

REGIONAL TRADE FOR DEVELOPMENT

RCEP IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL/TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE

Development of Project Designs for Two Projects on: i) Inclusive Cross-Border Trade Facilitation for Women Traders and SMEs under RCEP in Lao PDR; and ii) Inclusive Digital Transformation under RCEP: Strengthening SME Supply Chains by Empowering Women and Persons with Disabilities in Lao PDR

I. Summary

The Regional Trade for Development Facility (RT4D) is seeking a consultancy firm/individual consultant to manage and deliver the end-to-end Project Design for two projects approved under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Implementation Support Program (RISP). The Project Designs will inform the implementation of the RISP project starting in the 2026-27 Financial-Year.

Under the scope of services set in this ToR, the Consultant will manage the **development and delivery of two (2) separate Project Designs, with one Project Design developed for each of the following two (2) projects:**

- i) **Project 1:** Inclusive Cross-Border Trade Facilitation for Women Traders and SMEs under RCEP in Lao PDR
- ii) **Project 2:** Inclusive Digital Transformation under RCEP: Strengthening SME Supply Chains by Empowering Women and Persons with Disabilities in Lao PDR

The Project Design will follow a standard RT4D template and be subject to comments, amendments, and the approval from the RT4D Facility Team, the Project Proponent and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Title Project 1:	Inclusive Cross-Border Trade Facilitation for Women Traders and SMEs under RCEP in Lao PDR
Start Date	July 2026
Completion Date	September 2026
Reports to:	RT4D Manager: Sianong Phomkong, Sianong.Phomkong@regionaltrade4dev.org
Interacts With <i>[stakeholders who will provide inputs]</i>	RT4D Facility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Manager: Sianong Phomkong • Program Officer: Phonevilay Vongxay • Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) and Trade Manager: Yooke Damopolii Project Proponent: Department of Economic Fiscal Policy, Ministry of Finance, Lao PDR

Requires Approval from: <i>[stakeholders who will approve project outputs]</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT4D Facility • Project Proponent: Department of Economic Fiscal Policy, Ministry of Finance • Project Funding Partners: Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) & New Zealand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)
Timetable for Tender Process	<p>Request for Proposals: 10/6/2026 Closing Date for Queries: 24/6/2026 Closing Date for Proposals: 5/7/2026</p>
Submission Instructions	<p>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 Facility at procurement@regionaltrade4dev.org and Sianong.Phomkong@regionaltrade4dev.org by 5 July 2026</p>

Title Project 2:	Inclusive Digital Transformation under RCEP: Strengthening SME Supply Chains by Empowering Women and Persons with Disabilities in Lao
Start Date	July 2026
Completion Date	September 2026
Reports to:	RT4D Manager: Sianong Phomkong, Sianong.Phomkong@regionaltrade4dev.org
Interacts With <i>[stakeholders who will provide inputs]</i>	<p>RT4D Facility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Manager: Sianong Phomkong • Lao Program Officer: Phonevilay Vongxay • Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) and Trade Manager: Yooke Damopolii <p>Project Proponent: Institute for Industry, Commerce, and Energy (IICE), Ministry for Industry and Commerce (MOIC)</p>
Requires Approval from: <i>[stakeholders who will approve project outputs]</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT4D Facility • Project Proponent: Institute for Industry and Commerce, MOIC • Project Funding Partners: Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) & New Zealand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).
Timetable for Tender Process	<p>Request for Proposals: 10/6/2026 Closing Date for Queries: 24/6/2026 Closing Date for Proposals: 5/7/2026</p>
Submission Instructions	<p>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 Facility at procurement@regionaltrade4dev.org and Sianong.Phomkong@regionaltrade4dev.org by 5 July 2026</p>

II. Background

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Implementation Support Program (RISP), implemented through the Regional Trade for Development (RT4D) Facility, aims to support ASEAN Member States to realise the full benefits of RCEP through the provision of capacity-building support and access to technical expertise.

RT4D is seeking a Consultant (a consulting firm or an individual expert) to manage and deliver two (2) separate end-to-end Project Designs for two (2) approved RISP Projects, in close collaboration with the RT4D Facility and the Project Proponents. The final Project Designs will be subject to comments, amendments, and the approval from the RT4D Facility Team, the respective Project Proponent and Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and New Zealand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).

III. Objective, Beneficiaries, Outputs and Outcomes

This Project aims to develop two high-quality and robust Project Designs for the implementation of the approved of two RISP projects. The Project Design must demonstrate sound analysis, strong contextual understanding and consultation with the Project Proponent and the RT4D Facility. The table below outlines key features of the two projects.

A. Project 1

Project Name	Inclusive Cross-Border Trade Facilitation for Women Traders and SMEs under RCEP in Lao PDR
Project Objectives	<p>Cross-border economic corridors are critical gateways for Lao PDR’s participation in regional trade and value chains, particularly through the East–West, North–South, and Southern Economic Corridors under the Greater Mekong Subregion framework. The Government of Lao PDR has prioritised trade facilitation through the National Trade and Transport Facilitation Roadmap 2025–2030, which aims to reduce clearance times, improve logistics performance, and modernise border procedures. However, evidence on how different groups—especially women traders, women-owned SMEs, and persons with disabilities (PwDs)—utilise corridor and border services remains limited and fragmented. Without inclusive, disaggregated data, corridor investments and RCEP-related reforms risk benefiting only a narrow segment of traders. This project responds to this gap by generating practical evidence and policy-relevant insights on inclusive access to cross-border trade systems in Lao PDR.</p> <p>This project will address the following key gaps in Lao PDR’s cross-border trade system:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence gap on inclusive trade participation: the lack of gender- and disability-disaggregated data on how women traders, women-owned SMEs, and PwD-led businesses access and utilise border procedures, logistics services, and trade corridors. Barriers in practical use of trade facilitation measures: Limited understanding of how border processes, documentation requirements, costs, and informal practices affect different groups’ ability to participate in formal cross-border trade under RCEP.

	<p>3. Weak integration of gender and disability perspectives into trade policy: Insufficient incorporation of GEDSI considerations in trade facilitation reforms, corridor management, and public–private dialogue mechanisms.</p> <p>4. Capacity constraints among traders and institutions: Gaps in awareness, skills, and institutional capacity to design and implement gender-responsive trade facilitation and inclusive corridor policies.</p> <p>5. Translation of RCEP commitments into inclusive outcomes: The need to ensure that RCEP-related connectivity and trade reforms lead to measurable increases in participation of women traders</p>
<p>Beneficiaries</p>	<p>1) Primary beneficiaries: The primary beneficiaries of the project are women traders and women-owned MSMEs actively engaged in, or seeking to engage in, cross-border trade, particularly within key economic corridors linking Lao PDR with neighbouring RCEP markets. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women-led MSMEs operating in agricultural, agro-processing, manufacturing, and retail supply chains with export potential; • Informal and semi-formal women traders operating at or near border checkpoints who seek to transition into formal cross-border trade; • Women entrepreneurs and traders with disabilities (PWDs) who face additional physical, institutional, and informational barriers in accessing border services and logistics systems. <p>These groups will directly benefit from improved access to trade-related information, inclusive trade facilitation practices, capacity building activities, and policy recommendations generated by the project.</p> <p>2) Secondary beneficiaries: Secondary beneficiaries are public and private institutions that design, regulate, and support cross-border trade systems, and that will utilise the project’s findings to improve inclusive trade facilitation. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government trade and border agencies, including customs, transport, and trade facilitation authorities at national and sub-national levels; • Chambers of commerce, business associations, and private sector logistics and transport firms engaged in cross-border trade; • Local authorities and corridor management bodies in border provinces responsible for economic corridor development and service delivery; • RCEP-related institutions and development partners supporting trade facilitation and regional connectivity initiatives; and • Academic and policy research institutions specialising in trade, gender, and inclusive economic development.
<p>Project Activities and Outputs (subject to adjustments and confirmation as part of the Project Design process).</p>	<p>1. Inception & Work Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct initial consultations with relevant ministries (MoIC, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW), Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT), border authorities, and trade-related business associations.

- Develop a detailed implementation plan, research methodology, and coordination mechanisms focusing on inclusive cross-border trade participation.
- Recruit local research assistants and gender and inclusion specialists with experience in trade facilitation and SME development.

2. Desk Review & Secondary Data Compilation

- Review national trade facilitation policies, ASEAN and RCEP commitments, ECOTECH priority documents, and corridor-related infrastructure plans.
- Compile existing data on cross-border trade flows, SME participation, border procedures, logistics performance, and available sex- and disability-disaggregated trade statistics.

3. Stakeholder Mapping & Inclusive Trade Analysis Framework

- Identify key stakeholders across cross-border trade value chains, including women traders, women-owned SMEs, customs officials, logistics providers, transport operators, and trade support institutions.
- Develop inclusive analysis tools to capture trade participation patterns, access to border services, procedural barriers, costs, and information gaps faced by women and PWD traders.

4. Field Research at Selected Border Corridors

Field research will be conducted at key cross-border trade corridors, including:

- Lao PDR–Thailand economic corridors
- Lao PDR–Viet Nam border trade routes

Data collection will focus on:

- How women traders and SMEs use border procedures and logistics services;
- Time, cost, documentation, and informal practices affecting cross-border trade;
- Accessibility of border facilities and services for women and PwD traders.

5. Case Studies on Economic Corridors

- Develop case studies examining how corridors such as the East–West Economic Corridor (EWEC) influence women’s participation in cross-border trade, SME market access, and use of trade facilitation measures.
- Analyse corridor-specific enablers and constraints for inclusive trade participation.

6. Private Sector & SME Engagement

- Consult women-led SMEs, informal women traders, logistics firms, agribusiness exporters, e-commerce platforms, and border transport operators.
- Identify practical business and procedural constraints affecting women’s ability to participate in formal cross-border trade, including access to information, finance, documentation, and logistics services.

7. Policy & Regulatory Gap Assessment

- Review customs, trade facilitation, border management, transport, and SME policies to identify regulatory and institutional constraints affecting inclusive trade participation.
- Map alignment with RCEP provisions, ECOTECH priorities, and national trade facilitation reform agendas.

	<p>8. Capacity Strengthening Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct capacity building workshops for government officials, trade support institutions, and women-led SMEs on inclusive trade facilitation and gender-responsive border processes. • Equip women traders and SMEs with practical knowledge on cross-border procedures, documentation requirements, trade opportunities under RCEP, and pathways to formalisation. <p>9. Validation & Stakeholder Dialogue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present preliminary findings to relevant ministries, border authorities, private sector representatives, and civil society organisations. • Facilitate stakeholder dialogue to validate results and refine policy recommendations for inclusive trade facilitation. <p>10. Policy Recommendations & Action Roadmap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a gender- and disability-responsive action roadmap with practical recommendations for government agencies, private sector actors, and development partners to improve women’s and PwDs’ participation in cross-border trade. • Include measures related to border procedures, service accessibility, institutional coordination, and RCEP utilisation. <p>11. Final Reporting & Dissemination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a final analytical report and policy brief on inclusive cross-border trade participation in Lao PDR. • Conduct a national dissemination
<p>Project Outcomes</p>	<p>1. Improved evidence on inclusive cross-border trade participation: enhanced availability of sex- and disability-disaggregated data on how women traders, women-owned SMEs, and PwD-led businesses access and utilise border procedures, logistics services, and trade corridors in Lao PDR.</p> <p>2. Better understanding of practical barriers to RCEP utilisation: increased institutional knowledge among government agencies and trade support institutions on procedural, regulatory, and operational barriers affecting inclusive participation in cross-border trade, including time, cost, documentation, and accessibility constraints.</p> <p>3. Strengthened capacity for inclusive trade facilitation: improved capacity of government officials, border authorities, and trade-related institutions to design and implement gender- and disability-responsive trade facilitation measures aligned with RCEP and national trade facilitation reforms.</p> <p>4. Enhanced participation of women traders and SMEs in formal cross-border trade: increased awareness, knowledge, and practical ability of women traders, women-owned SMEs, and PwD entrepreneurs to navigate cross-border trade procedures and transition towards more formal participation in regional trade.</p> <p>5. Actionable policy recommendations for inclusive trade reforms: development of a practical, gender- and disability-responsive action roadmap providing concrete measures for improving inclusive access to cross-border trade systems, border services, and RCEP-related opportunities.</p>

Project Name	Inclusive Digital Transformation under RCEP: Strengthening SME Supply Chains by Empowering Women and Persons with Disabilities in Lao PDR
Project Objectives	<p>SMEs in Lao PDR remain vulnerable to market shocks due to weak supply chain coordination, limited market access, and low adoption of digital platforms. Although e-commerce can expand markets and strengthen resilience, many SMEs lack the skills, tools, and practical guidance to use platforms effectively, especially for product presentation, packaging, order fulfilment, and customer service. Women entrepreneurs and PwD face additional barriers such as limited access to training, finance, networks, and accessible digital content resulting in lower participation in online trade opportunities. At the same time, targeted policies, institutional support, and stakeholder partnerships to enable inclusive digital transformation are still insufficient, and there is a shortage of user-friendly Lao-language resources. Without evidence-based recommendations, stronger coordination, and accessible capacity-building, SMEs particularly women-led businesses and PwD risk being left behind in the growing digital economy. The objectives of this project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: To assess the challenges and opportunities of digital platform adoption in SME supply chains in Laos, with specific attention to women-led enterprises and the participation of PwD. • Objective 2: To develop evidence-based guidelines and policy recommendations that promote inclusive digital transformation and strengthen the resilience of SMEs. • Objective 3: To build the digital and supply chain capacities of SMEs - focusing on women entrepreneurs and PwD through improved institutional frameworks and strengthened stakeholder partnerships. • Objective 4: To create, develop, and publish practical information and tools on strengthening SME supply chain resilience through digital platforms, ensuring accessibility and relevance for women and PwD.
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From objective 1: Policymakers at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and other line ministries. • From objective 2: Reference for researchers, government officials, and public benefit • From objective 3: SME owners and managers, along with officials from relevant ministries, SME institutions, and private sector stakeholders, will directly benefit from capacity-building activities and strengthened partnerships, with particular attention to women-led enterprises and young entrepreneurs. • From objective 4: SMEs, policymakers, researchers, and ecosystem stakeholders will benefit from accessible information and knowledge products on strengthening handicraft SME supply chain resilience through digital platforms.
Project Activities and Outputs (subject to adjustments and confirmation as part of the Project Design process).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: To assess the challenges and opportunities of digital platform adoption in SME supply chains in Laos, with specific attention to women-led enterprises and the participation of PwD. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primary data: collected from relevant public- and private-sector stakeholders. - Secondary data: drawn from statistical databases, peer-reviewed literature, publications, government reports, and other credible sources. • Objective 2: To develop evidence-based guidelines and policy recommendations that promote inclusive digital transformation and strengthen the resilience of SMEs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity 2.1: Dissemination and consultation workshop will be organised to validate results of this study. Ideas from stakeholders will be used to develop policy recommendation for ministerial level policymakers • Objective 3: To build the digital and supply chain capacities of SMEs - focusing on women entrepreneurs and PWD through improved institutional frameworks and strengthened stakeholder partnerships. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity 3.1 – Mapping, selecting and inviting participants. Activity 3.2 – Up to three two-day training sessions in different provinces • Objective 4: To create, develop, and publish practical information and tools on strengthening SME supply chain resilience through digital platforms, ensuring accessibility and relevance for women and PwD. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity 4.1: Publication of local language brochure and handbook in both online (including social media platforms) and physical copies.
<p>Project Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome from objective 1: The project is expected to produce a strong evidence base on digital platform adoption in SME supply chains in Laos, including a clear baseline on current practices and readiness, with attention to women-led enterprises and the participation PWD. It will identify key challenges, gaps, and opportunities across functions such as marketing, ordering, inventory, delivery, and customer service, and provide practical insights on which platforms and support measures can generate the greatest resilience and market access benefits. • Outcome from objective 2: Delivering practical, evidence-based guidelines and a set of policy recommendations to enable inclusive digital transformation and strengthen SME resilience. Outputs will translate research findings into actionable measures for government and stakeholders, supported by clear justification, and presented in usable formats such as a policy brief and implementation-oriented guidance to improve digital adoption, inclusion, and competitiveness for SMEs, especially women and PWD. • Outcome from objective 3: Improving SMEs’ digital and supply chain capacity-building prioritising women entrepreneurs and PWD through strengthened institutional frameworks and active stakeholder partnerships. Expected outcomes include measurable improvements in skills and business readiness for online selling and supply chain management, better coordination among public and private support providers, and functioning collaboration mechanisms linking SMEs with training, e-commerce platforms, logistics, finance, and relevant women’s and disability organisations for sustained support. • Outcome from objective 4: Producing and disseminating practical information and tools in accessible formats to support SME supply chain resilience through digital platforms. Expected outcomes include locally relevant, user-friendly materials in the Lao language such as a handbook, checklists, templates, and step-by-step instructions designed to be accessible and useful for women and PWD and published in both digital and printed versions to enable wider adoption, replication, and long-term use by SMEs and support institutions.

IV. Project Deliverables and Timelines

A. Project Deliverables

The Consultant will be responsible for a coherent set of deliverables centred around the development of the two separate Project Designs for the two approved RISP projects above. The outputs will be developed through the following activities.

- 1) Deliverable 1: Project Design Work Plan
- 2) Deliverable 2: Stakeholder Consultations
- 3) Deliverable 3: Project Designs

A.1 Deliverable 1 – Project Design Work Plan

The Consultant will produce two (2) Project Design Work Plans that provides the tasks and timelines associated with the completion of the design. The Work Plans should include:

- An approach to stakeholder engagement and consultations, including a list of stakeholders to be engaged in the development of the Design. This will include any practical and logistical considerations regarding stakeholder engagement, detail specific stakeholders to engage with (e.g. key government agencies) and the expected outputs and outcomes from each of the consultations.
- Detailed and updated information on project timelines and key risks and mitigation.

In developing the Work Plan the Consultant will have access to: (i) two (2) approved Project Concepts noting the objectives, outputs, outcomes and other key details of the Projects and (ii) a Project Design Template. The Consultant should consult the RT4D Facility and the Project Proponent.

Output – Two separate Project Design Work Plans, submitted to the RT4D Facility and the project proponent for inputs and approval.

A.2 Deliverable 2 – Stakeholder Consultations

The Consultant will hold consultations with stakeholders as outlined in the approved Project Design Work Plans. The consultations will gather information, perspectives and feedback from key stakeholders to ensure key sections of the Project Designs reflect the needs and priorities of government and non-government stakeholders key to the implementation of the projects.

Output – Two Stakeholder Consultation Reports (maximum of 3 pages for each report), submitted to the RT4D Facility and the project proponents for inputs and approval.

A.3 Deliverable 3 –Project Designs

Based on inputs collected from stakeholder consultation and in line with the Project Design Template, the consultant will prepare two separate Project Designs. The table below provides a summary of key areas within the Project Design Template.

Project Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the project objectives, beneficiaries and connection to other initiatives in line with the approved Project Concept
Project Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative description all project activities (including outputs, deliverables, and key tasks associated with the implementation of each activity)

Project Work Plan and Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary work plan that (i) lists all activities, outputs, deliverables and tasks, (ii) responsible parties for each task and (iii) starting and completion dates for all tasks.
Project Risk Management and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify risks that affect the achievement of project objectives and mitigating measures. Identify and describe the approach to ensure project remains relevant to the needs of beneficiaries beyond its implementation
Child Protection, PSEAH (Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment) and other Policy Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section outlines the project's approach to managing risks in line with DFAT's Child Protection and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policies.
Project Management and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify all key actors and governance bodies who will need to be engaged in activity implementation.
Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with the Project Concept outline GEDSI dimensions of the Project and GEDSI Dimensions of the Sector Outline the project's approach to mainstreaming GEDSI (e.g. how the activity content, practitioners, and delivery will reflect RT4D's GEDSI requirements)
Communications and Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with Project Concept, outline how the project objectives or outcomes support Parties in communicating the benefits of the RCEP/AANZFTA to their populations
Business Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with Project Concept, outline how the project objectives or outcomes support Parties in engaging, building relationships or facilitating feedback from businesses
Addressing the Needs and Priorities of ASEAN Lesser Developed Economies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section describes the project's approach to addressing the needs and priorities of ASEAN Lesser Developed Economies (LDEs).
Monitoring Evaluation and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with the Project Concept, outline Project Outcome(s) In line with the Project's Outputs/Outcomes, please specify Performance Indicators to measure the success of the project.

The Consultant will develop two (2) separate project design drafts in line with RT4D project design template by completing relevant sections within the Project design template as mentioned above. The Consultant will revise the Project Designs drafts in line with written feedback from the RT4D Facility and the Project Proponents. In revising the Project Designs, the Consultant may organise additional meetings with RT4D to ensure clear understanding of the feedback before proceeding with edits to the document. It is expected that revisions may take at least two rounds of feedback. The final Project Designs will require approval from RT4D, the Project Proponents, DFAT and MFAT.

Output – Two (2) separate Project Designs developed for each of the two projects mentioned above. Project Designs must be approved by the RT4D Facility, the Project Proponents, DFAT and MFAT.

B. Deliverables, Tasks and Timeline

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 **2 calendar months (8 weeks) with an estimated 10-15 professional working days for each project design.**

Actual time will be agreed in negotiation with the selected Consultant. Work will commence immediately after contract signing.

Deliverable	Tasks	Responsible Party	Deadline
Deliverable 1: Work Plan	Task 1.1 Inception Meetings with RT4D and the Project Proponents.	RT4D Facility/Consultant/ Project Proponents	<i>Week 1</i>
	Task 1.2 Develop and submit Project Design Work Plan	Consultant	<i>Week 1</i>
	Task 1.3: Feedback and Approval of Project Design Work Plan.	RT4D & Project Proponent	<i>Week 2</i>
Deliverable 2 – Stakeholder Consultations	Task 2.1: Hold Consultations with approved list of stakeholders	Consultant	<i>Week 2 - 3</i>
	Task 2.2: Submit Stakeholders Consultation Reports using template provided by RT4D	Consultant	<i>Week 3</i>
	Task 2.3 Review and Approval of the Stakeholders Consultation Reports.	RT4D and Project Proponents	<i>Week 4</i>
Deliverable 3 – Project Designs	Task 3.1 Develop two (2) separate Project Design Drafts in line with RT4D template.	Consultant	<i>Week 4</i>
	Task 3.2 (if required) Hold optional consultation with RT4D to clarify expectations on key sections of Project Design template.	Consultant	<i>Week 4</i>
	Task 3.3: Provide Feedback on the Project Design Drafts	RT4D and Project Proponents	<i>Week 4 - 5</i>
	Task 3.4: Revise two (2) Project Designs in line with RT4D and Proponents Feedback	Consultant	<i>Week 5</i>
	Task 3.5 (if required): Organise meeting with RT4D Facility to clarify feedback.	Consultant & RT4D	<i>Week 5</i>
	Task 3.6: Review and approval of Revised Project Designs	Consultant	<i>Week 6</i>
	Task 3.7 (if required): Revise Project Designs in line with RT4D and Project Proponents feedback. May require additional meetings with RT4D or the proponents to clarify outstanding questions/inputs.	RT4D & Project Proponents	<i>Week 6 - 7</i>
	Task 3.8: Approval of Project Designs	RT4D, Project Proponents, DFAT and MFAT	<i>Week 7 - 8</i>

V. Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

The Consultant will be responsible for the development of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) components of the Project Design. The MEL component addresses the following questions:

- A. What would a successful activity look like? What change do you expect in knowledge, behaviour, or policy as a result of the activity? Please describe as concretely as possible. What performance indicator do you suggest measuring whether the activity is successful? [this should be worded as Number of... Percent of...]
- B. What performance indicator do you suggest to measure whether the activity is successful? [this should be worded as Number of... Percent of...]
- C. What performance indicator do you suggest to track whether the activity has contributed to gender equality mainstreaming? What quantitative and qualitative indicators would you suggest to measure the impact of this activity on gender equality?
- D. How will RT4D obtain the data for the indicators above? Who is responsible for collecting the datapoint? What kind of tools need to be used (questionnaires, administrative forms, online surveys)?

The consultant should consult the RT4D MEL Manager to ensure relevant outputs are delivered in line with RT4D MEL requirements.

VI. Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion

The Consultant will be responsible for the development of the Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) components of the Project Design. The GEDSI component addresses the following questions:

- A. How does this sector/activity impact men and women differently? Please cite gender disaggregated data if available. If you believe that your activity has no GEDSI dimensions, please justify here.
- B. How does this sector/activity give benefits to disadvantaged groups (e.g. disabled, ethnic minorities, MSMEs, the poor)? Are any measures needed to ensure that work in this sector, and specific to the subject of the activity, "Does No Harm"?
- C. How can the activities/facilities offered by this project be accessed by the different groups of people and/or by the targeted participants of the project?
- D. Does the proposed project provide a space or a mechanism for providing feedback and suggestions? If yes, who can provide those feedback and suggestions?
- E. How will this activity mainstream gender considerations? Please describe how the activity content, practitioners, and delivery will reflect RT4D's GEDSI requirements:

The consultant should consult the RT4D GEDSI Manager to ensure relevant outputs are delivered in line with RT4D GEDSI requirements.

VII. Communications, Media, and Business Engagement

The Consultant will be responsible for the development of the Communication and Business Engagement components of the Project Design. This component addresses the following questions:

- A. How will this activity identify specific communications objectives and core messages for identified beneficiaries and partners.

- B. How will this activity support the development of relevant communications activities & channels across activity implementation cycle: (i) before the activity (e.g. materials, participant outreach, press release, event POSMs, etc), (ii) during activity implementation (e.g. media, interview, broadcasting), and after activity implementation (e.g. news article)?

The consultant should consult the RT4D Program Performance and Quality Lead to ensure relevant outputs are delivered in line with RT4D communications requirements.

VIII. Reporting and Program Management

All deliverables are subject to feedback and amendments from the RT4D Facility team, project proponents and DFAT. The Consultant will engage regularly with these stakeholders in the drafting process, including seeking comments and adjustments and revising documents 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:

RT4D:

- The RT4D Manager is the main point of contact for the Consultant and will project manage the Assignment throughout the project lifespan. The RT4D Manager and relevant RT4D Facility team members will provide oversight and quality assurance through project implementation and ensure relevant approvals are obtained from the RT4D Facility Team and the Project Proponent.
- Members of the RT4D team, including the Program Delivery Lead (Fenny Chandra), Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Manager (Lia Lairing), Program Performance and Quality Lead (Sebastian Cortes-Sanchez) and the Operations Lead (Isradi Alireja), will provide inputs to relevant activity outputs.

Project Proponents:

- Department of Economic Fiscal Policy, Ministry of Finance, and Institute for Industry, Commerce and Energy (IICE), Ministry for Industry and Commerce (MOIC), Laos are the Project Proponent of Project 1 and Project 2 respectively. The two Project Proponents will closely monitor, provide inputs and approve all listed project deliverables. The Consultant will be expected to consult and closely liaise with the project proponents' stakeholders throughout project implementation.

IX. 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
Stakeholders are not available for consultations and/or do not provide timely feedback approval needed to complete the task.	Medium	Medium	RT4D will work closely with the Proponent to build an efficient approach to engaging key stakeholders.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Plan
Stakeholders engaged for consultation in the design process don't take a unified position on priorities or specific elements of the design document.	Medium	Medium	The RT4D Facility will promote open dialogue with the support of the consultant to help stakeholders reach consensus on priorities or specific elements on the design document.
The design is not aligned with cross cutting issues (MEL, GEDSI, Comms and Business Development).	Low	High	The RT4D Manager will work closely with the consultant to incorporate feedback from RT4D experts in MEL, GEDSI, Comms and regularly reviewing the design to ensure it is aligned to MEL, GEDSI, Comms and Business Development requirements.

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 Secretariate and by RCEP and their Subsidiary Bodies that are shared with RT4D's RCEP Implementation Support Program (RISP). 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

Interested consulting firms and individuals should put forth technical support personnel that can support the RT4D Team in the completion of the two projects.

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

- Demonstrated expertise in project design for donor-funded programs, including development of theories of change, results frameworks, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) systems, and full project design documentation.
- Strong experience in policy, institutional, and ecosystem analysis to inform project design, with ability to translate evidence into structured, implementation-ready design recommendations.

- Proven experience in mixed-methods research and consultation processes for project design, including stakeholder mapping, interviews, focus group discussions, and synthesis of qualitative and quantitative evidence.
- Strong facilitation and stakeholder engagement skills, including engagement with government agencies, private sector actors, development partners, and civil society during project formulation.
- Demonstrated expertise in Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), with ability to integrate inclusive design principles into research and project design frameworks.
- Strong analytical, synthesis, and report writing skills, with ability to produce high-quality project design documents, policy briefs, and actionable recommendations.
- Experience working with development partners, including programs supported by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, and understanding of their priorities in inclusive economic growth, SME development, trade, and digital transformation.
- Strong understanding of the Lao PDR development context, including SME development, trade facilitation systems, digital transformation, and inclusion of women and persons with disabilities.
- Experience engaging with Government of Lao PDR agencies, including the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) and Ministry of Finance, is highly desirable.

Specific-Project Expertise

Project 1: Inclusive Cross-Border Trade Facilitation under RCEP

- Strong expertise in trade facilitation, RCEP, and ASEAN economic integration frameworks, including customs, border management, logistics, and economic corridor systems affecting SME participation in cross-border trade.
- Experience translating trade policy and corridor analysis into structured project design frameworks, including inclusive interventions for women traders and persons with disabilities.

Project 2: Inclusive Digital Transformation for SME Supply Chains

- Strong knowledge of SME digital transformation, including e-commerce adoption, digital platforms, supply chain digitisation, and digital market systems in developing country contexts.
- Experience translating SME digital readiness and inclusion analysis into structured project design frameworks and intervention logic for women-led enterprises and persons with disabilities.

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
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1. Cost consciousness 2. Encouraging competition	3. Evidence based decision making 4. Proportionality	5. Performance and Risk Management 6. Results Focus 7. Experimentation and innovation	8. Accountability and transparency
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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, organisation 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 procurement@regionaltrade4dev.org and the listed **emails** 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
Part A – Response to Technical Component
<p>A.1 Approach and Methodology - Outline approach to completing the stated scope of services. The approach should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief discussion indicating your understanding of project requirements. • 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.
<p>A.2 Project Plan and Risk Management – Please provide the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project plan that specifies deliverables, tasks and timelines in line with section IV of the ToR. • Identify you approach to mitigating the project risks outlined in Section IX of this ToR. • Indicate how the project will be monitored and reported in line with section VIII of this ToR to ensure it is delivered in terms of quality, timeliness and cost. • Indicate the level of support that will be required from the RT4D Facility to complete the project.
<p>A.3 Organisational/Individual Capabilities and Experience – Please specify the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.). • Describe past experience in undertaking similar work and provide brief summaries of relevant projects undertaken. • 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.
<p>A.4 Project Team/Consultant and Resourcing – Describe approach to staffing including details of all proposed experts and their role in the delivery of the required services. This should include:</p>

- Key members of the project team/individual consultant, including their CVs, and demonstrate their skills and expertise essential to the delivery of this project.
- Roles, responsibilities, and level of participation of the project team members/individual consultant.
- An uncosted resource plan proposing the number of person days you expect each team member/individual consultant to undertake in delivering this project.

Part B – Response to Financial Component

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:

- Professional services fees for completing all deliverables in accordance with the uncosted resource plan.
- 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.
- Applicable taxes such as VAT, GST, PPN.

Annex B - Bidder Information

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

Name of Assignment	
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	

