

Invitation for Expression of Interest

Consultancy: Assessment of Impacts of Nepal's LDC Graduation and Development of Sectoral Coping Strategies

FNCCI, under the project “Enhancing Nepal’s Inclusive Business Environment and SME Growth,” invites eligible individual consultants and/or consulting firms to submit an Expression of Interest to conduct an assessment on the implications of Nepal’s LDC graduation on Nepali businesses and to develop sectoral coping strategies.

Background

Nepal is currently classified by the United Nations as a Least Developed Country (LDC). “LDC graduation” refers to Nepal’s transition out of the LDC category, following the UN’s graduation criteria and process. It is an important national milestone, but it also marks a shift in the international support measures that are linked to LDC status. Nepal currently benefits from several LDC-specific international support measures. These typically include:

- Preferential market access for exports in key markets (including duty-free and quota-free treatment under some schemes, and relatively flexible rules of origin).
- LDC-targeted development assistance and trade-related capacity-building support.
- Access to more concessional forms of development finance and dedicated LDC windows in some programs/funds (where applicable).
- Special and differential treatment and transition periods under certain international trade obligations (where relevant).

For Nepali businesses—especially SMEs—this transition matters because it can affect export competitiveness, compliance requirements, and access to finance and support programs. This makes early preparedness by the private sector and policy makers essential.

Nepal’s LDC graduation is expected to affect Nepali enterprises through changes in preferential market access, LDC-targeted international support, WTO-related obligations, and evolving financing opportunities linked to improved creditworthiness. FNCCI aims to strengthen the preparedness of businesses and policy makers through evidence generation and targeted awareness events.

Scope of the assignment

The selected consultant will:

- Conduct data analysis, literature review, stakeholder consultations and sectoral studies to assess implications of LDC graduation for Nepali businesses (with focus on agri-SMEs);

- Assess the implications of Nepal's LDC graduation for micro, small, and small-scale exporting businesses, with a specific focus on:
 - small agro-processing enterprises; and
 - women-owned or women-led businesses operating at small scale, including those exporting in small volumes.
- Develop five (5) sectoral coping strategies (practical and implementable) after the completion of the study;
- Support facilitation of three (3) provincial workshops (Koshi, Karnali, Sudurpaschim) and three (3) events in Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur), targeting participation of approximately 350 businesspersons, with at least 50% women participants across events;
- Prepare dissemination-ready materials in Nepali and English for FNCCI's website and social media.

Expected deliverables

- Bilingual assessment report (English + Nepali)
- Five sectoral coping strategies (standalone briefs)
- Bilingual presentation and workshop materials
- Facilitation support for the six events (3 at provincial level and 3 at national level) as described above

Eligibility / qualification requirements

Minimum requirements (individual consultant)

- Advanced university degree (Master's or above) in economics, trade, development studies, business/management, public policy, agriculture economics, or related field.
- At least 7 years of relevant professional experience in trade policy, private sector development, economic research, or LDC graduation-related analysis.
- Demonstrated experience in producing policy/strategy reports and facilitating multi-stakeholder consultations/workshops.
- Strong analytical skills (quantitative and qualitative).
- Excellent English writing; ability to develop materials in Nepali.

Preferred

- Experience with SMEs (preferably agro-process SMEs) and sector competitiveness in Nepal.

- Familiarity with preference schemes, WTO frameworks, and development financing instruments.
- Proven ability to deliver gender-responsive consultation processes (supporting the 50% women participation target in events).
- If a firm/team applies, the proposal should specify a Team Leader and relevant experts, with clear division of roles.

Submission requirements

Interested applicants must submit:

- EOI letter highlighting suitability
- Technical proposal (approach, methodology, workplan, team composition)
- Company profile (for firms)/detailed CV (for individuals) and relevant past assignment references
- Financial proposal (detailed breakdown)

Selection method

- The selection will be based on technical quality and cost reasonableness (quality- and cost-based approach). FNCCI may request presentations or clarifications from shortlisted applicants.

Submission deadline and address

EOIs must be submitted by email by 21 January 2025 to:

Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI)
 Teku, Kathmandu, Nepal
 Email: fncci.hrd@gmail.com

Subject line: ***EOI – LDC Graduation Impact Assessment Consultancy***

FNCCI reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs without assigning any reason.