

Terms of Reference (TOR)

Financial Management Specialist Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Human Development Service Delivery Project

Introduction

St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), a member of the Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), is a country with a small, open economy that continues to grapple with high climate risks and natural hazards, as well as vulnerability to economic shocks and volatile growth patterns which often have debilitating effects on livelihoods, particularly the poorest. Despite this, the country has achieved significant human development milestones. Education coverage is almost universal at the primary and secondary levels, with gross primary enrollment rates for boy and girls over 100 percent and near parity in secondary completion rates. While the successes in human development achievement are impressive, high levels of poverty and unemployment are still major development challenges that need to be address from multiple fronts.

Goal two (Enabling Increased Human and Social Development) of the SVG National Economic and Social Development Plan (2013-2025), emphasises the attainment of a high level of human and social development to foster the climate necessary for promoting economic growth. “As such, the Plan views human well-being as one of the principal goals of development and thus focuses on meeting the basic needs of citizens through and among other things, improved living conditions and modern health and educational services. This involves the development of a skilled, enterprising and adaptable workforce through poverty reduction, improved access to quality education and training, including post-school access, improved health and housing, community development, youth empowerment and recreation and protection of vulnerable groups.”

With funding from the World Bank (Bank), the Government of SVG (GoSVG) through the Public Sector Investment Programme Management Unit (PSIPMU), Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development and Information Technology (MoFESI), is implementing a five year project, titled “ St. Vincent and the Grenadines Human Development Service Delivery Project” (SVGHDSD). The Project aims *to strengthen the quality of service delivery in education, improve the efficiency of social protection systems, and improve the effectiveness of labour market systems.*

Financial management plays a vital role in satisfactorily implementing all the required components as planned within the budget. It would involve preparation of yearly budgets against planned activities and its disbursement accordingly. It would require preparation of various financial statements to comply with World Bank and GoSVG’s regulations. Accordingly, a qualified and experienced financial management specialist is required to manage project budget and expenditure.

Objectives

The objectives of the consultancy are to ensure that the Public Sector Investment Programme Management Unit (PSIPMU) maintains or causes to be maintained a financial management system and prepare financial statements in accordance with consistently applied accounting standards acceptable to the Bank and the GoSVG. This would be done in a manner to adequately reflect operations, resources and expenditures related to the Project.

Scope of Work

The Financial Management Specialist will be responsible for maintaining financial records, providing timely financial information to the Project Coordinator and to ensure compliance with GoSVG's Financial Rules and the Bank's fiduciary requirements as referred to in the Project Agreement.

Duties of Assignment / Deliverable

The Financial Management Specialist shall be responsible for:

Specific Tasks and Responsibilities

Budgeting and Planning

- Support the project team in preparing annual work plans for the Project.
- Prepare project's annual cash plan on the basis of the work plan and related procurement plan.
- In accordance with the GoSVG's budgeting rules and regulations, prepare annual budget estimates and revise estimates based on work plan/cash plan. Submit the estimates to MoFESI for inclusion in the annual budget of the relevant year. Follow-up and periodically report on the release of funds for the approved budget.
- Prepare monthly monitoring reports comparing actual expenditure against budget for submission to the Project Coordinator and the Director of Planning. In this report, weak performing areas will be highlighted and brought to the attention of the Project Coordinator for necessary action.
- Prepare timely annual and quarterly disbursement forecasts for all components of the project in line with the project's procurement plan.

Funds Management

- Prepare and submit to the Bank, no later than 45 days after the end of each calendar quarter, interim unaudited financial reports (IFRs) for the Project covering the quarter in form and substance acceptable to the Bank. The IFRs will include quarterly cash forecasts, prepared in coordination with the project team and submit to the World Bank for advance and replenishments of advance.
- Prepare and process withdrawal applications in accordance with the Bank's Disbursement Guidelines.
- Track funds and follow up with the Bank of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the World Bank to ensure timely credit of funds into the project's designated account.

Expenditure/Payment Processing

- Ensure compliance with the internal control framework (Operations Manual and the Bank’s fiduciary guidelines, etc.) and GoSVG’s rules and procedures when processing payments.
- Analyse, plan, design, implement and monitor the system to augment internal controls in line with best practices in the process of payment and expenditure management.
- Ensure that only eligible payments are forwarded for the Project Coordinator’s approval and drawing funds from the designated accounts.
- Apply pre-audit checks on all payments before payment from designated accounts including budget availability, sanction of competent authority and compliance with applicable financial rules and regulations.
- Ensure that a “No Objection Letter” is obtained from the Bank as necessary.
- Manage financial aspects of the contracts under implementation, including payment terms, purchase orders and variation orders.

Accounting and Records Management

- Maintain accounts on a cash basis.
- Record all transactions timely and accurately in the books of accounts in the local currency, Eastern Caribbean Dollars (XCD) and ensure that no expenditure remains unaccounted for.
- Ensure that all expenditure is journalized in the GoSVG’s accounting system (Smart Stream).
- Prepare monthly bank reconciliation statements of designated accounts in XCD and United States Dollars (USD).
- Reconcile the expenditure with the Accountant General’s Department on a monthly basis.
- Prepare monthly payroll and submit to the Project Coordinator for approval, prior to making any payment under salaries.
- Process monthly payroll of project employees. Ensure proper payroll controls are applied and the payments are made directly in the bank accounts, where applicable.
- Ensure that the fixed assets records are maintained for the project, identifying the location and the user of each asset and arrange for the annual and periodical inventory of the assets and updating of the records.
- Ensure the safe custody of all financial records for review by Bank Missions, third party monitoring agents; and external and internal auditors.

Financial Reporting

- Prepare quarterly Interim Unaudited Financial Statements (specified in the Legal Agreement) and submit to the Project Coordinator and the Bank in time for review and approval.
- Ensure that all government financial reporting requirements are complied with, specifically:
- Schedule of cheques prepared and submitted to the Project Coordinator for onward submission to the office of the Accountant General.

Audit

- Make arrangements for timely initiation and completion of audits of the project and ensure that the report produced is in compliance with the audit requirements of the Bank.
- Attend entry and exit meetings with external auditors, facilitate timely completion of audits by arranging timely submission of annual financial statements in the appropriate format, supply information and documents in response to queries, initiate actions for holding tripartite meetings and coordinate with various units in meeting audit objectives.
- Prepare working papers on audit observations raised by external auditors and arrange departmental accounts meetings to settle the audit observations.
- Prepare timely formal response to auditor's findings.
- Collaborate with the Bank, GoSVG and to improve project financial management, particularly in terms of following up on the action points agreed to in the project's legal documents, during the Bank's supervision missions, aide memoires and the recommendations of external and internal auditors.

Reporting Obligations

The Consultant will report to the Project Coordinator.

Qualification and Experience

The Financial Management Specialist shall have:

- A degree in accounting from a nationally/internationally recognized institution. ACCA/CPA/CIMA qualification will be an asset.
- At least six (6) years' experience after acquiring stipulated qualification in financial management, or accounting. Prior experience with Bank and/or donor funded and public sector projects will be an advantage.
- Excellent writing and communication skills.
- Proficiency in using accounting software and computer business desktop applications (MS Word, Excel, e.g.). Experience with Sage 50 (Peachtree) accounting software will be an asset.

Contract Duration

This contract will be for two (2) years, subject to satisfactory annual performance reviews and may be extended throughout the life of the project.

Remuneration

Remuneration will be commensurate with qualifications and experience.