**Terms of Reference**

**Junior Agronomist /Agricultural Extension Expert at PAFO**

**(Lao National)**

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

Location: PAFO Offices in Khamouane, Bolikhamsai, Xayaboury, Vientiane Provinces and Vientiane Capital

Duration: Twelve months with renewable (subject to satisfactory performance).

**Introduction**

The Government of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (GoL) received a US$ 25 million credit from World Bank to implement the Agriculture Competitiveness 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.

Under Component A- Improved Agricultural Efficiency and Sustainability, one of the key challenges in improving agricultural competitiveness is the ability of smallholder farmers to adjust resource use efficiently in response to market opportunities. This requires greater emphasis on GAPs, including the adoption of good quality seeds and sustainable use of soil and water resources at both farm and communal levels. Another important aspect is the institutional capacity to monitor chemical use at the farm level and to certify the farm produce quality. These are the key steps in enhancing food safety and agricultural quality to meet the increased requirement of a competitive market resulting from the greater trade integration. The component will support (a) the increased adoption of improved varieties and high-quality seeds, (b) the increased application of GAP, (c) the provision of critical productive infrastructure, and (d) the strengthening of public services delivery. The project will have a single matching grant mechanism for producer organizations, with two windows for SMGs and FPGs, as described under *Subcomponent A1* and *Subcomponent A2.*

*Subcomponent A1- Promoting Adoption of Good Varieties and Quality Seeds:* The project supports activities to promote the adoption of good varieties and quality seeds. The subcomponent aims to increase the availability and utilization of improved varieties and high-quality seeds mainly in rice (including ones resistant to climate variability such as floods and drought) in the project areas. The project aims to support to some 68 rice SMGs to produce and supply certified seeds to some 220 rice FPGs who would adopt GAP over 30,000 ha (under Subcomponent A2). Some vegetable SMG pilots will also be carried out. SMG will be provided with Matching Grants to selected SMGs to carry out Sub-projects for improving the production and postharvest handling, packaging, and storage of quality seeds.

*Subcomponent A2- Promoting Good Agricultural Practices*. The project supports activities to promote GAP which aims to promote the use of certified seeds, sustainable soil and water management, integrated pest management (IPM), alternative wet and dry practices in rice farming, and crop rotation and diversification to reduce GHG emissions and improve climate resilience and adaptation. The project also supports the improvement of (individual) on-farm infrastructure and (collective) postharvest systems consistent with the principles of GAP, thereby contributing to increased farm income, improved product quality, and smaller (or positive) environmental footprints. Farmers are organized into Farmer/Producer Groups (FPGs) and their capacities are strengthened to adopt Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). The project will provide support to some 220 rice FPGs, 70 maize FPGs, and 50 vegetable FPGs who would adopt GAP over 30,000 ha. FPGs will be provided with Matching Grants to selected FPGs to carry out Sub-projects that implement GAP to improve quality and ensure effective postharvest handling, packaging, and storage of farm produce.

The Department of Planning and Finance (DPF) is seeking to recruit five qualified Junior Agricultural Extension Experts to provide agricultural extension services to SMGs and FPGs and provide activity implementation support to PAFOs and its Senior Technical Consultants.

Recruitment process will follow a competitive selection in accordance with the World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers: Procurement in Investment Project Financing dated July 1, 2016, revised November 2017.

**Objectives of the assignment**

The Consultant will act as **intermediary between project and SMGs/FPGs. He or she will operate as facilitators and communicators, helping farmers in their decision-making and ensuring that needed agricultural technologies (i.e. good agricultural practices (GAP), organic agriculture (OA) and so on) are implemented to obtain the best results in respect of** Component A—**I**mproved Agricultural Efficiency and Sustainability**.**

**Scope of the assignment**

Specific duties and responsibilities include:

***1. Provide Agricultural Extension Services to SMGs and FPGs***

* Propagate new farming methods such as Good Agriculture Practice (GAP) or Organic Agriculture Practice to farmers/producers.
* Communicate to SMGs/FPGs on agricultural information on farming requirements of GAP and seed multiplication, on how best to prepare quality production plan as part of SMG/FPG’s Investment Plan.
* Ensure that farmers/producers understand GAP, organic agriculture and use them on their farms in order to adopt these agriculture technologies in accordance with the Investment Plan.
* Encourage farmers to adopt new, improved methods of farming, using a variety of methods to reach the farmers (i.e. organizing demonstration plot by introducing new farming technologies).
* Assist SMGs and FPGs to link to MAF’s agriculture service centers in provinces and at the central level to provide timely agricultural services.
* Assist PAFO/DAFO to monitor GAP implementation by SMGs/FPGs by following documentary requirements, templates, record keeping and quality assurance.
* Identify bottlenecks of implementing new agriculture technology to Senior Technical Consultant and PAFO for solution.
* Assist farmers to have access to agriculture technology and market information.
* Assist SMGs and FPGs to develop a seasonal production plan and link them to market demand.

***2. Activity Implementation Support.***

* Assist Senior Technical Consultant and PAFO in preparing the Annual Work Plan and budget based on the project documents and in line with the project expected outputs and impacts.
* Assist Senior Technical Consultant and PAFO to design appropriate agricultural extension curriculum for SMGs and FPGs engaging in Seed Multiplication and GAP production.
* Disseminate forms, templates and guides of GAP and Organic Agriculture to SMGs and FPGs.
* Organize and provide training to PAFO and DAFO staff on extension services (i.e. GAP/Organic Agriculture).
* Provide timely support to SMGs/FPGs in implementing seed multiplication techniques and GAP production techniques.
* Guide and train village-level facilitators in support of SMGs and FPGs on Investment Plan implementation.
* Track activity implementation, progress and report on results in fulfillment of the Project Result Framework.

**Reporting**

The Consultant will work under the supervision and report directly to the Provincial Technical Consultant and PAFO. The assistant will also work closely with other consultants at provincial level.

**Duration**

This assignment will be full-time services for a minimum of 3 years. The contract will be extended on a yearly basis depending on performance review and as recommended by the Project Director. The consultant will need to pass a three-month probationary period from the commencement of the assignment.

**Experience and qualifications**

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

* Bachelor’s Degree in Agronomy, Agricultural Extension or Agricultural Economics.
* Minimum three years of working experience in a technical consultant role in agricultural development or crop farm management.
* Excellent communication skills including PowerPoint Presentation, email management
* Excellent word processing skills (MS Word, PowerPoint, MS Excel)
* Good command of English (Writing, Speaking)
* Eligible candidate must be a Lao national.
* Willing to travel and work in the project provinces.

**Source of information**

*Department of Planning and Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry*

*Lao Agriculture Competitiveness Project (LACP)*

*National Project Management Office*

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