



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy Services for Scoping Study on Green Investment Ecosystems and Project Pipelines in the EEC

Regional Connectivity and Value Chain (RCV) Department
Mekong Institute, Khon Kaen, Thailand

Project Name:	Special Economic Zones (SEZs) Promotion for Intra-regional Trade in the Lancang-Mekong Region
Assignment Title:	Scoping Study: Green Project Pipelines and Practical Investor Guidelines in the EEC
Implementing Agency:	Regional Connectivity and Value Chains (RCV) Department, Mekong Institute (MI)
Contract Type:	Consultancy Services Agreement (Individual or Firm)
Location:	Home-based; with mandatory fieldwork in Bangkok, Chonburi, Rayong, Chachoengsao, and Prachinburi (Thailand)
Duration:	Jun-Oct 2026 (16 weeks)
Internal Project code:	A023-Y3-1.2-C1

1. Background and Rationale

1.1 The Regional Mandate: Performance and Sustainability

The “SEZs Promotion for Intra-regional Trade and Investment in Lancang-Mekong Region Project” is a three-year initiative implemented by Mekong Institute (MI). As the project enters its final operational year (2026), the mandate has expanded to prioritize “Performance and Sustainability”. The region is undergoing a fundamental transformation where the competitive advantage for attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is no longer defined by low labour costs, but by the ability to offer low-carbon infrastructure, regulatory certainty, and compliance with global Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards.

1.2 The Focus on the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC)

Thailand’s Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) represents the region’s most advanced “Regulatory Sandbox¹” for sustainable industrial development. To support future investments in a smart, green, and sustainable economy, the EEC is developing a 14,000-rai area known as the “Lung of the EEC”². This large-scale green infrastructure initiative is strategically designed to help Thailand meet its net-zero goal by 2050³, serving as a critical carbon sink and sustainable pilot zone for the region.

¹ EECO Act and Industry 4.0 Policy. The Ministry of Industry and EECO have established special measures and guidelines to facilitate “Industry 4.0” and seamless investment systems.

² *The Nation Thailand* (Nov 12, 2024). “14,000-rai ‘Lung of EEC’ to help Thailand meet net zero goal by 2050.” Available at: <https://www.nationthailand.com/news/general/40043217>.

³ Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP). Thailand formally accelerated its Carbon Neutrality target to 2050 in its revised Long-term Low Greenhouse Gas Emission Development Strategy (LT-LEDS) submitted to the UNFCCC

However, navigating this landscape presents several significant operational challenges and pain points for international investors. A primary hurdle is successfully managing Thailand's multi-stage permitting chain - spanning land use, construction, and operation - alongside the critical need to secure a "license to operate" from local communities, where technical compliance alone is often insufficient to prevent community pushback regarding noise or pollution⁴. Furthermore, investors frequently face regulatory and market barriers, including foreign ownership limits, difficulties in finding suitable local partners for joint ventures, and "standards gaps" where foreign environmental equipment lacks readily identifiable certifications for Thai regulatory acceptance. Investors in circular economy and recycling sectors also face challenges in verifying market feasibility and securing reliable feedstock data before committing capital.

1.3 The Need for a Technical Scoping Study

International investors, particularly from China, have demonstrated robust interest in Thailand's green transition, with a strong focus on high-value sectors such as solid waste management, recycling, circular supply chains, and renewable energy. However, to confidently enter the market, these investors require a data-driven approach that addresses their specific operational requirements. They are actively seeking clarity on complex Thai regulatory and environmental standards, pathways for establishing secure local partnerships or joint ventures, and detailed visibility into "ready-to-invest" project pipelines with clear infrastructure readiness information. Furthermore, investors need actionable guidance on securing the "license to operate" from local communities, understanding zoning compatibilities, and navigating combined BOI, IEAT, and EECO investment incentives⁵.

To bridge this knowledge gap and facilitate high-quality investment matching, the project requires a comprehensive Scoping Study that moves beyond general marketing. The study must deconstruct the EEC's green attributes into actionable, data-driven intelligence.

2. Objectives of the Assignment

The Consultant shall lead the design and implementation of the Scoping Study with four primary objectives:

Objective 1: Identify "Ready-to-Invest" Project Pipelines and Technical Assessment

To systematically survey EEC provinces and consult with the EEC Office (EECO), The Thailand Board of Investment (BOI), and the Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand (IEAT) to curate specific, ready-to-invest green project pipelines with clear site profiles, land availability, and infrastructure readiness to drive targeted 1:1 matching.

Objective 2: Develop Practical Investor Guidelines

To formulate a practical, easy-to-understand guide for foreign investors, mapping out Thai environmental certifications, step-by-step operational procedures, joint-venture strategies, permits, and combined BOI/EEC investment incentives.

Objective 3: Provide Technical Support for the Mekong Forum Side Event and the EEC Investment Promotion Activities

⁴ Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand (I-EA-T) Standards. The I-EA-T "Eco-Industrial Town" framework includes levels like "Eco-Champion" and "Eco-Excellence," focusing on environmental protection and community symbiosis.

⁵ Thailand Board of Investment (BOI) 2023–2027 Strategy. Current measures include specific incentives for "Smart and Sustainable" projects, such as those with low Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE).

To serve as the key resource person responsible for facilitating the Mekong Forum Side Event (July 2026), including the presentation of mid-term study findings and validation of data with stakeholders prior to finalization of the study. Furthermore, the assignment will involve analysing investor demand to support the upcoming Regional Green SEZs Investment Forum (tentatively scheduled for October 2026) and Investment Tour (October 2026), as well as providing technical support for the design of the SEZ web portal. The role will also include supplying the necessary raw data and inputs to enhance the “Investment Navigator” on the project’s web portal.

Objective 4: Formulate Next Phase of Project Concept

To formulate a set of actionable development project concepts based on the scoping study findings and identified green investment opportunities, to sustain and scale the current SEZ promotion project, address key development gaps, and further advance the green transition in Thailand and the Lancang–Mekong region.

3. Scope of Work (SOW)

Task 1: Methodology Design & Planning (Week 1-4)

- **Conduct a desk study** to review Thailand’s regulatory framework to promote green industry, green investment policies, key players, and strategic priorities of BOI, EEC and IEAT related to green industries and sustainable investment promotion.
- **Identify the list of key stakeholders** for interviews and coordinate with the MI team to finalize the list of targeted industrial estates and government agencies for site visits.
- **Develop a research framework** to assess green industry potential and project readiness in the EEC.
- **Prepare an inception report** incorporating above preliminary findings at this stage, work plan for the fieldwork and stakeholder interviews.

Task 2: Stakeholder Consultations, Fieldwork, and Green Investment Project Identification (Week 5–10)

- **Stakeholder Consultations and Site Visits:** Work closely with MI staff to conduct consultations and interviews with key stakeholders—particularly the EEC Office (EECO), BOI, MOI, and IEAT—to identify policy priorities, investment facilitation mechanisms, regulatory procedures, and potential green investment projects. Conduct field visits in Bangkok, Chonburi, Rayong, Chachoengsao, and Prachinburi, including assessments of 3–5 high-performing industrial estates, to evaluate green industrial development potential, infrastructure readiness, and key operational challenges within the EEC.
- **Data Collection and Green Investment Project Identification:** Collect, validate, and systematize data on green investment opportunities and transition challenges within the EEC, including industrial estate profiles, green investment needs across selected industrial estates, infrastructure readiness (such as renewable energy and water recycling systems), waste and feedstock availability, fast-track investment procedures, and operational bottlenecks affecting green industries and circular economy sectors. Based on the findings, identify and curate potential green investment projects and preliminary project pipelines for investment promotion and matchmaking purposes.
- **Review the inception report** and provide substantive technical inputs to prepare for the 2nd draft study report, incorporating field findings, stakeholder feedback, and preliminary green investment project pipeline identification.

Task 3: Provision of Facilitation and Technical Support for the Mekong Forum Side Event (Week 7-9)

- **Session Presentation and Facilitation:** Serve as the key resource person to present the key findings of the scoping study and facilitate the onsite discussion during the 2.5-hour Side Event of the Mekong Forum scheduled on July 22, 2026.

- **Data Validation:** Use the session as a dynamic dialogue platform to share mid-term study findings and validate collected data with the targeted participants, which include the key stakeholders, industrial estate leaders and Chinese investors.
- **Speaker/Moderator Role:** Act as a potential keynote speaker and/or actively moderate the interactive panel discussion and group discussion to capture operational insights, investment needs, and specific requirements from international investors.
- **Event Documentation and Reporting:** Prepare a summary of the discussion outcomes, which will contribute to the 3rd draft of the study report.

Task 4: Practical Investor Guide & Market Demand Analysis (Week 10-12)

- **Develop a Practical Investor Guide for Green Investment in the EEC,** tailored to address key operational challenges and pain points faced by foreign investors, particularly Chinese investors. The guide shall cover Thailand’s environmental and industrial regulatory framework, step-by-step procedures for factory establishment, combined BOI/IEAT/EEC incentive schemes, and requirements for obtaining environmental compliance and “license to operate” at the local level. Map and simplify Thai environmental standards, certification requirements, and permitting procedures to enhance investor understanding and reduce regulatory complexity.
- **Analyse investor demand and sectoral interests**—particularly in green industries such as circular economy, recycling, renewable energy, and sustainable manufacturing (to be further confirmed by EECO)—to identify investment gaps and opportunities within the EEC.
- **Match identified Chinese investor interests with Thailand’s industrial capabilities and investment project pipeline** and recommend 2–3 priority thematic investment areas for the Regional Green SEZs Investment Forum (October 2026) and Investment Tour (October 2026).

Task 5: Final Reporting and Technical Support for the SEZs Promotion Activities (Week 13-16)

- **Prepare and submit the Final Scoping Study Report,** consolidating findings on the EEC’s green investment ecosystem, including regulatory analysis, stakeholder consultations, fieldwork results, and validated project pipeline data. The report shall provide actionable insights and recommendations to facilitate high-quality investment matching and support the strategic objective of “Performance and Sustainability” in the Lancang–Mekong region. Crucially, the report must distill **'lessons learnt for other SEZs'** to be shared with a wider audience and include proposed project concepts for the next-phase initiative to continuously support green SEZ promotion and development in Thailand and the Lancang–Mekong region.
- **Provide overall technical guidance to the MI team for the design and organization of the SEZ Green Investment Forum and Investor Tour scheduled for October 2026 under the LMC-SEZ Project.** The guidance includes advising on the overall event concept, recommended session themes and discussion topics, and investor engagement approaches, based on scoping study findings—particularly identified green industrial opportunities and potential projects, Thailand–China investment matching potential, sector-specific investment demand, and priority areas for regional green industrial cooperation and investment promotion.
- **Compile and deliver a clean, structured dataset of collected and validated information,** including industrial estate profiles, infrastructure readiness, utilities, waste/feedstock availability, and green investment project pipeline data, to support the development and enhancement of the “Investment Navigator” on the project’s web portal. In addition, provide technical guidance to the MI team for the design of the SEZ platform. The Consultant’s responsibility is limited to data provision and validation within the scope of the study; platform development is excluded.

Scoping Study Timeline

Task	Jun				Jul				Aug				Sept			
	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	W12	W13	W14	W15	W16
Task 1: Methodology Design & Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓												
Task 2: Stakeholder Consultations, Fieldwork, and Green Investment Project Identification					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Task 3: Provision of Facilitation and Technical Support for the Mekong Forum Side Event							✓	✓	✓							
Task 4: Practical Investor Guide & Market Demand Analysis										✓	✓	✓				
Task 5: Final Reporting and Technical Support for the SEZs Promotion Activities													✓	✓	✓	✓

4. Expected Deliverables and Timeline

Phase	Deliverable	Description	Deadline	Payment
1	Inception Report	Referring to task 1, it should include the findings of desk study, detailed work plan, list of stakeholders for interviews, fieldwork itinerary, and proposed methodology and research framework.	Week 4	20%
2	2nd Draft Report, Mekong Forum Side event & Practical Investor Guide	Referring to tasks 2, 3, and 4, the deliverables should include: 2.1. Summary of stakeholders' interviews, site visits and a curated list of "Ready-to-Invest" project pipelines. 2.2. Successful implementation and summary report of the side event to share preliminary findings and validate data. 2.3. Submission of the comprehensive practical guide for investors. Note: Above outputs (2.2 & 2.3) will contribute to preparing for the 3rd version of the study report.	Week 12	50%
3	Final Outputs	Referring to task 5, the deliverables should include:	Week 16	30%

		<p>3.1 Final Scoping Study Report</p> <p>3.2 Provided overall technical guidance to the MI team for the design and organization of the Regional Green SEZs Investment Forum and Investor Tour scheduled for October 2026 under the LMC-SEZ Project.</p> <p>3.3 Provided guidance to MI team to final design the SEZ web portal and provided the finalized Data Set (M.S. Excel format) collected through the scope of the study as the input of the SEZ web portal (EEC segment).</p>		
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Note: The timeline and specific deliverables are subject to change based on negotiation with the selected consultant.

5. Technical Requirements

MI welcomes applications from individual consultants or boutique firms.

- **Education:** Master’s degree in economics, investment, environmental science, business, or related fields.
- **Experience:**
 - Minimum 5 years in industrial development, SEZs, or investment promotion.
 - Familiarity with Thailand’s EEC and Green/Sustainability policies.
 - Understanding of Chinese outbound investment trends is highly desirable.
- **Skills:** Strong research, writing, and data organization skills (Excel).

6. Professional Fee and Payment

- **Professional Fee:** The financial proposal should be a competitive Lump Sum amount covering professional fees and personal overheads.
- **Travel Costs:** MI will directly cover the cost of economy class flights, local transportation, and accommodation for the field mission and the Mekong Forum in accordance with MI regulations. However, per diem expenses must be covered by the Consultant and should be included within the Consultant’s financial proposal.

7. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on a combined scoring method:

- **Technical Proposal (70%):** Evaluated based on the consultant’s methodology, understanding of the EEC and green standards, relevant past experience, and qualifications.
- **Financial Proposal (30%):** Evaluated based on the overall cost-effectiveness of the submitted lump-sum fee.

8. Required Documents for Submission

Interested candidates (individual consultants or firms) are invited to submit the following documents **no later than 5 June 2026**.

1. Cover Letter:

- Motivation for applying and suitability for the assignment
- Relevant experience in green investment analysis, provide guidance for SEZ and industrial estates green development, circular economy, and sustainable infrastructure development, particularly in Thailand and/or the EEC

- Demonstrated familiarity with EEC regulatory frameworks, BOI/IEAT incentive systems, and investment facilitation mechanisms (preferable)
 - Experience engaging or analysing Chinese or international investors, including sectoral focus (e.g. renewable energy, recycling, waste management, sustainable manufacturing)
 - Availability for the full assignment period (June–October 2026), including field missions
2. **CV/Resume:** Detailed CV of the lead consultant and all proposed team members (if applicable). Clearly highlight:
- Relevant assignments (last 10–15 years preferred)
 - Experience in green investment promotion, or SEZ and industrial park development and promotion, industrial policy, or ESG/green economy
 - Experience in Thailand, ASEAN, or Mekong Region (if any)
 - Experience working with government agencies, development partners, or industrial estate authorities
 - Publications or technical reports related to investment, sustainability, or industrial development
3. **Technical Proposal (Max 5 pages):** Outlining the proposed methodology, data collection strategy, and understanding of the deliverables of the assignment.
4. **Financial Proposal:** Total lump sum fee (USD), explicitly inclusive of per diem costs for fieldwork.
5. **Work Sample:** Two samples of previous study report, and/or data project related to green investment market analysis, industrial development and sustainability.

9. Submission Process

- a. Submit the complete proposal package via the online application link:
<https://forms.gle/ZC5YFtxmKB4aPYMGA>
- b. In the consultant title or application form, select “**Scoping Study on Green Investment Ecosystems and Project Pipelines in the EEC**”
- c. All proposals must be received no later than May 28, 2026, 23:59 (Bangkok Time).
- d. Late submissions will not be considered.