

TERMS OF REFERENCE
Technical Assistance to PICO

Contracting Authority: Department of Planning and Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)

Location: Based in one of the Project Provinces: Xayabouly (1 person), Vientiane Province (1 person), Vientiane Capital (1 person), Bolikhamxay Province (1 person) and Khammouane Province (1 person)

INTRODUCTION

The Government of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (GoL) received a US\$ 25 million credit from World Bank to implement the Agriculture Competiveness Project (ACP). The project development objective is to enhance the competitiveness of selected agricultural value chains in the project areas. The project will be implemented over 6 years from 2018 to 2024 in five project provinces, including Khammouane, Bolikhamxay, Xayabouly, Vientiane Province, and Vientiane Capital. The project implementation is led by the Department of Planning and Finance (DPF) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), and its implementing agencies include technical departments of MAF, technical department of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC), Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices (PAFO), Provincial Industry and Commerce Office (PICO) in the five project provinces. The project has four components: (a) Improved Agricultural Efficiency and Sustainability, (b) Enhanced Agricultural Competitiveness, (c) Project Management, and (d) Contingent Emergency Response:

Component A - Improved Agricultural Efficiency and Sustainability (est. US\$ 18.2 million, of which International Development Association (IDA) would finance around US\$ 16.3 million). This component will support: (a) the increased adoption of improved varieties and high-quality seeds, (b) the increased application of good agricultural practices, (c) the provision of critical productive infrastructure, and (d) the strengthening of public services delivery.

Subcomponent A1: Promoting Adoption of Good Varieties and Quality Seeds (estimated US\$2.5 million, of which IDA would finance around US\$2.3 million)

This subcomponent will support activities to promote the adoption of good varieties and quality seeds, including the provision of (a) technical assistance (TA) for the establishment of seed multiplication groups (SMGs) and building their capacity to adopt good varieties and quality seeds (including ones resistant to climate variability such as floods and drought) ; (b) Matching Grants to selected SMGs to carry out Sub-projects (i.e., small works, goods, equipment, and so on) for improving the production and postharvest handling, packaging, and storage of quality seeds; (c) technical and material assistance (i.e., small works, goods, equipment, training, and so on) to build the capacity of Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices (PAFOs), District Agricultural and Forestry Offices (DAFOs), MAF technical departments, and research institutions to conduct training for SMGs and to carry out seed quality monitoring and certification; and (d) TA to link SMGs with Farmer Production Groups (FPGs) and Agribusinesses (ABs) in marketing certified seeds.

Subcomponent A2: Promoting Good Agricultural Practices (estimated US\$7.4 million, of which IDA would finance around US\$6.2 million)

This subcomponent will support activities to promote GAP , including the provision of (a) TA for the establishment of FPGs and building their capacity to adopt GAP; (b) Matching Grants to

selected FPGs to carry out Sub-projects that implement GAP; (c) TA and material assistance (i.e., small works, goods, equipment, training, and so on) to build the capacity of PAFOs, DAFOs, and MAF technical departments to conduct training for FPGs on GAP and to carry out related extension and certification activities including soil analysis, organic fertilizer production, and organic farming; and (d) TA to link FPGs with ABs in marketing farm produce.

Subcomponent A3: Providing Critical Productive Infrastructure (estimated US\$6.2 million, of which IDA would finance around US\$5.7 million)

This subcomponent will support activities to improve critical irrigation infrastructure and water use practices, including (a) rehabilitation of selected irrigation schemes and (b) provision of TA to establish water user groups and to build their capacity to adopt improved water use models. Through improving water use, management, and productivity of existing irrigation schemes, it is expected to enhance their resilience to impacts of climate change.

Subcomponent A4: Strengthening Public Services Delivery (estimated US\$2.1 million, of which IDA would finance US\$2.1 million)

This subcomponent supports activities to strengthen agricultural and nutrition service delivery, including the provision of technical and material assistance (i.e., small works, goods, equipment, training, and so on) to (a) improve the overall extension service capacity of the PAFOs, DAFOs, and MAF technical departments to deliver better quality services to farmers to promote GAP adoption and enhance resilience to climate change; (b) develop and implement mapping and demarcation pilots for agricultural land in irrigated areas; and (c) conduct studies on integrated farming systems and diversification for nutrition, and carry out social behavioral change communication (SBCC) activities related to dietary diversity, adequate care practices, and processing and cooking for improved nutrition

Component B - Enhanced Agricultural Commercialization (est. US\$ 7.2 million, of which IDA would finance around US\$ 4.8 million). The project will support: (a) establishing an Agriculture Value Chain Facility (AVCF), (b) measures to better link farmers to markets, and (c) studies to improve the enabling environment for agro-enterprise and value chain development.

Subcomponent B1: Establishing an Agricultural Value Chain Facility (estimated US\$5.3 million, of which IDA would finance around US\$2.9 million)

This subcomponent will support the establishment and operation of an AVCF for the purpose of extending technical and financial services to AB), including the provision of (a) TA to establish and operate the facility and provide advisory and Subproject implementation support to ABs; and (b) Matching Grants to selected ABs to carry out Subprojects for upgrading their processing and postharvest handling facilities and their management capacities to improve product quality, increase operational efficiency (including improved energy efficiency), reduce physical losses, and link with FPGs to improve marketing of the farm produce.

Some 30 ABs operating in rice, maize, and vegetables will be selected and provided with matching grants. Sizes of the matching grants (50% of total cost) range from around US\$25,000 for a vegetable AB to around US\$ 125,000 for a rice AB. The total matching grants for ABs under the

project will be around \$2.9 million. The eligible items that will be financed by ACVF include: goods, consulting services and civil works, as defined by Project Operation Manual (POM).

The AVCF will be supervised, on behalf of the Government, by a National Food Security Committee Secretariat, with majority of Government representatives, but also including private-sector representation. This committee will approve work plans, and review progress reports of the AVCF. An independent management entity (the consulting firm) is selected to be the “AVCF Management Team”. The AVCF Management Team will report on a day-to-day basis to the DPF. The business cycle of AVCF will consist of two stages:

Preparation phase:

- (1) Call for business proposals and assist interested ABs in preparing and submitted business proposals.
- (2) Assist the selected ABs whose business proposals are accepted to develop and submit the full business plans.

Implementation phase:

- (3) Provide technical advice to assist selected ABs in implement the approved business plans.
- (4) Monitoring the progress and evaluate the results

Subcomponent B2: Linking Farmers to Markets (estimated US\$1.4 million, of which IDA would finance US\$1.4 million)

This subcomponent will support activities designed to link farmers to markets, including the provision of TA to (a) strengthen the horizontal links of farmers within FPGs for implementing procurement, marketing, and other collective actions, and the vertical links of FPGs and ABs in productive partnerships to undertake further processing and marketing of the produce; and (b) develop an improved agriculture market information system to provide reliable market information for productive partnerships. Through strengthening the market linkages, it is expected to make farmers more resilient to climate change.

Subcomponent B3: Improving the Enabling Environment (estimated US\$0.5 million, of which IDA would finance US\$0.5 million)

This subcomponent will support activities by MAF technical departments, MOIC and other relevant agencies to improve the enabling legal, policy and institutional environment for supporting ABs investment and agricultural trade policies, including the development of improved sanitary and phytosanitary standards, rice standards and rice export policies, and improved import and export legislation focusing on agriculture inputs and farm machinery

Component C - Project Management (est. US\$ 2.9 million, of which IDA would finance US\$ 2.9 million). The component will support (a) project management; and (b) monitoring and evaluation.

Subcomponent C1: Project Management (estimated US\$2.4 million, of which IDA would finance US\$2.4 million)

This subcomponent will support the day-to-day implementation, coordination, and management of project activities including planning and execution, financial management (FM), procurement, internal and external audits, and environmental and social safeguards management.

Subcomponent C2: Monitoring and Evaluation (estimated US\$0.5 million, of which IDA would finance US\$0.5 million)

This subcomponent will support the day-to-day monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of project activities.

Component D: Contingent Emergency Response (US\$0 million)

This component with a provisional allocation of zero dollars is included under the project in accordance with OP10.00, paragraphs 12 and 13, for projects in situations of urgent need of assistance or capacity constraints. This will allow for rapid allocation of project proceeds in the event of the Government declaring that a crisis or emergency has occurred and the World Bank Group agreeing with such determination. This component would finance public and private sector expenditures on a positive list of goods and/or specific works, goods, services, and emergency operation costs required for emergency recovery. An Emergency Response Manual (ERM) will apply to this component, detailing FM, procurement, safeguards, and any other necessary implementation arrangements

The project is selecting an individual consultant to provide technical assistance to Provincial Commerce and Industry Office (PICO) of Xayabouly, Vientiane Province, Vientiane Capital, Bolikhamxay and Khammouane Province on project implementation in agricultural value chains in support of ABs in close coordination with the AVCF management team in the target province.

Objectives of the assignment

The consultant will assist PICO to plan, implement and monitor the project activities at provincial level, including preparation of the Annual Work Plan and budget, implementation of physical activities, coordination and reporting. He will have a key role in delivering training and coaching to PICO and DICO staff to implement the AVCF matching grants for ABs and productive partnerships with FOs. He/she will have a key role in coordination between PAFO, PICO, ABs, the AVCF manager and other project stakeholders. His/her duties will also include documentation and dissemination of best practices in liaison with other technical consultants at central and provincial level.

Scope of the assignment

Specific duties and responsibilities will be to assist the project focal point at PICO and DICO in:

- Monitoring implementation of AVCF matching grant for ABs and participating in disseminating guidelines and forms for AVCF and value chain activity implementation.
- Identifying existing ABs established in the province and review existing roster of ABs at provincial level.
- Provide training and coaching to PICO and DICO staff as well as other relevant agencies for implementation of the matching grant facility for ABs.
- Organizing marketing and communication campaign for existing ABs established in the province
- Supporting ABs in preparing expression of interest as well as providing training on business plan preparation in applying for AVCF matching grants.
- Assisting ABs in compliance with laws and regulations related to business registration and tax system.

- Supporting selected ABs in preparing business proposals and business plans in coordination with the AVCF manager.
- Supporting implementation of the approved business plan for ABs that have been granted a matching grant.
- Facilitating and monitoring contractual relationships between ABs and Farmers Organizations.
- Assisting M&E staff at provincial and district level in collecting data and maintaining the database for ABs, AVCF matching grants and ABs contributions.
- Facilitating coordination between PAFO, PICO and consultants at provincial level and at the central level.
- Assist the provincial project director in preparing quarterly and annual reports as well as technical and training reports as required

Reporting

The consultant will work under the supervision and report directly to the National Project Director.

Duration

This assignment will last for a minimum of 3 years. The consultant's annual contract will be extended on a yearly basis depending on performance review and as recommended by the Project Director. There will be a 3-month probation period beginning at the commencement of the position.

Experience and qualifications

The selection of this position will be primarily based on the following criteria:

- At least a bachelor's in business management, commerce, economics or technical backgrounds related to SME and value chain development; and has at least 7 years of relevant experience.
- Minimum 5 years working experience of a consultant role in agricultural/business value chains and small and medium enterprise (SME) development; with at least two years' experience with externally financed projects.
- Excellent communication skills, including email management. Excellent word processing skills (MS Word, MS Excel). Written and spoken fluency in English is highly preferred.

Source of information

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