

# **PRF SHORT TERM INTERNATIONAL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION ADVISOR**

## ***Terms of Reference***

Project Name:	The Poverty Reduction Fund Livelihood Opportunities and Nutritional Gains (LONG)
Number of positions:	1
Position:	<b>International Project Implementation Advisor</b>
Duty Station:	PRF/LONG Central office in Vientiane with regular missions to the selected target provinces, districts, Kum bans and villages.
Duration:	Starting May 1, 2014 (one year contract)

## **I. 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 (LuangNamtha, Huaphanh, XiengKhouang, 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.

## II. Main objectives of the position

- Train LONG team at all levels on the effective implementation of LONG field activities
- Support the finalization of technical manuals
- Develop work plans and provide mentoring services as needed during implementation
- Oversee Work Program and Budget and provide recommendations on targeting and scale-up plan
- Oversee the disbursement status, financial management and fund flow
- Oversee Monitoring and Evaluation activities
- Support the revision of the HR set up and TORs
- Represent the LONG project within the PRF, donors, GoL and other Development agencies
- Support the timely implementation of Mid-Term Review agreements and next steps

## III. Tentative schedule

The consultancy shall be carried out the assignment over a period of one year, starting May 1, 2014, and can be extended as needed. It is expected that the assignment will be fulfilled over a period of 100 working days.

The indicative Schedule (frequency of visits and length of inputs) will be discussed between the consultant and the PRF-LONG team during the first weeks of the consultancy and revised from time to time.

## IV. Scope of work

The scope of work which required the consultant to carry out is as below:

- (i) **Train National, Provincial and District Teams (incl. young graduates) on the effective implementation of LONG field activities**
  - Assess LONG team level of understanding towards the project objectives, approach, processes and procedures and capacity to manage and implement project activities efficiently and effectively
  - Develop capacity building/training work plan with related budget;
  - Develop related trainings topics and contents (including training tools) and ensure they are conducted according to plan
  - Ensure LONG staff capacity are regularly evaluated (after training and during project activities implementation) and capacity building/training work plan revised accordingly.
- (ii) **Support the finalization of technical manuals, (including field guidelines, guidelines for savings, VNC manual, VNC cooking book, POM, etc,) as well as the package of all field forms & templates and of IEC products**
  - Update the POM and other related manuals and IEC tools to ensure there are appropriate to the target audience (LONG staff, Concerned sectors, Community members)
  - Update existing field guidelines used during the formative research
  - Train PRF LONG team on related changes

- Assess need to develop further manuals and tools during the course of the project
  - Lead development of additional Manuals/IEC tools (design, form, contents, etc.) in coordination with the PRF IEC Unit
- (iii) Develop monthly/quarterly and yearly work plans with checklists per cycle/steps and provide mentoring services as needed during implementation**
- Review and finalize Work plan template
  - Coordinate with PRF-LONG team at National, province and district level to prepare work plan, including project coverage scaling up (following 23 steps)
  - Provide training as needed to ensure LONG staff capacity to plan activities
  - Assist LONG team to prepare Quarterly and Annual Progress reports reflecting implementation progress versus work plan.
- (iv) Oversee Work Program and Budget and provide recommendations on targeting and scale-up plan**
- Lead organization of regular meeting to follow up on implementation progress according to plan and provide recommendations on corrective measures as required, including project targeting and scale-up plan
  - Assist LONG team to develop effective communication flow between grass root and central levels to ensure all LONG staff are aware of any changes in the work program and budget and that Central level have access to latest updated data on progress at the field level for effective project management
- (v) Oversee the disbursement status, financial management and fund flow**
- Lead organization of regular meeting to follow up on disbursement according to plan and provide recommendations on corrective measures as required
  - Ensure financial management, procurement plan and fund flow are in compliance with project POM
  - Assist the LONG team at the central level to update and revise budget work plan and procurement plan as required
  - Assist LONG team to prepare disbursement status and financial management/procurement status in the Quarterly and Annual Progress reports
- (vi) Oversee Monitoring and Evaluation Activities**
- Ensure quality and accuracy in the data collection with MIS forms, data entry, cleaning and robust analysis & reporting
  - Support the preparation of quarterly reports and other pending reports or statistical summaries (refer also to points iii and v)
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- (vii) Support the revision of the HR set up and TORs**
- Based on the building/capacity work plan and overall project progress, assist the PRF/LONG HR Unit to revise the staff structure, organization, role and responsibilities as required to ensure the project can reach its objectives
  - Participate to assess staff performance evaluation on yearly basis, in coordination with the HR unit.

- (viii) **Represents the LONG project within the PRF, donors, GoL and other Development agencies and potential partners**
- Represent the project in meetings with the donor, GOL and other partners as needed and ensure the actionable integration of the LONG pilot into PRF's larger country program
  - Maintain a cooperative relationship with other international organizations, NGOs and other rural development projects, leading towards enhanced cooperation, share of experience and resources and reinforced LONG image
- (ix) **Support the timely implementation of MTR agreements and next steps**

The International Project Implementation Advisor will report to the Head of LONG

The International Project Implementation Advisor has to maintain excellent working relationship with authorities at all levels as well as with donors and other institutions involved in project activities.

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

## **V. 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 Management and planning, promoting Self-Help Groups, Self-Help Group Associations, 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 materials and field guideline for facilitators and beneficiaries in the field of Livelihood and nutrition, behavior change strategies, saving & credit, etc.;
- Experience in training of project staff;
- Fluency in English (writing, editing, reporting and speaking);
- Perfect command of Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point, Email and Internet);
- 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;
- Women are encouraged to apply.