

Terms of Reference:

Consultancy for Lao Diaspora Mapping Survey and Research

The Asia Foundation – Skills for Growth: Mobilizing Expertise to Support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) project

Period of Performance: May – July 2026 (two months)

Background:

The Asia Foundation (TAF) is implementing the Lao Diaspora Investment & Skills Mobilization Initiative to explore how the Lao diaspora can contribute to national development through skills exchange, mentorship, and investment.

The global Lao diaspora represents a significant but underutilized resource. This consultancy will address that gap through a **Diaspora Mapping Survey and Research**, generating actionable insights to inform pilot programming and policy recommendations aligned with Lao PDR's 10th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2026–2030).

In order to successfully deliver the project, TAF is seeking an individual consultant(s) or research firm to conduct with mapping and research of the program, with focus on three target countries: Canada, France, and Australia.

I. Objectives

The primary goal is to build an evidence base to inform pilot diaspora-SME activities and national policy recommendations. Specific objectives include:

- Identify demographic and professional profiles of the diaspora in target countries.
- Analyze motivations for, and structural or perception-based barriers to, engagement.
- Identify preferred engagement pathways, such as virtual mentoring or co-investment.
- Generate evidence-based insights to support Lao PDR's 10th NSEDP and inclusive engagement models.

II. Scope of Work

a) Research Design

The Consultant/Research Firm will design, administer, and analyze a diaspora mapping survey using a mixed-methods approach to generate an evidence base on Lao diaspora. Ensure that findings are both comparable across contexts and sensitive to target country-specific dynamics. The following themes shall guide the survey design:

- A structured core questionnaire: Applied uniformly across all countries to ensure data comparability.
- Contextual modules: Tailored to host-country dynamics and diaspora organizational patterns.

- Integration of qualitative components: Use of semi-structured interviews and focus groups to deepen data interpretation.
- Analytical synthesis: A structure that synthesizes findings into country profiles and a cross-country comparative synthesis.

b) Data Collection (quantitative and qualitative):

- Design and administer an online survey targeting Lao diaspora in the three countries
- Conduct semi-structured interviews with diaspora professionals, entrepreneurs, and community leaders
- Facilitate focus group discussions to capture group-level perspectives
- Ensure data collection enables cross-country comparability while capturing country-specific dynamics.

c) Sampling Strategy

- Develop and implement a multi-layered sampling approach, ensuring representation of key groups, including women, youth, and ethnic minority diaspora members
- Collaborate with Lao embassies to support the research through consular channels and official networks
- Engage diaspora associations and networks (professional, cultural, student, and informal groups) to expand reach
- Utilize digital platforms and social networks to distribute survey links
- Conduct follow-up qualitative engagement to address gaps in representation

III. Deliverables

- Inception Report: Detailed work plan finalized research tools, and sampling strategy.
- Country Profiles: Concise reports for each of the three target countries highlighting specific patterns and constraints.
- Cross-Country Synthesis Report: A final evidence base with actionable recommendations for pilot design and policy.
- Raw Data & Methodological Annexes: Inclusive of data protection and ethical safeguard documentation.

IV. Required Qualifications

- Advanced degree in Economics, International Development, Statistics, or a related field.
- Extensive experience in diaspora engagement, labor market research, or SME development.
- Proven proficiency in mixed-methods research and data analysis software (e.g., Stata or SPSS).
- Ability to navigate political sensitivities and build trust with diverse diaspora groups.
- Fluency in English and Lao is mandatory.

V. Proposal Requirements

Interested consultants should submit:

- Technical proposal (methodology, approach, workplan)
- Financial proposal
- Relevant experience and past work samples
- CVs of key personnel

VI. Reporting and Coordination

The Consultant will report directly to **Syviengkeo Bounlutay, Capacity Development Programs Coordinator** of The Asia Foundation in Lao PDR.