

Project Accountant Terms of Reference

Programme Name: Lao Upland Food Security Improvement Project (LUFSP)

Number of positions: 1

Position: ***Project Accountant - for the Poverty Reduction Fund***

Station: PRF Head office in Vientiane with regular missions to PRF target provinces

Reporting: To the Head of PRF Finance and Administration Unit

Duration: Renewable one-year contracts (subject to performance) with an initial probation period of 3-6 months.

BACKGROUND LUFSP PROJECT & THE POVERTY REDUCTION FUND

LUFSP PROJECT OVERVIEW

In September 2009 Cyclone Ketsana caused serious damage in Lao PDR. The cyclone highlighted the more deep seated problem of structural food insecurity faced by many households living in remote upland communities.

The project aims to reduce vulnerability to future shocks through the introduction of improved sustainable technologies and farming systems.

It is made up of the following components of work:

Component	
1:	Support to Conservation Agriculture Stations and Seed Multiplication Centers
2:	Support to Improved Farm Systems for Food Security
2a:	Support to Farmer Groups
2b:	Agricultural Assistance for Cyclone Recovery
3:	Support for Rural Infrastructure Improvement and Community-led Recovery <i>The component is implemented by PRF in close collaboration with the MAF</i>
3a:	Rural Infrastructure for Improved Agricultural Livelihoods
3b:	Community-Led Recovery
4:	Project Coordination and Management

Components 3a and 3b will be implemented by the PRF which has developed a proven community-driven participatory approach for the delivery of infrastructure and services in the poorest districts in Lao PDR, by empowering poor villages to plan and implement their own investments and by strengthening local institutions to support participatory decision making at local level. The PRF is currently implementing subprojects in seven Provinces in 21 out of the Government's 47 poorest priority District. Through the components developed within the LUSFIP project, the PRF will expand its operations including into new districts and in Attapeu Province. The Project will rely on PRF's current organizational structure, including PRF operational staff at National, Provincial, District and Kum Banh levels, and PRF volunteers at the village level.

THE POVERTY REDUCTION FUND (PRF)

The PRF is an initiative of the Lao Government, to effectively and efficiently deliver resources to poor villages and contribute to its poverty alleviation strategy.

The PRF was established in 2002 as an autonomous organization overseen by an Administrative Board, composed of Government members. Since the creation of the National Leading Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation in January 2007, the PRF is one of the divisions of this committee. Although the PRF is integrated into the government framework, it is currently set up as an autonomous body operated by contracted staff.

PRF objectives

- Assist villagers to develop community infrastructure and gain improved access to services;
- Build capacity and empower the poorest villages to plan, manage and implement their own public investments;
- Strengthen local institutions to support participatory decision-making and conflict resolution processes.

A network of volunteers (village and koumban representatives) was set up. Through their elected representatives, villagers decide on how resources are allocated, manage funds, and implement subprojects. 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.

Partners, donors and external auditors consider PRF internal accounting and control system as appropriate, robust and strong.

MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE POSITION

The main objectives of this position are:

Full time work on the various aspects of project accounting and financial budgeting & reporting relating to the LUFSSIP project work being implemented by PRF.

TASKS AND DUTIES

- Close collaboration with the Head of the PRF Finance Division to oversee the establishment and proper maintenance of the finance and accounts in accordance with the financial rules and procedures of the MoF and the World Bank.
- Coordinate with the various provinces of the LUFSSIP to prepare periodic financial reports in the standard format(s) required by the donor(s) and submit to the project National Coordination office (NCO).
- Prepare annual and periodic LUFSSIP budget plans and submit to the Head of the PRF Finance for approval and coordination.
- Prepare, implement and review the funding of the budgeted and actual annual cash flows and ensure adequate follow up on any matters needing clarification.
- Prepare periodic statement of expenditure (SOE) reports and fund replenishment requests, carefully checking and inspecting all supporting documents. These are to be regularly forwarded to the NCO.
- Regular visits to the field (province, district and koumban) for both training and auditing purpose
- Contribute to the use and maintenance of the project accounting information system - Accpac.
- Lead / facilitate the training and support of PRF provincial and district staff on all issues related to budget and finance
- Develop sustainable co-ordinate mechanism with MoF to ensure smooth financial operations and advise them on the project financial procedures.
- Represent the Unit, alongside the Head of FA Unit, in all discussions related to subprojects planning and implementation
- Liaise with other units to ensure that the financial and administrative aspects are always taken into account when making technical and strategic decisions
- Support the Head of Unit in the facilitation of external financial audits and during all discussions / supervision visits of donors
- Contribute with the other members of the FA Unit to the design or improvement of accounting and financial tools to be used by the communities managing subprojects
- Other reasonably related duties as may be assigned by the LUFSSIP project.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Strong ethical commitment to impartiality and transparency
- Appropriate qualification in Accounting, Finance or Business Administration – CPA qualification would be an advantage
- At least 2 years financial background
- Experience with major donors' regulations and guidelines
- Analytical judgement and ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines
- Excellent inter-personal skills and commitment to work in a participative way
- Good command of Ms Office® software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Willingness to work occasionally in rural areas
- Good English skills
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