



Commonwealth Blue Charter

Terms of Reference

Training on:

Project Conception, Concept Note and Proposal Development

Overview

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 independent and equal sovereign states and home to 2.4 billion people. The Commonwealth Secretariat is an independent organisation working with the 54 member countries and assists them together to promote prosperity, democracy and peace, amplify the voice of small states, and protect the environment.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's Trade, Ocean and Natural Resources Directorate assists its member countries to sustainably manage their natural resources, in the ocean and on land, for the benefit of present and future generations. The Secretariat provides technical assistance and support member countries in the development of policies, laws, design of fiscal regimes and strengthening national institutions as they seek to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is seeking to engage qualified consultants to develop online training modules and supporting materials to assist the 10 ocean-focussed 'Action Groups' under the Commonwealth Blue Charter in three separate training areas: i) project conception, concept note and proposal development; ii) science-policy communications and coordination; and iii) stakeholder engagement. This Request for Quotations is for (i), the project conception, concept note and proposal development contract.

Background

The Commonwealth Blue Charter is an agreement by Commonwealth countries to actively cooperate in addressing the myriad of ocean-related issues and commitments that they face. The world's ocean is essential to life on our planet. Billions of people depend on it for their livelihoods. Yet human activity is increasingly putting the health of this crucial natural resource in peril. Blue ecosystems are being degraded and destroyed at an unprecedented rate and this is not an issue any single country can solve.

In April 2018, the Commonwealth Blue Charter was adopted by member countries, to guide cooperative action on ocean issues. Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Groups are member-driven, led by Commonwealth Blue Charter 'Champion' countries. Working together, Action Groups can unlock the experiences and knowledge of their member countries and partners.

The Commonwealth Blue Charter works through a set of Action Groups, each devoted to a particular ocean issue. Action Groups are driven by member countries, led by ‘Champion’ countries. So far 13 countries have stepped forward to be Champions on 10 topics of their choosing:

- Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance (marine plastic pollution)
- Coral Reef Protection and Restoration
- Mangrove Ecosystems and Livelihoods
- Marine Protected Areas
- Ocean Acidification
- Ocean and Climate Change
- Ocean Observation
- Sustainable Aquaculture
- Sustainable Blue Economy
- Sustainable Coastal Fisheries.

Over the past year, the Commonwealth Blue Charter’s 10 Action Groups have been setting priorities and developing their individual Plans of Action, taking into account their regional needs and resource requirements. To operationalise the Action Plans, the Commonwealth Secretariat intends to support the member countries by providing three separate but related strands of training in order to assist countries to: 1) project conception, concept note and proposal development; 2) strengthen internal communications between science- and policy-orientated government departments, as well as with external research institutions/agencies (bridging the ‘science-policy divide’); and 3) develop realistic and effective strategies for stakeholder engagement, appropriate for each country’s cultural context.

Objectives & Purpose of the Consultancy

This Invitation to Tender (ITT) part of three separate, but related contracts. Interested parties may submit letters of interest to any or all of them.

Contract One (Provision of training on: project conception, concept note and proposal development)

Online training, virtual workshops and associated one-on-one support for the Action Groups to understand and engage in the full project proposal development process, beginning with project conceptualisation, through to concept note writing, and ending with guidance on effective proposal writing. The training will help participants develop beneficial prospective partnerships and to write funding concept notes (on ocean-related issues).

To educate and inform participating government officials on the topics listed in this ITT, the main tasks are:

- (1) Development of online training modules;
- (2) Delivery of live remote training workshops;

(3) Provision of mentoring support to each Action Group as required.¹

Overall, the course and materials should highlight the process of conceptualising a project, scoping potential partnerships, and writing a compelling concept note to interest funders.

Additionally, tips and guidance on effective proposal writing should be covered, recognising that different funders will have differing proposal requirements. Consideration should be given to approaches for both conventional and non-conventional sources of funding, including national, philanthropic and international (multilateral) granting funds, development bank and private sector financing, innovation funding and start-up pitches. (Some of this focus will depend upon the nature of the project concepts developed by the participants.)

The training materials, workshops, and mentoring should include the following:

Scoping

- Work with Action Groups to select potentially fundable multi-country (pan-Commonwealth) project ideas based on their Plans of Action and priorities.²
- Consideration of regional and international partnerships / cooperation consistent with the principles and aspirations of the Commonwealth Blue Charter;

Course Content

- The elements of a successful funding proposal;
- Elements of successful project partnerships, and how to seek out suitable partners;
- Approaches for undertaking stakeholder engagement³;
- Outlining 'SMART' project proposals, including (but not necessarily limited to):
 - goals, objectives, outputs, and desired outcomes (Theory of Change)
 - key steps and milestones
 - indicative timeline
 - indicative budget
 - preparatory capacity building, meetings, workshops, etc.
 - proposed indicators of progress / success, logical frameworks
- Writing clear and inspiring project concept notes;
- How to identify and reach out to potential funders

Practical elements

- Practical exercises and feedback to participants on the exercises;
- Development of project concept notes that can be disseminated internally for approval, or externally to trusted potential partners (governments and non-governmental) and ultimately to funders;

¹ If extensive mentoring is identified by the Contractor as being required, a subsequent separate mentoring contract can be developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

² Plans of Action and priorities will be provided to the successful contractor.

³ Note that stakeholder engagement is the topic of or a separate ToR.

- Reviewing of initial drafts of concept notes and providing constructive feedback;
- Availability to answer questions across all time zones of participants.

Expected Deliverables and Location

- a) A draft work plan to be agreed with the Commonwealth Blue Charter Team
- b) First draft outline of the online training course, including consideration of remote workshops and basic mentoring;
- c) Final work plan that incorporates feedback from the Commonwealth Secretariat and other stakeholders as identified by the Secretariat;
- d) First draft of training materials (may be submitted one module at a time);
- e) Final draft of the modules that incorporates feedback from the Commonwealth Secretariat and other stakeholders as identified by the Secretariat;
- f) Delivery of training using (with permission) the Commonwealth Blue Charter's online collaborative platform portal and other common virtual meeting tools;⁴
- g) Final online training modules handed over for ongoing use by the Secretariat
- h) A final report including:
 - Summary of tasks completed;
 - Summary of trainings -participants, dates, durations, what worked and what did not;
 - Update on the participants' progress, summarising the creation of project concept notes and whether they have been progressed beyond the training setting;
 - Reflections and recommendations;
 - Annex: logbook of individual Action Group level support provided to participants, particularly in the development of project concept notes, and including summaries of the feedback / support provided.

The work may be conducted from any location within the Commonwealth. The appointed consultant should provide their own computer equipment, required computer applications, including Microsoft Office applications. Access to the Commonwealth Blue Charter's online Collaborative platform will be provided by the Secretariat). Good internet connection sufficient to do online training in real-time is required.

Duration and Timeframe

The consultancy is expected to take place between 24 July and 31 October 2020.

A proposed overall work plan will be agreed with the Commonwealth Blue Charter team at the start of the contract. The contractual days will be spent on developing training modules,

⁴ The Commonwealth Blue Charter online collaboration platform is Bitrix based and allows for the sharing of modules, workbooks and polls. It is used in combination with common online meeting applications. Technical specifications will be further described to the successful Contractor.

conducting consultations with Action Groups and potential project partners and delivering the training programme.

The suggested activity schedule for the assignment is as follows:

Deliverable	Final Due Date
Draft work plan	31 July 2020
Draft outline for the training modules (feedback will be sent within one week of receipt)	10 August 2020
Drafts of the online training modules: first module (feedback will be sent within 10 days of receipt)	17 August 2020
Drafts of the online training modules: last module (feedback will be sent within 10 days of receipt)	4 September 2020
Final draft of the online training modules: first module	11 September 2020
Final draft of the online training modules: last module	11 September 2020
Delivery of training workshops	September and October 2020
Final report	31 October 2020

If this preferred timeline is not achievable, alternative timings should be proposed in the proposal submitted. The contract must be completed no later than 30th November 2020.

Project Management and Reporting

The project will be coordinated through the Oceans and Natural Resources (ONR) Section of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The successful consultant will be expected to work in close consultation with the Commonwealth Blue Charter Advisor and Outreach Coordinator within ONR.

Estimated Budget

The total budget payable under this contract will be up to a maximum of £30,000 (including VAT). Payment will be made upon satisfactory completion of work as signed off by the Commonwealth Secretariat and within 30 days upon submission of the invoice.

Qualifications & Competencies

The preferred consultant or consultancy firm should hold the profile below:

- At least ten (10) years of experience in environmental and/or community project development and/or in related project capacity-building and training, including:
 - a. Experience in multi-partner projects;

- b. Experience working with governments, preferably Commonwealth;
 - c. With at least five (5) years' experience in successful project proposal writing;
 - d. Preferably having a successful track-record of developing multilateral development project proposals with/for governments.
- An understanding of the variety of available international funding sources, including but not limited to: international development agencies of donor governments, multilateral organisations (e.g. under the United Nations), philanthropies, and the private sector;
 - An understanding of marine issues (science, policy, or law) is advantageous.

To Apply for this Consultancy

Please submit the following:

- A short cover letter explaining your relevant experience, including international experience, as well as reflections on this topic area and your approach for completing this work (1-2 pages);
- A brief technical proposal. The proposal should outline the elements proposed and show how the consultancy would be carried out to meet the specific objectives and timeline set out above;
- CVs of the persons to deliver this work.

Evaluation will be based on competency, experience, and cost.