

GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA

**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, RURAL MODERISATION, KALINAGO UPLIFTMENT AND
CONSTITUENCY EMPOWERMENT**

Leveraging Eco-Tourism for Biodiversity Protection in Dominica (LETBP)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Position title	Consultancy Services – Audit, Design, and implementation plan for Eco-tourism Sites and Trails
Project activity	Improvement of Ecotourism Infrastructure and Interpretation
Location	EALCRP Project Implementation Office
Duration	Six (6) months
Procurement Plan Ref. #	DM-MOERMKU-385658-CS-CQS
Tentative Start Date	October 2024

I. Background

The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica has received the grant funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the world's largest funder of biodiversity protection, nature restoration, pollution reduction, and climate change, for the implementation of the project “*Leveraging Eco-tourism for Biodiversity Protection in Dominica*” (LETBP). GEF financing is channelled through the World Bank, as a GEF ‘implementing agency’. As such, LETBP is being implemented alongside other World Bank financed operations in Dominica, namely Emergency Agricultural Livelihoods and Climate Resilience Project (EALCRP).

The EALCRP is part of an overall developmental partnership initiative supporting medium and long-term recovery in Dominica after the devastating effects of Hurricane Maria, while LETBP focuses on leveraging Dominica’s natural environment as a driver of economic resilience, in line with the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020 and the National Resilience Development Strategy 2020-2030. This overall program of support complements and is aligned with other development partner initiatives and fills critical gaps for agricultural development and biodiversity conservation.

A Project Implementation Unit (PIU) established within the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Blue and Green Economy (MAFBGE) coordinates the day-to-day management and execution of the EALCRP and will also support the administration of the LETBP project in joint execution with the Ministry of Environment, Rural Modernisation, Kalinago Upliftment and Constituency Empowerment (MERMKUCE). The PIU works in close coordination with the Central Services Unit (CSU), under the Climate Resilience Execution Agency of Dominica (CREAD), which supports on procurement, social and environmental risk management, and financial management, and serves as a shared resource for all World Bank financed project in Dominica.

II. Project Description

Leveraging Eco-tourism for Biodiversity Protection in Dominica (LETBP)

The LETBP project aims to coordinate and optimize the Government's approach to Protected Areas (PAs) management and forest systems and support the Government in its efforts to conserve biodiversity as part of its pursuit to establish Dominica as an eco-tourism destination. This will be achieved by improving regulation and enforcement of its natural capital, and by improving the Government's capacity to manage PAs in line with international best practice to simultaneously promote biodiversity conservation and economic development. The project consists of three components each addressing key pillars for eco-tourism and biodiversity protection and mutually supporting the overall Project Development Objective "*to improve management of Dominica's three national parks and the Waitukubuli National Trail*".

Key barriers identified to be addressed through the project implementation include (a) a limited integration of PAs planning and management into national key development processes (land-use planning, agriculture, forestry management, etc.); (b) a lack of awareness at the decision-making level of the value of the country's biodiversity; and (c) insufficient baseline data, weak monitoring capacities, and information needed to measure threats at the ecosystem level. Project components set out policy, investment, and capacity building and awareness raising interventions to promote conservation through the development opportunities provided by nature-based tourism, in pursuit of the Project Development Objective and Dominica's National Biodiversity Objective.

The first component (*Protected Areas Planning*) will support strengthening the institutional framework for PAs planning and management for three national parks (The Morne Trois Pitons National Park, The Morne Diablotin National Park and The Cabrits National Park) and the Waitukubuli trail network. This component will also assist in improving national and local capacities for PA monitoring and management through a strong stakeholder engagement approach and will include a thorough assessment on the role and value of ecosystem services as well the impact of Invasive Alien Species (IAS). The second component (*Biodiversity and Sustainable Ecotourism Operations*) will enhance the physical and institutional environment for the protection of biodiversity through the sustainable use of landscapes along the Waitukubuli National Trail (WNT) and in the three National Parks. This component will also improve financial management and visitor management which will greatly contribute to revenue mobilization, increased visitor experience and promotion efforts. The third component (*Sustainable Livelihoods*) will support enhanced opportunities for sustainable livelihoods for the Kalinago Community along the Waitukubuli National Trail and the areas surrounding PAs to engage in and benefit from Dominica's nature-based tourism sector. This will be accomplished through investment in sustainable land use and through the preservation and inter-generational transfer of traditional Kalinago knowledge and livelihood training to better integrate in tourism value chains.

The project will strengthen biodiversity protection, financial management and build capacity for the national parks and the national trail system personnel, as well as local communities. The direct project beneficiaries include communities and their members in targeted landscapes, farmers, tour guides, entrepreneurs, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and community-based organizations (CBOs). Women, including within the Kalinago Community, bear the heavy burden of ensuring the livelihood sustainability of rural households and as of such are expected to benefit significantly. Benefits are expected to include improved access to skills training for business development, finance and markets, improved local governance, and subsequently more profitable community- or individually- owned businesses and increased household income, all while promoting conservation of Dominica's rich biodiversity endowment.

III. Objective of Assignment

The purpose of this consultancy is to provide an independent audit/assessment for the eco-tourism sites and trails within the Component two (2) of the LETBP project under the activity ‘*Improvement of Ecotourism Infrastructure and Interpretation*’.

The objective of the assignment is to enhance Protected Areas infrastructure, visitor safety and experience for more sustainable eco-tourism operations.

The company is expected to assess twelve (12) eco-tourism sites/trails as follows:

Trafalgar Falls, Emerald Pool, Middleham Falls Trail, Freshwater Lake Trail, Boeri Lake Trail, Boiling Lake Trail, Morne Diablotin Trail, Morne Trois Pitons Trail, Syndicate Nature Trail, Indian river, Chemin Letang trail, Cabrits National Park and trails, Soufriere Sulphur Springs.

The company is expected to provide or develop appropriate, site-specific, and cost-effective designs for the visitor facilities and infrastructure including proposed rehabilitation, upgrade, and/or extension of facilities and trails, and communication and interpretation systems. Significant emphasis should be placed on eco-friendliness, sustainability, and renewable energy.

Experts under this assignment will work in close collaboration and coordination with the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division, the Ministry of Tourism as well as the Project Implementation Unit.

Consideration must be given to the diverse cultural and geographical aspects of Dominica incorporating language that speaks to respecting local traditions, indigenous knowledge, and cultural heritage.

All recommendations from this consultancy should be modern and user-friendly and must meet international safety standards. Designs and solutions proposed should also comply with the standards for protected areas management (e.g. IUCN Guidelines for management planning of protected areas, UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention and similar).

Specific Objectives:

- 1) Assessment and design of eco-tourism sites and trails to include Signage and Trail Marking, and Visitor Infrastructure (bridges, benches, tables, railings, picnic shelters, toilets, etc).
- 2) Classify/rank current condition of eco-tourism sites’ infrastructure and make recommendations for their rehabilitation (trails, buildings, water crossings and other amenities).
- 3) Where possible utilize architectural and engineering designs from the “Audit and Design of Civil Works for Rehabilitation of the Waitukubuli National Trail (WNT)” assessment.
- 4) Assess and identify availability of Communication System (internet access and mobile service) at the eco-tourism sites (facilities and trails). Please refer to the “Audit and Design of Civil Works for Rehabilitation of the Waitukubuli National Trail (WNT)” findings
- 5) Develop an implementation plan for the improvement of the eco-tourism sites and trails including designs and detailed technical specifications for works and goods.

- 6) All specifications (measurements of designs, plans, bill of quantities etc) should be done in imperial.

IV. Key Responsibilities

- 1) Conduct stakeholder consultations with the PIU, Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division, the Ministry of Tourism and others, and coordinate with consultants developing Management Plans for national parks and the Waitukubuli National Trail to discuss the details of assignment and gather relevant information and documents.
- 2) Conduct research on eco-tourism sites regionally and globally for best practices which would be specific to Dominica.
- 3) Consult the WNT audit report (Audit and Design of Civil Works for Rehabilitation of the Waitukubuli National Trail) when making design recommendations.
- 4) Integrate risk management strategies to prepare for potential challenges during fieldwork or in implementing designs.
- 5) Develop a schedule incorporating field visits, inspections, documents recording, inventory, coordinating with the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division, the Ministry of Tourism and all relevant stakeholders.
- 6) In consultation with the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division assess and identify areas for:
 - placing markers to guide trail users in distance of the trail,
 - installing directional signs, trail markings and interpretation panels,
 - safety measures to be put in place to enhance and safeguard visitor experience,
 - developing protocols for Search and Rescue.
- 7) Assess and identify need for new amenities to enhance the visitor experience.
- 8) Assess condition of trail beds and drainage systems (needs for improvement and proposed solutions) and make recommendations.
- 9) Assess and identify availability of Communication System at the eco-tourism sites and trails for improved visitor management and purposes of search and rescue.
- 10) Assess existing interpretation centers and make recommendations for their improvement.
- 11) Develop a maintenance plan for the eco-tourism sites (trails, amenities, infrastructure, signage) and make recommendations for their improvement.
- 12) Prepare and submit a comprehensive assessment/audit report including the process overview, findings, recommendations, and implementation plan, including designs and technical specifications for works and goods.

V. Qualifications and Experience Required

Qualifications and Experience

The contracted company should:

- Have their core business in Civil Engineering with over 5 years of experience,
- Have a past portfolio of at least 3 similar projects or assignments in Protected Areas,
- Show previous experience in conducting similar assessments in the Caribbean or small island developing states (SIDS), and
- Demonstrate previous experience working with international development agencies.

The service will be provided through the activities of a team leader and additional experts that the contractor must make available during the execution of the assignment.

The Team shall consist of, at minimum:

- Team Leader/Manager,
- Civil Engineer,
- Interpreter for Nature/Biodiversity

Team Leader/Manager

The Team Leader/Manager will lead the team and provide overall management of activities under the consultancy. The Team Leader must possess the following minimum requirements:

- Advanced university degree (MSc, equivalent or higher) in one of the key areas of expertise (e.g., architecture, civil engineering, natural resource management, ecotourism,) or another related educational background.
- At least 5 years of relevant project management experience.
- At least 3 projects with similar assignments, outlining the description of work and specific role.
- Demonstrated experience working with national governments, communities, and diverse stakeholder groups.
- Demonstrated experience leading field and/or research teams relative to Natural Resources Management and Planning.
- Understanding the demands for applying environmental considerations into the planning and development of structures within Protected Areas.
- Practical experience working in rugged outdoor conditions on similar projects.
- Work experience in the Caribbean will be considered an asset, specifically in Dominica.
- Strong teamwork skills and the ability to understand team needs and develop ideas to meet the assignment objectives.
- Ability to meet deadlines and prioritize multiple tasks.
- Fluency in English with the ability to write in a clear and concise manner.
- Computer skills – MS Projects, MS Office, and similar.

Civil Engineer

- At least a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from a recognized University and a recognized professional qualification from the country of origin or residence.
- At least 5 years professional experience

- At least 3 projects with similar assignments undertaking architectural and interpretation designs in Protected Areas.
- Excellent knowledge of applicable specifications for eco-tourism infrastructure (trails, facilities, and amenities).
- Understanding the demands for applying environmental considerations into the planning and development of structures within Protected Areas.
- Proficient use of mapping technology (GIS etc).
- Practical experience working in rugged outdoor conditions on similar projects.
- Fluency in English.
- Computer skills – AutoCAD, GIS, MS Office, etc.

Interpreter for Nature/ Biodiversity Interpreter

- Advanced university degree (MSc, equivalent or higher) in one of the key areas of expertise (e.g., ecology, natural resource management, natural sciences) or another related educational background.
- At least 5 years professional experience with a proven track record in projects including interpretation and presentation of nature and biodiversity.
- At least 3 projects with similar assignments, outlining the description of work and specific role.
- Practical experience working in rugged outdoor conditions on similar projects.
- Knowledge of the institutional framework for Protected Areas in Dominica.
- Work experience in the Caribbean will be considered an asset, specifically in Dominica.
- Fluency in English.
- Computer skills – AutoCAD, MS Office and presentation software.

VI. Reporting & Quality Assurance

The selected Service Provider will report on a regular basis to the Project Implementation Unit Office and the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division.

The Service Provider shall operate a Quality Assurance (QA) system throughout the execution of the engagement. The nature of the QA system will be described in the response to Call for Bids.

Quality control by the Service Provider shall include a check list containing the following: Detailed Work Plan, Assessment Report, Draft Assessment/Audit Report, and Final Assessment/Audit Report.

VII. Terms of Assignment

The contract is expected to be awarded for a duration of six (6) months. The assignment is expected to commence in October 2024.

Specific Deliverable	Timeline
Submission of a literature review and develop a detailed workplan to include methodology and best practices for improvement of eco-tourism sites as well as timelines for the schedule of activities to be undertaken.	Two (2) weeks after signing of contract
Submission of an Assessment report detailing field visits, inspections, documents, recordings, photos, and inventory. The report should include changes of the initial submitted workplan (if applicable).	After six (6) weeks
Submission of a draft Assessment/Audit Report with designs, recommendations, maintenance plan, and specifications for improvement of eco-tourism sites' infrastructure and interpretation.	After four (4) months
Submission of final Assessment/Audit Report for improvement of eco-tourism sites' infrastructure and interpretation incorporating any comments/changes from stakeholders.	After six (6) months