**Terms of Reference**

**International Consultant to develop an Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS)**

**Package No. MoIC/IC-21**

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

Location: Based in Vientiane at the Department of Trade Promotion and the Department of Import – Export of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

**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:

**Component A - Improved Agricultural Efficiency and Sustainability.** 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*

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 Agricultural 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*

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*

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*

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** 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*

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.

*Subcomponent B2: Linking Farmers to Markets*

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*

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.** The component will support (a) project management; and (b) monitoring and evaluation.

*Subcomponent C1: Project Management*

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*

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

**Component D: Contingent Emergency Response**

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

Under ***Subcomponent B2: Linking Farmers to Markets,*** the project is seeking to recruit a national consultant to provide technical assistance and support to the Department of Trade Promotion of MOIC in developing an Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS). An AMIS collects, analyses, packages, stores and disseminates agricultural production inputs, output, prices and other information relevant to farmers, traders, processors and others interested in agricultural commodities. The AMIS should provide reliable market information for productive partnerships and, through strengthening the market linkages, it is expected to make farmers more resilient to climate change.

**Objectives of the assignment**

The objective is to assist Department of Trade Promotion as the leading agency and other public and private stakeholders in reviewing any existing AMIS, recommending improvements or development of a relevant AMIS for Lao PDR’s agricultural products.

**Scope of the assignment**

***Task Cluster 1: AMIS Development, Design and Implementation***

* Identify and review any existing AMIS system within the MOIC/MAF and line department of MOIC and MAF for its coverage scope and contents, its operating model and management, structure (hardware and software), its relevance and usefulness to end users (agribusiness and farmers). If applicable, any necessary questionnaire based survey to assess the existing system may be conducted to identify shortfalls and limitations.
* Define and design an AMIS and its operating model based on situational context in Lao PDR by drawing international experiences to meet the needs of end users (agribusiness and farmers), policy makers, and other stakeholders.
* Prepare detailed technical system specifications (software, hardware and services), detailed costs and operating requirements for an AMIS. An implementation timeline must be prepared as part of the package.
* Asist NPMO and DOTP in procurement of software, hardware and services for the AMIS implementation.
* Upgrade, develop and implement the agreed/approved AMIS including testing, pilot and rollout of the system at all levels.
* Organize consultations and workshops with relevant public and private stakeholders in AMIS upgrade, development and implementation.

***Task Cluster 2. Capacity building for AMIS sustainability.***

* Prepare AMIS Manuals for operational staff and technical staff.
* Provide training on AMIS for technical staff to maintain the system.
* Provide training on AMIS for operational staff (users including agribusinesses and farmer groups).
* Provide advice and recommendations to strengthen ministerial mandates, roles and responsibilities in operating and maintaining the AMIS for sustainability in medium and long terms.

**Reporting**

The consultant will work under the overall supervision of and report directly to the National Project Director under MAF. He/she needs to technical and operational interaction with management and staff of DOTP under MOIC.

**Deliverables**

The consultant will prepare and deliver the following deliverables satisfactory to DOTP and NPMO:

* An assessment report reviewing any existing AMIS, defining and (re-)designing an AMIS and its operating model under MOIC and MAF.
* A package of detailed technical specifications (hardware, software and services), detailed costs and operating requirements for an AMIS ready for procurement.
* Progress reports on AMIS upgrade, development and implementation.
* Operational and technical manuals of the AMIS.
* Descriptive reports on training to operational staff (users) and technical staff to maintain the AMIS in MOIC and MAF including district and provincial levels.
* Final completion report with recommendations for AMIS sustainability.

**Duration**

This assignment will be intermittent with a split mobilization schedule for a total not exceeding 3-man months over a year.

**Experience and qualifications**

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

* At least a Master’s degree in e-commerce, information management technology, applied computer sciences or related fields.
* Minimum 10 years working experience in agricultural market information systems, agricultural value chains, or related areas. Strong knowledge/experiences on databases (such as Oracle, mySQL, PostQreSQL); web application development; e-commerce; cloud technology; server; networking, security implementation of similar projects.
* Excellent communication skills, including writing reports, email management and interpersonal skills to facilitate dialogue with various government agencies, engage with senior and technical staff, farmers and businesses. Prior working experience in Southeast Asia and Laos will be considered an asset
* Willing to work alongside and assist national counterparts in a practical and proactive way.
* Be able to network with a wide range of stakeholders including businesses, international organizations, business support institutions and business associations.
* Written and spoken fluency in the English language.