St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Unleashing the Blue Economy Project (UBEC)

Terms of Reference

SVGUBEC-C-IC-26

Development of a Costed Roadmap for a Queen Conch CITES Non-Detriment Finding (NDF), Including a Study Tour to see NDF systems in operation.

1. BACKGROUND

The Unleashing the Blue Economy of the Caribbean (UBEC) Project supports the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) and other participating countries by enhancing sustainability, resilience, and economic opportunities through targeted investments and policy reforms. The Project aims to modernize fisheries management, promote climate-smart practices, and expand economic opportunities for fisherfolk, including small-scale operators and women engaged in aquaculture and fisheries-related activities. Key interventions include updating national and regional fisheries policies and supporting investments in fisheries and aquaculture infrastructure—such as climate-resilient landing sites and processing facilities—to improve value addition and reduce post-harvest losses.

The Queen Conch (*Aliger gigas*, formerly *Strombus gigas*) is a high-value marine gastropod mollusc, widely recognized for its iconic, pink-lipped shell and prized for both its meat and ornamental uses. Native to the Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and parts of the western Atlantic Ocean, the species plays an important ecological role in seagrass ecosystems and provides a critical source of income and employment for coastal communities across the region.

SVG is a significant contributor to the Eastern Caribbean conch fishery. In 2017, it produced approximately 230 tonnes out of a combined Eastern Caribbean total of 350 tonnes ranking among the leading producers within the Caribbean Region. By 2020, queen conch had become SVG's most valuable fisheries export, accounting for approximately 62.7% of total fisheries export value and generating over EC$898,000 (USD 326,285), with an estimated 130 active fishers. Primary export markets include the United States, Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Sint Maarten.

However, overfishing, habitat degradation, and historically limited fisheries management and enforcement have contributed to significant declines in queen conch stocks across the Caribbean, including in SVG. Many fisheries in the region are now considered overexploited or depleted, prompting increased national, regional, and international concern. In response, queen conch is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on

International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which requires that any exports be supported by a scientifically robust Non-Detriment Finding (NDF) demonstrating that such trade will not be detrimental to the survival of the species.

At present, SVG faces constraints in meeting these requirements, including limited fisheries-independent stock assessment data, gaps in catch and effort monitoring systems, and the absence of an integrated institutional framework linking fisheries management, scientific assessment, and trade regulation. While ongoing national and regional initiatives are beginning to address some of these gaps, there is currently no structured, costed pathway to guide the development and implementation of a CITES-compliant NDF for queen conch.

In this context, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (GoSVG) intends to develop a phased, costed roadmap that defines the technical, institutional, and financial requirements for establishing and sustaining a CITES-compliant Non-Detriment Finding (NDF) system. To support this effort, the UBEC Project seeks a consultant to lead the development of the roadmap. The assignment will include targeted stakeholder capacity building, including a study tour to a Caribbean country that has established a CITES NDF system, to enable SVG stakeholders to learn from practical implementation experience. The insights gained will directly inform the design of the roadmap and ensure that it is grounded in practical, regionally relevant experience.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this assignment is to develop a costed roadmap for SVG to operationalize a CITES-compliant NDF and which includes a study tour for SVG stakeholders to study how NDF systems are designed and implemented.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The Consultant shall undertake the following tasks:

(i) Inception Meeting
(ii) Diagnostic Assessment
(iii) Design and Implementation of Study Tour
(iv) Design of NDF Technical Framework
(v) Institutional and Governance Framework
(vi) Development of a Costed Roadmap
(vii) Costing and Financial Analysis
(viii) Risk Assessment
(ix) Stakeholder Engagement and Validation
(x) Prepare technical reports

4. TASKS

TASK A: Inception Meeting

The Consultant shall:

- Review project documentation
- Conduct an inception meeting with the Project Implementing Unit (PIU), Fisheries Services, and relevant stakeholders.
- Confirm scope, methodology, stakeholder engagement approach, workplan, and reporting arrangements.
- Define a detailed methodology and workplan for the assignment.

Deliverable A: Inception Report

TASK B: Diagnostic Review

The Consultant shall:

- Review relevant information including: Biological and fisheries data systems; Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) systems; Trade and export data systems; Institutional and legal frameworks; Identification of priority gaps and constraints.
- Evaluate the efficacy of existing chain-of-custody protocols and traceability mechanisms—from the point of harvest and primary landing sites to processing facilities and final export—to identify systemic gaps in the verification of legal acquisition and compliance with CITES Appendix II requirements.
- Assessment of current gaps relative to Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) NDF requirements.

Deliverable B: Diagnostic Assessment Report

TASK C: Study Tour

The Consultant shall:

- Design and Implementation of Study Tour
- Identify and justify a suitable Caribbean country with an established queen conch NDF system (e.g., The Bahamas).
- Design a structured study tour programme (5–7 days), including:
  - Meetings with fisheries authorities, scientific institutions, and CITES authorities
  - Site visits to landing sites, monitoring systems, and relevant facilities
- Facilitate technical demonstrations and site visits focused on the host country's traceability infrastructure, specifically examining the digital or paper-based "Chain of Custody" documentation that links individual harvests to export permits to satisfy CITES Legal Acquisition Finding (LAF) requirements.

- Define clear learning objectives aligned with SVG's NDF development needs.
- Facilitate the study tour, including technical briefings and stakeholder engagement.
- Document key lessons learned, including:
  - Data requirements and collection systems
  - Institutional arrangements and coordination
  - Decision-making processes for NDF development and export authorization
  - Resource and capacity requirements

Deliverable C: **Study Tour Report**

TASK D: NDF Technical Framework

The Consultant shall:

- Define biological, monitoring, institutional, and legal frameworks.
- Recommend a structure of SVG's NDF system, including:
  - Stock assessment methodologies
  - Indicators and reference points (e.g., biomass, CPUE, density)
  - Data collection and management protocols
- Recommend the design of a monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system
- Recommend a pragmatic methodology for the seamless integration of fisheries, scientific, and trade data systems to establish a robust chain-of-custody framework which links harvest-level monitoring with export authorization processes to ensure all Queen Conch (*Aliger gigas*) trade is fully CITES-compliant and supported by the national Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) infrastructure.

Deliverable D: **NDF Technical Framework Report**

TASK E: Institutional and Governance Assessment

The Consultant shall:

- Define roles and responsibilities of:
  - Fisheries Services
  - CITES Management Authority
  - Scientific Authority
  - The entity responsible for auditing traceability records and verifying that the Queen Conch was harvested in compliance with national management measures and meet export certification requirements
- Assess existing legal and regulatory frameworks
- Identify gaps and recommended reforms
- Proposed coordination mechanisms

Deliverable E: **Institutional and Governance Assessment Report**

TASK F: Costed Roadmap and Budget

The Consultant shall:

- Prepare a phased implementation plan (short-, medium-, long-term)
- Prioritize key activities and sequencing
- Prepare Capital and operating cost estimates including unit cost estimates for key activities
- Compile expenses in an Excel-based spreadsheet with clearly stated assumptions

Deliverable F: **Institutional and Governance Assessment Report**

TASK G: Assessment of Risks and Mitigation Strategy

The Consultant shall:

- Identify key risks: including
  - Technical and data-related
  - Institutional and governance
  - Financial
  - Socio-economic
  - Compliance and enforcement
- Recommend Risk mitigation measures including decision thresholds and sequencing considerations

Deliverable G: **Risk Assessment Matrix and mitigation strategy**

TASK H: Validation and Final Report

The Consultant shall:

- Present findings in at least 2 workshops and gather feedback from stakeholders
- Take into consideration stakeholder feedback when preparing consolidated reports integrating all deliverables
- Finalize the roadmap and recommendations

Deliverable H: **Final Report**

5. DELIVERABLES

Deliverable	Description	Timeline
A	Inception Report which includes: Detailed understanding of the assignment; Methodology and analytical approach; Workplan and timeline; and Stakeholder engagement plan.	Month 1
B	Diagnostic Report which includes identification of priority gaps and constraints relative to CITES NDF requirements.	Month 1
C	Study Tour Report which includes: Summary of study tour programme and meetings; Key technical findings, including: NDF methodologies and data requirements, Institutional arrangements; Export monitoring and quota-setting processes; Comparative insights relevant to SVG; Practical lessons learned, including constraints and risks; and Recommendations for application in SVG	Month 2
D	NDF Framework Report which includes: proposed structure of SVG's NDF system, including: stock assessment methodologies; Indicators and reference points (e.g., biomass, CPUE, density); Data collection and management protocols; Design of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) systems; and Integration of fisheries, scientific, and trade data systems	Month 3
E	Institutional and Governance Assessment Report which includes: Definition of roles and responsibilities of: Fisheries Services, CITES Management Authority; Scientific Authority; Assessment of existing legal and regulatory frameworks and Identification of gaps and recommended reforms	
F	Costed Roadmap and budget	Month 3
G	Risk Assessment Report which includes: Identification of key risks (Technical and data-related, Institutional and governance, Financial, Compliance and enforcement); Risk mitigation measures; Recommended decision thresholds and sequencing considerations.	Month 3
H	Final Report and Validation Workshop Report	Month 4

6. DURATION AND LEVEL OF EFFORT

Duration: 4 months

Level of Effort: 50 consultancy days

7. CONSULTANT PROFILE, QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

CONSULTANT PROFILE

The successful consultant will be a senior fisheries specialist with a strong combination of scientific expertise, CITES trade regulatory experience, and practical knowledge of fisheries governance in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The individual will have a demonstrated capacity to translate complex technical and institutional diagnostics into actionable, costed policy roadmaps and to engage effectively with government counterparts, scientific authorities, and international development partners. The assignment requires both technical depth—spanning stock assessment, chain-of-custody systems, and NDF frameworks—and the advisory and facilitation skills needed to lead a structured study tour and a multi-stakeholder validation process.

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Advanced postgraduate degree (MSc or PhD) in Fisheries Science, Marine Biology, Environmental Economics, or a closely related discipline.

TECHNICAL EXPERIENCE IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

- Minimum 7 years of professional experience in fisheries management, stock assessment, and fisheries policy advisory work at the national or international level.
- Demonstrated experience conducting fisheries diagnostic assessments, including analysis of biological data systems, monitoring control and surveillance (MCS) frameworks, trade data systems, and institutional and legal arrangements.
- Demonstrated awareness of CITES implementation, international law, or trade and biodiversity regulation is a distinct advantage.
- Proven capacity to design stock assessment methodologies and recommend appropriate indicators and reference points (biomass, CPUE, density) suited to data-limited small-island fisheries environments.
- Experience producing technically rigorous, evidence-based reports and policy documents meeting international development bank standards (e.g., World Bank, IFC, IDB).

CITES AND NON-DETRIMENT FINDING (NDF) EXPERIENCE

- Hands-on experience with the design, implementation, or technical review of CITES Appendix II Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs) for commercially harvested marine species, preferably including queen conch (*Aliger gigas*) or comparable species.

- Sound working knowledge of CITES requirements and their practical application in national fisheries regulatory systems.
- Experience designing or evaluating chain-of-custody documentation systems that link harvest-level monitoring to export permit authorisation.
- Familiarity with national CITES Management Authority and Scientific Authority institutional roles, responsibilities, and inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

CARIBBEAN AND SIDS CONTEXT

- Demonstrated professional experience working in Caribbean SIDS, with a nuanced understanding of the socio-economic, governance, and capacity constraints affecting small-island fisheries management and regulatory compliance.
- Familiarity with regional fisheries bodies including WECAFC, CRFM, and OSPESCA, and their roles in supporting Caribbean queen conch management.
- Working knowledge of SVG's fisheries sector, or comparable Eastern Caribbean conch-producing states, is a significant advantage.

FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

- Demonstrable competence in preparing budgets and cost estimates for fisheries or natural resource management investments.
- Proficiency in developing Excel-based costing tools with clearly articulated assumptions, suitable for submission to multilateral development bank project implementation units.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Proven experience facilitating multi-stakeholder consultative processes involving fisheries agencies, CITES authorities, scientific institutions, coastal fishing communities, and international development partners.
- Demonstrated experience designing and leading structured technical study tours, cross-country learning visits, or capacity-building missions in a fisheries or marine resource management context.
- Ability to synthesise field observations and stakeholder insights into practical, context-specific policy recommendations.

COMMUNICATION AND REPORTING

- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English, with a track record of producing high-quality technical reports, policy briefs, and presentations for government and donor audiences.
- Experience presenting complex technical findings to senior government officials and high-level development bank review processes.

8. REPORTING

Reports to UBEC PIU and coordinates with Fisheries Services and CITES Authority.

9. DATA AND QUALITY STANDARDS

Outputs must be evidence-based, clearly structured, and suitable for World Bank submission.

10. CONSULTANT EVALUATION AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Prospective consultants will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Points	Description
Educational Qualifications	10	Advanced degree in relevant field.
Relevant Technical Experience	20	Experience in fisheries, aquaculture, or stock assessment.
Experience with CITES/NDF	20	Demonstrated experience with NDF or related regulatory processes.
Caribbean/SIDS Experience	15	Work experience in Caribbean or similar contexts.
Methodology and Approach	10	Quality and feasibility of proposed approach.
Financial and Economic Analysis Skills	10	Experience in costing and financial modeling.
Stakeholder Engagement Experience	10	Ability to facilitate multi-stakeholder processes.
Communication and Reporting Skills	5	Quality of past reports and presentations.
TOTAL	**100**	