Request for Proposal
Local Law firm to Formulate Food Safety Regulations with MFDA and WHO in Maldives

1. Purpose

The purpose of this expression of interest is to hire a local contractual partner/law firm to support development of 17 documents – regulations and standards mentioned in the Food Safety Act, in coordination with MFDA, MoH and WHO. The Food Safety Act outlines the need for several regulations to be formulated to ensure its smooth implementation. Clause 99 lists twenty regulations that need to be formulated or revised, with sixteen needing endorsement within 3 months from 23rd August 2024. The MFDA is seeking legal assistance to develop these regulations within the specified time frame.

2. Background

Food safety is paramount for people to consume the nutrients they need to stay healthy, learn, or work. More than 600 million people fall ill and 420,000 die every year after eating contaminated food. Foodborne diseases impede socioeconomic development by straining healthcare systems, and harming national economies, tourism and trade (WHO, 2020). The burden of such illness falls most heavily on the poor and the young. In addition, foodborne illness is responsible for 420,000 preventable deaths every year (FAO/WHO, 2022).

Food safety measures are implemented to prevent food contamination and illness. The Food Safety Act (6/2024), which was endorsed by the President of the Maldives on May 23, 2024, constitutes a critical component of the government’s public health mandate. The Maldives Food and Drug Authority (MFDA) is diligently collaborating with pertinent stakeholders to ensure the scheduled implementation of the Food Safety Act.

The Food Safety Act outlines regulations to be formulated to ensure its smooth implementation. Clause 99 lists twenty regulations that need to be formulated or revised, with sixteen of these regulations needing endorsement within 3 months starting from 23rd August 2024. We are seeking legal advice from Attorney General’s office to check the possibility of combining some of the similar regulations among the twenty listed in Clause 99 of the Food Safety Act aiming to reduce the number of new regulations needed to be formulated in order to fully implement the Act.

3. A detailed statement of work to be performed (TOR)
The Food Safety Act outlines the need for several regulations to be formulated to ensure its smooth implementation. Clause 99 lists twenty regulations that need to be formulated or revised, with sixteen needing endorsement within 3 months from 23rd August 2024. The WHO and MFDA is seeking legal assistance to develop these regulations within the specified time frame. Strict adherence to timeline is crucial.

The list of regulations/standards to be developed is provided in annex.

- Coordinate with the National Program Staff, Legal department at MoH, WHO Country office and relevant stakeholders for the development of the 13 documents, before the provided deadline, and the remaining 4 documents within 6 months’ time frame. The relevant stakeholders will be identified with the support from MFDA technical units.
- To conduct an assessment of the Food Safety Act and identify the most appropriate way forward to formulate the standards and regulations under the said Act.
- Develop 1st draft standards/regulations as per the list provided within the time frame, for feedback and comments from MoH, MFDA.
- Conduct stakeholders meeting prior to finalizing the 17 documents – with priority given to the first 13 documents completion before November 2024.
- Conduct stakeholders meeting prior to finalizing the remaining 4 regulations, before January 2024.
- Submission of final documents for the 13 regulations/standards before mid-November 2024
- Revised guideline to be in line with the latest WHO recommendations and guidance’s and to be finalized in coordination with HPA and WHO technical units.
- All 17 documents to be validated after Stakeholder consultations, MoH and WHO technical unit approvals ONLY.
- All documents and activities to be followed strictly confidentiality with STRICT adherence to timelines.

4. Deliverables:

Formulation of the 17 regulations and standards to successfully implement the Food Safety Act, 13 regulations by November 2024 and remaining 4 by February 2024.

The list of regulations/standards to be developed is provided in annex.
5. Specific requirements

Requirements:
- Juris Doctor (JD) degree OR a Degree in Law with a specialization in food law, regulatory law, or public health law.
- Strong understanding of food safety risk assessment and management principles.
- Strong understanding of Maldives legal framework and its implementation
- Expertise in policy analysis, impact assessment, and stakeholder engagement.

Desirable:
- Master’s degree or Degree in food science, public health, or a related field in addition to the degree in Law is preferred.
- Proven experience in drafting and implementing food safety regulations is desirable.

Experience:
- Experience in developing regulations and standards related to Public Health.
- Demonstrated ability to collaborate with government agencies, industry stakeholders, and scientific experts.
- Experience in documentation, organizing and project management relevant to Public Health and/or related fields.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills for drafting regulations and engaging with stakeholders.
- Excellent coordination and delivery capacities with government agencies and other relevant partners.
- Ability to plan, prioritize and complete tasks on tight deadlines and management of time.
- High degree of flexibility, creativity and good inter-personnel skills

Language requirements:
- English and Dhivehi – fluency

6. Timeline
September 2024 – February 2025

7. Application
Interested companies are requested to submit company profiles, proposal for the project along with a budget breakdown to sewhomav@who.int by 30 August 2024.

Note: Given the breadth of countries and tasks to be covered, these TORs are for a call for proposals that can identify an institution able to provide a range of services and experts). Based on a review of the proposals received, WHO reserves the right to subsequently enter into contract with the selected contractual partner for the objective, in ways that optimize the technical skill set and capacities of the applicants. WHO will facilitate connection/coordination amongst selected contractor/contractors.