

GUIDELINES FOR PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT MARKETING SUPPORT FUND (MSF)

1. Background

The Marketing Support Fund was established to assist micro small and medium enterprises of the Forum Island Countries with limited financial resources and access to capital. The Fund aims to assist these enterprises with an injection of direct financial assistance targeted at increasing market access, enhancing products to gain competitive edge and grow export potential and capability. These would be consistent the Pacific Plan pillar, Economic Growth, which is defined as *sustainable, pro-poor economic growth*, and advocates amongst others, expansion of market for **trade in goods** under the trade agreements (SPARTECA, PICTA and PACER).

2. Objective

To facilitate growth of the private sector through increasing their capabilities to expand, market and promote their products more effectively. The Fund is also meant to provide the means for the private sector to gain information on markets that would help them develop and maintain strategic and sustainable plans for their businesses.

3. Areas of coverage

The MSF offers assistance in four main areas as outlined below:

- (i) *Market Research* (maximum F\$5,000) – this component assists applicants with the gathering of information such as consumer demographics and product demands and specifications on prospective markets through research. This can be through either specially commissioned market research and/or the review of existing research. The assistance is **not** available for applicant's travel, and research cannot be undertaken by the applicant's salaried employees, or by subsidiary/associate/parent companies' employees or by immediate family members or by anyone with pecuniary interest in the project.
- (ii) *Exploration Visits* (maximum F\$5,000 within the region and F\$8,000 outside the region) - the aim of this component is to encourage applicants to explore opportunities for their goods and/or services in target markets. Applications for this component must include evidence of research that was conducted on the market that will be visited, and a confirmed schedule of meetings with prospective customers. The report should include the outcomes of the meetings. The assistance should cover the cost of airfare and per diem for one (1) person.
- (ii) *Exhibition/Conference Participation* (maximum F\$5,000 within the region and F\$8,000 outside the region) – this component allows the applicants to participate at exhibitions and/or conferences where they can promote their products and network with prospective buyers. The assistance should cover the cost of airfare and per diem for maximum of one (1) person, and up to 60% of airfreight charges.
- (iii) *Promotional Material* (maximum F\$5,000) – material such as brochures, posters, advertisements and websites are crucial to the promotion of a product. This component provides the means for the applicants to produce promotional material. The assistance should cover the cost of design, layout and printing, and is offered for new material (no reprints) and as **one time only**. The

following acknowledgement statement should be included in all printed material that is produced under the MSF, ***“Assistance for this project was provided by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.”*** Reports for this component should include four (4) copies of the printed material.

4. Criteria

In order for a business/enterprise to be eligible for the MSF assistance they should:

- (i) Be registered and conducting business in one of the fourteen (14) Forum Island Countries;
- (ii) Have been trading for not less than twelve (12) months; and
- (iii) Not have been assisted under the MSF within 24 months from the time of the current application, i.e. applicants can only reapply after a period of two (2) years from when they were first assisted.

5. Procedures

The MSF grants are offered on a reimbursement basis, with payment made after a comprehensive report and original receipts of expenses are received by the Secretariat by the given deadline. All applications for the MSF are required to be appraised and endorsed by a competent trade official or similar entity (e.g. Line Ministry, Trade & Investment Board, Investment Promotion Unit, Chamber of Commerce or relevant NGO), and then channeled through the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat’s official contact which in most cases is the Ministry of Foreign or External Affairs, and in some, the Prime Ministers Office.

The requests should give details of the project, e.g. objective, scope and description of the project, background of the consultant in the case of Market Research, and expected benefits.

Requests need to be submitted to the Secretariat at least two weeks before the commencement of the activity.

6. Funding request

The requests should give the following details:

- **Title:** Title of the project
- **Objective:** Objective(s) of the project and how it fits in with your business strategies, and the relevant government department/ministry programme or development plan (where available) of your country, and the Economic Growth pillar of the Pacific Plan (see Section 1)
- **Background:** Description of your business; the main activities and constraints within your industry and how this project will address them.
- **Marketing & Promotion:** Provide details of current marketing and promotional strategies and how this project will add value to your overall business objectives.
- **Project Description:** Provide full description of the project including dates and location.
- **Project Cost:** Provide detailed breakdown of the cost of project. Where travel is included, provide a copy of confirmed flight itinerary with airfare, cost of airfreight (if applicable), fees (if applicable) and estimate of per diems.

Note – failure to provide the above detailed costs will delay the assessment and approval process

- **Implementing Organisation/Enterprise:** The name of the Organisation/Enterprise that will be responsible for project implementation. The name, title, phone/fax number and email of the person responsible.
- **Expected Benefits:** Describe the benefits that are expected from the project, and how the organisation/business intends to ensure their sustainability in the medium to long term.
- **Payment:** Provide the Organisation/Enterprise's bank details for reimbursement after the completion of the project.

7. Reporting/ Reimbursement

Upon completion of the project, the applicant is required to submit a report to the Secretariat using the MSF Report Template, by the given deadline. Submission for reimbursement should include the report and original receipts of all expenses incurred. Please see Section 3 under the relevant component for further required reporting details.

8. Information

For *further information* please:

- a) contact the PIFS Official Contact in your country which is usually the Secretary for Foreign Affairs or External Affairs or the Prime Ministers Office; or
- b) write directly to *The Development Cooperation Adviser, Enabling Mechanism, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Private Mail Bag, Suva, Fiji*, or Fax (679) 3305880, or Phone (679) 3312600 or E-mail: info@forumsec.org.fj