

► Terms of Reference

National consultant for producing a mapping study on the Social and Solidarity Economy in Laos

Designation: National consultant for producing a mapping study on the Social and Solidarity Economy in Laos as part of the Strengthening Social and Solidarity Economy Knowledge Base project

Geographical scope: The project consists of research and capacity building activities in six Asian countries (Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Thailand, and Vietnam). The Consultant will lead and conduct the research on Laos.

Duration: The duration of the contract shall be from **July 2022 to September 2023**.

Background

The ILO undertook a project on [Strengthening Social and Solidarity Economy Policy in Asia](#) during 2019-2021, in collaboration with the implementing partner, Korea Social Enterprise Promotion Agency (KoSEA), with financial support from the Korean Ministry of Employment and Labour (MOEL). The research component sought to better understand the current status of the SSE in six countries in Asia (China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines and Republic of Korea) in terms of their organizational landscape. The research adopted a framework suitable for cross-country comparison, conducted a mapping of the SSE landscape in six countries, and identified policy challenges and suggested preliminary pathways for strengthening the SSE. A series of eight policy briefs have been produced as an output.¹

In light of the great interest generated during the first phase of the project, the ILO launched a second phase of the project on [Strengthening Social and Solidarity Economy Knowledge Base](#) in July 2021, expanding the scope to six additional countries in Asia and the Pacific region: Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Thailand and Vietnam.

The project seeks to generate a comprehensive overview of the SSE landscape in six Asian countries, followed by capacity-building and improved policymaking at the national level. It seeks to ensure that ILO constituents and SSE practitioners, and researchers in the six countries, as well as those operating at the regional and international levels, have access to robust evidence on the contribution of the SSE to decent work and sustainable development. It aims to enable them to advocate for integration of the SSE in national, regional and international development agendas. At the end of the project, ILO constituents, promoters, decision makers and their development partners, will have access to studies, data and knowledge on the overall SSE landscape in six countries in Asia, and have increased understanding of the contribution of the SSE to decent work and the SDGs in Asia and the Pacific.

The project will implement activities towards achieving:

- **Outcome 1.** Enhanced understanding on the SSE in six countries in Asia
- **Outcome 2.** Increased capacity of the stakeholders to develop and/or mainstream the SSE in policies and programmes

Under Outcome 1, ILO will conduct additional country case studies in Cambodia, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. The national case studies will describe and analyze the organizational landscape of the SSE in the six countries, identify legal and policy constraints, as well as opportunities to strengthen the SSE at national and regional levels. The case studies will be carried out with a refined analytical research framework from the first phase.² The acquired knowledge will be shared through an international conference with relevant stakeholders. A normative model for the SSE across all twelve countries³ of Asia will be developed.

The national case studies will describe and analyze the organizational landscape of the SSE in each of the six countries, identify legal and policy constraints, and opportunities to strengthen the SSE at national and regional levels.

¹ See: <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/projects/sse-asia/publications/lang--en/index.htm>

² It will capture social and solidarity economy enterprises and organizations (SSEOs) operating in the informal economy in addition to those that are formally registered.

³ The six countries from the first phase of the project are: China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

Scope of work

National researcher that possesses expertise in the field of the SSE will lead and conduct the national case study on Laos as part of Outcome 1 (Research Component) of the project. The Consultant will:

- Present an overview of the SSE landscape in Laos in an orientation session
- Participate in research progress meetings with ILO COOP, regional consultant, international advisor and other national consultants
- Conduct national case study on mapping the SSE landscape in Laos
- Lead (or co-lead) the national advisory committee of Laos
- Report on the progress to the regional advisory committee meetings
- Contribute to a regional report based on the comparative analysis of six country cases
- Elaborate a report on “Mapping the SSE Landscape in Laos
- Contribute to developing a normative model for the SSE in Asia

The tasks will be undertaken with the guidance and input from ILO COOP, and national advisory committee (NAC).

In order to ensure national ownership over project outcomes, advisory committees will be established at the national and the Asia regional levels, consisting of relevant stakeholders (e.g. Ministries/departments in charge of the SSE, workers’ and employers’ organizations, SSE apex bodies, research institutions and SSE service providers). The selection criteria for the committee members will consist of affiliation to SSE networks in the six target countries in Asia and the Pacific region, relevant knowledge and expertise on the SSE and the willingness to engage with relevant stakeholders to advance the SSE. Gender balance and disability inclusion will also be considered.

The national advisory committees will meet every four to six months during the project implementation; they will be responsible for guiding the research process, providing inputs, and validating the research outcomes, monitoring implementation progress against indicators, and ensuring that the key findings are translated and applied to the capacity-building activities. The national researchers from the six countries will report the progress to the ILO COOP and RAC after consulting with the national advisory committees. After collecting progress reports from the researchers, the regional advisory committee will be held within a month.

The regional consultant will participate in the regional advisory committee (RAC) meetings to share the progress of the research and reflect ILO COOP and RAC members’ feedback in the draft report. The Consultant will present the findings from the national case of Laos in the research conference scheduled for 2023, and other relevant webinars and events.

The national report should be written in English in a clear, concise, and accessible format to enable ease in translation. The national consultant will also be expected to provide inputs to the regional report, a comparative analysis of the mapping on the SSE landscape in six countries.

Activities

The Consultant’s responsibility shall consist of the following:

Activity 1: Deliver a presentation “Overview of the SSE landscape in Laos” in an orientation session⁴;

Activity 2: Participate in research progress meetings with ILO COOP, regional consultant, international advisor and other national consultants to monitor the research progress, discuss any issues related to collecting data and/or analysis, prepare for the research conference, and adjust the research implementation plan, if necessary;

⁴ The orientation session will cover an overview of the project’s objectives, lessons from the first phase, definitions and concepts of the SSE, research methodology, international labour standards related to the SSE, transition from the informal to the formal economy and gender equality.

Activity 3: Organize and coordinate the meetings of the NAC, by preparing meeting agendas, chairing (or co-chairing), and reporting on progress to the RAC;

Activity 4: Carry out a study on “Mapping the SSE Landscape in Laos”, including a presentation of the SSE landscape, documentation of good practices of SSEOs, and their contribution to job creation and the SDGs, challenges, opportunities, and policy recommendations to strengthen the SSE. It will consist of:

- Review a comprehensive list of entities and determine which ones can be qualified as “SSEOs” based on the criteria defined in the analytical framework, and map the SSE landscape;
- Conduct desk research, case studies, and interviews with stakeholders to provide an overview of the SSE development in the country, SSE organizations’ contribution to job creation and the SDGs, and policy trends, and;
- Identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities to strengthen the SSE in Laos.

Activity 5: Elaborate a national report that incorporates comments and feedback;

Activity 6: Present key findings of the study at the Research Conference in 2023;

Activity 7: Provide inputs to drafts of a regional report based on the comparative analysis of six country cases;

Activity 8: Provide inputs to a normative model⁵ for the SSE in Asia which can be identified across all twelve countries; and

Activity 9: Disseminate research outputs to the national partners, e.g. ILO constituents, SSE practitioners and research institutions in relevant webinars, workshops and events to increase visibility of project outputs and promote national awareness on the SSE.

Key considerations

Coherence of research with ILO guidelines

The research outputs will be written in a clear and accessible format to facilitate ease in translation. They should adhere to the guidelines outlined in the ILO house style manual⁶. The international consultant will ensure the research is aligned with the ILO, basing their analyses on existing ILO research on this topic⁷, and take into account ILO references such as norms, particularly [ILO Recommendation No. 193](#).

The target audiences for the report include:

- Policymakers in the six countries to become acquainted with institutional and legal frameworks needed for the SSE to thrive in their countries;
- Representatives of workers’ and employers’ organizations, practitioners, researchers and other stakeholders in the six countries to be better informed about the scope, nature, limitations, and opportunities around the SSE; and
- Staff of relevant ILO departments and field offices who are working with ILO constituents in developing and mainstreaming SSE in policies and programmes in Asia and beyond.

Communication, dissemination and outreach

The communication around the project findings is timely given the upcoming general discussion on

⁵ The normative model will provide a definition for the SSE in Asia, determine the SSE values and principles in the context of Asian traditions, determine which types of organizations and enterprises shall be considered members of the SSE family, and identify the most SSE-relevant SDG targets in the Asian context.

⁶

⁷ At the ILO, seven case studies and one comparative study are available as part of a broader study on SSE Public Policies. They are: the Philippines, Europe, Korea, South Africa, Brazil, Costa, Rica, Nicaragua, and a comparative study of above seven country cases. The ILO is also carrying out a development cooperation project in Tunisia and South Africa for promoting SSE organizations and strengthening policy capacity for SSE in each country. See ILO’s work on the SSE at <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/sse/lang--en/index.htm>.

the SSE at the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference in 2022⁸. The dissemination of the project findings will help increase awareness of constituents and relevant stakeholders on the SSE's contribution to decent work and ensure the sustainability of the project outcomes. The project news and outputs will be disseminated through various channels, on website and social media platforms by the ILO and partners' network in the six countries in Asia.

Gender considerations

The principle of gender equality will guide the design and implementation of the project. During the research component, women's participation in, and leadership of, SSEOs will be assessed through the compilation and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and qualitative information. Gender analysis will be incorporated in formulating policy recommendations for decision-makers, practitioners, and SSE actors to ensure women's needs and aspirations are appropriately reflected in national SSE policies, adapted to the national contexts. The research should also take into consideration other cross-cutting issues such as disability inclusion, just transition to environmental sustainability, social dialogue and International Labour Standards.

Risk analysis

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the risks that may affect the delivery of the project. The ILO will frequently assess the various risks and its implications such as restrictions on travel and physical meetings on the project and develop contingency plan to monitor and adapt the implementation strategy.

Monitoring and evaluation

The project's monitoring mechanism will track progress against the results framework and make adjustments to the programme design if necessary. Monitoring will take place at national and global levels. A steering committee composed of global consultant, national consultants in the six additional countries, and the ILO COOP will virtually meet every six months to review the project implementation and measure progress against indicators and propose corrective action if necessary. The project will be subject to a mid-term, internal evaluation during the 15th months of project and a final, internal evaluation, to be carried out during the last three months of project evaluation. These evaluations will be managed by the ILO Evaluation Unit.

Deliverables

The concrete deliverables of the national consultant is as follows:

1. Quarterly updates on the progress of the research based on the consultation with NAC;
2. A national report on "Mapping the SSE Landscape in Laos" including an analysis of SSE's role in decent job creation and achieving the SDGs, and policy implications;
3. Inputs and feedback to the normative framework of the SSE in Asia; and
4. Presentation of key findings at the Research Conference in 2023.

Timeline

The main milestones and tentative timeline are:

- Selection of regional consultant: April 2022
- Selection of national consultants: May-July 2022
- Refined analytical framework due: May 2022
- Orientation session: September 2022
- Intermediate check 1 (1st NAC): September 2022
- Intermediate check 2 (2nd NAC): March 2022
- Intermediate check 3 (3rd NAC): July 2023
- **Final country reports: September 2023**
- Final regional report: October 2023

⁸ See: https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/sse/WCMS_840060/lang--en/index.htm

- Research conference: September 2023

Payment of fees

Payments will be made upon completion of the aforementioned deliverables upon satisfaction of the ILO.

Completion Criteria

The final research report will become the property of the ILO once each one has gone through the pre-determined evaluation and feedback mechanism, and written approval has been submitted by COOP team.

Requirements/qualifications

- Advanced degree in social sciences, law, economics, or other related disciplines;
- Demonstrated experience and knowledge on cooperative and wider SSE legislation and policies in the country;
- Well connected to key actors involved in the SSE promotion, and SSE movements in the country;
- Knowledge and experience on ILO's work on SSE (preferred);
- Knowledge on organizational landscape of SSE in Asia and the Pacific (preferred);
- Experience working on/with SSE organizations and exposure to development cooperation projects (preferred); and
- Excellent research and analytical skills, as well as ability to elaborate high quality research documents in English;
- Fluency in written and spoken English and Lao.

Application process

Candidates interested in this consultancy are invited to submit a technical proposal (not exceeding 10 pages) which should include: i) CV of the person who will undertake the study; ii) cover letter expressing interest in the position and at least one copy of a similar study developed under a previous contract should be included as annex (this will not be counted within the 10 pages limit). The email should be sent to coop@ilo.org copying ahnh@ilo.org by **July 4, 2022** with "Consultancy on Mapping the SSE in Laos" as the subject line.