# REGIONAL TRADE FOR DEVELOPMENT

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL/TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE

## General Design Principles for Digital Exchange Frameworks

## I. Summary

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| **Title** | General Design Principles for Digital Exchange Frameworks |
| **Start Date** | March 2026 |
| **Completion Date** | June 2027 |
| **Reports to:** | **RT4D Manager:** *Sianong PHOMKONG, Regional Manager* |
| **Interacts With** | **RT4D**:<br>• Regional Manager: Sianong Phomkong<br>• Program Delivery Lead: Fenny Chandra<br>• Program Performance and Quality Lead: Sebastian Cortes Sanchez<br>• Operations Lead: Isradi Alireja<br>• GEDSI and Trade Manager: Yooke Damopolii<br>• Lao Program Officer: Phonevilay Vongxay<br>**ASEAN Secretariat:** External Economic Relations Division (EERD)<br>**FTA Subsidiary Body:** Committee on Electronic Commerce (CEC)<br>**Project Proponent:** Craig Smith, Director New Zealand Peppol Authority, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment |
| **Requires Approval from:** | **RT4D:** RT4D Facility via Regional Manager:<br>**ASEAN Secretariat:** External Economic Relations Division (EERD)<br>**FTA Subsidiary Body:** Committee on Electronic Commerce (CEC)<br>**Project Proponent:** Craig Smith, Director New Zealand Peppol Authority, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment |
| **Timetable for Tender Process** | **Request for Proposals:** 11/2/2026<br>**Closing Date for Queries:** 23/2/2026<br>**Clasing Date for Proposals:** 7/3/2026 |
| **Submission Instructions** | The provider should submit Technical and Financial submissions in alignment with requirements outlines in Section XII of this ToR. The Submissions or any questions should be sent to the RT4D Manager at AISP Implementation Support Program**:**<br>**aisp@regionaltrade4dev.org**<br>Copy the email to: Regional Manager:<br>**Sianong.Phomkong@regionaltrade4dev.org**<br>**RT4D Lao Program Officer:**<br>**phonevilay.vongxay@regionaltrade4dev.org** by **7/3/2026.** |

**Scope of Work Summary:**

The Regional Trade for Development Facility (RT4D) is seeking a consulting firm/consortium (hereafter called Consultant) to implement the project "General Design Principles for Digital Exchange Frameworks" by providing both **technical and event organisation support.** RT4D

will manage the project in close consultation with the ASEAN Secretariat, FTA Subsidiary Body, and Project Proponent.

Under the scope of services set in this ToR, the Consultant will support technical support for the following activities under the project:
Activity 1 – Mobilisation Phase
Activity 2 – Policy Working Group and Consultation Paper
Activity 3 – Virtual Workshops on Consultation Paper
Activity 4 – Consultation and Endorsement of General Design Principles
Activity 5 – Development of Regional Toolkit Development of Adapted Toolkits
Activity 7 – Dissemination of Regional and Adapted Toolkits
Activity 8 – Project Reporting

## II. Background

This project seeks to advance inclusive digital exchange frameworks across ASEAN by developing and disseminating General Design Principles, a Regional Toolkit, and tailored Toolkits for up to three interested ASEAN Member States (AMS). The initiative aims to harmonise AMS around a shared set of general design principles to enhance domestic and cross-border trade efficiency, while embedding inclusivity to support underrepresented groups and LDEs.

Early stages involve establishing a Policy Working Group (PWG) and releasing a Consultation Paper to gather input from public and private stakeholders. Virtual workshops will facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building among AANZFTA Party officials and industry representatives. Insights from these and additional consultations will inform the refinement of General Design Principles and a Regional Toolkit, which will be launched with capacity building, knowledge sharing and awareness building activities at a hybrid two-day event in Lao PDR. Adapted Toolkits for up to three interested AMS (LDEs preferred) and related half-day Virtual Workshops will follow.

Through these activities, the project will aim to promote regional harmonisation and inclusive, low-cost approaches that support AMS to adopt or enhance digital exchange frameworks that drive equitable economic integration.

## 2.1 Project Objectives

This project aims to support AANZFTA Parties, in particular ASEAN LDEs, to adopt globally recognised design principles for the development of digital exchange frameworks. The focus is on ensuring equal access to the domestic, regional and global digital economy at low or no cost.
The project has the following specific objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Provide AANZFTA Parties with General Design Principles to support the domestic adoption of digital exchange frameworks that promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

- **Objective 2:** Provide AANZFTA Parties with a Regional Toolkit that ensures officials and businesses know, understand and trust the benefits of inclusive digital exchange frameworks and engagement with the rapidly expanding digital economy to increase the competitiveness of their economies, products and services.

- **Objective 3:** Provide additional technical assistance to ASEAN LDEs with adapted LDE Toolkits that are tailored to local contexts and language to further support inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

- **Objective 4:** Provide private sector stakeholders (particularly businesses with individuals and groups that disproportionately face barriers to participate in the digital economy) with opportunities to participate in the development of the domestic digital economy and to access regional and global networks at low or no cost.

## 2.2 Intended Beneficiaries

The primary beneficiaries of this project include:

- Domestic AMS officials (primary beneficiaries) who have the authority, responsibility and/or interact with digital exchange frameworks, electronic commerce and/or cross-border trade. These officials will contribute to the development of the General Design Principles and Regional

Toolkit. They will also gain practical knowledge and application of the General Design Principles and Regional Toolkit alongside their ASEAN colleagues.

- Domestic LDE officials (primary beneficiaries) who have the authority, responsibility and/or interact with digital exchange frameworks, electronic commerce and/or cross-border trade. These officials will contribute to the development of the General Design Principles, the Regional Toolkit and the LDE Toolkits. They will also gain practical knowledge and application of the General Design Principles and Regional Toolkit alongside their ASEAN colleagues, as well as their country's adapted LDE Toolkit.

- Non-government stakeholders (secondary beneficiaries), including businesses that do and do not currently benefit from a domestic digital exchange framework and interoperability with other markets. These private sector stakeholders will benefit from applying the Toolkit and from any adoption/implementation of the General Design Principles in AMS public policy.

- Women, disabled persons, LDEs and other underrepresented stakeholders (secondary beneficiaries) who currently face additional barriers for participation in the digital economy. These stakeholders will benefit from applying the Toolkit(s) and from any inclusive and accessible adoption/implementation of the General Design Principles in AMS public policy.


## 2.3 Project Outcomes

While contributing to achieving RT4D's Intermediate Outcomes (IO) 1 & 4 and End of Investment Outcomes (EOIO) 1 &2,[1] the project directly supports AANZFTA CEC's Strategic Directions and Priorities Document (SSDP). The project is expected to deliver measurable outcomes in line with AANZFTA CEC's SSDP priorities and provide broader contributions to ASEAN's economic integration and infrastructure goals. These include:

**SSDP Priority 2 –** The project's General Design Principles and Toolkits specifically seek to support an environment conducive for the facilitation and enhancement of electronic commerce and trade among AANZFTA Parties. It will do so through the adoption of digital exchange frameworks and standards that align with best practice, promote regional interoperability, and support localised implementation of inclusive and accessible approaches.

- SSDP Intended Outcome 2a – Through the project's engagements with AANZFTA Party officials and private sectors, it will seek to increase awareness of the benefits of adopting international standards to underpin electronic commerce across the region.

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[1] IO1: FTA workstreams supported by RT4D effectively assist economic cooperation and integration as prioritised by FTA Parties, particularly LDEs.

IO4: FTA Parties and their institutions, particularly LDEs, have improved knowledge and skills to increasingly implement priority areas within FTAs.

EOIO1: Selected FTAs are effectively implemented: Parties have enhanced cross-border cooperation and increasingly consistent regulatory frameworks, in targeted sectors, that have considered the needs of SMEs, women and people with a disability.

EOIO2: Regional and national institutions, particularly within LDEs, have improved skills, networks, and policy options to implement FTAs in targeted sectors.

- SSDP Intended Outcome 2b – The project will explore and include consistent consideration of current practice across the region regarding current standards, including variations among AANZFTA Parties, related to digital exchange frameworks.

- SSDP Intended Outcome 2c – The project will identify principles that can effectively guide the adoption of international standards for digital exchange standards across ASEAN and AANZFTA Parties.

- SSDP Intended Outcome 2d – The project will engage stakeholders, particularly those that face barriers to participate in digital economies, to understand their needs and how adopting **SSDP Priority 3 –** The project's General Design Principles and Toolkits will support this priority to enhance cross-border electronic commerce and facilitate paperless trade among AANZFTA Parties.

- SSDP Intended Outcome 3a – The project seeks to increase capabilities for AANZFTA Party public sectors in approaching the development of legislation and policies on how to facilitate cross-border e-commerce and paperless trade.

- SSDP Intended Outcome 3b – The project will explore best practices and cooperation mechanisms for cross-border e-commerce and paperless trade.

- SSDP Intended Outcome 3c – The project will identify barriers and challenges for businesses to conduct cross-border e-commerce and paperless trade among Partners.

## 2.4 Complementarity with Other Efforts

This project is a milestone project for AANZFTA CEC and presents a timely and strategic opportunity to strengthen the digital foundations of ASEAN and AMS economies, particularly ASEAN's LDEs. With the AANZFTA Agreement Upgrade including a Chapter on Electronic Commerce, it will support the objectives and previous efforts of ASEAN to embrace the digital economy.

Under the AANZFTA Agreement Upgrade, Chapter 10 addresses Electronic Commerce. In Article 12 (Domestic Regulatory Framework), each Party has also agreed to align with international best practice:

1. Each Party shall adopt or maintain a legal framework governing electronic transactions, taking into account the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce 1996, the United Nations Convention on the Use of Electronic Communications in International Contracts done at New York on 23 November 2005, or other applicable international conventions and model laws relating to electronic commerce.

2. Each Party shall endeavour to avoid any unnecessary regulatory burden on electronic transactions and take into account input by interested persons in the development of its legal framework for electronic transactions.

## III.   Scope of Services

The RT4D Facility is seeking a firm/organisation (the Consultant) to support the design and delivery of project activities between March 2026 to June 2027. The selected Consultant will be responsible for the scope of services outlined in the sections below.

## 3.1 Project Activities

- Activity 1 – Mobilisation Phase
- Activity 2 – Policy Working Group and Consultation Paper
- Activity 3 – Virtual Workshops on Consultation Paper
- Activity 4 – Consultation and Endorsement of General Design Principles
- Activity 5 – Development of Regional Toolkit Development of Adapted Toolkits
- Activity 7 – Dissemination of Regional and Adapted Toolkits
- Activity 8 – Project Reporting

### Activity 1 – Mobilisation Phase

This Activity will focus on ensuring key stakeholders meet and align on next steps. In particular, this phase will confirm expected participation on the PWG (see Activity 2). This phase will also allow stakeholders to discuss the scope, objectives and approach for the overall project.

It will also confirm the approach to governance arrangements and other risk management and safeguard considerations. This may require the participation of ASEC EERD, AANZFTA EC-SC and AANZFTA CEC. These bodies will also review and provide inputs on PWG membership.

***The consultant will support the project implementation through the following:***

1. Facilitate a one-hour Mobilisation Meeting with the RT4D Facility and, if available, ASEC EERD, AANZFTA EC-SC and AANZFTA CEC.
2. Communicate with AMS e-commerce officials (as needed) to confirm intended participation in the Policy Working Group and other project activities.
3. Submit Emailed PWG Membership List to ASEC EERD, AANZFTA EC-SC and AANZFTA CEC.
4. Incorporate feedback from ASEC EERD, AANZFTA EC-SC and AANZFTA CEC.
5. Finalise and resubmit the Emailed PWG Membership List for AANZFTA CEC Endorsement.

### Activity 1 Output(s):

1.1. Emailed PWG Membership List submitted to ASEC EERD, AANZFTA EC-SC and AANZFTA CEC for feedback (non-published).
1.2. Revised Emailed PWG Membership List submitted to AANZFTA CEC for endorsement (non-published).
1.3. Final Emailed PWG Membership List endorsed by AANZFTA CEC (non-published).

### Activity 2 – Policy Working Group and Consultation Paper

This Activity focuses on the establishment of a PWG and the development of a Consultation Paper on the General Design Principles for Digital Exchange Frameworks in ASEAN (the Consultation Paper). The main objective of this Activity is to prepare a Consultation Paper that will facilitate two half-day Virtual Workshops (Activity 3) and further stakeholder consultations, refinement and endorsement of General Design Principles (Activity 4). This will also support the development of a Regional Toolkit and CLV Toolkits in Activity 5 and 6.

**PWG meetings will be facilitated by a technical consultant and should be held at least once a month for the duration of the project.** Additional meetings may be held, if required. During this

Activity, the technical consultant will work closely with the PWG to conduct desktop research and consultations with 3-5 non-government stakeholders to inform the Consultation Paper.

The membership of the PWG may include:

- Chair: Representative of the Project Proponent (New Zealand's Peppol Authority).
- AANZFTA Party Officials: One representative from each AANZFTA Party with relevant expertise and as determined by each AANZFTA CEC Representative.
- ASEC: One representative from each of ASEC EERD and ASEC DED.

The membership of the PWG and the facilitation role of the technical consultant should be confirmed during the Inception Phase (Activity 1).

**While the Consultation Paper is being developed, this Activity will seek to engage 3-5 non-government stakeholders in virtual stakeholder consultations** with expertise on relevant international best practice. These stakeholders may include OpenPeppol and the Digital Business Networks Alliance (DBNAlliance).

The objectives of the 3-5 non-government virtual stakeholder consultation sessions are to:

- Socialise the project's objectives, expected outcomes and planned activities.
- Explore priority themes for inclusion in the general design principles and toolkits with stakeholders with expertise on digital exchange frameworks.
- Identify risks, mitigations and opportunities for the general design principles.

This approach and the facilitation role of the technical consultant should be confirmed during the Inception Phase (Activity 1). Insights will be incorporated into the Consultation Paper and included in the Stakeholder Consultation Summary (Activity 2).

With oversight from the PWG, the technical consultant will be responsible for developing the Consultation Paper. This Consultation Paper will present the draft general design principles, draft toolkit outline and considerations for LDE adaptations.

**The Consultation Paper should summarise:**

- The policy, regulatory and technological context of AANZFTA Parties in the form of a literature review or similar amalgamation of existing information.
- Consideration of international best practice for digital exchange frameworks.
- The rationale for developing general design principles and their objectives, including promotion of interoperability and scalability in a way that supports inclusivity and accessibility.
- The relationship of the development of general design principles to ASEAN's objectives, including the AEC Blueprint, DIF and DIFAP.
- Draft general design principles, their rationale, and relevant consultation questions.
- Draft toolkit outline, its rationale, and relevant consultation questions.
- Considerations for LDE adaptations and relevant consultation questions.
- Next steps for the development of the general design principles and toolkit.

The Consultation Paper (including the draft general design principles and the draft toolkit outline therein) should also include careful consideration of how the General Design Principles and Toolkits will integrate GEDSI dimensions and ensure appropriate attention is provided to the experiences and needs of women, disabled persons, LDEs and other underrepresented stakeholders.

The Consultation Paper should be designed to include relevant design elements, including infographics, diagrams, tables and other design elements. However, the focus should be to develop a technically sound, accessible, inclusive and sustainable toolkit of approximately 30-40 pages.

**The endorsed Consultation Paper will be distributed** to relevant stakeholders by the RT4D Facility with support from ASEC, AANZFTA EC-SC, AANZFTA CEC, DFAT and MFAT. These stakeholders will be invited to provide responses to the Consultation Paper's consultation questions. Responses to the Consultation Paper will support the refinement of the draft general design principles, toolkit outline and LDE adaptations. Distribution should occur prior to the Virtual Workshops (Activity 3) to support participant discussion and consideration of the contents of the Consultation Paper.

***The consultant will support the project implementation through the following:***

1. Facilitate meetings of the PWG to support development of the draft general design principles on a regular monthly basis and on an as-needed basis.
2. Conduct desktop research (self-directed and with direction from the PWG) to support identification and development of the draft general design principles.
3. Facilitate 3-5 virtual stakeholder consultation sessions with non-government experts, such as OpenPeppol and the Digital Business Networks Alliance (DBNAlliance).
4. Prepare and submit the Consultation Paper to the PWG.
5. Incorporate feedback from the PWG.
6. Incorporate feedback from ASEC EERD, AANZFTA EC-SC and AANZFTA CEC.
7. Finalise and resubmit the Consultation Paper for AANZFTA CEC Endorsement.

***Activity 2 Output(s):***

2.1 Consultation Paper on the General Design Principles for Digital Exchange Frameworks in ASEAN and Toolkit Outline (published).


### *Activity 3 – Virtual Workshops on Consultation Paper*

**This Activity will include two half-day Virtual Workshops** to socialise the Consultation Paper and engage with relevant and interested stakeholders. These Virtual Workshops should occur following the Consultation Paper's endorsement and distribution in Activity 2. The sessions should include interactive components, and they should provide guidance and clarifications to participants on the General Design Principles, toolkit outline and LDE considerations described in the Consultation Paper.

**The first Virtual Workshop will be tailored to an audience consisting of relevant AANZFTA Party officials.** Its core objective will be to strengthen the capacity of these officials to engage and respond to the Consultation Paper in written submissions and during later Bilateral Consultations (Activity 4). In addition, it should seek to build their awareness of the project and understanding of how the eventual General Design Principles and Toolkits can be adopted in their country. It should

also provide participants with advice on how to engage domestic private sector organisations that could provide responses to the Consultation Paper, and the need to engage domestic organisations with GEDSI dimensions.

**The second Virtual Workshop will be delivered to a broader audience and tailored to the needs of the private sector.** While AANZFTA Party officials should be encouraged to attend, the target audience should include organisations that engage with cross-border trade and electronic commerce. It should also include MSMEs and organisations with GEDSI dimensions. The main objective for this session is to socialise the project and Consultation Paper with these stakeholders.

The agendas for the Virtual Workshops should consider the following:

- **Keynote Address** from the Project Proponent (New Zealand's Peppol Authority), other AANZFTA Party authorities (e.g. a relevant authority in the host country, Lao PDR) or international organisations (e.g. OpenPeppol or DBNAlliance). A Keynote Address should intend to set the tone for the event, establish key themes, and provide expert insights.

- **Consultation Paper Overview** to outline and socialise the draft General Design Principles, toolkit outline and LDE considerations. These should provide clear and accessible information to support participants to engage with the project and provide submissions to the Consultation Paper. Interactive components should also provide participants with an opportunity to provide reflections that should be captured for consideration in later activities.

- **Panel Discussions** on topics such as the benefits of adopting a digital exchange framework, drivers and barriers for private sector and/or LDE adoption, the importance of regional interoperability, and/or the importance of ensuring inclusive digital exchange frameworks. Panellists may include representatives from AANZFTA Party authorities, the financial technology sector, MSMEs, industry groups, and/or businesses or groups with GEDSI dimensions (women, disabled people, and other underrepresented groups). These discussions should build participants' broader understanding and approach to engaging with the project and its outputs.

- **Technical Sessions** delivered by an AANZFTA Party authority (e.g. New Zealand's Peppol Authority) or international organisations (e.g. OpenPeppol or DBNAlliance) to demonstrate digital exchange framework implementation and integration. This may showcase ERP systems, APIs, security protocols and/or data exchange standards. The intent of these sessions would be to illustrate and contextualise real-world applications related to the project's outputs.

- **Targeted Sessions for Officials** in the first Virtual Workshop that are tailored to uplift the understanding and/or capacity of AANZFTA Party officials. These could seek to support officials to engage with the private sector in relation to the Consultation Paper and project, to further understand the technology-neutral intent of the General Design Principles, and to consider potential national adoption plans.

As the Project Proponent, the New Zealand Peppol Authority within the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) is well placed to present during the Virtual Workshops. Equivalent officials from Australia or AMS may also provide technical input and support during delivery. The scheduling of the Virtual Workshops should facilitate the participation of officials and private sector stakeholders in each relevant time zone for these countries.

The second Virtual Workshop should be recorded, published and distributed by the RT4D Facility with support from ASEC, AANZFTA EC-SC, AANZFTA CEC, DFAT and MFAT. The purpose of this will be to provide relevant stakeholders with an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the project and the Consultation Paper. The first Virtual Workshop will not be recorded for public distribution to encourage open discussions with AANZFTA Party officials.

The specific agenda, dates and potential participants for the two Virtual Workshops should be confirmed in the Inception Phase (Activity 1) and in close collaboration with the PWG, ASEC EERC, AANZFTA EC-SC and AANZFTA CEC.

***The consultant will support the project implementation through the following:***

1. Support development of the agenda and invitations for the Virtual Workshops in close collaboration with AANZFTA CEC and the New Zealand Peppol Authority.

2. Prepare the agenda and materials for relevant sessions (including the Consultation Paper Overview) hosted by RT4D, the consultation and/or AANZFTA Party officials.

3. Facilitate the relevant agenda items for the Virtual Workshops, as required.

4. Prepare and submit a consolidated Virtual Workshops Report for AANZFTA CEC feedback and approval.

### *Activity 3 Output(s):*

3.1 Virtual Workshop for AANZFTA Party officials (recording non-published).
3.2 Virtual Workshop for officials and the private sector (recording published)
3.3 Consolidated Virtual Workshops Report (non-published)

### *Activity 4 – Consultation and Endorsement of General Design Principles*

This Activity will focus on finalisation and endorsement of the General Design Principles, based on the inputs of a broad range of relevant stakeholders. These inputs will be sought through responses to the distributed Consultation Paper and Bilateral Consultations with AANZFTA Party officials. The objective of this Activity is to ensure that the general design principles and later activities will be fit-for-purpose and responsive to domestic, regional and international considerations.

**Responses to the endorsed Consultation Paper will be received** from relevant stakeholders who received it from the RT4D Facility with support from ASEC, AANZFTA EC-SC, AANZFTA CEC, DFAT and MFAT. These stakeholders will have been invited to provide responses to the Consultation Paper's consultation questions. Responses to the Consultation Paper will support the refinement of the draft general design principles, toolkit outline and LDE adaptations. The Virtual Workshops (Activity 3) will have supported participant understanding of its contents.

**Bilateral Consultations** will also be held virtually with each AANZFTA Party. These sessions will be facilitated by the technical consultant and attended by officials with responsibility for electronic commerce and cross-border trade. Inputs from these sessions will support the refinement of the draft general design principles, toolkit outline and LDE adaptations. Additional time should also be provided to the Bilateral Consultations with the three ASEAN LDE economies to ensure that their needs and expectations for adaptations and dissemination can be appropriately explored.

**The objectives of these Stakeholder Consultations are to:**

• Gather structured feedback from non-government stakeholders and government stakeholders through the Consultation Paper and responses to consultation questions.

- Engage directly with relevant AANZFTA Party electronic commerce and cross-border trade officials through bilateral consultations.

- Socialise the project's objectives, expected outcomes, and planned activities.

- Identify priority themes, gaps, and opportunities relevant to domestic, regional, international and LDE contexts.

- Understand stakeholder experiences and needs, including specific case studies involving women, persons with disabilities, LDEs, and other underrepresented groups who interact with the digital economy.

- Identify potential refinements of the general design principles, toolkit outline and LDE adaptations to inform the project's next steps and Activities.

- Test AMS interest in the development of an adapted Toolkits for their country.

**Relevant stakeholders who should receive the Consultation Paper include:**

- AANZFTA Party officials with responsibility for electronic commerce and cross-border trade.

- AANZFTA Party industry groups that represent businesses that have a vested interest in the digital economy.

- Other groups from (or that advocate on behalf of) underrepresented groups including women, disabled persons, LDEs and other underrepresented stakeholders

**Relevant stakeholders for the virtual Bilateral Consultations include:**

- Officials from ASEAN's LDE economies with responsibility for electronic commerce and cross-border trade, with additional time to discuss both regional considerations and specific insights to inform the relevant LDE adaptations in depth.

- Other AANZFTA Party officials with responsibility for electronic commerce and cross-border trade, focused on regional considerations.

The approach to the Stakeholder Consultations, including a list of recipients of the Consultation Paper, should be confirmed during the Inception Phase (Activity 1).

Following the conclusion of these Stakeholder Consultations, the technical consultant will summarise feedback and present it to the PWG. This should include potential refinements of the general design principles, toolkit outline and approach to LDE adaptations. The technical consultant will also develop and submit a high-level Stakeholder Consultation Summary to provide oversight of outcomes.

**The technical consultant will then prepare and submit a report of approximately 10-15 pages outlining revised General Design Principles for endorsement**. These will be submitted to the PWG for additional inputs and feedback, prior to being distributed to ASEC EERD, AANZFTA EC-SC and AANZFTA CEC for their input and approval.

Once endorsed, the General Design Principles will be published and distributed to relevant stakeholders by the RT4D Facility with support from ASEC, AANZFTA EC-SC, AANZFTA CEC, DFAT and MFAT.

***The consultant will support the project implementation through the following:***

1. Prepare materials for virtual bilateral consultation invitations for relevant AANZFTA Party officials and distribution of the Consultation Paper to other relevant stakeholders.

2. Facilitate virtual bilateral consultations with relevant AANZFTA Party officials, including adaptations for LDE officials to understand their needs for Activity 6 and Activity 7.

3. Prepare and submit a Stakeholder Consultation Summary that includes overviews of responses to the Consultation Paper, inputs from bilateral consultations and views shared during the Activity 2 non-government consultation sessions.

4. Revise and submit a short report outlining the revised General Design Principles to the PWG.

6. Incorporate feedback from the PWG.

8. Incorporate feedback from ASEC EERD, AANZFTA EC-SC and AANZFTA CEC.

9. Finalise and resubmit the General Design Principles for AANZFTA CEC Endorsement.

### *Activity 4 Output(s):*

4.1. Stakeholder Consultation Summary (non-published).

4.2. General Design Principles for Digital Exchange Frameworks in ASEAN (published).

## *Activity 5 – Development of Regional Toolkit*

This Activity will see the development of the Toolkit for the General Design Principles for Digital Exchange Frameworks in ASEAN (the Regional Toolkit). The objective of this Activity is to develop a Regional Toolkit that includes resources that will support AMS officials and private sectors to apply the General Design Principles and promote equal access to the digital economy at low or no cost. The Regional Toolkit is grounded in the toolkit outline included in the Consultation Paper (Activity 2) and refined during consultations (Activity 3).

The Regional Toolkit should be designed to include relevant design elements, including infographics, diagrams, tables and other design elements. However, the focus should be to develop a technically sound, accessible, inclusive and sustainable toolkit of approximately 50-60 pages in length.

The technical consultant will prepare and submit the Regional Toolkit to the PWG. Once the PWG's feedback has been incorporated, the Regional Toolkit will be submitted to ASEC EERD, AANZFTA EC-SC and AANZFTA CEC for further feedback. It will then be submitted to AANZFTA CEC for endorsement.

**Indicative content for the Regional Toolkit includes:**

- The rationale for the General Design Principles and their objectives, including promotion of interoperability and scalability in a way that supports inclusivity and accessibility.

- Overviews of each General Design Principles, their rationale and indicative applications.

- The relationship of the General Design Principles to international best practice.

- The relationship of the General Design Principles to ASEAN's objectives, including the AEC Blueprint, DIF and DIFAP.

- The benefits of applying the General Design Principles to domestic contexts, including for government, the private sector and underrepresented groups.

- Technology-neutral standards, policies and guidelines to further promote interoperability while retaining the sovereignty of each AMS.

- Templates and guidance, if relevant for one or more of the General Design Principles.

- The outline for the Regional Toolkit will be refined in development of the Consultation Paper (Activity 2) and during consultations (Activity 3).

Once endorsed, the Regional Toolkit will be published and distributed to relevant stakeholders by the RT4D Facility with support from ASEC, AANZFTA EC-SC, AANZFTA CEC, DFAT and MFAT.

*The consultant will support the project implementation through the following:*

1. Facilitate the convening of the PWG to support development of the Regional Toolkit.
2. Prepare and submit the Regional Toolkit to the PWG.
3. Incorporate feedback from the PWG.
4. Incorporate feedback from ASEC EERD, AANZFTA EC-SC and AANZFTA CEC.
5. Finalise and resubmit the Regional Toolkit for AANZFTA CEC Endorsement (published).

*Activity 5 Output(s):*

5.1. Toolkit for the General Design Principles for Digital Exchange Frameworks in ASEAN.

## Activity 6 – Development of Adapted Toolkits

This Activity will see the Regional Toolkit being adapted and translated for up to three interested AMS, with a preference for ASEAN's LDEs (Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam). The objective of this Activity is to provide additional resources to interested AMS that will be accessible to local officials and local private sectors.

**The technical consultant will leverage outcomes from previous consultations** (Activity 3 and Activity 4) to provide localised information in the adaptations. These may include the localisation of the standards, policies, guidelines, templates and/or guidance in the Regional Toolkit. It may also include additional localised case studies or considerations.

**The technical consultant will also engage in additional virtual Bilateral Consultations** with relevant AMS officials with responsibility for electronic commerce and cross-border trade to refine the adapted Toolkits. These sessions will support the adaptations to be fit-for-purpose and will further socialise the objectives of this Activity and the project.

Once feedback from the relevant AMS and the PWG has been incorporated, the English versions of the adapted Toolkits will be submitted to ASEC EERD, AANZFTA EC-SC and AANZFTA CEC for further feedback. They will then be submitted to AANZFTA CEC for endorsement.

**The RT4D Facility will facilitate translations of the adapted Toolkits** into the local language for each of the up to three interested AMS. Each translated version will be provided to the PWG, ASEC EERD, AANZFTA EC-SC, AANZFTA CEC and the relevant domestic authority.

Once each is finalised, the English and local language versions of the adapted Toolkits will be published and distributed to relevant stakeholders by the RT4D Facility with support from ASEC, AANZFTA EC-SC, AANZFTA CEC, DFAT, MFAT and local AMS authorities.

*The consultant will support the project implementation through the following:*

1. Facilitate bilateral consultations with relevant officials.
2. Prepare and submit English versions of the adapted Toolkits to the PWG and relevant domestic authority.
3. Incorporate feedback from the PWG and officials.
4. Incorporate feedback from ASEC EERD, AANZFTA EC-SC and AANZFTA CEC.
5. Finalise and resubmit the English versions of the adapted Toolkits for AANZFTA CEC Endorsement.
6. Support the RT4D Facility and procured provider(s) to translate the adapted Toolkits.

*Activity 6 Output(s):*

6.1. English version of the adapted Toolkit(s) (published).

6.2. Local language version of the adapted Toolkit(s) (published).

## Activity 7 – Dissemination of Regional and Adapted Toolkits

This Activity will focus on the delivery of a two-day hybrid Regional Workshop in Lao PDR and one Adapted Toolkit Half-Day Virtual Workshop for each of the up to three AMS. The Adapted Toolkit Half-Day Virtual Workshops should each focus on knowledge sharing, capacity building and awareness in relation to the adapted Toolkits for the respective countries. Each event would be attended by approximately 60 participants.

The two-day hybrid Regional Workshop will be facilitated in Lao PDR to provide knowledge sharing, capacity building and awareness for the Regional Toolkit with approximately 60 AMS officials with responsibility for electronic commerce and cross-border trade. Participants will be encouraged to attend in-person, though accommodations will be made to facilitate hybrid participation. Members of the PWG and technical experts (such as from OpenPeppol or DBNAlliance) may also be involved in the delivery of the Regional Workshop. This will support capacity building in relation to the General Design Principles, Regional Toolkit and digital exchange frameworks amongst participants.

The date, agenda and participant list of the event will be determined in line with the outcomes of previous phases, and in close consultation and with the approval of the PWG and AANZFTA CEC. However, each event should consider the following indicative agenda items:

- Opening Remarks and Session Formalities.
- Presentations by international experts and AMS authorities on domestic approaches and progress in relation to digital exchange frameworks.
- Structured session to share knowledge of the General Design Principles.
- Structured session to build capacity to leverage the Regional Toolkit.
- Training session to support participant understanding of specific aspects of the Regional Toolkit.
- Presentations and/or panel discussions that feature participants.
- Participatory exercises (e.g. breakout groups) where participants are asked to engage with the General Design Principles and relevant Toolkit.
- Targeted session to discuss national adoption plans, approaches to accounting for unique domestic challenges, and potential support that may be required in future.

- Closing Remarks that identify lessons learned and next steps.

**One Adapted Toolkit Half-Day Virtual Workshop will also be facilitated for the up to three AMS with adapted Toolkit** with approximately 60 domestic officials and local private sector representatives. The participation of PWG members and technical experts should also be considered to support capacity building and knowledge sharing in relation to the General Design Principles, LDE Toolkits and digital exchange frameworks. The translation of sessions materials should be considered, as should delivery in the local language and/or live translation services.

The date, agenda and participant list of each event will be determined in line with the outcomes of previous phases, and in close consultation and with the approval of the PWG and AANZFTA CEC. The national adoption plan of each AMS should be a key focus of each session. However, each event should consider the following indicative agenda items:

- Opening Remarks and Session Formalities.

- Structured session to share knowledge of the General Design Principles.

- Structured session to build capacity to leverage the adapted Toolkit.

- Training session to support participant understanding of specific aspects of the adapted Toolkit.

- Presentations and/or panel discussions that feature participants.

- Participatory exercises (e.g. breakout groups) where participants are asked to engage with the General Design Principles and relevant Toolkit.

- Targeted session to discuss national adoption plans, approaches to accounting for unique domestic challenges, and potential support that may be required in future.

- Closing Remarks that identify lessons learned and next steps.

A Workshop Report (based on the RT4D template for Workshop Reports) will be prepared for each event for AANZFTA CEC approval two weeks following each event. This report will provide a detailed summary of the attendees, proceedings and outcomes of each event.

In addition, a technical high-level Future Support Plan of approximately 10-15 pages will be developed to identify suggested next steps. This will be informed by targeted sessions in the Regional Workshop to discuss national adoption plans, and the outcomes of consultations with AMS and each Virtual Workshop. The objective of this output is to provide AMS, the RT4D Facility and other project stakeholders with a clear pathway to support the adoption of inclusive digital exchange frameworks across ASEAN.

This high-level Future Support Plan should include careful consideration of how next steps should integrate GEDSI dimensions and ensure appropriate attention is provided to the experiences and needs of women, disabled persons, and other underrepresented stakeholders. The needs of LDEs should also be carefully considered and the domestic needs of Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam should be specifically outlined.

*The consultant will support the project implementation through the following:*

1. Develop the agenda and materials for the two-day hybrid Regional Workshop, in close consultation with the PWG, ASEC EERD, AANZFTA EC-SC and AANZFTA CEC.

2. Facilitate the two-day hybrid Regional Workshop in Lao PDR.

3.  Prepare and submit a Regional Workshop Report to AANZFTA EC-SC feedback and approval.

4.  Develop the agendas and materials for the half-day Virtual Workshops, in close consultation with relevant AMS officials.

5.  Facilitate the Virtual Workshops.

6.  Prepare and submit Virtual Workshop Reports to AANZFTA CEC feedback and approval.

7.  Prepare and submit a high-level Future Support Plan to AANZFTA CEC feedback and approval.

### *Activity 7 Output(s):*

7.1. Delivery of the two-day hybrid Regional Workshop in Lao PDR to facilitate knowledge sharing, capacity building and awareness for the Regional Toolkit for the General Design Principles for Digital Exchange Frameworks and attended by relevant officials with responsibility for electronic commerce and cross-border trade from all AMS.

7.2. Delivery of one half-day Virtual Workshop for each of the up to three AMS with an adapted Toolkit and attended by relevant domestic officials.

7.3. Workshop Reports for the Regional Workshop and each Virtual Workshop submitted to AANZFTA CEC for feedback and approval (non-published).

7.4. High-Level Future Support Plan (non-published).


## *Activity 8 – Project Reporting*

The project will produce the following two reports to provide RT4D and relevant stakeholders with oversight of the project:

- Project Progress Report: There are two versions of this report. The long version is for RT4D's internal use. The summary version is for sharing with AANZFTA CEC.

- Project Completion Report: After all project activities are completed and all relevant outputs are endorsed, the Project Completion Report assesses the achievement of project objectives and the delivery of outputs. The report will follow RT4D's template. There are two versions of this report. The long version is for RT4D's internal use. The summary version is for submission to the AANZFTA Economic Cooperation Sub-Committee (EC-SC), in close consultation with RT4D, the project proponent, ASEC EERD, and AANZFTA CEC.

In addition, the project will produce a survey to be completed 6 months post-project delivery. This will be developed in close consultation with RT4D, the project proponent, ASEC, and AANZFTA CEC.

### *The consultant will support the project implementation through the following:*

1.  Prepare and submit the Project Progress Reports for approval by relevant stakeholders.

2.  Prepare and submit the Project Completion Report for approval by relevant stakeholders.

3.  Develop a 6-month post-project survey questionnaire.

4.  Ensure all outputs and relevant documentation are provided to RT4D.

### *Activity 8 Output(s):*

8.1 Final Project Progress Report (long and summary version)

8.2 Final Project Completion Report (long and summary version)

8.3. Final 6-month post-project survey questionnaire

## A. Project Work Plan

Working closely with the RT4D team, the Consultant is expected to deliver the outlined deliverables in line with the work plan and timeline below.

The support from the selected Consultant, will be undertaken over a continuous effective period of *15* calendar months with an estimated *130* person days of professional services. Actual time will be agreed in negotiation with the selected Consultant. Work will commence immediately after contract signing.

| Activity/Task | Responsible Party | Deadline |
|---|---|---|
| **Activity 1:  Mobilisation Phase** | | **Mar 2026** |
| • Task 1.1: Submit Emailed PWG Membership List | RT4D & Technical Consultant (TC) | Mar 2026 |
| • Task 1.2: Review Emailed PWG Membership List | EC-SC, CEC & ASEC EERD | Mar 2026 |
| • Task 1.3: Re-submit Emailed PWG Membership List | RT4D & TC | Mar 2026 |
| • Task 1.4: Approve Emailed PWG Membership List | CEC | Mar 2026 |
| **Activity 2: Policy Working Group (PWG) and Draft General Design Principles** | | **Apr – Jul 2026** |
| • Task 2.1: Organise first meeting of the PWG | RT4D & ASEC EERD | Apr 2026 |
| • Task 2.2: Facilitate first monthly meeting of the PWG | RT4D & TC | Apr 2026 |
| • Task 2.3: Consult 3-5 non-government experts on digital exchange frameworks | RT4D & TC | Apr 2026 |
| • Task 2.4: Develop and submit Consultation Paper | RT4D, TC & PWG | Apr 2026 |
| • Task 2.5: Review Consultation Paper | EC-SC, CEC and ASEC EERD | May 2026 |
| • Task 2.6: Re-submit Consultation Paper | RT4D, TC & PWG | May 2026 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • Task 2.7: Approve Consultation Paper | CEC | May 2026 |
| • Task 2.8: Distribute Consultation Paper | RT4D & ASEC EERD | Jun 2026 |
| **Activity 3: Virtual Workshops** | | **Jun-Sep 2026** |
| • Task 3.1: Develop and submit agendas for the Virtual Workshops | RT4D & TC | Jun 2026 |
| • Task 3.2: Approve agendas for the Virtual Workshops | CEC | Jun 2026 |
| • Task 3.3: Develop and submit materials for the Virtual Workshops | RT4D & TC | Jul 2026 |
| • Task 3.4: Hold first Virtual Workshop (for AANZFTA Party officials) | RT4D & TC | Aug 2026 |
| • Task 3.5: Hold second Virtual Workshop (for officials and the private sector) | RT4D & TC | Aug 2026 |
| • Task 3.6: Submit consolidated Virtual Workshops Report | RT4D & TC | Aug 2026 |
| • Task 3.6: Approve consolidated Virtual Workshops Report | CEC | Sep 2026 |
| **Activity 4: Refinement and Endorsement of General Design Principles** | | Aug – Nov 2026 |
| • Task 4.3: Develop and submit materials for Bilateral Consultations | RT4D & TC | Aug 2026 |
| • Task 4.4: Hold Bilateral Consultations | RT4D & TC | Sep 2026 |
| • Task 4.5: Submit Stakeholder Consultation Summary | RT4D & TC | Sep 2026 |
| • Task 4.6: Develop and submit report with finalised General Design Principles | RT4D & TC | Oct 2026 |
| • Task 4.7: Review General Design Principles | EC-SC, CEC & ASEC EERD | Nov 2026 |
| • Task 4.8: Re-submit General Design Principles | RT4D & TC | Nov 2026 |
| • Task 4.9: Approve General Design Principles | CEC | Nov 2026 |
| **Activity 5: Development of Regional Toolkit** | | Dec 2026 – Mar 2027 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • Task 5.1: Develop and submit Regional Toolkit | RT4D & TC | Dec 2026 – Jan 2026 |
| • Task 5.2: Review Regional Toolkit | EC-SC, CEC & ASEC EERD | Jan – Feb 2027 |
| • Task 5.3: Re-submit Regional Toolkit | RT4D & TC | Feb 2027 |
| • Task 5.4: Approve Regional Toolkit | CEC | Feb 2027 |
| **Activity 6: Development of Adapted LDE Toolkits** | | Mar – Apr 2027 |
| • Task 6.1: Develop and submit materials for Bilateral Consultation with LDEs | RT4D & TC | Mar 2027 |
| • Task 6.2: Hold Bilateral Consultations with LDEs | RT4D & TC | Mar 2027 |
| • Task 6.3: Develop and submit adapted LDE Toolkits | RT4D & TC | Mar 2027 |
| • Task 6.4: Review adapted LDE Toolkits | EC-SC, CEC & ASEC EERD | Apr 2027 |
| • Task 6.5: Re-submit adapted LDE Toolkits | RT4D & TC | Apr 2027 |
| • Task 6.6: Approve adapted LDE Toolkits | CEC | Apr 2027 |
| • Task 6.7: Translate adapted LDE Toolkits | RT4D | Apr 2027 |
| **Activity 7: Dissemination of Regional and Adapted LDE Toolkits** | | |
| • Task 7.1: Submit materials for Regional Workshop | RT4D & TC | Mar 2027 |
| • Task 7.2: Review and approve materials for Regional Workshop | CEC | Mar 2027 |
| • Task 7.3: Hold Regional Workshop in Lao PDR | RT4D & TC | Apr 2027 |
| • Task 7.4: Submit Regional Workshop Report | RT4D & TC | Apr 2027 |
| • Task 7.5: Review and Approve Regional Workshop Report | CEC | May 2027 |
| • Task 7.6: Submit materials for up to three Virtual Workshops | RT4D & TC | May 2027 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • Task 7.7: Review and approve materials for up to three Virtual Workshops | CEC | May 2027 |
| • Task 7.8: Hold up to three Virtual Workshops | RT4D & TC | May- Jun 2027 |
| • Task 7.9: Submit up to three Virtual Workshops Reports | RT4D & TC | Jun 2027 |
| • Task 7.10: Review and Approve up to three Virtual Workshop Reports | CEC | Jun 2027 |
| • Task 7.11: Submit High-Level Support Plan | RT4D & TC | Jun 2027 |
| **Activity 8: Project Reporting** | | **May 2026 – Jun 2027** |
| • Task 8.1: Submit Project Progress Report (1) | TC | May 2026 |
| • Task 8.2: Approve Project Progress Report (1) | RT4D | May 2026 |
| • Task 8.3: Submit Project Progress Report (2) | TC | Dec 2026 |
| • Task 8.4: Approve Project Progress Report (2) | RT4D | Dec 2026 |
| • Task 8.7: Submit Project Completion Report | RT4D & TC | Jun 2027 |
| • Task 8.8: Approve Project Completion Report | CEC | Jun 2027 |

## IV. Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion

The Consultant will be responsible for ensuring that project implementation embeds Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) in line with the requirements set in this section. The Consultant should consult and work closely with the RT4D Manager and RT4D GEDSI Manager in ensuring that the project implementation addresses these requirements.

### 4.1 GEDSI Dimension of the Project

In line with the original Project Concept Note and the whole-of-economy potential of electronic commerce, this project has a strong GEDSI dimension and will have significant opportunity to further GEDSI considerations through its Activities and outputs. This project will provide a set of tools for policy and decision makers to make good, informed decisions on the development, implementation and adoption of digital exchange frameworks. It will also ensure equal access to opportunities presented by the increasing reliance on the digital economy for domestic, regional and global trade. The project should attempt to include GEDSI considerations as much as possible throughout the key activities of the project, using the following content as a guide ensure inclusivity throughout the project design.

### 4.2 GEDSI Dimensions of the Sector

The purpose of the project and inclusive digital exchange framework is to support standardised and efficient commerce and cross-border trade that promotes inclusive and accessible access to the digital economy at low or no cost. The digital economy involves a range of GEDSI dimensions, which require targeted and integrative support to ensure disadvantages are reduced and not exacerbated.

As a broad and whole-of-economy issue, there is extensive information on the GEDSI dimensions of electronic commerce in AANZFTA Party economies. According to the ASEAN-USAID IGNITE initiative, digital payments in ASEAN reached $806 billion USD by the end of 2022, a 35% rise from pre-COVID levels. Online expenditures are also expected to reach at least $1 trillion USD by 2030. IGNITE also developed the ASEAN Digital Integration Index (ADII), which measures AMS progress against milestones in ASEAN's DIF. In 2023, the ADII 2.0 Report found that digital integration had progressively increased across each of its measured pillars. However, reports such as this also find that underrepresented groups in AMS economies can face significant barriers in accessing the internet and digital solutions.

The Business Times reported in 2023 that 71% of people in ASEAN receive their wage in cash. The 2022 World Economic Forum's ASEAN Digital Generation Report also found that 79% of the ASEAN population can be categorised as financially excluded. This report noted that a large proportion of the financially excluded population are rural, MSMEs and women. These groups were also reported as having restricted access to the internet, technology, credit, insurance or investment products.

These barriers and the opportunities for underrepresented or disadvantaged groups should be considered throughout the project. For example, research (e.g. a literature review) should be conducted to inform the Consultation Paper, which will in turn inform later stakeholder engagement activities and the General Design Principles, Regional Toolkit and LDE Toolkits.

## 4.3 GEDSI Mainstreaming

*A. How will this project mainstream gender considerations? Describe how the project's content, practitioners, and delivery will reflect RT4D's GEDSI requirements?*

- All activities and outputs should reflect RT4D's GEDSI requirements, given the diversity of AMS economies and the barriers to participation in digital economies faced by underrepresented groups. This includes ensuring that stakeholders with GEDSI dimensions are provided with opportunities to respond to the Consultation Paper and to participate in other project activities. In addition, all events for this project should seek to have and report diverse participation.

- The General Design Principles and Toolkits should integrate GEDSI considerations to promote inclusive and accessible access to the digital economy at low or no cost. This may include a specific General Design Principle or information in the Toolkit related to social inclusion and/or accessibility, achieving low-or-no cost access to the digital economy, and/or consideration of communicating opportunities to access the digital economy to underrepresented stakeholders.

- Attention should be given to appropriate and respectful communication styles, in line with the RT4D Guideline for Inclusive Events and Communications. This may require consideration of in-country workshops, additional translations of materials and document-based outputs and live translations at events.

- Through all consultation and engagement activities and outputs, the project should incorporate targeted and specific information for the inclusion of underrepresented groups in AMS digital economies and cross-border trade to support broader social impact.

- Through all consultation and engagement activities and outputs, the project should collect disaggregated data on gender and disability participation and experience to support reporting and the design/delivery of future projects.

- By engaging with both public and private sector stakeholders, including those representing underrepresented groups, activities and outputs should raise awareness of the socio-economic benefits of greater representation of underrepresented groups in digital economies, including as a key driver of inclusive and growing economies.

*B. Who are the targeted participants of the project's activities? What will be the planned proportion of male and female participants? Will there be participants with disabilities and/or other participants representing under-represented and/or under-privileged groups?*

- During development of the Consultation Paper, expert non-government organisations will be engaged provide technical expertise on digital exchange frameworks. Given the technical nature of these engagements and the need for technical inputs into the Consultation Paper, no GEDSI targets have been included in the project.

- The Consultation Paper will be distributed to AANZFTA Party private sector organisations, including those working on GEDSI issues or representing underrepresented groups. These organisations will be identified by RT4D with the support AANZFTA CEC, AANZFTA EC-SC and ASEC EERD. During the Virtual Workshop for AANZFTA Party officials, participants

should also be provided with further advice on organisations working on GEDSI issues that may be able to provide relevant responses. The project has a target of receiving at least five responses from these organisations, which will support the refinement of the General Design Principles and development of the Regional Toolkit and LDE Toolkits.

- The project's direct engagements are predominantly set to target AANZFTA Party officials. This includes in the Virtual Workshops, Bilateral Consultations, Regional Workshop. During these engagements, the project has an overall target of 30% female representation.

- The project's up to three Virtual Workshops related to adapted Toolkits will be attended by the private sector. Given these sessions are demand-driven and will be tailored to the needs of each AMS, the project has no specific target for participation of organisations working on GEDSI issues and those representing or working with disadvantaged groups such as women, people with disabilities and micro/small business players. However, the participation of these organisations should be encouraged and explored with each AMS, with the support of AANZFTA CEC, AANZFTA EC-SC and ASEC EERD.

## C. How does this project benefit disadvantaged groups (e.g. people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, MSMEs)? Are any measures needed to ensure that work in this sector, and specific to the subject of the project, "Does No Harm"?

- The project will benefit disadvantaged groups by integrating applicable considerations in the General Design Principles, Regional Toolkit and LDE Toolkits. In doing so, AMS economies will be supported to adopt localised digital exchange frameworks that promote inclusive and accessible participation in the digital economy at low or no cost. By ensuring that outputs are neutral and guiding only, the sovereignty of each AMS (and especially ASEAN LDEs) will also be promoted and supported.

- The project should consider how to embed RT4D Guideline for Inclusive Events and Communications in the design of the Virtual Workshops, Bilateral Consultations and Regional Workshop. This will support the project to ensure that these engagements are culturally sensitive, equitable and beneficial for all participants.

- The project should also consider how its methodology and approach can support integrity of participation by appropriately tailoring activities and outputs to ensure social barriers (e.g. language, culture, religion, location, disability and preferred engagement style) do not unintentionally limit or otherwise impede participation or benefits from outputs.

- No specific measures are needed in this activity to ensure 'Do No Harm' except standard risk mitigation measures.

## D. How will the proposed project activities ensure the voices and aspirations of all participants, including those representing woman and other marginalised groups, be heard? What mechanism is provided to solicit input from participants or stakeholders that may not proactively contribute? Please elaborate.

- The project's Consultation Paper will be distributed to a wide range of public sector and private sector stakeholders, including those from and/or representing marginalised groups. These stakeholders will be invited to provide responses to the Consultation Paper's consultation questions. The list of stakeholders will be determined by the RT4D Facility in close consultation with AANZFTA CEC, AANZFTA EC-SC and ASEC EERD.

- During the Virtual Workshops, AMS officials should also be provided with further advice on additional distribution to organisations with GEDSI dimensions that may be able to provide relevant responses. The project has a target of receiving at least five responses from these organisations, which will support the refinement of the General Design Principles and development of the Regional Toolkit and LDE Toolkits.

- During the Virtual Workshops for adapted Toolkits, the project also expects to engage with organisations working on GEDSI issues and/or representatives of disadvantaged groups. Their participation will directly inform the development of the high-level Future Support Plan.

- The project should also consider how to appropriately capture feedback from participants (e.g. during the Virtual Workshops, Bilateral Consultations and Regional Workshop) to produce disaggregated data on gender and disability to inform reporting.

- Throughout the activity, the use of inclusive tools and respectful communication styles should also be considered. In doing so, the aim should be to reduce any language and hierarchical barriers that may inhibit open and transparent discussion. This should support all stakeholders to feel comfortable to ask questions and engaging in discussions.

### E. How will you ensure the organisation and/or implementation of project activities is inclusive (please refer to the RT4D Guidelines for Inclusive Events and Communications)?

- The project should consider how to embed RT4D Guidelines for Inclusive Events and Communications in the design of all engagements with stakeholders (e.g. the Virtual Workshops, Bilateral Consultations and Regional Workshop).

- The General Design Principles, Regional Toolkit and LDE Toolkits should embed GEDSI considerations within their practical guidance, advice and information (such as any case studies). The Toolkits will include a dedicated section and/or subsections that analyse GEDSI dimensions of digital exchange frameworks and participation in the digital economy. A key consideration will be how adopting and promoting inclusive and accessible digital exchange frameworks can benefit or be augmented to be supportive of the participation of marginalised and minority groups in the digital economy.

- Additionally, the General Design Principles, Regional Toolkit and LDE Toolkits should follow the RT4D Inclusive Communications Principles. This will ensure the project activities remain inclusive.

## V.   Communications, Media, and Business Engagement

The Consultant will support the RT4D Facility in meeting any Communications and Media objectives through the course of the Project. All reports and materials should be produced to a high quality in line with RT4D Branding Guidelines.

The Consultant is expected to adhere to following RT4D guidelines as required:

i.   Employ RT4D Branding guidelines, templates and logos in all project documentation (e.g. reports, PPTs, invitations).
ii.   Collecting images of the workshop for website and social media promotion.
iii.   RT4D Banner and RT4D brand on physical materials shared.

External Communications and Media component of this Project will be a key component of most project activities. The Consultant will be expected to respond to any reasonable requests and inputs

from the RT4D Program Performance and Quality Lead and Program Delivery Team, which may include but will not be limited to project updates and requested written inputs.

In addition, the Consultant is expected to manage the implementation of the activity so that it adheres to communications and business engagement objectives as outlined below.

- The Consultant will ensure that communication, media, and business engagement considerations are systematically embedded across all project activities in accordance with the endorsed Project Design. This includes supporting consistent messaging, appropriate visibility of RT4D support, and effective engagement with relevant public and private sector stakeholders to enhance awareness, transparency, and uptake of project outputs.
- The Consultant will work closely with the RT4D Program Performance and Quality Lead and Program Delivery Team to support external communications, including the timely provision of written inputs, activity updates, and promotional content as required. All communication and engagement activities will be implemented in compliance with RT4D branding and communication requirements and will contribute to the achievement of the Project's communications and business engagement objectives.

## VI. Monitoring & Evaluation

| # | Suggested Indicator | Indicator Type | Target | Activity Number | GEDSI Mainstreaming |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Minimum number of AMS with a representative on the PWG | Output | 5 | 2 | No |
| 2 | Approval of Consultation Paper | Output | 1 | 2 | No |
| 3 | Virtual Workshops | Output | 2 with 30% female participation | 3 | Yes |
| 4 | Minimum number of responses to Consultation Paper from stakeholders with a GEDSI dimension | Outcome | 5 | 4 | Yes |
| 5 | Bilateral Consultations with all AANZFTA Parties on the Consultation Paper | Output | 12 | 4 | Yes |
| 6 | Minimum number of officials per AMS involved in Bilateral Consultations, including percentage of female representatives | Output | 2 (30% female across all Bilateral Consultations) | 4, 6 | Yes |
| 7 | Approval of Report on General Design Principles | Output / Outcome | 1 | 4 | No |
| 8 | Approval of Regional Toolkit | Output | 1 | 5 | No |
| 9 | Bilateral Consultations with AMS officials | Output | 3 | 6 | No |
| 10 | Approval of Adapted Toolkits | Output | Up to 3 | 6 | No |
| 11 | Hold hybrid Regional Workshop in Lao PDR attended by AMS officials | Output | 1 and with 30% female participation | 7 | No |

| 12 | Hold up to 3 Virtual Workshops for adapted Toolkits attended by AMS officials and local private sector stakeholders | Output | Up to 3 with at least 5 private sector participant and 30% female participation in each session | 7 | Yes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Increased awareness of AMS challenges and approaches to digital exchange frameworks | Outcome | 80% of participant responses | 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 | No |
| 14 | Increased awareness of challenges specific to LDEs, women, disabled people and other under-represented groups | Outcome | 80% of participant responses | 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 | Yes |
| 15 | Increased awareness and understanding of the benefits of the General Design Principles and digital exchange frameworks being in line with international best practice | Outcome | 80% of participant responses | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 | No |
| 16 | Likelihood of General Design Principles and Toolkits being used in the work of participating AMS officials | Outcome | 80% of participant responses report as likely | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 | No |

# VII.  Reporting and Program Management

Deliverables are subject to feedback and amendments from the RT4D Facility team, Director New Zealand Peppol Authority, Committee on Electronic Commerce (CEC), External Economic Relations Division (EERD). The Consultant will engage regularly with these stakeholders in the drafting process, including seeking comments and adjustments and revising deliverables as directed.

The RT4D Facility will support with standard procedures required to receive feedback and endorsement from key stakeholders. A full list of stakeholders the Consultant will engage with is outlined below:

| Stakeholder | Responsibilities |
|---|---|
| AANZFTA CEC | • Support the RT4D Facility in identifying and securing participation of relevant stakeholders for this project.<br>• Nominate one representative from each AANZFTA Party for the PWG, such as the AANZFTA CEC Representative or another domestic official with relevant expertise.<br>• Provide direct oversight and closely monitor status updates of this project.<br>• Provide timely review, inputs, and final approval for all project outputs. |
| AANZFTA EC-SC | • Support the RT4D Facility in identifying and securing participation of relevant stakeholders for the project.<br>• Provide timely review and inputs into relevant project activities and outputs. |
| ASEC EERD | • Coordinate with the RT4D Facility to ensure effective implementation of this project.<br>• Support the RT4D Facility in identifying and securing participation of relevant stakeholders for this project.<br>• Provide timely review and inputs into relevant project activities and outputs. |

| Stakeholder | Responsibilities |
|---|---|
| RT4D Facility | • Overall project management support, including: <br>     ○ Procurement, contracting, disbursement and finance/budget management according to the RT4D Facility requirements and procedures. <br>     ○ Technical oversight and coordination of consultants <br>     ○ Provide advice on GEDSI, MEL, template requirements, and finalise any publicly released media materials (such as social media and press releases for the RT4D Facility). <br>     ○ Liaise and communicate with relevant Project Proponents and AANZFTA Parties on project outputs and approvals, as required, through relevant ASEC Desk Officers. <br>     ○ Members of the RT4D team, including the including Program Delivery Lead, Program Performance and Quality Lead, MEL Manager, GEDSI Manager, and Regional Managers will provide inputs to relevant activities and outputs. |
| External consultants[2] (Subject Matter Experts, Technical Consultants, Translation Service). | • Deliver all activities for this project as stated in this project design and relevant Terms of Reference (ToR). <br> • Provide logistics and event management support for relevant events under this project. <br> • Provide translations of adapted Toolkits and related Virtual Workshop materials. |

## VIII. Risk Management

The Consultant will support the RT4D Facility in the management and mitigation of activity risks as outlined in the table below.

| Risk | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigation Plan |
|---|---|---|---|
| Key stakeholders (i.e. AANZFTA Party officials) do not participate in the Virtual Workshops, Bilateral Consultations, and/or Regional Workshop. | Medium | High | Leverage RT4D's and the Project Proponents with key stakeholders to confirm early attendance. |
| Key stakeholders (i.e. private sector entities and organisations with a GEDSI dimension) do not respond to the Consultation Paper or participate in the Virtual Workshops and Regional Workshop. | Medium | High | Leverage RT4D's and the Project Proponents with key stakeholders to confirm early attendance. |
| Key stakeholders continue to make changes to the scope and starting points for the General Design Principles and Toolkits. | Medium | High | The scope of outputs and their starting points for development are confirmed in this Project Design. |
| The General Design Principles and Toolkits are not fit-for-purpose. | Medium | High | In addition to the Project Design, the project will provide appropriate review times for each output and deploy tools and tailored |

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[2] RT4D will be responsible for the procurement of the technical consultants and event organisation for effective project implementation.

| Risk | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigation Plan |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | methodologies to allow for inclusive participation and consultation. |
| International organisations (e.g. OpenPeppol and the DBNAlliance) and technical expertise are not willing or have limited availability, particularly to be consulted or respond to the Consultation Paper and to participate in the Virtual Workshops, or Regional Workshop. | High | Medium | Early engagement with key organisations and relevant experts will confirm the appetite and availability to attend/present/facilitate the Regional Workshop. |

## IX. Child Protection[3], PSEAH[4] (Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment) and other Policy Considerations

For this specific project, and all other activities undertaken through RT4D, it is expected that anyone involved in the delivery must operate in strict compliance with DFAT's Child Protection and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policies. In the design of the consultations and the Regional Workshop, the project should consider the importance of managing risks associated with the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Child Protection and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policies.

The project should also refer to Tetra Tech's policy on PSEAH for additional guidance on risk assessment and management. The project should also note that any activities that require personnel to be deployed outside their usual location or country of residence (e.g. consultations and regional workshops) may pose higher PSEAH risks.

While this project does not directly involve children or vulnerable populations, several activities will include stakeholder engagement, workshops, and cross-border collaboration, which may require personnel to travel or interact with diverse participants.

Accordingly, the project will implement the following measures to manage risk and uphold high standards of professional conduct:

**Policy Adherence and Risk Mitigation Measures**

All personnel, including external consultants, will be required to formally acknowledge and comply with DFAT's Child Protection and PSEAH policies internal guidance.

- In-person engagements (e.g. workshops, regional consultations) will be co-facilitated by multiple team members to ensure transparency and minimise the risk of inappropriate behaviour.

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[3] Child Protection Policy 2025 | Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

[4] Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment | Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

- Gender balance among facilitators and speakers will be proactively encouraged in all capacity-building and consultation activities.

Where imagery or communication materials are developed (e.g. for public dissemination of the ASEAN Guidelines), gender sensitivity and cultural appropriateness will be ensured to avoid reinforcing harmful stereotypes. **Feedback and Reporting Mechanisms**

- Anonymous reporting channels will be made available during any in-person events and engagements, allowing participants safely raise concerns or report breaches of conduct.
- Clear codes of conduct and behavioural expectations will be included in workshop materials and opening remarks at events.

**Inclusive Practices**

- In line with RT4D's guidelines for inclusive events and communications, project activities will be designed and delivered to ensure safe, respectful, and inclusive environments, particularly for women and marginalised groups.
- The overall approach will prioritise preventative action, transparency, and clear accountability, with the RT4D Facility and implementing partners maintaining active oversight throughout all phases of project implementation.

## X. Privacy and Confidentiality

Regional Trade for Development Facility (RT4D) is committed to ensuring and maintaining the security and confidentiality of all documents and information produced by its development programs and by its partners and clients. This includes ensuring the security and confidentiality of all information and documents produced by the ASEAN Secretariat and by AANZFTA FJC and their Subsidiary Bodies that are shared with RT4D's AANZFTA Implementation Support Program (AISP). RT4D security and confidentiality measures and protocols are underpinned by Tetra Tech (the managing contractor) systems.

All files/outputs associated with the delivery of outputs set in this TOR will be stored on a secure file-sharing platform (Egnyte). Access to Egnyte is controlled and will only be granted to non-RT4D users on a needs basis and as agreed with ASEC and or Subsidiary Bodies.

All RT4D sub-contractors and consultants will sign a Code of Conduct, a Deed of Confidentiality, and a Conflict-of-Interest Declaration before starting their tenure/assignment. These documents specify acceptable behaviours on confidentiality, handling of sensitive information, and information security. Training on these topics is also provided on regular basis to ensure compliance.

All personnel engaged by RT4D for the delivery of outputs set in this Scope of Services are expected to sign these documents before the implementation of this activity.

## XI. Criteria for Issuing Tasking Note

### A. Technical Soundness Considerations

To ensure the above can be effectively managed and completed in alignment with this TOR, it is recommended that interested organisations have multidisciplinary team with:

- Advanced degree in Economics, International Trade, Public Policy, Digital Commerce, ICT, or related fields, providing a strong technical foundation in trade, e-commerce, and policy frameworks relevant to ASEAN and AANZFTA Parties.

- Demonstrated experience in digital exchange frameworks, e-commerce, or interoperability standards, enabling effective design, review, and validation of the General Design Principles and related toolkits.

- Strong stakeholder facilitation and consultation skills, essential for coordinating Policy Working Group meetings, bilateral consultations, and multi-stakeholder workshops.

- Proven experience in policy paper development and toolkit or manual preparation, ensuring outputs are technically sound, accessible, inclusive, and practical for regional and national stakeholders.

- Sound knowledge of regional and multilateral trade agreements, including the AEC, AANZFTA, WTO, and RCEP, to ensure alignment with international obligations and regional priorities.

- Proven experience working with government agencies and regional authorities, enabling effective engagement, coordination, and endorsement of project outputs.

- Demonstrated ability in multi-stakeholder coordination and consensus-building, including managing diverse inputs and aligning competing perspectives with project objectives.

- Experience in planning and delivering workshops, webinars, and bilateral consultations, supporting effective capacity building and structured stakeholder feedback.

- Experience in developing and implementing toolkits and guidance documents, with a focus on usability, sustainability, and practical application.

- Strong reporting and documentation skills, including preparation of progress reports, consultation summaries, workshop reports, and completion reports.

- Ability to integrate GEDSI considerations across activities and outputs, ensuring inclusion of women, persons with disabilities, LDEs, and other underrepresented stakeholders.

- Prior engagement with similar donors, such as DFAT, RT4D, or MFAT, which would be considered an advantage.

- Experience in coordinating translations or producing multi-lingual outputs, ensuring technical accuracy while adapting materials for multiple ASEAN contexts.

## B. Value for Money Considerations

Proposals to deliver this project should adhere to DFAT's Value for Money Principles, outlined below.

Achieving value for money is a critical consideration for the achievement of DFAT's strategic objectives. It is a requirement under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act (2013) and the Commonwealth Procurement Rules. Building on these requirements DFAT has developed eight Value for Money Principles to guide decision making and maximise the impact of its investments. DFAT's website includes a detailed description of VfM indicators (outlined in the table below). We expect all our delivery partners to give effect to these principles and value for money performance is measured in DFAT's Aid Performance Framework.

| Economy | Efficiency | Effectiveness | Ethics |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Cost consciousness<br>2. Encouraging competition | 3. Evidence based decision making<br>4. Proportionality | 5. Performance and Risk Management<br>6. Results Focus<br>7. Experimentation and innovation | 8. Accountability and transparency |

Bidders should note that the RT4D Facility refers to DFAT's Aid Adviser Remuneration Framework to estimate the cost of contracting international advisers for the delivery of projects and activities.

## XII. Annexes

### Annex A - Response from Tenderers and Evaluation Criteria

Interested bidders should submit a Technical and Financial proposals that respond to the selection criteria outlined in the table below. As part of their Technical Proposal submission, bidders should also provide their information as outlined in Annex B.

If a bidder finds any discrepancy, error or omission in the ToR or wishes to make any enquiry concerning the ToR, the bidder is to notify aisp@regionaltrade4dev.org in writing by the last queries date indicated in the ToR summary. All answers to any such notices or questions will be provided to all registered tenderers in the form of addenda.

| Component | Score |
|---|---|
| **Part A – Response to Technical Component** | |
| **A.1 Approach and Methodology -** Outline approach to completing the stated scope of services. The approach should include: <br><br> • A brief discussion indicating your understanding of project requirements. <br> • A description of the methodological approach to achieving the project objectives and completing project deliverables. This may include an analysis of key issues, analytical strategies that will underlie the approach, specific tools or techniques that will be employed, and practical discussion of methodological limitations. | **20** |
| **A.2 Project Plan and Risk Management –** Please provide the following: <br><br> • A project plan that specifies deliverables, tasks and timelines in line with section III of the ToR. <br> • Identify your approach to mitigating the project risks outlined in Section VIII of this ToR. <br> • Indicate how the project will be monitored and reported in line with section VII of this ToR to ensure it is delivered in terms of quality, timeliness and cost. <br> • Indicate the level of support that will be required from the RT4D Facility to complete the project. | **20** |
| **A.3 Organizational Capabilities and Experience –** Please specify the following: <br><br> • Outline general organisational capability that is likely to affect performance of project in line with ToR requirements (e.g. size of the organisation, in-house expertise, strength of project management support, networks, etc.). <br> • Describe past experience in undertaking similar work—referring to criteria outlined in Section XI-A of this ToR—and provide brief summaries of relevant projects undertaken. <br> • Explain whether any work would be subcontracted, to whom, how much percentage of the work, the rationale for such, and the roles of the proposed sub-contractors. | **20** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **A.4 Project Team and Resourcing** – Describe approach to staffing in line with ToR requirements including details of all proposed experts and their role in the delivery of the required services. This should include:<br><br>• Key members of the project team, including their CVs, and demonstrate their skills and expertise essential to the delivery of this project—as specified in section XI-A of this ToR.<br>• Roles, responsibilities, and level of participation of the project team members.<br>• An uncosted resource plan proposing the number of person days you expect each team member to undertake in delivering this project. | **20** |
| **TOTAL – Technical Proposal** | **80** |
| **Part B – Response to Financial Component** | |
| **Using the template provided**, complete a Financial Proposal for the delivery of the scope of services in alignment with RT4D Value for Money Principles. The Financial Proposal should specify all direct and indirect costs for undertaking the project, including:<br><br>• Professional services fees for completing all deliverables in accordance with the uncosted resource plan.<br>• Indirect costs for undertaking the project, including costs for experts and participants such as reimbursable expenses for travel costs, daily subsistence allowance for workshops, meetings, and all other agreed activities.<br>• Management and/or operational fees (if any), which include all costs incurred by the person/entity/company for internal coordination, communication, travels and any other associated project management cost;<br>• Applicable taxes such as VAT, GST, PPN. | **20** |
| **TOTAL – Financial Proposal** | **20** |
| **GRAND TOTAL – Evaluation Criteria** | **100** |

## Annex B - Bidder Information

Consultant's general information – to be submitted together in the Technical Proposal

| | |
|---|---|
| **Name of Assignment** | General Design Principles for Digital Exchange Frameworks |
| **Tenderer's Organisation or Person** | |
| **Address** | |
| **Contact Person and Title/Position** | |
| **E-Mail** | |
| **Telephone / Mobile Phone** | |
| **Business Name Registration (if applicable)** | |
| **Tax Registration Number (if applicable)** | |
| **Indicative number of years involved in similar business/work** | |

| Date | |
|------|--|

## About RT4D

The $53.3 million Regional Trade for Development (RT4D) initiative, funded by both the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, assists ASEAN Member States in meeting their commitments and realising the advantages offered by the Agreement establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA), and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). RT4D supports AMS in benefitting from an open, free and rules-based trading system.

Through the AANZFTA Implementation Support Program (AISP) and the RCEP Implementation Support Program (RISP), RT4D provides tailored support to enhance the capabilities of ASEAN Member States by strengthening skills, building networks, facilitating policy options and ensuring that trade benefits everyone, including Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), women and people with disabilities.

The Regional Trade for Development Initiative:

- provides ASEAN with access to world class technical expertise to support economic cooperation activities.
- delivers economic cooperation activities, working closely with ASEAN Member States and ASEAN Secretariat.
- has a strong focus on less developed ASEAN economies to ensure that it responds to the different needs and readiness of ASEAN.
- facilitates implementation of the provisions of selected FTAs to support inclusive development outcomes.

🌐 Visit our website: https://regional-trade4dev.org/

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