

## **Terms of Reference: External collaborator to develop an M&E framework and tools for the Supporting Resilience of Lao MSMEs in response to COVID-19” project**

### **Objective**

The ILO seeks an external collaborator to assist in developing a robust, applicable and gender-responsive M&E system for the “Supporting resilience of Lao MSMEs in response to COVID-19” project. More specifically, this entails reviewing and elaborating key indicators; developing data collection and analysis tools for baseline, targets, and milestones; and articulating time frames, roles and responsibilities for data collection.

### **Background**

The Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) has in recent years seen strong economic growth which has contributed to reduced poverty and improved living standards. However, the country is still facing challenges when it comes to its socio-economic development. With extreme poverty falling from 46 percent in 1992 to 23 percent in 2012/13 and to 18 percent in 2018/19, the elasticity of poverty to GDP growth in Lao PDR was significantly lower compared to most neighbouring countries. Consumption growth had also been historically lower than GDP growth, with consumption growth of the bottom 40 percent lagging particularly behind<sup>1</sup>. The country is part of the group of Least Developed Countries (LDC). With the COVID-19 outbreak, which has resulted in a global health emergency and economic crisis, Lao PDR’s development trajectory is at risk and the country could potentially face devastating consequences.

The micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) sector in Laos constitute the backbone for job creation and employment, accounting for more than 80 percent of employment in the country. The sector has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, caused largely by a nation-wide lockdown imposed by the Government to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. However, the Lao MSME sector could play a vital role in responding to the COVID-19 crisis and in driving a sustainable and resilient recovery if it is provided with the right support.

As a response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the ILO launched a project in April 2021 with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The project will be implemented in partnership with the LNCCI and will receive policy guidance from the MOIC. The project ultimately aims to support women and men-owned MSMEs in Laos to become more sustainable and resilient and generate economic and decent employment opportunities, contributing to Lao PDR’s recovery from COVID-19. Specifically, the project will achieve this by:

- Working with financial institutions and other partners to support formal and informal women- and men-owned MSMEs in accessing cash, credit and other financial services;
  - Supporting efforts to provide continued and reliable information related to COVID-19 support measures and contribute to a better enabling environment for entrepreneurship development and MSMEs; and
  - Delivering business development services to women- and men-owned MSMEs and aspiring entrepreneurs, including those in the informal sector, to build business and financial management skills, financial literacy, promote entrepreneurship and stimulate new innovative and sustainable business ideas.
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## Scope of assignment

As part of the assignment, the expert is expected to work closely with the project team to develop a 1) M&E framework, including reviewing and elaborating key indicators and articulating clear time frames, roles and responsibilities, and; 2) developing corresponding data collection and analysis tools for baseline, targets, and milestones.

### 1. M&E Framework

The M&E framework will assist project and stakeholders to monitor and understand progress and achievement of outcomes and outputs of the project as well as assess the effectiveness of the project's impact on MSMEs in terms of 'Business Resilience'.

Business resilience is defined as:

- The ability to respond to and survive a crisis
- The ability to have foresight and multi-hazard awareness to prepare for future crisis that emerge
- The ability to turn crisis into a source of opportunity and growth

It is expected that the expert will ensure that indicators are gender responsive indicators and that gender issues are explicitly addressed throughout the framework.

In the process of developing this framework, the expert will review the project concept note, logical framework and theory of change as well as the project workplan to certify that the framework will respond to this. This includes reviewing the existing KPIs determined prior to commencement of the project implementation, to assess whether these adequately will capture project results or whether these needs to be elaborated or supplemented in any way.

The expert is also expected to be familiar and take guidance from the following documents (to be provided by the ILO at the start of the assignment):

- ILO policy guidelines for evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations
- ILO Development Cooperation Manual
- ILO Evaluation Guidelines on integrating gender into M&E plan of projects and programmes
- Previous ILO MSME project data collection tool: SME profile, Evaluation Feedback

### 2. M&E Tools

The expert is also expected to support the project by preparing data collection and analysis tools for baseline, targets, and milestones. Given how project is primarily focusing on the delivery of support services to MSMEs, it is anticipated that this will include an evaluation / feedback survey to be completed at the end of each learning activity as well as a tracer study to capture how MSMEs have acquired new knowledge, adopted new practices and improved business performance through the project.

The expert will prepare tools in English for replication by the project into Lao language.

## Deliverables

As part of this assignment, the External Collaborator will share the following deliverables with the ILO:

1. M&E Framework (Excel)
2. Tools (in Word or excel)

## Duration

The External Collaborator is expected to undertake the work between 01 August 2021 to 14 August.

## Qualifications

The Consultant is expected to fulfil the following criteria:

- Have at least five years of experience in monitoring and evaluation, including the development of baseline studies, M&E framework and strategy and the data collection and analysis tools.
- Have undertaken monitoring and evaluation work in developing countries
- Experience with enterprise development will be a great advantage.
- Have a good knowledge of the ILO tripartite mechanism and proven ability to engage effectively and constructively with government and social partners.
- Have the proven ability to write high quality, clear, concise reports in English.

## Application

Interested individuals are requested to submit their application by email addressed to [patela@ilo.org](mailto:patela@ilo.org) by 27 July 2021. The following documents should be included:

- Financial proposal that specify a total lump sum amount and payment terms around the specific and measurable deliverables of the TOR;
- Most recent CV clearly highlighting similar assignments previously undertaken.

## Payment

Payments are based upon output, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the TOR, and deliverables accepted and certified by the ILO Project Technical Officer.