

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
**Package MAF/IC-39:**  
**International Social and Environment Safeguard Supervisor**

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

Location: Work from home or in the country of consultant

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

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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:

**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 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 agribusinesses 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 the 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 agribusinesses, including the provision of (a) TA to establish and operate the facility and provide advisory and Subproject implementation support to agribusinesses; and (b) Matching Grants to selected agribusinesses (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 submitting 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 implementing the approved business plans.
- (4) Monitoring the progress and evaluating 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 agribusinesses 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 agribusiness 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 the 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

## **2. Objective of the assignment**

An international Environment and Social Safeguard consultant (IESSC) will provide guidance to the national safeguard consultant in conducting E&S impacts screening and preparing the required safeguards documents including mitigation plans and E&S monitoring report to ensure project implementation complies with the project's safeguard documents. These are an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and Ethnic Group Engagement Framework (EGEF), and Compensation and Resettlement Policy Framework (CRPF) which were prepared for the project in accordance with relevant national laws and WB safeguard policies triggered by the project including: (i) Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01); (ii) Pest Management (OP 4.09); (iii) Natural Habitats; (iv) Indigenous Peoples (OP/BP 4.10); (v) Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12); (vi) International Water Ways (for irrigation rehabilitation).

## **3. Duties and Responsibilities**

Provide guidance and support the national Environment and Social Safeguard Specialist and focal persons from NPCO and PAFOs to fulfill the safeguard requirements. These include impact screening, additional specific E&S assessments that may be required, and completion of required safeguard reports and instruments for investment activities under all project components, focusing on (i) irrigation rehabilitation schemes to ensure the safeguard reports are completed on time for the procurement and construction and (ii) matching grant investments of ABs and farmer groups supported by the project.

- With input from the National E&S Safeguard consultant, assist the focal persons of NPCO and PAFOs in preparing and updating annual safeguard implementation workplans and budget which will form part of the Project Annual Workplan and Budget (AWPB).
- Consolidate the results of the field work conducted at the subproject level into a coherent and approvable safeguards assessment and mitigation plan.
- Provide input prior to field visits, based on feasibility studies or Business plan drafts to steer an efficient discussion and data collection at the subproject level.
- Develop and provide training and support to the national safeguard consultant and provincial safeguard focal persons to develop their capacity in the safeguard implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- Prepare semi-annual and annual safeguards monitoring reports including the status of Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) as required by the World Bank, using the inputs from the national safeguard consultant and provincial safeguard focal persons. Provide a safeguard input extracted from the safeguard monitoring report to semi-annual and annual project progress reports for submission to the WB.
- Consolidate comments and suggestions received from the stakeholders during the consultation and implementation processes and provide in the safeguard reports and mitigation instruments.
- Prepare and provide advice on the safeguard compliance monitoring and reporting system for the MAF.
- Ensure coherence in safeguard documents between Feasibility studies and technical design, as well as between environmental and social safeguard chapters
- Review and edit or update for all safeguard-related documents prepared in English before submission and resubmission to the WB for review and clearance to ensure that the quality of the documents is acceptable and approvable by the WB before disclosure on the project/ministry's website.
- Update the existing safeguard documents (ESMF, EGEF and CRPF) and the safeguard section of the Project Operation Manual applied under the project as required during the project implementation or project restructuring that may be required.

#### **4. Consultant Qualification Requirements**

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- At least a Master's degree in one of the following fields of study: social sciences, community development, natural resource management, environmental studies, environmental management, or other relevant academic studies.
- Demonstrated experience in preparing the environment and social safeguard documents for irrigation rehabilitation and other investments in the agriculture sector with World Bank funding.

- Experience preparing and implementing development projects financed by World Bank. Experience with World Bank Group's Operational Policies and Performance Standards is a plus.
- Ability to effectively communicate in English Language and strong report writing skills are essential.

#### **5. Number of working days and duration of the assignment**

The Consultant will work during 12 months (Six (6) months per year) with possible extension subject to satisfactory performance. The consultant will be mobilized when there is work that needs her/his guidance, review, and inputs (she/he does not need to work 8 hours per day and 22 days per month for the project). The consultant can work from his/her country during the pandemic lockdown and may conduct some travels to project sites when international and domestic travels are back to normal.

#### **6. Source of information**

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