

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Consultancy Vacancy for the

Final Evaluation of the Systematic Mechanism for Safer Trade (SYMST) Project

Background: The [Independent Evaluation Unit](#) (IEU) of the [International Trade Centre](#) (ITC) plans to conduct a final evaluation of the ITC 'Systematic Mechanism for Safer Trade (SYMST) Project'. The purpose of this call for expression of interest is to identify a qualified evaluation consultant to conduct this project evaluation. Therefore, individuals (or teams of consultants) are invited to apply for this assignment.

The main evaluation process, including the preparation of the evaluation, designing the approach, data collection, report writing and communication, is expected to take place in the timeframe from October 2023 to March 2024.

Description and context of the programme: The [SYMST project](#), funded by the EU, aims to provide support to the target countries in ASEAN (Lao PDR and Vietnam) in the area of plant health and pesticide use and control of the Fruit and Vegetable (F&V) as well as on other plant products supply chains. The overall objective of the project is to improve food safety through better governance. The specific objective is to strengthen the regulatory framework for the control of plant health and pesticides in the F&V sector and other plant products through the application of norms and standards and improve market access.

The expected results are:

- Improved awareness and knowledge of private sector and authorities on plant health and pesticides issues in fruits, vegetables and other plant products.
- Improved performance of the regulatory and control institutions and improved capacity of the fruits, vegetables and other plant product supply chain actors to comply with plant health and pesticides control
- Strengthened market access opportunities and facilitated business linkages of fruits, vegetables and other plant products actors from target countries to EU and regional markets.

Main objectives and scope of the evaluation: The final evaluation is expected to determine if the intervention has been successful in achieving its goals and identify its strengths and weaknesses. More specifically, the evaluation is expected to provide:

- an overall independent assessment of the performance of the SYMST project, paying particular attention to its different levels of results measured against its expected objectives and the reasons underpinning such results; and
- key lessons learned, conclusions and related recommendations in order to improve current and future interventions.

The evaluation will assess all elements of the project design, implementation, and management, including processes, operations, and results. It will cover the period from the project implementation (December 2018) to the present. As the project will end on 16 October 2023, potential results related to impact and sustainability will be included. The geographic scope of the evaluation is Lao PDR and Viet Nam.

Application process: To apply, please send your expression of interest to evaluation@intracen.org, with a copy to mfaraq@intracen.org, indicating in the title 'EOI for the SYMST Final Evaluation'. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for an interview.

The application should include an updated CV and 2-3 exemplary reports of evaluations conducted. In addition, applicants are encouraged to address the following questions in their cover letter:

- Why are you interested in this evaluation?
- What expertise and experience do you have that qualifies you for this specific evaluation?
- What are the daily rates that would apply?

The terms of reference for this consultancy are attached in the annex of this document.

--- The closing date for this call is **6 October 2023**

ANNEX**Terms of Reference****Evaluation Consultant**

Assignment title:	Final Evaluation of the 'Systematic Mechanism for Safer Trade (SYMST) Project'
Vacancy job title:	Evaluation Consultant
Duty station:	Home-based
Travel:	Laos PDR and Viet Nam
Total workdays:	Approximately 50 days, from October 2023 to March 2024

Background

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is a joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization for trade-related technical cooperation in developing countries. The Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) of ITC seeks an evaluation consultant (or team of consultants) with proven experience in evaluation, trade and development to design and conduct the final evaluation of ITC's 'Systematic Mechanism for Safer Trade (SYMST) Project'.

Duties and responsibilities

The evaluation consultant (or lead consultant) will work under the supervision of ITC's Associate Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, under the overall guidance of the Head of the IEU, OED/SPPG. The consultant will be responsible for the delivery of the following outputs:

- ***Desk review and inception phase:*** The selected external evaluation consultant reviews the relevant ITC policies, strategies, and project documents and conducts interviews (face-to-face or virtual) with the ITC Project Manager and project team members. The consultant will prepare an inception report. The inception report should clarify the evaluation approach, project ToC and corresponding results chains tailored for each of the projects under evaluation, evaluation questions, evaluation matrix, data collection methods and instruments, major analysis and findings based on desk review, evaluation framework, key issues to be assessed, data gaps to be addressed during evaluation, and timeline of the evaluation. The inception report will include a contextual analysis covering each of the project countries and sectors to be used to identify the most appropriate methodological approach for each country, including mitigation measures should local data collection not be feasible. The inception report should also include an indicative evaluation communication and learning plan. The desk review phase, including the review of the draft inception report and its finalization, should take approximately 5 weeks to complete from the contract starting date.

Main deliverables: draft and final inception reports

- ***Data collection and analysis phase:*** The selected consultant will apply the evaluation methods agreed in the inception report to answer the evaluation questions identified in the inception report and in the evaluation matrix, including triangulation of methods to ensure ideal coverage and assessment and the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Ideally, data collection would include obtaining data, including data collected through interviews with beneficiaries and stakeholders in the respective project countries. If certain conditions (such as travel restrictions, local health situations, or political instability) preclude on-site data collection, alternative forms of data collection must be considered. The evaluation will distil the findings that emerge from the data collected on the projects that contribute to the SYMST project, and the analysis will examine the project from a synthetic perspective, assessing the project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, potential impact, and potential sustainability into a single and coherent final evaluation report. At the end of this phase, an update will be provided to the IEU, and the consultant will provide a presentation of findings and preliminary conclusions in a validation workshop. The data collection and analysis phase, including the validation workshop, should take approximately 6 weeks to complete.

Main deliverables: Update on findings and validation workshop

- ***Reporting phase:*** Following data collection and analysis, the selected consultant will draft the final evaluation report. The draft should be shared with IEU for peer review and quality assurance. Thereafter, the IEU will share the revised draft with the project and other key stakeholders and partners, inviting comments. The comments will be acknowledged and addressed respectively by

the selected consultant. To ensure participation and ownership among key stakeholders, regular consultations will be conducted during the evaluation process. In concrete terms, this implies that key stakeholders (in particular, the SYMST team and the EU Programme Manager) will be consulted at the drafting stages of the (i) terms of reference, (ii) inception report, and (iii) evaluation report and will have the opportunity to provide comments. Moreover, it is envisaged to have a meeting with the SYMST team and the EU Delegations to present and discuss the findings before the conclusion of the final draft of the evaluation report. The reporting phase, including the review and approval of the draft evaluation report and its finalization, should take approximately 8 weeks to complete.

Main deliverables: draft and final evaluation reports; audit trail addressing comments; and a one-page communication on evaluation highlights

Required profile

Education

- Advanced degree in the field of project management, social science, development studies, or another relevant field of study

Experience and skills

- Minimum of 10 years of experience in project/programme evaluations, with no previous engagement/involvement in the design and delivery of the SYMST project;
- Demonstrated knowledge of and a strong record in leading or conducting evaluations (including both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods) of development projects/programmes within the past five years;
- Technical capability to carry out the work required in the projects countries, namely Lao PDR, Viet Nam, and possibly Thailand, with a preference for in-country residents or consultants who have in-country living experience.
- Experience in leading evaluations with the UN and knowledge of the UN evaluation norms and standards and its reporting system would be an asset;
- Knowledge of the UN project operations, with technical competency in trade issues, particularly Aid for Trade, and/or in private sector development approaches;
- Experience and knowledge in evaluating F&V sector and F&V value chain development;
- Knowledge of developing country economies in the region and in-country experience in any of the project countries would be an asset;
- Knowledge of other related local projects/programmes and associated local institutions and government structures in the countries where the project is being implemented will be an asset;
- Ability to analyse and interpret data from a range of sources and write clear and concise analytical reports to bring cross-cutting dimensions into the evaluation, including design, data collection, analysis and report writing.
- Ability to tap into a network or compile a team of country-based interpreters or translators who have had no previous involvement in the delivery of the SYMST project in their respective countries would be an advantage;
- Ability to communicate effectively with various stakeholders, including representatives from governments, donors, the private sector, and other beneficiaries; and
- Ability to be flexible and responsive to changes and demands and to be result-based and open to feedback.

Languages

- Proficiency in English and excellent report-writing skills; and
- Ability to speak one of the local languages (Lao or Vietnamese) would be highly desirable.