

Mid-term Evaluation
of the implementation and assessment
of the initial results of the CFC/ICAC project

**Commercial Standardization of Instrument Testing of Cotton (CSITC)
for the Cotton Producing Developing Countries in Africa (CFC/ICAC/33)**

Terms of Reference

The Common Fund for Commodities is inviting bids from suitably qualified consultants/consulting firms to conduct a mid-term evaluation *cum* technical assessment of the above-mentioned project. The project is designed to contribute to the establishment and introduction of a reliable, global, system of instrument-based cotton characterization and to facilitate the full involvement of African cotton producing countries therein, through (*inter alia*) the establishment of two specialized Regional Technical Centres in Africa, capable of providing supportive services to a large part of the African cotton producing countries.

Proposals: Interested consultants or consulting companies are invited to submit their proposals outlining proposed methodology, work programme, time frame and budget. An account of relevant past experience/corporate profile should be included, duly reflecting the qualifications sought from the consultants under “Profile of the Consultant” (below). The costs of the proposals to be received are not expected to exceed US\$ 40,000 (including travel), based on a two-person evaluation team. Although the contract will be awarded on a lump-sum basis, the financial proposals should include a transparent breakdown of the total number of days worked, applicable daily fee, travel costs, DSA/local expenses, etc.

Proposals (marked: “Evaluation CFC/ICAC/33”) should reach the Common Fund by 19 March 2010 cob, addressed to:

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Background

The cotton industry increasingly requires objective and reliable cotton fibre test results. Cotton producers who are not able to provide sufficient verification of the quality of their cotton will face price discounts and ultimately possibly exclusion from the market. Only a worldwide harmonised control and testing system can favour a frictionless business for all participants in the whole commercial chain.

Developed cotton growing countries, like the USA, have already built up their national cotton quality assessment systems and their instrumental classification has resulted in a competitive advantage for the USA in global marketing. It is obvious that the establishment of an adequate instrumental cotton testing system for the cotton producing countries in Africa and elsewhere would facilitate the access of their cotton to diverse global markets. Up to now, there is no adequate international verification of test laboratories and their results. The availability of high volume cotton testing instruments solely is not satisfactory. The test results have to be reliable at an internationally agreed

level. Cotton producing developing countries will be disadvantaged in their market position, if they do not manage to participate in an international system to assess the quality of test results.

For the purpose of achieving reliable instrumental test results for the global cotton trade, the ICAC-CSITC Task Force (Commercial Standardisation of Instrument Testing of Cotton) brought together representatives of spinning mills, traders, cotton producers and researchers. Their meetings resulted (*inter alia*) in the design of the current project, which is developed to assist the cotton producing countries, especially the developing countries and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), to meet the emerging quality assessment demands of the global cotton market so as to strengthen or at least maintain their competitive position in the world market by keeping up with modern developments from the end-markets. Therefore, it is essential to enable these countries to supply their cotton with objective and reliable instrument-based quality information, based on internationally accepted test rules and procedures. The current project aims to contribute substantially to that objective.

The Project

The project has total budget of approximately € 6.4 mln and is jointly funded by the Common Fund: € 1.6 mln); the European Union (through its All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme): € 2.6 mln; and counterpart contributions from various parties involved in the project: € 2.2 mln.

The aim of the project is to improve the integrity of worldwide cotton trade by establishing a reliable system of instrument-based cotton characterisation, adoptable by all cotton producing countries, especially developing countries. Therefore, the following measures have to be put in place:

1. Worldwide basis for the project: Introduction of a worldwide acceptable, adoptable and reliable instrument-based cotton quality assessment having defined test rules and supported by a worldwide cotton testing laboratory certification system.
2. Africa-specific part (core of the project): Support to African laboratories, so that they will be able to meet the international requirements for reliable instrument testing of cotton. This will be done mainly by the establishment of two Regional Technical Centres (RTCs) capable to provide the necessary assistance for the application of instrument testing in cotton testing laboratories. Especially training and expertise development will be essential for a successful setting-up of a network of well harmonised laboratories to satisfy the cotton testing demands. The RTCs will be installed in Segou/Mali (Cerfitex/Mali jointly with Sofitex/Burkina Faso) and in Dar es Salaam/Tanzania (Tanzania Bureau of Standards jointly with the Tanzania Cotton Board).

The project comprises the following technical project components:

- A) Global CSITC Configuration;
- B) Evaluation of Cotton Testing Laboratories (setting up of a global Round Trial system);
- C) Support to African Cotton Producing Countries (establishment of 2 RTC's);
- D) Technical Developments to Improve Instrument Testing Reliability.

Components A and B have a global perspective, while components C and D specifically target Africa.

The project is operational since December 2007 and is scheduled to be completed by December 2011. The project is implemented by the FIBRE Institute, Bremen, Germany, which has been contracted by the Fund to be the Project Executing Agency (PEA).

Project activities are mainly located in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (location of "RTC East") and Segou, Mali (location of "RTC West"). Lead technical work is being undertaken in Bremen (at the FIBRE Institute) and Montpellier, France, where CIRAD play a major supportive role.

Detailed information on the project can be found on the websites of the ICAC (www.icac.org), under CFC projects, and of the project (www.csitc.org).

Objective of the Evaluation

In accordance with the requirements of the Fund, a mid-term evaluation has been scheduled to take place approximately after two years of project implementation. This mid-term evaluation shall comprise, but not be limited to, an assessment of the progress made with respect to implementation of the project and the prospects for reaching the targets set.

The main objective of the evaluation is to make an overall assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency with which the project is being implemented and, in particular, to provide a detailed technical assessment of the results obtained so far. The evaluation shall specifically focus on the likelihood of achieving a substantive, sustainable impact, in terms of the project's contribution to the establishment of an internationally operational quality characterization/assessment mechanism and the establishment of two Regional Technical Centres, capable of servicing cotton producing countries in their regions.

While the emphasis will thus be on the project as it has been designed and implemented thus far, the consultants should also assess the considerations that have led to the design of the project itself, given the stated objective of the project, and comment on the perceived usefulness/appropriateness of the various components (as well as the explicit and/or implicit assumptions underlying the current design). In that regard, issues like the managerial and technical expertise in the participating institutions as well as those institutions' operational capabilities for adequately performing the required tasks are to be assessed. A specific issue that should be assessed is the expected post-project sustainability of the structures established by the project.

Profile of the Consultant

The consultants shall have intimate knowledge of the structure of the cotton supply chain and possess extensive experience in the field of cotton characterization/quality control and marketing. They shall have extensive knowledge of both types of instruments currently used for testing (HVI and Premier) and be able to technically assess the performance of the different types of experts working in the Regional Technical Centres. The consultants should possess extensive knowledge of and insights in the work of the ICAC Task Force on CSITC and be able to place the project activities in the overall framework of that Task Force. The consultants should be capable of analysing the work (to be) undertaken by the RTC's from a technical, managerial and commercial level.

The consultants should be knowledgeable of the work of the Common Fund and of the underlying principles of the European Union's All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme. They should be fluent in English and French.

The consultants shall be contracted by the Common Fund for the purpose of the assignment. If awarded the contract, the consultants shall have to confirm that the information made available to them in the framework of the assignment may contain confidential information which should be treated accordingly. In addition, the consultants will have to confirm that any information made available to them shall not be used for any commercial or non-commercial purpose during or after the completion of the assignment.

Programme of Work

It is envisaged that the mission will require visits to the following locations with the following indicative durations:

Bremen – Germany: 2 days;

Montpellier – France: 1 day;

Dar es Salaam – Tanzania: 2 days;
Segou – Mali: 2 days.

With a provisional period of three days preparation in the home office, seven days in the field and four days draft report preparation, it is envisaged that the work can be undertaken in a total period of maximum 20 days (including timing for travel days). Total time input should therefore not exceed 40 (wo)man days.

Travel arrangements are to be made by the consultants. The PEA will assist, to the extent feasible, in preparing a suitable meeting/travel programme. Fielding of the mission is envisaged to be in May 2010.

The consultants will be provided with the following documentation, after finalisation of the contractual arrangements:

- the Project Document (providing a description of the details of the project);
- the Progress Reports for year 1 and 2;
- Annual Work Plans and Budgets for year 1 and 2;
- Other documentation as deemed required by the consultants and available from the PEA, CFC and/or ICAC.

If deemed relevant, staff from the PEA or other designated experts may accompany the consultants as a resource person or as an observer.

The consultants shall be independent in their analysis and assessment. They shall, however, share their preliminary views and findings after visits to project locations with key project staff met during that visit, in order to ascertain that they have correctly assessed the project situation at that location.

Reporting

The evaluation report will be prepared in draft form and be submitted, in the English language, to the Fund for comments/observations within two weeks after completion of the mission. The report shall include an Executive Summary in both English and French (highlighting key findings and recommendations of the mission). It shall contain separate sections on project design, scientific/technical approach, implementation arrangements, and findings and recommendations. It shall follow the prescribed format for evaluation reports as provided in the Fund's Manual for Project Formulation (Annex VII, available through www.common-fund.org). Annexes like Terms of Reference, Technical analyses undertaken, etc. will be attached. One Annex shall specify all meetings held, including dates, names and positions of people met and subjects of discussion. The Fund will share this draft report (which should normally be in the range of 20 - 30 pages, excluding annexes) with the ICAC and the PEA. After having considered the possible comments/observations from the three parties, the consultants shall finalize the report as deemed appropriate. The final report shall reach the Fund not later than two weeks after the receipt of the comments from the three parties. The Fund will arrange for further distribution of the report to and through the ICAC, the PEA and other relevant project partners as appropriate.

Translation of the final report into the French language will be arranged by the Fund.
