

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) – Deadline 24 April 2020

To conduct a study on good (best) practices of national policy framework on (cross-border) paperless trade; and produce a template and guidelines on development of such national policy framework

Background

Recognizing the “importance of trade as an engine for inclusive economic growth and sustainable development” and that “facilitation of cross-border paperless trade makes international trade transactions more efficient and transparent while improving regulatory compliance”, the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (Framework Agreement) was adopted at ESCAP in 2016, making the most recent UN treaty in the area of trade and development.¹ Despite the importance of paperless trade, many developing ESCAP member States are at different stages of readiness in this area.²

As part of implementing the Framework Agreement, ESCAP member States are working towards developing a template for designing a national policy framework.³ Indeed, once the Framework Agreement enters in force, “the Parties shall endeavour to establish a national policy framework for paperless trade, which may define targets and implementation strategies and allocate resources, and a legislative framework.” [Article 6.1]. Many countries already have various policy frameworks, action plans and laws related to paperless trade in place and it would be useful to fully understand how they, together (and in part or in whole), amount to an effective national policy framework for paperless trade – although it may not be referred to as such.⁴

In this context, the Trade, Investment and Innovation Division of ESCAP seeks to hire an individual consultant to conduct a study on good (best) practices of national policy framework on (cross-border) paperless trade; and produce a template and guidelines on development of such national policy framework on this topic (the details, including proposed table of contents, of the report are in the annex). This is taking place as part of a larger project a sustained capacity building effort on cross-border paperless trade facilitation along the BRI corridors.

Work assignment and requirements for the consultancy

The consultant is required to perform the following tasks:

1. Conduct desk top research and collect good (best) practices of national policy framework on (cross-border) paperless trade in the region (covering all subregions) and selected practices outside of the region.
2. Create a template and guidelines for national policy framework based on good (best) practices

¹ Details on the Framework Agreement can be found: <https://www.unescap.org/resources/framework-agreement-facilitation-cross-border-paperless-trade-asia-and-pacific>

² UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation 2019. <https://unnex.unescap.org/content/un-global-survey-digital-and-sustainable-trade-facilitation-2019>

³ See draft road map for the implementation of the substantive provisions in the Framework Agreement. https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/E_PTA_IISG2018_CRP1E.pdf

⁴ See also paperless trade readiness assessment checklist and studies at: <https://www.unescap.org/resources/readiness-assessments-cross-border-paperless-trade>

3. Prepare a draft report and submit to the ESCAP Secretariat prior to a virtual meeting of experts (tentatively in August 2020)
4. Participate in a virtual meeting of experts to present key points based on the report and collect comments and suggestions from participating experts; and revise the report accordingly
5. Participate in an inter-subregional workshop to present key points based on the revised report and collect comments and suggestions from participating stakeholders (tentatively in the week starting of 28 September 2020).
6. Prepare final report, by incorporating comments/suggestions received both from the virtual meeting and the inter-subregional workshop

The consultant is expected to carry out the assignment during the period of May – October 2020. Consultancy fee expected to range from 10-14,000 USD.

A minimum 7-year work experience in the area of trade facilitation/e-commerce/paperless trade is required. The consultant should have experience in developing, implementing, and/or assessing public policy/framework in the area of trade facilitation/e-commerce/paperless trade at national, regional or international level. He/she should have a good knowledge of trade facilitation and e-commerce/paperless trade in general. Previous work experience in developing national policy framework would be an advantage. Previous work experience in Asia preferred.

EOI Submission (As soon as possible; deadline: 24 April 2020)

Individuals with relevant expertise are invited to submit EOIs to Mr. Yann Duval, Chief, Trade Policy and Facilitation Section, United Nations ESCAP (duvaly@un.org) with a copy to Ms. Soo Hyun Kim (kim51@un.org).

The EOIs should include:

- (1) An email expressing interest, highlighting previous work experience, other related assignments, training or any useful experience relevant to the assignments;
- (2) Proposed work plan on how to carry out the assignments (refer to the annex for the proposed contents and table of contents);
- (3) Curriculum Vitae (CV), and any other evidence of relevant work.

Selection process

The criteria used to evaluate the consultants will be:

- (1) previous work experience in the areas related to the assignments, and
- (2) quality of the proposed work plan

*Please note that only selected candidate(s) would be contacted.

For further information:

Please email Mr. Yann Duval (duvaly@un.org) with a copy to Ms. Soo Hyun Kim (kim51@un.org), should you have any questions.

Annex. Details of the work assignment

The reports should include: (1) good (best) practices of national policy framework on (cross-border) paperless trade*; (2) template of national policy framework on paperless trade**; and (3) guidelines on how to develop national policy framework.

The following is a proposed table of contents for the report:

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction: What is/is not a national policy framework for paperless trade? (reference to be made to Article 6 of the Framework Agreement)
3. Analysis of good (best) practices of national policy frameworks for paperless trade: Are there different models?
 - a. Consolidated list of common attributes (both essentials and desirables of what constitutes good (best) practices) and elaborations on each common attribute
 - b. Highlighted cases of good (best) practices from all subregions, plus selective cases from outside of the Asia-Pacific region*
4. Template of a national policy framework (based on common attributes)**
 - a. Attributes can be: (i) general features for a national policy framework; and (ii) explicitly relevant to (cross-border) paperless trade and relevant areas
 - b. Template would also include how relevant and existing legal statutes, initiatives, frameworks and others can be incorporated into the template
5. Guidelines on how to develop a national policy framework
 - a. Overall guidelines and methodologies, such as methods for data and information collection and analysis; modalities for consultations; and how to establish focal points and working groups, when necessary
 - b. Guidelines on how to develop each attribute, including some examples (incorporating good (best) practices) and references
 - c. Guidelines on how to utilize and incorporate existing and relevant legal statutes and initiatives
6. Annexes
 - a. Complete list and details of collected good (best) practices
 - b. Mapping of relevant statutes and initiatives
 - c. References
 - d. Any other items

**To the extent possible, all good (best) practices of national policy frameworks on (cross-border) paperless trade from the region should be extensively collected. Other good (best) practices outside of the region could be selectively collected, which can be considered as world's good (best) practices. Other relevant frameworks, such as on e-commerce and ICT, should also be collected, referenced and analyzed for benchmarking.*

***To develop guidelines, it is critical to build upon existing work done by international organizations and regional organizations, especially those covering same or similar economies and geography.*

The report should be with the length of up to 60 pages, excluding annexes, in A4 MS Word format.