



Republic of Liberia
Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Liberia Investment, Finance and Trade Project (LIFT-P)
2nd Floor, Insurance Building, 5th Street, Sinkor-Monrovia

Project ID: P171997

Terms of Reference

For

Consulting Services to Develop the Liberia National Trade Policy (LNTP)

2024-2030

Post Title: Recruitment of Trade Policy Expert

Location of Post: Department of Commerce and Trade
Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Contract Duration: 60 days spread over a period of four Months

Reporting Line: Deputy Minister for Commerce and Trade

Recruitment Type: Open International

Type of Contract Individual Consultant Selection

Background

- The Republic of Liberia is poised to re-envision its trade policy framework to better integrate into the global market while promoting sustainable economic development within its borders. Recognizing the pivotal role of trade in national development, the Government of Liberia, via the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, intends to develop a progressive National Trade Policy for the period 2024-2030. This initiative is timely as the nation seeks to build upon the foundations laid by the previous National Trade Policy (2014-2019), which was primarily focused on promoting inclusive growth through enhanced trade competitiveness.

- The previous policy period underscored significant strides towards integrating the Liberian market into regional and global economies, emphasizing the need for a renewed framework that can adapt to the evolving economic landscape. Lessons learned from the earlier policy framework highlight both achievements and areas requiring more focused interventions, particularly in enhancing trade infrastructure and regulatory environments to foster a more competitive economy.
- This new phase of policy development is set to be developed with the support of the Liberia Investment, Finance, and Trade (LIFT) Project; a five-year project, supported by a US\$40 million investment from the World Bank, aims to rejuvenate Liberia's economic sectors by restoring confidence in the monetary and financial systems, thereby promoting sustainable job creation, and working with the Liberia Special Economic Zone Authority to establish special economic zones among other objectives. The LIFT project is a cornerstone initiative that will provide the necessary resources and framework for the comprehensive development of the upcoming trade policy.
- The National Trade Policy 2024-2030 will be intricately aligned with the government's ARREST Agenda, which stands for Agriculture, Roads, Rule of Law, Education, Sanitation and Health, and Tourism. This alignment ensures that the trade policy not only addresses economic metrics but also engenders social and infrastructural developmental goals including gender sensitivity that are critical for holistic national progress. The policy will also aim to synergize with regional commitments such as the ECOWAS Common Trade Policy, the Mano River Union (MRU) including its Building Inclusive Business Ecosystems for Stabilization and Transformation (BI-BEST) initiative, and the expansive frameworks like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
- Furthermore, Liberia's obligations under the World Trade Organization and commitments to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be critical reference points. These international frameworks provide a set of standards and goals that will help guide the trade policy towards enhancing Liberia's participation in the global economy while adhering to sustainable practices and equitable development.
- The development of the National Trade Policy for 2024-2030 is not merely a regulatory or procedural update; it is a strategic imperative designed to propel Liberia forward by leveraging trade as a key engine of growth. This policy will aim to refine the country's trade mechanisms, enhance export development and economic diversification, and ultimately elevate the living standards of its citizens through more robust economic frameworks and opportunities.
- In view of the above context, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, with the support of the LIFT Project, seeks the services of expert consultant (open international) to develop the National Trade Policy 2024-2030 for Liberia.

Rationale:

- **Strategic Imperative for National Development:** The development of Liberia's National Trade Policy for 2024-2030 is crucial for leveraging trade as a key driver of economic diversification, job and wealth creation, and income generation. By building on the insights gained from the previous policy period and rectifying past shortcomings, this new policy will aim to create a more dynamic and responsive trade environment. Aligning with regional and global standards, such as those set by ECOWAS, AfCFTA, MRU including its BI-BEST initiative, and the WTO, ensures

that Liberia can effectively participate in and benefit from the global trading system, enhancing its economic stability and growth prospects.

- **Enhancing Inclusive and Sustainable Growth:** This policy is envisioned to promote inclusive economic growth that integrates enhancements in gender related issues including women and youth engaged in cross-border trade, SME access to finance and markets, and advances in digital trade such as e-commerce and e-trade, ensuring broad economic participation and sustainable development. Strengthening human and institutional capacities to manage trade effectively will stabilize and predict investment environments, fostering local industries and sustainable practices that align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; thus, securing economic resilience against global economic fluctuations and ensuring equitable growth.

Scope of Work

4. Comprehensive Review and Analysis:

- **Review of Previous Trade Policies:** The consultants will undertake a detailed review of Liberia's previous National Trade Policy (2014-2019) to identify what worked well and where improvements are necessary. This includes analyzing the policy's effectiveness in enhancing trade competitiveness and its impact on sustainable economic growth.
- **Examination of Development Plans:** Analysis of past and current development plans related to economic and trade development to ensure continuity and alignment with broader national development goals.
- **Current Trade Environment Assessment:** Assess the existing trade and commercial environment to identify current challenges and opportunities. This will involve an evaluation of trade infrastructure, legal frameworks, and the operational efficiency of trade-related institutions.

2. Stakeholder Engagement and Needs Assessment:

- **Sectoral Consultations:** Engage with stakeholders from various sectors including agriculture, development finance and planning, telecommunication, financial institutions, women and youth engaged in trade, marketing associations, manufacturing, digital commerce, and services to gather insights on sector-specific needs and challenges.
- **Public and Private Partnerships:** Facilitate discussions with public agencies and private sector representatives to foster partnerships that will be crucial for the successful implementation of the trade policy.
- **Workshops and Feedback Sessions:** Organize workshops to present findings and draft strategies, collecting feedback to refine the policy approach continuously.

3. Policy Development and Strategic Framework:

- **Drafting the National Trade Policy:** Based on the comprehensive review and stakeholder consultations, draft a detailed national trade policy document that outlines strategic goals, policy measures, and implementation strategies that align with the ARREST agenda and international trade obligations.
- **Integration with Regional and Global Agreements:** Ensure the trade policy aligns with regional commitments (ECOWAS, AfCFTA, MRU) and global frameworks (WTO and the SDGs), facilitating Liberia's integration into the global economy.
- **Special Economic Zones Development:** Propose frameworks (in collaboration with the Liberia Special Economic Zone Authority) where trade will be used as a catalyst for the development and promotion of industrial parks and special economic zones for economic growth by attracting investment and boosting export-oriented industries.

4. Implementation Planning and Support Frameworks:

- **Action Plan Development:** Develop a clear and actionable implementation plan that outlines the roles, timelines, and resources required to effectively execute the trade policy.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework:** Design an M&E framework that will allow for continuous assessment of the policy's impact on trade performance and economic growth, ensuring the policy remains relevant and effective over time.
- **Communication Strategy:** Craft a comprehensive communication strategy to ensure all stakeholders are informed and engaged throughout the policy implementation process.

5. Capacity Building and Technical Assistance:

- **Institutional Strengthening:** Recommend strategies for strengthening the capacity of trade-related institutions to manage and facilitate trade effectively.
- **Training Programs:** Develop training programs for local businesses and government officials on new trade practices, digital trade tools, and compliance with international trade regulations.

6. Final Reporting and Policy Handover:

- **Comprehensive Final Report:** Deliver a comprehensive final report that includes the developed national trade policy, implementation action plan, monitoring and evaluation framework, communication strategy, and training programs for local businesses and government officials on new trade practices, digital trade tools, and compliance with international trade regulations.
- **Policy Presentation:** Present the final trade policy and related components to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and other key stakeholders, ensuring clarity and alignment with national and international trade objectives.

Qualification and Experience:

- Master's degree in economics, international trade, development studies, or a related field.
- Minimum of ten (10) years of experience in policy research, analysis, and development, particularly national trade policies.
- Extensive experience working in Africa, with profound knowledge of WTO, the SDGs, AfCFTA, MRU, and ECOWAS trade policies.
- Demonstrated expertise in digital trade, standards, and project management/coordination.
- A deep understanding of Liberia's socio-economic, political and trade context is critical. The consultants should be familiar with the country's development challenges, priorities, and policy frameworks, as well as its institutional landscape and governance structures, as it relates to trade.
- The consultants should have prior experience in developing national trade policies for institutions similar to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- It is required that the consultant should work collaboratively with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's team or local staffers and other relevant stakeholders, providing guidance, mentorship, and capacity-building support as needed. Strong teamwork and leadership skills are essential for fostering a cohesive and productive working environment.

Deliverables and Timeline:

- **Inception Report (Day 15 upon signing of the contract; 10% Payment):** This should include a detailed understanding of the assignment, proposed methodology, and work schedule.
- **First Draft Policy (Day 30; 20% Payment):** Initial draft for review by the technical committee.
- **Second Draft Policy and Components (Day 45; 30% Payment):** Revised draft including an implementation action plan, monitoring and evaluation framework, a communication strategy, and training program pack.
- **Final Draft Policy and Components (Day 60; 40% Payment):** Final comprehensive policy document with all related deliverables ready for implementation.

Methodology:

- **Comprehensive Research and Analytical Approach:** The methodology for developing the Liberia National Trade Policy 2024-2030 will commence with a comprehensive research phase, integrating both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques. Quantitative data collection should include the analysis of trade volumes, economic impact studies, and performance metrics of previous policies to establish a statistical baseline. Qualitative analysis should involve conducting extensive interviews, focus groups, and consultations with key stakeholders from government bodies, the private sector, trade associations, international trade experts, and all other relevant actors. This dual-faceted approach will ensure a thorough understanding of both the macroeconomic and microeconomic factors influencing Liberia's trade landscape. Additionally, comparative analysis with similar economies undergoing trade reforms should be employed to glean best practices and cautionary tales that could inform the policy framework.

- **Stakeholder Engagement and Iterative Development Process:** The methodology should strongly emphasize stakeholder engagement to ensure the trade policy is inclusively developed and meets the diverse needs of all economic participants. This should involve a series of workshops, public forums, and targeted consultation sessions designed to gather input and feedback at various stages of the policy development process. An iterative development approach will be adopted, where draft versions of the policy are presented to stakeholders for feedback, which will then be incorporated into subsequent drafts to refine the policy’s objectives and strategies. This iterative process ensures that the policy is adaptive and responsive to the inputs of stakeholders, enhancing its relevance and effectiveness. Where applicable, advanced digital tools and platforms should also be utilized to facilitate broader engagement and real-time feedback, allowing for a more dynamic and interactive policy development process.

Reporting Arrangements:

a. Technical

- The reporting arrangements for the development of the Liberia National Trade Policy will be structured to ensure continuous collaboration and oversight. The consultant will report directly to the Deputy Minister for Commerce and Trade through the SME Specialist at the LIFT Project, with the focal point of the assignment being the Assistant Minister for Commerce and Trade, while maintaining close consultation with the Minister for Commerce and Industry and other Deputy Ministers to align the progress and direction of the policy development with strategic governmental objectives. Regular progress reports will be mandated on a bi-weekly basis, detailing achievements, challenges encountered, and steps taken towards the upcoming milestones. Additionally, each phase of the deliverables, beginning with the inception report and followed by the draft policies and final document, will be thoroughly reviewed by a technical team comprising various expert officers from the Ministry and other relevant institutions. This team will provide critical feedback and approval before any subsequent phases proceed and before any payments are released. This structured reporting approach ensures that the policy development remains on schedule, adheres to the highest standards of quality, and is fully aligned with the ministry’s expectations and strategic goals.

b. Administrative

Administratively, the Consultant will report to the LIFT-P Coordinator, through the SME Specialist for payment purposes. All request for payment will be addressed to the Project Coordinator at all times.

Submission of Expressions of Interest (EoI)

The submission of EoIs is a crucial stage in the evaluation and selection process for the expert consultants tasked with developing the National Trade Policy. To ensure a comprehensive and transparent assessment, the EoIs should adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Expressions of Interest Format:** Interested consultants should prepare their EoIs in accordance with the format outlined in the Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The EoI should specify the required structure and content of the Terms

of Reference (TOR), including sections such as executive summary, methodology, work plan, team composition where applicable, budget, and annexes.

- **Compliance with Requirements:** Consultants must carefully review the ToR to ensure that their EoIs address all the requirements and specifications outlined by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. This includes providing detailed responses to each component of the ToR and adhering to any formatting guidelines or submission instructions consistent with the REOI.
- **Qualifications and Experience:** Consultants should clearly demonstrate their qualifications and experience relevant to the assignment. This may include information about the consultants' educational background, professional certifications, previous work experience, and specific expertise in developing national trade policies, and related fields.
- **Methodology and Approach:** Expressions of Interests should articulate the consultants' proposed methodology and approach to developing the national trade policy for the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. This should include a detailed description of the consultants' ability to undertake the assignment, data collection methods, stakeholder engagement strategies, and analytical frameworks.
- **Work Plan:** Consultants should provide a comprehensive work plan outlining the key activities, milestones, and deliverables for the duration of the consultancy. The work plan should be realistic, time-bound, and aligned with the project's objectives and timeline.
- **Budget and Financial Proposal:** Consultants should prepare a detailed budget and financial proposal as an annex to the EoI outlining the costs associated with the consultancy, including personnel expenses, travel and accommodation, equipment and materials, and any other relevant expenses. The budget should be transparent, well-justified, and aligned with the scope of work and deliverables.
- **Quality Assurance:** Consultants should ensure that their EoI is well-written, clear, and concise, with attention to detail and accuracy. EoIs should be free from errors, inconsistencies, or ambiguities that could detract from their overall quality and credibility.

Facilities to be provided by the Client

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry will provide office space and all documents that are relevant to the assignment or provide the required support for the Consultant to secure such documents.