

ESCAP Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

To conduct a national feasibility study in a selected Asian country in South-East or South Asia on the cross-border electronic exchange of trade-related data and documents with other Asian countries. Deadline for application: 13 March 2022

Background

Trade is recognized as an important means of implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030. Trade facilitation and paperless trade can help make trade more inclusive and sustainable. This led United Nations ESCAP members to negotiate and adopt the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (Framework Agreement), a UN treaty to accelerate and support the digitalization of trade procedures.¹ The Framework Agreement encourages implementation of pilot projects on cross-border paperless trade (Article 13), as a basis for capacity building of ESCAP developing member States and to achieve harmonization and interoperability between paperless trade systems.

In this context, the ESCAP Secretariat seeks to hire an individual consultant to conduct a national feasibility study in a selected Asian country on the electronic exchange of trade-related data and documents with other countries in South-East and South Asia, in particular with those that have been actively engaged in the development and/or implementation of the Framework Agreement or where paperless trade readiness assessments have already been conducted.² The consultant will evaluate the feasibility for the selected country to engage in cross-border electronic exchange of trade-related data and documents, including by identifying priority partner countries, and by assessing the costs and benefits of exchanging specific documents or harmonizing systems.

Target countries

Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam (other South and South-East Asian countries may also be considered, particularly if a paperless trade readiness assessment can be conducted as part of/ in parallel to the feasibility study).

Work assignment

The consultant is required to perform the following tasks (with tentative timeline):

- a) Prepare a detailed work plan for carrying out the feasibility study, including by identifying the information required and relevant agencies or stakeholders for the collection of primary data, building on (rather than duplicating) the national paperless trade readiness assessment study if already conducted.
Delivery date: 29 April 2022

- b) Evaluate the feasibility for the selected country to engage in cross-border electronic exchange of trade-related data and documents, including by identifying priority partner

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

² See [countries for which readiness assessments for cross-border paperless trade have been conducted](#).

countries, and by assessing the costs and benefits of exchanging specific documents or harmonizing systems. Tasks include:

- a. Conducting desktop research and collecting relevant information.
- b. Visiting/interviewing relevant agencies and stakeholders to collect primary data.
- c. Drafting a report of the feasibility of alternative cross-border paperless trade projects.

Delivery date: 15 July 2022

- c) Finalize the report of the feasibility study by incorporating comments and feedback from invited international experts, national stakeholders, and other reviewers.

Delivery date: 15 August 2022

The consultant is expected to carry out the assignment during the period of 15 April 2022 – 15 August 2022.

Consultancy fee expected to range from 5,000 – 10,000 USD, depending on experience of the consultant, scope of national feasibility study proposed, and final terms of reference.

Requirements for the consultancy

A minimum 7-year work experience in the area of trade policy/facilitation/e-commerce/paperless trade is required. The consultant should preferably have relevant experience in implementing trade facilitation (including customs automation projects), and assessing the feasibility of cross-border cooperation activities related to trade facilitation and the electronic exchange of trade-related data and documents, particularly in relation to the target country of study.

Relevant work experience in the country in which the national feasibility study is proposed to be conducted is required. Good network with relevant government agencies and association with a national level think tank or trade facilitation/digitalization-related agency is preferred.

EOI Submission (As soon as possible; deadline: 13 March 2022)

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 Mr. Yern Fai Lee (yernfai.lee@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 assignment.
- (2) Proposed work plan on how to carry out the assignment; and
- (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 and scope of the proposed work plan

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

For further information:

Please email Mr. Yern Fai Lee (yernfai.lee@un.org) with a copy to Mr. Yann Duval (duvaly@un.org) should you have any questions.