TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR MIDTERM EVALUATION

Improving the Resilience of the Agriculture Sector in Lao PDR to Climate Change Impacts (IRAS)

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the UNDP and AF M&E policies and procedures, a mid-term evaluation of the full-size project *"Improving the Resilience of the Agriculture Sector in Lao PDR to Climate Change Impacts (IRAS)"* implemented through the *Ministry of Agriculture (MAF) / National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI)* is to be undertaken in 2013. The project started on the *10th of May 2011 (signing of project documents)* and is coming into its *3rd* year of implementation. This Terms of Reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for this mid-term evaluation.

The essentials of the project to be evaluated are as follows:

Project Title:	Improving the Resilience of the Agriculture Sector in Lao PDR to Climate Change Impacts (IRAS)			
UNDP Project ID:	00076176	Project financing	<u>at endorsement (Million</u> <u>US\$)</u>	<u>at MTE (Million US\$)</u>
ATLAS Project ID:	00060492	GEF financing:	4,445,450	4,445450
Country:	Lao PDR	IA/EA own:	378,320 in-kind	378,320 in-kind
Region:	South East Asia	Government:	4,764,969 parallel	4,764,969 parallel
Focal Area:	Climate Change Adaptation	Other: UNDP	2,575,259 parallel 280,000 cash	2,575,259 parallel 280,000 cash
		Total co-financing:	7,998,548	7,998,548
Executing Agency:	 Ministry of Agriculture (MAF) National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) 	Total Project Cost in cash:	4,725,450	4,725,450
involved:	 Department for Disaster Management and Climate Change (DDMCC/MONRE) Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperatives (DAEC/MAF) Department of Land Planning and Development (DLPD/MONRE) National Disaster Management Office (NDMO/MLSW) 	ProDoc Signature	(date project began): Planned closing date: May 2015	10 th of May 2011 Revised closing date: December 2015

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OBJECTIVES

Project background

The land-locked country of Lao PDR is highly exposed and vulnerable to flooding and drought. These impacts are being induced by observable changes in the climate including higher than usual intensity rainfall events during the raining season and extended dry seasons. The related risks include sudden flash-floods, landslides and large-scale land-erosion on slopes and - recently - typhoons in the south. These events can be very destructive not only altering the landscape, fauna and vegetation, but also destroying public infrastructure, property, productive land, agricultural assets and harvests. The people of Lao PDR are particularly vulnerable to climate change because 80% of livelihoods are associated with some form of agricultural activity. Furthermore poor farmers have a limited asset base and lack access to support provided by the state.

Furthermore recent market forces, mainly through external investors and tourism, have started to re-structure agricultural production towards large scale monoculture farming and away from more traditional subsistence smallholder farming. The overall effect has been to delink long established interdependencies between farming and ecosystems, to reduce diversity in crop varieties and production techniques, leading to even greater vulnerability to climate risks.

In order to promote resilience in the agricultural sector Lao PDR needs assistance in improving the knowledge base on climate change, strengthening agriculture and rural sector policies and developing institutional capacities so that systematic adaptation planning can be carried out. At the same time, appropriate and adaptive agricultural practices need to be introduced on the ground together with measures to introduce alternative livelihood options for poor rural communities.

In its efforts to Increase the overall adaptive capacity of the agriculture sector in Lao PDR and improve the resilience of food production systems, the project proposes the following four-pronged approach: (i) strengthening of the national knowledge and information base on climate change impacts in Lao PDR and their effects on agricultural production and food security; (ii) enhancement of the capacity of sector planners and agricultural producers to understand and address climate change related risks and opportunities for local food production; (iii) demonstration and promotion of diversified and adaptive agricultural practices and other off farm livelihood alternatives at the community level; and (iv) adaptation monitoring and learning as a long term process that assures that lessons learnt do benefit the local population, as well as national policies and international climate change adaptation efforts.

The project implementation started in 2011 and is focused on two main provinces exposed to risks of increasing climate variability – expressed both in prolonged droughts and more severe incidents of floods. The project has engaged with the government and local farmer communities and villagers in Savannakhet and Xayaboury provinces to test a wide range of community-based adaptation options. These measures vary from cropping methods to water harvesting techniques, livelihood diversification options and supply chains. Among other key efforts the project is also working to improve climate hazard information that is usable for both decision makers and target communities, strengthen the extension services so farmers are adequately guided on effective coping options, and adjust the land use and disaster risk management policies that enable broader community and sector-wide resilience. Continuous monitoring of results and learning will assure that lessons learnt do benefit the local population, as well as national policies and international Climate Change adaptation efforts.

Project Objective

The objective of the project is to minimize food insecurity resulting from climate change in Lao PDR and reduce the vulnerability of farmers to extreme flooding and drought events.

Four outcomes will contribute to this objective; the progress toward the objective and outcomes is measured through the following indicators:

Objective / Outcomes	Indicators	Target by end of project, relative to the baseline of 2009 (unless specified otherwise)
Objective: Food insecurity resulting from climate change in Lao PDR	 Availability of a framework for climate change resilient agriculture in Lao PDR 	By the end of the Project a framework for CC resilient agriculture is available
minimized and vulnerability of farmers to extreme flooding and drought events reduced	• Percentage of households in pilot districts (Savannakhet, Saravan and Xayaboury province) actively implementing climate change adaptation measures introduced by the project	By the end of the project 6 Training and Agricultural Adaptation Modules (CCTAMs) have been extended to 75% of target households in 2 pilot districts (Savannakhet/Saravan province, Xayaboury province)
	• Proportion and value (yield) of agricultural assets with increased resilience to climate change as a result of adaptation measures implemented by this project	By the end of the project interventions on the ground increase agricultural productivity on Climate Change affected land by 25%

Outcome 1: Increased knowledge and understanding of climate variability and climate induced threats on agricultural production, food security and vulnerability, in Lao PDR	1.1 Cover: Number and type of stakeholders served by expanded climate and vulnerability information and knowledge base related to agriculture and food security	All stakeholders identified during PPG and inception phases have access to an efficiently organized and up to date knowledge and information network for climate change impacts on agriculture and food security.
	1.2 Impact: Numbers of national and provincial level stakeholders using improved climate and vulnerability information in formulation of climate resilient policies and plans.	By the end of the project 60% of identified national and provincial government stakeholders are using the knowledge base for sector planning: strategies, long- term plans, annual plans and budgets, project work plans
	1.3 Sustainability: Resources available to maintain knowledge base after end of the project	By the end of the project 50% of cost for operation and maintenance of the knowledge base and information network are included in the sectoral budget allocation for agriculture
Outcome 2: Capacities of sectoral planners and agricultural producers strengthened to understand and address climate change – related risks and opportunities for local food production and socio-economic conditions	 2.1 Cover: Number of targeted institutions (agriculture, water management, food security, early warning, poverty alleviation, etc) with increased capacity to reduce risks of and respond to climate variability. 2.2 Impact: Number of targeted agricultural officers, extension workers, farmer cooperatives and TSC (Technical Service Center) members in target districts having an advanced understanding of key climate change risk and impacts on agricultural production and socio-economic conditions. 	By the end of the project at least 4 planners from at least 6 sectors / sub-sectors relevant to agriculture, food security and CC are able to effectively apply climate risk information in annual and multi- year planning exercises and have applied these skills to the review and revision of existing sector / sub-sector strategies. By the end of the project 75% of District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO), District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC), and TSC staff in target districts have been trained in applying climate risk information and are applying this acquired knowledge in the planning and implementation of their activities.

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Outcome 3: Community-based adaptive agricultural practices and off- farm opportunities demonstrated and promoted within suitable agro-ecological systems	3.1. Cover: Number and type of climate risk-reducing farmer level practices identified and trialed to support adaptation of livelihoods and/or resource management.	By the end of the project at least 100 practical field-based adaptation interventions (food security, water management, flood and drought control) are trialed in the 5 pilot districts according to accepted technical standards
	3.2. Cover: % or targeted farming households aware of predicted adverse impacts of climate change and implementing new adaptive practices for agro-ecosystem and landscape management.	By the end of the project 75% of farming households in 5 pilot districts (3 provinces), equivalent to 13,500 households, have had access to extension services based on 6 Climate Change Training and Agriculture Adaptation Modules (climate resilient cropping, livestock, fisheries and forestry practices, water management etc.)
	3.3. Impact: Improvement in farmer yields and water availability due to adaptation measures trialed in more than 50% of targeted communities.	By the end of the project there is a 25% improvement in farmer yields resulting from adaptation measures trialed in target communities in 5 pilot districts.
Outcome 4: Adaptation Monitoring and Learning as a long-term process	4.1. Replicability: Number of 'lessons learned' codified in a specific KM facility such as the Adaptation Knowledge Platform for South East Asia or the global Adaptation Learning Mechanism	A project internal M+E system covering all components and all project locations systematically provides quantitative and qualitative data and information on coded 'lessons learned' and a website has been established linked to wider dissemination through regional and global networks (ALM, Wiki-adapt, Eldis and the Asia Knowledge Platform)
	4.2. Replicability: Number and type of relevant networks or communities through which lessons learned are disseminated to enable replication.	By the end of the project 2 regional conferences on CC+AA are organized by NAFRI for GMS member states (in collaboration with partner organizations) for SE ASIA (UNEP, SID, SEI, UNDP, ADB)

3. OBJECTIVES OF THIS MID-TERM EVALUATION (MTE)

The objective of the MTE is to provide an independent analysis of the progress of the project so far. The MTE will identify potential project design problems, evaluate progress towards the achievement of the project objective, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP-GEF supported AF projects), and make recommendations regarding specific actions that should be taken to improve the project. The MTE will evaluate early signs of project success or failure and identify the necessary changes to be made. The project performance will be measured based on the indicators of the **project's logical framework (see Annex 1**).

The MTE must provide evidence based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluation team is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and key stakeholders. The evaluation team is expected to conduct field missions to different government agencies in Vientiane capital, Xayaboury and Savannakhet provinces, including the project sites in Outhoumphone, Champhone, Phiang and Paklay districts. Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum:

- 1. UNDP staff who have project responsibilities;
- 2. Implementing Partner National
- 3. The Chair of Project Board
- 4. The National Project Director (NPD) and Project Manager (PM)
- 5. Project stakeholders, to be determined at the inception meeting; including academia, local government and CBOs

The team will evaluate all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual PIRs, GEF AMAT tracking tools, project budget revisions, progress reports, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based evaluation. A list of documents that the project team and UNDP Country Office will provide to the team for review is included in Annex 2 of this Terms of Reference.

4. SCOPE OF THE MTE

The evaluation team will evaluate the following three categories of project progress. For each category, the evaluation team is required to rate overall progress using a six-point rating scale outlined in Annex 3.

4.1 Progress towards Results

Project design:

- Evaluate the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Evaluate the effect of any incorrect assumptions made by the project. Identify new assumptions.
- Evaluate the relevance of the project strategy (and theory of change) and whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results.
- Evaluate how the project addresses country priorities.
- Evaluate the baseline data included in the project results framework and suggest revisions as necessary.

Progress:

- Evaluate the outputs and progress toward outcomes achieved so far and the contribution to attaining the overall objective of the project.
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyze, beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality **and women's empowerment**, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis. Suggest measures to **improve the project's development impact**, **including gender equality and women's empowerment**.
- Examine whether progress so far has led to, or could in the future lead to, potentially adverse environmental and/or social impacts/risks that could threaten the sustainability of the project outcomes. Are these risks being managed, mitigated, minimized or offset? Suggest mitigation measures as needed.
- Evaluate the extent to which the implementation of the project has been inclusive of relevant stakeholders and to which it has been able to create collaboration between different partners, and how the different needs of male and female stakeholders has been considered. Identify opportunities for stronger substantive partnerships.

4.2 Adaptive management

Work Planning

- a) Are work planning processes result-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results.
- **b)** Examine the use of the project document logical/results framework as a management tool and evaluate any changes made to it since project start. Ensure any revisions meet UNDP-GEF requirements and evaluate the impact of the revised approach on project management.

Finance and co-finance:

- a) Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- b) Complete the co-financing monitoring table (see Annex 4).
- c) Evaluate the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.

Monitoring Systems.

- a) Evaluate the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required?
- **b)** Ensure that the monitoring system, including performance indicators meet UNDP-GEF minimum requirements. Develop SMART indicators as necessary.
- c) Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators as necessary.
- d) Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to M&E? Are these resources being allocated effectively?

<u>Risk Management</u>

- a) Validate whether the risks identified in the project document, PPRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why. Give particular attention to critical risks.
- b) Describe any additional risks identified and suggest risk ratings and possible risk management strategies to be adopted.

<u>Reporting</u>

- a) Evaluate how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management, and shared with the Project Board.
- b) Evaluate how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

4.3 Management arrangements

- a) Evaluate overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the project document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- b) Evaluate the quality of execution of the project Implementing Partners and recommend areas for improvement.
- c) Evaluate the quality of support provided by UNDP and recommend areas for improvement.

5. MID TERM EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
Inception Report	Evaluation team clarifies timing and method of evaluation	No later than 2 weeks before the evaluation mission	Evaluation team submits to UNDP Country Office
Presentation	Initial Findings	End of evaluation mission	To project management and UNDP Country Office (CO)
Draft Final Report	Full report (as template in annex 5) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission	Sent to UNDP CO, reviewed by UNDP Regional Technical Advisor (RTA), Program Support Unit (PSU), and Implementing Partner (IP)
Final Report	Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comment have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report).	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to UNDP CO

6. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP Country Office (UNDP CO) in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The UNDP CO will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The project team will be responsible for liaising with the evaluation team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits with missions within Vientiane capital and to Xayaboury and Savannakhet provinces (Outhoumphon, Champhon, Phiang and Paklay districts).

7. TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the evaluation will be 4 weeks starting October 2013 according to the following plan:

Activity	Timeframe
Preparation	(date range) (3 days)
Evaluation mission and debriefing	(date range) (11 days)
Draft evaluation report	(date range) (3 days)
Finalisation of final report	(date range) (3 days)

8. TEAM COMPOSITION

A team of two independent evaluators will conduct the evaluation - one international team leader and one national expert. The recruitment for both the international team leader and national expert with be led by the UNDP Country Office as separate recruitments. The consultants will not have participated in the project

preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities. The team should have prior experience in reviewing or evaluating similar projects. Experience with GEF financed projects is an advantage.

The selection of consultants will be aimed at maximizing the overall "team" qualities in the following areas:

- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies high level analytical work and tracking on climate change adaptation project development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to conservation or natural resource management;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Work experience in relevant technical areas for at least 10 years;
- Excellent English communication skills;
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;
- Experience working in the Mekong region (South East Asia).

9. PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

%	Milestone
50	Upon approval of 1 st draft mid-term evaluation report
50	Upon approval of final mid-term evaluation report

10. APPLICATION PROCESS

All interested and qualified candidates should apply on-line using the following links:

- 1) UNDP Lao PDR Country Office website at: http://www.la.undp.org/content/lao_pdr/en/home/operations/jobs/_Or
- 2) UNDP Jobs at <u>http://jobs.undp.org/</u>

Interested individual consultants must submit the following documents/information:

- 1) Cover letter explaining why he/she would be the most suitable candidate for the work, and including a brief methodology on how he/she will approach and conduct the evaluation;
- 2) CV including past experience in similar projects or assignments and at least 3 references;
- 3) Detailed financial proposal: Lump sum offer with clear cost breakdown (international travel, consultancy fee, and per diem).

Note: UNDP accept only travel costs not exceeding of an economy class ticket.

During the online application it is recommended that all documents to be uploaded in one electronic file in Word or PDF formats.

Criteria for Evaluation of Proposal: The selection will be made based on the educational background and experience on similar assignments. The price proposal will weigh as 30% of the total scoring.

Evaluation of proposals and award criteria:

- 1. Short listing of applications according to technical criteria (a to b),
- 2. The 3-4 applications with the highest score will be interviewed
- 3. Final evaluation includes interview scoring (criteria c) and financial proposal (as per table below)

		obtainable
Technical criteria	0.7	70
a. Academic degree	0.05	5
 b. Skills and experience of a consultant experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies, high level analytical work and tracking on climate change adaptation project development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation 	0.10	10
• Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios	0.05	5
 Competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to conservation or natural resource management; 	0.05	5
Demonstrable analytical skills;	0.03	3
Relevant work experience in Laos or Southeast Asia	0.02	2
c. Proposed work plan and approach to carry out the assignment		
- All aspect of the ToR has been addressed in sufficient detail.	0.10	10
- Implementation schedule.	0.05	5
- Quality assurance measures.	0.05	5
Result of the interview	0.20	20
Financial	0.3	30
Total points obtainable	1.0	100

Cumulative analysis: The award of the contract will be made to a consultant who offer has been evaluated and determined as:

- a. responsive/compliant/acceptable, and
- b. Having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria:
 - * Technical Criteria weight; [0.7]
 - * Financial Criteria weight; [0.3]

Only a consultant obtaining a minimum of 49 points in the technical rating would be considered for the financial evaluation.

Note: Any request for clarification must be sent in writing to the following e-mail: yvette.lizee@undp.org UNDP Lao PDR will respond in writing by standard electronic mail to all consultants.

Only short-listed candidates will be notified.

Qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

Annex 1: Project Results framework, see the Project Document page 48-51 Annex 2: List of Documents

- 1. Project Document
- 2. Project Implementation Review (PIR) and AMAT tracking tool
- 3. Quarterly progress reports and work plans of the various implementation task teams
- 4. Audit reports
- 5. Administrative and Financial Tracking tools
- 6. The Mission Reports and Lessons learnt study
- 7. M & E Operational Guidelines, all monitoring reports prepared by the project; and
- 8. Financial and Administration guidelines.

The following documents will also be available:

- 9. Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
- 10. Minutes of the Project Board Meetings
- 11. Maps
- 12. UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks.

Annex 3: Mid-term Evaluation Rating Scale

Progress towards results: use the following rating scale

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Project is expected to achieve or exceed all its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as "good practice".
Satisfactory (S)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Project is expected to achieve its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only some of its major global environmental objectives.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Project is expected not to achieve most of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, any of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.

Adaptive management AND Management Arrangements: use the following rating scale

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The project has no shortcomings and can be presented as "good practice".
Satisfactory (S)	The project has minor shortcomings.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The project has moderate shortcomings.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	The project has significant shortcomings.
Unsatisfactory (U)	The project has major shortcomings.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The project has severe shortcomings.

Annex 4: Co-financing table

Sources of Co- financing ¹	Name of Co- financer	Type of Co- financing ²	Amount Confirmed at CEO endorsement / approval	Actual Amount Materialized at Midterm	Actual Amount Materialized at Closing
		TOTAL			

Explain "Other Sources of Co-financing":

¹ Sources of Co-financing may include: Bilateral Aid Agency(ies), Foundation, GEF Agency, Local Government, National Government, Civil Society Organization, Other Multi-lateral Agency(ies), Private Sector, Other

² Type of Co-financing may include: Grant, Soft Loan, Hard Loan, Guarantee, In-Kind, Other

Annex 5: Table of Contents for the Mid-term Evaluation Report

- i. Opening page:
 - Title of UNDP supported AF financed project
 - UNDP and AF project ID#s.
 - Evaluation time frame and date of evaluation report
 - Region and countries included in the project
 - Implementing Partner and other project partners
 - Evaluation team members
 - Acknowledgements
- ii. Executive Summary
 - Project Summary Table
 - Project Description (brief)
 - Evaluation Rating Table
 - Summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons
- iii. Acronyms and Abbreviations
- 1. Introduction
 - Purpose of the evaluation
 - Scope & Methodology
 - Structure of the evaluation report
- 2. Project description and development context
 - Project start and duration
 - Problems that the project sought to address
 - Immediate and development objectives of the project
 - Baseline Indicators established
 - Main stakeholders
 - Expected Results
- 3. Findings

3.2

- 3.1 Progress toward Results:
 - Project Design
 - Progress
 - Adaptive Management:
 - Work planning
 - Finance and co-finance
 - Monitoring systems
 - Risk management
 - Reporting
- 3.3 Management Arrangements:
 - Overall project management
 - Quality of executive of Implementing Partners
 - Quality of support provided by UNDP
- 4. Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons
 - Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
 - Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
 - Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives
 - Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success

- 5. Annexes
 - ToR

 - Itinerary
 List of persons interviewed
 Summary of field visits
 List of documents reviewed
 - Questionnaire used and summary of resultsCo-financing table