REGIONAL TRADE FOR DEVELOPMENT (RT4D)

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE

Implementing Consultant – Strengthening Stakeholder Capacity for Compliance with Updated SPS Regulations in Lao PDR

1. Summary

Title	Implementing Consultant – Strengthening Stakeholder Capacity for Compliance with Updated SPS Regulations in Lao PDR
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:** ● Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, Lao PDR
Requires Approval from:	**RT4D:** ● Regional Manager: Sianong Phomkong **Project Proponent:** ● Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, 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: The Regional Trade for Development Facility (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 "**Strengthening Stakeholder Capacity for Compliance with Updated SPS Regulations in Lao PDR**".

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) implementation in Lao PDR involves several government institutions with complementary responsibilities, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE), through the Department of Agriculture (DOA), the Department of Livestock and Fisheries (DOLF) and the Department of Planning and Cooperation (DPC); the Ministry of Health, through the Food and Drug Department (FDD); and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, through the Department of Trade Negotiation and Economic Cooperation. Previous support from the Regional Trade for Development (RT4D) programme contributed to strengthening inter-agency coordination and the formal establishment of the National SPS Committee in November 2025, providing an important institutional foundation for implementing Lao PDR's SPS obligations and commitments under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Building on this progress, the proposed project will focus on advancing the practical implementation of SPS requirements within the agriculture sector, moving beyond high-level institutional coordination towards more consistent technical procedures, strengthened institutional capacity and effective frontline implementation across central and provincial authorities and priority international checkpoints.

Despite progress in establishing the national coordination framework, challenges remain in the consistent application of SPS requirements, availability of practical operational guidance, technical competency of officials and understanding of compliance requirements among agricultural businesses. In response, the project will adopt an integrated approach combining the review and strengthening of existing SPS procedures and operational tools, national Training of Trainers (ToT) for central and provincial officials, hands-on technical coaching at selected international checkpoints, and provincial capacity-building and engagement with agricultural MSMEs and other private-sector stakeholders. It will also promote gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) through inclusive participation, accessible information and consideration of barriers affecting women-led enterprises, smaller businesses and people with disabilities. Implemented alongside the complementary RT4D-supported MOH/FDD SPS project, the intervention will strengthen practical coordination between competent authorities where responsibilities intersect and ensure that implementation lessons and private-sector feedback inform improvements to procedures and guidance. Ultimately, the project aims to support more consistent, coordinated and practical SPS implementation in Lao PDR, strengthen institutional capacity and enable agricultural businesses to better understand and comply with SPS requirements affecting their participation in domestic and regional trade.

2.1 Project Objectives

- Strengthen priority MAE SPS procedures, operational guidance and practical tools for plant-health, animal-health/livestock and fisheries functions, building on existing regulatory instruments and addressing verified implementation gaps.
- Strengthen the technical competency and national resource-person base of central and provincial SPS officials, including relevant representatives from all 18 provinces, to support more consistent interpretation, dissemination and application of strengthened SPS requirements and procedures.
- Improve practical frontline application of SPS requirements at selected priority international checkpoints through hands-on coaching, testing and refinement of strengthened procedures

and tools, including inspection, sampling, laboratory referral, certification, documentation and risk-based decision-making.

- Strengthen practical coordination among relevant SPS authorities, including MAE's SPS Enquiry Point and, where relevant, MOH/FDD and the MOIC SPS Notification Authority, particularly for referral, notification, inspection hand-off, information exchange and other processes requiring more than one competent authority.
- Improve agricultural businesses' understanding of and ability to navigate relevant SPS requirements, while using structured private-sector feedback to identify implementation constraints and improve practical government- and business-facing guidance.

2.2 Intended Beneficiaries

Primary government beneficiaries will include MAE/DPC personnel responsible for project coordination, the SPS Enquiry Point and relevant regional cooperation functions; DOA officials responsible for plant-health SPS measures; DOLF officials responsible for animal-health, livestock and fisheries SPS measures; Provincial Agriculture and Environment Office officials from all 18 provinces; and frontline SPS officials at selected priority international checkpoints and associated inspection, sampling and laboratory-referral services.

The project will also engage other competent authorities where mandates or operational processes intersect. These will include MOH/FDD in relation to food-safety responsibilities and cross-agency procedures, and the MOIC SPS Notification Authority where strengthened procedures, information flows or notification-related matters require coordination. This engagement is intended to improve practical interfaces between existing institutions rather than create new or parallel coordination mechanisms.

Private-sector beneficiaries will include agricultural and agrifood producers, processors, MSMEs, traders, importers/exporters, producer organisations, cooperatives, business associations and other enterprises affected by SPS requirements. Particular attention will be given to reaching women-owned and women-led enterprises, smaller provincial businesses, people with disabilities and other stakeholders who may face additional barriers to accessing regulatory information, participating in consultations or navigating SPS compliance processes.

Indirect beneficiaries will include other provincial and frontline officials who subsequently receive technical guidance or knowledge from project-trained resource persons, as well as businesses that access strengthened SPS information and practical guidance beyond direct project participants.

2.3 Project Outcomes

The project is expected to achieve three interrelated outcomes:

Outcome 1 – MAE SPS officials demonstrate strengthened technical competency and practical application of priority SPS procedures and tools.

Central and provincial officials will strengthen their ability to interpret, explain and apply relevant plant-health, animal-health/livestock and fisheries SPS requirements. Trained resource persons will support wider dissemination across the provincial system, while practical coaching at selected international checkpoints will provide deeper evidence of application, identify operational constraints and enable procedures and tools to be refined through use.

Outcome 2 – MAE and relevant SPS authorities strengthen and practically test priority procedures and cross-agency coordination arrangements.

Priority MAE procedures, operational guidance and practical tools will be reviewed and strengthened, while selected processes requiring coordination between competent authorities will be clarified and tested through relevant project activities. This will include, where applicable, referral, notification, inspection hand-off, sequencing and information-exchange arrangements involving MAE, MOH/FDD and the SPS Notification Authority. Findings from practical application will inform refinement of procedures and, where formal inter-agency validation is required, feed into the companion MOH/FDD project and appropriate national coordination mechanisms.

Outcome 3 – Agricultural MSMEs and other businesses improve their understanding of SPS requirements and contribute to more practical and responsive implementation guidance.

Agricultural producers, processors, MSMEs, traders, importers/exporters and other private-sector stakeholders will improve their understanding of relevant SPS requirements, documentation, procedures and sources of technical assistance. Structured business feedback will identify recurring compliance difficulties, information barriers and inconsistent implementation and will be used, where appropriate, to refine business-facing guidance and final project recommendations.

Alignment with RT4D Outcomes

The three project outcomes contribute principally to **RT4D Intermediate Outcome 4 (IO4)** through strengthened institutional capability, technical competency, procedures and frontline implementation, and to **RT4D Intermediate Outcome 1 (IO1)** through improved institutional coordination, private-sector understanding and structured engagement between SPS authorities and businesses.

2.4 Complementarity with Other Efforts

The project builds directly on earlier RT4D support to Lao PDR's SPS institutions and forms part of the next phase of strengthening practical implementation of the national SPS framework. It will be implemented in parallel with the complementary RT4D-supported MOH/FDD SPS project, with coordination built into inception, technical review, implementation, monitoring and final consolidation.

The two projects have distinct institutional ownership and technical emphasis. This MAE-led project will focus on agriculture-sector SPS procedures and tools, technical competency across central and provincial levels, practical application at selected international checkpoints and agricultural business engagement. The MOH/FDD-led project will focus principally on operationalisation of the National SPS Committee, national inter-agency coordination, strengthened food-safety processes, food-sector business readiness and assessment of readiness for future electronic food-safety certification.

Where mandates intersect, the projects will coordinate rather than duplicate activities. Technical issues may be jointly examined and practically tested under the relevant project activities, while matters requiring formal cross-agency agreement or validation will be channelled through the companion MOH/FDD project and existing national coordination mechanisms, including the National SPS Committee where appropriate.

The MAE project will also engage the SPS Notification Authority where relevant, complementing DPC's SPS Enquiry Point function and strengthening the practical connection between domestic SPS implementation, information exchange and Lao PDR's regional trade responsibilities.

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 and August 2027.

3.1 Project Activities

- Activity 1: Project Inception and Mobilisation
- Activity 2: Technical Review and Strengthening of MAE SPS Technical Procedures, Guidance and Operational Tools
- Activity 3: National SPS Training of Trainers and Technical Resource-Person Development
- Activity 4: Advanced Practical SPS Coaching and Application at Three Priority International Checkpoints
- Activity 5: Provincial SPS Awareness and Practical Capacity Building for Agricultural MSMEs, Traders and Other Private-Sector Stakeholders
- Activity 6: Project Results, Lessons Learned, Way Forward and Formal Closure

A.1 Activity 1 – Project Inception and Mobilisation

This activity will initiate implementation of the MAE SPS project and establish the technical and operational foundations for delivering the planned activities. It will bring together MAE/DPC, DOA, DOLF and other relevant stakeholders to confirm a shared understanding of the project scope, expected results and implementation approach. The inception process will establish agreed implementation arrangements, technical priorities, institutional responsibilities, coordination mechanisms and activity sequencing before substantive technical work begins.

The process will confirm the detailed implementation workplan, consultation requirements, participant and resource-person selection approaches, proposed checkpoint locations, business-engagement arrangements, resource requirements and monitoring processes. It will also establish coordination points with the companion MOH/FDD project to support alignment on intersecting SPS responsibilities. Proposed priority international checkpoints will be reviewed against agreed selection criteria, including trade flows, SPS risks, operational workload, identified implementation gaps and the feasibility of project support. GEDSI considerations will be integrated from the outset, including inclusive stakeholder outreach, accessibility requirements and identification of potential barriers affecting women, people with disabilities and smaller or less visible agricultural enterprises.

The activity will take place in January 2027, following procurement and mobilisation of the Implementing Consultant,. The process will involve MAE/DPC, DOA, DOLF and other relevant MAE technical units, with participation from MOH/FDD, the MOIC SPS Notification Authority and other stakeholders where their responsibilities intersect with the project. Final consultation arrangements and participants will be confirmed during inception.

The Implementing Consultant will support the project in:

- Reviewing the project design, scope, expected results and existing SPS-related work to inform the inception process.
- Facilitating inception consultations with MAE/DPC, DOA, DOLF and other relevant government agencies and stakeholders.
- Preparing a detailed implementation workplan, including activity sequencing, timelines, milestones, resource requirements and expected outputs.
- Confirming institutional responsibilities, technical priorities, consultation requirements and coordination arrangements across the six activities.
- Developing selection criteria and reviewing indicative locations for priority international checkpoints, taking account of trade flows, SPS risks, operational workload, implementation gaps and feasibility.
- Confirming participant and technical resource-person selection approaches, including relevant eligibility and representation considerations.

- Establishing the approach to engaging agricultural businesses, provincial stakeholders and relevant business networks.
- Confirming monitoring, reporting and coordination arrangements, including coordination points with the companion MOH/FDD project.
- Identifying GEDSI considerations, accessibility requirements and potential participation barriers to be addressed throughout implementation.

Outputs

- **Output 1.1:** Inception report and confirmed implementation workplan.
- **Output 1.2:** Confirmed institutional responsibilities and coordination arrangements.
- **Output 1.3**: Confirmed technical-review priorities and consultation plan.
- **Output 1.4:** Agreed selection criteria and confirmed locations for targeted checkpoint coaching.
- **Output 1.5:** Participant/resource-person selection and GEDSI/accessibility arrangements.
- **Output 1.6:** Confirmed MEL and evidence-collection approach.

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

A.2 Activity 2 – Technical Review and Strengthening of MAE SPS Technical Procedures, Guidance and Operational Tools

This activity will focus on the existing SPS procedures, guidance and operational tools used by MAE and its technical departments to carry out plant-health, animal-health/livestock and fisheries SPS functions. It will build on existing institutional arrangements and technical instruments rather than assume that new procedures or systems are required. The purpose is to identify priority implementation gaps and strengthen the procedures and practical tools needed for more consistent application by central, provincial and frontline officials.

The review will cover relevant MAE laws, regulations, standard operating procedures (SOPs), inspection manuals, checklists, certification and permit procedures, sampling and laboratory-referral arrangements, forms and other operational materials. It will assess which existing instruments remain fit for purpose and where clarification, consolidation, updating or additional practical tools are needed. Depending on the findings, strengthened materials may include inspection and document-review checklists, process maps, decision-support and field-reference tools, sampling and referral guidance, certification and permit guidance, templates and concise operational guidance.

Technical consultations will involve DPC, DOA, DOLF and other relevant MAE technical units. Where procedures or responsibilities intersect with other competent authorities, relevant counterparts, including MOH/FDD and the MOIC SPS Notification Authority, will be consulted as appropriate. The review will also consider whether existing procedures and information requirements create avoidable barriers for different users, including through documentation and literacy requirements, accessibility of information and facilities, digital-only processes and administrative burdens that may disproportionately affect women-led, smaller or informal businesses and people with disabilities. Findings will inform practical improvements within institutional authority, while issues requiring broader action will be documented for referral through appropriate mechanisms.

The activity will take place from February to March 2027. The review will primarily involve MAE/DPC, DOA, DOLF and other relevant MAE technical units responsible for plant-health, animal-health/livestock and fisheries SPS functions. Relevant counterparts from MOH/FDD, the MOIC SPS

Notification Authority and other competent authorities will be consulted where required to address intersecting responsibilities and operational processes.

The Implementing Consultant will support the project in:

- Reviewing relevant MAE laws, regulations, SOPs, inspection manuals, checklists, certification and permit procedures, sampling and laboratory-referral arrangements, forms and existing guidance materials.
- Consulting with DPC, DOA, DOLF and other relevant technical units to understand current procedures, institutional practices and implementation challenges.
- Assessing the practical application of existing instruments and identifying those that remain fit for purpose and those requiring clarification, consolidation, updating or strengthening.
- Identifying priority operational gaps, inconsistent interpretation and procedural challenges affecting central, provincial and frontline implementation.
- Developing or strengthening practical operational materials, as appropriate, including process maps, inspection and document-review checklists, field-reference tools, decision-support guidance, sampling and laboratory-referral guidance, certification and permit guidance, forms and templates.
- Facilitating consultations with MOH/FDD, the MOIC SPS Notification Authority and other competent authorities where procedures or responsibilities intersect.
- Examining potential procedural and information-access barriers affecting women-led, smaller or informal businesses and people with disabilities, and identifying feasible improvements within the relevant institutional mandates.
- Presenting draft and revised materials to relevant MAE technical units for technical review, feedback and validation.
- Organising and maintaining the reviewed materials and documenting identified gaps and issues requiring further institutional consideration or referral.

Outputs:

- **Output 2.1:** Technical gap analysis and agreed priority areas for strengthening.
- **Output 2.2:** Strengthened priority SPS procedures, guidance and practical operational tools.
- Output 2.3: Relevant process maps and clarified operational roles, referral pathways and cross-agency interfaces.
- **Output 2.4:** Technical materials forming the basis for subsequent ToT and checkpoint application.
- **Output 2.5:** Documented issues requiring formal cross-agency validation or further institutional action.

Contribution to Project Outcomes: this activity contributes primarily to **Outcome 2** by strengthening priority SPS procedures, operational tools and relevant institutional interfaces and establishing the basis for their subsequent practical testing and refinement. It also enables **Outcome 1** by providing the technical materials and tools used for competency development under Activity 3.3 and practical application under Activity 3.4.

A.3 Activity 3 – National SPS Training of Trainers and Technical Resource-Person Development

This activity will build on the priority SPS procedures, guidance and practical tools reviewed and strengthened under Activity 3.2. It will strengthen the technical competency of central and provincial MAE officials and support the development of a national resource-person base capable of promoting more consistent interpretation, dissemination and application of SPS requirements and operational tools.

The activity will deliver a two-day national Training of Trainers (ToT) in Vientiane, combining common sessions on the SPS framework, RCEP-related implementation responsibilities, institutional roles and coordination with technical sessions on plant-health, animal-health/livestock and fisheries SPS functions. Training will emphasise practical application rather than presentation of regulations alone. Participants will work with the procedures and tools strengthened under Activity 3.2 through case exercises covering document review, inspection scenarios, sampling and laboratory referral, certification and permit processes, and other relevant operational situations.

Participant competency will be assessed through practical exercises or other application-based methods during the ToT. Assessment results, together with technical responsibilities and availability, will inform the identification of officials who may serve as technical resource persons for subsequent project activities and wider institutional knowledge sharing. Participation in the ToT alone will not be treated as evidence of trainer competency. The activity will seek appropriate representation of women and people with disabilities and support qualified women officials to take substantive technical and coaching roles. The gender composition of officials subsequently selected and deployed as technical resource persons will also be monitored.

The activity will take place in April 2027, following sufficient completion of priority procedures, guidance and practical tools under Activity 3.2. The two-day national ToT is expected to involve approximately 65 core participants, comprising relevant central officials and provincial representatives from all 18 provinces, with indicative provincial participation of two to three technically relevant officials per province. Participants will include DPC, DOA and DOLF officials, with other relevant officials invited to specific sessions where their responsibilities intersect with the technical content.

The Implementing Consultant will support the project in:

- Developing the ToT programme, agenda, methodology and session materials based on the priority procedures, guidance and tools strengthened under Activity 3.2.
- Preparing practical training resources, including presentations, case studies, exercises, inspection scenarios, document-review examples and relevant technical reference materials.
- Coordinating with DPC, DOA and DOLF to identify the required technical trainers, facilitators and resource persons for the different training modules.
- Supporting the identification and mobilisation of approximately 65 participants, including relevant central officials and two to three technically relevant provincial officials from each of the 18 provinces.
- Delivering or coordinating the two-day national ToT in Vientiane, including common SPS sessions and technical sessions covering plant-health, animal-health/livestock and fisheries SPS functions.

- Facilitating practical exercises to strengthen participants' ability to interpret and apply relevant procedures, checklists, sampling and referral guidance, certification and permit processes and other operational tools.
- Developing and applying appropriate methods to assess participant understanding and practical competency during the training.
- Documenting assessment results and supporting MAE to identify suitable technical resource persons based on demonstrated competency, technical responsibilities and availability.
- Promoting substantive participation of qualified women officials in technical sessions and supporting their consideration for subsequent resource-person and coaching roles.
- Preparing a training completion report summarising participation, assessment results, key learning points and recommendations for subsequent technical coaching.

Outputs:

- **Output 3.1:** ToT curriculum, technical materials and practical exercises based on the strengthened procedures and tools developed under Activity 3.2.
- **Output 3.2:** Competency-assessment approach and documented results for participating officials.
- **Output 3.3:** Identified national pool of technically competent resource persons, with relevant technical roles and areas of expertise documented.
- **Output 3.4:** Agreed arrangements for use of resource persons in subsequent project-supported coaching and institutional knowledge sharing.
- **Output 3.5:** Participation, accessibility and GEDSI records, including gender composition of officials identified and subsequently deployed as resource persons.

Contribution to Project Outcomes :this activity contributes primarily to **Outcome 1** by strengthening the technical competency of central and provincial SPS officials and establishing the resource-person base needed to support more consistent interpretation and application of strengthened SPS requirements and tools. It also provides the human-capacity foundation for practical frontline application and observation under Activity 3.4.

A.4 Activity 4 – Advanced Practical SPS Coaching and Application at Three Priority International Checkpoints

This activity will translate the strengthened SPS procedures and tools developed under Activity 3.2 and the technical competencies developed through the national ToT under Activity 3.3 into practical frontline application. It will provide targeted, hands-on coaching at selected international checkpoints to strengthen the implementation of priority SPS functions under actual operational conditions. The activity will also provide an opportunity to observe how the strengthened procedures and tools work in practice and identify any remaining operational gaps.

Coaching will use actual or, where necessary, closely simulated SPS cases and may cover inspection and document review, commodity identification, sampling and laboratory referral, risk-based decision-making, certification and permit processes, record keeping, use of inspection checklists and decision-support tools, and communication or referral of cases requiring further technical action. Coaching will be supported by relevant technical specialists and resource persons developed through the national ToT, enabling participants to apply their learning in operational settings.

Where SPS responsibilities intersect, relevant sessions may involve MOH/FDD or other competent authorities to examine practical arrangements for referral, inspection hand-off, sequencing and information exchange. Where relevant to notification-related processes, lessons may also be shared with DPC as the SPS Enquiry Point and the MOIC SPS Notification Authority. Cross-agency issues requiring formal agreement will be documented and referred through the appropriate institutional mechanisms rather than treated as resolved solely through checkpoint coaching. Operational problems, inconsistent interpretations and difficulties in using particular procedures or tools will be systematically captured to inform further refinement of materials and final project recommendations.

The activity will take place from May to Jun 2027, following the national ToT under Activity 3.3 and coordinated, where practical, with provincial private-sector engagement under Activity 3.5. Coaching is expected to cover three priority international checkpoints, indicatively in Sayaboury, Savannakhet and Attapeu. Final locations will be confirmed during inception based on trade flows, SPS risks, operational workload, identified implementation gaps and feasibility of project support. Participants will include relevant MAE/DPC, DOA and DOLF frontline and technical officials, trained resource persons and, where appropriate, counterparts from MOH/FDD and other competent authorities. Qualified women resource persons will be supported to take substantive technical roles, with practical arrangements considering accessibility, safe travel and accommodation. No physical SPS inspection, laboratory or other equipment will be procured under this activity.

The Implementing Consultant will support the project in:

- Confirming the technical coaching approach, session plans and practical learning methods based on the procedures and tools strengthened under Activity 3.2 and the ToT delivered under Activity 3.3.
- Supporting MAE/DPC, DOA and DOLF to confirm the three priority international checkpoints using the agreed selection criteria.
- Coordinating with relevant departments and checkpoint authorities to confirm operational requirements, participating officials, schedules and access arrangements.
- Identifying and mobilising suitable technical specialists and trained resource persons to support coaching across plant-health, animal-health/livestock and fisheries SPS functions.
- Preparing practical coaching materials, case exercises and reference tools relevant to the functions and operational conditions of each checkpoint.
- Delivering or facilitating hands-on coaching on inspection and document review, commodity identification, sampling and laboratory referral, risk-based decision-making, certification and permit processes, record keeping and the use of relevant operational tools.
- Supporting practical sessions involving relevant competent authorities to examine referral, inspection hand-off, sequencing and information-exchange arrangements where SPS responsibilities intersect.
- Observing and documenting the application of procedures and tools, including operational difficulties, inconsistent interpretations and gaps requiring further technical or institutional attention.
- Supporting qualified women resource persons to undertake substantive coaching and technical facilitation roles.
- Ensuring practical participation arrangements consider accessibility, safe travel, accommodation and other relevant barriers.

- Consolidating checkpoint coaching findings and recommendations to inform refinement of procedures, guidance and operational tools and the final project report.
- Ensuring that all coaching activities are delivered without procurement of physical SPS inspection, laboratory or other equipment.

Outputs:

- **Output 4.1:** Documented practical coaching and application cases from the selected checkpoints.
- **Output 4.2:** Practical application-assessment records identifying areas of demonstrated competency and remaining technical gaps.
- **Output 4.3:** Documented operational issues affecting use of priority SPS procedures, tools and cross-agency arrangements.
- **Output 4.4:** Agreed technical refinements to relevant procedures, tools, workflows or guidance arising from frontline application.
- **Output 4.5:** Documented issues requiring further institutional or cross-agency consideration.

Contribution to Project Outcomes: this activity contributes directly to **Outcome 1** by enabling project-supported observation of frontline officials applying priority SPS procedures and tools in practical settings. It also contributes to **Outcome 2** by testing procedures and selected cross-agency arrangements through actual or closely simulated cases and generating evidence for their refinement.

A.4 Activity 5 – Provincial SPS Awareness and Practical Capacity Building for Agricultural MSMEs, Traders and Other Private-Sector Stakeholders

This activity will engage agricultural and agrifood businesses, traders and other relevant private-sector stakeholders at provincial level to strengthen their understanding of SPS requirements and related compliance processes. It will connect the technical work undertaken with government officials under the project to the practical requirements and experiences of businesses affected by SPS measures. The activity will also provide an opportunity to identify recurring business compliance challenges and areas where access to SPS information and support could be improved.

The activity will deliver three two-day provincial SPS capacity-building and engagement activities, with content tailored to provincial business needs. Sessions may cover applicable SPS requirements, the roles of relevant authorities, required documentation, certificates and permits, inspection and sampling processes, common compliance deficiencies, border procedures, relevant RCEP-related requirements and where businesses can obtain authoritative information or technical assistance. Practical process maps, checklists, case examples and other business-facing materials developed under Activity 3.2 will be used and refined as appropriate.

Business understanding will be assessed using proportionate practical methods, while structured discussions and participant feedback will help identify recurring compliance difficulties, unclear or inconsistent information, procedural barriers and other implementation issues experienced by businesses. Participant mobilisation will draw on existing provincial, producer, cooperative and business networks, with targeted outreach to women's business organisations and organisations of persons with disabilities. Particular attention will be given to smaller, informal and home-based agricultural enterprises that may not routinely appear on standard government or business-association participant lists. Reasonable accommodation and accessible information will be provided as required.

The activity will take place from May to mid. July 2027 and will be coordinated, where practical, with the checkpoint coaching missions under Activity 3.4. Three two-day provincial activities are proposed, with approximately 60 participants per activity and an indicative total reach of around 180 participants. Locations will, where practical, align with the geographic areas supported through Activity 3.4 to enable coordinated delivery and reduce repeated travel and mobilisation costs. Participants will primarily comprise agricultural and agrifood businesses directly affected by the SPS requirements covered, together with relevant provincial officials and other supporting technical stakeholders. Recruitment will prioritise participants from each host area, with targeted representation from surrounding provinces and inclusive outreach to women-led enterprises and people with disabilities. Travel and accommodation support will follow the agreed participant allocation, journey requirements and applicable rates.

The Implementing Consultant will support the project in:

- Developing the provincial activity programme, agendas, training methodology and practical session materials based on the SPS requirements and business needs identified.
- Coordinating with MAE, RT4D, relevant provincial authorities and business partners to confirm the three provincial locations and delivery arrangements.
- Supporting participant eligibility and selection arrangements, prioritising agricultural businesses directly affected by the SPS requirements covered and relevant supporting technical stakeholders.
- Mobilising approximately 60 participants for each provincial activity through provincial, producer, cooperative and business networks, including targeted outreach to women-led enterprises and organisations of persons with disabilities.
- Preparing and delivering practical, business-oriented sessions on relevant SPS requirements, institutional responsibilities, documentation, certificates and permits, inspection and sampling processes, common compliance issues, border procedures and sources of technical information.
- Using and adapting business-facing process maps, checklists, case examples and other practical materials developed under Activity 3.2.
- Facilitating discussions and practical exercises to assess business understanding and identify common compliance challenges and procedural barriers.
- Capturing feedback from participating businesses on unclear requirements, inconsistent information, administrative burdens and other difficulties affecting SPS compliance.
- Coordinating activity delivery with the checkpoint coaching missions under Activity 3.4, where practical, to link business compliance issues with frontline implementation experience and reduce unnecessary travel and mobilisation costs.
- Managing participant mobilisation and event logistics, including travel and accommodation arrangements in accordance with the agreed allocation, journey requirements and applicable rates.
- Providing accessible information and reasonable accommodation as required to support the participation of people with disabilities and other underrepresented groups.
- Consolidating participant data, feedback and key findings to inform the refinement of business-facing guidance and final project recommendations.

Outputs:

- **Output 5.1:** Practical business-facing SPS guidance and supporting materials adapted from the strengthened technical procedures and tools.
- **Output 5.2:** Documented assessment of participating businesses' understanding of relevant SPS requirements and compliance processes.

- **Output 5.3:** Structured record of business compliance constraints, implementation experiences and priority information needs.
- **Output 5.4:** Feedback-response record showing how priority private-sector issues have informed refinement of business-facing guidance or final recommendations.
- **Output 5.5:** Participation and accessibility records demonstrating outreach to relevant business groups, including women-led enterprises and people with disabilities.

Contribution to Project Outcomes: this activity contributes primarily to Outcome 3 by improving participating businesses' practical understanding of SPS requirements and ensuring that their compliance experiences and priority concerns inform business-facing guidance and project recommendations. Business feedback may also contribute to Outcome 2 where it identifies procedural or coordination problems requiring technical or institutional refinement.

A.4 Activity 6 – Project Results, Lessons Learned, Way Forward and Formal Closure

This activity will consolidate the results and implementation experience generated across the project and provide a formal opportunity for government and private-sector stakeholders to review achievements, discuss lessons and confirm priorities for continued SPS implementation. It will also support the finalisation and institutional handover of project-supported technical materials, helping ensure that strengthened procedures, operational tools and technical knowledge can continue to be used beyond the project period.

The activity will consolidate evidence and lessons from the technical review, national ToT, checkpoint coaching and provincial private-sector engagement. It will support the refinement and finalisation of priority procedures, operational tools, guidance and training materials based on implementation experience. Findings involving more than one competent authority will be discussed with the responsible institutions, with matters requiring formal inter-agency agreement or higher-level validation referred through the companion MOH/FDD project and/or existing national SPS coordination mechanisms, including the National SPS Committee where appropriate.

The project will document which materials have been technically or formally validated, which units are responsible for maintaining and using them, and which officials or resource persons can continue to support technical knowledge sharing. A practical way-forward plan will identify agreed responsibilities, priority follow-up actions, indicative timelines and any additional resource or approval requirements. Actions dependent on future government budgets, staffing or formal approval will be identified as such rather than presented as guaranteed post-project results. Sustainability arrangements will also consider the maintenance of accessible project materials and continuity of the technical resource-person base, including succession or refresher arrangements that support women and other underrepresented officials to participate substantively in future technical capacity building.

The activity will take place during mid. July to end of August 2027, with project completion by 31 August 2027. It will include a one-day in-person national results and lessons meeting for approximately 60 government and private-sector stakeholders. Participants will include MAE/DPC, DOA, DOLF, relevant provincial and frontline officials, technical resource persons, agricultural businesses and other relevant government and private-sector stakeholders. Relevant counterparts from MOH/FDD, the MOIC SPS Notification Authority and other competent agencies will be engaged where required to review findings and discuss follow-up arrangements.

The Implementing Consultant will support the project in:

- Consolidating technical outputs, implementation records, monitoring data, participant feedback and evidence generated across Activities 3.1–3.5.

- Reviewing and refining priority SPS procedures, operational tools, guidance and training materials based on findings from technical consultations, ToT, checkpoint coaching and provincial business engagement.
- Facilitating technical discussions with MAE/DPC, DOA, DOLF and other relevant institutions to review findings and confirm the status of project-supported materials.
- Coordinating with MOH/FDD, the MOIC SPS Notification Authority and other competent authorities to discuss issues involving intersecting responsibilities and identify matters requiring further institutional agreement or referral.
- Documenting the validation status of technical materials, responsible institutional units and arrangements for their continued use, maintenance and updating.
- Identifying officials and technical resource persons who can continue supporting institutional knowledge sharing and practical SPS capacity building.
- Developing a practical way-forward plan outlining agreed responsibilities, priority actions, indicative timelines and any additional resource, staffing or approval requirements.
- Identifying sustainability considerations, including accessible materials, resource-person continuity, succession and refresher arrangements, and opportunities for women and other underrepresented officials to undertake substantive technical roles.
- Organising and facilitating the one-day national results and lessons meeting for approximately 60 government and private-sector stakeholders.
- Preparing the meeting agenda, presentation materials, results summaries and documentation of stakeholder feedback, agreed actions and follow-up priorities.
- Preparing the final project completion report, consolidating results, outputs, implementation lessons, challenges, recommendations and supporting evidence, and submitting all agreed final materials to RT4D by 30 June 2027.
- Supporting the formal handover of validated project-supported technical materials and relevant implementation records to MAE/DPC, DOA and DOLF.

Outputs:

- **Output 6.1:** Final consolidated package of strengthened SPS procedures, operational tools, guidance and training materials, reflecting relevant implementation experience and agreed refinements.
- **Output 6.2:** Final business-facing SPS guidance incorporating priority feedback from private-sector engagement.
- **Output 6.3:** Consolidated record of checkpoint application cases, business feedback and key implementation lessons.
- **Output 6.4:** Documented validation, institutional ownership and resource-person arrangements for relevant project materials and functions.
- **Output 6.5:** Agreed way-forward and sustainability plan identifying responsibilities, priority actions, timelines and any further resource or approval requirements.
- **Output 6.6:** Concise project results and lessons materials suitable for wider communication, including English-language summaries where appropriate for regional or RT4D audiences.

Contribution to Project Outcomes: this activity supports consolidation of **all three project outcomes** by ensuring that demonstrated competency and frontline experience under Outcome 1,

tested and strengthened procedures and coordination arrangements under Outcome 2, and business understanding and feedback under Outcome 3 are reflected in final project materials, institutional arrangements and agreed follow-up actions. It also supports sustainability by documenting ownership and realistic continuation arrangements before project completion.

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	**RT4D, Implementing Consultant and MAE/DPC, in coordination with DOA and DOLF**	**31 Jan 2027**
• Task 1.1: Conduct inception consultations and confirm implementation priorities, institutional responsibilities and coordination arrangements.	Implementing Consultant, RT4D and MAE/DPC	W1 Jan 2027
• Task 1.2: Confirm technical-review priorities, consultation requirements and coordination points with the companion MOH/FDD project.	Implementing Consultant, MAE/DPC, DOA and DOLF	W2 Jan 2027
• Task 1.3: Apply agreed criteria and confirm priority international checkpoints for targeted coaching.	MAE/DPC, DOA and DOLF, with Implementing Consultant and RT4D	W3 Jan 2027
• Task 1.4: Confirm participant/resource-person selection approach, GEDSI and accessibility arrangements, and MEL/evidence requirements.	RT4D, Implementing Consultant and MAE/DPC	W3 Jan 2027
• Task 1.5: Submit and approve inception report and detailed implementation workplan.	Implementing Consultant; MAE/DPC and RT4D	W4 Jan 2027
Activity 2: Technical Review and Strengthening of MAE SPS Technical Procedures, Guidance and Operational Tools	**Implementing Consultant and MAE/DPC, DOA and DOLF, with relevant competent authorities**	**31 Mar 2027**
• Task 2.1: Review existing MAE SPS laws, regulations, SOPs, manuals, checklists, certification/permit procedures, sampling and referral arrangements, forms and guidance materials.	Implementing Consultant with DOA, DOLF and DPC	10 Feb 2027
• Task 2.2: Conduct focused technical consultations to identify implementation gaps and priority procedures and tools requiring clarification, strengthening or development.	Implementing Consultant, MAE/DPC, DOA, DOLF and relevant stakeholders	15 Feb 2027
• Task 2.3: Examine relevant cross-agency operational interfaces with MOH/FDD and, where applicable, the MOIC SPS Notification Authority.	MAE/DPC and Implementing Consultant with relevant competent authorities	25 Feb 2027
• Task 2.4: Prepare strengthened priority procedures, guidance and practical operational tools, including	Implementing Consultant with MAE technical departments	5 Mar 2027

Activity/Task	Responsible Party	Deadline
relevant process maps, checklists, referral guidance and field-reference materials.		
• Task 2.5: Review and technically validate priority materials required for subsequent ToT and checkpoint application.	MAE/DPC, DOA and DOLF with Implementing Consultant and RT4D	19 Mar 2027
• Task 2.6: Finalise the technical gap analysis and strengthened package, documenting issues requiring further cross-agency validation or institutional action.	Implementing Consultant and MAE/DPC	31 Mar 2027
Activity 3: National SPS Training of Trainers and Technical Resource-Person Development	**MAE/DPC, DOA and DOLF with RT4D and Implementing Consultant**	**30 Apr 2027**
• Task 3.1: Develop/finalise ToT curriculum, practical exercises and competency-assessment tools based on strengthened materials under Activity 2.	Implementing Consultant with DOA, DOLF and DPC	9 Apr 2027
• Task 3.2: Confirm technically relevant central and provincial participants, including representatives from all 18 provinces, and required accessibility arrangements.	MAE/DPC, DOA and DOLF with RT4D	20 Apr 2027
• Task 3.3: Deliver the two-day national ToT and undertake practical competency assessment of participants.	MAE technical departments, Implementing Consultant and RT4D	27-28 Apr 2027
• Task 3.4: Identify and document technically competent resource persons and their areas of expertise and subsequent support roles.	MAE/DPC, DOA and DOLF with Implementing Consultant	30 Apr 2027
Activity 4: Advanced Practical SPS Coaching and Application at Three Priority International Checkpoints	**MAE/DPC, DOA and DOLF with Implementing Consultant and trained resource persons**	**30 Jun 2027**
• Task 4.1: Confirm coaching plans, technical teams and practical cases for each selected checkpoint.	MAE and Implementing Consultant	15 May 2027
• Task 4.2: Conduct hands-on coaching and practical application of strengthened SPS procedures and tools at the first selected checkpoint.	MAE technical officials/resource persons and Implementing Consultant	20 May 2027
• Task 4.3: Conduct hands-on coaching and practical application at the second selected checkpoint.	MAE technical officials/resource persons and Implementing Consultant	10 Jun 2027
• Task 4.4: Conduct hands-on coaching and practical application at the third selected checkpoint.	MAE technical officials/resource persons and Implementing Consultant	24 Jun 2027
• Task 4.5: Consolidate application evidence, operational issues and agreed refinements arising from checkpoint implementation.	Implementing Consultant with MAE/DPC, DOA and DOLF	30 Jun 2027

Activity/Task	Responsible Party	Deadline
Activity 5: Provincial SPS Awareness and Practical Capacity Building for Agricultural MSMEs, Traders and Other Private-Sector Stakeholders	**MAE with RT4D, Implementing Consultant and relevant provincial/business partners**	**mid. Jul 2027**
• Task 5.1: Finalise practical business-facing SPS materials and participant mobilisation arrangements, including targeted GEDSI outreach and accessibility requirements.	Implementing Consultant, MAE and RT4D	12 May 2027
• Task 5.2: Deliver first two-day provincial agricultural MSME/private-sector capacity-building and engagement activity.	MAE, Implementing Consultant and RT4D	18-19 May 2027
• Task 5.3: Deliver second two-day provincial agricultural MSME/private-sector capacity-building and engagement activity.	MAE, Implementing Consultant and RT4D	8-9 Jun 2027
• Task 5.4: Deliver third two-day provincial agricultural MSME/private-sector capacity-building and engagement activity.	MAE, Implementing Consultant and RT4D	22-23 Jun 2027
• Task 5.5: Consolidate business-understanding assessment results and structured feedback on compliance constraints and information needs.	Implementing Consultant with MAE and RT4D	30 Jun 2027
• Task 5.6: Refine business-facing guidance and relevant recommendations based on priority private-sector feedback.	Implementing Consultant and MAE	9 Jul 2027
Activity 6: Project Results, Lessons Learned, Way Forward and Formal Closure	**MAE/DPC with DOA, DOLF, RT4D and Implementing Consultant**	**17 Aug 2027**
• Task 6.1: Consolidate findings and lessons from technical review, ToT, checkpoint application and private-sector engagement.	Implementing Consultant and MAE/DPC	15 Jul 2027
• Task 6.2: Finalise priority SPS procedures, operational tools, technical guidance, training materials and business-facing materials based on implementation experience.	Implementing Consultant with MAE technical departments	25 Jul 2027
• Task 6.3: Confirm validation status, institutional ownership, responsible units/resource persons and sustainability arrangements for relevant materials and functions.	MAE/DPC, DOA and DOLF with RT4D	30 Jul 2027
• Task 6.4: Prepare agreed way-forward plan covering responsibilities, follow-up actions, timelines and additional resource/approval requirements.	MAE/DPC with Implementing Consultant and RT4D	5 Aug 2027
• Task 6.5: Conduct final results, lessons and way-forward process with relevant government and private-sector stakeholders.	MAE/DPC and RT4D with Implementing Consultant	10 Aug 2027

Activity/Task	Responsible Party	Deadline
• Task 6.6: Finalise and submit the consolidated project outputs and completion documentation.	Implementing Consultant with MAE/DPC and RT4D	17 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 SPS rules and border processes affect people differently depending on enterprise size, location, access to information, mobility, digital access and participation in technical institutions. Women are strongly represented in many Lao agrifood MSMEs and trading activities, while persons with disabilities and smaller rural operators may face additional barriers. The project will mainstream GEDSI in participant selection, provincial delivery, business guidance, activity planning, monitoring and communications.

5.2 GEDSI Dimensions of the Sector

Agriculture and food trade are important livelihood sectors in Lao PDR, including for women, rural households and small enterprises. At the same time, technical SPS and border functions may be dominated by specialised officials and can be difficult for smaller businesses to navigate. Travel distance, care responsibilities, physical access, communication formats and digital connectivity can also affect participation. Provincial delivery can reduce some travel burdens while bringing training closer to actual operational contexts.

5.3 GEDSI Mainstreaming

- Seek balanced and meaningful participation of women officials and business representatives, while recognising the actual staffing profile of technical agencies.
- Use provincial locations and scheduling that consider travel, care responsibilities and operational workloads.
- Apply a GEDSI lens to the technical review of SPS procedures, tools and information requirements, including consideration of documentation and literacy requirements, accessibility,

digital processes and administrative barriers that may disproportionately affect women-led, smaller or informal businesses and people with disabilities.

- Apply RT4D inclusive-event guidance and identify reasonable accommodation needs in advance, including participants with physical, visual, hearing, intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, with reasonable accommodation provided according to individual accessibility and participation requirements.
- Use plain-language, visual and practical job aids and business guidance, with accessible digital formats where feasible.
- Disaggregate participant and learning/application data by sex and, where feasible and safe, disability and stakeholder category.
- Ensure business testing includes women-led MSMEs, smaller operators and other underrepresented users.
- Monitor actual application of skills and tools, not only attendance, so GEDSI analysis considers who is benefiting in practice.

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

The project will mainstream GEDSI throughout project design, technical implementation, participant selection, monitoring and communications rather than treating inclusion as a standalone activity.

Gender and inclusion considerations will be incorporated into the development and testing of SPS procedures and business-facing guidance to examine whether women-owned enterprises, smaller producers, rural operators or persons with disabilities experience different barriers in accessing information, complying with SPS procedures or engaging with competent authorities.

Technical relevance will remain the primary basis for selecting government participants; however, the project will actively encourage meaningful participation of women officials and aim for approximately 40% women participants in the National Training of Trainers, where the available pool of technically relevant officials permits.

The project will also seek balanced representation among facilitators, presenters and technical resource persons wherever RT4D and MAE have influence over participant selection, while ensuring that technical competence remains the overriding consideration.

All participant-based monitoring data will be disaggregated by sex and, where feasible and safe, by disability status and stakeholder category.

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

The project will engage both government and private-sector stakeholders across the SPS implementation ecosystem.

Government participants will include MAE/DPC coordination personnel, technical officials from DOA and DOLF, provincial agriculture and environment officials representing all 18 provinces, frontline SPS inspectors and officers at selected international checkpoints, and relevant MOH/FDD and other competent authorities participating in joint SPS processes.

Private-sector participants will include agricultural MSMEs, producers, processors, traders, exporters, importers, producer organisations and relevant business associations affected by MAE SPS requirements.

Indicative participation targets are:

- National ToT: approximately 40% women participants, subject to technical staffing profiles.
- Provincial MSME workshops: approximately 60 participants per workshop, targeting 48% women and at least 5% persons with disabilities.
- National Results and Closing Event: approximately 60 participants, targeting 48% women and at least 5% persons with disabilities.

The project will also encourage participation by smaller enterprises and businesses operating outside Vientiane to ensure provincial voices are represented.

C. How does this project benefit disadvantaged groups (e.g. people with disability, ethnic minorities, MSMEs)? What will the project do to apply the "Do No Harm" principle?

The project recognises that smaller enterprises, rural producers, women-led businesses and persons with disabilities may face greater challenges in understanding technical SPS requirements because of information gaps, travel constraints, accessibility barriers and limited interaction with regulatory agencies.

Rather than lowering regulatory standards, the project will improve access to understandable information and practical guidance so that disadvantaged groups can more effectively comply with existing SPS requirements and participate in agricultural and regional trade opportunities.

The project will apply the Do No Harm principle by ensuring participation is voluntary, inclusive and appropriate to participants' circumstances. Activities will avoid creating unnecessary travel or time burdens, particularly for women and smaller businesses, and will provide reasonable accommodation for participants with disabilities where required.

No project activity will promote differential treatment in regulatory compliance. Instead, inclusion will be achieved through equitable access to information, participation and practical capacity-building opportunities.

D. How will the proposed project activities ensure the voices and aspirations of all participants, including those representing woman and other marginalised groups, be heard and incorporated? What measures will the project take to incorporate the views and input of women, people with disability and other marginalise groups in the various stages of project implementation?

Women's enterprises, smaller agricultural businesses and other underrepresented stakeholders will be actively included in stakeholder mapping and workshop mobilisation rather than relying solely on larger or better-connected enterprises.

Each provincial business workshop will include facilitated discussion sessions allowing participants to identify practical compliance difficulties, administrative bottlenecks and opportunities for improving SPS guidance. Facilitators will encourage participation from quieter participants and smaller enterprises rather than relying exclusively on plenary discussion.

Feedback will be collected through structured workshop evaluation forms, facilitated group discussions and documented consultation notes. Where appropriate, anonymous written feedback will also be available for participants who may be less comfortable raising concerns publicly.

Business feedback will be consolidated and used to refine business-facing guidance, practical case studies and final recommendations.

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

All project events will follow RT4D Inclusive Events and Communications Guidelines.

Inclusive measures will include:

- Accessible venue selection wherever feasible;
- Early identification of reasonable accommodation requirements;
- Practical scheduling that considers travel time and provincial operational responsibilities;
- Clear and plain-language presentation materials supplemented with visual process maps and practical examples;
- Accessible digital materials where feasible;
- Respectful and culturally appropriate facilitation;
- Collection of sex-disaggregated participation data and disability data where feasible and safe; and
- Monitoring meaningful participation and application of knowledge rather than attendance alone.

This approach reflects the project's practical objective of ensuring SPS implementation benefits both institutions and the businesses they regulate.

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

This project will communicate the benefits of RCEP by demonstrating how stronger SPS implementation contributes to more predictable agricultural trade, clearer regulatory processes and improved institutional capability rather than focusing primarily on treaty provisions.

Communications will emphasise practical implementation: how updated procedures assist frontline officials, how clearer guidance helps businesses comply with SPS requirements, and how improved coordination between competent authorities supports more efficient and consistent implementation of RCEP-related SPS commitments.

A. Communication focus and key messages

The project will communicate five principal messages.

- Effective SPS implementation supports safer, more predictable and more efficient agricultural trade by improving the consistency of inspection, certification and border procedures
- Strengthening the capability of central, provincial and border officials helps translate national SPS laws and regulations into practical day-to-day implementation.
- Practical operational guidance, process maps, checklists and job aids make regulatory requirements easier for officials and businesses to understand and apply consistently.
- Agricultural MSMEs, producers, processors, traders and exporters benefit from clearer SPS information because they are better able to understand applicable requirements, documentation and where to seek technical guidance.
- Coordination between MAE and MOH/FDD strengthens implementation of shared SPS processes while preserving the distinct institutional mandates of each ministry.

B. Communication audiences

Primary audiences will include:

- MAE central technical departments;
- Provincial Agriculture and Environment Offices across all 18 provinces;
- Frontline SPS officers at selected international checkpoints;
- MOH/FDD and other relevant competent authorities;
- Agricultural MSMEs, producers, processors, traders, exporters and business associations;
- National SPS Committee stakeholders;
- Development partners; and
- Wider stakeholders where dissemination is appropriate.

C. Project communication outputs

Project communication outputs will be practical, proportionate and directly linked to implementation. Subject to MAE, RT4D and donor approval, the following outputs are expected to be available for wider dissemination:

- Business-friendly SPS guidance, process maps, simplified checklists and practical reference materials – primarily in Lao, with selected materials also available in English where useful for wider RT4D, regional or international audiences.
- Concise case studies demonstrating practical implementation improvements and lessons from checkpoint coaching and business engagement – available in both Lao and English for wider dissemination.
- Selected presentations, visual summaries and infographics highlighting project results and practical SPS messages – produced in Lao and/or English depending on the intended audience, with bilingual versions used where appropriate.
- Approved final project results and lessons materials, including relevant summaries derived from the Project Completion Report – available in English, with Lao-language versions or summaries prepared where useful for government and domestic stakeholder dissemination.
- Formal project reporting outputs, including activity reports, progress reporting, Project Completion Report and Summary PCR – prepared in English in accordance with RT4D reporting requirements.

Government-owned technical procedures, SOPs, manuals and other operational materials will not automatically be treated as public communication products. Their dissemination and language will be determined by MAE according to their intended operational use and relevant approval requirements.

External communications, photography, quotations, case studies and other public dissemination will remain subject to appropriate MAE, RT4D and donor clearance before release.

D. Communication approach

Communication will prioritise usefulness over visibility.

Rather than producing promotional products disconnected from implementation, the project will generate communication materials directly from strengthened procedures, practical coaching experiences, provincial business engagement activities and validated lessons learned.

Where stories or examples are shared publicly, they will focus on institutional improvement, practical SPS implementation and stakeholder benefit while respecting confidentiality and appropriate government clearance.

7. Business Engagement

A. Business relevance

Agricultural businesses experience SPS implementation through practical processes such as permits, certificates, inspections, sampling, laboratory referral and border clearance.

For many businesses, compliance challenges arise not only from technical requirements themselves but also from unclear documentation, uncertainty regarding responsible agencies, inconsistent interpretation of procedures and limited access to practical guidance.

The project will therefore engage businesses as implementation partners and evidence providers, helping government better understand practical compliance experiences while maintaining the integrity and purpose of SPS protection.

Business engagement will focus on improving predictability, clarity and accessibility of regulatory implementation rather than reducing legitimate SPS requirements.

B. Reflection of business needs in delivery

Existing consultation findings and targeted engagement during implementation will inform:

- Prioritisation of business-facing SPS topics;
- Refinement of practical guidance and process maps;
- Development of realistic training cases and examples;
- Identification of common compliance bottlenecks;
- Clarification of documentation and certification processes; and
- Recommendations arising from provincial business feedback.

The project will particularly consider the experiences of smaller agricultural enterprises, women-led businesses and provincial operators whose access to regulatory information may differ from larger enterprises.

C. Direct business engagement

The project will conduct three two-day provincial SPS capacity-building and engagement activities, aligned operationally with the three checkpoint coaching missions wherever practical.

Each workshop will engage approximately 60 participants drawn from agricultural MSMEs, producers, processors, traders, exporters, producer organisations and relevant business associations.

Business representatives will participate not merely as training recipients but also through structured dialogue, practical case discussion and feedback sessions that examine real implementation challenges.

Where appropriate and with consent, anonymised examples of practical compliance experiences may be incorporated into training cases to improve realism and relevance.

D. Use of business input

Business feedback will be systematically documented through workshop discussions, evaluation forms and consultation records.

The findings will be analysed to identify recurring issues relating to:

- Clarity of SPS guidance;
- Documentation requirements;
- Inspection and certification processes;
- Administrative bottlenecks;
- Accessibility of regulatory information;
- Provincial implementation differences; and
- Opportunities for improving business-facing communication.

Priority issues will be considered by MAE during refinement of practical guidance and incorporated, where appropriate, into final recommendations and the national way-forward process.

The project will rely on existing producer organisations, business associations and provincial networks rather than establishing parallel consultation mechanisms, consistent with RT4D's institutional sustainability approach.

8. Support to Lesser Developed Economies

The project is designed around Lao PDR's geographic, institutional and resource realities. Provincial capacity-building and engagement activities extend subnational reach without requiring separate events in all 18 provinces, while targeted checkpoint coaching focuses scarce resources on operationally important sites. Existing procedures and equipment will be inventoried before new investment. Practical Lao-language and visual tools will support continued use, and implementation will allow reasonable time for government review, travel and operational commitments.

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

The project has been designed specifically around the institutional, geographic and resource realities of Lao PDR as an ASEAN Lesser Developed Economy.

Rather than introducing entirely new regulatory systems, the project strengthens existing MAE SPS procedures, operational guidance and institutional responsibilities so that improvements remain realistic for government implementation after external assistance concludes.

The project recognises several practical capacity constraints common to LDE administrations, including limited specialist human resources across provinces, uneven frontline implementation, long travel distances, concentration of technical expertise in central government and the need to maximise value from limited operational budgets.

Accordingly, the project combines national institutional reach with targeted operational depth: one national Training of Trainers covering all 18 provinces, followed by intensive practical coaching at three strategically selected international checkpoint areas where operational learning can generate wider institutional benefit.

The project will also coordinate closely with the companion MOH/FDD SPS investment so that scarce government resources contribute to complementary national outcomes rather than duplicated systems or overlapping activities.

B. How will this activity ensure relevant ASEAN LDE government institutions and representatives can engage and make the most out of all activity outputs, at a pace that supports their capacity and institutional needs/constraints?

Implementation will follow a staged and government-led approach that allows sufficient time for technical review, consultation, validation and practical application.

Government agencies will participate throughout the project cycle rather than being asked only to endorse final consultant products. MAE technical departments, provincial representatives and relevant SPS agencies will contribute to development, testing and refinement of procedures and operational tools, strengthening institutional ownership and increasing the likelihood of continued use.

Activity sequencing has been designed deliberately:

- Technical review and consultation;
- Development of practical guidance;

- National Training of Trainers;
- Practical application and coaching at selected international checkpoints;
- Provincial business engagement; and
- Results, lessons learned and formal closure.

This sequencing allows learning to build progressively rather than compressing complex technical reforms into isolated workshops.

Provincial delivery and coordinated provincial missions will also reduce unnecessary travel and improve efficiency for provincial officials while enabling direct engagement with frontline operational contexts.

C. How will the project strengthen long-term institutional capability rather than short-term activity delivery?

- The project will strengthen institutional capability by embedding reusable SPS tools, practical guidance and technical resource persons within existing MAE structures.
- The intended legacy is not the number of workshops delivered but the continued ability of government officials to:
- Apply strengthened procedures consistently;
- Train and support colleagues within their provinces;
- Provide clearer guidance to agricultural businesses;
- Implement practical inspection and referral processes at frontline locations; and
- Participate effectively in ongoing national SPS coordination mechanisms.
- This emphasis on institutional ownership, practical application and sustainable capacity reflects the broader RT4D objective of strengthening the implementation capability of LDE institutions rather than providing short-lived training inputs. The existing project rationale already identifies Lao PDR's geographic, institutional and resource realities as the basis for this approach.

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	**O1:** By the end of the project, participating central and provincial SPS officials demonstrate competency relevant to their technical roles, and officials at the selected checkpoints demonstrate correct application of priority strengthened SPS procedures and tools during project-supported coaching.	**O1.1:** Percentage of assessed ToT participants meeting the agreed competency standard for their assigned technical functions. **O1.2:** Number of coached checkpoints where officials correctly apply at least one agreed priority procedure or tool and identify any necessary corrective action.	**O1.1:** At least 75% of assessed ToT participants meet the competency standard. **O1.2:** All three coached checkpoints demonstrate correct application in at least one priority SPS process.	**O1.1:** Role-appropriate competency assessments and practical case exercises administered during the national ToT. **O1.2:** Baseline and coaching observations, completed checklists, case files or referral records, corrective-action records and supervisor verification from the three coached checkpoints. Brief case narratives will describe how officials applied the procedures, barriers encountered and corrective action taken	Competency results disaggregated by sex and technical role where numbers allow. Monitor whether women officials have meaningful opportunities to demonstrate technical competency and participate in frontline application.

No	Result level	Project result	Indicator	Target	Evidence/source	GEDSI consideration
2	Outcome	**O2:** By the end of the project, participating MAE and MOH/FDD technical officials have tested selected cross-agency SPS arrangements through actual or closely simulated cases and agreed necessary refinements to relevant procedures, workflows and operational tools.	Evidence that participating MAE and MOH/FDD technical officials agree necessary refinements to selected cross-agency SPS arrangements following practical testing.	Participating technical officials reach agreement on necessary refinements for at least two selected cross-agency SPS arrangements or cases tested during the project.	Case documentation; referral or notification records; joint coaching reports; technical meeting records; revised process maps; feedback-and-response matrix; agency confirmation. Short case summaries will explain the coordination issues identified during testing and how the agreed refinements address them.	Testing should consider whether the arrangements create or reduce information, access or procedural barriers for women-led MSMEs, people with disabilities and smaller businesses.
3	Outcome	**O3:** By the end of the project, participating agricultural businesses and MSMEs demonstrate improved practical understanding of relevant SPS requirements, and their priority compliance concerns are reflected in final business-facing guidance and recommendations.	**O3.1:** Percentage of assessed business participants demonstrating improved understanding of the SPS requirements, documentation and sources of guidance relevant to their activities. **O3.2:** Evidence that priority business feedback is reflected in final business-facing guidance or recommendations.	**O3.1:** At least 75% of assessed participants demonstrate improvement. **O3.2:** Priority business feedback identified through project engagement is demonstrably reflected in final guidance or recommendations, or reasons for non-incorporation are documented.	Matched practical pre/post assessments; scenario exercises; structured feedback from provincial business engagement activities; consultation records; feedback-and-response matrix; final business guidance and recommendations. Selected examples will show how business feedback informed changes to guidance or recommendations, including reasons where suggestions could not be incorporated.	Assessment results disaggregated by sex, disability where feasible and safe, and business category. The feedback matrix identifies issues raised by women-led enterprises, smaller operators and participants with disabilities.

No	Result level	Project result	Indicator	Target	Evidence/source	GEDSI consideration
4	Output contributing to O1–O2	**OP1.1.** A technically validated package of strengthened MAE SPS procedures, guidance, checklists and operational tools is produced for priority plant-health, animal-health/livestock and fisheries functions.	Percentage of the priority procedures and tools agreed at inception that are reviewed, updated or developed and technically validated.	100% of the agreed priority package completed and technically validated by March 2027. New tools are developed only where the initial review confirms an operational gap.	Technical inventory; agreed priority and gap matrix; revised procedures and tools; technical consultation records; MAE validation or approval records.	Review whether procedures and tools create different information or access barriers for women officials, women-led businesses, smaller operators or people with disabilities.
5	Output contributing to **O1**	**OP1.2.** A standardised national ToT and resource-person package is produced for central and provincial SPS officials.	ToT package completed with technical modules, case exercises, job aids and competency-assessment criteria, together with a confirmed resource-person roster documenting relevant technical roles, areas of expertise and subsequent support responsibilities.	One complete ToT package and one confirmed resource-person roster covering relevant central units and all 18 provinces by end of April 2027.	Approved curriculum; technical modules; case exercises; job aids; competency tool and scoring rubric; resource-person roster; documented roles and responsibilities.	Materials are accessible and appropriate for different technical roles. The roster records sex-disaggregated participation and reasonable accommodation needs where relevant.
6	Output contributing to **O1**	**OP1.3.** A checkpoint application and refinement package is produced from coaching at the three selected international checkpoints.	Package contains baseline observations, documented practical cases, application findings, corrective actions and recommended refinements for each coached checkpoint.	One consolidated package covering all three confirmed checkpoints completed by May 2027.	Structured baseline and coaching observation records; completed case documentation; checklists; corrective-action records; coaching reports; final recommended refinements.	Document whether women officials participate in substantive technical roles and whether observed procedures affect diverse businesses differently.

No	Result level	Project result	Indicator	Target	Evidence/source	GEDSI consideration
7	Output contributing to **O2**	**OP2.1**. Cross-agency process maps and operational guidance are produced for selected MAE–MOH/FDD interfaces.	Selected arrangements are clearly documented, specifying procedural steps, responsible actors, decision points and referral or information requirements.	One technical package covering at least two selected cross-agency interfaces completed for practical testing.	Process maps; draft operational guidance; responsibility matrix; technical consultation records; review comments from MAE and MOH/FDD.	Process maps should identify potential accessibility and information barriers affecting smaller businesses, women-led enterprises and people with disabilities.
8	Output contributing to **O2**	**OP2.2**. Agreed refinements arising from practical testing are documented and incorporated into relevant procedures or referred to the appropriate institutional process.	Findings and agreed refinements from each tested case are recorded, with their disposition clearly documented.	One consolidated testing and response record completed by May 2027.	Case findings; technical feedback-and-response matrix; revised procedures or process maps; referral or submission record to the companion MOH/FDD process.	The response record identifies whether testing revealed different impacts or access barriers for diverse business users.
9	Output contributing to **O3**	**OP3.1.** Practical, business-facing MAE SPS guidance and tools are produced in accessible Lao-language formats.	Business guidance package completed, covering relevant requirements, documentation, process steps, common compliance issues and sources of technical assistance.	One business-facing package completed before the provincial SPS capacity-building and engagement activities and finalised following business feedback by May 2027.	Business guidance; process maps; checklists; practical examples; technical review; accessibility review; final approved materials.	Materials use plain language and accessible formats and respond to barriers faced by women-led businesses, smaller provincial operators and people with disabilities.

No	Result level	Project result	Indicator	Target	Evidence/source	GEDSI consideration
10	Output contributing to **O3**	**OP3.2**. A consolidated record of business compliance concerns and project responses is produced.	Priority issues raised during the three provincial SPS capacity-building and engagement activities are documented and linked to refinements in guidance or final recommendations.	One consolidated feedback-and-response matrix covering all three provincial SPS capacity-building and engagement activities, completed by May 2027.	Structured activity and consultation records; participant feedback; issue register; response matrix; revised business guidance; final recommendations.	Feedback is analysed by relevant participant and business categories to avoid larger or better-connected enterprises dominating the findings.
11	Output contributing to **O1–O3**	A consolidated results, lessons, institutional responsibilities and way-forward package is produced and handed over to MAE.	Package documents results, remaining constraints, institutional ownership, maintenance responsibilities and agreed priorities for continued implementation.	One package validated and formally handed over to MAE by the end of June 2027.	Results and lessons assessment; agreed responsibility matrix; sustainability and way-forward record; handover documentation; technical inputs to the PCR.	The way-forward package records responsibilities for maintaining accessible materials, supporting women resource persons and responding to barriers affecting diverse businesses.

10. Reporting and Program Management

Deliverables are subject to feedback and amendments from the RT4D Facility team and Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment 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 Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment	- 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 Project Manager	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.
Technical Consultant / Consulting Firm	To be confirmed following procurement. The Consultant will provide technical implementation, facilitation, technical drafting, MEL evidence collection, activity reporting and preparation of project deliverables in close consultation with MAE and RT4D.

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 workshops, including opening/inception and final/closing activities, Training of Trainers, provincial business engagement activities and checkpoint coaching missions will be planned and delivered using safe and inclusive event-management practices.

  This includes appropriate venue selection, transparent participant registration, professional facilitation arrangements, respectful workplace conduct and supervision appropriate to the nature of each activity.

- **Codes of conduct and personnel responsibilities:** All consultants, facilitators and relevant delivery personnel engaged under the project 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 field 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 reporting channels.

  Where concerns arise, they will be managed in accordance with established organisational procedures while protecting confidentiality and the rights of affected persons.

- **Inclusive and respectful participation:** The project will promote respectful interaction among government officials, businesses and facilitators regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, age or institutional position.
  Facilitators will encourage inclusive participation and ensure that workshop discussions and field activities provide appropriate opportunities for women, persons with disabilities and smaller enterprises to contribute safely and meaningfully.
- **Communications, photography and case studies:** Photography, video, quotations and case examples will only be used in accordance with informed consent and applicable RT4D communication procedures.

  Project communications will respect dignity, cultural appropriateness and confidentiality and will avoid reinforcing harmful stereotypes or exposing sensitive operational or personal information.

- **Child protection considerations:** The project does not intentionally target children as beneficiaries or participants.

  However, where activities take place in public facilities or communities where children may be present, delivery personnel will remain alert to child protection responsibilities and comply with DFAT and RT4D child safeguarding requirements at all times.

- **Other policy considerations**

Implementation will also comply with relevant RT4D requirements concerning:

- confidentiality and responsible handling of project information;
- conflict of interest declarations for consultants where applicable;
- ethical stakeholder engagement;
- inclusive events and communications;
- GEDSI mainstreaming;
- workplace health and safety during travel and field activities; and
- appropriate management of personal information collected through participant registration, evaluation and consultation processes.

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
1. Delays in technical review, agreement or validation of strengthened SPS procedures and guidance	Medium	Delays could compress subsequent ToT, checkpoint coaching and provincial SPS capacity-building and engagement activities or result in training based on materials that are not sufficiently mature.	Begin technical review immediately after inception; prioritise procedures required for subsequent activities; use focused technical consultations to resolve issues progressively; maintain clear review deadlines and decision points; escalate unresolved issues early through MAE/DPC and RT4D.
2. MAE and MOH/FDD	Medium	Officials and businesses may receive inconsistent instructions,	Maintain designated focal points and regular coordination between the two

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Plan
activities become misaligned, delayed or produce inconsistent cross-agency guidance		and agreed SPS referral, notification, hand-off or information-exchange arrangements may not be implemented effectively.	concurrently implemented SPS projects; distinguish MAE-specific work from genuinely joint matters; progressively resolve cross-agency technical issues; use the companion MOH/FDD process for formal validation/adoption of joint roles and procedures; allow MAE-specific activities to proceed without unnecessary dependency on the FDD timetable.
3. Provincial participation or post-training application is uneven across the 18 provinces	Medium	Nationwide participation may not translate into sustained provincial capacity or consistent SPS implementation.	Confirm technically relevant representation from all 18 provinces in advance; select participants with responsibilities for subsequent application/dissemination; use competency-based ToT rather than lecture-style training; establish a central/provincial technical resource-person network; assign follow-up responsibilities and track evidence of subsequent use or dissemination.
4. Checkpoint coaching does not translate into practical application or priority locations do not provide sufficient opportunities to test strengthened procedures	Low-Medium	Resources may be spent without demonstrating improvement in frontline SPS implementation.	Confirm the selected priority international checkpoints during inception against SPS risk, trade flows, operational workload, technical need and feasibility; undertake baseline operational observations; use real or closely simulated cases; require practical application of SOPs, checklists and referral processes; document corrective actions and follow up against baseline findings.
5. Insufficient or inappropriate private-sector participation in the three provincial SPS capacity-building and engagement activities	Medium	The activities may not reach enough relevant agricultural MSMEs, producers, processors and traders or may have limited value for improving practical compliance.	Begin stakeholder mapping and mobilisation early through provincial authorities, producer/business organisations and relevant trade networks; draw participants from the wider provincial and surrounding commercial catchment rather than only businesses immediately at the checkpoint; prioritise enterprises genuinely affected by SPS requirements; use practical, business-

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Plan
			facing content and systematically capture participant feedback.
6. Women, persons with disabilities or other groups facing participation barriers are under-represented or unable to participate meaningfully	Medium	Project benefits and opportunities may not be equitably accessible, and GEDSI participation targets may not be achieved.	Integrate GEDSI considerations into participant identification and mobilisation; target approximately 48% women and at least 5% persons with disabilities for business and final project events, and approximately 40% women for the technical ToT; use accessible venues and materials and provide reasonable accommodation where required; collect disaggregated participation data and monitor meaningful participation, not attendance alone.
7. Compressed implementation period, government availability or competing official commitments cause activity delays	Medium	Sequential activities may be pushed together, reducing preparation quality or jeopardising completion within the project period.	Confirm key dates and government focal points during inception; maintain a detailed critical-path work plan; schedule technical reviews and participant mobilisation well in advance; coordinate MAE and MOH/FDD calendars; combine checkpoint coaching and provincial business engagement activities into coordinated provincial missions where practical; retain June 2027 as a buffer for final reporting and administrative completion.
8. Strengthened procedures, tools and capacity are not sustained after project completion	Medium	Improvements may diminish once consultant and RT4D support ends, limiting longer-term institutional benefit.	Build on and strengthen existing government procedures and systems rather than create parallel mechanisms; assign institutional ownership of final tools; establish a national technical resource-person network; use materials suitable for continued provincial/frontline application; agree maintenance, dissemination and follow-up responsibilities during the final way-forward process; refer outstanding cross-agency issues to the National SPS Committee and relevant national mechanisms.

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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