ARISE PLUS LAO PDR
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR NATIONAL CONSULTANT(S) TO DEVELOP INVESTMENT PROFILE(S)

Title of assignment: Developing investment profiles in Lao PDR on selected products [Wood-based and Coffee products]
Duty Station: Home-based (Lao PDR)
Tentative start date: 15 May 2020
Tentative end date: 15 October 2020

BACKGROUND:

The International Trade Centre (ITC), a joint agency of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the United Nations (UN), is the only multilateral agency fully dedicated to supporting internationalisation of SMEs. ITC’s mission is to foster inclusive and sustainable growth and development through trade and international business development. ITC’s projects and programmes contribute to the global efforts to achieve UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development and Aid for Trade Agenda.

ITC is the implementing agency for the “Lao PDR Trade-Related Assistance (ARISE Plus – Lao PDR)” project, funded by the European Union (EU). The Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) is the focal point for the project in Lao PDR.

ARISE Plus – Lao PDR is the national Lao component of the regional ARISE Plus Programme supporting regional economic integration under focal sector 1 of the 2014-2020 Multiannual Indicative Program for Asia. In line with the new European Consensus on Development “Prosperity” chapter and its focus on inclusive and sustainable growth and jobs, it supports the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) to reap the benefits of regional integration in line with multilateral trade frameworks such as the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA). The four-year project contributes to integration of the Lao economy into global production chains through targeted support to both public and private sectors, with a focus on smallholders and SMEs and a total budget of EUR 5,017,000.

The overall objective is to promote inclusive economic growth, increased climate change resilience, mitigate vulnerability (especially due to dependence on a limited number of sectors and markets) and create jobs in Lao PDR.

The specific objectives are to:

a) Improve the business environment in targeted sectors with a focus on regional economic integration (ASEAN); and
b) Increase trade and participation in global value-chains in targeted sectors.

Within the scope of this project, the Trade Facilitation and Policy for Business (TFPB) section of the ITC is in charge of trade policy components, both at the private and public sector levels. TFPB aims to strengthen institutional capacities to develop and coordinate design and implementation of coherent domestic regulatory reforms, trade policies and trade negotiations. To achieve the above objectives, TFPB is involved in the achievement of all the expected results (ER), including:

ER 3: Strengthened support services (especially for smallholders and SMEs, with a focus on women), reduction of supply-side constraints, and trade and investment promotion in targeted sectors (e.g. wood processing and agro-based products).

Lao PDR remains heavily dependent on a few economic sectors (notably mining and hydro-power), and support to targeted sectors (e.g. wood-based and agro-based products) can reduce such dependence.
These sectors notably offer significant potential for pro-poor development and employment creation in terms of production and downstream processing with increased value addition, especially among SMEs. Within agro-based products, the coffee industry has been highlighted as one of the leading cash crop commodities in Lao PDR; and has been identified as a crucial component of the overall Lao economy being relatively well organized and a good model for development of other key agricultural sectors in the country.

Accordingly, Activity 3.6 of ER 3 sets out tasks to facilitate ‘Investment Promotion in targeted sectors’. At this stage, TFPB proposes to develop investment profiles and materials for two selected sectors, namely, wood processing and coffee, to provide foreign investors with an overview of investment opportunities and incentives for specific sectors.

This will enable investors to:

(i) identify investment opportunities;
(ii) understand the investment climate; and
(iii) have the latest research and market insights, which are paramount in an ever-evolving industry.

These Profiles will also enable public and private representatives to promote investment within target sectors of the Lao economy.

ITC will recruit National Consultant(s) (NC) to draft investment profiles for the two sectors under the guidance of an International Consultant (IC). Whenever possible, ITC will mentor the development of these Investment Profiles by local institutions in order to ensure a sustainable transfer of knowledge through a learning-by-doing approach.

This ToR covers the tasks expected of the NC to develop investment profiles for the selected sectors, under the guidance of the IC.

DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Consultant will work under the direct guidance of the Senior Officer, Business and Trade Policy, TFPB.

The Consultant will conduct country, relevant sector and value chain analyses and subsequently package the information in the form of sector-specific investment profiles that will be used to promote and attract investments by the respective investment promotion and sector agencies.

To do so, the consultant will undertake the below tasks:

1. Attend the training conducted by IC on how to draft the Investment Profiles and gain the necessary skills;
2. Undertake detailed research, in line with the instructions of the IC and the draft template, and covering the aspects specified below:
   - On the Country Analysis: The objective here is to identify favourable factors that highlight Lao PDR as a solid investment destination. At a minimum, the analysis should include:
     (i) an overview of country analysis including competitive advantages such as geographic location, natural resources etc.;
     (ii) analysis and trends of the economy including key sectors and markets, favourable macroeconomic policies in various areas important to investors (tax, banking, labour market, real estate, investment incentives, electricity, special economic zones, etc.);
     (iii) trade and investment statistics, infrastructure developments, risks; and
(iv) other factors deemed necessary by the consultant.

- On the Sector selected: At a minimum, the assessment should include:
  (i) various stages of the relevant sector value chains in Lao PDR including, but not limited to, the supply chain, production, processing, manufacturing, packaging, labelling, marketing, distribution, sales, consumption etc.;
  (ii) various players for each stage of the value chain including any linkages;
  (iii) SWOT analysis incorporating, current growing, production and processing patterns, markets, soil/climate considerations, geographical distribution, local consumption and export, investment trends, value addition, transport (air, road, rail), position of marginalized groups, institutional support, policies and regulations, quality infrastructure for export compliance, use of technology, linkages with other key economic sectors; and
  (iv) other factors deemed necessary by consultant.

The research should include those from reputable sources such as international organizations (e.g. ITC, OECD, World Bank, UNCTAD), national statistics, national and international media, government reports, etc.

Where applicable, use of text should be minimized in favour of graphical representation.

3. Identify most relevant stakeholders to interview and subsequently interview them. These include key sector players from the public and private sectors. The consultant will be required to engage regularly with the above-mentioned stakeholders to ensure national ownership of the initiative as well as to obtain regular feedback throughout the process. Additionally the consultant, working under the guidance of the IC, will also be required to submit notes from the stakeholder conditions to the IC and liaise continuously with the IC working on the project.

4. Based on the analysis and the recommendations, produce a draft Profile (25 to 30 pages) – capturing the country analysis, relevant value chain analysis and the recommendations for very precise investment opportunities. This profile should also include recommendations for the most bankable investment opportunities for each chosen sector. These should clearly be derived from the analysis and provide potential foreign investors with clear and precise ideas for investments.

5. Present the developed draft Profile (using PowerPoint and/or other appropriate supporting materials) together with the IC, during a Public Private Dialogue (PPD) in Lao PDR for stakeholder consultations. This presentation should:
   o Introduce the Investment Profile created for the sector and encourage discussions and feedback about the Profile created;
   o Highlight the key findings for the sector;
   o Incorporate recommendations to improve investments in the sector.

6. Finalize the Profile based on the inputs received from the PPD and other bilateral meetings with the stakeholders.

7. Once the Profile is finalized, the consultant will produce a summary of the profile (4 pages) which will be used as a brochure for potential investors.

The Consultant is obliged to provide full access to ITC external and internal auditors to documents and information. In addition, the consultant shall comply with any audit undertaken in line with the financial regulations and rules of the United Nations.
The Consultant is responsible for all submitted documents and must ensure that they are not plagiarized. Any plagiarism, copying or closely reproducing another’s work without accrediting the legitimate author, in the documents submitted would result in a refusal of the submitted document.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND TIMELINES:

For each of the investment profiles for the two selected sectors, the expected outputs and timelines are as follows:

**Activity 1: Undertake Training under the IC**
Output 1: NC successfully participated in trainings
Timeline 1: May - June 2020

**Activity 2: Undertake necessary research, in line with instructions of the IC and draft template**
Output 2: Research undertaken to draft the Investment profiles
Timeline 2: May – July 2020

**Activity 3: Undertake stakeholder consultations and submit notes from key stakeholder meetings to IC**
Output 3: Meetings undertaken with stakeholders and notes shared
Timeline 3: May – July 2020

**Activity 4: Draft a 25 - 30 page profile to be submitted to ITC**
Output 4: First draft of the profile submitted to ITC
Timeline 4: July 2020

**Activity 5: Present the draft profile at a PPD**
Output 5: PPD undertaken and draft profiles presented to stakeholders
Timeline 5: August 2020

**Activity 6: Finalize the draft profile based on the inputs received at the PPD**
Output 6: Investment Profile finalized
Timeline 6: September 2020

**Activity 7: Produce a short summary of the profiles**
Output 7: Summary for the Profile produced
Timeline 7: September 2020
EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS REQUIRED

Skills:
- Strong analytical and drafting skills
- Organizational and managerial skills
- Fluency in written and spoken English
- Capacity to work effectively with the ITC team

Education:
- Advanced degree (MA/MSc) in trade, law or economics.

Experience:
- Minimum 5 years work experience
- Knowledge of the selected sectors [i.e. wood processing or coffee sectors] and related organizations in the sectors. Knowledge in the field of trade and investment promotion is an added advantage.
- Good communication and presentation skills, at ease with high-level representatives of the public and private sector.
- Proven ability to work independently with minimum supervision

Language:
- Excellent command of written and spoken English and Lao language; and strong drafting skills in English.