

# TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR) FOR THE GRANT AWARD EVALUATION COMMITTEE

## BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) is a government agency within the Government of the Cook Islands. Established under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Act 1995-1996, the Ministry's purpose is to:

- (a) To establish effective economic, fiscal, and financial management and responsibility by Government;
- (b) To provide accompanying accountability arrangements, together with compliance with those requirements;
- (c) To require the Government to produce:
  - (i) statements of economic policy;
  - (ii) confirmation of adherence to fiscal disciplines prescribed under this Act;
  - (iii) budget policy statements;
  - (iv) economic and fiscal forecasts and updates;
  - (v) financial management information;
  - (vi) comprehensive annual reports.

The Development Coordination Division (DCD) of the MFEM is charged with managing development partner assistance to the Cook Islands, including grants, loans, and technical assistance.

Given the Cook Islands position as a Small Islands Developing State (SIDs), that is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, the MFEM has been selected as the agency to facilitate access to funding allocated to the fight against climate change. In 2016, the MFEM was accredited as a National Implementing Entity (NIE) to the Adaptation Fund (AF) and is currently undertaking accreditation by the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Mechanisms for evaluation of project proposals, procurement rules and management and monitoring systems of the MFEM have been developed and consolidated to this end.

## PURPOSE OF THIS TOR

These ToR describe the composition and the functioning of the Grant Award Evaluation Committee. This Committee will be in charge of reviewing project proposal submitted to the MFEM in order to receive climate financing (AF and GCF) and/or any other financial partners.

This Committee is created within the overall framework of establishing a Grant Award system for the MFEM, and in particular to cover the specific requirements related to climate financing.

## COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

The Grant Award Evaluation Committee will be chaired by the Manager of the DCD within the MFEM and composed of staff from the MFEM, Office of the Prime Minister's (OPM) Policy and Planning Office, National Environment Service, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture, supported, if necessary by external experts. The Committee will operate based on three complementary components, outlined below:

### 1. Fiduciary and Administration Team

This team will examine elements related to the institutional and financial arrangements for the project proposal. It will mainly assess the following criteria: the project eligibility, the

eligibility of the implementing agency and other project stakeholders, the financial resources and budget allocation, the project management system.

This team will be composed of the following MFEM staff, the Treasurer, the Budget Manager, Senior Procurement Officer and Development Program Manager.

## **2. Technical Team**

This team will examine the elements related to the issues and themes addressed and the technical solutions proposed by the project. The following elements will be assessed: the conformity of the project objectives with the focus areas of the fund/financial partner, alignment to national priorities, compliance of activities and expected results with good practices and internationally recognised standards.

The core member of this team will be from the OPM Policy and Planning Office and depending on the themes to be addressed and the complexity of the proposal, the Chair may seek expertise from other relevant sectors of the Cook Islands Government and/or seek external technical expertise.

## **3. Environmental and Social Team**

This team will review the environmental and social impacts and risks related to the project activities. The team will be guided by the MFEM Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework and the Environmental and Social Safeguard Standards to ensure the proposals compliance and potential management of risks and impacts. The Screening Checklist for ESS2-9 will also assist.

The core members of this team will be from the National Environment Service, Director of the Policy Division, Gender Unit, Labour Unit from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture, if necessary, the Chair may seek recourse from external expertise.

## **FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMITTEE**

Following receipt of a grant request, the Committee Chairman shall summon the members of the three teams to assess the compliance of the project proposal with the eligibility and evaluation criteria set by the fund/financial partner.

The Grant Award Evaluation Committee shall be guided by the MFEM Grant Evaluation Procedures for Climate Financing Mechanisms.

## ANNEX 2

### TABLE OF ELIGIBILITY AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

COMPONENT	CRITERIA	SCORE
<b>PHASE 1. PRELIMINARY EVALUATION/ELIGIBILITY CHECK (CONCEPT NOTE)</b>		
Fiduciary and Administration (F&A)	Availability of funds	N.A
	Eligibility of implementing agency	
	Eligibility of project (letter of endorsement from NDA)	
	Alignment of the project to Cook Islands priorities	
Technical	Compliance with the objectives of the fund/financial partner	
<b>PHASE 2. IN-DEPTH EVALUATION (FULL PROPOSAL)</b>		
Fiduciary and Administration	Re-verification of the F&A criteria of the Phase 1	0 - 5
	Rational and economical estimation of budget and allocation	
	Reasonableness of the Implementing Agency's management fees	
Technical	Compliance with NSDP, JNAP, GCF Country Programme	0 - 10
	Relevance of addressed issues and themes	
	Clarity of the project objectives and components	
	Promotion of new and innovative solutions	
	Compliance of proposed solutions with best practices and international standards	
	Integration of activities related to knowledge sharing and capacity building	
	Integration of monitoring and evaluation system	
Environmental and Social (E&S)	Compliance with the MFEM Environmental and Social Safeguards Standards	0 - 5
	Completion of the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan, and any other required documentation as per the Environmental Social Assessment	
	Consideration of Gender	