Terms of Reference
development of the Global Programme on Consumer Information

for individual consultants or not-for-profit organizations only

Organizational Unit: UNEP DTIE SCP Branch

1. Background (justification for request)

The UNEP Programme of Work on Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Consumption and Production has an area of work focusing on the following objective:

*Demand-side decisions and consumption choices favour more resource-efficient and environmentally responsible products, driven and enabled by harmonized and internationally recognized product sustainability information.*

High quality, transparent, credible and easy accessible information on the sustainability of products is one of the critical enabling conditions for advancing towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns and the transition to a green economy. Information should meet the following criteria: (1) be based on products’ impacts along their life cycles to allow different market actors to identify critical areas for action and ensure net environmental improvement without shifting impacts elsewhere; and (2) be available in a practical and understandable format for the user to apply in a range of contexts.

The current landscape of consumer-oriented product information systems is fragmented and confusing.

- There are different underlying methodologies used for measuring the impacts of products based on life cycle, which often produce results that are not easily comparable and verifiable.
- The information systems used for communicating product information to consumers such as voluntary certifications, ecolabels, product declarations, ratings and reporting are proliferating.
- There is currently no commonly agreed way to quantify the sustainability of a product and to communicate it and no global structures or mechanism that could link the different initiatives with the purpose of creating dialogue and consensus.

These challenges lead to unsubstantiated claims, greenwashing, and as other unfair commercial practices, which result in consumer confusion and mistrust, undermine the intended purpose of these systems and limit the potential of green markets and growth. There are, however, existing best practices that need to be promoted and scaled up.

There are many issues but also opportunities in assisting the market transformation through credible, meaningful and comprehensive information about products and companies’ performances. The opportunities can be realized through the joint work of various concerned actors and initiatives within a global programme on consumer information. Such programme has been prioritized under the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on SCP (10YFP), which was adopted at the UNCSD Rio+20 Conference in June 2012.¹ The 10YFP is a global framework for action to enhance international cooperation to accelerate the shift towards SCP in both developed and developing countries. The 10YFP will develop, replicate and scale up SCP and resource efficiency initiatives, at national and regional levels, decoupling environmental degradation and resource use from economic growth, and thus increase the net contribution of economic activities to poverty eradication and social development. The 10YFP builds on the experience gained through the preparatory process known as the Marrakech Process, which identified regional needs and priorities for promotion of more sustainable consumption and production practices.

To develop a proposal for a global programme on consumer information, a proper preparation with open and informed and multi-stakeholder consultation is necessary to ensure active engagement and, ownership of stakeholders, identify synergies and build cooperation, as well as ensure relevance, and

¹ 10YFP adopted document (A/CONF.216/5) available at www.unep.org/10yfp
true collaborative and inclusive spirit. The programme should be also in compliance with key criteria\(^2\) identified by the 10YFP.

2. Purpose:

To this end, UNEP is seeking an external consultant to contribute to the preparation and consultation process to develop a proposal for a Global Programme on Consumer Information under the 10YFP on SCP. More specifically the consultant will implement the following activities in close consultation with the 10YFP Secretariat, hosted by UNEP:

1) **Take stock of ongoing work, initiatives, networks related to consumer and product sustainability information including achievements, lessons learned, best practices and gaps and prepare a draft concept paper:**

   - Make an overview of the results of the completed and existing work by UNEP and other actors and stakeholders related to consumer information and production sustainability information to identify needs, gaps and opportunities. These include international literature research, recent research and outcomes of the various events.

   - Based on the overview, develop a draft concept of how a global programme on consumer information should respond to the current needs and challenges and promote existing best practices, aiming to make a positive difference in the market within 10 years. The draft concept will propose the scope of the programme, specific objectives for short, medium and long terms, areas of work to pursue, with which stakeholders, challenges and opportunities as well as best practices. Issues in countries with emerging and developing economies should be also considered. The concept note of the proposal on consumer information programme should address the key criteria for 10YFP programmes as outlined in the 10YFP document A/CONF.216/5.

2) **Develop and conduct international multi-stakeholder consultation:**

   - Based on the draft concept paper, develop necessary strategy for consultation with key stakeholders through interviews and online survey in close collaboration and coordination with the 10YFP Secretariat.

   - Conduct consultation. The consultation will be using an online questionnaire and also include a number of targeted interviews with key stakeholders. The consultation should be conducted in inclusive fashion, globally with balanced geographical representation. The consultation process will require substantive networking and outreach efforts.

   - Based on feedback received, the draft concept note will be revised and finalized. This will be used for further outreach and consultation in relevant international events on the 10YFP and other relevant events related to consumer information during the period of this assignment.

3) **Develop a proposal for the global programme on consumer information:**

   - Taking into the account the results of the preliminary stakeholder consultation, develop the proposal with details of the programme’s content (scope, objectives, areas of work and activities, timeline, indicators) and modus operandi including the governance structure and list of stakeholders for engagement in the programme coordination, management and implementation. A budget for the short-term implementation of the programme and the proposal for the launch of the programme will be included. The programme should be in line with key criteria for 10YFP programmes as outlined in the 10YFP text.

4) **Contribute to the organization of and facilitate the expert meeting.**

\(^2\) The 10YFP lists the following criteria for programmes: (a) Contribute to meeting the goals and principles of the 10-year framework of programmes, as well as to the three pillars of sustainable development; (b) Respond to national and regional needs, priorities and circumstances; (c) Be based on life cycle approaches, including resource efficiency and sustainable use of resources, and related methodologies, including science-based and traditional knowledge-based approaches, cradle to cradle and the 3R concept, as appropriate; (d) Be based on a solid scientific and policy knowledge base; (e) Be transparent; (f) Be consistent with international obligations, including, where applicable, the rules of the World Trade Organization; (g) Encourage the involvement of all relevant stakeholders; (h) Consider the use of a mix of efficient instruments such as education, training and data collection, as well as research activities in each programme, as appropriate; (i) Have established clear objectives and measures of success; (j) Promote synergies with work in similar areas, in order, inter alia, to promote co-benefits and opportunities to leverage resources towards mutual objectives and minimize duplication of ongoing efforts, including in other international forums; (k) Be described in a simple common format, covering the programme criteria mentioned above and identifying lead actors.
- The meeting objective will be to review the proposal and engage key stakeholders for the participation in the programme implementation. This meeting will be organized in cooperation with the 10YFP Secretariat and Board, and ideally will be within an official international/regional 10YFP meeting or back to back.

5) Make the revised draft available on the 10YFP website for consultation and feedback by public.

- Revise the draft based on the discussion of the expert meetings and feedback from UNEP and open the final draft for consultation by public through the 10YFP website.

6) Finalize the proposal, including feedback from public and final remarks from UNEP. The final submission should include the launch plan.

Detailed work plan is presented in section 4.

3. Requirements

3.1 Qualifications / special skills or knowledge

- Advanced university degree in environmental policy or international business management and administration with focus on sustainability, corporate social responsibility;
- At least 10 years of experience in the field;
- Extensive knowledge of product information (life cycle data and methodologies) and communication (standards, certification, labelling and corporate reporting). Knowledge and familiarity with sustainable production and consumption policies is desirable;
- Demonstrated analytical skills and ability to analyze and integrate diverse information from various sources and derive a strategy from this information;
- Strong oral and written communication skills; ability to craft and deliver messages in an articulate manner. Good command of English;
- Flexibility to accommodate changes and ability to operate effectively in a changing environment, and to produce results under stress;
- Good network of international contacts to be able to reach out to key actors including thought leaders.

3.2 Ultimate result of services

The final output will include the structured, multi-stakeholder global programme on consumer information with a potential for a launch. The proposal for the programme (25-35 pgs) will be based on the following proposed outline:

- Executive summary
- Background and introduction
- Analysis including methodology, scenarios and options
- Programme proposal
  - Scope, goal and objectives (short, mid and long-term)
  - Areas of work and activities (based on objectives)
  - Stakeholders
  - Timeline and indicators
  - Modus operandi including the governance structure
  - Budget
  - Launch roadmap
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Annexes

3.3 Title and identification number of programme/project (for internal use only): 63.P2

3.4 Duration: 6 months

4. Funding
4.1 Source of Funds  
Regular Budget ☐  Extra-budgetary ☑

4.2 Allotment Account / Budget Line (for internal use only)

4.3 Indicative level of remuneration: Lump sum including the travel

3. Travel involved

Travel will be organized by  
Substantive Office ☐  Selected candidate ☑

4. Workplan (for content and requirements of each activity, refer to section 2)

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<th>Activity/objective</th>
<th>Delivery time</th>
<th>Output and Performance indicators</th>
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<tr>
<td>1) Take stock of ongoing work and prepare a daft concept paper. Building on and complementing already available information, develop a draft concept paper of how a global programme on consumer information can be to respond to the current needs and challenges and promote existing best practices.</td>
<td>2nd week after the start of the assignment</td>
<td>Clear and concise draft concept for the review by UNEP (5-10 pgs). The draft concept will propose the scope of the programme, specific objectives for short, mid and long terms, areas of work to pursue and with which stakeholders, challenges and opportunities as well as best practices with clear vision of how to make a positive difference in the market within 10 years. Specific focus should be made on the issues in countries with emerging and developing economies. The concept note of the proposal on consumer information programme should address the key criteria for 10YFP programmes as outlined in the 10YFP document A/CONF.216/5.</td>
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<td>2) Present the draft concept to UNEP and possibly other key actors (through a webinar) collect the feedback and revise as necessary based on the UNEP comments.</td>
<td>3rd week</td>
<td>Revised draft of the concept approved for the external consultation.</td>
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<td>3) Develop and conduct a preliminary stakeholder consultation. Based on the agreed draft concept paper, develop necessary strategy for consultation from key stakeholders through interviews and survey. The survey will be conducted using the online media and also involve a number of targeted interview with key stakeholders. The survey should be conducted in consultative and inclusive fashion and be globally representative. It will require substantive networking and outreach efforts.</td>
<td>8th week</td>
<td>Implemented strategy for consultation on the concept paper from key stakeholders, which resulted in comprehensive, meaningful responses from a geographically balanced group of stakeholders, useful for the purpose of developing the concept into a full-scale programme</td>
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<td>4) Finalize the concept note based on feedback received and</td>
<td>9th week</td>
<td>A comprehensive concept for the programme available in a communication format to be</td>
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<td>Activity/objective</td>
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<td>facilitate its use for further outreach in key international events organized during the period of the assignment.</td>
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<td>used for further outreach and consultation in other relevant international events.</td>
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<td>5). Develop a proposal for the global programme on consumer information. Taking into the account the results of the preliminary stakeholder consultation, develop the proposal with details of the programme’s content and modus operandi. Revise it accordingly with UNEP input to be presented at the expert meeting.</td>
<td>12th week</td>
<td>Draft proposal for the global programme on consumer information agreed with UNEP for the presentation at the expert meeting (20-25 pgs). The proposal clear defines content (scope, objectives, areas of work, activities, timeline and indicators) and modus operandi including the governance structure and list of stakeholders for engagement at different level, needed budget with details on the near-term implementation of the programme and launch plans.</td>
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<td>6) Contribute to the organization of and facilitate the expert meeting. The meeting objective will be to review the proposal, engage key stakeholders for the participation in the programme implementation and agree on the next steps for the launch of the programme.</td>
<td>16th week</td>
<td>Meeting annotated agenda, list of participants and meeting report from a well-organized meeting resulting in useful recommendations for the refining and finalization of the programme proposal, agreement on the next steps and engagement of key stakeholders in the programme implementation.</td>
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<td>7) Revise the proposal and elaborate the launch plan based on the discussion of the expert meeting.</td>
<td>18th week</td>
<td>Revised draft proposal of the global programme taking into account the feedback from the expert meeting and responding to key criteria for the 10YFP programmes on consumer information.</td>
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<td>8) In coordination with the 10YFP Secretariat open the final draft for consultation by public and other interested stakeholders.</td>
<td>18th week</td>
<td>Revised proposal available for consultation on the 10YFP website for feedback from public and other interested stakeholders.</td>
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<td>9) Submit the final proposal to UNEP including the launch plans.</td>
<td>24th week</td>
<td>Fully fledged structured and comprehensive programme proposal with duly considered comments from UNEP and feedback from the public. Agreed and accepted by the 10YFP Secretariat.</td>
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5. Reporting lines:
Responsible Consumption Unit, Sustainable Consumption Branch, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics of UNEP.

6. Submission process:
Interested groups and experts are invited to submit a short proposal containing the description of relevant background and qualification, technical and financial offer. The deadline for submission is 15 February 2013. Proposals to be submitted to the attention of Ms. Liazzat Rabbiosi at 10yfp@unep.org