



REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ)

FOR SERVICES

Project Title:	Pacific Research Vessel
Nature of the services	Research, assess and advise on sustainable financing considerations for the Pacific Research Vessel.
Location:	Noumea
Date of issue:	6/11/2024
Closing Date:	24/11/2024
SPC Reference:	24-7295

Contents

PART 1: INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 ABOUT THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY (SPC)	3
1.2 SPC'S PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES	3
1.3 SPC'S REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ) PROCESS	3
PART 2: INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS	3
2.1 BACKGROUND	3
2.2 SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS	3
2.3 EVALUATION & CONTRACT AWARD	4
2.4 KEY CONTACTS	4
2.5 KEY DATES	4
2.6 LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE	5
2.7 COMPLAINTS PROCESS	5
PART 3: TERMS OF REFERENCE	6
A. BACKGROUND/CONTEXT	6
B. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, SCOPE OF SERVICES	7
C. TIMELINES	7
D. REPORTING AND CONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS	7
E. SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS	8
F. SCOPE OF BID PRICE AND SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS	8
G. ANNEXES TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE	9
PART 4: PROPOSAL EVALUATION MATRIX.....	10
4.1 COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS & SCORE WEIGHT	10

Part 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 About the Pacific Community (SPC)

The Pacific Community (SPC) is the principal scientific and technical organisation of the Pacific region, established by treaty in 1947 with the signing of the *Agreement Establishing the South Pacific Commission* (the Canberra Agreement).

Our unique organisation covers more than 20 sectors and is renowned for knowledge and innovation in such areas as fisheries science, public health surveillance, geoscience and conservation of plant genetic resources for food security.

For more information about SPC and the work that we do, please visit our website: <https://www.spc.int/>.

1.2 SPC's procurement activities

SPC's procurement activities are guided by the principles of high ethical standards, value for money, open competition and social and environmental responsibility and are carried out under our Procurement Policy.

For further information or enquiries about SPC's procurement activities, please visit the procurement pages on our website: <https://www.spc.int/procurement> or email: procurement@spc.int

1.3 SPC's Request for Quotation (RFQ) Process

At SPC, procurement valued at more than EUR 2,000 and less than or equal to EUR 45,000 requires an evaluation of at least three quotations to determine the offer that provides the best value for money through a Request for Quotation (RFQ) process.

This RFQ sets out SPC's requirements for a project and it asks you, as a bidder, to respond in writing in a prescribed format with pricing and other required information.

Your participation confirms your acceptance of SPC's conditions of participation in the RFQ process.

Part 2: INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

2.1 Background

SPC invites you to submit a quotation to deliver the services as specified in [Part 3](#).

SPC has compiled these instructions to guide prospective bidders and to ensure that all bidders are given equal and fair consideration. Please read the instructions carefully before submitting your bid. For your quotation to be considered, it is important that you provide all the prescribed information by the closing date and in the format specified.

2.2 Submission Instructions

You must **submit your quotation and all supporting documents** in English and as an attachment to an email sent to simonn@spc.int and with the subject line of your email as follows: **Submission 24-7295**. The email should also be copied to rfq@spc.int.

The supporting documents expected in this RFQ are:

- [The Conflict-of-Interest Declaration form](#) completed

- Resume or *curriculum vitae* including full contact details from at least three people professionally familiar with your work who would be willing to provide a testimonial on your behalf.

Your submission must be clear, concise and complete and should only include a quotation and information that is necessary to respond effectively to this RFQ. Please note that you may be marked down or excluded from the procurement exercise if your submission contains any ambiguities or lacks clarity.

Bids will be evaluated on the basis of information received by **23.59 hours Noumea time on 24/11/2024**.

2.3 Evaluation & Contract Award

Each quotation validly received will be assessed against the evaluation criteria matrix set out in [Part 4](#). Any changes in the evaluation criteria will result in the RFQ process being re-issued.

SPC may award the contract once it has determined that a bidder has met the prescribed requirements and the bidder's proposal has been determined to be substantially responsive to the RFQ documents, provide the best value for money (highest cumulative score) and best serve the interests of SPC.

In the event of a bid being accepted, procurement will take place under SPC's [General Terms and Conditions of Contract](#) and depending on the value or nature of the procurement, the award will be made by issuing a purchase order or a signed and dated contract, or both.

2.4 Key Contacts

Please contact SPC should you have any doubt as to what is required or if we can help answer any questions that you may have.

Dr Simon Nicol will be your primary point of contact for this RFQ and can be contacted at simonn@spc.int. You should copy any communications into rfq@spc.int.

Details will be kept of any communications between SPC and bidders. This assists SPC to ensure transparency of the procurement process. While SPC prefers written communication in the RFQ process, at any point where there is phone call or other conversation, SPC expects to keep a file note of the exchange, with all forms of communication with prospective bidders to be retained as source documents for the procurement of the services.

2.5 Key Dates

Please see the proposed procurement timetable in the table below. This timetable is intended as a guide only and while SPC does not intend to depart from the timetable, it reserves the right to do so at any stage.

STAGE	DATE
RFQ sent to potential vendors	6/11/2024
RFQ Closing Date	24/11/2024
Award of Contract	6/12/2024
Commencement of Contract	9/12/2024
Conclusion of Contract	28/02/2025

2.6 Legal and compliance

Confidentiality: Unless otherwise agreed by SPC in advance or where the contents of the RFQ are already in the public domain when shared with the bidder, bidders shall at all times treat the contents of the RFQ and any related documents as confidential. SPC will also treat the information it receives from the bidders as confidential.

Conflict of interest: Bidders must take all necessary measures to prevent any situation of conflict of interest. You must notify SPC in writing as soon as possible of any situation that could constitute a conflict of interest during the RFQ process. If you have any familial connection with SPC staff, this must be declared, and approval will then be sought for you to engage in the RFQ process. **In support of your response to this RFQ, you must submit to SPC [the Conflict-of-Interest Declaration form](#) available on our procurement page website: <https://spc.int/procurement>.**

Breach of this requirement can result in SPC terminating any contract with a successful bidder.

Currency, validity, duties, taxes: Unless specifically otherwise requested, all proposals should be in USD and must be net of any direct or indirect taxes and duties, and shall remain valid for 120 days from the closing date. The successful bidder is bound by their proposal for a further 60 days following notification they are the preferred bidder so that the contract may be awarded. No price variation due to escalation, inflation, fluctuation in exchange rates, or any other market factors shall be accepted at any time during this period.

No offer of contract or invitation to contract: This RFQ is not an offer to contract or an invitation by SPC to enter into a contract with you.

Privacy: The bidder is to comply with the requirements of applicable legislation and regulatory requirements in force for the use of personal data that is disclosed for the purposes of this RFQ. SPC will handle any personal information it receives under the RFQ in line with its [Privacy Policy](#), and the [Guidelines for handling personal information of bidders and grantees](#).

Warranty, representation, assurance, undertaking: The bidder acknowledges and agrees that no person has any authority to give any warranty, representation, assurance or undertaking on behalf of SPC in connection with any contract which may (or may not) follow on from this RFQ process.

2.7 Complaints process

Bidders that consider they were not treated fairly during any SPC procurement process may lodge a protest. The protest should be addressed to complaints@spc.int. The bidder must provide the following information: (1) full contact details; (2) details of the relevant procurement; (3) reasons for the protest, including how the alleged behaviour negatively impacted the bidder; (4) copies of any documents supporting grounds for protest; (5) the relief that is sought.

Part 3: TERMS OF REFERENCE

A. Background/context

Although there are some privately owned and operated vessels that support marine research, the majority of fisheries and oceanographic research vessels in operation around the globe are owned and operated by national entities. These research vessels support a variety of projects associated with cruises in waters under national jurisdiction or on the high seas. In some circumstances vessels are available to third parties to charter to undertake research of specific interest to that party including in multiple maritime jurisdictions (exclusive economic zones (EEZs) or the high seas). In other circumstances, where the outcomes are of mutual interest, third parties may contribute financially and technically to cruises supporting collaborative research in waters under a range of jurisdictions. This occurs in the EU, for example. The costs associated with the operations of research vessels in these situations are generally supported from participating Government recurrent allocations to national academic or research institutions.¹

The Pacific Community's Pacific Research Vessel (PRV) will be owned and operated by the SPC Secretariat on behalf of its 27 member countries and territories. It will have the potential to support research cruises in the EEZs of all of its 22 Pacific Island members and on the adjacent high seas covering a total area of approximately 50 million km².

Although several SPC member territories host research vessels operated by metropolitan members of SPC, none of SPC's Pacific Island member countries or territories currently own or operate a fisheries or oceanographic research vessel that can support extended operations beyond coastal areas. The reason for this is the costs associated with owning and operating fisheries research vessels are beyond the capability of the national budgets of individual SPC members to sustain. For similar reasons, these countries and territories rarely, if ever, charter research vessels to undertake oceanographic research. However, they do authorise research vessels operated by other countries or commercial interests, generally from beyond the region,² to support a range of marine research within their EEZs that is assessed to be of potential national benefit.

On the basis that individual SPC Island member ownership is prohibitive, and that the ocean is the central pillar of long-term social and economic wellbeing for Pacific Island countries, a shared fisheries and oceanographic research vessel is a logical development. In addition to the initial capital cost associated with the acquisition of such as asset, funding arrangements to sustain its day-to-day operations, need to be secured. A sustainable funding model for the SPC's PRV is essential. It has one objective:

To secure funding to sustain a RFRV cruise schedule in the SPC region of 200 sea days annually.

Principles

The overarching principle guiding a funding requirements assessment for the PRV is that the operations of the vessel will be based on full cost recovery.

Unless specifically provided for in SPC's annual approved budget, SPC's recurrent budget will not be used to subsidise vessel cruises at any time³.

¹ In some instances, research vessels may be made available for charter by the private sector e.g. to undertake bathymetric surveys for a coastal development or to support seabed mining exploration.

² Including Australia, New Zealand, Korea, Japan, China, France and the USA.

³ See below in relation to the anticipated annual contribution from SPC's recurrent budget to maintain the vessel in a state capable of undertaking cost-recovered cruises at all times. [for discussion!]

B. Purpose, objectives, scope of services

The purpose of this consultancy is to research, assess and advise on financing options to support the operations of the Pacific Research Vessel. Objectives include:

1. Project the funding required to support the PRV supporting an anticipated 200 sea days annually for the 5-year period 2027-2031
2. Describe the risks for the operations of the PRV that are directly related to securing sustainable financing arrangements. Potential risks could include a combination of political, institutional, reputational and economic/financial (such as associated with vessel lay up).
3. Identify and describe all potential sources of funding that could contribute to supporting the operations and activities of the PRV
4. Describe the potential extent of funding that might be available from each potential funding source across various time frames
5. Assess the strengths and weaknesses/limitations of each potential source of funding to support the operations of the PRV as a basis for recommending future courses of action in relation to each
6. In relation to each funding source appraised as offering potential funding support, map out a strategy for SPC to implement to optimise the prospects for securing funding support from that source.

C. Timelines

The assignment is expected to commence on the signing of a contract with SPC on 9 December 2024. The contract will conclude on 28 February 2025 which provides approximately 50 working days for the task. This recognises numerous days falling within the Christmas/New Year period.

An approximate schedule, subject to negotiation and confirmation with the successful bidder, is:

20 December	Inception Report. Task 1
17 January	Draft Report for Tasks 2, 3, 4 and 5
24 January	Draft Report for Task 6
7 February	SPC written response to Drafts submitted
28 February	Submission of final consolidated Report ⁴

D. Reporting and contracting arrangements

The successful bidder will be responsible to Dr Simon Nicol (simonn@spc.int) from SPC FAME's Division. Any revisions to the timelines, terms of reference, scope of work or forecast outputs and deliverables must be approved by Dr Nicol in writing. It is anticipated that communications with SPC FAME staff will remain open throughout the assignment with a minimum of a weekly de-brief.

⁴ Subject to negotiation regarding progress with completing this task taking account of the impact of the Christmas/New Year period.

The assignment may involve travel to Noumea, New Caledonia or other regional locations by prior agreement. SPC will reimburse the successful bidder for air fares, DSA and reasonable pre-approved costs associated with travel. Miscellaneous expenses may also be considered for reimbursement by SPC also on a pre-approved basis.

The successful bidder is expected to undertake a broad range of consultations with relevant professionals to support the required research and assessment. Consultations may include individuals and representatives of agencies responsible for research vessel operations in New Zealand, Australia and France. Consultations with representatives of SPC member governments, traditional sources of development assistance funding to SPC and to its members and other international or national funding sources, including potential philanthropic sources, will be expected. Engagement with other CROP agencies, particularly SPREP, FFA, PNAO, USP and ForSec will inform the assessment. If required SPC will assist with introductions to appropriate personnel.

E. Skills and qualifications

The successful bidder will:

- hold a tertiary qualification in one or more of the following fields: business, financial and institutional analysis, project administration or investment appraisal.
- demonstrate at least 10 years of professional experience in the business case appraisal of complex projects or initiatives, inclusive of financial feasibility assessments
- be able to describe similar assessments or feasibility appraisals directly relevant to this assignment with which the bidder had a senior role
- have a deep understanding of the political and economic environment of the Pacific Islands region
- be conversant with the regional institutional arrangements in the Pacific Islands region
- be knowledgeable of traditional sources of funding supporting economic and social development initiatives in SPC members or at SPC, and
- be aware of the requirements for the inclusion of social and environmental responsibility considerations in undertaking work for the SPC.

F. Scope of Bid Price and Schedule of Payments

The assignment fee is based on a lump sum amount paid in instalments. Pre-approved travel costs including airfares by the most direct economy-class route and accommodation costs will be reimbursed by SPC. The fee will be paid on the receipt of an invoice for each of the following deliverable:

Draft Report: Task 1	20%
Draft Report: Task 2, 3, 4, and 5	30%
Draft Report: Task 6	15%
Final Report	35%

The terms of payment shall be in accordance with the provisions of Article 10 of SPC's General Conditions.

G. Annexes to the Terms of Reference

Additional background information is available here: <https://fame.spc.int/ecosystems-and-marine-biology/pacificsciencevessel> or on request from Dr Simon Nicol – simonn@spc.int

Part 4: PROPOSAL EVALUATION MATRIX

4.1 Competency Requirements & Score Weight

The evaluation matrix below reflects the obtainable score specified for each evaluation criterion (technical and financial requirements) which indicates the relative significance or weight of the items in the overall evaluation process.

Evaluation criteria	Score Weight (%)	Points obtainable
Mandatory requirements		
<p>Hold a tertiary qualification in one or more of the following fields: business, financial and institutional analysis, project administration or investment appraisal.</p> <p>Deep understanding of the political and economic environment of the Pacific Islands region</p> <p>Conversant with the regional institutional arrangements in the Pacific Islands region</p> <p>Knowledgeable of traditional sources of funding supporting economic and social development initiatives in SPC members or at SPC, and</p> <p>Acknowledge the requirements for the inclusion of social and environmental responsibility considerations in undertaking work for the SPC.</p>		Mandatory requirements. Bidders will be disqualified if any of the requirements are not met
Technical requirements		
Technical requirement 1: At least 10 years of professional experience in the business case appraisal of complex projects or initiatives, inclusive of financial feasibility assessments	35%	245
Technical requirement 2: Methodology and work plan describing the strategic approach to be used by the consultant to complete the assignment.	35%	245
Technical requirement: Evidence of appraisals and feasibility assessments in which the bidder had a leading role and which are demonstrably relevant to this assignment	15%	105
Technical requirement: Names and contact details for people in a position to provide a professional testimonial verifying the competence and capability of the bidder.	10%	70
Other: Comprehensiveness and presentation format of the bid	5%	35
Technical Score	70%	700
Financial scoring		
Price	30%	300
TOTAL	100%	1,000