

Terms of Reference

Position Title:	Consultant(s)/ Consulting firm to conduct training and hands-on coaching on identifying and accessing networks and high reliable market information, digital applications in production, business management and income-generating economic/livelihood activities for EMW-focused producer groups and their linked members
Location:	Lào Cai Province and online (via Microsoft Teams, etc.), with flexibility based on actual needs
Period of Assignment:	November 2026 – March 2027
Reporting To:	Project Coordinator/GEWEE Focal
Project:	SMEs Promote Resilience, Inclusion, and Innovative Transformation (SPRINT)
Activity Code:	1211.4

1. Background

SMEs Promote Resilience, Inclusion, and Innovative Transformation (SPRINT) is funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC), with an implementation period from 2024-2029. The SPRINT is implemented in Lao Cai province and managed by Cowater International.

Cowater International is a leading global development consulting company founded in 1985. Headquarter in Ottawa, Cowater International has successfully delivered a portfolio of over 2,500 projects and assignments in more than 95 countries. Cowater works with governments, private sector actors, and communities to implement projects that support socio-economic development, institutional strengthening, environmental improvements, and advancing equal opportunities for all.

(Website: <https://www.cowater.com/en/home/>)

- **Introduction of SPRINT Project:**

The SMEs Promote Resilience, Inclusion and Innovative Transformation (SPRINT) Project is a flagship initiative of Global Affairs Canada in Vietnam and is being implemented by Cowater International Inc. in the province of Lao Cai (formerly in Yen Bai province) in northern Vietnam.

The Project aims to improve the socio-economic well-being of ethnic minority women working in the agricultural sector by elevating their economic status, leadership, and agency through the promotion of clean growth. The program will implement a series of interventions

designed to strengthen the performance of ethnic minority women (EMW)-led MSMEs, cooperatives (Coops) and producer groups (PG) in the agri-food sector, with a focus on enhancing agricultural value chains for key commodities such as sticky rice, tea, cinnamon, Hmong apple, bamboo shoots, medicinal herbs, mixed vegetables and mulberry. The primary beneficiaries are ethnic minority women living in the 38 communes of Lao Cai province (belong to six former districts of the former Yen Bai province: Van Chan, Van Yen, Luc Yen, Mu Cang Chai, Tram Tau, Yen Bai city).

The Project is scheduled to run for six years from 2023 until 2029. It will respond to critical skill gaps, knowledge gaps, and incentivize innovation and adoption of agriculture resilience and clean growth, including Renewable Energy (RE) and Energy Efficient (EE) solutions among EMW-led agri-food businesses while promoting sustainable agricultural product marketing and business development strategies to enhance market access and profitability.

2. Purpose of the Consultancy

To contribute to:

- **Intermediate Outcome 1200:** Increased influence of EMW in clean economic growth in the agriculture sector.
- **Immediate Outcome 1210:** Increased access to productive resources and clean growth opportunities by EMW in agriculture.
- **Output 1211:** Market and network information, and digital and financial literacy training provided to EMW

3. Description of the Activity

In 2025, SPRINT implemented 04 training classes for approximately 400 members of EMW-focused agriculture cooperatives, producer groups on access and identifying networks and quality market information, digital applications in business management and operation for cooperatives and producer groups. After that, SPRINT supported to form 12 community-based technical support groups, comprising 39 members. These groups were trained to support communities with the above-mentioned topics. Particularly, they received training on the following topics:

- The 5B Sales Formula, advanced sales skills, Marketing 4.0, and e-commerce platform sales.
- Optimization of green products, the use of local resources and their application to products, legal compliance and standardization, green production, and safety standards.
- Basic financial management and tax knowledge.

In 2026, SPRINT continues the above-mentioned approach by training members of the technical support groups so that they could provide community-level support through the

implementation of Activity 1211.4: Training for producer groups and linked households, with a focus on EMW, participating in the project's priority value chains, on skills to access and identify reliable market information and networks, and the application of digital technologies to income-generating economic and livelihood activities.

Specific as follows:

Conduct training on three themes. Each theme will be delivered through six repeated training classes, for a total of 18 training classes across the three themes.

Each training class will be organized in three days as follow:

- (1) The first day: Training for the 39 members who have been organized into 12 community-based technical support groups across six commune clusters: former Van Chan, Tram Tau, Mu Cang Chai, Van Yen, Luc Yen, and the former Yen Bai City.
- (2) The second and third days: Coaching and hands-on support for the technical support group members as they deliver cascade training to members of producer groups and agricultural household businesses, with a focus on EMW, within their respective commune clusters. Each training session will have 37 participants, reaching a total of 675 participants, of whom 80% will be ethnic minority women.

Three themes as follow:

- **Theme 1:** Market Access, B2B Networking, and Digital Tools for Market Analysis: i) Training on the use of digital tools such as Google Trends, Facebook Insights, and Shopee Seller Center to understand consumer trends and market demand for agri-food products (tea, cinnamon, bamboo shoots, vegetables, indigenous apples, sticky rice, medicinal plants, mulberry); ii) Development of a list of potential buyers and business partners, and establishment of MSME networks, cooperatives, and producer groups.
- **Theme 2:** Product and Packaging Standardization: i) Guidance on designing environmentally friendly, visually appealing, and digitally recognizable packaging and labeling; ii) Integration of QR codes for traceability, quality assurance, and transparency in production practices to strengthen consumer trust.
- **Theme 3:** Financial Management for Producer Groups /Household Businesses: i) Training on the use of government-approved sales applications for household businesses; ii) Record-keeping methods for households, collective groups, and producer groups.

4. Expected results

- The 12 community-based technical support groups have enhanced their knowledge and developed the skills needed to guide and support members of production groups, household businesses, and linked households in financial management, market access, product standardization, and the application of digital technologies in production and business operations.
- 18 training sessions for production groups and linked households successfully delivered, with a total of 675 participants, of whom 80% are ethnic minority women (EMW) (Indicators 1211.1 and 1210.1).
- 50% of participants report feeling confident or very confident in applying knowledge and skills in identifying market information and networks, product standardization, basic financial management, and the use of digital technologies in their production and business activities (Indicator 1200.1).

5. Scope of work

The consultant(s) will coordinate with the Local Coordinator¹ to deliver the following:

- Training of Trainers (ToT) for the 12 community-based technical support groups on the key themes outlined above, including but not limited to the following:

1. Market Access, B2B and Digital Technologies:

Knowledge: How to identify market needs and consumer trends; customer segmentation; sources of market information; concepts and approaches for building B2B networks.

Skills: Using Google Trends, Facebook Insights, and Shopee Seller Center; searching for and screening information; developing a list of potential customers; establishing and maintaining B2B relationships; and guiding others in the use of digital tools.

2. Product Standardization and Packaging:

Knowledge: Principles of packaging and labelling design; brand identity; basic requirements for label information; principles of traceability and QR codes; and environmentally friendly packaging.

Skills: Assessing existing packaging; identifying areas for improvement;

¹ Individuals with relevant experience and knowledge of the local context, selected by the Project based on specific criteria, to work with the consultant(s) in implementing the assignment. Their understanding of the local context will contribute to the effective implementation of the activities and facilitate continued support to participating trainees after the completion of the assignment.

developing label content; creating and using QR codes; and providing advice on improving product presentation on digital platforms.

3. Financial Management and Sales Applications:

Knowledge: Basic financial management principles for household businesses, producer groups, and linked households; revenue, costs, and profit; basic bookkeeping principles; basic knowledge of tax filing; and the functions of sales applications.

Skills: Recording and checking financial records; monitoring income and expenditure; using sales applications; guiding household businesses through basic procedures related to tax filing; and providing guidance to others on these skills.

4. Skills for organizing community sharing sessions, providing hands-on support, and sharing knowledge and information with communities, with a focus on ethnic minority women (EMW).

Provide direct guidance and hands-on support to the community-based technical support groups as they deliver 18 training sessions for producer groups and linked households at the community level. The support will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. How to search for and identify market information, identify potential customers, use simple digital tools to monitor market trends and demand, develop a list of potential customers, and approach/connect with customers and other businesses.
2. How to review and improve packaging and labelling, identify the information required on product labels, use QR codes to provide information on product origin, quality, and production processes, and select packaging that is appropriate, environmentally friendly, and easily recognizable when selling products online.
3. Practical bookkeeping, including recording and monitoring revenue and expenses, managing basic income and expenditure, using basic digital record-keeping tools, using sales applications, and carrying out basic tax filing procedures in accordance with current guidance.

6. Training structure and approach

The consultant(s) will work closely with the Local Coordinator and Project Staff to establish a Zalo group for communication with the 12 technical support groups, conduct one or two online meetings with the 12 groups to discuss and agree on the objectives,

purpose, and approach for implementing the 18 training sessions, and deliver the 18 community-based training sessions.

In terms of methodology, the consultant(s) should ensure the following:

- Ensure active participation, interaction, and appropriate feedback that are responsive to the local context and participants' needs.
- Apply adult learning principles and use a variety of tools and approaches, including illustrative materials, videos, real-life cases, and direct hands-on guidance at the field level.
- Equip the 12 community-based technical support groups with practical tools and coaching so that they can directly organize guidance and knowledge-sharing sessions in their communities on the above-mentioned topics.
- Design gender-responsive training programmes and incorporate participatory learning approaches, such as peer-to-peer learning through pair/group work and case-based group exercises.
- Ensure practical and continuous support to help the technical support groups implement, monitor, and report on the effectiveness of community-level activities.

7. Specific tasks and deliverables

Note: All deliverables shall be completed in Vietnamese.

No	Specific tasks	Description	Deliverables	Deadline
1	Develop the Activity Implementation Plan	- Consult with the Project Staff to gain a clear understanding of the context, requirements, expectations, and coordination arrangements. - Establish contact with the 12 community-based technical support groups and the Local Coordinator. - Participate in one or two online meetings with the community-based technical support groups, Local Coordinator, and Project staff to understand the expectations of the group	One activity implementation plan submitted to the Project for coordination and implementation.	11/2026

		members and prepare the activity implementation plan. - Based on the above, develop the activity implementation plan		
2	Develop the Training of Trainers (ToT) Materials and Provide Technical Support to the 12 Community-Based Technical Support Groups	- Develop a comprehensive training and technical support package, including the training programme, presentation slides, handouts, guidance materials, and technical tools for the technical support groups. - Develop pre- and post-training survey forms	A completed technical support package, including the detailed training programme, presentation slides, handouts, guidance materials, technical tools, and pre- and post-training survey forms	11/2026
3	Develop Simple and User-Friendly Materials for Community-Level Knowledge Sharing by the 12 Technical Support Groups	- Develop a set of materials covering key knowledge, methodologies, simple practical tools, and skills that the 12 technical support groups can apply and use for knowledge-sharing at the community level. - Develop pre- and post-training survey forms.	-One set of materials for community-level knowledge-sharing	11/2026
4	Support and Coordinate with the 12 Technical Support Groups to Deliver 18	- Deliver training for the 12 technical support groups. - Coordinate with the technical support groups to prepare them to participate in knowledge-sharing	-18 community-level training sessions successfully delivered.	11/2026-2/2027

	Training Sessions for Production Groups and Linked Households at the Community Level	sessions and provide direct support in delivering the community-level training sessions, with the consultant(s) providing direct facilitation support when needed.		
5	Reporting on the Training of Trainers (ToT) and Community-Level Training Activities	- Analyse the pre- and post-training survey results; collect quantitative and qualitative feedback from participants to assess the achievement of project indicators, as specified in the expected results and Appendix 1.	-One progress report on the training and community-level training activities	15/12/2026
		- Prepare a consolidated activity report using the Project’s reporting template.	-One final report for the consultancy assignment. (SPRINT template)	15/3/2027
Total working day estimate: 63 days				

8. Consultant Qualifications

Criteria	Required
Education	A university degree in business development, agribusiness or a related field. A master's degree is an advantage.
Experience	- At least 5 years of experience in delivering capacity building, training, mentoring or coaching programs for MSMEs/ cooperatives/ producer groups, preferably in ethnic minority areas - Proven experience in designing and facilitating participatory, hands-on training/coaching programs on topics such as digital tools, market

	access, product standardization, financial management for MSMEs, cooperatives and household business. - Experience working on gender equality, women's economic empowerment, or inclusive market development is highly desirable.
Technical Skills	- Strong skills in training curriculum design, facilitation, and participatory coaching methodologies - Strong expertise in Facebook page/group management, digital marketing, content creation (livestreaming, short-form videos, graphics) - Familiarity with digital applications relevant to MSMEs/cooperatives (e.g., mobile apps for inventory, e-commerce, basic accounting) - Ability to design and apply tools for pre- and post-training assessments, and to document lessons learned - Knowledge of adult learning principles and community-based technical support models.
Language	- Fluency in Vietnamese is required for training delivery and documentation. - Working proficiency in English is preferred, particularly for reporting and documentation purposes.

1. Application Process

Competitive tendering will be applied. Interested consultant (s) are invited to submit the following with the subject line: **[Consultancy Application _ Sub Activity 1211.4 _ Consultant (s)/ Company Name]** to procurement@sprint-vietnam.com by 17.00pm on 17th October 2026:

- Letter of interest
- Consultant CVs
- Technical proposal and financial proposal
- Examples of previous similar work (optional but recommended)
- The Technical Proposal should include the following: the consultant's understanding of the project, the objectives and purpose of the activity; the proposed approach to implementing the activity, including tools and methodologies; a description of the scope of work; expected results, with the number of consultancy days allocated to each result and work component; an implementation plan with the proposed

timeline for each work component; and a brief introduction to the consulting team, including team composition and contact details.

- The Financial Proposal should include a summary of the proposed budget and the consultant's financial requirements, as well as a detailed breakdown of the work components and the number of consultancy days allocated to each work component. The breakdown should specify the allocation of days among individual consulting team members for each work component, the corresponding daily consultancy rate for each consultant, and the total cost. The Financial Proposal should be combined into the same file as the Technical Proposal.

Note: The financial proposal should be developed based on the above-mentioned scope of work and requirements (all applicable taxes included). This amount excludes allowances for local trainers and travel/accommodation expenses for the consultant(s), if incurred during field visits. Equipment for demonstrations will be provided by the project and is not included in the financial proposal.

Cowater is committed to providing equal opportunities for all applicants. Women, people with disability, and people from minority groups are strongly encouraged to apply. We thank you for your interest in building a better tomorrow with Cowater International.

Annex 1- Project monitoring framework indicators

- Output indicator 1211.1: # (total) of targeted EMW trained on/are aware of market and network information, and digital and financial literacy (access outreach)
- Immediate outcome indicator 1210.1: # (total) of targeted EMW having access to productive resources, finance and clean growth opportunities in agriculture
- Intermediate outcome indicator 1200.1: % of total EMW in surveyed reported increased confidence their ability to actively participate and/or influence in the clean economy

APPENDIX 2 – JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE LOCAL COORDINATOR

The Local Coordinator will coordinate communication and collaboration among the consulting team, the 12 community-based technical support groups, and the SPRINT Project. The coordinator will support participant mobilization and attendance tracking, assist with the organization and logistics of training sessions, and maintain regular communication with the technical support groups. The coordinator will also facilitate the exchange of information and feedback among the technical support groups, consulting

team, and SPRINT Project to ensure that activities are implemented smoothly and according to schedule. The coordinator will be responsible for establishing a Zalo group among the relevant parties to facilitate communication, sharing, and updates; maintaining an up-to-date contact list of the 12 community-based technical support groups; and supporting the Project in maintaining regular contact with the groups.