REGIONAL TRADE FOR DEVELOPMENT (RT4D)

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE

Implementing Consultant – Operationalising the National SPS Committee and Preparing Food-Safety Certification Workflows under RCEP

1. Summary

Title	Implementing Consultant – Operationalising the National SPS Committee and Preparing Food-Safety Certification Workflows under RCEP
Start Date	January 2027
Completion Date	August 2027
Reports to:	**RT4D Manager:** Sianong Phomkong, RT4D Regional Manager
Interacts With	**RT4D:** ● Program Performance and Quality (MEL, Communications and GEDSI) Lead: Sebastian Cortes Sanchez ● Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Manager: Lia Lairing ● Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) and Trade Manager: Yooke Damopolii ● Operations Lead: Isradi Alireja ● Laos Program Officer: Phonevilay Vongxay **Project Proponent:** ● Food and Drug Department (FDD), Ministry of Health (MoH), Lao PDR
Requires Approval from:	**RT4D:** ● Regional Manager: Sianong Phomkong **Project Proponent:** ● Food and Drug Department (FDD), Ministry of Health (MoH), Lao PDR **DFAT:** *via RT4D*
Timetable for Tender Process	Request for Proposals: **11/11/2026** Closing Date for Queries: **20/11/2026** Closing Date for Proposals: **6/12/2026 (11.59 pm ICT)**
Submission Instructions	The provider should submit Technical and Financial submissions in alignment with requirements outlines in the Request for Proposal (RFP). The Submissions or any questions should be sent to the following email: procurement@regionaltrade4dev.org by the deadline indicated above. Please also copy to sianong.phomkong@regionaltrade4dev.org and phonevilay.vongxay@regionaltrade4dev.org
Scope of Work Summary: Tetra Tech International Development, as managing contractor of RT4D, is seeking a consultancy firm/consortium partner (hereafter "the Consultant") to manage and deliver both	

technical and event organisation services for a project approved under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Implementation Support Program (RISP). Under the scope of services set in this ToR, the Consultant will manage the delivery of the "Operationalising the National SPS Committee and Preparing Food-Safety Certification Workflows under RCEP".

The Project Design will inform the implementation of this project.

The delivery will be guided by standard RT4D processes and template and be subject to comments, amendments, and approval from RT4D Team, the Project Proponent and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

2. Background

Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) responsibilities in Lao PDR are shared across several government institutions, including the Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE), and Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC). The Food and Drug Department (FDD) under MOH is responsible for food-safety regulation, including registration, inspection and certification, while MAE agencies oversee plant and animal health. MOIC provides the trade-policy and RCEP implementation interface, and the Department of Planning and Cooperation serves as the national SPS Enquiry Point and supports coordination across institutions.

While institutional mandates are established, effective SPS implementation requires stronger coordination where responsibilities and regulatory processes intersect. This is particularly relevant for processed and semi-processed food products, where businesses may need to meet requirements from multiple agencies. Previous RT4D support contributed to the establishment of the National SPS Committee in November 2025**,** creating an important framework for national SPS coordination. However, further support is needed to translate this framework into practical and consistent coordination arrangements, including clearer workflows, information exchange and referral processes.

The project will therefore support the operationalisation of the National SPS Committee and strengthen coordination around food-safety and SPS processes. It will build on existing government mandates and systems and will be implemented in coordination with the companion MAE SPS project to ensure that national-level improvements are linked to practical implementation at the provincial and checkpoint levels.

2.1 Project Objectives

The overall objective of the Project is to operationalise the National SPS Committee and strengthen inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms to support effective implementation of RCEP SPS commitments and facilitate safe, compliant, and competitive exports.

Specific objectives of the project are as follows:

1) Operationalise the National SPS Committee by establishing practical Secretariat, meeting, work-planning, documentation, action-tracking, information-sharing and follow-up arrangements.
2) Strengthen practical coordination among FDD/MOH, MAE and other relevant SPS authorities by clarifying priority institutional interfaces and improving agreed workflows, referrals, notification, sequencing and information-exchange arrangements.
3) Improve MSME understanding of applicable SPS and food-safety requirements, responsible authorities, registration, inspection and certification processes, and available compliance services.
4) Strengthen Good Hygienic Practices (GHP)/Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) readiness among a selected cohort of food businesses with demonstrated technical and business readiness and potential for improved market access and/or export.
5) Develop, test and operationalise priority e-Food Safety certification functions that complement FDD's existing government-funded digital registration initiative, translate clarified regulatory processes into practical digital workflows, and strengthen FDD/MOH's capacity to deliver and sustain accessible electronic certification services.

2.2 Intended Beneficiaries

Primary government beneficiaries will be FDD/MOH personnel responsible for food-safety regulation, registration, inspection, certification, digital-system administration and SPS coordination; the Secretariat and members of the National SPS Committee; and relevant MAE and other government officials involved in SPS processes that intersect with food-safety responsibilities.

Private-sector beneficiaries will include food-sector MSMEs, producers, processors, traders, importers/exporters and other businesses affected by food-safety requirements. Three national MSME workshops covering northern, central and southern Lao PDR will provide broad awareness and practical guidance, while approximately 8–12 selected food businesses will receive more intensive GHP/GMP readiness support.

Users of FDD's priority e-Food Safety certification functions will benefit from clearer and more accessible electronic certification processes. FDD administrators and technical users will participate in requirements definition, testing, training and handover, while selected business/end users will provide practical feedback during development and user acceptance testing.

The project will promote meaningful participation by women and people with disability through targeted outreach, accessible delivery and disaggregated monitoring. Technical and business readiness will remain the primary basis for activities where specialist roles or enterprise selection are essential to achieving the intended result.

2.3 Project Outcomes

Outcome 1 – Institutional operation and coordination

By project completion, the National SPS Committee and relevant government agencies have begun using agreed operating and coordination arrangements to record, assign and follow up selected SPS matters and to apply or test agreed cross-agency procedures in relevant cases.

Outcome 2 – MSME understanding and business readiness

By project completion, participating in MSMEs demonstrate improved understanding of relevant food-safety requirements and compliance processes, and selected businesses have completed at least one feasible priority action identified through their GHP/GMP readiness assessment.

Outcome 3 – FDD capability to operate priority electronic certification functions

By project completion, designated FDD personnel demonstrate that they can use and administer the tested priority e-Food Safety certification functions, with operational, administrative and maintenance responsibilities formally assigned.

2.4 Complementarity with Other Efforts

This project builds directly on previous RT4D support to strengthen SPS implementation in Lao PDR, which brought relevant institutions together and contributed to the establishment of the National SPS Committee in November 2025. The present project represents the next stage of that support, moving from establishment of the coordination mechanism towards practical operation through Secretariat arrangements, action tracking, clearer cross-agency procedures and follow-up of priority SPS matters. In this way, the project strengthens the sustainability and practical application of the earlier investment rather than establishing a parallel coordination mechanism.

The project will be implemented alongside the companion RT4D-supported MAE SPS project. The two projects have distinct but complementary roles. This MOH/FDD project focuses on national SPS coordination, food-safety regulatory processes, MSME awareness and GHP/GMP readiness, and priority electronic food-safety certification functions. The MAE project focuses principally on

strengthening agriculture-sector SPS technical capacity and practical implementation at provincial and international checkpoint levels, including plant-health and animal-health related functions.

Where the responsibilities of MOH/FDD and MAE intersect, particularly for food products of plant or animal origin, the two projects will coordinate the clarification and practical application of institutional interfaces, referrals, sequencing, information exchange and other relevant procedures. Coordination will occur through designated government focal points, the National SPS Committee where appropriate, and regular technical exchange between the two implementation teams. Activities may also be coordinated or scheduled consecutively where locations, stakeholders and timing permits, while maintaining separate technical content where agency mandates and participant needs differ.

The project's digital component will complement FDD's government-funded online regulatory registration initiative rather than duplicate it. During inception, existing architecture, functionality and infrastructure will be assessed to determine the most appropriate approach for delivering the priority e-Food Safety certification functions, including their relationship with existing government systems, interoperability where relevant, and sustainable hosting, administration and maintenance arrangements.

3. Scope of Services

The RT4D Facility is seeking a consultancy firm/ consortium (hereinafter “the Consultant”) to support the delivery of project activities between January - August 2027.

3.1 Project Activities

- Activity 1: Technical Inception and Mobilisation
- Activity 2: Operationalise the National SPS Committee and Strengthen Inter-Agency Coordination
- Activity 3: National MSME Awareness on SPS and Food-Safety Requirements
- Activity 4: Targeted GHP/GMP Readiness Support for Selected Food Businesses
- Activity 5: Development and Operationalisation of Priority e-Food Safety Certification Functions
- Activity 6: Results, Lessons and Way Forward

A.1 Activity 1 – Technical Inception and Mobilisation

This activity will establish a common technical and operational foundation for project implementation, ensuring effective coordination between the FDD/MOH and MAE SPS projects. It aims to confirm a shared understanding of the project scope, implementation priorities, institutional responsibilities and expected results, while identifying any changes or requirements that may affect implementation.

The activity will deliver a structured inception and mobilisation process to confirm the implementation arrangements, activity sequencing, roles and responsibilities, existing systems and documentation, baseline information and any material changes since project design. Particular attention will be given to establishing practical coordination arrangements between the two projects, especially where institutional responsibilities and procedures overlap.

The activity will be undertaken in January 2027, concurrently with the initial work under Activities 2 and 5, and will involve approximately 30 participants, primarily relevant technical and decision-making officials from FDD/MOH, MAE and other key SPS agencies and stakeholders.

The Implementing Consultant will support FDD/MOH and RT4D to:

- Review the project design, consultation findings, existing SPS documentation, available technical assessments, and relevant information on FDD's government-funded digital registration initiative and existing food-safety certification processes, identifying completed work and outstanding technical and operational requirements.
- Confirm the detailed implementation approach, activity sequencing, institutional responsibilities, technical focal points and coordination arrangements, including interfaces with the companion MAE SPS project.
- Prepare and facilitate a technical inception and work-planning meeting involving FDD/MOH, MAE and other relevant SPS agencies and stakeholders to confirm the detailed workplan, responsibilities, coordination arrangements and monitoring requirements.
- Confirm baseline information and MEL and GEDSI requirements, including data-collection arrangements, accessibility considerations and evidence requirements for subsequent project activities.
- Undertake an initial review of existing food-safety certification procedures, available digital infrastructure and relevant technical documentation to identify priority areas requiring further workflow validation, standardisation, functional requirements development and capacity building under Activity 5. This review will build on existing assessments and avoid duplicating completed technical work. Suggested criteria for identification of priority areas may include RCEP/trade relevance; material regulatory bottleneck; cross-agency dependency; readiness for practical testing; expected business benefit; legal feasibility; resource implications; and GEDSI/accessibility implications.
- Prepare and finalise the Inception Report and detailed implementation workplan incorporating agreed responsibilities, sequencing, coordination arrangements, baseline and monitoring requirements, and the confirmed scope and approach for strengthening FDD/MOH's technical and operational readiness for future electronic food-safety certification services.

Outputs:

- Output 1.1: Inception Report and detailed implementation workplan, including confirmed scope, responsibilities, sequencing, coordination arrangements and implementation approach.
- Output 1.2: Documented baseline, MEL, GEDSI, stakeholder-engagement and evidence requirements for project implementation.
- Output 1.3: Initial review of existing food-safety certification processes, available technical assessments and relevant digital initiatives completed, with priority technical and operational requirements, identified gaps and the agreed scope and sequencing of preparatory work under Activity 5 documented.

Contribution to Project Outcomes: this activity establishes the implementation, coordination, inclusion, technical and monitoring arrangements required to support delivery and measurement of all three project outcomes.

A.2 Activity 2 – Operationalise the National SPS Committee and Strengthen Inter-Agency Coordination

This activity will support the National SPS Committee's transition from formal establishment to effective operation by strengthening practical coordination among responsible SPS authorities, particularly where food-safety and other SPS regulatory responsibilities and processes intersect. It aims to improve institutional collaboration, clarify operational responsibilities and establish sustainable coordination mechanisms without redefining statutory mandates.

The activity will develop and operationalise practical arrangements for the Committee, including Secretariat functions, regular working arrangements, coordination workflows and procedures for addressing cross-agency issues. Particular attention will be given to operational interfaces between FDD/MOH and relevant MAE authorities, including processed and semi-processed food products of plant or animal origin. It will also facilitate government-led clarification of operational responsibilities and review practical regulatory and procedural barriers affecting businesses, particularly women-led MSMEs and businesses involving people with disabilities.

The activity will be implemented from January to July 2027. Initial institutional review, workflow mapping and consultations will take place in January 2027, concurrently with Activity 1, with operationalisation and application of agreed arrangements continuing throughout subsequent project activities. Participants will include FDD/MOH, relevant MAE departments and other agencies represented on or supporting the National SPS Committee. Technical consultations and working meetings will involve relevant officials according to the specific procedures, regulatory processes and institutional interfaces under review.

The Implementing Consultant will support FDD/MOH, the National SPS Committee and relevant SPS authorities to:

- Review the National SPS Committee's existing mandate, membership, Secretariat arrangements and coordination mechanisms and identify practical requirements for its regular and effective operation.
- Develop or refine practical Committee and Secretariat working arrangements for meeting preparation, work planning, documentation, action tracking, reporting, information exchange and follow-up.
- Review existing FDD–MAE coordination arrangements and map priority institutional interfaces, responsibilities and regulatory and operational workflows in areas where SPS responsibilities intersect.
- Facilitate technical consultations among relevant authorities to clarify operational responsibilities, referral points, information-sharing requirements, advance notification where relevant, sequencing of regulatory actions and other cross-agency procedures.
- Review and support the updating, rationalisation or integration of relevant existing SOPs, inspection procedures, certification procedures, process maps and coordination tools where necessary, building on existing materials rather than recreating them.
- Support the National SPS Committee to review and validate priority operating arrangements, institutional interfaces and agreed procedures, and document issues requiring further Committee consideration or other government action.
- Support application and follow-up of agreed Committee actions and coordination procedures during project implementation and document implementation experience, unresolved issues and necessary refinements.
- Translate relevant clarified regulatory workflows, institutional responsibilities and information-sharing arrangements into documented business-process and functional requirements to support technical and operational preparation for future electronic food-safety certification services under Activity 5.

In undertaking this work, the Consultant will consider whether relevant fees, documentation requirements, forms, procedural steps or digital requirements create disproportionate barriers for women-led enterprises, smaller or informal businesses, or people with disability. Relevant findings will inform subsequent MSME guidance, business-support activities and the development of inclusive, accessible certification procedures and functional requirements under Activity 5.

Outputs:

- **Output 2.1:** Practical National SPS Committee Secretariat and operating arrangements covering meeting preparation, work planning, documentation, action tracking, information exchange and follow-up.
- **Output 2.2:** Documented mapping and clarification of priority institutional interfaces, operational responsibilities and cross-agency workflows.
- **Output 2.3:** Updated, improved or rationalised priority inter-agency procedures, process maps and coordination tools, including relevant procedures tested or applied during project implementation.
- **Output 2.4:** Documented Committee decisions, agreed actions, implementation follow-up, unresolved issues and recommended refinements arising from application of the strengthened arrangements.
- **Output 2.5:** Documented regulatory, institutional and business-process requirements arising from clarified cross-agency workflows to inform the preparation of validated certification procedures, functional requirements and the phased digital certification implementation roadmap under Activity 5.

Contribution to Project Outcomes: this activity contributes primarily to Outcome 1 by establishing practical operating arrangements for the National SPS Committee and strengthening priority cross-agency procedures, workflows and coordination arrangements. It also provides an institutional and procedural foundation for relevant business-facing and digital activities under Outcomes 2 and 3.

A.3 Activity 3 – National MSME Awareness on SPS and Food-Safety Requirements

This activity will strengthen awareness and understanding among food-sector MSMEs of applicable SPS and food-safety requirements, relevant regulatory procedures and the practical steps required to improve compliance. It aims to bridge information gaps between regulatory authorities and businesses and strengthen MSMEs' ability to understand and navigate relevant compliance processes.

The activity will deliver three two-day national MSME awareness and capacity-building workshops covering northern, central and southern Lao PDR. The workshops will disseminate updated and clarified regulatory requirements, institutional responsibilities and compliance procedures confirmed under Activity 2, alongside practical guidance on food-safety requirements and introductory Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP). Where practical, workshop locations and schedules will be coordinated with the companion MAE SPS project to reduce duplication and facilitate participation by relevant technical officials.

The activity will be implemented between February and March 2027, following sufficient progress under Activity 2 to ensure that the information disseminated reflects clarified and updated procedures. Workshops will proceed only after FDD/MOH clearance of the final guidance. Approximately 80 participants will attend each workshop (approximately 240 participant places in total), primarily comprising MSME owners, managers and relevant staff involved in food production, processing and trade, together with provincial and local regulatory officials where their participation is necessary to explain requirements and procedures. Most participants will be recruited from the host province and nearby areas, with approximately two representatives from each participating neighbouring province. The project will aim for at least 45% women and 5% people with disabilities among MSME participants across the three workshops overall, supported through proactive outreach and appropriate accessibility measures.

The Implementing Consultant will support FDD/MOH and relevant provincial authorities to:

- Develop and finalise practical, business-friendly SPS and food-safety guidance and awareness materials reflecting the clarified regulations, responsibilities and procedures emerging from Activity 2.
- Prepare simplified guidance, process maps, checklists, examples and other practical materials covering applicable SPS and food-safety requirements; responsible authorities and points of contact; registration, inspection and certification processes; documentation and procedural requirements; introductory information on GHP, GMP and other relevant food-safety requirements; and, where applicable, information on existing FDD digital registration services and clarified food-safety certification procedures. Information on future electronic certification arrangements will be provided only where sufficiently validated, with a clear distinction between existing services and proposed future improvements.
- Identify and mobilise relevant food-sector MSMEs and other participants for three national awareness and capacity-building workshops covering northern, central and southern Lao PDR, including targeted outreach to women-led businesses and people with disability.
- Prepare and deliver the three workshops using practical and accessible approaches appropriate to participants' needs, including consideration of language, literacy, digital literacy and reasonable accommodation requirements.
- Undertake appropriate participant learning assessments and collect structured feedback on business understanding, compliance constraints, information needs and procedural or coordination issues requiring further clarification or follow-up.
- Consolidate workshop results and participant feedback and, where necessary, refine the business-facing guidance and awareness materials and refer relevant procedural or coordination issues for consideration under Activity 2.

Outputs:

- **Output 3.1:** Practical, business-friendly SPS and food-safety guidance and awareness materials reflecting clarified regulations, responsibilities, procedures and available regulatory services.
- **Output 3.2:** Three national MSME awareness and capacity-building workshops delivered in northern, central and southern Lao PDR, reaching approximately 240 participant places in total.
- **Output 3.3:** Documented participant learning-assessment results and structured business feedback on SPS and food-safety compliance constraints, information needs and relevant procedural or coordination issues.
- **Output 3.4:** Participation and accessibility records demonstrating targeted outreach to relevant MSMEs, including women-led businesses and people with disability.

Contribution to Project Outcomes: this activity contributes primarily to Outcome 2 by improving participating MSMEs' practical understanding of SPS and food-safety requirements, responsible authorities and compliance processes. Structured business feedback may also contribute to Outcome 1 by identifying procedural or coordination issues requiring clarification or follow-up.

A.4 Activity 4 – Targeted GHP/GMP Readiness Support for Selected Food Businesses

This activity will strengthen the practical capacity of selected food businesses to identify and address priority gaps in their food-safety management systems, production practices and operational procedures. It aims to help participating businesses implement practical improvements

and demonstrate measurable progress towards GHP/GMP compliance, improved market access and/or export readiness.

The activity will deliver targeted GHP/GMP readiness support through an intensive training course, practical readiness assessments, business-specific improvement plans and structured follow-up coaching. One intensive GHP/GMP training course will be conducted in Vientiane for management and technical personnel nominated by the selected businesses. Subsequent technical support will focus on feasible business-level improvements that can be implemented during the project period, while helping businesses understand the additional requirements and steps necessary to progress towards formal GHP/GMP compliance or certification.

The activity will be implemented between March and June 2027, building on the broader awareness activity and relevant regulatory and procedural work under Activities 2 and 3. Approximately 8–12 food businesses will be selected based on transparent, readiness-based criteria, including demonstrated technical and operational readiness, commitment to improvement and realistic potential to progress towards improved market access and/or export. One intensive training course will involve approximately 20–25 management and technical personnel from the selected businesses. The selection process will provide equitable opportunities for eligible women-led businesses and encourage participating businesses to nominate appropriately qualified women from their management, production and quality-assurance teams.

The Implementing Consultant will support FDD/MOH and participating businesses to:

- Develop and apply transparent technical selection criteria for approximately 8–12 participating food businesses, considering their readiness, relevance to priority food sectors, commitment to implementing improvements, potential for domestic market upgrading and/or export, and opportunities for replicating lessons among other enterprises.
- Apply the selection criteria inclusively, without unnecessarily disadvantaging women-led, smaller or less formal enterprises, while maintaining technical readiness, commitment to improvement and the feasibility of achieving meaningful progress during the project period as primary considerations.
- Design and deliver a focused, practical GHP/GMP capacity-building course in Vientiane for approximately 20–25 management and technical personnel from selected businesses. The course will address relevant food-safety principles, production hygiene, facility and equipment requirements, personnel practices, sanitation, documentation, quality-control procedures and other applicable GHP/GMP requirements. Practical exercises, examples and self-assessment tools will be incorporated to support subsequent business-level application.
- Undertake structured GHP/GMP readiness assessments for participating businesses, using appropriate technical checklists and direct observation of relevant facilities, production processes, documentation and food-safety practices. Each assessment will identify existing strengths, priority compliance gaps, associated risks and practical areas requiring improvement.
- Work with each participating business to prepare a prioritised corrective action or improvement plan, identifying feasible measures, responsible personnel, indicative implementation timeframes and evidence needed to demonstrate progress. Recommendations will distinguish improvements achievable through changes in practices, procedures and management from those requiring substantial investment or longer-term action.
- Provide structured, business-specific technical coaching and follow-up support to help participating businesses implement selected priority improvements. Support may include practical demonstrations, review of revised procedures and records, technical advice on hygiene and quality-control practices, and assistance in addressing difficulties encountered

during implementation. The intensity and format of support will be proportionate to identified needs, feasibility, available resources and the project timeframe.

- Conduct follow-up reviews to assess progress against the agreed improvement plans, document actions completed and outstanding gaps, and provide practical recommendations for continued improvement beyond the project period. Each participating business will be encouraged and supported to complete at least one feasible priority improvement action during implementation.
- Consolidate recurring compliance constraints, practical lessons and business feedback arising from the assessments and coaching to inform future food-safety guidance, regulatory support and, where relevant, the validation of certification procedures and business-facing requirements under Activity 5.

Potential participating sectors may include drinking water, salt production, coffee, cassava processing and other eligible food products, subject to assessment and final selection.

The project will not guarantee GHP/GMP certification or finance comprehensive enterprise upgrades. Participation will not automatically entitle a business to project-funded certification. Any exceptional additional demonstration support would require separate justification based on business readiness, additionality, potential co-investment, replicability and value for money.

Outputs:

- **Output 4.1:** Transparent technical selection criteria applied and approximately 8–12 food businesses selected for targeted GHP/GMP readiness support.
- **Output 4.2:** Focused practical GHP/GMP capacity-building course delivered for approximately 20–25 relevant management and technical personnel from selected businesses, supported by appropriate training materials and practical assessment tools.
- **Output 4.3:** Structured GHP/GMP readiness assessments completed for participating businesses, documenting existing strengths, priority compliance gaps and practical improvement needs.
- **Output 4.4:** Business-specific corrective action or improvement plans developed and follow-up technical support provided, with priority actions, responsibilities and feasible implementation timeframes identified.
- **Output 4.5:** Structured technical coaching and follow-up reviews provided, with documented evidence of progress against priority improvement actions and outstanding requirements.
- **Output 4.6:** Consolidated record of recurring practical compliance constraints, lessons learned and relevant business feedback, including recommendations for future food-safety guidance and support.

Contribution to Project Outcomes: this activity contributes directly to Outcome 2 by strengthening participating businesses' understanding and practical application of GHP/GMP requirements, enabling them to identify priority compliance gaps, undertake feasible corrective actions and demonstrate measurable progress towards improved food-safety readiness. Findings may also inform regulatory guidance and technical preparation for future certification services under Outcome 3.

A.4 Activity 5 – Development and Operationalisation of Priority e-Food Safety Certification Functions

This activity will strengthen FDD/MOH's institutional, technical and operational readiness to introduce and progressively implement electronic food-safety certification services, building on existing government-funded digital initiatives and regulatory procedures. It aims to improve institutional capacity, certification workflows and technical preparedness for future digitalisation without financing new software development under the project.

The activity will support the review and validation of existing systems, certification procedures and technical and functional requirements for priority food-safety certification services, including Health Certificates and GHP/HACCP-related certification processes. It will also support practical workflow testing, consultation with relevant institutional and business users, capacity building for designated FDD/MOH personnel and preparation of an implementation roadmap. Consideration will be given to accessibility and usability, including mobile and low-bandwidth access, Lao and English language requirements, screen-reader compatibility where feasible and assisted access arrangements.

The activity will be implemented from January to July 2027, with the review and validation of existing systems and certification procedures commencing during inception, followed by technical preparation, practical workflow testing, capacity building and finalisation of an implementation roadmap. Participants will include relevant FDD/MOH regulatory, certification and technical personnel, approximately 2–5 designated central FDD trainers/resource persons, relevant MAE and other SPS officials where institutional responsibilities intersect, and selected business users for consultation and practical workflow validation.

The Implementing Consultant will support FDD/MOH and relevant technical stakeholders to:

- **Review existing digital systems and technical assessments.** Examine FDD's government-funded online regulatory registration initiative, available technical studies, existing certification procedures and relevant government digital infrastructure. Identify completed work, outstanding requirements and opportunities to build on existing investments without duplicating previous assessments.
- **Map and validate priority certification processes.** Review and document the regulatory, administrative and operational workflows for priority food-safety certification services, indicatively covering Health Certificates, GHP Certificates and HACCP Certificates. Clarify application requirements, responsible officials, verification procedures, internal approvals, certificate issuance, record keeping and relevant information-sharing arrangements, drawing on institutional and procedural work undertaken under Activity 2.
- **Develop practical certification procedures and standardised documentation.** Prepare or refine process maps, SOPs, application and verification checklists, standard forms, data requirements and operational guidance for the selected certification services. The materials will support more consistent processing and provide a foundation for subsequent electronic implementation.
- **Prepare and validate functional and technical requirements for future digital certification.** Translate agreed certification procedures into documented user requirements, data fields, processing steps, user roles, approval arrangements, reporting requirements and relevant interoperability considerations. Address information security, accessibility, mobile usability, low-bandwidth access and practical needs of smaller enterprises, women-led businesses and people with disability. These requirements will support future government-led or separately funded digital development.
- **Undertake practical workflow validation and testing.** Facilitate structured technical exercises with designated FDD personnel and representative business users to test the

clarity, completeness and practicality of revised certification procedures and documentation. Where existing government electronic tools are sufficiently operational and authorised for use, incorporate practical demonstrations or limited testing of available functions. The project will not undertake software programming, configuration of new certification modules or deployment of a new application.

- **Strengthen FDD technical and operational capacity.** Deliver focused practical training for relevant central FDD personnel on revised certification procedures, workflow management, documentation, verification, record keeping and the application of agreed digital-readiness requirements. Prepare approximately 2–5 designated central personnel as trainers or technical resource persons to support subsequent dissemination and capacity building at provincial level.
- **Develop a practical digital certification implementation roadmap.** Consolidate validated procedures, functional requirements, institutional responsibilities, existing technical resources, identified gaps and implementation priorities into a phased roadmap for introducing electronic food-safety certification services. The roadmap will identify feasible implementation options, indicative resource requirements, institutional responsibilities, sustainability considerations and potential future financing needs.
- **Validate and hand over the technical outputs.** Facilitate a technical validation session with FDD/MOH and relevant stakeholders to confirm the proposed procedures, functional requirements, training materials and implementation roadmap. Finalise and hand over the agreed documentation for government ownership and future use.

Outputs:

- **Output 5.1:** Consolidated review of existing FDD digital initiatives, available technical assessments and priority certification processes, identifying completed work, outstanding gaps and opportunities to avoid duplication.
- **Output 5.2:** Validated process maps, SOPs, standard forms, verification checklists and operational guidance for priority food-safety certification services, indicatively covering Health Certificate, GHP Certificate and HACCP Certificate processes.
- **Output 5.3:** Documented and validated functional, data, user-access, accessibility and interoperability requirements to guide future electronic certification implementation.
- **Output 5.4:** Practical certification workflow validation and testing completed with relevant FDD personnel and representative users, with findings, identified procedural gaps and agreed refinements documented.
- **Output 5.5:** Focused technical and operational training delivered to relevant FDD personnel, including approximately 2–5 designated central trainers/resource persons equipped to support subsequent provincial capacity building.
- **Output 5.6:** Phased Digital Food-Safety Certification Implementation Roadmap prepared and validated, identifying implementation priorities, technical and institutional requirements, indicative resources, sustainability considerations and future development needs.
- **Output 5.7:** Finalised technical and operational documentation, training materials and agreed implementation recommendations formally handed over to FDD/MOH.

Contribution to Project Outcomes

- This activity contributes primarily to Outcome 3 by strengthening FDD/MOH's technical, institutional and operational readiness to implement priority electronic food-safety certification services through validated procedures, functional requirements, practical workflow testing and capacity building.

- It also supports Outcome 1 by translating clarified regulatory responsibilities and inter-agency procedures into more consistent certification workflows and operational guidance. Through consultation with business users and the incorporation of accessibility and inclusion considerations, the activity contributes to clearer, more predictable and inclusive food-safety certification processes that can facilitate MSME compliance and participation in trade under RCEP.

A.4 Activity 6 – Results, Lessons and Way Forward

This activity will assess project implementation and results, consolidate lessons learned and identify practical priorities for sustaining and further strengthening SPS coordination and food-safety systems beyond the project period. It aims to capture achievements, assess progress against intended results and establish recommendations and follow-up actions to support the sustainability of project outcomes.

The activity will deliver a final monitoring, evaluation and reporting process, including consolidation of activity results, documentation of achievements, identification of implementation challenges and development of recommendations for future action. It will also organise a final results and way-forward event, combining a focused technical review of project outcomes and sustainability priorities with a broader project closing and communications component. The event will provide an opportunity for government agencies, participating businesses and stakeholders to review achievements, discuss remaining challenges and agree on practical next steps.

The activity will take place during July - August 2027, following completion of substantive implementation activities. The final results and way-forward event will involve approximately 60 participants, comprising FDD/MOH, MAE, National SPS Committee members and other relevant government agencies; participating MSMEs and business representatives; relevant business associations and organisations representing women and people with disabilities; development partners and other stakeholders; and Australian/New Zealand representatives, subject to availability.

The Implementing Consultant will support FDD/MOH, RT4D and relevant stakeholders to:

- Consolidate and analyse evidence of results, implementation experience and lessons from National SPS Committee operationalisation, inter-agency coordination and procedures, MSME awareness activities, targeted GHP/GMP readiness assessments and technical coaching, and FDD/MOH's technical and operational preparation for future electronic food-safety certification services, including validated workflows, functional requirements, practical testing and staff capacity building.
- Prepare and facilitate a final technical results and way-forward session with relevant government agencies and key stakeholders to review documented results, remaining institutional, procedural and technical issues, and practical priorities for continued government action.
- Incorporate relevant lessons from the companion MAE SPS project, particularly where the two projects have addressed intersecting institutional responsibilities, procedures or implementation issues.
- Document agreed follow-up priorities, responsibilities, sustainability actions and unresolved matters for consideration through the National SPS Committee and other appropriate government mechanisms.
- Present and formally hand over to FDD/MOH the validated priority food-safety certification workflows, standardised procedures and documentation, functional and operational requirements, practical testing results, relevant training materials and phased digital

certification implementation roadmap. Confirm institutional ownership, designated responsibilities and agreed follow-up actions for maintaining and applying these materials and preparing for future electronic certification implementation, subject to government priorities and available resources.
- Support a broader project closing and communications component to share key achievements, lessons and next steps with relevant stakeholders.
- Finalise technical evidence and inputs required for project completion reporting, incorporating documented results, lessons, agreed sustainability actions and recommendations.

Outputs:

- **Output 6.1:** Consolidated record of project results, implementation lessons, remaining constraints and agreed follow-up and sustainability priorities.
- **Output 6.2:** Final technical results and way-forward session completed, with agreed priorities, responsibilities and unresolved matters documented for appropriate government follow-up.
- **Output 6.3:** Relevant implementation lessons, including lessons from intersecting work under the companion MAE SPS project, documented for consideration in future National SPS Committee work and institutional arrangements.
- **Output 6.4:** Validated certification workflows, standardised procedures, functional and operational requirements, practical testing results, training materials and phased digital certification implementation roadmap formally presented and handed over to FDD/MOH, with institutional ownership, responsibilities and priority follow-up actions documented.
- **Output 6.5:** Technical evidence and inputs to project completion reporting finalised by August 2027.

Contribution to Project Outcomes: this activity consolidates all three project outcomes by documenting evidence of institutional operation and coordination under Outcome 1; improved MSME understanding and measurable GHP/GMP readiness progress under Outcome 2; and strengthened FDD/MOH technical and operational readiness for future electronic food-safety certification under Outcome 3. It will ensure that demonstrated results, remaining constraints, institutional responsibilities and agreed follow-up priorities are reflected in final project materials and sustainability arrangements.

4. 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 **8** calendar months (January to August 2027) with an estimated **95** person days of professional services. Actual time will be agreed in negotiation with the selected Consultant.

Activity/Task	Responsible Party	Deadline
Activity 1: Project Inception and Technical Mobilisation	**MOH/FDD, RT4D and Implementing Consultant**	**31 Jan 2027**
• **Task 1.1:** Mobilise consultant; confirm FDD/MOH, MAE and other relevant technical focal points and coordination arrangements with the companion MAE SPS project	RT4D, MOH/FDD and Implementing Consultant	W1 Jan 2027

Activity/Task	Responsible Party	Deadline
• **Task 1.2:** Review the project design, consultation findings, existing SPS documentation, food-safety certification procedures, available technical assessments and FDD's government-funded digital initiatives; identify completed work, outstanding requirements and areas requiring further technical preparation.	Implementing Consultant	W2 Jan 2027
• **Task 1.3:** Conduct technical inception/work-planning meeting for approximately 30 participants	MOH/FDD, RT4D and Implementing Consultant; MAE and other relevant agencies	W3 Jan 2027
• **Task 1.4:** Confirm baseline, MEL/GEDSI requirements, stakeholder arrangements, activity sequencing and coordination with the companion MAE SPS project; identify priority certification workflows and agree the scope of technical and operational preparation under Activity 5.	MOH/FDD, RT4D and Implementing Consultant	W3 Jan 2027
• **Task 1.5:** Submit and approve Inception Report and detailed work plan	Implementing Consultant; MOH/FDD and RT4D review/approval	W4 Jan 2027
Activity 2: Operationalise the National SPS Committee and Strengthen Inter-Agency Coordination	**MOH/FDD, National SPS Committee, MAE, relevant agencies and Implementing Consultant**	**Jan-Jul 2027**
• **Task 2.1:** Review National SPS Committee mandate, membership, Secretariat arrangements, existing coordination mechanisms and requirements for effective operation	Implementing Consultant with MOH/FDD	18 Jan 2027
• **Task 2.2:** Review existing FDD–MAE coordination arrangements and map priority institutional interfaces, responsibilities, workflows and areas of overlap	MOH/FDD and MAE, facilitated by Implementing Consultant	25 Jan 2027
• **Task 2.3:** Conduct technical consultations to clarify operational responsibilities, referrals, information exchange, sequencing and other cross-agency procedures	MOH/FDD, MAE, relevant agencies and Implementing Consultant	29 Jan 2027
• **Task 2.4:** Review and update or rationalise relevant SOPs, procedures, process maps and coordination tools, building on existing materials rather than recreating them, and document relevant regulatory workflows and institutional responsibilities to inform the technical and operational preparation for future electronic food-safety certification services under Activity 5.	Implementing Consultant with relevant authorities	8 Feb 2027
• **Task 2.5:** Support National SPS Committee meeting/validation of priority operating arrangements, institutional interfaces and agreed procedures	MOH/FDD, National SPS Committee, MAE and RT4D	16 Feb 2027

Activity/Task	Responsible Party	Deadline
• **Task 2.6:** Support application and follow-up of agreed Committee actions and coordination procedures and document unresolved issues for further Committee consideration	MOH/FDD, MAE and Implementing Consultant	mid. Feb–Jul 2027
Activity 3: National MSME Awareness on SPS and Food-Safety Requirements	**MOH/FDD, relevant provincial authorities, RT4D and Implementing Consultant**	**Feb - Mar 2027**
• **Task 3.1:** Finalise business-friendly guidance, process maps, checklists and awareness materials reflecting clarified regulations, responsibilities and procedures from Activity 2, including information on relevant existing and forthcoming e-Food Safety registration and certification services.	Implementing Consultant with MOH/FDD	20 Feb 2027
• **Task 3.2:** Identify and mobilise approximately 80 participants per region, prioritising relevant food-sector MSMEs and incorporating GEDSI outreach targets (at least 45% women and at least 5% persons with disabilities among MSME participants)	MOH/FDD, provincial authorities and Implementing Consultant	Feb–Mar 2027; confirm participants before each workshop
• **Task 3.3:** Conduct **a** two-day national MSME awareness/capacity-building workshop in Vientiane Capital (central Lao PDR)	MOH/FDD and Implementing Consultant	25-26 Feb 2027
• **Task 3.4:** Conduct **a** two-day national MSME awareness/capacity-building workshop in northern Lao PDR	MOH/FDD and Implementing Consultant	10-11 Mar 2027
• **Task 3.5:** Conduct **a t**wo-day national MSME awareness/capacity-building workshop in southern Lao PDR	MOH/FDD and Implementing Consultant	18-19 Mar 2027
• **Task 3.6:** Conduct participant learning assessment; consolidate MSME feedback, identified compliance bottlenecks and information needs; and use findings to refine business-facing guidance and regulatory support.	Implementing Consultant with MOH/FDD	31 Mar 2027
Activity 4: Targeted GHP/GMP Readiness Support for Selected Food Businesses	**MOH/FDD and Implementing Consultant**	**Mar-Jun 2027**
• **Task 4.1:** Establish transparent readiness-based selection criteria and identify approximately 8–12 food businesses with strong potential to progress towards improved market access and/or export	MOH/FDD and Implementing Consultant	Mar-Apr; selection completed by 23 Apr 2027
• **Task 4.2:** Conduct baseline GHP/GMP readiness assessment of selected businesses and tailor technical course/materials to identified gaps	Implementing Consultant with FDD technical specialists	By 7 May 2027; assessments may begin as businesses are selected

Activity/Task	Responsible Party	Deadline
• **Task 4.3:** Conduct one intensive GHP/GMP course in Vientiane for approximately 20–25 relevant management and technical personnel from selected businesses. Business and technical readiness will remain the primary selection criteria, while appropriately qualified women will be actively encouraged to participate.	MOH/FDD and Implementing Consultant	18-19 May 2027
• **Task 4.4:** Provide structured, business-specific technical coaching and follow-up support to approximately 8–12 selected businesses, including practical advice on identified GHP/GMP gaps, development and implementation of prioritised corrective action plans, and review of feasible improvements undertaken during the project period.	Implementing Consultant with FDD technical specialists	Late May 2027
• **Task 4.5:** Conduct follow-up reviews and document progress against business-specific improvement plans, including evidence of at least one feasible priority improvement action completed by each participating business where achievable, outstanding compliance gaps, recurring constraints and recommendations for continued improvement or subsequent certification preparation.	Implementing Consultant with MOH/FDD	30 June 2027
Activity 5: Strengthening Digital SPS and Food-Safety Certification Readiness	**MOH/FDD, Implementing Consultant and relevant technical specialists, as required**	**Jan - Jul 2027**
• **Task 5.1:** Review existing FDD digital initiatives, available technical assessments, current food-safety certification procedures and related regulatory requirements. Identify priority certification services, existing technical resources, completed preparatory work and gaps requiring further assessment, while avoiding duplication of government-funded activities.	Implementing Consultant/IT specialist with MOH/FDD	Jan 2027, following mobilisation and alongside inception.
• **Task 5.2:** Map and validate the end-to-end procedures for priority food-safety certification services, including Health Certificate, GHP Certificate and HACCP Certificate processes, covering application submission, document review, inspection or verification, approval, issuance, record management and relevant institutional responsibilities. Identify procedural gaps and prepare or refine supporting SOPs, forms, checklists and guidance.	MOH/FDD, Implementing Consultant/IT specialist and RT4D	Jan – Mar 2027

Activity/Task	Responsible Party	Deadline
• **Task 5.3:** Prepare and validate functional, data, user-access, administrative, interoperability, accessibility and information-security requirements for future electronic food-safety certification implementation, drawing on the agreed workflows, existing government systems and relevant user needs. Confirm the technical documentation and practical testing approach with FDD/MOH and RT4D.	MOH/FDD and RT4D	30 Apr 2027
• **Task 5.4:** Undertake practical validation and scenario-based testing of agreed certification workflows and procedural requirements with designated FDD personnel and representative business users. Test the clarity, completeness, accessibility and operational feasibility of proposed processes using sample applications, process simulations and existing electronic tools where available and authorised. Document findings and refine the technical and operational requirements without undertaking new software programming or deployment.	Implementing Consultant/technical specialists with MOH/FDD	May-Jun 2027; completed by 18 Jun 2027
• **Task 5.5:** Provide focused practical training for designated FDD personnel on validated certification procedures, workflow management, documentation, information requirements and preparation for future electronic implementation. Prepare approximately 2–5 central FDD personnel to serve as trainers and technical resource persons for subsequent provincial capacity building, and assess their ability to apply and explain the agreed procedures.	Implementing Consultant/technical specialists with MOH/FDD	21 – 30 Jun 2027
• **Task 5.6:** Prepare and validate a phased digital food-safety certification implementation roadmap, identifying priority functions, institutional responsibilities, technical dependencies, potential integration with existing government systems, future development and operational requirements, indicative resource needs and sustainability considerations. Finalise and hand over the validated workflows, SOPs, technical requirements, testing findings, training materials and roadmap to FDD/MOH.	Implementing Consultant with MOH/FDD and relevant technical specialists	16 Jul 2027
Activity 6: Results, Lessons and Way Forward	**MOH/FDD, RT4D and Implementing Consultant**	**Jul - Aug 2027**

Activity/Task	Responsible Party	Deadline
• **Task 6.1:** Consolidate and verify evidence of results across National SPS Committee operationalisation, inter-agency coordination, MSME awareness, GHP/GMP readiness support and FDD/MOH's technical and operational preparation for future electronic food-safety certification services.	MOH/FDD and RT4D	early July; completed by 9 July 2027
• **Task 6.2:** Prepare the consolidated technical results and lessons materials, drawing on validated institutional procedures, business-level improvement evidence, digital certification readiness deliverables and relevant findings from the companion MAE SPS project.	Implementing Consultant with MOH/FDD	16 Jul 2027
• **Task 6.3:** Assess results, lessons, sustainability requirements and outstanding issues and prepare recommendations for continued implementation	Implementing Consultant with MOH/FDD and relevant agencies	16 Jul 2027
• **Task 6.4:** Conduct the technical results, lessons and way-forward component; review relevant lessons from the companion MAE project and document agreed priorities, responsibilities, unresolved issues and follow-up actions.	MOH/FDD, RT4D and Implementing Consultant	20 Jul 2027
• **Task 6.5:** Present and formally hand over to FDD/MOH the validated certification workflows, standardised procedures, functional and operational requirements, practical testing results, training materials and phased digital certification implementation roadmap. Confirm institutional ownership, responsibilities and priority follow-up actions for future implementation.	MOH/FDD, National SPS Committee, MAE, relevant stakeholders and RT4D	20 Jul 2027; alongside Task 6.4
• **Task 6.6:** Conduct a broader project closing and communications event for approximately 6**0 participants**, presenting key project results, business experiences, lessons and next steps, with participation by relevant government, private-sector, development-partner and Australian/New Zealand stakeholders.	MOH/FDD and RT4D	27 Jul 2027
• **Task 6.7:** Finalise technical materials, handover documentation, results evidence and technical inputs to the Project Completion Report.	Implementing Consultant, MOH/FDD and RT4D	12 Aug 2027
• **Final reporting approval, outstanding invoices and financial reconciliation**	RT4D	By 31 Aug 2027

5. Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion

All RT4D projects mainstream Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) throughout the project cycle. The Consultant will be responsible for ensuring that project implementation embeds GEDSI in line with the requirements set in this ToR. The Consultant should consult and work closely with the RT4D Manager, RT4D GEDSI & Trade Manager, Project Proponent and other stakeholders in ensuring that the project implementation addresses these requirements.

The consultant is expected to adhere to the following RT4D Guidelines as required:

- Embedding GEDSI considerations into the methodology, work plan, stakeholder engagement and activity delivery.
- Identifying and addressing barriers to the participation, access, influence and benefit of women, people with disability and other relevant or underrepresented groups.
- Applying inclusive and accessible approaches to consultations, workshops, training, communications and other activities.
- Ensuring that relevant GEDSI perspectives are reflected in project outputs, recommendations, tools and other deliverables.
- Collecting disaggregated participation data.
- Reporting on GEDSI actions, participation, results, risks and lessons through the agreed project reporting and MEL processes.

The Consultant must ensure that appropriate technical expertise and resources are available throughout implementation to support the effective integration of GEDSI requirements into project activities, outputs, communications, monitoring and reporting.

5.1 GEDSI Dimension of the Project

The project has a meaningful GEDSI dimension because access to food-safety information, regulatory services, training and digital certification can differ according to enterprise size, location, gender, disability, language and literacy, digital access and institutional role. Women are strongly represented in many Lao food-sector MSMEs and trading activities, while people with disability and smaller, informal or rural businesses may face additional barriers to information, travel, physical access, digital services and engagement with regulatory authorities.

GEDSI will therefore be integrated across institutional consultation, MSME outreach and awareness, GHP/GMP readiness support, development and testing of priority e-Food Safety certification functions, monitoring and communications. Inclusion measures will be proportionate to the activity and will not displace essential technical or business-readiness requirements.

5.2 GEDSI Dimensions of the Sector

Food production, processing and trade provide important livelihood and enterprise opportunities in Lao PDR, including for women and smaller businesses. However, businesses may experience regulatory requirements differently depending on their size, location, formality, access to information and digital services, language and literacy, and ability to travel or engage directly with government authorities.

Women may face time, care, mobility or representation constraints, while people with disability may encounter physical, communication and digital-access barriers. Ethnic-minority and rural businesses may also experience language or literacy barriers when regulatory information is primarily communicated through formal written Lao or digital channels.

Digitalisation has the potential to reduce repeated travel and make certification services more accessible, but future digital-only processes could create barriers for users with limited connectivity, digital literacy, access to appropriate devices or assistive technologies. The project will therefore incorporate accessibility, usability and assisted-access considerations into the review and validation of certification procedures and the preparation of functional and operational requirements for future electronic food-safety certification services. These considerations will be informed by consultation

with representative users and practical workflow testing, rather than development or deployment of a new digital application under this project.

5.3 GEDSI Mainstreaming

- Use proactive outreach through relevant business associations, producer groups, cooperatives, women's business networks and organisations representing people with disability, where available, for the three national MSME workshops. Across the three workshops overall, aim for **at least 45% women and 5% people with disability among MSME participants**, rather than applying identical targets to each location.
- Apply transparent technical and business-readiness criteria for selection of approximately 8–12 businesses for GHP/GMP support. Selection arrangements will avoid unnecessary barriers for women-led, smaller or less formal businesses while maintaining technical and business readiness as the primary criteria. During business selection, consideration will be given to promoting participation by women-led enterprises and enterprises owned or managed by persons from vulnerable groups.
- Following business selection, encourage participation of appropriately qualified women among relevant managementproduction, food-safety and quality-assurance personnel in the intensive GHP/GMP training and coaching activities. No fixed gender quota will apply to business ownership or specialist training participation, given the targeted nature of the intervention and the need to prioritise demonstrated technical readiness, relevant responsibilities and realistic potential for compliance improvement. Selection and participation arrangements will nevertheless remain transparent and inclusive, with participation monitored and reported by sex.
- Apply accessible-event and communication practices, including accessible venues, reasonable accommodation, practical scheduling and materials appropriate to participants' language, literacy and communication needs.
- Incorporate accessibility and inclusion considerations into the validation of food-safety certification procedures and preparation of functional and operational requirements for future electronic certification services. These will include clear and readable information, appropriate Lao and English language support, mobile-responsive and low-bandwidth-conscious design requirements, compatibility with commonly used assistive technologies where technically feasible, and consideration of assisted-access arrangements for users who may be unable to complete future digital processes independently.
- Engage representative users, including women-led and smaller enterprises and people with disability where feasible, in consultation, certification workflow validation and practical scenario-based testing. Assess whether proposed procedures, documentation requirements and future digital-service specifications are understandable, accessible and operationally feasible for users with different levels of digital literacy and access. Document relevant findings and incorporate them into revised procedures, technical requirements and recommendations for future implementation.
- Disaggregate relevant participation and outcome data by sex and, where feasible and safe, disability, stakeholder/business category and location, focusing on meaningful participation and benefit rather than attendance alone.

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

GEDSI will be mainstreamed across institutional consultation, business engagement, GHP/GMP readiness support, technical preparation for future electronic food-safety certification services, monitoring and communications. Technical relevance will remain the primary basis for selecting government participants, while FDD/MOH and the Implementing Consultant will encourage meaningful participation by appropriately qualified women officials. Business-facing activities will use proactive and inclusive outreach, transparent selection arrangements, accessible delivery and practical materials. Certification workflows and future digital-service requirements will be reviewed

with representative users to identify accessibility, usability, digital-literacy and information barriers and incorporate appropriate measures into the project's technical recommendations.

- *Who are the targeted participants and what participation is planned?*

Government participants will include FDD/MOH personnel, National SPS Committee members and relevant MAE and other competent authorities. Private-sector participants will include food-sector MSMEs, producers, processors, traders and importers/exporters. The three national MSME workshops covering northern, central and southern Lao PDR will provide approximately 180 participant places in total, with a target of at least 45% women and 5% people with disability among MSME participants across the three workshops overall.

The intensive GHP/GMP course will involve approximately 20–25 relevant personnel from 8–12 readiness-selected businesses. Appropriately qualified women will be encouraged to participate, aiming where feasible for around 40% of course participants. No fixed gender quota will apply to technical government meetings or enterprise selection where specialist functions and business readiness are essential.

- *How does the project benefit disadvantaged groups and apply Do No Harm?*

The project will improve access to understandable regulatory information and services without lowering food-safety standards. National delivery across northern, central and southern Lao PDR will reduce some travel burdens, while practical guidance will help smaller and less formal businesses navigate regulatory requirements.

Future digital certification services may reduce repeated travel and administrative uncertainty, but they could also create barriers for people with limited connectivity, digital literacy or access to assistive technologies. The project will therefore incorporate accessibility, usability and assisted-access considerations into certification workflow validation and technical requirements for future implementation. Do No Harm principles will also be applied through voluntary participation, respectful and accessible delivery, reasonable accommodation, appropriate management of personal and business information, and participant-selection approaches that do not unnecessarily disadvantage women-led businesses, smaller enterprises or people with disability.

D. How will diverse voices be heard and incorporated?

The three national MSME workshops will include structured discussion and feedback on practical compliance barriers. Outreach will draw on relevant business associations, producer groups, cooperatives, women's business networks and organisations representing people with disability, where available. Facilitators will create appropriate opportunities for smaller businesses, women and people with disability to contribute, including through written or anonymous feedback where useful.

GHP/GMP participants will provide feedback on practical compliance gaps and the feasibility of recommended improvement actions, while selected business representatives and other relevant users will contribute to consultation and practical validation of priority food-safety certification workflows. Their feedback will be documented and used to refine business guidance, certification procedures, accessibility and functional requirements, and recommendations for future digital implementation.

E. How will implementation be inclusive?

All project events will follow RT4D Inclusive Events and Communications guidance. Measures will include accessible venue selection where feasible, early identification of reasonable accommodation requirements, practical scheduling, clear and plain-language materials, attention to relevant language and literacy barriers, accessible digital formats where feasible, respectful facilitation, and disaggregated monitoring of participation and outcomes.

The review and validation of priority food-safety certification procedures will consider users with different levels of digital literacy, connectivity and accessibility needs, including people using assistive technologies. Functional requirements for future electronic certification services will address appropriate Lao and English language support, clear navigation and readable information,

mobile-responsive and low-bandwidth-conscious access, and reasonable assisted-access arrangements. These requirements will inform future system development, rather than constitute commitments to deliver a functioning digital interface under this project.

6. Communications and Media

The Consultant will support the RT4D Facility in meeting any Communications and Media objectives through the course of the Project.

All reports, presentations, invitations, event materials and other communications products must be accurate, evidence-based, fit for purpose, accessible and of a high professional standard. Materials must comply with RT4D branding, acknowledgement and approval requirements, as advised by the RT4D Communications Team.

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

- Use approved RT4D branding, templates, logos and acknowledgement wording in project documentation and materials (e.g. reports, PPTs, invitations).
- Provide timely project information, verified evidence, photographs, participant inputs, quotations, testimonials and other materials required for RT4D communications and reporting.
- Collect photographs, video or other visual materials during project activities, where appropriate and with the required consent and permissions.
- Ensure that communications use inclusive and respectful language, representative imagery and accessible formats, including alt text, captions, transcripts or plain-language summaries where relevant.
- Obtain the required consent and permissions for the use of personal information, images, video, quotations, testimonials and case studies, including any additional safeguards required for children, people with disability or other vulnerable groups.
- Submit public-facing communications products to the RT4D Manager and Communications Team for review and approval before publication or distribution.

RT4D will retain oversight of communications quality, branding, messaging, approvals and release. The Consultant must not publish or distribute public-facing communications products relating to the Project without the required RT4D and, where relevant, Project Proponent, partner or donor clearance.

In addition, the Consultant is expected to manage the implementation of the project so that it adheres to communications objectives and planned outputs outlined in the sections below.

6.1 Communications Focus, Key Messages and Audiences

The project will communicate the benefits of RCEP through practical examples of stronger SPS governance, clearer food-safety processes, improved business compliance capability and more accessible regulatory services. Communications will focus on how effective implementation helps government and businesses apply SPS requirements more consistently and predictably, rather than relying primarily on treaty-level messaging.

A. Communication focus and key messages

- Effective SPS coordination supports safer, more predictable and more efficient trade by reducing uncertainty in regulatory processes while maintaining legitimate food-safety protections.
- An operational National SPS Committee provides an important mechanism for coordinating SPS implementation, resolving cross-agency issues and sustaining institutional cooperation.
- Clearer procedures, process maps and business guidance help MSMEs understand which authority is responsible, what documentation is required and how to comply.
- Practical GHP/GMP readiness support can help capable food businesses strengthen internal systems and progress towards certification and improved market or export readiness.

- The priority e-Food Safety certification functions demonstrates how appropriate digitalisation can make regulatory services more accessible, transparent and efficient while strengthening government administration.

B. Communications audiences

- FDD/MOH and National SPS Committee stakeholders;
- MAE and other relevant competent authorities;
- Provincial/local food-safety authorities involved in project activities;
- Food-sector MSMEs, producers, processors, traders and importers/exporters;
- Business associations and relevant enterprise networks;
- Australian and New Zealand stakeholders and development partners; and
- Wider stakeholders where approved dissemination is appropriate.

6.2 Communications Outputs

- National MSME workshop materials and concise activity summaries;
- Practical guidance and approved information materials on food-safety certification procedures, including clarified workflows, documentation requirements and relevant technical preparations for future electronic certification services;
- Closing-event materials highlighting project results, lessons learned, improvements in institutional coordination and business readiness, technical and operational preparations for future electronic food-safety certification services, and agreed next steps.

Government-owned regulatory and technical materials will remain subject to FDD/MOH approval. External communications, media engagement, photography, case studies and public dissemination will follow RT4D, government and donor approval requirements. Business-facing communication materials will be produced primarily in Lao, with English versions or bilingual materials used where appropriate. Public dissemination of project outputs will be subject to FDD/MOH, RT4D and relevant donor approval, recognising that some technical, regulatory or government materials may not be appropriate for unrestricted public release.

7. Business Engagement

A. Business relevance

Food businesses experience SPS and food-safety regulation through registration, inspection, certification, documentation, product requirements and interactions with different competent authorities. Consultation findings indicate that practical compliance can be complicated by limited awareness, unclear procedural steps and uncertainty where institutional responsibilities intersect. The project will therefore treat businesses both as beneficiaries and as sources of implementation evidence, while maintaining the integrity of legitimate food-safety requirements.

B. Reflection of business needs in project delivery

Business needs will inform the preparation of practical guidance, selection of awareness topics, identification of common compliance bottlenecks, design of GHP/GMP readiness support and development and testing of the priority e-Food Safety certification functions m. The project will distinguish between requests that reflect genuine procedural barriers and those that would require changes to statutory requirements outside the project's scope.

C. Direct business engagement, if relevant

Three national MSME awareness and capacity-building workshops covering northern, central and southern Lao PDR will engage approximately 80 participants each. Approximately 8–12 readiness-selected food businesses will receive more intensive GHP/GMP support through practical training, business-level assessments, corrective action planning, technical coaching and follow-up. Selected businesses and representative end users will also be engaged, where appropriate, in consultation and practical validation of priority food-safety certification workflows and requirements for future

electronic certification services. Engagement will use practical cases, process maps, scenario-based exercises, structured dialogue and feedback rather than lecture-only formats.

D. Use of business input

Business feedback will be documented through workshop discussions, evaluation tools, readiness assessments, consultation records and practical validation of priority food-safety certification workflows. Recurring issues will be analysed to identify gaps in guidance, documentation, regulatory sequencing, accessibility and future digital-service requirements. Findings will be used, where appropriate, to refine business-facing materials, GHP/GMP support, certification procedures, functional and operational requirements for future electronic certification services, and recommendations considered through the National SPS Committee and final way-forward process.

8. Support to Lesser Developed Economies

The project is designed around Lao PDR's institutional, geographic, business and resource realities. It strengthens existing government structures and procedures, uses three national business workshops covering northern, central and southern Lao PDR rather than duplicative provincial events, targets intensive support to businesses with realistic readiness, and undertakes technical and operational preparation for future electronic food-safety certification services. This preparatory work will take account of government ownership, existing digital initiatives and infrastructure, institutional capacity, potential recurrent costs and sustainability requirements, without financing new software development under this project.

A. How will this activity recognise and address knowledge, capacity, or institutional needs specific to ASEAN LDE governments?

The project recognises that limited specialist human resources, fragmented information, constrained recurrent budgets and uneven access to regulatory services can make implementation difficult. It therefore focuses on practical institutional arrangements, reusable procedures and guidance, targeted business capacity, and technical and operational preparation for future electronic food-safety certification services. This will include validated certification workflows, standardised procedures, functional and operational requirements, practical testing and a phased implementation roadmap that takes account of existing government systems and available resources. The project also uses the National SPS Committee to strengthen coordination across existing institutions instead of establishing a parallel mechanism.

B. How will relevant institutions engage at a pace that supports their capacity and constraints?

Implementation is deliberately staged and overlapping. Early institutional and business-process work will clarify regulatory procedures, operational responsibilities and certification requirements before detailed technical preparation and wider dissemination. Government agencies will participate in review, validation, practical workflow testing and decision-making throughout implementation. National delivery across northern, central and southern Lao PDR will reduce travel burdens for businesses, while the digital-readiness component will allow time for certification workflow mapping, preparation and validation of functional and operational requirements, scenario-based testing, staff capacity building and finalisation of a phased implementation roadmap before project completion.

C. How will the project strengthen long-term institutional capability?

The intended legacy is a National SPS Committee using agreed operating and coordination arrangements; clearer and reusable inter-agency procedures; practical business guidance; improved food-business readiness; and strengthened FDD/MOH technical and operational capacity to prepare for future electronic food-safety certification services. Validated certification workflows, standardised procedures, functional and operational requirements, practical testing findings, training materials and

a phased digital certification implementation roadmap will be formally handed over to FDD/MOH. Institutional ownership, designated responsibilities and priority follow-up actions will be documented to support the future development and sustainable operation of electronic certification services, subject to government priorities and available resources.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

The project's performance will be monitored against the activities, outputs, outcomes, indicators and evidence sources specified in this ToR. The Consultant will support the RT4D Facility to collect, manage and report reliable evidence on project delivery, participation, output quality, GEDSI integration, stakeholder feedback, outcomes and learning.

The Consultant must ensure that sufficient appropriately skilled personnel, time and other resources are available throughout implementation to meet the MEL requirements set out in this ToR. This will include, but not be limited to:

- Standardised participant registration forms (online).
- Standardised participant sign-in sheet and attendee tracking (online or paper form) for virtual and in-person consultation and workshops.
- Standardised participant feedback forms (online).
- Consolidated participant, attendance and feedback data (MS Excel in standardised RT4D template)
- Workshop Report using standardised RT4D template (due within two weeks after a workshop or training) summarising workshop participant and feedback information, workshop proceedings, outputs and key achievements and lessons learned.
- Relevant GEDSI participation data, including sex and disability disaggregation.
- Progress and Project Completion Reports, using the standardised RT4D template, documenting delivery against the approved activities, outputs and work plan, and assessing whether the project met or contributed to its intended outcomes. In assessing project outcomes reports must describe observed changes, including who changed, what changed, when and where the change occurred, the supporting evidence and the significance of the change.

The Consultant should consult RT4D's MEL team to:

- Verify that participant registration, attendance tracking and feedback arrangements comply with RT4D requirements.
- Obtain guidance on using MEL templates.
- Seek support with data collection during implementation, where required;
- Obtain guidance on the tabulation and analysis of participant, attendance and feedback data required to complete the Workshop Report
- Seek guidance on assessing and documenting whether the project achieved or contributed to its intended outcomes, including identifying observed changes, supporting evidence, significance and contribution to the relevant project outcomes.

Tabel 9-1: Project Performance Indicators

No	Result level	Project result	Indicator	Target	Evidence/ source	GEDSI consideration
1.	Outcome	**Outcome 1:** The National SPS Committee and relevant government agencies have begun using agreed operating and coordination arrangements to record, assign and follow up selected priority SPS matters and to apply or test agreed cross-agency procedures in relevant cases.	O1.1 Number of priority SPS matters for which agreed arrangements are used to record decisions, assign responsibility and document follow-up. O1.2 Number of priority cross-agency procedures/workflows applied or tested in relevant cases or processes.	O1.1 At least 2 priority SPS matters managed using the agreed arrangements, with decisions, responsibilities and follow-up documented. O1.2 At least 2 priority cross-agency procedures/workflows applied or tested, with results or issues documented.	Committee/Secretariat minutes and action tracker; decision and follow-up records; approved or validated procedures/process maps; case/process records. Brief case summaries will explain how the agreed arrangements were used, what coordination difficulties arose and how these were addressed or referred for further action.	Record participation and decision-making roles by sex where meaningful. Review relevant procedures/workflows for avoidable barriers affecting women-led, smaller or less formal businesses and people with disability.
2.	Outcome	**Outcome 2:** Participating MSMEs improve their understanding of applicable SPS and food-safety requirements, while selected businesses make documented progress against feasible priority	O2.1 Percentage of matched pre/post assessment participants in the three national MSME workshops demonstrating improved knowledge. O2.2 Percentage of readiness-supported businesses completing at least	O2.1 At least 75% of matched pre/post assessment participants demonstrate improved knowledge. O2.2 At least 60% of supported businesses complete at least one feasible priority	Matched pre/post learning assessments; workshop evaluation records; initial and follow-up GHP/GMP readiness assessments; business-specific corrective action plans; dated evidence of completed priority improvement actions, including observation	Participant data disaggregated by sex and, where feasible and safe, disability status and stakeholder/business category. Across the three national MSME workshops overall, aim for at least 45% women and 5% people with disability

No	Result level	Project result	Indicator	Target	Evidence/ source	GEDSI consideration
		GHP/GMP readiness actions.	one feasible priority action identified through their readiness assessment.	readiness action by project completion.	records or photographs where appropriate and consented; and consultant verification and progress summaries. Short business case narratives will describe the improvements made, barriers encountered and how participating businesses used the training and coaching.	among MSME participants.
3.	Outcome	**Outcome 3:** FDD/MOH has strengthened technical and operational readiness for future electronic food-safety certification through validated priority certification procedures, documented functional and operational requirements, practical workflow testing, and	O3.1 Percentage of assessed designated FDD personnel who successfully demonstrate agreed core tasks associated with the validated priority food-safety certification workflows and procedures. O3.2 Extent to which institutional ownership, designated	O3.1 At least five designated FDD personnel are assessed, of whom at least four (80%) successfully demonstrate agreed core workflow and procedural tasks relevant to their roles through practical exercises or scenario-based assessments. O3.2 Institutional	Validated certification workflows and procedures; scenario-based assessment and practical testing records; staff training attendance and competency assessments; agreed technical and operational documentation; phased implementation roadmap; and formal handover, responsibility and	Training and assessment results disaggregated by sex and technical role where meaningful. Workflow validation will consider accessibility, digital literacy, mobile and low-bandwidth access, assistive technologies where technically feasible, and appropriate assisted-access arrangements. Representative

No	Result level	Project result	Indicator	Target	Evidence/ source	GEDSI consideration
		designated personnel able to apply the agreed procedures, with institutional responsibilities and follow-up priorities documented.	responsibilities and priority follow-up arrangements for future electronic food-safety certification implementation are documented and agreed.	ownership, designated responsibilities and priority follow-up actions for future electronic certification implementation documented and agreed with FDD/MOH by project completion.	follow-up records. Qualitative feedback from designated staff and representative business users will document workflow usability, accessibility barriers and the refinements made to procedures and future digital-service requirements.	users, including women-led businesses and people with disability where feasible, will be consulted to inform future digital-service requirements.
4.	Output	**OP1.1:** Practical National SPS Committee/Secretariat operating arrangements and priority inter-agency procedures, workflows and coordination tools reviewed, clarified, developed or tested.	OP1.1 Number of agreed operating/coordination arrangements and priority procedures/workflows completed or validated for practical use.	OP1.1 Agreed Committee/Secretariat operating arrangements and priority procedures/workflows required for project implementation completed or validated, with unresolved matters documented for follow-up.	Approved/validated operating arrangements; procedures; process maps; action-tracking tools; consultation and validation records.	Relevant reviews consider whether documentation, fees, procedural steps or access arrangements create avoidable barriers for women-led, smaller or less formal businesses or people with disability.
5.	Output	**OP2.1:** Business-facing SPS and food-safety guidance and learning materials produced for MSMEs.	OP2.1 Business-facing SPS and food-safety guidance and learning materials completed and used	OP2.1 Practical business-facing SPS and food-safety guidance and learning materials completed and used across three	Business-facing SPS and food-safety guidance and learning materials; workshop agendas and reports; participant feedback	Across the three workshops overall, aim for at least 45% women and 5% people with disability among MSME

No	Result level	Project result	Indicator	Target	Evidence/ source	GEDSI consideration
			in the three national MSME workshops.	national MSME workshops covering northern, central and southern Lao PDR.	and learning-assessment records.	participants. Participant data gender-disaggregated and, where feasible and safe, disability-disaggregated; accessible participation and reasonable accommodation supported.
6.	Output	**OP2.2:** GHP/GMP readiness assessments and feasible improvement/action plans completed for selected food businesses.	OP2.2 Number of selected businesses with completed GHP/GMP readiness assessments and documented feasible improvement/action plans.	OP2.2 Approximately 8–12 selected businesses have completed GHP/GMP readiness assessments and documented feasible improvement/action plans.	GHP/GMP readiness assessments; documented improvement/action plans; follow-up and verification records.	Selection will apply transparent technical and business-readiness criteria without unnecessary barriers to eligible women-led, smaller or less formal enterprises. Appropriately qualified women among relevant management, production and quality-assurance personnel will be encouraged to participate in the focused GHP/GMP training and coaching

No	Result level	Project result	Indicator	Target	Evidence/ source	GEDSI consideration
						activities. No fixed gender quota will apply to business ownership or specialist training participation. Participation will be monitored by sex, and accessibility and reasonable accommodation needs will be addressed where feasible.
7.	Output	**OP3.1** Priority food-safety certification procedures and workflows for Health Certificate, GHP Certificate and HACCP Certificate services reviewed and validated; supporting documentation and functional and operational requirements prepared; practical workflow testing and designated staff capacity building completed; and a	**OP3.1a** Number of priority food-safety certification service workflows reviewed, documented and validated, with supporting procedures and functional and operational requirements completed. **OP3.1b** Completion of practical workflow testing, designated FDD personnel training, a phased	**OP3.1a** Three priority certification service workflows—Health Certificate, GHP Certificate and HACCP Certificate—reviewed, documented and validated, with relevant SOPs, forms, process maps and functional and operational requirements prepared and agreed with FDD/MOH.	Approved or validated certification workflow maps, SOPs, forms and supporting documentation; functional and operational requirements; technical consultation and validation records; scenario-based workflow testing reports and findings; training attendance and practical assessment records; phased digital certification	Workflow validation and requirements preparation will consider diverse end-user needs, including those of women-led businesses, smaller enterprises and people with disability where feasible. Future digital-service requirements will address appropriate Lao and English language support, mobile-responsive and low-bandwidth-conscious access,

No	Result level	Project result	Indicator	Target	Evidence/ source	GEDSI consideration
		phased digital certification implementation roadmap formally handed over to FDD/MOH.	digital certification implementation roadmap and formal handover of the agreed technical and operational deliverables.	**OP3.1b** Practical scenario-based validation completed and findings documented; relevant designated FDD personnel trained, including approximately 2–5 central personnel prepared as trainers or technical resource persons; and a phased digital certification implementation roadmap, supporting technical documentation and formal handover completed by **July** 2027.	implementation roadmap; and formal FDD/MOH review, acceptance and handover records.	clear and accessible information, compatibility with relevant assistive technologies where technically feasible, and assisted-access arrangements. These are requirements for future implementation, not commitments to develop or deploy software under this project.
8.	Output	**OP4.1:** Project results, lessons, sustainability requirements and agreed priorities, responsibilities and follow-up actions consolidated in a final	**OP4.1** Final results and way-forward record completed, documenting agreed priorities, responsibilities, unresolved issues and follow-up actions.	**OP4.1** Final results and way-forward record completed and agreed priorities, responsibilities, unresolved matters and follow-up actions documented by project completion.	Results/lessons record; way-forward/action record; closing-event agenda and attendance; handover records; completion reporting/PCR inputs.	Closing and communications activities use inclusive outreach and accessible event arrangements. Participation data gender-disaggregated and, where feasible and

No	Result level	Project result	Indicator	Target	Evidence/ source	GEDSI consideration
		results and way-forward record.				safe, disability-disaggregated; representation from relevant business networks and organisations representing women and people with disability encouraged.

10. Reporting and Program Management

Deliverables are subject to feedback and amendments from the RT4D Facility team and Food and Drug Department as the Project Proponent. 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:

The Consultant will engage with the stakeholders and contact points outlined in the table below throughout the delivery of the project.

Stakeholder and Contact Points	Responsibilities
Project Proponent Food and Drug Department Ministry of Health, Lao PDR	- Assumes overall responsibility for project implementation. - Reviews the project implementation progress and provide technical inputs - Reviews and endorses proposed objectives in the project scope. - Responsible for staff assignment, project adjustment, and overall leadership
RT4D Facility	Oversees overall project implementations on behalf of the RT4D, including procurement of suppliers, activity planning and execution, and approval of activity reports by the Consultant.
Implementing Partner (Contact point to be determined)	Deliver project activities in accordance with the approved Project Design and work plan; coordinate stakeholder engagement; prepare project deliverables and progress reports; and integrate monitoring, evaluation, learning (MEL), GEDSI, and communications requirements throughout project implementation.

11. Child Protection, PSEAH (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 stakeholder consultations and workshop or trainings 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 PSEAH Policies.

The project should 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.

The Consultant will work closely with the RT4D Facility to ensure that all project activities set in place adequate risk management measures including, but not limited to:

- **Safe activity planning and delivery:** all consultations, national workshops, GHP/GMP activities, practical certification workflow validation sessions and project events will use safe and inclusive event-management practices, including appropriate venues, transparent participant registration, professional facilitation, respectful workplace conduct and supervision appropriate to the activity.
- **Three national MSME workshops:** for the three national MSME workshops, safeguarding measures will include appropriate and accessible venues, clear participant information and reporting channels, professional facilitation, appropriate travel and event arrangements, and application of relevant RT4D and Tetra Tech safeguarding requirements.
- **Targeted GHP/GMP readiness support:** for targeted GHP/GMP support, including participation in the focused course in Vientiane where travel may be required, safeguarding measures will include appropriate travel and accommodation arrangements where project-supported, clear points of contact and reporting channels, professional conduct by consultants and facilitators, and reasonable accommodation for participants where required.
- **Codes of conduct and personnel responsibilities:** cconsultants, facilitators, technical specialists and other delivery personnel will comply with applicable Codes of Conduct, safeguarding obligations, confidentiality requirements and professional behaviour standards. Safeguarding expectations will be communicated during mobilisation and reinforced before relevant activities.
- **Confidential reporting and response:** participants and project personnel will have access to clear and confidential mechanisms for reporting safeguarding concerns or allegations through RT4D and Tetra Tech channels. Any concerns will be handled in accordance with established procedures while protecting confidentiality and the rights of affected persons.
- **Inclusive and respectful participation:** the project will promote respectful interaction regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, age, enterprise size or institutional position. Facilitators will provide appropriate opportunities for women, people with disability, smaller businesses and quieter participants to contribute safely and meaningfully.
- **Communications, photography and case studies:** photography, video, quotations and case examples will only be used with appropriate consent and in accordance with RT4D communication procedures. Public materials will respect dignity, confidentiality and cultural appropriateness and will avoid exposing sensitive regulatory, commercial or personal information.
- **Digital data, privacy and information security:** the review and validation of priority food-safety certification workflows and preparation of technical and operational requirements may involve regulatory, business or user information requiring appropriate protection. Project consultations, practical workflow testing and training will therefore use anonymised or sample information wherever feasible, with access to sensitive information restricted to authorised personnel and managed in accordance with applicable government and RT4D requirements. Functional and operational requirements for future electronic certification services will address relevant data protection, user permissions, information security, access controls, backup and confidentiality considerations. These requirements will inform future government-led digital implementation and will not involve the development or operation of new certification software under this project.

- **Child protection considerations:** the project does not intentionally target children as beneficiaries or participants. Where project activities occur in public or community settings where children may be present, delivery personnel will remain alert to child-protection responsibilities and comply with applicable safeguarding requirements.
- **Other policy considerations:** implementation will also comply with relevant requirements concerning conflicts of interest, ethical stakeholder engagement, inclusive events and communications, GEDSI, workplace health and safety, responsible travel, confidentiality and appropriate management of participant and business information.

12. 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 RCEP FJC 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 (SharePoint). Access to SharePoint 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 project.

13. Risk Management and Safeguards

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

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Plan
Delays in operationalising the National SPS Committee or reaching agreement on priority cross-agency procedures and institutional interfaces	Medium	Delays in government review or unresolved institutional issues could hold up validation of procedures, weaken Committee effectiveness, or result in subsequent business guidance and digital workflows being based on arrangements that are not sufficiently settled.	Begin institutional review and workflow mapping immediately after inception; distinguish technical/operational issues from matters requiring higher-level policy or legal decisions; use focused working-level consultations to resolve issues progressively; establish clear review and decision points; document unresolved matters and refer them promptly through the National SPS Committee or other appropriate government mechanisms rather than allowing them to stall the wider project.
MOH/FDD and MAE project	Medium	Officials and businesses may	Maintain designated focal points and regular coordination between the two concurrently

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Plan
activities become misaligned or generate inconsistent cross-agency guidance		receive inconsistent information, duplication may occur, and agreed referral, notification, sequencing or information-sharing arrangements may not function effectively.	implemented SPS projects; clearly distinguish FDD/MOH-specific, MAE-specific and genuinely joint matters; coordinate development of common workflows and business-facing information; use the MOH/FDD project and National SPS Committee process for appropriate cross-agency validation while allowing institution-specific activities to proceed without unnecessary dependency on the other project's timetable.
National MSME workshops do not reach sufficiently relevant businesses or do not translate into improved practical understanding	Medium	Workshops could become generic awareness events rather than improving businesses' ability to understand and navigate food-safety requirements and services.	Begin stakeholder mapping and mobilisation early through FDD, provincial authorities, business organisations and relevant networks; prioritise MSMEs genuinely affected by food-safety registration, inspection and certification requirements; use practical process maps, examples and compliance guidance rather than lecture-style content; assess participant understanding and systematically capture business feedback for refinement of guidance and regulatory support.
Businesses selected for targeted GHP/GMP support are not sufficiently ready or do not implement agreed improvement actions	Low-Medium	Intensive technical support may produce limited progress toward stronger food-safety systems, certification or market/export readiness, reducing value for money and demonstration potential.	Apply transparent readiness-based selection criteria covering technical readiness, management commitment, market/export potential and ability to implement improvements; undertake baseline readiness assessments before intensive support; tailor assistance to identified gaps; agree realistic corrective actions with participating businesses; follow up implementation and document progress. Participation will not guarantee project-funded certification.
Technical and operational preparation for future electronic food-safety certification is delayed, insufficiently validated or does not adequately reflect regulatory procedures and user requirements.	Medium	Certification workflows, functional and operational requirements or the phased implementation roadmap may be incomplete, inconsistent with validated regulatory procedures or insufficiently practical for future government-led digital implementation, reducing the value and usability of project outputs.	Commence business-process and technical assessment early in implementation; confirm priority certification services, regulatory workflows and technical responsibilities with FDD/MOH; review existing procedures and digital initiatives before preparing functional and operational requirements; establish clear review and validation milestones; use practical scenarios and representative user feedback to test the completeness and usability of proposed workflows; document unresolved issues and required decisions; and finalise the phased implementation roadmap and technical handover documentation within the agreed project timeframe.
Technical preparation for future electronic food-safety certification does not	Medium	The resulting technical documentation and implementation roadmap may be difficult for FDD/MOH to use, may duplicate	Review existing government digital initiatives, infrastructure and institutional capacity during the technical assessment; identify relevant interoperability, data management, information-security, accessibility and assisted-access requirements; consider realistic options for

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Plan
adequately address existing government systems, institutional capacity, accessibility, information security or long-term sustainability requirements.		existing government digital initiatives or may lead to future implementation options with unrealistic operational, technical or recurrent-cost requirements. Inadequate consideration of data protection and accessibility could also create risks for future users and government institutions.	future hosting, technical support, maintenance and recurrent costs without committing the project to software development; involve designated FDD technical personnel throughout validation and practical training; document institutional ownership and responsibilities; and provide a phased implementation roadmap with clear priorities, dependencies and resource considerations for future government decision-making.
Women, people with disability and other stakeholders facing participation or access barriers are under-represented or unable to benefit meaningfully	Medium	Project benefits may not be equitably accessible, GEDSI objectives may not be achieved, and business guidance, certification procedures or requirements for future digital services may fail to adequately reflect the needs of women, people with disability and other stakeholders facing participation or access barriers.	Integrate GEDSI into stakeholder mobilisation, event planning, preparation of materials, business selection and practical validation of priority certification workflows; aim for at least 45% women and 5% people with disability among MSME participants across the three national workshops; use accessible venues, formats and reasonable accommodation; encourage appropriately qualified women to participate in focused GHP/GMP training and coaching without imposing fixed quotas that could displace essential technical personnel; involve diverse end users, where feasible, in reviewing certification procedures and future digital-service requirements; collect disaggregated data and monitor meaningful participation and benefits rather than attendance alone.
Compressed implementation period, government availability, procurement dependencies or competing official commitments delay critical activities	Medium	Interdependent activities could be compressed, reducing technical quality or leaving insufficient time for validation of certification workflows and requirements, practical staff training, GHP/GMP follow-up, institutional handover, National SPS Committee coordination or completion reporting.	Confirm the critical path, government focal points, review periods and procurement responsibilities during inception; commence institutional and technical assessment activities in parallel with inception where feasible; schedule consultations and participant mobilisation well in advance; establish and monitor milestones for certification workflow validation, technical requirements, practical testing, staff training and handover; escalate delays promptly; sequence activities so that MSME workshops and GHP/GMP support are not unnecessarily dependent on every institutional issue being finalised; and allow sufficient time within the agreed project period for substantive deliverables, government validation, final reporting and administrative close-out. Maintain a review-and-decision tracker recording each submission, responsible reviewer, agreed response date and outstanding decision. Follow up overdue

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Plan
			reviews and escalate delays promptly through RT4D and the relevant government focal points. Continue independent preparatory work while approvals are pending, while ensuring that dependent technical work uses validated procedures. In line with Section 4, target core delivery by July and use August for final refinements, handover and reporting within the agreed completion date.

About RT4D

Regional Trade for Development (RT4D) is an AUD53.3 million, 6-year initiative funded by the governments of Australia and New Zealand to support the effective implementation of ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreements.

RT4D is delivered through 3 programs: the AANZFTA Implementation Support Program, the RCEP Implementation Support Program and the Australia-funded Trade and Gender Equality Incubator. Through these programs, RT4D provides targeted technical expertise, supports planning and coordination with ASEAN partners, focuses on less developed ASEAN economies, and facilitates selected FTA implementation in ways that support inclusive development outcomes.

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