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**GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE
REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTERESTS
DATE OF ISSUE: 16TH MAY 2023
CONSULTING SERVICES FIRM SELECTION**

**CONSULTING SERVICES FOR THE FORMULATION OF AN ISLAND TOURISM POLICY
AND DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT
PLAN TO ENHANCE ISLAND TOURISM IN SIERRA LEONE**

Sierra Leone possesses pristine beaches and islands, mountains and rich biodiversity, interesting wildlife, friendliness and rich cultural capital among people and its special place in the world history of anti-slavery movement as ‘the land of the free.’ The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has officially prioritized tourism in the Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019 -2023. The National Tourism Policy states the goal of tourism in Sierra Leone as to “generate foreign exchange, encourage even development, promote tourism-based rural enterprises, generate employment, accelerate rural-urban integration and foster socio-cultural unity among the various regions of the country through the promotion of domestic and international tourism.” (GoSL, 2017). Its National Ecotourism Policy states the goal of receiving 20,000 international and 30,000 domestic ecotourism visits to sites by 2025 (GoSL, 2017).

The World Bank is supporting an Economic Diversification Project, one of the components of which will take an integrated destination approach to improving the performance of Sierra Leone’s tourism sector. This will include facilitating the reduction of barriers to business success, assisting existing tourism providers with market access, and improving the quality of selected tourism products in order to place the country’s tourism sector on a sustainable and inclusive growth trajectory. This will be achieved through a mix of institutional, and policy reforms, market development and national re-branding as well as building B2B linkages and strategically developing tourism products in prioritised areas including but not limited to the islands of Bunce, Jaibui, Kortimaw, Kagbeli, Plantain, Sherbro, Tasso and Tiwai and the Turtle and Banana Island Archipelagos.

Islands are a natural attraction for domestic and international tourists. Island environments present a unique challenge to sustainability due to their fragile ecosystems and historical and sociocultural aspects. Sustainable development and management of tourism as an economic activity in island environments requires policymaking in the areas of transportation, the supply chain, hospitality services, waste management, ecosystem conservation and protection, and energy and water consumption among others.

Sierra Leone is endowed with a wealth of wildlife biodiversity, cultural diversity, and historic sites amid its island destinations. The country’s 530-kilometer coastline is predominantly low-lying, dotted with numerous beaches and islands. The ecosystems protected by Western Area Peninsula National Park along the coast have been degraded due to subsistence and other economic development activities, which is resulting in increased interest among investors in Sierra Leone’s islands. Sea-level rise is beginning to cause the loss of entire communities and culturally significant sites, forcing relocations and costing livelihoods. The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has recognised the need for policy interventions. The GoSL has developed a National Climate Change Adaptation Plan, which sets out the actions needed to reduce the impacts of climate change nationally, and a new resettlement policy for those affected by coastal erosion and a warming climate. The National Tourism Policy and National Ecotourism Policy also recognise

the need to sustainably develop and protect the diverse natural, cultural and historic assets amid Sierra Leone's islands. In addition, a new National Marine Protected Area Act is under development.

The tourism sector in Sierra Leone at its current stage heavily depends on beach tourism, which has a strong appeal to attract tourists to the country. GoSL, in its strive to use tourism as a vehicle to diversify its economy, has realized the need for diversifying the tourism offer. Through progressive policymaking, Sierra Leone has the ability to help protect its island destination environments, create sustainable tourism product to increase their appeal, and directly benefit host communities.

II. Objective of the assignment

The main objective of this assignment is twofold:

- I. To formulate a comprehensive Island Tourism Policy inclusive of an island tourism vision, policies, priorities/goals, and indicators; and
- II. To prepare a comprehensive. integrated Sustainable Island Tourism Development & Management Plan and Costed Action Plan geared towards Enhancing Sustainable Island Tourism in Sierra Leone. This includes both coastal islands and river islands.

These objectives will be achieved through the following:

- a. Strengthen the legislative framework for the blue economy and sustainable coastal zone management incorporating the tourism sector and gateway communities
- b. Ensure island tourism occurs in a regulated and controlled manner to protect the resources on which it depends with environmental and social safeguards in place
- c. Ensure island tourism contributes to economic growth and improve the livelihoods of local communities
- d. Ensure island tourism economic benefits directly support the protection of fragile ecosystems and other conservation efforts
- e. Promote environmentally friendly infrastructure for tourism in island destinations and natural and cultural heritage sites of interest
- f. Create more awareness and sensitization for low-impact, responsible travel among the tourism sector, visitors and residents
- g. Encourage local communities to participate in sustainable coastal zone management and the establishment of marine and terrestrial protected areas in order to protect fragile ecosystems
- h. Empower and build capacity of local communities to provide tourism services to potential visitors attracted by island destinations
- i. Strengthen law enforcement and build the capacity for the protection of marine life and wildlife
- j. Maximize the benefits of tourism to visitors through the blue economy, sustainable coastal zone management, and marine and terrestrial protected areas
- k. Formulate mechanisms that utilize tourism revenues to directly support marine life conservation efforts and the welfare of gateway communities
- l. Identification of marine and terrestrial protected areas, suitable ecotourism sites, and ecotourism zoning to undertake island tourism development activities
- m. Devise an institutional framework and prepare a comprehensive. integrated Sustainable Island Tourism Development & Management Plan and Costed Action Plan geared towards enhancing island tourism in Sierra Leone including:
 - i. analyzing, recommending, and prioritising the required infrastructure (e.g., visitor facilities and attractions, ecolodges and boutique hotels, transportation and access, etc.)
 - ii. analyzing and recommending the optimal models for sustainable infrastructure development including, for example, private public partnerships and joint ventures where appropriate

- iii. identification of historic sites, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, marine life, and wildlife of interest
- iv. identification of potential marine and terrestrial protected areas, the rationale for their protection, and the development of a management plan to protect them

III. Scope of work

Phase 1

- The consultant will conduct a desk review on the following:
 - Economic potential of sites and negative impact on the environment, recommending measures to mitigate adverse risks or impact and maximize economic benefits for conservation and gateway communities
 - Existing National Climate Change Adaptation Plan, Tourism Development Act, National Tourism Policy, the National Ecotourism Policy and Wildlife Conservation Act as well as international best practise in island tourism policies
 - Emerging policy including the National Marine Protected Area Act
 - Existing data on coastal tourism in Sierra Leone and identify key sites for the execution of tourism development
- In addition, if feasible, the consultant will consult with the teams responsible for the Wildlife Tourism Policy and Sustainable Tourism Master Plan
- The consultant will visit the islands of Bunce, Jaibui, Kortimaw, Kagbeli, Plantain, Sherbro, Tasso and Tiwai and the Turtle and Banana Island Archipelagos at a minimum and conduct questionnaires and surveys to assess stakeholder and community views on tourism, conservation, linkages to community development, and other local issues in each place especially related to marine life, wildlife, and other natural and cultural heritage assets
- The consultant will meet and discuss how to optimize island tourism in order to maximize conservation and community economic development outcomes with other key stakeholders including the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs (MoTCA); the National Tourist Board; Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and the Environment; Environment Protection Agency (EPA); Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS); Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR); Sierra Leone Hotel & Tourism Association; Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary; Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning (MLHCP); and local and international conservation NGOs operating in Sierra Leone

Phase 2

Based on the consultations, the consultant will draft the Island Tourism Policy for Sierra Leone and a comprehensive, integrated Sustainable Island Tourism Development & Management Plan and Costed Action Plan geared towards Enhancing Sustainable Island Tourism in Sierra Leone.

- The consultant will ensure the policy, proposal and plan build on and are fully complementary to and not overlapping nor contradicting with the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan, emerging National Marine Protected Area Act, Tourism Development Act, National Tourism Policy, the National Ecotourism Policy and Wildlife Conservation Act, and any other relevant legislation.
- The consultant will consider and incorporate best practice into the Island Tourism Policy for Sierra Leone such as tourism funded support for Government and community-led marine and terrestrial protected area management and conservation efforts, compensation schemes for reducing human-wildlife conflict, tourism revenue sharing schemes with

gateway communities, community participation in island tourism, and innovative conservation finance mechanisms (e.g., blue carbon credits, biodiversity credits etc.).

- To the extent necessary, the consultant will clearly document a policy reform process related to the Tourism Development Act, Tourism Policy, Ecotourism Policy, Island Tourism Policy, and any other relevant legislation.
- The consultant will design the Island Tourism Policy so that it can be translated into legislation.
- The consultant will develop an integrated Sustainable Island Tourism Development & Management Plan and time bound Costed Action Plan with a detailed budget, primary activities and sub-activities, identification of the primary accountable parties. and measurable metrics to monitor progress. The action plan should constitute a comprehensive support program for the public, private, and civil sector to collaborate with one another to mitigate adverse environmental impacts, protect fragile ecosystems, and maximize economic benefits for conservation and gateway communities. Once the drafts are approved by the MoTCA, the draft documents will be widely circulated, popularized and a validation workshop will be held to allow tourism and other key stakeholders to share their views.
- Comments and agreements will be integrated into the Sierra Leone Island Tourism Policy, Sustainable Island Tourism Development & Management Plan, and Costed Action Plan which will then be finalized for approval by Cabinet.

The consultant will produce two executive briefings of a maximum of six (6) pages each, summarizing the findings of Phase 1 and 2, including infographics, key metrics and recommendations for high-level decision makers. A PowerPoint summarizing key points of Phase 1 and 2 will be produced in tandem with the final report.

IV. Deliverables

The consultant will submit the following deliverables while carrying out the tasks listed above:

Deliverables	Delivery Dates	Payment schedule
Inception Report and Situation Analysis	8 weeks after contract signing	30%
Draft Sierra Leone Island Tourism Policy, Sustainable Island Tourism Development & Management Plan, Costed Action Plan and executive briefing	16 weeks after contract signing	30%
Final Sierra Leone Island Tourism Policy, Sustainable Island Tourism Development & Management Plan, Costed Action Plan and executive briefing	30 weeks after contract signing	40%

The documents will be simply and clearly written. It will be supported by factual background information in the annexes.

V. Reporting

The consultant will report to the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs (MoTCA) as the lead beneficiary, the National Tourist Board, Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and the Environment and any other stakeholders recommended by the GoSL.

VI. Criteria for selection

The firm is expected to fulfill, at minimum, the following selection criteria.

The team should include at least three (3) members with the following experience amongst them

- a) Documented experience no less than five (5) years in the development of conservation and coastal tourism and island tourism policies and coastal tourism development and management plans
- b) Documented experience in community consultation no less than seven (7) years
- c) Documented experience in marine conservation and management involving local communities
- d) Experience running a tourism or ecotourism business a plus
- e) Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English and Krio

The minimum team leader competencies required are the following.

Team Leader

- University degree in Sustainable Tourism Development, Marine Protected Area Management, Environment, or a related field
- At least eight (8) years of experience in one or more of the following fields: Coastal Tourism, Island Tourism, Marine Protected Areas.
- Previous successful experience in drafting policies and proposals to enhance coastal tourism, establish marine protected areas and execute management and business plans for MPAs, mitigate the adverse impacts to marine and wildlife and their habitats, and maximize economic benefits for conservation and gateway communities
- Knowledge of the marine life, wildlife, islands and coast of Sierra Leone or other similar African tourism destinations
- Strong analytical and report writing abilities
- Outstanding organizational, project management and leadership skills
- Proven track record in managing a team of experts; supervising and coordinating technical aspects of the project, ensuring good client communication.
- Immediate availability

The team must also include at least two specialists, including at least one resident of Sierra Leone with good Kiro and knowledge of the tourism sites included, with additional competencies in the following areas:

- Experience in sustainable coastal and terrestrial tourism development projects, plans and activities
- Experience establishing private public partnerships, joint ventures, and related operational agreements between government, the tourism private sector, and communities
- Excellent knowledge of tourism markets, market segmentation and trends and in evaluating strategic visitor flows and evaluating and designing market-ready ecotourism including water-based, nature-based, and cultural tourism attractions, products, and experiences.
- Community-led and managed tourism development
- Experience in innovative conservation finance mechanisms linked to tourism is a plus

Mode of Application

Note: The Consultant will be selected in accordance with Consultant Qualification Selection (CQS) method set out in the Consultant Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants under IDA Grants by World Bank Borrowers, (July 2016, Revised November 2017, 2018 and fourth edition 2020).

All expressions of interest should be sent to the email below:

sleconomicdiversification@gmail.com

Closing Date:

The Closing Date and time for receipt of applications is 30th May 2023 at 16:00pm.

Only short-listed consultant will be contacted

