

## REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ)

### Study on Situation of the Women Market Vendors in Lao PDR

DATE: 8 October 2015

REFERENCE:  
RFQ-LAO-2015-001 (Readvertisement)

Dear Sir / Madam:

We are seeking the Study on Situation of the Women Market Vendors in Lao PDR and kindly request you to submit your quotation as per terms of reference/specifications, detailed in Annex 1 of this RFQ.

Quotations may be submitted on or before 23 October 2015 and via *e-mail and/or courier mail* the address below:

#### UN WOMEN LAO PDR OFFICE

UN Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Room No. 320, Lanxange Avenue, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR P.O. Box 345  
c/o Tingthong Phetsavong

[procurement.bangkok@unwomen.org](mailto:procurement.bangkok@unwomen.org)

Quotations submitted by email must be limited to a maximum of 10 MB, virus-free and no more than 3 email transmissions. They must be signed and in .pdf format, free from any form of virus or corrupted contents, or the quotations shall be rejected.

It shall remain your responsibility to ensure that your quotation will reach the address above on or before the deadline. Quotations that are received by UN WOMEN after the deadline indicated above, for whatever reason, shall not be considered for evaluation.

Conditions	
Payment Terms	30 days upon invoice
Validity of Quotation	■ 90 DAYS
Preliminary Examination - Completeness of quotation.	■ Partial bids permitted.
Value Added Tax on Price Quotation	Must be exclusive of VAT and other applicable indirect taxes

Contact Person for Inquiries (Written inquiries only)	<a href="mailto:Tingthong.Phetsavong@unwomen.org">Tingthong.Phetsavong@unwomen.org</a>
General Conditions of Contract	For <a href="#">Services</a>

At any time during the validity of the quotation, no price variation due to escalation, inflation, fluctuation in exchange rates, or any other market factors shall be accepted by UN WOMEN after it has received the quotation. At the time of award of Contract or Purchase Order, UN WOMEN reserves the right to vary (increase or decrease) the quantity of services and/or goods, by up to a maximum twenty five per cent (25%) of the total offer, without any change in the unit price or other terms and conditions.

Any Contract or Purchase Order that will be issued as a result of this RFQ shall be subject to the General Conditions attached hereto. The mere act of submission of a quotation implies that the vendor accepts without question the General Conditions of UN WOMEN herein attached.

The UN Women has set out a vendor protest procedure intended to afford an opportunity to appeal to persons or firms not awarded a purchase order or contract in a competitive procurement process. **It is not available to non-responsive or non-timely proposers/bidders or when all proposals/bids are rejected.** In the event that you believe you have not been fairly treated, you can find detailed information about vendor protest procedures in the following link: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/procurement/vendor-protest-procedure>

Thank you and we look forward to receiving your quotation.

Sincerely yours,

**Masumi Watase**  
Lao PDR Country Manager

## **Annex 1: Terms of Reference/Specifications**

### **Study on Situation of the Women Market Vendors in Lao PDR**

#### **I. Background**

UN Women has a global mandate to implement innovative programme targeting women's development. Women's Economic Empowerment is one of UNWOMEN's priorities. Investing in women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. This makes a strong case for targeting poor women who are engaged economically and linking markets to sustainable livelihoods.

UN Women's goal in Lao PDR is to promote the rights of women by developing institutional capacity and strengthening advocacy on engendering policy reform. UN Women Lao PDR currently has three core areas of focus to its programmes:

- Strengthen provisions on gender equality and women's empowerment in national development strategies and support their effective implementation;
- Strengthen government commitment on implementation of policies that support women's economic empowerment; and
- Support development and implementation of the national policies on ending violence against women.

Lao PDR is on its way to achieve the MDG target of halving poverty by 2015 and is aiming to graduate from LDC in several years. Although considerable progress has been made, indicators suggest that women may not have benefited equally from the country's advancements. Further, women working in informal sector may be a group that will benefit least from the ASEAN economic integration, which will take place soon.

To achieve gender equality in development, gender gaps need to close in terms of access to economic opportunities, earnings, and productivity. Labour market inequalities remain a serious problem, women's disadvantages are largely rooted in gendered roles and inferior status in society. Despite that women occupy half of the country's labor force, they remain amongst the country's poorest as a consequence of the significant wage gaps and the burden of reproductive work.

Small-scale trade represents a vital aspect of income for many households in Lao PDR and represent important sources of outreach. At the same time, exploitation takes place, mismanagement undermine earnings, health and safety challenges are common, and the infrastructure itself can put vendors at risk. This is particularly the case in terms of women market vendors, as negative cultural norms, the lack of protective services, weak organisation and

economic vulnerability all undermine personal and economic security.<sup>1</sup> Small-scale market operations are dominated by large numbers of poor women and girls with little capital, knowledge, skills and support network to expand operations as well as social protection. In many markets for fresh produce and cooked food, women represent as many as 95% of the vendors. Many travel long distances in order to sell their products<sup>2</sup> and hours are long, profits are often low, and conditions difficult. Furthermore, many women lack the means to pay the fees required by the private market owners, forcing them to sell their products outside designated market areas, increasing their vulnerability in terms of reduced safety requirements and inadequate legal protection.

Reports indicate that women owned businesses are smaller than those of men in terms of assets, capital and benefits.<sup>3</sup> Despite the increase in the number of women owned businesses,<sup>4</sup> financial obstacles remain a serious impediment.<sup>5</sup> The registration process is long and complex, posing extra difficulties for women due to constraints such as low education, lack of mobility due to housework responsibility, stereotypical attitudes and lack of confidence in legal matters and documentation.<sup>6</sup> Women belonging to ethnic minority communities are particularly disadvantaged by customs maintaining traditional gender roles,<sup>7</sup> facing constraints in movement hindering them to work far from home.<sup>8</sup> In addition, discriminatory practices are still observed such as women owned businesses being required to present greater collaterals in order to receive credit.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, businesswomen are deprived of access to data and information on policies, laws and regulations, particularly in rural areas.<sup>10</sup>

A major barrier is women's lack of agency, in part evidenced by high levels of violence against women and women's limited representation amongst decision-makers.<sup>11</sup> As a result of the educational infrastructure and the cultural attitudes, women's ability to organize themselves and/or participate in decision-making processes are severely hampered.<sup>12</sup> Although informal market networks often exist, they are dominated by men and do not particularly target women market vendors.<sup>13</sup> Women are equally underrepresented in the formal decision making processes and only a limited number of women are active in the Ministry of Commerce, which monitors the market activities and the implementation of regulations, as well as in other key stakeholder groups

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<sup>1</sup> Underhill-Sam, Y. (2012). UN Women Desk Review: Partners Improving Markets (PIM) Project (2008-2012), Dr. Y. Underhill-Sam, Centre for Development Studies, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.

<sup>2</sup> Country Gender Assessment for Lao PDR; Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Opportunity, 2012, The World Bank, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> The World Bank reports on a recent study that found that only 5 percent of women owned enterprises used electric or motorized equipment, compared with 48 percent of men's enterprises. Women owned enterprises also have fewer employees. Country Gender Assessment for Lao PDR; Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Opportunity, 2012, The World Bank, p. 39 and 41.

<sup>4</sup> In 2010, women owned 54.8 percent of newly registered firms, compared to only 43.9 percent in 2009. Country Gender Assessment for Lao PDR; Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Opportunity, 2012, The World Bank, p.41.

<sup>5</sup> Country Gender Assessment for Lao PDR; Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Opportunity, 2012, The World Bank, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> Country Gender Assessment for Lao PDR; Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Opportunity, 2012, The World Bank, p. 41.

Country Gender Assessment for Lao PDR; Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Opportunity, 2012, The World Bank, p. 35.

<sup>8</sup> Country Gender Assessment for Lao PDR; Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Opportunity, 2012, The World Bank, p. 42.

<sup>9</sup> Country Gender Assessment for Lao PDR; Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Opportunity, 2012, The World Bank, p. 42 and 70.

<sup>10</sup> In 2004 GRID has conducted a study on gender role in SMEs, by interviewing 150 businesswomen and 100 businessmen in five provinces. P 44. Cedaw, Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women Combined sixth and seventh periodic report of States parties Lao People's Democratic Republic\*, 30 may 2008

<sup>11</sup> Field research, led by the University of Western Sydney and Fiji National University, for the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA). See <http://www.iwda.org.au/research/measuring-gender-equality-outcomes-economic-growth-pacific/>

<sup>12</sup> The Millennium Development Goals; Progress Report for the Lao PDR 2013, United Nations, p. 73.

<sup>13</sup> The lack of disaggregated data along the high turnover remains a challenge in measuring the key gender indicators.

such as the Market Management Committee,<sup>14</sup> the Market management business unit,<sup>15</sup> vendors groups and service worker groups.<sup>16</sup>

The key players promoting women's interests have limited influence, including the Lao Women Businesses Association, working under the Lao Women's Union (LWU) and the Ministry of Commerce (MOC), as well as the Lao Women Business Group. The mainstreaming of gender is further constrained by the inadequate cooperation between policymakers, market owners and women market vendors regarding the vendor's needs and concerns. Although the Ministry of Commerce has established a complain channel, women are in practice barred from accessing this service due to their limited knowledge about their rights as well as the surrounding social stigma and the negative image of the commerce authorities and market management business.<sup>17</sup>

## II. Objective, scope of work and specific tasks

UN Women Lao PDR requires the services of a research institute under the direct supervision of UN Women Lao PDR to conduct the study on situation for women vendors in Lao PDR. The selected research institute is required to collect and analyse information related to their economic status, time use, value-chain, gender norms/discrimination as well as policies/laws and institutional mechanisms that govern marketplaces and (women) vendors.

The goal of the project is to improve socio-economic security for women market vendors by ensuring that marketplaces in rural and urban areas in Lao PDR are safe, inclusive and non-discriminatory environments that promote women's engagements and empowerment. This research will provide a situational analysis of women vendors in selected local vegetable markets in Vientiane Capital.

<b>Deliverables</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Detailed revised work plan and methodology and a draft questionnaire for interviews/focus group discussion submitted by 5 November, 2015 (tentative date)</li> <li>2. Draft study report by 30 November, 2015 (tentative date)</li> <li>3. Presentation of the draft report to all stakeholders in one day-consultation workshop on 10 December , 2015 (tentative date)</li> <li>4. Revised draft report by incorporating the comments from the consultation workshop by 17 December, 2015 (tentative date)</li> <li>5. Timely submission of a final draft report by 24 December, 2015. (tentative date)</li> </ol> <p>*all the above will have to be in English.</p>
<b>Activities/</b>	<b>The contractor will carry out the following tasks:</b>

<sup>14</sup> Including representatives from the Department of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, the Department Health and the Department of Technology and Environment.

<sup>15</sup> This unit composed of non-government staff managed and supervised by market owner based on their regulation in line with Ministry of commerce regulations.

<sup>16</sup> Rapid- analysis on Market Management Structure Lao PDR, May 2014 draft.

<sup>17</sup> Rapid- analysis on Market Management Structure Lao PDR, May 2014 draft.

<b>Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a desk review, interview and group discussion on policies/laws and institutional mechanisms that govern marketplaces and (women) vendors and analyse if they are gender responsive or address women vendors' issues.</li> <li>• Conduct a desk review, interview and group discussion of existing literature and reports/studies on women vendors' on situational analysis/economic status, time use, value-chain, gender norms/discrimination and other relevant aspects.</li> <li>• Present the draft report to all stakeholders in one day-consultation workshop</li> </ul>
<b>Personnel / Qualifications</b>	<p>Quotation must be submitted by a legally registered organization. The applicant must be a company, organization or an institute with the following qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legally registered organization and based in Lao PDR.</li> <li>• The institute must have staff with Master Degree on Gender, socio-economic development, public policy, employment, social protection or any relevant fields.</li> <li>• Minimum 5 years of experience working in the field of economics, social research methods, or marketing.</li> <li>• Knowledge on Lao PDR is an asset.</li> <li>• In-depth and wide-ranging knowledge of development issues and Multi-Sectoral approaches.</li> <li>• Experience of working with multi-national organizations, inter-governmental organizations and the United Nations Agencies is advantage</li> </ul>
<b>Roles and responsibilities of the parties</b>	<p>UN Women will monitor and evaluate the expected deliverables against the agreed detail work plan and methodology.</p> <p>The selected research institute will conduct the research based on the proposal submitted. When necessary the proposal and methodology may be reviewed as required by UN Women.</p>
<b>Timeframe and location</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The assignment is for duration of maximum 30 working days from October - December 2015 including one day stakeholder consultation.</li> <li>• The study area will be in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR. Travel logistics is not applicable due to the nature and short duration of this assignment. Transportation to the venue of the research areas and workshop will be the responsibility of the research institute and any associated logistic costs should be included in the lump sum fees.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication and reporting obligations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular consultation and meeting between UN Women and selected research institute through face to face, email, teleconference and skype as appropriated and agreed. The selected research institute need to submit the report in timely</li> </ul>

	manner as outlined and agreed in the project proposal/contract. The selected research institute need to update and inform UN Women on the progress of the research regularly as required by UN Women.
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### **Evaluation Method**

Quotations will be evaluated based on UN Women Lowest-Price Technically Compliant methodology. The contract will be awarded to the supplier who meet the requirements and provide the lowest price.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

The quotation is evaluated on the basis of its responsiveness to the Terms of Reference (TOR) as per the criteria mentioned under Personnel/Qualifications section.

### **Submission of Quotation:**

Interested company, institute should submit a quotation in response to the TOR, which should include the following to [procurement.bangkok@unwomen.org](mailto:procurement.bangkok@unwomen.org); to the attention of Procurement Unit no later than 23 October 2015

- Proposal (limited to 4 pages)
- Quotation; the quotation submitted by service provider must include the breakdown costs
- List of the key personnel (name and title)who are expected to perform the services and their CVs
- Related projects in the last 3 years (Name of Project/Clients, Project size/amount in USD, Project duration)
- Three references with full recent contact details