USAID and Australia Mekong Safeguards Program (Mekong Safeguards), implemented by The Asia Foundation, is a six-year (2018 to 2024) program that supports policymakers, government regulators, major financiers, developers, contractors, and communities with technical assistance, knowledge, and tools to foster consistent application of strengthened environmental and social governance standards in the energy, transport, and water sectors in the Mekong Subregion. The program is an exciting opportunity to support new and improved ways governments, financiers, developers, and civil society organizations can invest and build sustainable energy and transportation.

The Asia Foundation’s office in Thailand seeks the services of a qualified and reputable firm to support the Mekong Safeguards on a mission to accelerate the sustainable infrastructure transition in the Mekong Region by reducing the negative environmental and social impacts of large-scale infrastructure project development. The activity under this request for proposal is to strengthen environmental, social, and corporate governance standards (ESG) at the implementation level by engaging with the leading local commercial bank in Thailand (the Bank) to enhance its ESG standard in relation to its infrastructure lending process with direct technical assistance and capacity building to the bank itself as well as its clients under infrastructure-related sector.

The activity will require highly specialized advisory capacity, with sectorial, national, and international experience, to develop a training program to support implementing the Bank’s ESG initiatives regarding sustainability knowledge training for internal and external stakeholders. Interested applicants must read the request for proposal carefully to prepare the necessary documents. This contains three parts:

- PART 1: Services Procured
- PART 2: Qualifications and Application Process
- PART 3: Evaluation Method and Criteria

PART 1: SERVICES PROCURED

Introduction

Environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues can manifest in different ways and are important to consider throughout project development which starts with financing, as they can negatively impact the effectiveness of a project and adversely contribute to, rather than help, wider sustainability issues in the area where they're developed. When not assessed, understood, and managed properly, these issues may result in negative perceptions of development (including negative media and civil society
Sustainable finance is a way of investing that considers ESG factors, not just profits. The banking system has been seen as the main drive for infrastructure development in the Mekong subregion. To facilitate the strengthening of ESG within the banking business, a systematic several-step approach will help. As a starting point, it is key for financial institutions to develop an ESG policy that clearly points out the commitment toward sustainable financing. It will also be critical for financial institutions to have a risk assessment screening tool to help understand the risk associated with projects they’re financing. This will allow the lenders to include necessary covenants in the loan agreement that minimizes environmental and social risks and, ultimately, financiers’ credit and reputational risks. Several financial institutions have developed such ESG policies.

One of the largest commercial banks in Thailand, which has committed to the principle of sustainable banking, aims to enhance its sustainable development operations in alignment with its established ESG policy.

Objectives:

- Support the Bank sustainability department in organizing the training workshop(s) for its staff who are part of the Bank’s lending process for an infrastructure segment on relevant ESG topics so that the Bank can become the leading bank of sustainability
- Support the Bank sustainability department in organizing the training workshop(s) for its clients who are classified as infrastructure-related businesses to enhance understanding of the Bank’s ESG policy to contribute to the Bank’s sustainable value chain

Scope of work:

Under Mekong Safeguards supervision, the awarded applicants shall be responsible for, but not limited to, the following tasks, subject to the discussion and approval of Mekong Safeguards:

Task1: Training Program for Power and Transportation Sector

- Develop and provide training to build management and staff capacity in a deep understanding of decarbonization risks and opportunities arising from climate change and potential decarbonization solutions in the power and transportation sector. The training program shall include, but not be limited to, topics of credit risk in relation to climate change, relevant methodology and guidelines for sustainable financing (ex. Thailand Green Taxonomy), and green financial products.

- Develop and provide training to build the Bank’s clients’ capacity to understand decarbonization risks and opportunities arising from climate change and potential decarbonization solutions in the power and transportation sector. The training program shall include, but not be limited to, basic greenhouse gas accounting, Thailand’s current policy on climate change, relevant
methodology and guidelines for the power and transport sector, and an overview of existing carbon markets.

**Task 2: Training Program for Construction Sector**

- Develop and provide training to build management and staff capacity in a deep understanding of decarbonization risks and opportunities arising from climate change and potential decarbonization solutions in the *construction sector*. The training program shall include, but not be limited to, topics of credit risk in relation to climate change, relevant methodology and guidelines for sustainable financing (ex. Thailand Green Taxonomy), and green financial products.

- Develop and provide training to build the Bank’s clients’ capacity to understand decarbonization risks and opportunities arising from climate change and potential decarbonization solutions in the *construction sector*. The training program shall include, but not be limited to, basic greenhouse gas accounting, Thailand’s current policy on climate change, relevant methodology and guidelines for the construction sector, and an overview of existing carbon markets.

There shall be a bi-weekly, or other mutually agreed periodical, meeting among the consultant, the Bank sustainability department, and Mekong Safeguards for the progress toward each delivery milestone until all the scope of work are completed.

**Deliverables:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverable</th>
<th>Tentative delivery date¹</th>
<th>Suggested % of total contract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 The training program, PowerPoint presentation and in-person training workshop for the Bank’s selected management &amp; staff who are responsible for the power and transportation sector.</td>
<td>Within two (2) months after the contract execution</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The training program, PowerPoint presentation and in-person training workshop for selected power and transportation developers.</td>
<td>Within three (3) months after the contract execution</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 PowerPoint presentation and in-person training workshop for the Bank’s selected management &amp; staff who are responsible for the construction sector.</td>
<td>Within four (4) months after the contract execution</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The training program, PowerPoint presentation and in-person training workshop for selected construction contractors.</td>
<td>Within five (5) months after the contract execution</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Recommendation to the Bank for further ESG enhancement based on feedback from the training workshop.</td>
<td>Within six (6) months after the contract execution</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Delivery dates are adjustable as agreed by Mekong Safeguards and the awarded consultancy firm / individual consultant. Dates in parentheses are estimations based on the contract signing date in July 2023.
Duration:
- Six (6) months (*tentatively from July 2023 to January 2024*).

**PART 2: QUALIFICATIONS AND APPLICATION PROCESS**

**Preferred qualifications:**
- Organization with an extensive sustainability strategy consulting and carbon market track record.
- Experience in developing an in-depth training program on sustainable/green finance. Experienced in working with major financial institutions in Thailand preferred.
- Extensive knowledge and understanding of infrastructure-related business with presence and/or capacity to conduct in-house training in Thailand.

**Limitations**
To be considered as *qualified consultancy firm*, applicants are required to adhere to the following criteria:
- Company must be registered in Thailand since all activities will be conducted in Thailand
- All deliverables/outputs produced under this assignment will be subject to Marking and Branding Requirements as specified by Mekong Safeguards.

**How to apply:**
- Prior to the proposal due date, consultancy firms may submit questions or request further information concerning this request for proposal to Mekong.Safeguards@asiafoundation.org. In the email subject title, please include “*Inquiry on RFP No.: MSP-2023-06-44*.”
- Qualified consultancy firms must submit proposals (including both technical and financial proposals) in the electronic format only to Mekong.Safeguards@asiafoundation.org by **July 31, 2023 5:00 pm Bangkok time**. The email subject title shall include “*Submission of RFP No.: MSP-2023-06-44.*”

- **Proposals for submission (required):**
  Consisting of the following:
  - describing the proposed approach to the assignment
  - A chart showing the timeline of proposed tasks and deliverables.
  - Description of past experiences with similar assignments.
  - CVs of staff proposed to work on the project, including any subcontract (if applicable).
  - Total proposed price.
  - Breakdown of cost by deliverables.

- **Additional documents to be submitted after award of contract:**
  - Company/organization registration.
  - VAT certificate.
  - Proof of good financial standing (in the form of company annual reports or similar documentation):
PART 3: EVALUATION METHOD AND CRITERIA

- The award of the contract shall be made to the qualified consultancy firm whose offer has been evaluated and determined as responsive/compliant/acceptable and represented the best value to the Foundation. The evaluation will be done in ranking, but will not be scored, under each evaluation factor.

- The following are evaluation factors which are in equally order of importance:
  1. **Technical approach** - working approach, and work plan demonstrate a logical, feasible, adequacy and conformity to accomplishing the Scope of Work and deliverables set forth in Part 2 of the request for proposal;
  2. **Staffing Plan** - staffing plan provides for clear roles and responsibilities and ensures efficient operations for both the work implementation and management required to successfully implement the Scope of Work resulting in deliverables set forth in Part 2 of the request for proposal;
  3. **Qualifications and competence** - applicant, including staffs and sub-contractors (if applicable), convincingly demonstrates recent experience in implementing activities similar in scope, geographical, related industry, and complexity to the Scope of Work set forth in Part 2 of the request for proposal. Preference would be given to previous experiences working with USAID, DFAT, and/or commercial banks in Thailand;
  4. **Good Sustainable Business Practice** - applicant should adhere to ethical business practices, especially on matters relating to labor and human rights, occupational health and safety, and social and environmental responsibility. The Asia Foundation always encourages our consultants to minimize their adverse impacts on biodiversity and promote a net positive impact of their actions while providing products or services.
  5. **Financial Proposal** - overall cost proposed are reasonable, realistic, and competitive for the work proposed to perform.

Issuance of this request for proposal does not constitute an award commitment, nor does it commit Mekong Safeguards Program, The Asia Foundation, USAID, DFAT, or any of its funding Partners to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of applications. Further, Mekong Safeguards Program reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. Applications are submitted at the risk of the Applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the Applicant’s expense.

Award of the contract resulting from this request for proposal will be based upon the most responsive organization/company whose offer will be the most advantageous for Mekong as specified in this request for proposal. The Foundation will issue a Service Agreement/Contract following its internal policies and procedures and applicable donor regulations. Payments will be made as per the agreed schedule which will be negotiated and finalized before signing the agreement/contract.

The Asia Foundation reserves the right to:
1. Reject any or all offers and discontinue this request for proposal process without obligation or liability to any potential bidder.
2. Accept other than the lowest priced offer.
3. Conduct discussions with the applicant for the purpose of obtaining “best and final offers.” To obtain best and final offers from bidders, The Asia Foundation may do one or more of the following: Enter pre-selection negotiations, schedule oral presentations, and/or request revised proposals.