

# **PRF LONG SHORT TERM NUTRITION / SHG SPECIALIST**

## ***Terms of Reference***

Project Name:	The Poverty Reduction Fund
Number of positions:	1
Position:	<b>International Nutrition / Saving Group Specialist</b>
Duty Station:	PRF national office in Vientiane and project areas
Duration:	Up to 25 working days, several assignments starting May 7, 2012

## **BACKGROUND**

The Poverty Reduction Fund Project was legally established by Decree from the Prime Minister of Lao PDR (No. 073/PM) on 31 May 2002, initially supported by the World Bank in the form of a low-interest credit, repayable over a forty-year term. The consented credit amounts to approximately 19.5 million US\$. The Prime Ministerial Decree allows the PRF to also receive and use funds from other sources.

The objectives of the PRF Project are to support the Lao PDR Government in its efforts to reduce poverty through expanding community opportunities to identify local development needs and manage small scale development projects through financing sub-projects for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of social and economic infrastructure, and other socially productive activities, including creating income generating opportunities through training and other support. Key emphases of the PRF include participation of the communities, transparency and sustainability of the sub-project outputs.

### **Specifically the project objectives are to:**

- (i) Assist villagers to develop community public infrastructure and gain improved access to services;
- (ii) Build capacity and empower villages in poor districts to manage their own public investment planning and sub-project implementation in a decentralized and transparent manner; and
- (iii) Strengthen local institutions to support participatory decision-making and conflict resolution processes at the village, Kum Ban and district levels, involving a broad range of villagers, including women and the poor.

A network of volunteers (village and Kum ban representatives) was set up. Through their elected representatives, villagers decide on how resources are allocated, manage funds, and implement sub-projects. Extensive facilitation and training is provided to ensure that poor villagers, including women and people from smaller ethnic groups, participate in the decision-making process and benefit from Program inputs. The Program builds community capacity by providing technical support for villagers.

The Program aims to create stronger links between the local government and the aspirations of villagers with Program staff at district, province and national level coordinating and building linkages. A forum was created at district level where villagers and district authorities meet regularly to discuss each other priorities and plans and reach a compromise that will satisfy each party.

During the first 5-year phase of the project (cycles I to V), with a loan from the World Bank, PRF supported more than 2,000 subprojects in 21 districts located in 5 provinces (Luang Namtha, Huaphanh, Xieng Khouang, Champasak, Savannakhet and Saravane) representing 161 Kum Ban, more than 1,900 villages and a total population of 744,140 persons. The total budget for the first phase reached more than US\$ 20,000,000. A budget of US\$ 16,616,000 was directly invested in more than 2,000 sub-projects at village level.

The Lao government and PRF donors decided to extend PRF project with a 3-year additional phase which started in October 2008 with grants from the World Bank (US\$ 15 million) and from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (US\$ 5 million). During the current cycle (Cycle VI), PRF is working in 19 first priority districts located in 6 provinces and is currently supporting 355 sub-projects corresponding to a total direct investment of US\$ 4.4 million.

In July 2009, during the 13th PRF National Administrative Board meeting chaired by Lao PDR Deputy Prime Minister, which took place in July 2009, the board members agreed to upgrade PRF into a National Program after completion of the project additional phase in 2011. Building on its past achievements, the next phase of the PRF (2011-2016) will continue to contribute to the Government's poverty reduction agenda. Specifically, the PRF II will fill a gap by financing investments in small public infrastructure that facilitate poor communities' access to basic services and markets in relatively remote and inaccessible areas.

In its 2<sup>nd</sup> phase, the Poverty Reduction Fund aims to strengthen its pro-active outreach to program stakeholders with information on what PRF is, what it does, how it works, and how one can benefit from it. Focus will be on informing and educating targeted Kum Ban and villages. The main objectives of this revised IEC M&S are:

- Inform local communities in the targeted Kum Ban how the PRF II funded projects will support them and introduce the process of community participation.
- Provide communities with the means to provide feed-back and access project and operational information.
- Ensure that stakeholders get relevant information about the PRF II – status, projects, results etc.
- Ensure visibility of PRF vis a vis the Government of Lao and the international donor community.

In addition, in response to the Government's request that the PRF also address livelihood challenges, the PRF II would support livelihoods activities on a parallel financing track through a grant (US\$2.6 million) financed by the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF). The livelihood pilot would be implemented during three years in five districts in Houaphan and Savannakhet provinces, where PRF has a strong presence, and be closely aligned with the PRF's planning cycle. It would have a strong gender and ethnic group focus and seek to test models for effective and sustainable rural livelihood improvements for poor communities. Depending on the success of the pilot, options for scale-up and replication would be developed accordingly.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE POSITION**

In order to support the development of high quality processes, mechanisms and required support structures during the formative stage of the PRF LONG project, the Specialist's specialist are to advise and actively contribute to the PRF-LONG team and activities with respect to the

- (i) process of formation of Self Help Groups;
- (ii) design and development of Village Livelihood and Nutrition Plans;
- (iii) activities towards sensitization in Community Driven Development, Livelihood and Nutrition;
- (iv) provide inputs for capacity building measures for (i), (ii), and (iii)
- (v) provide advise and share experience regarding saving groups structure, self-management and practices

## **TASKS, DUTIES AND OUTPUTS**

The main tasks and duties of the Communication specialist are to:

- Review and advise on the overall design and details of LONG's promotion of SHGs, Village Livelihood and Nutrition Plans;
- support the LONG team in the development / elaboration of measures for sensitization in Community Driven Development, Livelihood and Nutrition;
- actively contribute in the design of capacity building measures for (i), (ii), and (iii);
- implement orientation sessions to build the capacity of the LONG team with respect to the topics under (i), (ii), and (iii);
- contribute to the Behavior Change Strategy, operational details and IEC material;
- Share with LONG staff at different levels experiences, strategies, approaches, methods and tools relevant to PRF LONG;
- Advise LONG personnel in relevant aspects of SHGs, saving / credit activities (self-management), short- / long-term effects;
- Cooperate and coordinate with relevant PRF units (e.g. IEC).

The consultant will participate in field visits / exercises when suitable and feasible and support the LONG team in the respective activities.

When necessary, s/he will accomplish others tasks as defined by the Executive Director of the PRF.

### **Outputs**

- Separate overviews for

( i ) process of formation of Self Help Groups,  
(ii) design and development of Village Livelihood and Nutrition Plans,  
(iii) sensitization in Community Driven Development, Livelihood and Nutrition  
documenting chosen approaches, methods and tools, observations and recommendations  
including details;

- Presentations and schedule of conducted orientation / training sessions conducted by the consultant.

## **REPORTING**

The consultant will report to the Executive Director of the PRF or his designate.

## **REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:**

- An advanced university degree in Social Sciences, Rural Development (in particular Agriculture), Economics, Development studies or other relevant field;
- At least 10 years experience in projects promoting nutrition awareness, good nutrition practices and saving / credit groups in rural areas;
- Solid relevant working experience in the development of communication tools as well as training staff and beneficiaries in the field of promoting nutrition awareness, behavior change strategies, saving & credit.
- Experience in training of project staff;
- Familiarity with the Lao culture and tradition and of the context of ethnics groups in remote areas;
- Knowledge of Lao language, culture and tradition will be considered as an asset;
- Fluency in English (writing, editing, reporting and speaking).
- Perfect command of Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point, Email and Internet.
- Women are encouraged to apply.