

**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (REOI)
CONSULTANT’S QUALIFICATIONS BASED SELECTION (CQS)**

Name of Project	FSM Skills and Employability Enhancement (SEE) Project
Grand Number	D-9870
Assignment Title	Technical Assistance for Establishing National Skills Certification Processes
Procurement Plan Ref Number	FM-NDOE-437182-CS-CQS
Country of Delivery	Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)

The FSM National Department of Education [has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the FSM Skills and Employability Enhancement (SEE) project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for the following consulting services.

The Services include the provision of technical and capacity-building support to develop with the Government of FSM certification body to conduct independent examinations and issue globally recognized certifications for specific trades (based on the Labor Market Study completed in 2024 and the outcomes of the Occupation Selection Workshop scheduled in June 2024).

The Services will focus on supporting the FSM Government in conducting a needs assessment, developing a roadmap, and preparing key documents so that the outcomes of this assignment will be available for the operationalization of the Certification Unit during Phase 2.

Ultimately, this certification body will be licensed by the Consulting firm to issue globally recognized trade certifications and meets the necessary licensing requirements in addition to setting up the standard operations and procedures for examination, safeguards for maintaining the license to examine and certify, and training of examiners.

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment is attached to this REOI.

The FSM National Department of Education now invites eligible consulting firms (“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.**

REOI -CONSULTANT'S QUALIFICATIONS BASED SELECTION

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 3.14, 3.16 and 3.17 of the World Bank's *Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers* Fifth Edition, September 2023 ("the Regulations"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

The best qualified firm to carry out the services will be selected in accordance with the Consultant's Qualifications Based Selection (CQS) method set out in the Regulations and based on the following criteria:

Mandatory requirements

- At least 10 years of experience in developing and implementing certification programs in various trades and sectors, including conducting needs assessments and creating roadmaps, or similar instruments.
- Experience in providing technical assistance to governments for the licensing and authorization of certification bodies.
- Proven ability to develop written and practical exams for a variety of trades.
- Familiarity with legal and regulatory requirements pertaining to certification bodies, both at the national and international levels.
- Understanding of annual audit requirements for certification bodies and the ability to ensure compliance.

Desirable requirements

- Experience in engaging curriculum development and alignment with international certification standards.
- Experience in designing and delivering training and capacity building for examiners and assessors.
- Experience in providing technical support to the FSM or a similar context.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours from 8am to 5pm Pohnpei time.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below via e-mail **by Friday, November 8, 2024 3pm Pohnpei time.**

FSM National Department of Education

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Attachment: Terms of Reference (TOR)**Technical Assistance for Independent Assessment and Certification of skills
Phase 1: Preparation for Accreditation**

Project Name	FSM Skills and Employability Enhancement Project
Grant Number	D-9870
Implementing Agency	FSM National Department of Education
Contract Name	Technical Assistance for Establishing National Skills Certification Processes
Contract Reference Number	FM-NDOE-437182-CS-CQS
Intended Start Date	January 2025

1. Background

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is committed to enhancing its vocational education offerings in high schools, particularly in response to the growing demand for skilled professionals in various industries. To support this effort, the National Department of Education (NDOE) is implementing the Skills and Employability Enhancement (SEE) Project, which focuses on developing occupational profiles, curricula, and apprenticeship programs aligned with industry needs. The project also seeks to build the capacity of educators, strengthen school-industry partnerships, and equip students with market-relevant skills to enhance their employability. Specifically, the SEE Project consists of the following three main components:

- **Component 1: Improving equitable access to vocational education and training.** The objective of this component is to ensure TVET access to all eligible youth, especially the poor and vulnerable youth, women, persons with disabilities, and geographically disadvantaged groups such as students or trainees from outer islands. The component aims to achieve this by expanding the availability of quality skills training while providing information, incentives, and support to increase participation of under-represented and disadvantaged groups in TVET.
- **Component 2: Improving the relevance and quality of TVET.** The objective of this component is to enhance the relevance and quality of training offered by TVET institutions by upgrading the training curricula and its standards; improving the quality of trainers; and making provisions for independent testing and certification of skills.
- **Component 3: Improving labor market information and employment services.** This component aims to establish capacity within the Government to provide labor market information and employment support services with a view to improve labor market outcomes among potential workers—including TVET graduates—in FSM. To this end, the activity will support schools and relevant Government units, and the SDOEs, in their efforts to match jobseekers with appropriate vacancies through comprehensive job search assistance.

The FSM currently has no processes or system in place for independent assessment and certification of skills. This limitation not only makes it difficult to ensure the quality of outputs of formal vocational and technical training programs but also prevents workers with experience but without formal qualifications from getting their skills recognized. The certification of skills will give workers portable certificates that signal their market value both in FSM and abroad. It would also facilitate their participation in higher-level skills training

programs to further enhance their qualifications and skills. To enhance the credibility of certification and ensure that skills certificates are valued by both national and international employers, including foreign companies operating or potentially investing in FSM, the national certification must also be recognized through international certification bodies.

To address this need, the National Department of Education (NDOE)’s Skills and Employability Enhancement (SEE) project will support the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia in the establishment of a national skills certification unit within the FSM Department of Resources and Development (R&D). The unit is expected to have the authority to assess and certify the skills of both formally trained individuals and those without formal training.

To ensure effective project implementation, the NDOE established the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) in 2023. The PIU is responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of the Project.

The SEE Project became effective on February 9, 2023, and is expected to be completed by June 30, 2027.

3. Objective

The Technical Assistance (TA) Consultant will develop, with the Government of FSM, a Skills Certification Unit to conduct independent examinations and issue globally recognized certifications for specific trades (based on the Labor Market Study completed in 2024 and the outcomes of the Occupation Selection Workshop scheduled in June 2024). This Certification Unit will be licensed by the TA Consultant to issue globally recognized trade certifications. These global certifications will help Micronesian citizens seek employment, including California, Guam, Hawai’i, and elsewhere.

The objective will be achieved by supporting the Government in setting up a Certification Unit that meets the necessary licensing requirements in addition to setting up the standard operations and procedures for examination, safeguards for maintaining the license to examine and certify, and training of examiners.

4. Scope of Work

Technical Assistance, for establishing the skills certification unit, will eventually be implemented in two phases as a Lump Sum contract. For this assignment, the NDOE is seeking technical support for **Phase 1 only**.

Phase 1: Preparation for Accreditation	Phase 2: Implementation and Operationalization
Objective: To focus on the preparation of documents and set up the roadmap for the accreditation of the Certification Unit.	Objective: To operationalize the Certification Unit and ensure its effective functioning. The scope may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing technical assistance for developing general training content headings and information to help

	<p>guide the curriculum being developed for students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing and Delivering capacity-building training for the Government and the Skills Certification Unit • Awarding the Certification Unit a license (accreditation) to conduct examinations and award certifications (the annual licensing fee will be covered by the project for the first two years and thereafter by the government of FSM) • Training at least 25 examiners across the four states • Observing and correcting examiners' conduct during examinations to ensure adherence to established rules and standards • Reaching an agreement with the government of FSM on annual audit requirements
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For Phase 1: Preparation for Accreditation, the following tasks will be undertaken with the submission of the deliverables:

Phase 1: Preparation for Accreditation	
Task	Activity
Task 1: Conduct a needs assessment	Conduct a needs assessment with the Government of FSM and relevant parties to prepare documents and roadmap to establish an intended independent skills testing and certification unit.
Task 2: Develop a Roadmap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline a detailed plan, key milestones and timeline for establishing the Certification Unit • Develop comprehensive operating procedures for the Certification Unit
Task 3: Prepare key documents	<p>Prepare required documents for accreditation of the skills testing and certification process. Suggested documents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality manual for Testing and Certification Body • Certification Body Management System Documentation Procedures and Forms • Skills Testing and Certification Process Procedures and Forms • Internal Audit and Review Procedures <p>The final list and sub-documents will be confirmed during an initial meeting with the relevant departments and/or after the needs assessment.</p>
Task 4: Conduct knowledge and	Deliver training sessions to familiarize key stakeholders with the outputs of Tasks 2 and 3. This will ensure that the

capacity-building training	Departments and the Skills Certification Unit have a thorough understanding of the roadmap and the steps forward.
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5. Deliverables and Timeline

Phase 1: Preparation for Accreditation			
Task	Activity	Deliverables	Tentative Timeline
Task 1: Conduct a needs assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a needs assessment with the Government of FSM and relevant parties to prepare documents and roadmap to establish an intended independent skills testing and certification unit. Conduct an information session on the general processes of skills testing and certification, including the required steps and documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs assessment report Information session 	January 2025
Task 2: Develop a Roadmap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline a detailed plan, key milestones and timeline for establishing the Certification Unit Develop comprehensive operating procedures for the Certification Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roadmap Operating procedures manual 	February 2025
Task 3: Prepare key documents	<p>Prepare required documents for accreditation of the skills testing and certification process. Suggested documents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality manual for Testing and Certification Body Certification Body Management System Documentation Procedures and Forms Skills Testing and Certification Process Procedures and Forms Internal Audit and Review Procedures <p>The final list and sub-documents will be confirmed during an initial meeting with the relevant departments and/or after the needs assessment.</p>	Agreed key documents	March 2025
Task 4: Conduct knowledge and capacity-building training	Deliver training sessions to familiarize key stakeholders with the outputs of Tasks 2 and 3. This will ensure that the Departments and the Skills Certification Unit have a thorough understanding of the roadmap and the steps forward.	Final report	May 2025

6. Expected Key Experts and Man-Months (Phase 1)

No.	Expected Key Expert	Roles	Man-Months
1	Project Manager (International)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee the project and ensure smooth coordination. Lead the needs assessment and roadmap development. Ensure all deliverables are completed on time and within the scope of work. 	1.5
2	Certification and Accreditation Expert (International)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the certification body management system and testing procedures. Lead the development of skills testing and certification procedures. Ensure the testing systems align with national and international standards. Provide technical advice on accreditation and compliance. Design and deliver training workshops for stakeholders. 	2.5
3	Legal and Regulatory Specialist (National/Regional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review legal compliance of documents and systems with FSM regulations. Provide guidance on licensing and audit requirements for the Certification Unit. 	0.5
Total Expected Man-Months			4.5

7. Qualification of the Firm

7.1 Mandatory requirements

- At least 10 years of experience in developing and implementing certification programs in various trades and sectors, including conducting needs assessments and creating roadmaps, or similar instruments.
- Experience in providing technical assistance to governments for the licensing and authorization of certification bodies.
- Proven ability to develop written and practical exams for a variety of trades.
- Familiarity with legal and regulatory requirements pertaining to certification bodies, both at the national and international levels.
- Understanding of annual audit requirements for certification bodies and the ability to ensure compliance.

7.2 Desirable requirements

- Experience in engaging curriculum development and alignment with international certification standards.
- Experience in designing and delivering training and capacity building for examiners and assessors.
- Experience in providing technical support to the FSM or a similar context.

8. Evaluation and selection process

- **Submission of EOIs:** Interested firms submit their EOIs, which include details of their qualifications, relevant experience, and understanding of the TOR.
- **Shortlisting:** The EOIs will be evaluated based on their qualifications, relevant experience, and capacity to perform the assignment.
- **Selection Based on Qualifications:** The shortlisted firm will be invited to submit a full technical and financial proposal or evaluation.

Expected Duration: 4.5 months