

PRF NATIONAL NUTRITION OFFICER

Terms of Reference

Project Name:	The Poverty Reduction Fund
Number of positions:	1
Position:	National Nutrition Officer
Direct reporting to:	Head of Livelihood linked Nutrition Unit
Duty Station:	PRF national office (Vientiane) with regular missions to the selected target provinces, districts, Kum bans and villages (each district to be visited at least 6 times/year)
Duration:	One year contract starting January, 2016 with a three months probationary period. Contract renewable subject to satisfactory performance and project continuation approval

I. Introduction and context

The Lao Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) is an autonomous legal entity established under the Prime Minister Decree 10 dated Jan 10, 2012 which aims to assist National Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (NCRDPE) to implement rural development and poverty eradication projects based on rural development and poverty eradication plan. PRF operates based on the decree and laws of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and under the guidance of the President of the NCRDPE.

PRF is governed by the Administrative Board of Directors, which is chaired by the President of the NCRDPE and includes ministerial or vice-ministerial heads of relevant ministries and representatives of relevant mass organizations and one civil society organization. The Executive Director office of PRF will be responsible for day to day execution of activities, which compose of the Executive Director and heads of departments.

PRF objectives

- Financing community infrastructure activities, and other community public capital investments endeavours and training activities at the village level;
- Building local capacity at the village level in poor districts to manage public investment planning and implementation; and
- Strengthening the capacity of local institutions to support participatory decision-making at the village, kum ban, and district levels. The Project development objective is “to improve the access to and utilization of basic infrastructure and services for the project’s targeted poor communities” to be achieved with strengthen the development capacities of villages and local government. Beneficiaries, however, have repeatedly asked for support of training activities.

The main business line of PRF is to use the fund provided by donors and the government to carry out participatory processes, identify priority community needs and finance subprojects to build or rehabilitate priority community infrastructure. PRF operates in 10 provinces and has about 300 staff in total. About 35 are based in the central level, and the rest is based in provincial or district level. They are mapped mainly to either of the Community Development department, Technical Assistance department, Financing and Administration department and M&E department and are headed by respective department heads who form the Project Management Team (PMT) together with the Executive Director of the PRF.

LIVELIHOOD LINKED NUTRITION

As part of the Lao Government's vision to graduate from Least Developed Country status by 2020, PRF II would also support livelihoods and nutrition activities on a parallel financing track through a pilot innovative livelihood focused community driven development program called Livelihood Opportunities and Nutritional Gains (LONG) project, through a grant (US\$2.6 million) supported by the World Bank Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF). The grant signing ceremony was held in April 2011, and a JSDF technical preparation mission was conducted in May 9-20, 2011. During the field visit, the team mission observed a strong need for additional support to livelihood improvement activities, high levels of malnutrition, and limited capacity among the communities to take charge of their own development.

PRF-LONG project has been implemented over a three years period by the implementation mechanisms of the PRF. About 600 livelihood and/or nutrition sub-grants of an average amount of \$2,000 have been utilized benefiting of 28,710 sub-grant beneficiaries over three years.

The World Bank has agreed to provide additional financing until period of December 2016, following the completion and in order to build on the experience of the JSDF funding. In additional financing, the name of Livelihood Opportunity and Nutrition Gain (LONG) has been changed to **Livelihood Improvement and Nutritional Security (LN) and integrated into the PRF.**

The PRF-LN objective is to pilot an innovative livelihood-focused community driven development (CDD) program in five poverty reduction priority districts within Huaphan and Savannakhet provinces, enabling rural households in project target areas to improve their livelihoods and well-being through group based activities. The PRF-LN project constitutes a new component to the PRF's CDD-based program and builds on improved small-scale infrastructure and on local institutions and mechanism which were already set up during PRF Phase I and Phase II.

The PRF-LN aims at strategic partnerships between PRF, relevant line-ministries and mass organizations (in particular with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Lao Revolutionary Youth Union). Potential for collaborations with other relevant organizations will be gauged in the first year of the implementation. The aim is for the livelihood project to become fully integrated into the PRF's project cycle and closely coordinate with the core PRF program.

The PRF-LN directly responds to three key development challenges in Lao PDR, including: (i) persistent and high incidence of poverty particularly in remote areas and among non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups despite strong aggregate economic growth; (ii) persistent and high levels of

malnutrition¹; and (iii) limited capacity for participatory community driven approaches to development.

Recognizing the key role rural women play as producers, household food providers and family care takers, the project has a strong gender focus. The PRF-LN project strives to establish positive links between livelihood improvements and wellbeing of which nutrition is a most actionable pathway.

The PRF-LN consists of four main thematic components, including:

- capacity building of local service providers and formation of community self-help groups;
- leveraging community grants and community contributions for improved livelihood activities (cash and food security);
- leveraging pro-nutrition livelihood activities;
- monitoring and evaluation of pilot activities.

II. Main objectives of the position

The main objective of the position is to lead and manage the implementation of the nutrition related activities), strengthen the capacity of the PRF's nutrition staff/ Young Graduates and VNC members, and strengthen the linkage with the livelihood activities, following the Project Manual of Operations and the VNC manual.

III. Tentative schedule

The consultancy shall be carried out the assignment over a period of one year, starting January, 2016, and can be extended as needed.

The indicative Schedule (frequency of visits and length of inputs) will be discussed between the consultant and the PRF 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 National Nutrition officer to carry out is as below:

- (i) Train and support on regular basis National, Provincial and District Teams (incl. young graduates) on VNC implementation (following the VNC Manual) and technical aspect of nutrition together with MOH staff using classroom training and on the job training. Particular focus shall be given to meal planning and costing as well as the preparation of affordable meals (e.g. vegetarian cooking with beans)

¹ Compared to other countries, Lao PDR has experienced very high and largely unchanged malnutrition over the past 15 years – despite improvements in poverty reduction and increased household incomes. Prevalence of stunting in children under five years of age in rural areas among non Lao-Tai ethnic groups is significantly higher than among Lao-Tai ethnic groups – for some reaching levels as high as 60%. Retarded child growth is coupled with high levels of micronutrient deficiencies and underweight in women in the reproductive age.

- (ii) Guide the implementation of all four VNC activities by demonstrating good practices in the field with the PRF nutrition staff and targeted beneficiaries and frequently visiting all old and new VNCs regularly for trouble shooting.
- (iii) Prepare monthly work plans and conduct bi-monthly District progress meetings, including the documentation of lesson learned which would guide the design of the nutrition activities under PRF III.
- (iv) Assist the district staff for the VNC work plans preparation and implementation as well as Nutrition staff work plan and related budget.
- (v) Assist the district staff in the promotion of VNC home garden, household home garden by VNC members and support the livelihood officer for the promotion of home garden for SHG members in non VNC villages
- (vi) Review and finalize the behavior change strategy and update the IEC materials.
- (vii) Support the procurement and delivery of necessary equipment (e.g. weighing scales, height measurement boards, growth monitoring charts, kitchen equipment) in new villages
- (viii) Revise the Nutrition Field Manual and ensure that it is available and applied in all targeted villages.
- (ix) Develop VNC Operation Guideline for the implementation of nutrition education sessions
- (x) Update the VNC data collection books and oversee the monitoring system to assure quality and accuracy in the data collection, timely data flow and data analysis for the VNC (especially meals costing, community contribution, behavior change, etc.) and MCH activities (height and weight measurement, etc)
- (xi) Assist the head of LN for the preparation of the budget plan and disbursement summaries related to the nutrition activities (Interim financial Report)
- (xii) Prepare monthly and quarterly progress report related to the nutrition activities
- (xiii) Represent the project in meetings with the donor, MOH and other partners as regards to nutrition technical aspects.
- (xiv) Ensure good coordination between the nutrition and the livelihood activities following the Manual of Operations

The National Nutrition officer will report to the Head of LN and work in close collaboration with the National Livelihood officer and the International Project Implementation Advisor.

The National Nutrition officer 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 LN or the Executive Director of the PRF.

V. Qualifications

- An advanced university degree in Health and/or Nutrition, Social Sciences, Rural Development, Economics, Development studies or other relevant field;
- At least 5 years of experience in multi-sectoral project management (including project planning, implementation and coordination, M&E, institutional strengthening, etc) in decentralized and Community Development approaches is required;
- At least 5 years of relevant technical working experience in community nutrition, such as village-based nutrition management, home gardens, health and nutrition service delivery (including at-home counselling), and/or mother and child health (MCH).
- Experience in working with – in particular training of ethnic groups in mountainous and remote areas through bottom-up and participatory approaches reflective of community needs;
- Experience in the implementation of program with focus on gender promotion;
- Experience in agriculture-based nutrition activities, handicraft or other micro-enterprise will be a plus;
- Experience in training of Project staff for community development operations;
- Strong analytical skills for project design and for incorporating of best practices and lesson learned;
- Excellent knowledge of the different stakeholders involved in rural development activities in Lao PDR (government and donors community);
- Fluency in English and Lao (writing, editing, reporting and speaking);
- Perfect command of Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point, Email and Internet);
- Familiarity with projects financed by the World Bank is an advantage;
- Women and people from small ethnic groups are encouraged to apply;
- Lao National only.