September 10, 2024

**Terms of Reference (TOR)**

Development of Tools and Methodology for Conducting Market Assessments and Market Research to Identify Entry Points and Best Practices for Women-Owned Businesses, Including Consolidated Reporting

**Title:** Consultant for Developing Tools, Methodology, and Reporting Framework for Market Assessments of Women-Owned Businesses

**Location:** Oudomxay and Khammoun Province
**Duration:** 7-31/Oct/ 2024
**Reporting To:** Country Director/ Program Manager
**Contract Type:** Consultancy/Short-Term Contract

1. **Introduction**

Action Education is seeking a qualified consultant or team to conduct market assessments and market research at the local level to identify entry points and best practices for women-owned businesses in Laos. each country will carry out one, for a total of two. This mapping will enable female producer groups to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices from relevant networks, understand the needs of the current market, be able to develop their product to meet the criteria, build market networks, and be able to increase their income generation. In Laos, AE will work with local authorities to conduct participatory economic community assessments and use the information for discussion to identify business development plans and employment opportunities. The findings of the market assessment will be valuable for both Action Education (AE) and its government partners as well as the Provincial of Industry and Commerce Office from Oudomxay and Khammouan Province.

1. **Background**

Action Education has been committed to building pathways to quality education and lifelong learning for Lao communities. Recognizing the crucial role of gender equality in fostering individual and societal development, AE consistently integrates GEWE considerations into its initiatives.

In line with this commitment, Action Education partnered with the National Commission for the Advancement of Women and Mother-Children (NCAWMC) and the Provincial for the Advancement of Women and Mother-Children (PAWMC) from Oudomxay and Khammouan Province to launch the Gender Empowerment through Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education (GEVEE) project in March 2023. GEVEE focuses on empowering young women and youth in 25 communities and 5 secondary schools across Oudomxay and Khammouan provinces. Through gender awareness training and entrepreneurial skills development, the project aims to equity young women with the necessary tools to become independent and successful actors in the local economy. To achieve this, there is a need for comprehensive tools and methodologies that can effectively assess market opportunities and identify best practices for women-owned businesses. This consultancy will focus on developing these tools, as well as a reporting framework that consolidates findings into actionable recommendations.

1. **Objectives**

The primary objective of this consultancy is to develop robust tools and a detailed methodology for conducting market assessments and market research that will:

* Identify entry points and opportunities for women-owned businesses in the target area of Oudomxay and Khammoun Province.
* Determine the challenges and barriers faced by women entrepreneurs.
* Highlight best practices and successful models of women-owned businesses in similar at local context
* The consultant completed draft and final consolidated reporting to present findings and recommendations effectively.
* Provide actionable recommendations for supporting the growth and sustainability of women-owned businesses for strengthening GEVEE Program related to business development plans as the seed funding activities.
* Identify gaps, challenges and opportunities  in program design, implementation, and outcomes, addressing both intended and unintended impacts on market access and market trends from Oudomxay and Khammouan Province.
1. **Scope of Work:** The consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

#####  Development market assessment & Data Analysis Tools:

* Design survey instruments, questionnaires, and interview guides tailored to assess market opportunities, barriers, and support systems for women-owned businesses.
* Create tools for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring they are culturally appropriate and accessible to the target population.
* Ensure that the tools are adaptable to different contexts and province, allowing for consistent data collection.
* Completed for analyzing market data, including sectoral analyses, barrier identification, and value chain mapping.
* Compiling and interpreting both numerical data (e.g., market size, growth potential) and qualitative insights (e.g., barriers, best practices).
* Completed market assessment tools, data collection tools, and data analysis tools for Lao Language
1. **Methodology Development:**
* Design a mixed-methods research methodology that integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches for a comprehensive market assessment.
* Develop all methodology and tools, including women entrepreneurs, local businesses, NGOs, government agencies, and financial institutions.
* Include guidelines for conducting focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and consultative meetings.
* Create a methodology for validating findings through stakeholder workshops, ensuring that the data and conclusions are accurate, reliable, and actionable.
* The AE staff and partner in Oudomxay and Khammoun will participated data collection in the fields
1. **Progress Reporting:**

Design formats for interim progress reports, providing regular updates on data collection, preliminary findings, and any challenges encountered.

1. **Final Reporting:**

Create a comprehensive full report writing that consolidates all findings into a single document, including:

* An executive summary
* Detailed analysis of market opportunities and barriers
* Best practices and case studies
* Actionable recommendations for stakeholders
* Include guidelines for presenting data visually, using charts, graphs, and infographics to enhance understanding.
* Created full PowerPoint to presenting key findings and recommendations to stakeholders.
* Provide guidelines on how to tailor the presentation for different audiences, including donors, government agencies, and community groups.
* **Training and Capacity Building:**

Conduct a training session for program staff and partners on the use of the developed tools and methodology. To AE staff at VTE office to ensure project staff understand the methodology guide line and data collection accurate.

* **Qualifications and Experience**

The consultant should possess the following qualifications and experience:

* Master's degree or equivalent in gender studies, development studies, social sciences, or a related field.
* Proven experience 2-3 year conducting gender-focused reviews or evaluations, preferably in the education or development sector.
* Demonstrated understanding of GEWE concepts, theories, and frameworks, with specific knowledge of GBV prevention and response.
* Strong research, data analysis, and reporting skills.
* Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, including the ability to work effectively with diverse stakeholders.
* Ability to work independently and manage time effectively.
* Previous work related to methodology development and reporting (if available).
* Fluency in English and Lao is required.
1. **Budget**

The consultant should submit a detailed budget proposal outlining the costs associated with conducting the research This should include fees for the consultant(s) and any other relevant costs.

1. **Timeline**

 Conduct market assessment and market research is expected to be completed within 15 working days from the date of contract signing. The tentative timeline for the consultancy is from October 7th -31th 2024, with details stated in the table below.

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| # | Activity | No. of estimated working days |
| 1 | Develop tools and methodology with AE program/ project staff at Vientiane office and providing training and desk review (Analyzing reports, data, and other relevant documents.) | 3 days(Oct 7-9/2024) |
| 3 | Conduct quantitative data analysis: Examining market assessment and market trends from local market on gender and entrepreneurship skills from direct and indirect beneficiary (Oudomxay and Khammoun) | Oct 10-18/2024By AE staff |
| 4 | Participatory workshops (engaging with communities and beneficiaries to gather feedback and insights in Oudomxay and Khammoun Province) |
| 6 | Draft consolidated inception and progress report and submission of a presentation  | Oct 21-25/2024By Consultant |
| 7 | Adjust the report per recommendations and final report submission.  | Oct 28-31/2024 |