

TERMS OF REFERENCE
Package MAF/IC-04: National Project Advisor

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

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 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 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 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 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 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 a National Project Advisor to provide technical assistance and support to DPF in project implementation and provide advices on project implementation issues to technical departments of MAF and PAFOs and in close coordination with the Part-Time Project Advisor for MOIC DPC in support of technical departments of MOIC and PICOs.

Objectives of the assignment

The consultant will assist LACP National Project Coordinator/Director in DPF in project management including preparation of annual work plan, monitoring and keeping tracks of project implementation, preparation of project progress reports and timely advisory support on technical and managerial issues of the overall project implementation under the technical guidance of the international project advisor.

Scope of the assignment

The consultant will perform the following specific tasks:

Task 1: Provide technical advice and assistance to NPMO, Technical Departments of MAF and MOIC, PAFOs and PICOs in their preparation of the Annual Work Plan and Budget based on the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) and POM for LACP implementation.

- Review and assist NPMO, technical departments of MAF and MOIC, PAFOs/PICOs in their preparation of annual work plans and budgets based on the description of project activities in PAD.
- Review and update all project templates for project activity implementation based on the preliminary templates, cost tables, etc. in POM.

- Serve as the focal point to clarify queries and questions requested by implementing agencies to ensure that they understand and follow principles and approaches in the LACP's activity implementation.
- Project documents are properly disseminated to and understood by all project stakeholders through training and dissemination workshops.
- Check consistency between AWPB, procurement plan and disbursement plan with support from procurement specialist, financial management specialist and national project advisor.

Task 2: Work with International Project Advisor to consolidate and prepare the six-month project progress report.

- Consolidate project outputs, working documents and technical reports and conceptualize them into the preparation of the project progress report.
- Draft the six-month project progress report of the overall project implementation (including progress of project activities, financial management (IFRs) and procurements) in one report.
- Work closely with members of NPMO, technical departments of MAF, MOIC, PAFOs and PICOs to get feedbacks and finalize the progress report.
- Prepare project briefing notes and short executive summaries under the technical guidance of the international project advisor for the National Project Coordinator/Director and higher management if required.
- Review project media and communication products prepared by the project communication staff for consistency between English and Lao before publication.

Task 3: Coordination with implementing agencies, monitoring and keeping tracks of project implementation outputs delivered by implementing agencies Technical Departments of MAF and MOIC, PAFOs and PICOs.

- Ensure coordination between all government agencies involved in the project implementation (MAF departments, MOIC departments, provincial level departments) by disseminating information and setting adequate communication and channels and decision-making processes
- Coordinate the work of the project implementation partners in particular the AVCF manager and FAO, as well as other service providers
- Assist the National Project Coordinator/Director to monitor the AWPB implementation and track the agreed project activities, inputs and performance of implementing agencies, and stakeholders in delivering outputs in a timely manner.
- Assist International Project Advisor to draft, review and revise TORs, technical specifications of goods and works, presenting the national and local aspects of these works.
- Oversee and coordinate the work of all project consultants, ensuring that they are fulfilling their TORs and handling all administrative matters relating to the consulting company's or individual contractual arrangements.

- Identify risks, issues, challenges and delays that affect project performance, progress and achievement of results.
- Advise the National Project Coordinator/Director with remedial actions and mitigation efforts to address identified project issues, challenges and delays if they arise.
- Ensure that appropriate quality assurance measures are established and functioning effectively to ensure quality delivery of project outputs and recommendation implementation.
- Assist the MAF-DPF in ensuring that there is national level inter-agency coordination and knowledge sharing with other projects and programs of other agencies operating in the target provinces, to maximize the synergy of development.

Task 4: Assist National Project Coordinator/Director in performing project management responsibilities.

- Perform overall project management responsibilities in support to the National Project Coordinator/Director.
- Advise on overall Project management and implementation related issues to ensure that the Project implementation is in line with government policies, guidelines and the LACP framework.
- Assist the National Project Coordinator/Director and focal points at Ministry department levels, and where required, Project Consultants and Staff, on strategic and critical aspects of Project management and implementation to ensure that the Project achieve the outcomes and outputs envisaged in the project document and result framework.
- Making presentations and leading dialogues in support the Project National Coordinator/Director and focal points in Ministry level departments in the Central and Provincial Project Steering Committee Meetings.
- Coordinate with fiduciary staff (procurement and financial management) to address any fiduciary issues that will affect project management and implementation progress.
- Manage cross-cutting issues relevant to the project such as transactional transparency, inclusion, gender equity, climate change adaptation etc. This will include responsibility for promoting gender equality in the program and understanding of gender issues amongst the implementation team;
- Any other management tasks as required by the National Project Coordinator/Director.

Reporting

The National Project Advisor will work under the supervision and report directly to the National Project Coordinator/Director. He/she is required to work closely with the International Project Advisor and the part-time Advisor for MOIC-DPC.

Duration

This assignment will last for a minimum of 3 years. The contract will need to be reconfirmed annually 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:

- Minimum 5 years working experience in managing agricultural development, agriculture value chains projects financed by international development agencies in Lao PDR.
- At least a Master's degree in agriculture, agricultural economics, project management, MBA or related development fields.
- Excellent communication skills, including inter-personal skills and email management in a multi-cultural working environment.
- Written and spoken fluency in both English and Lao.
- Excellent word processing skills (MS Word, MS Excel, PowerPoint).

Source of information

Department of Planning and Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Lao Agriculture Competitiveness Project (LACP)

Tel/Fax: 021 410074