

*Request for Proposals*

**Strategic Analysis:**  
***econext*'s Caribbean International Business  
Development Interventions**



**RFP Release Date: July 6, 2023**  
**Proposal Due Date: July 20, 2023**

## Background:

*econext*, in partnership with ACOA and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, has been coordinating a Caribbean Market Development Program since 2014. As we approach the tenth year of supporting firms and organizations in their pursuit of business in the Caribbean region, *econext* is seeking consulting services to conduct a thorough program review.

## Objective:

The primary objective of this consultancy is to provide unbiased and comprehensive analysis to support the enhancement of *econext*'s Caribbean programming, with the aim of maximizing benefits for Atlantic Canadian businesses. The generated recommendations from this program review will shape the development of the 2024-2026 iteration of the Caribbean Market Development Program.

## Scope of Work

To develop strategic program recommendations, research and engagement is required to review the history of the *econext* Caribbean Program, the nature of doing business in the Caribbean region, and the results achieved to date.

To accomplish these objectives, key activities of this consultancy include:

### 1. Firm-Level Engagement:

- Engage with past and current program participants.
- Capture and analyze outcomes emanating from the program including:
  - Increased capacity readiness of firms to engage in international business.
  - Number of brand-new exporters from Atlantic Canada
  - Number of firms diversifying into new markets (and number of markets)
  - New revenues accrued as a result of new exports / sales.
  - New expenditures incurred.
  - Employment growth as a result of new exports / sales
  - New investment / funding attracted.
  - Formal partnerships (e.g., MOUs, joint ventures) established.
  - R&D expenditure growth as a result of international partnerships
  - Any other outcomes that program participants feel are relevant to report.

Note that outcomes may not necessarily be a direct result of a specific activity within the program but may have occurred fully or partially as a result of program participation.

- Evaluate program enrollment and retention.
- Identify gaps/areas for improvement in service offerings from the firm perspective.

## 2. Program Activities Review:

- Review background information, relevant materials, participant lists, progress reports, and other supporting information as provided by *econext* to gain a comprehensive understanding of program history.
- Assess effectiveness of various program offerings.
- Conduct cost-benefit analysis of specific interventions.

## 3. Evaluation of Key Sectors and Opportunities in CARICOM Countries:

- Review market research, including *econext*'s 2020 'Blue and Green Economy Opportunities in the Caribbean Basin' report (<https://econext.ca/blue-and-green-opportunities-in-the-caribbean-basin/>). Other secondary sources of information will be provided. In addition to secondary research, there is potential for engagement with a limited number of strategic in-market stakeholders (e.g., High Commission staff).

## 4. Strategic Opportunity Identification:

- Based on the activities outlined in 1-3, identify strategic areas of opportunity within the CARICOM region that align with the strengths of firms and organizations in Atlantic Canada, particularly within the Blue and Green Economy. Key SMEs in the region that may be considered to take part in the program will be identified. Information on Atlantic Canadian blue and green economy strengths will be provided.

## 5. Development of Recommendations:

- Develop specific recommendations related to program design and SME recruitment methods, prioritizing overall return on investment (ROI) according to the following metrics:
  - Number of brand-new exporters from Atlantic Canada
  - Number of firms diversifying into new markets (and number of markets)
  - New revenues accrued as a result of new exports / sales (e.g., sales)
  - Employment growth as a result of new exports / sales
  - New investment / funding attracted.
  - R&D expenditure growth as a result of international partnerships

# Deliverables and Timing

### *Deliverable 1:*

Development of an Interview Guide and schedule for Task 1: Firm-Level Engagement. *econext* will provide a list of program participants (approx. 45), and the selected consultant(s) shall demonstrate a reasonable effort to engage as many of the identified firms/organizations as possible within the timeline. *econext* will facilitate soft introductions to stakeholders where required.

### *Deliverable 2:*

A brief presentation on the findings from Task 1: Firm-Level Engagement to the project Steering Committee to allow for discussion and questions.

### *Deliverable 3:*

A final report that summarizes the findings of Tasks 1-4 and provides recommended next steps for the client based on the consultant's work and expertise.

### *Timeline (anticipated):*

1. RFP Release Date: July 06, 2023
2. Proposal Due Date: July 20, 2023
3. Project Kickoff: July 24, 2023
4. Project Completion: September 18, 2023

RFP respondents should be ready to execute a project agreement immediately upon contract execution, with the understanding that the client is motivated to complete this work as time-efficiently as possible. To protect the proprietary information of *econext*, the participant companies, and other key stakeholders, the service provider will be asked to sign a nondisclosure agreement.

## Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Knowledge and experience in relation to the work: demonstrated ability to meet expectations; based on completion of similar projects and/or quality of previous works;
- Understanding of the scope and objectives of the project: demonstrated comprehension of/adherence to the RFP;
- Proposed methodology and approach to evaluation;
- Knowledge of and experience working with or within Atlantic Canada;
- Price - value of work proposed versus identified costs.

## Proposal Submissions

The contracting organization for this RFP is *econext*. A single electronic document is sufficient. The proposal should be no longer than four (4) pages, and be concisely worded with clearly described objectives, methods, timelines, and outcomes. The proposal must acknowledge and fully accept the terms and conditions as laid out in this RFP.

Supporting documentation may be appended. Suggested appendices include (1) brief descriptions of the respondent's company/relevant experience with similar projects, (2) a description of the relevant work experience of the staff assigned to this project.

The electronic copy of submissions should be in DOC and/or PDF format, and sent to Abbie Hodder, *econext's* COO and Director, International Business, via email at [abbie@econext.ca](mailto:abbie@econext.ca) by 4:00 PM on Thursday, July 20, 2023. Questions from interested applicants can be directed to the same address.

## Budget

Respondents are expected to provide detailed budget breakdowns in their submissions.

## Terms and Conditions

- All proposals received will be considered strictly confidential;
- The lowest cost, or any proposal, will not necessarily be accepted;
- Proposed costs must be represented in Canadian dollars;
- No payment will be made for the preparation and submission of proposals for this project;
- No fee will be made on the cost of work incurred to remedy errors or omissions for which the consultant is responsible; and
- *econext* reserves the right to meet with all, or any, of the applicants during the proposal evaluation stage to clarify information in the submissions and seek additional detail which may be used in the evaluation.