REGIONAL TRADE FOR DEVELOPMENT (RT4D)

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PROJECT

Implementing Consultant – RCEP Insights: Preparing Malaysian SMEs for Trade

1. Summary

Title	Implementing Consultant for the project "RCEP Insights: Preparing Malaysian SMEs for Trade"
Start Date	February 2027
Completion Date	November 2027
Reports to:	**RT4D Manager:** *Mai Nguyen, RT4D Regional Manager*
Interacts With	**RT4D**: Mai Nguyen, RT4D Regional Manager, Trang Duong, RT4D Program Officer **Project Proponent:** *SME Corporation Malaysia*
Requires Approval from:	**RT4D Facility** **Project Proponent:** *SME Corporation Malaysia*
Timetable for Tender Process	**Request for Proposals:** *5 November 2026* **Closing Date for Queries:** *30 November 2026* **Closing Date for Proposals:** *29 December 2026*
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 RT4D Manager at procurement@regionaltrade4dev.org**.** Please also copy: trang.duong@regionaltrade4dev.org. Queries must be submitted by **30 November 2026**; proposals must be submitted by **29 December 2026**.

Scope of Work Summary:

Tetra Tech International Development, as managing contractor of the Regional Trade for Development Facility (RT4D), is seeking a **consulting firm/organisation or consortium** (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 following project:

- RCEP Insights: Preparing Malaysian SMEs for Trade

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

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is world's largest free trade agreement, accounting for 30% of global GDP, trade and population. While this agreement presents significant opportunities for businesses across the 15 participating countries, its utilisation rate has remained below its potential since entering in force in 2022. Many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) still have limited awareness of RCEP or lack capacity required to apply RCEP's provisions. In Malaysia, "current estimates suggest utilisation rates among Malaysian businesses remain relatively low, at below 1%" (Doreenn Leong, 2026).

2.1 Project Objectives

The overall objective of this project is to strengthen Malaysian SMEs' understanding and utilisation of RCEP by improving practical knowledge and capacity to apply the Agreement in their business operations. This will be achieved through the development of a practical RCEP Toolkit for SMEs and the delivery of a targeted capacity-building workshop. The project directly supports implementation of RCEP Chapter 14 (Small and Medium Enterprises), particularly Article 14.3 on cooperation, by strengthening Malaysian SMEs' access to information, knowledge and practical tools to understand and utilise the Agreement.

In achieving this overall objective, the project seeks to:

- **Objective 1: Increase awareness** and understanding of RCEP provisions among SMEs through the development and dissemination of a practical, user-friendly RCEP Toolkit.
- **Objective 2: Strengthen practical capacity** of SMEs to apply key RCEP provisions, including rules of origin, customs procedures and digital trade requirements, through targeted training and practical guidance.
- **Objective 3: Improve SME readiness** to utilise RCEP by equipping participating enterprises with the knowledge and tools needed to understand relevant RCEP provisions, identify how these provisions can be applied to their business operations, and identify practical next steps for utilising RCEP in regional markets and value chains.

The project objectives will be delivered through complementary interventions comprising the development of the RCEP Toolkit for SMEs and a targeted RCEP utilisation workshop.

2.2 Intended Beneficiaries

The primary beneficiaries of the project are Malaysian small and medium enterprises (SMEs), particularly those with limited experience in utilising the RCEP or applying its provisions in business operations. The project will strengthen SMEs' understanding of key areas of the Agreement, including rules of origin, customs procedures, digital trade and other relevant trade requirements, enabling them to participate more effectively in regional markets.

The project will also benefit the broader SME support ecosystem, including business associations, chambers of commerce, trade promotion and SME support organisations. By strengthening the knowledge and practical capacity of these institutions, the project will enhance their ability to provide sustained guidance and support to Malaysian SMEs in utilising RCEP beyond the project period.

2.3 Project Outcomes

By the end of the project, participating Malaysian SMEs demonstrate an improved knowledge, practical capability and confidence to apply relevant RCEP provisions including rules of origin, customs procedures, digital trade and other relevant trade procedures in their business or advisory activities, leading to greater utilisation of the agreement. The project will contribute to RT4D Intermediate Outcome IO4[1] by strengthening Malaysia SMEs to access and apply RCEP provisions, and thereby, to utilise the benefits of RCEP.

2.4 Complementarity with Other Efforts

This project complements the Government of Malaysia's ongoing efforts to strengthen SME competitiveness and improve utilisation of free trade agreements. SME Corp. Malaysia has developed the Quick Guide on Utilising FTAs by SMEs, which provides businesses with practical guidance on key trade concepts across Malaysia's network of free trade agreements, including rules of origin, customs procedures and related trade requirements. In addition, SME Corp. Malaysia and the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) continue to promote awareness and utilisation of RCEP through outreach and capacity-building initiatives that help SMEs better understand the Agreement and its opportunities.

At the regional level, the project complements ASEAN initiatives to advance digital economic integration, including preparations for the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA). It also aligns with bilateral Government cooperation supporting SME development through knowledge exchange, business matching, and joint efforts in digitalisation and cross-border trade. Together, these initiatives strengthen the enabling environment for SME internationalisation while promoting greater regional economic integration.

Building on these efforts, the proposed project will develop a practical toolkit tailored specifically to the RCEP. Rather than duplicating existing resources, it will provide agreement-specific guidance, practical tools and targeted capacity building to help Malaysian SMEs better understand and utilise RCEP provisions in their business operations.

3. Scope of Services

The RT4D Facility is seeking a **consulting firm/organisation or consortium** (the Consultant) to support the delivery of project activities between February and November 2027. The selected Consultant will be responsible for the scope of services outlined in the sections below.

3.1 Project Activities

A.1 Activity 1 – Developing RCEP Toolkit for SMEs

Activity description

A key constraint to the utilisation of RCEP is the limited capacity of many Malaysian SMEs to interpret and apply its provisions. Currently, SMEs face several critical challenges in leveraging the agreement, including a widespread lack of tailored guidance and accessible information, a deep lack of understanding regarding complex trade procedures (such as Rules of Origin, tariff classifications, and customs compliance), and strictly limited human, financial and operational

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

resources. Furthermore, many small businesses struggle with high administrative costs, limited digital readiness and a lack of in-house trade expertise, leaving them unable to assess market opportunities or keep pace with differing regulatory standards across RCEP member states.

While the Agreement offers significant opportunities for regional trade, its legal and technical requirements can be difficult for businesses particularly SMEs with limited trade expertise to understand and implement.

To address this challenge, the project will develop a practical, business-oriented RCEP Toolkit for SMEs that translates complex trade requirements into clear, accessible and actionable guidance. The Toolkit will focus on key areas of the Agreement, including rules of origin, customs procedures, digital trade and other provisions that are particularly relevant to SMEs seeking to expand into RCEP markets.

The toolkit will be developed in close consultation with RT4D, SME Corp. Malaysia, Government agencies, business associations, and other stakeholders required by SME Corp. Malaysia.

To ensure technical accuracy, policy coherence and practical relevance, the draft Toolkit will be validated by SME Corp. Malaysia in consultation with relevant government agencies, customs authorities, trade agencies, business associations and other stakeholders. This process will ensure that the Toolkit reflects current regulatory requirements and responds to the practical needs of Malaysian SMEs. Final validation and approval of the Toolkit will be formally granted by SME Corp. Malaysia prior to publication.

The Toolkit will be published through SME Corp. Malaysia's communication channels to maximise outreach and support for continued utilisation beyond the project period. SME Corp. Malaysia will take ownership of the Toolkit following its development, including responsibility for its ongoing use, maintenance and updating to ensure that it remains relevant, reflecting evolving needs and regulatory developments

Activity outputs:

- Output 1.1: Full Compilation Report (Microsoft Word Format): A comprehensive full report consolidating all working documents, outlining the project methodology, detailed findings and the outcomes/results of all stakeholder engagement sessions.
- Output 1.2: RCEP Utilisation Toolkit for SMEs in Malaysia (A5 Booklet Format): A standalone, practical, user-friendly toolkit designed specifically for SMEs, estimated at 50 pages in length, presented in an easy to read A5 booklet format, highlighting a step-by-step guide in utilising RCEP for SMEs. In order to ensure maximum accessibility, readability and quick reference by SMEs, the toolkit must feature rich visual elements, including highly engaging infographics, summary charts, comparison tables, and other relevant graphics.

Consultant responsibilities

The Consultant shall be responsible for the full implementation of the activity description and delivery of the Full Compilation Report and RCEP Utilisation Toolkit for SMEs in Malaysia, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Develop the research methodology, Toolkit outline, content structure and consultation approach, and submit them to SME Corp. Malaysia and RT4D for review and approval.
- Conduct a comprehensive desk review and analysis of relevant RCEP provisions, including

rules of origin, tariff classifications, customs procedures, digital trade and other areas relevant to Malaysian SMEs, identifying practical requirements, market opportunities and challenges in utilising RCEP.

- Develop the stakeholder mapping and consultation tools, and conduct targeted consultations with relevant government agencies, customs authorities, trade agencies, business associations, SMEs and other stakeholders, in close coordination with SME Corp. Malaysia and RT4D.
- Analyse and synthesise research and consultation findings, and prepare Output 1.1: Full Compilation Report (Microsoft Word format), consolidating the methodology, working documents, detailed findings and stakeholder engagement outcomes. Submit to SME Corp. Malaysia and RT4D for review, incorporate feedback and finalise for approval.
- Develop Output 1.2: RCEP Utilisation Toolkit for SMEs in Malaysia, an approximately 50-page, practical and user-friendly A5 booklet featuring step-by-step guidance, infographics, summary charts, comparison tables and other relevant visuals to support SMEs in utilising RCEP.
- Submit the draft Toolkit to SME Corp. Malaysia and RT4D for review, support the validation process coordinated by SME Corp. Malaysia, incorporate consolidated feedback and finalise for formal approval prior to publication. Provide the final Toolkit in publication-ready and editable formats to support dissemination, ongoing use and updating by SME Corp. Malaysia.

A.2 Activity 2 – Capacity building workshop

Activity description

Building on the RCEP Toolkit, the project will deliver one targeted capacity-building workshop for Malaysian SMEs and key trade support stakeholders. The workshop will strengthen participants' understanding of RCEP and build practical capacity to apply key provisions, including rules of origin, customs procedures and digital trade requirements, in their business operations.

The workshop will provide an interactive platform for SMEs, Government agencies, business associations and SME support organisations to discuss practical implementation issues, exchange experiences and strengthen understanding of opportunities under RCEP.

The workshop will be delivered using the following approach:

- **Location –** One full day workshop co-hosted by SME Corp. Malaysia and RT4D will be held in Kuala Lumpur, providing convenient access for SMEs and other stakeholder organisations.
- **Participant –** Approximately 40–50 participants will be invited, comprising SMEs together with representatives from government agencies, business associations, chambers of commerce, trade promotion agencies and SME support organisations. The workshop will promote knowledge sharing and collaboration across Malaysia's trade support ecosystem. In line with RT4D's GEDSI objectives, the project will encourage the participation of women entrepreneurs and female representatives across all activities, including through targeted outreach to relevant organisations and networks**.** A hybrid option may be explored, subject to needs and practicality.
- **Workshop design** – The workshop agenda and training materials will be developed in close

consultation with SME Corp. Malaysia and RT4D to ensure alignment with project objectives and participant needs. The programme will combine expert presentations, practical case studies, facilitated discussions and question-and-answer sessions to maximise learning and encourage practical application of RCEP

Consultant responsibilities

In close consultation with SME Corp. Malaysia and RT4D, the Consultant shall be responsible for the full implementation of Activity 2 and delivery of the required outputs.

Technical responsibilities

- Develop the workshop delivery approach, one-day agenda and training materials based on the RCEP Toolkit, including expert presentations, practical case studies, facilitated discussions and question-and-answer sessions on rules of origin, customs procedures, digital trade and other relevant RCEP provisions. Submit them to SME Corp. Malaysia and RT4D for review and approval.
- Identify and propose appropriate participants, speakers, moderators and facilitators, including representatives from SMEs, government agencies, business associations, chambers of commerce, trade promotion agencies and SME support organisations, in consultation with SME Corp. Malaysia and RT4D, with appropriate consideration of GEDSI objectives.
- Secure and coordinate the participation of approved speakers, moderators and facilitators, including necessary briefing and preparation arrangements.
- Manage the end-to-end technical delivery of the workshop, ensuring effective coordination, interactive learning, knowledge exchange and practical application of the RCEP Toolkit.
- Capture and synthesise participant feedback, key discussions and lessons learned to inform future use and dissemination of the RCEP Toolkit.
- Prepare the Workshop Report using the RT4D template; submit to RT4D for review, revise based on feedback, and finalise for approval.

Event organising responsibilities

- Workshop organisation and logistics
    - In consultation with RT4D and SME Corp. Malaysia, identify and secure suitable venues in Kuala Lumpur, and manage all venue-related arrangements, including, but not limited to, room setup and seating arrangements, accessibility requirements, catering, and the design, production and installation of event branding and visibility materials, such as backdrops, e-standees and branded stationery.
    - Provide and manage all technical infrastructure required for the workshops, including LED screen(s), high-quality audio-visual and sound systems, interpretation equipment, reliable high-speed internet connectivity, and hybrid meeting facilities, including Zoom connectivity and livestreaming, where required. Ensure all equipment is tested and fully operational prior to the events and provide qualified technical personnel throughout the workshops.

  - Manage participant and event support services, including registration and check-in in accordance with RT4D requirements, reception/event support staff, and professional interpretation and MC services where required.
  - Prepare and provide all required workshop materials and manage their distribution, while coordinating the workshop schedules and providing on-site operational support to ensure smooth delivery of the events.
  - After the workshops, compile participant feedback and check-in lists in accordance with RT4D standards/templates to support preparation of the consolidated workshop report, and finalise all expense reports with required supporting documentation for the RT4D payment process.
- Participant accommodation and travel reimbursement
  - Coordinate with RT4D Facility and SME Corp. Malaysia to follow up on participant registrations and attendance for the workshop.
  - Facilitate travel arrangements.
  - Coordinate and provide suitable lodging arrangements at a four-star hotel.
  - Facilitate the payment of per diems and travel expenses.
  - Prepare, collect and compile all required data, records and documentation related to participant accommodation, travel, and reimbursement arrangements, and submit them in accordance with RT4D requirements and templates.
- Media-related support
  - Draft and submit the press release in English to SME Corp. Malaysia and RT4D Facility for review, feedback and approval.
  - Prepare and conduct 2–3 interviews with selected workshop participants and/or stakeholders, as required, to support the production of a workshop recap video featuring key proceedings, highlights of the workshop and participants reflections.
  - Deliver high-quality photographs and all video footage from the workshop, including complete, unedited footage of opening remarks delivered by VIP guests.

Project Completion Report

- Prepare and finalise the Project Completion Report (PCR) in accordance with the RT4D template, incorporating feedback from RT4D/ DFAT, and submit for approval.

4. Project Work Plan

Working closely with the RT4D team and the Project Proponent 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 **10 calendar months**. Work will commence immediately after contract signing.

Activity/Task	Responsible Party	Deadline
Activity 1: Develop the RCEP Toolkit for SMEs		
● Task 1.1: Develop the approach and work plan. Obtain required feedback and approval.	Implementing Partner, SME Corp. Malaysia, RT4D	Feb-27
● Task 1.2: Conduct desk review and data collection/stakeholder consultations.	Implementing Partner, SME Corp. Malaysia, RT4D	Mar-27
● Task 1.3: Develop the outline of the Toolkit. Obtain required feedback and approval.	Implementing Partner, SME Corp. Malaysia, RT4D	Mar-27
● Task 1.4: Conduct further research and data collection/stakeholder consultations. Analyse findings to prepare the draft the initial RCEP Toolkit.	Implementing Partner, SME Corp. Malaysia, RT4D	Apr-27
● Task 1.5: Conduct revisions in accordance with the guidance and feedback of relevant stakeholders.	Implementing Partner, SME Corp. Malaysia, RT4D	Apr-27
● Task 1.6: Conduct 3 to 4 stakeholder validation sessions/processes of the draft RCEP Toolkit in coordination with SME Corp. Malaysia, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI), Royal Malaysian Customs Department (RMCD) and other relevant stakeholders.	SME Corp. Malaysia	May-27

Activity/Task	Responsible Party	Deadline
● Task 1.7: Finalise and submit the final Toolkit. Obtain final approval.	Implementing Partner, SME Corp. Malaysia, RT4D	Jun-27
Activity 2: Capacity-building workshop		
● Task 2.1: Coordinate with RT4D and SME Corp. to confirm date, venue, and participant outreach strategy.	Implementing Partner, SME Corp. Malaysia, RT4D	Jun-27/ Aug-27
● Task 2.2: Prepare logistics, develop the workshop agenda and training materials. Obtain required feedback and approval.	Implementing Partner, SME Corp. Malaysia, RT4D	Jun-27/ Aug-27
● Task 2.3: Deliver the capacity-building workshop	Implementing Partner, SME Corp. Malaysia, RT4D	Jul-27/ Sept-27
● Task 2.4: Collect participant feedback and prepare the workshop reports. Obtain required feedback and approval.	Implementing Partner	2 weeks after the workshop
Prepare and submit the Project Completion Report. Obtain required feedback and approval.	Implementing Partner	4 weeks after the project completion

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 Dimensions of the Project

The project adopts an inclusive approach by improving access to trade-related knowledge and capacity-building opportunities for Malaysian SMEs, which often face greater resource and capability constraints than larger firms in utilising free trade agreements. Compared with larger enterprises, many SMEs have more limited technical expertise, financial resources and dedicated trade compliance capacity to interpret complex trade rules, meet regulatory requirements and identify export opportunities.

By developing a practical RCEP Toolkit and delivering targeted capacity-building, the project will make trade-related knowledge more accessible to SMEs, helping reduce information and capability barriers to participating in regional trade. The project will also promote inclusive participation in project activities by actively encouraging the participation of women entrepreneurs in the capacity-building workshop, consistent with RT4D's commitment to gender equality and social inclusion.

5.2 GEDSI Dimensions of the Sector

The benefits of free trade agreements, including RCEP, are not always realised equally across businesses of different sizes and capacities. While larger enterprises are generally better positioned to understand and utilise complex trade agreements, many SMEs face constraints in accessing specialised advice, interpreting technical requirements and implementing trade-related procedures. In particular, SMEs owned or led by women and people with disabilities may face additional barriers to accessing trade-related information, finance, business networks, technology and advisory services, which can limit their ability to understand and utilise RCEP and other FTAs. Without targeted capacity-building, these differences may limit SMEs' ability to benefit from regional

economic integration.

By strengthening SMEs' awareness, knowledge and practical capacity to utilise RCEP, the project supports more equitable access to trade opportunities and contributes to a more inclusive trade ecosystem. Through practical guidance and capacity development, the project seeks to enable a broader range of Malaysian businesses to participate more effectively in regional markets.

5.3 GEDSI Mainstreaming

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

GEDSI considerations will be integrated throughout project implementation to promote equitable participation and access to project benefits.

- The development of the RCEP Toolkit will include consultation with a diverse range of stakeholders, including women-led businesses and organisations supporting SMEs, to ensure the guidance reflects different business experiences and practical needs.
- The capacity-building workshop will actively encourage the participation of women entrepreneurs, encouraging greater representation of women in trade-related capacity-building activities.
- Workshop facilitation will adopt an inclusive and participatory approach, providing all participants with equal opportunities to contribute to discussions and knowledge sharing.

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 stakeholders across Malaysia's trade ecosystem, including:

- Malaysian SMEs, which are the project's primary beneficiaries.
- Business associations, chambers of commerce, trade promotion agencies and SME support organisations.
- Relevant government agencies involved in trade policy and SME development.

The project will also actively encourage the participation of women entrepreneurs in the workshop. Participating organisations will also be encouraged to nominate representatives from under-represented groups, including persons with disabilities, where appropriate.

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 supports more equitable access to trade-related knowledge by addressing information and capacity barriers faced by many SMEs, enterprises led by persons with disabilities, ethnic-minority enterprises which may face additional barriers in understanding and utilising RCEP. Through practical guidance and capacity-building, it will enable a broader range of businesses to participate more effectively in regional trade.

To apply the Do No Harm principle, the project will:

- Develop the RCEP Toolkit in clear, practical and accessible formats to maximise usability for a wide range of users.

- Deliver activities in a manner that promotes equal access and participation without discrimination.
- Select workshop venues and arrangements that are accessible and responsive to participants' needs wherever practicable.

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?

The project will adopt a participatory approach throughout implementation. Accordingly:

- Stakeholder consultation during development of the RCEP Toolkit will seek input from a diverse range of businesses and SME support organisations, including women-led enterprises, to ensure the Toolkit reflects a broad range of user perspectives.
- The capacity-building workshop will encourage active participation through facilitated discussions and interactive learning activities, enabling participants to share experiences, identify implementation challenges and provide feedback that can inform the final Toolkit.

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

The project will follow the RT4D Guidelines for Inclusive Events and Communications by:

- **Accessible venue:** Selecting a workshop venue that is centrally located, accessible by public transport and equipped with accessible entrances, ramps, lifts and other facilities to support participants with disabilities.
- **Accessible communications and materials:** Preparing project materials in clear, user-friendly and accessible formats to maximise participation and usability for diverse audiences.
- **Inclusive delivery:** Providing a respectful and inclusive learning environment in which all participants have equal opportunities to engage, contribute and benefit from project activities.

6. Communications and Media

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

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

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

- Use approved RT4D branding, templates, logos and acknowledgement wording in project documentation and materials (e.g. reports, PPTs, invitations).

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

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

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

6.1 Communications Focus, Key Messages and Audiences

The project's communications will focus on increasing awareness, understanding and practical utilisation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) among Malaysian SMEs and the broader trade support ecosystem. Communications will emphasise the practical business opportunities available under RCEP and the importance of building SMEs' capacity to apply the Agreement's provisions in their day-to-day operations.

All communication materials, particularly the RCEP Toolkit for SMEs, will present technical trade concepts in clear, practical and business-oriented language, making information more accessible and easier for SMEs to apply.

The project's primary audience is Malaysian SMEs, particularly businesses seeking to expand their participation in regional markets through RCEP.

The project will also engage business associations, chambers of commerce, trade promotion agencies, SME support organisations and relevant government agencies that provide advisory and trade facilitation services. While participation in the capacity-building workshop will be limited, the RCEP Toolkit will be made publicly available through SME Corp's communication channels, enabling wider access to practical guidance beyond the project's direct beneficiaries.

6.2 Communications Outputs

The project will produce communication outputs that support both project implementation and longer-term knowledge sharing, including:

- A practical RCEP Toolkit in English, cobranded by the proponent, RT4D, DFAT and MFAT, for SMEs, published through SME Corp's communication channels for broad public access;
- Communication materials to promote participation in the capacity-building workshop; and

- A workshop report highlighting key discussions, lessons learned and practical recommendations to support continued awareness and utilisation of RCEP.

7. Business Engagement

A. Business relevance

The project is strongly business-oriented, with Malaysian SMEs as its primary beneficiaries. By strengthening SMEs' understanding and practical utilisation of the RCEP, the project will help businesses better access the opportunities offered under the Agreement. It will also strengthen the capacity of business associations, chambers of commerce, trade promotion agencies and SME support organisations to provide practical guidance to businesses, contributing to a more effective SME support ecosystem.

B. Reflection of business needs in project delivery

Business needs are central to the design and delivery of the project. The RCEP Toolkit for SMEs will focus on the practical areas where businesses commonly encounter challenges, including rules of origin, customs procedures, digital trade and other key trade requirements. Its content will be informed by consultation with SMEs and relevant stakeholders to ensure that the guidance reflects real business needs and implementation challenges.

The capacity-building workshop will reinforce this practical approach by translating complex RCEP provisions into clear, actionable guidance. Through case studies, facilitated discussions and practical examples, participants will strengthen their understanding of how to apply RCEP in their business operations.

C. Direct business engagement, if relevant

Businesses will be actively engaged throughout the project. SMEs and business support organisations will be consulted during the development and validation of the RCEP Toolkit to ensure its practical relevance, while SME representatives will participate in the capacity-building workshop to share experiences, discuss implementation challenges and exchange good practices.

D. Use of business input

Feedback from businesses and other participating stakeholders will be used to inform:

- The development and validation of the RCEP Toolkit for SMEs, ensuring that it reflects practical business needs and current implementation challenges;
- Refinement of workshop content, including the selection of case studies, discussion topics and practical examples; and
- Lessons learned and recommendations to support future SME capacity-building initiatives on RCEP utilisation.

8. Support to Lesser Developed Economies

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

The project primarily supports Malaysian SMEs in strengthening their understanding and utilisation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). However, many of the implementation challenges addressed by the project—including understanding rules of origin, customs procedures and digital trade provisions—are common across ASEAN economies,

including Lesser Developed Economies (LDEs).

By developing practical guidance on applying RCEP provisions, the project will generate knowledge resources and implementation experience that may be relevant to government agencies, SME support institutions and businesses in ASEAN LDEs seeking to strengthen RCEP utilisation and SME participation in regional trade.

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?

The project's principal knowledge product—the RCEP Toolkit for SMEs—will be made publicly available through SME Corp's communication channels, enabling government agencies, SME support organisations and other stakeholders across the ASEAN region to access and draw on the resource where relevant.

By making the Toolkit openly available, the project will support regional knowledge sharing and provide a practical reference that may inform similar SME capacity-building initiatives in ASEAN LDEs. The project will also contribute to broader regional learning on approaches to strengthening SME utilisation of RCEP.

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 should consult the RT4D MEL Team throughout implementation, as required.

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.

The Consultant's MEL responsibilities will include the following mandatory requirements for all projects:

- collecting, managing and reporting evidence against the activities, outputs, outcomes, indicators and evidence sources specified in this ToR;
- providing relevant GEDSI participation data, including sex and disability disaggregation where required;
- documenting evidence of output delivery, quality, stakeholder feedback, lessons learned and, where required, the use, application, adaptation or uptake of project outputs; and
- preparing 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.

Where workshops, training, consultations or other participant-based activities are included in the scope of work, the Consultant will also be responsible for the following, as relevant:

- using standardised participant registration forms, including online forms where appropriate;
- using standardised participant sign-in sheets and attendance-tracking arrangements for virtual and in-person activities;
- using standardised participant feedback forms, including online forms where appropriate;
- submitting consolidated participant, attendance and feedback data in Microsoft Excel using the standardised RT4D template; and
- preparing a Workshop Report using the standardised RT4D template within two weeks after each workshop or training activity. The report must summarise participant and feedback information, workshop proceedings, outputs, key achievements and lessons learned.

Table 9-1: Project Performance Indicators

Result level	Project result	Indicator	Target	Evidence/source	GEDSI consideration
Output	Knowledge products generated	RCEP Toolkit completed	One RCEP Toolkit	Final RCEP Toolkit validated and approved	Yes – The Toolkit will be developed in clear, practical and accessible language, taking into account the needs of SMEs, including women-led enterprises and other under-represented groups.
Output	Capacity-building workshop delivered	Number of workshops delivered and participants trained	1 workshop, 40–50 participants	Workshop report, participant list	Yes - participants disaggregated by sex and, where feasible, disability status.
Outcome	Improved awareness and understanding of RCEP among SMEs	Percentage of participants demonstrating improved knowledge of key RCEP provisions	≥70% of workshop respondents	Post-workshop evaluation	Results disaggregated by sex and, where feasible, disability status
Outcome	Improved readiness of SMEs to utilise RCEP	Percentage of participating SMEs and SME support organisations demonstrating improved knowledge and readiness to apply key RCEP provisions	≥70% of workshop respondents	Post-workshop evaluation	Results disaggregated by sex and, where feasible, disability status

10. Reporting and Program Management

Deliverables are subject to feedback and amendments from the RT4D Facility team, the Project Proponent, and DFAT. The Consultant will engage regularly with these stakeholders in the drafting process, including seeking comments and adjustments and revising deliverables as directed.

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

Stakeholder and Contact Points	Responsibilities
Project Proponent *Ms. Kamsuzilawati Kamin, Director of the Economics and Policy Division, SME Corporation Malaysia*	Provide strategic direction and technical guidance; facilitate coordination with relevant government agencies, business associations and other stakeholders; facilitate stakeholder consultations and workshops; review and endorse key project deliverables; support dissemination and ongoing utilisation of project outputs.
RT4D Facility *Ms. Mai Nguyen, Regional Manager* *Ms. Trang Duong, Program Officer*	Provide overall project management, technical oversight, and quality assurance; review and endorse key project deliverables; facilitate communication between Proponent and the Implementing Partner; monitor project progress and reporting.
Implementing Partner *(Contact point to be determined)*	Deliver project activities in accordance with the approved Project Design and work plan; coordinate stakeholder engagement; prepare project deliverables and progress reports; and integrate monitoring, evaluation, learning (MEL), GEDSI, and communications requirements throughout project implementation.

11. Child Protection, PSEAH (Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment) and other Policy Considerations

For this specific project, and all other activities undertaken through RT4D, it is expected that anyone involved in the delivery must operate in strict compliance with DFAT's Child Protection and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policies. In the design of stakeholder consultations and workshop or training activities, 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 and inclusive delivery**: Workshops, meetings and other project activities will be conducted in professional, accessible and inclusive venues that promote respectful participation and minimise safeguarding and PSEAH risks.

- **Personnel and partner compliance**: Contracts, Codes of Conduct and other contractual arrangements will require consultants, implementing personnel and any downstream partners to comply with applicable Child Protection and PSEAH requirements.
- **Inclusive participation**: Project activities will promote equitable participation and provide a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all participants, consistent with the project's GEDSI commitments.
- **Responsible communications**: Project communications, photographs, case studies and other materials will be prepared in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner, avoiding discriminatory language, harmful stereotypes or inappropriate imagery.
- **Child protection:** The project is not expected to involve direct engagement with children. Should any interaction with children arise during implementation, all applicable DFAT Child Protection requirements will be strictly observed

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 RCEP FJC and its 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
The RCEP Toolkit does not adequately address the practical needs of SMEs.	Medium	High	Develop the Toolkit through a structured consultation and validation process led by SME Corp. Malaysia, engaging SMEs, relevant government agencies, business associations and other stakeholders to ensure the content is practical, accurate and responsive to business needs.
Limited participation or representation in the capacity-building workshop.	Medium	High	Develop and implement a targeted participant engagement plan in collaboration with SME Corp. Malaysia to promote broad representation across SMEs, government agencies and SME support organisations, while encourage the participation of women entrepreneurs in line with the project's GEDSI commitments.
Insufficient	Medium	High	Establish clear governance and communication

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Plan
coordination among the Implementing Partner, SME Corp and RT4D.			arrangements, including regular coordination meetings, agreed roles and responsibilities, and timely review of project deliverables to support effective decision-making and minimise implementation delays.

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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