**Request for Expressions of Interest**

**(INDIVIDUAL CONSULTING SERVICES)**

**PROJECT COUNTRY COORDINATOR**

**TONGA**

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| Project Name | Pacific Strengthening Correspondent Banking Relationships Project |
| Project Number | P502591 <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P502591>  |
| Activity and Reference Number (STEP)  | **PROJECT COUNTRY CO-ORDINATOR (CC), TONGA****FJ-PIFS-475433-CS-INDV**  |
| Implementing Agency Names  | Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat |
| **Country** | **TONGA** |

1. **The Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS)** and seven pacific island member countries (Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) have received financing (grants and credits) from the World Bank (WB) Group’s International Development Association (IDA) towards the **“Pacific Strengthening Correspondent Banking Relationships Project” (the Project**) and will apply part of these proceeds to the contract below for Consulting Services. The PIFs will act as the Implementing Agency for the regional project.
2. The PIFS PMU is now seeking qualified and competent national consultant from each participating member country (Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) to be the country coordinator (CC) for the PMU and based in the respective participating Island countries (PICs). The CC will manage and coordinate the full range of the assigned and approved projects, country specific activities during the project cycle from effectiveness through implementation to completion. The CC will be funded by the project (through the PMU) and report to the PIFS/ PMU Coordinator. In addition, he/she will work closely with the specific Country Focal Point (CFP), a senior official at the NRBT appointed by the MOF of Tonga. The selected CC will lead and coordinate the day-to-day implementation of the project activities, including the following: i) Liaising with Tonga’s Ministry of Finance’s CFP and Central Bank on country specific project related activities, ii) Work in close coordination with the CFP in developing the annual country specific activities, budgets to be submitted to the PIFS/PMU; iii) Follow up closely on all country specific procurement activities to ensure that there are no delays in the selection process; iv) In coordination with the CFP, identifying problems/impediments promptly as they arise during project implementation and take timely remedial actions; v) monitoring, with assistance of the PMU M&E specialist, the progress of the country specific project activities and its results indicators; (vi) Regular reporting to PIFS nominated committee and World Bank IDA Association on progress of implementing the Project, (vii) An immediate report to be provided on any unforeseen even or upcoming event that will likely restrict implementation of the Project at any point in time, (viii) Raising and reporting of any issues that will materially impact the implementation of the project on a timely manner for PIFS nominated committee and World Bank IDA Association’s awareness, and (xi) Providing of effective recommendations to address any arising issues and timeline to ensure implantation plans will continue to be implemented and completed for approval and support by World Bank and PFIS Nominated Committee.
3. PIFS seeks an experienced individual with the following qualifications: a) A bachelor’s degree in economics, finance, management, business administration, or a related field, b) A minimum of seven (7) years of relevant work experience in international development, financial sector, and/or project management, c) strong background or experience in the financial/banking sector in either the public or private sector would be desirable; d) Demonstrable experience in organizational and administrative duties in liaising with high level stakeholders, e) Experience working in Pacific Islands Countries or small island developing countries would be an advantage; and f) High degree of computer literacy, and intermediate to advanced knowledge of Microsoft Office Package (Excel, Word, and Power Point) and Internet; and g) Excellent command of both spoken and written English is required.
4. PIFS, on behalf of the participating member countries, now invites eligible individuals (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services (attach curriculum vitae and a cover letter with description of experience in similar assignments, similar conditions, etc.).
5. Firms’ staff may express interest through the employing firm for the assignment and, under such situation, only the experience and qualifications of individuals shall be considered in the selection process.
6. The attention of interested Consultants (including firms) is drawn to paragraph 3.13, 3.14, 3.15 and 3.16 of the WB’s ‘Procurement Regulations for Investment Project Financing (IPF) Borrowers’ (Procurement Regulations), sixth edition, February 2025, and as amended over time (“the Regulations”), setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest. A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the individual consultant selection method set out in the WB’s ‘Procurement Regulations.
7. The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment is attached below and provides details of the scope of the services required along with specific deliverables expected. Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours [insert office hours if applicable, i.e., 0900 to 1700 hours]. The TOR can also be found at [www.tenders.net/forumsec](http://www.tenders.net/forumsec)
8. Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by e-mail) no later than **17:00 hours (Fiji Time) 24th April 2025**.
9. Address for Enquiries and Submission of EOIs

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

Attn: Rodney Kirarock, Program Officer/Timaima Qeranatabua, Procurement Officer

Private Mail Bag, Suva

PO Box 856, Suva, Fiji.

Tel: 679-3312600

E-mail: mailto:rodneyk@forumsec.org /mailto: timaimaq@forumsec.org

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**CONSULTING SERVICES – INDIVIDUAL SELECTION**

**PROJECT COUNTRY COORDINATOR**

**TONGA**

1. Project Overview

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| **Project Overview**  |
| **Project Name** | Pacific Strengthening Correspondent Banking Relationships Project |
| **Activity Reference Number (STEP)**  | **FJ-PIFS-475432-CS-INDV** |
| **Position Title**  | PROJECT COUNTRY CO-ORDINATOR (CC)**TONGA** |
| **Location of role** | The position will be based in Tonga. |
| **Implementing Agency on behalf of participating countries** | Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)https://forumsec.org/  |
| **Duration of Assignment** | This is a part-time work assignment, in line with the project timeline; the engagement will be for six (6) years, with a possible extension if the project implementation period is extended. The CC’s services shall be subject to an annual performance evaluation using the Country’s contract performance assessment and based on the performance indicators specified in the Terms of Reference below. Performance evaluation shall be the basis for the extension or termination of the services. The selected CC is expected to work in his/her home country and will be supported by the PMU based in Suva, Fiji. |
| **Agency Description** | The Pacific Islands Forum was established to bring together the region to address pressing issues and challenges, and foster collaboration and cooperation in the pursuit of shared goals. PIF’s mandate is to strengthen cooperation and integration in the Pacific region through the pooling of regional governance, resources and the alignment of policies, furthering Forum members shared goals of economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security. Founded in 1971, it comprises 18 members: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The PIFS is a vital platform for Leaders to convene, engage in discussions and agree on policies that will benefit the people of the region.  |
| **Participating Countries** | The Pacific Island Countries (PICs) participating in the regional project comprise Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu |
| **Overall Project Objective** | The Project development Objective is to enable continuous access to correspondent banking services in the participating Pacific Island Countries |
| **Project Length** | August 2024 to September 30 2030 |

1. Project Background

The Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) is expecting to receive financing from the World Bank (WB) Group’s International Development Association (IDA) for a proposed project to enable continuous access to correspondent banking services in Pacific Island Countries (PICs). The PICs covered by the proposed regional project (Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) include diverse island economies facing similar correspondent banking relationship challenges.

PICs range in size and topography – from small island states such as Samoa, with two principal inhabited volcanic islands, to large archipelagos such as the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), with 29 atolls spread over 2 million km2 of ocean. Population sizes vary from 11,300 people in Tuvalu to 930,000 people in Fiji.

The economic landscape of PICs is equally diverse, marked by different growth drivers, poverty rates, and growth trajectories. The average GDP growth across PICs decelerated to 3.5 percent in 2023 after a historically high of 7.9 percent in 2022, in a rebound from the COVID-19 crisis. However, medium-term growth prospects have worsened, with output growth expected to be significantly below the pre-pandemic trend of 4.7 percent between 2014 & 2019. Given low growth and limited employment opportunities in the island economies, labor migration to neighboring countries and the resulting remittances are critical drivers of living standards.

The United States, New Zealand, and Australia account for 94 percent of the Pacific diaspora. Trade and tourism are vital for many PICs, providing revenue and employment opportunities. Remittances, equivalent to more than 40 percent of GDP in some PICs, are a buffer against income shocks and an important source of finance for essential household consumption and human capital investment.

Financial systems in PICs are characterized by low levels of financial access and an uneven development of national payment systems. Both domestically owned and multinational commercial banks dominate the financial sector in all PICs. In several PICs, much of the population lacks access to basic transaction accounts, limiting households and businesses’ ability to send and receive payments, save, invest, and respond to climatic and economic shocks. The financial market infrastructure is underdeveloped, in part due to limited competition and the lack of economies of scale. The level of national payment system development is uneven across PICs, and regional efforts to improve the efficiency of cross-border payments are limited in scale and scope.

PICs are uniquely vulnerable to the withdrawal of the correspondent banking relationships (CBR) that underpin international trade, tourism, remittances, and humanitarian financial flows. Correspondent banking is an arrangement under which one bank (correspondent) holds deposits owned by other banks (respondents) and provides payment and other services to those respondent banks. CBRs are an essential feature of the global payment system – they enable individuals, businesses, and governments to make and receive cross-border payment services related to remittances, e-commerce, trade, and official sector flows. The cross-border transactions enabled in PICs are in various currencies, primarily the US dollar, Euro, and Australian dollar.

The withdrawal of CBRs, a well-documented global phenomenon affecting many emerging markets and developing economies, has adverse consequences and negative externalities for Pacific Islanders, including seasonal laborers, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and vulnerable populations. Based on publicly available data, the number of active correspondents for Pacific banks has declined significantly since 2011 to levels that put the Pacific financial system overall at risk.

In order to mitigate the issues identified above, the WB will provide funding to the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) to implement the proposed “Pacific Strengthening Correspondent Banking Relationships Project”. The Pacific Islands Forum was established to bring together the region to address pressing issues and challenges and foster collaboration and cooperation in pursuing shared goals. PIF’s mandate is to strengthen cooperation and integration in the Pacific region through the pooling of regional governance, resources, and the alignment of policies, furthering Forum members' shared goals of economic growth, sustainable development, good governance, and security. Founded in 1971, it comprises 18 members: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The PIFS is a vital platform for Leaders to convene, engage in discussions, and agree on policies that will benefit the people of the region.

The project will have two components: (1) Temporary correspondent banking services and (2) Enabling environment and regulatory harmonization. The proposed project will be implemented by a Project Management Unit (PMU) within the PIFS with strategic project oversight provided by a Project Steering Committee (PSC) comprised of representatives of participating Pacific Finance Ministers. While the PMU will be responsible for day-to-day project activities, it will need to ensure close collaboration and coordination with participating Ministries of Finance, which will oversee project activities and approve work plans through the PSC.

Comprising of Secretaries of Finance or other officials from the participating PICs finance ministries and the PIFS Director (Programs and Initiative), the PSC will meet on a quarterly basis and be responsible for the approval of key project activities as needed. The PSC will report to Pacific Finance Ministers annually at the Forum Economic Minister Meeting (FEMM) to ensure that strategic guidance and orientation are provided over the project activities. At the technical level, each participating PIC will be required to nominate a competent government official as a Country Focal Point (CFP) responsible for project coordination at the national level, who will be designated as the point of contact with the PMU and the WB team.

The competent government official in each PIC will be complemented by a **country coordinator (CC) based in-country**, recruited through the PMU, and responsible for coordinating service delivery at the individual country level.

**The PIFS is now seeking qualified and competent national consultants from each member country to be the country coordinator (CC) for the PMU and based in the respective participating Pacific Island countries (PICs). The required positions are expected to be selected by the PIFS in accordance with the WB’s ‘Procurement Regulations for Investment Project Financing (IPF) Borrowers’ (Procurement Regulations), fifth edition, September 2023, and as amended over time.**

1. Objective of the Position

The main objective of the CC would be to manage and coordinate the full range of project, country specific activities during the project cycle from effectiveness through implementation to completion. The CC will be funded by the project (through the PMU) and report to the PIFS/ PMU Coordinator. In addition, he/she will work closely with the specific Country Focal Point (CFP), a government official appointed by the MOF of that particular PIC.

1. Scope of Services

The CC will be required to adopt a flexible approach to coordinate and facilitate the required country specific project activities and report on tangible outcomes in terms of project implementation progress. The CC will be required to work in a pro-active manner, and to help ensure effective implementation of activities and delivery of outputs in a timely manner.

1. The selected CC will lead and coordinate the day-to-day implementation of the project activities, including the following:
2. Liaising with PICs Ministry of Finance’s CFP and Central Bank on country specific project related activities, including follow up on the Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings and preparing meeting minutes as required;
3. Work in close coordination with the CFP in developing the annual country specific activities, budgets to be submitted to the PIFS/PMU;
4. Follow up closely on all country specific procurement activities to ensure that there are no delays in the selection process;
5. In coordination with the CFP, identifying problems/impediments promptly as they arise during project implementation and take timely remedial actions;
6. Monitoring, with assistance of the PMU M&E specialist, the progress of the country specific project activities and its results indicators;
7. Follow up closely on all country specific financial management activities to ensure that there are no delays in the payment process;
8. Follow up closely on the country specific activities and report to the CFP and the PMU Project Coordinator;
9. Work closely with the CFP and review reports/outputs prepared by selected consultants and provide inputs to the CFP as required;
10. Prepare the required documentation for the payment of outputs prepared by the selected consultants, obtain CFP approval and submit documents to the PMU for payment;
11. Work closely with the CFP in preparing annual reports on country specific activities to be submitted to the MOF and PIFS;
12. Regular reporting to the PMU Project Coordinator on progress of implementing the Project.
13. An immediate report to be provided on any unforeseen even or upcoming event that will likely restrict implementation of the Project at any point in time.
14. Raising and reporting of any issues that will materially impact the implementation of the project on a timely manner for the PMU Project Coordinator awareness.
15. Providing of effective recommendations to address any arising issues and timeline to ensure implantation plans will continue to be implemented and completed for approval and support by PMU Project Coordinator.
16. Any other activities as requested by the CFP or the PMU Project Coordinator.
17. Reporting Obligations

The CC will work closely with, and report to the Country Focal Person (CFP) and an onwards report in-county to the Secretary for Finance, NRBT, and the PMU Project Coordinator.

1. Institutional Arrangements

This is a part-time work assignment, with the Consultant expected to be based in Tonga. The CC will be supported by the NRBT, MOF Tonga and the PIFS PMU based in Suva, Fiji but will work closely with and report to the CPF in the first instance. The CC is expected to show flexibility in working arrangements as time inputs will fluctuate based on country requirements. The work will be part-time averaging approximately 10-12 days per month for the next six years. A contract will initially be signed for two years with a performance-based extension every two years thereafter. Performance evaluation shall be the basis for the extension or termination of the services. Facilities such as office space, intercom telephone facilities, personal computers, printing facilities, Internet access and stationery will be provided.

1. Performance Indicators

The following performance indicators shall be used for performance assessment:

1. Positive progress and good performance of the entrusted project activities, as per the TOR;
2. Ensuring that WB processes and procedures are complied with in all activities and in accordance with the POM;
3. Provide and maintain strategic engagement, networking and collaboration with key stakeholders;
4. Ensure the utilization and management of project funds are in compliance with the Financing Agreement;
5. Ensure the collection of all data required to track project progress;
6. Ensure the project monitoring and reporting timeline is adhered to;
7. Prepare and compile periodic semi-annual and annual reports on project activities
8. Compile proposed annual workplan for the following year with budget and procurement plan;
9. Positive evaluation of performance by the PIFS and the WB team;
10. Effective management of other experts engaged by the PMU; and
11. Support in implementing any capacity building agendas related to the Project as required.
12. Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

The CC undertakes to comply with PIF’s and WB’s policies and rules with regard to anti-corruption and prevention of fraudulent practices, conflict of interest and confidentiality. The CC shall maintain confidentiality on all sensitive information obtained during the assignment and shall not publish wholly or in part the findings or such information, without prior written consent by the PIF. Any draft reports and other documents produced by the consultant will be discussed and cleared with the PIF and the WB before their final issue. A non-disclosure agreement (NDA) will be signed between the PIFS and the selected candidate to be attached to the contract.

1. Evaluation Requirements

This section details the basis upon which selection of the successful candidate will be based.

**Mandatory Criteria –** These criteria **must** be met in order to be considered for this contract.

| **Mandatory Criteria** | **Description** | **Evaluation** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Education** | A bachelor’s degree in economics, finance, management, business administration, or a related field | Pass or Fail |
| **Experience** | A minimum of seven (7) years of relevant work experience in international development, financial sector, and/or project management, including previous experience working with projects funded by multilateral development banks. | Pass or Fail |

**Scoring Criteria –** These criteria are requirements or qualities that are not mandatory but would be considered beneficial if they are met and will be assigned scores during evaluation. Applicants must detail, in (their) CVs previous positions which support the criteria claimed the experience. Supporting documentation should be provided where necessary.

| **Criteria**  | **Evaluated Criteria** |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | A strong background or experience in the financial/banking sector in either the public or private sector would be desirable; |
| 2 | Demonstrable experience in organizational and administrative duties in liaising with high level stakeholders |
| 3 | Experience working in Pacific Islands Countries or small island developing countries would be an advantage; |
| 4 | High degree of computer literacy, and intermediate to advanced knowledge of Microsoft Office Package (Excel, Word, and Power Point) and Internet; and |
| 5 |  Excellent command of both spoken and written English is required |

1. Selection Process

Applicants will be assessed on their Resume as submitted and any supporting documentation.

Applicants who do not pass **Mandatory criteria** requirement will not be evaluated further.

Applicants passing mandatory criteria requirements will be assigned points on presented **scoring criteria**.

The Evaluation committee shall consult with the Tonga Secretary for Finance and the NRBT Governor, and reserves the right to interview any candidates.

A minimum of two professional references should be provided.

The Project values individuality and celebrates difference with a strong commitment to diversity, equality, racial equity, gender, and disability inclusion and strongly encourages people from culturally and diverse communities to apply for this position.