women are potentially more prone to lose part of their activity, notably in tourism and fisheries sector when sargassum strandings occur, as a majority of women in the Caribbean islands are engaged in informal, low paid activities and occupy the least stable and skilled segment of the workforce. The project aims at reducing gender inequalities in access to income generating activities. To meet this objective, a specific support to women’s entrepreneurship and innovation in the sargassum value chains is envisaged, once all the preliminary steps for valorisation and environmental and social impact studies have been completed.

1. **Objectives of the consultancy**

The objective of the consultancy is to assist Expertise France in the analysis and the consideration of gender issues in dealing with the sargassum problematic, as well as in designing activities to ensure gender mainstreaming in the programme’s logic of intervention. The first step of the analysis aims at identifying barriers, potential constraints and gender disparities in accessing income generated activities in the economic sectors affected by sargassum (tourism, fisheries, aquaculture). Based on this analysis, the consultant will validate the relevance and feasibility of the activities envisaged at this stage of development and will propose additional interventions to strengthen the mainstreaming of gender in the operations and in the governance of the project. The consultant will have exchanges with the consultant team responsible for the diagnosis study to ensure the integration and coherence of the gender component in the overall project architecture.

1. **Nature of the services requested**

In close collaboration with the project management team based in Paris, the consultant will be in charge of:

1. **Analysis of gender disparities in the areas of intervention**:
   * Collection of qualitative and quantitative gender-specific data, and of policies and institutional framework on gender equalities in the Caribbean through study and literature review.
   * Collect information more specifically on gender disparities in the economic sectors affected by sargassum (tourism and fisheries) in the countries of intervention of Component 2: **St Lucia, Dominican Republic** **and two other islands currently under delineation**.
   * Identify initiatives, local and regional actors, civil society organisations working on decreasing gender inequalities, through training, support to economic development, empowerment, advocacy.
2. **Proposal for the operational dimension of the programme:** 
   * Assess the relevance and the feasibility of the activities planned for the gender component and their coherence in the overall planning of activities.
   * Propose scenarios of interventions and enhance the operational and steering dimensions for mainstreaming gender in the programme, considering the specific needs of women and men in terms of reducing gender inequalities in access to services, resources and income generated by the project.
   * Define the organisation for their implementation: human and financial resources, and objectives to achieve with indicators for monitoring and evaluation for this component.

# Methodology

The methodology should include, at a minimum:

* + - A review of key literature on gender issues in the Caribbean region with a special focus on the countries where direct interventions are planned (component 2): policy documents, database available from the World Bank, UN Woman, gender Gap Report of World Economic Forum, etc., research studies, socio-demographic surveys, etc.;
    - Interviews with resource persons;
    - Follow-up meetings with EF;
    - If the Consultant deems it relevant, and if s/he is based in the region, s/he can arrange a mission in one of the countries of intervention. The costs should be within the maximum budget.

# Deliverables

The expected deliverables are presented in the table below:

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| **Deliverable 1 – Inception report**  It should include:   * The work plan; * the methodological approach; * the preparation of the meetings to conduct, list of stakeholders to meet, a plan for the mission if necessary, etc. |
| **Deliverable 2 – Gender diagnostic report**  This report will include:   * Country profiles of all the countries of interventions with quantitative and qualitative gender-specific data available in the country. * For the 3 or 4 countries of intervention of Component 2:   + An analysis of policy, legal and institutional framework from a gender perspective.   + Identification of barriers and constraints causing gender disparities in access to services and stable income-generating activities.   + An analysis of the economic sectors affected by sargassum (tourism and fisheries) from a gender perspective.   + Collection of studies and gender-specific data on the social and health impacts of sargassum |
| **Deliverable 3 – Proposals of interventions for mainstreaming gender in the programme**  This report will include:   * Evaluation of the relevance and exploration of the feasibility of the activities envisaged and enhanced intervention proposals. * Mechanisms to integrate gender in the project governance. * Sizing of the human and financial resources needed for implementation. * Monitoring and evaluation indicators. |

Each deliverable will be debriefed with the Expertise France project team, who may request adjustments from the Consultant. The Consultant will have one week to take these adjustments into account in a revised version. These exchange can be done remotely.

# Duration and indicative schedule

Indicative schedule of Consultancy and of the deliverables:

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| Notification of the contract | T0 |
| Deliverable 1 – Inception report | T0 + 7 |
| Deliverable 2 – Gender diagnostic report | T0 + 20 |
| Deliverable 3 – Proposal of interventions | T0 + 50 |

# Budget

The total budget for the consultancy **must not exceed 12 750 EUR**.

# Skills and Experience

**Experience**:

* At least 7 years of experience in one of the following fields: sustainable development and gender; gender equality policies; gender and sustainable development;
* Proven experience in the implementation of a gender approach (e.g. gender implementation of a gender approach (e.g. gender analysis, methodology for facilitation/consultation activities, training of operational teams) in international cooperation projects or in the public sector (ministries and decentralized state services);
* Proven expertise in public consultation and participatory approach;
* Previous experience in the Caribbean region and knowledge of institutions is a strong asset;
* Experience in the development and implementation of international cooperation projects: appraisal, project cycle, steering and monitoring/evaluation;
* Fluency in English is mandatory. Spanish is a strong asset.

**Personal skills:**

* Proficient writing skills: elaboration of diagnosis and methodologies, drafting of documents for structuring and initiating projects, summary notes;
* Rigor and ability to write in a clear, precise and concise manner;
* Global, synthetic and concrete vision;
* Strong autonomy and interpersonal skills.

# Application Modalities

**Submission deadline: April 11th 2024, 18:00 pm (Paris time**).

Expertise France reserves the right to choose a candidate before this date.

**Proposal composition:**

* A ***technical offer***, including :
  + A resume highlighting the skills and experience in line with the required ones (5 pages max);
  + 3 references;
  + A 2 to 5 pages memo of understanding of the context and issues of the mission;
  + A detailed workflow.
* A ***financial offer***, including number of man-days per activity and daily fees.

**Incomplete applications will not be considered.**

1. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/dac-gender-equality-marker.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1382668922000874?via%3Dihub> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)