

TERMS OF REFERENCE
Package MAF/IC-24
Local Consultant – Farmer Group Investment Plan Development Advisor

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: Xayabouly, 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 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.

Farmer Groups	Number of Groups	Provinces
Rice Seed Multiplication	65-68	All five provinces
Rice Production (GAP)	225	All five provinces
Maize Production (GAP)	59-70	Xayabouly
Vegetable Production (GAP)	48-50	Vientiane Capital and Vientiane Province

To implement the Matching Grant facility, MAF is selecting a part time national consultant to assist Farmer Groups (SMGs and FPGs) in preparing Investment Plans to apply for Matching Grants.

Objectives of the assignment

The Business Development Advisor will support Farmers Groups in preparing Investment Plans (IP) to apply for matching Grants under component A1 and A2 of the Project. There are about 400 Farmer Groups who are identified to prepare and submit Investment Plans during the life time of the project.

Scope of the assignment

Specific duties and responsibilities include:

1. Review the current project framework and operational guidelines of the Matching Grant Facility for Farmer Groups.
2. Familiarize with the fiduciary aspects of the groups matching grant facilities, i.e. financial management and procurement requirements.
3. Prepare field operational guidelines with necessary tools for Matching Grants Facility for Farmer Groups to guide matching grant application cycle.
4. Review progress of and finalization of ongoing Investment Plan development for SMGs and FPGs established by the project in 2019.
5. Provide technical and operational training on Investment Plan development for SMGs and FPGs to local service providers and project staff.

6. Lead and supervise development of Investment Plans for SMGs and FPGs who submit their expression of interests to DAFO and PAFO in compliance with Project Operation Manual (POM).
7. Liaise with environment and social safeguards focal points and technical experts to ensure that Investment Plans for SMGs and PFGs follow the Environmental Code of Practice (ECOP) or Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) where they are applicable.
8. Assist NPMO and PAFOs/DAFOs to develop operational steps and with necessary tools to monitor Investment Plan implementation.
9. Perform other tasks assigned by National Project Director.

Reporting / Deliverables

The Business Development Advisor will work under the supervision and report directly to the National Project Director. The expected deliverables are:

- Field operational guidelines with necessary tools for Matching Grants Facility for Farmer Groups are prepared and submitted.
- Investment Plans for Farmer Groups in 2019 are prepared and submitted.
- Technical and operational training on Investment Plan development for SMGs and FPGs. to local service providers and project staff are conducted.
- Operational steps and templates (tools) to monitor Investment Plan implementation are prepared and submitted.

Duration

This assignment will be for **132 working days during Six (6) man months intermittent**. The assignment will commence in February 2020.

Experience and qualifications

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

- At least a master's degree in Agronomy, Agricultural Economics, Soil Sciences, Crop Sciences or related fields.
- Minimum 5 years working experience in agriculture development with at least two years' experience with externally financed projects
- 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

*Department of Planning and Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Project Management Unit,
Tel: +856 21 410074 Fax: +856 21 410073*