



Mid-Term Evaluation
Support for an Effective Lao National Assembly (SELNA) United Nations Joint
Programme

February-April 2011

Terms of Reference for International Consultant
Team Leader
21 Days

(10 days home based, 11 days in-country incl. travel days)

Purpose, Uses and Timing of the Evaluation

a) Purpose

1. To assess the performance of the SELNA JP to date against its intended objectives as set out in the Results and Resources Framework and to make recommendations to assist its implementation over the remainder of its term.
2. To assess the applicability of the SELNA Programme Document and make recommendations on required amendments especially in regard to the Cost-sharing Agreement with EU.
3. To revise the programme document based on the adopted recommendations

b) Objectives

The objectives of this Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) are:

- To assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of programme design and implementation in the context of Lao PDR
- To assess the stakeholders' level of satisfaction with the programme's results so far
- To review how each agency has been promoting the achievement of the SELNA JP goals;
- To assess the sustainability of implemented activities
- To draw lessons learned and make recommendations for corrective action to comply with the requirement of the programme document/funding agreement
- To assess the current situation and make recommendations towards amending the programme document (if necessary) and amendments required to be made in the Cost-Sharing Agreement with EU.
- Revise the RRF and relevant narrative sections of the programme document as per findings and recommendations after they have been verified/endorsed by stakeholders

Deriving from these objectives, the questions that guide the evaluation are set out in some detail in the 'Content and Scope of the Evaluation' section of this TOR



c) Evaluation timing

The Support to an Efficient Lao National Assembly (SELNA) Joint Programme started in 2009 as a four-year programme and a mid-term evaluation was originally scheduled for the last quarter of 2010, but has been deferred to first quarter of 2011.

Team leader (International) 21 days in total:

- 2 days desk review & preparation (Home based)
- 8 field consultation including travelling (Lao PDR)
- 3 days writing, presenting and collecting feedback (Lao PDR)
- 3 days writing, feedback and review (Home based)
- 5 days revision of programme document (Home based)

Programme profile

a) Country context/Background of the National Assembly:

The Constitution of Lao PDR, adopted in 1991 and amended in 2003, assigns the National Assembly as the highest organ of the State, vested with representative, legislative and oversight functions. As such, the National Assembly has a pivotal role in the national policy with wide ranging duties and responsibilities.

National Assembly elections are held by secret ballot on a part-list system in which all citizens aged 18 and over have the right to stand and to vote. Lao PDR comprises 17 provinces and each province forms a multi-member constituency. Only 1/3 of National Assembly members are engaged full-time in the legislature. Full time members include the NA President and two Vice-Presidents, the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the functional committees, the Chief of Cabinet and 17 members responsible for constituency offices, one in each province. Most other members are senior State officials; a small number hold jobs in the private sector.

The NA convenes in two ordinary sessions a year, each normally lasting three to four weeks. During these sessions, the Assembly receives statements from government line ministries, reviews the State budget and votes on new/revised legislation, among other tasks.

The NA has six permanent committees each one responsible for a specific functional area: Law; Economics, Planning & Finance; Social & Cultural Affairs; Ethnic Affairs; Defence & Security; and Foreign Affairs. The Committees are responsible for reviewing bills, proposing amendments and scrutinizing the activities of the government. Each Committee has its own functional department, which provides technical and administrative assistance. Additionally, the Office of the National Assembly comprises five other general departments under the responsibility of the Chief of Cabinet who is a full time NA Member and Member of the NA Standing committee.

When the Assembly is not sitting, the Standing Committee (SC) substitutes for the NA. This Committee consists of 10 full time members, namely: the President of the National Assembly and two Vice-Presidents, the Chief of Cabinet and the Chairs of all 6 functional Committees. It is chaired by the NA President. The National Assembly's oversight role is augmented by a mandate to receive public petitions, which may relate to administrative decisions, court decisions or individual state officials decisions and behavior. The Petitions & Nationality Department, which is responsible for this task, reviews and considers complaints from citizens and may refer the matter to the Standing



Committee for further consideration. Where appropriate, the Standing Committee can request the Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor and People's Supreme Court to review and re-consider a court decision, or instruct the government to address the petitioner's grievance.

The capacity of the National Assembly to fulfill its constitutional mandate has increased over the years. A People's Supreme Assembly was initially set up in 1975 and comprised 45 members, including 4 women. The second legislature was elected in 1989 and comprised 75 members, of whom 5 were women. The 6th Legislature (2006-2011) has 115 Members, including 29 women. Next elections are expected to be held in April 2011.

b) Programme within United Nations Development Assistance Framework:

The box below shows how the SELNA is situated within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Lao PDR for the period 2006-2011.

UNDAF 2007-2011 Outcome 3:

By 2011, strengthened capacities of public and private institutions to fulfill their duties and greater people's participation in governance and advocacy for the promotion of human rights in conformity with the Millennium declaration

Joint Programme Outcome: 'An efficient, effective and accountable parliament supporting development and poverty reduction for the citizens of the Lao PDR'

Expected Outputs / Indicators:

1. Enhanced Parliamentary Capacity for Exercising Legislative and Oversight Responsibility
2. Effective Parliamentary Representation of Citizens
3. Strengthened Parliamentary Support Services

c) Programme summary:

The Constitution of Lao PDR, adopted in 1991 and amended in 2003, designates the National Assembly as the highest organ of the State, vested with representative, legislative and oversight functions. As such, the National Assembly has a pivotal role in the national policy with wide ranging duties and responsibilities. The capacity of the National Assembly to fulfill its constitutional mandate has increased over the years. Despite these significant achievements, the NA is still a young institution.

Since the late-1990s, UN agencies have provided technical support to the National Assembly. In 2007 the National Assembly undertook a strategic assessment of its own development priorities for the period 2008-2020. The findings were developed by the National Assembly into a concept note for coordinated international development cooperation. The United Nations responded to this request by proposing a Joint Programme of support to the National Assembly. The Joint Programme approach presents a unified work plan and budget, which coordinates inputs from all development partners under a common management arrangement. It seeks to increase aid effectiveness by improving coordination in the delivery of resources, while avoiding duplication and gaps. It also supports national ownership by explicitly aligning development assistance to national priorities.

The programme seeks to strengthen the capacities of the National Assembly and its staff to improve the quality of services provided to parliamentarians and their constituents, as well as building the capacities of MPs to exercise the oversight function and to influence policy making in order to enable this institution to fully contribute to a truly participatory and representative democracy.



As a foundation for legislative appraisal and oversight functions, the programme provides Members and technical staff in committee departments with improved knowledge and awareness of relevant sectoral issues. Key activities include awareness-raising workshops on national and international policy and development issues, assisting Committees to access national and international expertise, gender sensitization, harnessing internet technology to promote information exchange between Members dispersed across the country, and establishing an induction programme for new members.

To increase representation of its citizens, the Programme seeks to provide capacity building for Members and Staff of Constituency offices on their representative role; promote public access to the

National Assembly building; strengthen the processing, monitoring and reporting of public petitions; and strengthen the processing, monitoring and reporting of public complaints.

Parliamentary services will be strengthened to ensure that National Assembly is able to efficiently and effectively discharge its political responsibilities. Capacity gaps in the office of the National Assembly will identified and addressed through the introduction of a performance-based human resource development system, and the establishment of annual training plans. Information services will be strengthened through the development of ICT infrastructure and skills, as well as through improvements in existing research, reference and archiving facilities, and through development of the parliamentary library. Finally, training and other capacity building related to planning, coordination, monitoring and reporting will be delivered to National Assembly staff members acting as focal points for programme activities in each department.

The National Assembly as Implementing Partner is responsible and accountable for managing the programme, including the monitoring and evaluation of programme interventions, achieving programme outputs, and for the effective use of donor resources.

The Programme contributes to UNDAF Outcome 3: “By 2011, strengthened capacities of public and private institutions to fulfil their duties and greater people’s participation in governance and advocacy for the promotion of human rights in conformity with the Millennium Declaration.”

The Programme contributes to the achievement of all MDGs through strengthening the legislative, representative and oversight functions of parliament – functions that help ensure necessary legislation is put in place, adequate budgets are allocated, and government agencies take necessary actions to realize MDG targets. Additionally, the Programme specifically supports the achievement of MDG 3 (Gender Equality) and the associated Indicator 12 (proportion of seats held by women in National Parliament) through gender awareness activities with Members and specific activities with female Members.

The National Assembly performs an important role in approving the National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED), monitoring its implementation, approving related state budget allocations and putting in place supporting legislation. Towards this end, the Programme organises capacity-building workshops with Members to enable them to effectively engage in dialogue on development issues and to monitor Government implementation of the NSED.

d) Programme expected results:

Output 1: Members of the NA and Committee Departments have the necessary skills and capacities to review policy, legislative and budgetary issues and more effectively oversee their implementation



Output 2: The National Assembly effectively and accurately represents constituents' interests, needs and expectations.

Output 3: The National Assembly has Upgraded Parliamentary Support Services.

Output 4: Technical Assistance and Programme Support Services operational

e) Programme status:

In 2010, the National Assembly has shown some significant progress towards improving capacities of its Members and staff in exercising their legislative, oversight and representative duties as reflected in the quality of discussions, analyses, studies and legislations generated. Several activities also have encouraged more open discussions and interactions between NA members, line agencies and citizens. Further, several activities also contributed to increasing the knowledge and skills of NA Members and Staff towards improving their own organizational management and support services to effectively perform their roles and responsibilities

Output 1:

- Inter-session programmes organised in March and September in 2009 and 2010
- Support to the 26th Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Population and Development (April 2010)
- Awareness-raising workshops with each one of the six permanent committees
- Organisation of field visits for NA Members at grass-root level, particularly in remote districts
- A policy paper on improved techniques for budgetary oversight and auditing (including a gender perspective) has been developed
- A policy paper, including a fully drafted law on policy development and law making has been developed. It is expected to enable the NA to play a leading role in the law making.
- Programme advisors assist the NA in the review of draft laws and recommend amendments (HIV/AIDS, commercial arbitration, law on lawyers, law on consumers' protection etc.)

Output 2:

- Training of NA Petitions department and NA provincial offices staff on petitions handling – the interaction between the NA, the Public Prosecutor and the Supreme Court has significantly developed, enabling the NA to play an ombudsman role
- Improvement of the handling of the NA Hotline
- Outreach missions organised with NA committees, to visit villagers, local organisations (Women's Union, Lao Front for National Construction), village chiefs etc.
- Partnership with the National University of Laos and the Faculty of Law

Output 3:

- Training of NA staff (in Vientiane Capital and provincial offices) on personnel management
- Training of NA staff (Vientiane Capital and provincial offices) on research and documentation, note taking, note drafting
- Language skills (English) developed
- On-desk support to committee staff through CIM experts and short-term training modules
- IT training for National Assembly staff.

Output 4:

- STA recruited on time



- CIM experts appointed only in October and December 2010 respectively for the Social/Cultural Affairs committee and the Economic/Finance committee
- Lack of a communications specialist to promote Joint programme's visibility
- Programme management team (accountant, senior administrative officer, secretary) operational

f) Previous evaluations:

- Midterm Review of the UNDP's Project for Strengthening the National Assembly of Lao PDR, November 5, 2006 (*Mid-term review of the previous phase of the programme*)
- ROM mission report 2010 (*Report is a snapshot of the programme not a full evaluation. It is conducted by an independent evaluator for the EU delegation in Lao PDR, which is the largest donor for SELNA JP*)

Content and Scope of the Evaluation

Evaluation Questions for the country level assessment

Taking into account the implementation status of the programme and the resource disbursements made to date, the evaluations will take up the following questions:

1. Overall Results Achievement at the mid-term stage

- What has been the progress made towards achievement of the expected outcomes and expected results? What are the results achieved? What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement?
- To what extent have beneficiaries been satisfied with the results?
- Is the programme cost-effective, i.e. could the outcomes and expected results have been achieved at lower cost through adopting a different approach and/or using alternative delivery mechanisms?
- Are the programme activities enhancing a sustainable improvement in the working of the National Assembly? Have they strengthened the capacities of the implementing partner?
- Does the programme have effective monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards results?

2. Results achievement at the output and outcome level

- What measures have been taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently and effectively used?
- Have the organizational structure, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the programme?



- How does the programme utilize existing local capacities of right-bearers and duty-holders to achieve its outcomes?

4. Factors Affecting Successful Implementation and Results Achievement

- What external factors have influenced the programme implementations and results?
- Are there opportunities that the programme should further explore in order to receive support for its implementation?

5. Strategic Positioning and Partnerships

- How well has the programme coordinated and harmonized its work with other actors in the sector?
- How relevant is the SELNA JP to the national development priorities and the achievement of the MDGs?

5. Future direction

- What is the likelihood that the benefits from the programme will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time if the programme were to cease?
- Is the programme supported by national/local institutions? Do these institutions demonstrate leadership commitment and technical capacity to continue to work with the programme or replicate it?
- What operational capacity of national partners, also known as capacity resources, such as technology, finance, and staffing, has been strengthened?
- What adaptive or management capacities of national partners, such as learning, leadership, programme and process management, networking and linkages have been supported?
- Do partners have the financial capacity to maintain the benefits from the programme?

Evaluation methodology and instruments

The mid-term evaluations will use methodologies and techniques as determined by the specific needs for information, the questions set out in the TOR, the availability of resources and the priorities of stakeholders. In all cases, consultants are expected to analyse all relevant information sources, such as annual reports, programme documents, internal review reports, programme files, strategic country development documents and any other documents that may provide evidence on which to form opinions. Consultants are also expected to use interviews as a means to collect relevant data for the evaluation.

The methodology and techniques to be used in the evaluation should be described in detail in the desk study report and the final evaluation report, and should contain, at a minimum, information on



the instruments used for data collection and analysis, whether these be documents, interviews, field visits, questionnaires or participatory techniques.

Deliverables

The mission will be responsible for submitting the following deliverables:

- **An inception report** which contains evaluation objectives and scope, description of evaluation methodology/methodological approach, data collection tools, data analysis methods, key informants/agencies, evaluation questions, performance criteria, issues to be studied, work plan and reporting requirements. It should include a clear evaluation matrix relating all these aspects.
- **Executive Summary** (max 6 pages);
- **Final Evaluation Report** including (max 20 pages including standard data tables/graphs for which template will be provided, but excluding annexes):
 - Executive Summary (maximum five pages)
 - Programme description
 - Evaluation purpose
 - Evaluation methodology
 - Findings
 - Lessons learnt
 - Recommendations
 - Annexes (including interview list – without identifying names for sake of confidentiality/ anonymity, data collection instruments, key documents consulted, Terms of Reference).
- **Brief synopsis** of evaluation and key findings (500 words for corporate communications use)
- Based on comments received on the drafts, the team leader will finalise the deliverables, with inputs from other evaluation team members, as required, and submit to the Managing Agent by the agreed date.
- The Managing Agent is responsible for circulating the **finalised report** to all concerned parties, for inclusion on the UN website and the UNDP Evaluation Resource Centre database.
- **Power point presentation** of preliminary findings to the key stakeholders for dissemination purposes.
- After recommendations have been validated/endorsed by stakeholders, **revise the programme document** accordingly (RRF + narrative) also taking available budget into account.

Product	Responsible Party	Estimated Time Frame	Place
Work plan with Specific dates	Evaluation Team	February 2011	Home based
Inception report	Evaluation Team	February 2011	Home Based
List of preliminary findings	Evaluation Team	February 2011	Field



Present preliminary findings & receive feedback	Evaluation Team	February 2011	Field
Draft Report of the Evaluation	Evaluation Team	March 2011	Home based
Comments from stakeholders to the draft report	Managing Agent (UNDP)	March 2011	Home based
Final Report and Executive Summary	Evaluation Team	April 2011	Home based
Translate executive summary and recommendation into Lao	National Expert	April 2011	Home based
Dissemination of final evaluation report to stakeholders	Managing Agent (UNDP)	April 2011	Home based
Revised programme document	Evaluation Team	April 2010	Home based

Composition of Evaluation team

The evaluation will be conducted by a team of two independent consultants. Overall responsibility for the mission and its independent report lies with the Evaluation Team Leader. The team leader together with the national team member is responsible for the timely delivery of the evaluation report. The third team member will be a Lao-English-Lao translator.

EVALUATION TEAM LEADER – A senior consultant with strong international experience in the field of parliamentary development.

Responsibilities:

- Documentation review and framing of evaluation questions
- Leading the evaluation team in planning, execution and reporting (hypothesis workshop).
- Deciding and managing division of labour within the evaluation team and supervising the national team members
- Use of best practice evaluation methodologies in conducting the evaluation
- Conducting the debriefing for the UN partners and the SELNA team
- Leading the national debriefing for programme stakeholders in Lao PDR
- Leading the drafting and finalization/quality control of the evaluation report
- Revise the programme document according to the recommendations made in the final evaluation report.
- Overall responsibility of the evaluation deliverables

Qualifications:

- Master's degree or higher on governance specializing in democratic institutions and other relevant fields;
- At least 15 years of professional experience in governance related issues, especially in developing countries;



- Sound knowledge and experience in evaluation of development programmes/projects;
- Through understanding of key elements of results-based programme management;
- Strong capacity for data collection and analysis, as well as report writing;
- Experience or knowledge of the National Assembly in Lao PDR and/or regional experience in the area of parliamentary development;
- Sound knowledge and understanding of gender sensitivity and social inclusion;
- A good level of experience in the strategic positioning of decentralization and local development programmes in relationship to the GoL, donors/development partners and local authorities;
- Ability to assess the effectiveness and sustainability of programme structure and implementation modalities to inform UN;
- Strong task management and team leading competencies;
- Fluency in English, both in speaking and writing. Knowledge of Lao would be an asset.

Management of the Evaluation

The Managing Agent (UNDP) of the Joint Programme will establish an internal Reference Group for internal validation of the process and to enlarge the circle of learning. The Reference Group will include a representative from all participating UN Agencies and the Programme team. It will review the evaluation TOR, the inception report, and the first draft of the evaluation report and provide feedback. The Managing Agent will also establish an external Reference Group with the national counterparts in Lao.

The roles and responsibilities of the Managing Agent are as follows:

- Liaise with the Reference Group to finalize the TOR for the Evaluation so as to ensure that an effective evaluation is conducted that is relevant to key users and that includes a desk review, stakeholder interviews, and in-depth information gathering;
- Timely delivery of documentation and information requested by the Evaluation Team;
- Facilitating meetings and interviews requested by the evaluation team with internal and external parties.
- Monitor the evaluation work-plan and ensure its timely completion, including timeline and deliverables of the Evaluation Team;
- Organize debriefings with the SELNA project's main donors if necessary;
- Facilitate the coordination of the Evaluation Team's meetings in Lao including briefings by the Evaluation Team to present preliminary and final findings and recommendations;
- Review and technically assess the Evaluation Team's work plan, inception report, preliminary and final evaluation products to ensure Evaluation Team products reflect all requirements for a high quality evaluation;
- Circulate the Evaluation Team's products for review and compiling comments and feedback from internal and external stakeholders;
- Hold briefing and debriefing sessions with the Evaluation Team and maintain regular contact throughout the evaluation;
- Other tasks related to the evaluation, upon request by the SELNA Programme Manager.



- Oversight of the Evaluation Team's inception report to fully comply with evaluation quality standards, including sending it for consultation with key stakeholders Review the list of preliminary findings
- Oversight and technical review of the draft report and the final evaluation report to ensure a quality product

Evaluation Offer

1. Financial Offer

- **Provide a lump sum cost in USD for the consultancy including:**
 - Fees per working day
 - International travel costs (if applicable)
 - DSA

Domestic travel in Lao PDR should not be included in the lump sum. Travel costs in Lao PDR will be reimbursed by UNDP.

2. Technical Offer

- **Provide a evaluation methodology proposal**
- **CV of the consultant**

3. Guarantee of availability

The consultants will provide a signed and dated declaration guaranteeing his/her availability mentioning:

- "I declare that I am able and willing to work:*
 - *For the period(s) foreseen in the terms of reference attached to the request for the position for which I have applied*
- *Within the execution period of the specific contract which runs from February 2011-May 2011*
- *Furthermore, should this offer be accepted, I am fully aware that if I am not available at the expected start date of my services for reasons other than ill-health or force majeure, I may be subject to exclusion from other tender procedures and contracts funded by UN."*



Annexes:

- Programme Data Sheet
- Standards of Evaluation in the UN system,
http://www.unevaluation.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=22
- Ethical Code of Conduct for Evaluation in UNDP,
<http://www.unevaluation.org/ethicalguidelines>
- Quality Criteria for the Evaluation Report (UNIFEM),
<http://erc.undp.org/unifem/resources/guidance/Guidance%20Note%20-%20Quality%20Criteria%20for%20Evaluation%20Reports.pdf;jsessionid=17983B8B3E7F83951D4576A711218BBB>
- Programme document
<http://www.undplao.org/whatwedo/Projectdocs/update%20January%202009/Joint%20Prog%20of%20Support%20to%20NA%20Phase%20II.pdf>



ANNEX 1

Programme Data Sheet

Country: Lao PDR

Programme Title: Support to an Effective Lao National Assembly (SELNA)

Programme ID: 00069660

Programme ATLAS Code (by donor):

UNDP	00012
UNFPA	00031
UNICEF	00035
UNIFEM	00032
UNODC	N/A
Donor	00280 (EU)

Financial Breakdown (by donor)

UNDP	USD 1,119,906
UNFPA	USD 50,000
UNICEF	USD 90,000
UNIFEM	USD 100,000
UNODC	USD 10,000
UNAIDS	USD 24,500
Donor	EUR 1,100,000 (EU)
Government	In kind
	Unfunded amount: USD 1,552,058
Delivery to date (per donor per year):	
UNDP	UNDP 2009: \$361,906 2010: \$258,000
UNFPA	UNFPA 2009: \$18,845 2010: \$16,500
UNICEF	UNICEF 2009: \$35,475 2010: \$30,525
UNIFEM	UNIFEM 2009: \$19,993 2010: \$20,000
UNODC	EU 2009: \$451,892 2010: \$354,859
Donor	
Total Programme Budget	USD 4,387,395

