**Terms of Reference**

**Package MAF/IC-25:**

**Local Consultant on strengthening of water user associations (WUAs) and operation and maintenance (O&M)**

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

Location: Based in MAF, Vientiane with frequent travel to the five target provinces: Xayabuoly, Vientiane Province, Vientiane Capital, Bolikhamxay Province and Khammouane Province

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 objective of the ACP is to enhance the competitiveness of selected agricultural value chains in the project areas. The project comprises the following four components: (a) Improved Agricultural Efficiency and Sustainability, (b) Enhanced Agricultural Competitiveness, (c) Project Management, and (d) Contingent Emergency Response and it 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 implementing agencies include Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry (MOF), Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC), and the five project provinces.

LACP is supporting rehabilitation of critical productive infrastructure for agricultural production under 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 technical assistance 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.

MAF is selecting a full-time national consultant to provide support to DOI, PAFOs and DAFOs in strengthening of water user associations (WUAs) and operation and maintenance (O&M) of critical productive infrastructure in project provinces.

**Objectives of the assignment**

The WUA and O& M specialist will support DOI and PAFOs in work planning, implementation and monitoring of the Project Subcomponent A3: Upgrading of critical productive infrastructures. He or she will provide assistance to PAFO and DAFO in strengthening capacity of the WUG/WUA to operate and manage the rehabilitated infrastructure financed by the project.

**Scope of the assignment**

Specific duties and responsibilities include:

* Review the current legal framework and operational guidelines regarding Water Users Groups (WUG) and associations (WUA) and O&M modalities for various types of irrigation schemes (gravity, pumps, etc.)
* In coordination with PAFO in each of the 5 project provinces, review the status of and assess needs of the Water User organizations in the 71 selected irrigation sub-projects;
* Based on the assessment of existing water user organizations, design a capacity building program to enhance and strengthen the capacity of Water Users Organizations in project provinces;
* Facilitate consultations with existing Water Users Groups (WUG) committees, village authorities and PAFO/DAFO to identify need for reorganization and formal registration in Water User Association (WUA);
* Assist the reorganization process of the WUGs/WUA;
* Facilitate the survey and design process, ensuring the WUG/WUA is associated in the decision-making process;
* In coordination with the social safeguard specialist and relevant authorities and line agencies, assist PAFOs and DAFOs in the process of land compensation where support is required;
* Review existing guidelines and training material for WUG/WUA and prepare updated guidelines and training material, including Water Users groups governance, technical irrigation scheme Operation (crop planning, water distribution scheduling), maintenance of the infrastructures, and administration of the group/association including the Irrigation Service Fee and financial management financial management of Irrigation Service Fees and other aspects;
* Conduct training of trainer for PAFO/DAFO technical irrigation staff;
* Assist and follow up training of Water Users organizations by PAFO/DAFO irrigation staff
* Conduct regular monitoring and supervision support to the PAFO/DAFO irrigation staff and provide coaching and on-the-job training as required;
* Contribute to the M&E activities of the project as well as the environmental and social safeguards and management plans; and,
* Provide monthly and quarterly progress reports as required by the Project National Director.

**Reporting**

Consultant on strengthening of WUA and O&M will work under the supervision and report directly to the National Project Director.

**Duration**

This assignment will Six (6) man months per year with intermittent mobilization over the project 4-year timeframe (2019-2023). 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 irrigation or community development with at least two years’ experience with externally financed projects
* At least a Diploma in irrigation, community development or related field
* Excellent communication skills, including email management
* Excellent word processing skills (MS Word, MS Excel).
* Written and spoken fluency in the English language is highly preferred.

**Source of information**

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