



TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Development of a gender responsive tool to assess the creative innovation, value chain connections and financial capacity of SMEs (SMEs Assessment Tool)

I. BACKGROUND

UN Women and the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)

Grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, the empowerment of women and the achievement of substantive equality between women and men. The fundamental objective of UN Women is to enhance national capacity and ownership to enable national partners to formulate gender responsive laws, policies and upscale successful strategies to deliver on national and international commitments to gender equality.

UN Women Viet Nam Country Office has been of one of the 7 countries (China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam) for the implementation of the UN Women Regional Programme "Promoting Economic Empowerment of Women at Work in Asia 4/2019-3/2022" (WeEmpower Asia). Its Overall Objective is that more women lead, participate and have access to enhanced business opportunities and leadership within the private sector to advance sustainable and inclusive growth. The programme is a part of UN Women's Strategy Note for Viet Nam 2017-2021. The activity under this TOR is within the framework of Outcome 2.3: «More women lead, participate and have access to business opportunities to advance sustainable and inclusive growth; Output 2.3.2: Women-owned businesses and women entrepreneurs have increased capacity to build their businesses for advancement of women economic empowerment».

The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), established by the UN Women and the UN Global Compact since 2010, are a set of 7 principles for enterprises offering guidance on how to promote gender equality and women empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community with the subtitle "Equality Means Business »¹:

1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality
2. Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination
3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers
4. Promote education, training and professional development for women
5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women
6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy

¹For further information about WEPs, please visit <https://www.weps.org/>

7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

The Women's Empowerment Principles Gap Analysis Tool (WEPs GAT Tool) was currently developed as an online tool including a check list to help companies from around the world assess gender equality performance across the workplace, marketplace, and community².

Ministry of Planning and Investment, SMEs Law, women-owned enterprises and SMEs Assessment Tool.

In Viet Nam, women-owned enterprises account for 26.5 percent of the total active enterprises, making a significant contribution to the economy. These enterprises are mainly small and micro-sized (93.2 percent) and mostly operate in the service sector (79.2 percent)³. Women-owned small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are facing many obstacles in engaging in business activities, including limited access to resources, low human capital, inadequate knowledge and skills in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and confront gender stereotypes related to family and business. These obstacles impact on the optimization of the development potential of women-owned SMEs.

The SMEs Support Law No. 04/2017/QH14 stipulates the tasks to support Vietnamese SMEs. Article 8, Section 1, Chapter II encourages credit institutions to provide SMEs loans based on enterprise's credit rating and encourages the establishment of an independent advisory organization to give credit ratings to SMEs. Articles 17, 18, 19, Section 2, Chapter II stipulate the contents to support SMEs in creative and innovative startups, value chain connections. Points 2 and 4 of Article 22 define the responsibilities of the Ministry of Planning and Investment: Perform the coordinating role, identify targets, subjects/beneficiaries and focal areas of support to formulate and implement plans, programs and projects to support SMEs; Take the lead in and coordinate with the Ministry of Finance, the State Bank of Viet Nam, other ministries and ministerial-level agencies in setting up an information system for SME credit rating.

The Agency for Enterprise Development (AED) under the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) needs and expects to have a gender-responsive capacity assessment tool for SMEs, including women-owned SMEs on creative innovation, value chain connections and financial health, thereby classifying SMEs in groups by their capabilities in an attempt to design and execute appropriate support plans, programs and projects. These data are also the foundation to guide the implementation of consultation activities to improve the innovation and value chain connection capacity among enterprises. The tool will also help enterprises assess their health, innovative processes, identify strengths and weaknesses, and realize requirements/gaps for businesses to boost their performance.

II. SCOPE OF WORK AND ACTIVITIES

²For further information about the Women's Empowerment Principle Gap Analysis Tool, please visit <https://weps-gapanalysis.org/>

³ Data are consolidated from General Statistic Office's Enterprise Survey 2017.

UN Women supports the Agency for Enterprise Development (AED) of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) to develop a gender responsive tool to assess the creative innovation, value chain connections and financial capacity of SMEs including women-owned SMEs (SMEs Assessment Tool). The Tool will be mainstreamed gender and women's empowerment principles.

Objectives:

The gender responsive SMEs Assessment Tool aims to assess the competitiveness (including creative innovation, willingness to participate and exploit the value chains, and financial capacities) of SMEs, especially women-owned SMEs in Viet Nam.

The Tool is not only utilized to select the enterprises to be awarded with titles, but also helps enterprises to assess their health, the innovation process, to recognize strengths and weaknesses coupled with requirements/gaps to boost performance.

Requirements:

The Tool aims to assess the competitiveness of SMEs, especially women-owned SMEs in Viet Nam, which is based on three building blocks: i) Creative innovation; ii) Value chain connections market access; iii) Financial health/ capacity and access to finance in which gender-inclusiveness business will be comprehensively cross-cut in these blocks. These are three important building blocks of competence for enterprises to have a comprehensive and holistic assessment of the competitiveness, health and development potentials of a SME, especially an women-owned SME in Viet Nam. The tool will be mainstreamed with gender equality and women's empowerment principles by referring the WEPs GAT tool.

The Tool is simply designed to be adopted on a large scale use with any size of enterprises. It can be applied on web/digital platforms. The questionnaire needs to be mainstreamed with gender elements and to be suitable with lean start-up trends (i.e. to further shorten and speed up the process ranging from product innovation ideas and their introduction to the market).

Target users of the Tool include: i) male and female enterprise owners; ii) business advisors; iii) enterprise supporting organizations; iv) State management agency on business support; v) individuals and organizations working on business research and enterprise support.

Activities:

The supplier will be recruited to work closely with the officials of the Agency of Enterprise Development (AED) of the Ministry of Planning and Investment and UN Women Programme Manager of WeEmpower Asia to carry out the following activities from 10 Mar 2021 to 10 Dec 2021:

Activities	Expected outputs	Timing
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Activity 1: Develop the SMEs Assessment Tool which is mainstreamed with gender and women's empowerment principles on three building blocks: (i) creative innovation capacity, (ii) willingness capacity to participate and exploit the value chains, and (iii) financial capacity with comprehensive gender inclusive business mainstreaming in these 3 building blocks;	The draft gender-responsive tool assesses the 3 building blocks of SMEs competence with comprehensive gender inclusive business mainstreaming and is in Vietnamese and English (used for testing), in which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods and indicators to measure and assess capacity of enterprises are mainstreamed with gender equality and women's empowerment principles; • Parameters are averages by sector, area, enterprise size so that they can be used for reference and comparison with each specific enterprise. 	Q2 - 2021
Activity 2: Test the SMEs Assessment Tool	Tests will be conducted among 30-50 SMEs, including minimum 50% women-owned enterprises	Q2 - 2021
Activity 3: Finalize the SMEs Assessment Tool after being tested	The SMEs Assessment Tool will be in Vietnamese and English (final version)	Q2 & 3-2021
Activity 4: Digitalize the SMEs Assessment Tool on website	- The "SMEs Assessment Tool" will be digitalized on websites, in order to meet the following requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprises are to log in, provide information and answers to the set of predefined questions. The system will automatically return the 3-building block capacity assessment table. The evaluation table helps enterprises to proactively identify the need for capacity improvement, and then reach out for support sources and capacity building services. • The database has the ability to update automatically every time more enterprises participate in giving information and responding to the set of predefined questions. • The Tool has the function to be integrated into other websites and apps; new data will still be updated onto the common database. • Business identity encrypted data and aggregated data are shared with the Agency for Enterprise Development (AED), international organizations, individuals, research institutions, and national and international independent consulting organizations to serve the implementation of researches, policy proposals as well as the activities to support SMEs. 	Q3&4 - 2021

Activity 5: Post the digitalized SMEs Assessment Tool on the portal of MPI http://www.mpi.gov.vn/en/Pages/default.aspx	The SMEs Assessment Tool will be handed over to and under the ownership and copyright of AED, MPI and UN Women	
Activity 6: Communicate and disseminate the SMEs Assessment Tool on website to women-owned enterprises	-100 enterprises including minimum 50% women-owned enterprises will apply the “SMEs Assessment Tool” to measure and evaluate the 3 building blocks of capacity with comprehensive gender inclusive business mainstreaming in these 3 building blocks, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement and evaluation conducted via direct interviews: 30 SMEs, including minimum 50% women-owned SMEs • Measurement and evaluation conducted via websites: 70 SMEs, including minimum 50% women-owned SMEs -10 SME support organizations including minimum 40% women-owned SMEs support organizations, and/or start-up support organizations are introduced the methodology and the “SMEs Assessment Tool”, so they will be able to use this tool in counseling and supporting women-owned SMEs. -50 business advisors including minimum 40% female business advisors are introduced and guided to use the “SMEs Assessment Tool”, then and apply it in the processes of providing counsels and support to women-owned SMEs. -All the data of the SMEs engaging in capacity assessment using the Tool will be handed over to the AED, MPI and UN Women	Q3&4 - 2021

III. FINAL PRODUCTS

- The SMEs Assessment Tool will be in Vietnamese and English (final version)
- The digitalized SMEs Assessment Tool in Vietnamese on the portal of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) at <http://www.mpi.gov.vn/en/Pages/default.aspx>
- The Report on the communication and dissemination of the SMEs Assessment Tool in Vietnamese and English.

IV. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENT

The Vietnamese supplier (company) will arrange sufficient number of professional staff (a team as mentioned in the section VI & VII) to work with the Agency for Enterprise Development of the Ministry of Planning and Investment, UN Women Programme Manager of WeEmpower Asia during contract time to ensure high-quality technical products.

UN Women will provide technical guidance where possible during whole working process. The Supplier (company) shall be required to bear all the related costs and work independently to successfully achieve the final results.

The Vietnamese supplier (company) will report to the UN Women Programme Manager in Viet Nam.

V. PAYMENT

The payment will be provided in four instalments as below:

Time	Expected deliverables	Amount
15 days after signing contract	Detailed implementation workplan of the Supplier that is agreed by UN Women and AED, MPI	20%
Target by 30 Jun 2021	The draft Tool assesses the 3 building blocks of SMEs competence with comprehensive gender inclusive business mainstreaming in these 3 building blocks in Vietnamese and English (used for testing)	30%
Target by 10 Sep 2021	The digitalized SMEs Assessment Tool in Vietnamese on the portal of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) at http://www.mpi.gov.vn/en/Pages/default.aspx	30%
Target by 10 Dec 2021	The Report on the communication and dissemination of the SMEs Assessment Tool in Vietnamese and English	20%

VI. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- The suppliers will be evaluated based on technical capacities (70%) and financial proposal (30%). Suppliers need to get at least 490 points to be considered technically qualified.

VII. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. The company profile includes:

- The company's valid registration (Document in Vietnamese is accepted)
- Business result of the current 3 years in which mention company's compliance with Vietnamese legal regulations (Document in Vietnamese is accepted)
- Description of related work experience (Document in English), including:
 - o Developing similar tools
 - o Have a proven track record working on researching and technology based projects Collaboration and networking with business support ecosystem partners, mentors, investors in north, south, and central of Viet Nam
 - o Experience in delivering business development, business leader/founder capacity building and coaching, SMEs investment;
 - o Have a proven track record working on capability building programmes and consultancy services;
 - o Experience in delivering consulting services to government funded programme in implementing enterprise development, entrepreneurship development and innovation.
- List of related experience/ record to work with well-known clients on similar tools (Document in Vietnamese is accepted, Document in English is preferred)

2. **The technical proposal** includes:

- Description on format, key content including gender inclusive business mainstreaming areas and method of the SMEs Evaluation Tool (Document in English)
- Proposal on timeline and deliverables which are mentioned in the section II. SCOPE OF WORK AND ACTIVITIES and Section V. PAYMENT in the TOR. (Document is in English)

3. **The CV of the assigned team** (Document in English). The team is expected to include a team leader and several team members.

The team leader should have:

- Doctor of Philosophy in Electronics and Telecommunication or related field.
- Minimum of 10 years relevant experience in enterprise development.
- Minimum of 5 years relevant experience in innovation capability building and consultancy activities.

The team members should have:

- Master's degree in economics development especially business innovation
- Minimum of 10 years relevant experience in business support, economics and policy research.
- Minimum of 5 years relevant experience in connecting different stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem

At least one team member must be a gender specialist:

- Master's degree in economics development, gender
- Minimum of 5 years relevant experience in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in economic area.

4. **The financial proposal** with cost estimation for key items of work that lead to the good completion of the required final products as mentioned in section III. (Document in English).