

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR MIDTERM EVALUATION (International Consultant)**

**Poverty and Environment Initiative – Lao PDR**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with the UNDP and UNEP policies and procedures, a mid-term evaluation is required for the project “UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Initiative” (hereafter referred to as PEI Project) which isimplemented through the *Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Ministry of Planning and Investment and the National Assembly, in Lao PDR.*  Lao PDR was a beneficiary country under PEI Scale-Up Project, implemented 2009-2013, and has been included in the Global Final Evaluation for the Scale-Up Project taking place in November to December 2014. Lao PDR has already moved beyond the Scale-Up Phase and is currently implementing PEI Phase 2, 2012-2015. This Terms of Reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for this mid-term evaluation, which will build upon the findings for Lao PDR in the Global Final Evaluation, as well as evaluate project implementation up to November 2014.

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Project Title: | *UNDP- UNEP POVERTY Environment Initiative* | | | |
| UNDP Project ID: | Output 1: 00061662/ Output 2: 00068327/ Output 3: 00068328/ Output 4 n/a  Output 5: 00068329 | **Project financing** | *(USD)* | *At MTE ( US$)* |
| ATLAS Project ID: | Output 1: 00078225/ Output:2 00083583/ Output 3:00083584/ Output 4: n/a  Output 5: 00083585 | PEF (cash) | 749,193 | 353,834.74 |
| Country: | Lao PDR | Government (in-kind) | 708,519 | 529,190 |
| Region: | South East Asia | UNDP (cash) | 504,000 | **251,157.17** |
| Focal Area: | Environment and Energy | SDC financing (cash) | 3,000,000 | **1,729,406.28** |
|  |  |  |
| Executing Agency: | Output 1: Department of Planning; / Output 2: Department of Investment and Promotion; / Output 5: National Economic Research Institute of the Ministry of Planning and Investment ;  Output 3: Department of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment of Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment; Output 5: National Assembly |  |  |  |
| Other Partners involved: | N/A | Total resources- in cash: | $4,253,193 | 2,334,398.19 |
| Total resources- in kind | $708,519 | 529,190 |
|  | Planned closing date: | 31 Dec 2015 |

### PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OBJECTIVES

*Project Background*

Lao Peoples’ Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) lies in the center of the Indochinese peninsula surrounded by Thailand, Vietnam, China, Myanmar and Cambodia. Lao PDR has a population of 6.67 million people, and the overall population density is low at 24 people per Km2. As a result of its relatively wide ranges of latitude and altitude, its rich water resources and tropical climate, Lao hosts globally significant tropical ecosystems.

The richness and as such global significance of Lao PDR’s agro-biodiversity is attributable to several factors: location between two major bio-geographical zones –the temperate north and the tropical south –high ethnic diversity, and different climatic and altitudinal zones. Lao PDR is thought to be at the center of domestication for Asian rice and the center of origin for job’s tears. Other potentially globally significant agro-biodiversity include cultivated local and indigenous varieties of maize, sugar cane varieties such as oy hok and oy pa used in confectionaries; bushy peas including indigenous varieties currently being studied at NAFRI; Livestock; and crop associated biodiversity such as wild crop relatives and pollinators and other insects.

The overall goal of PEI Phase I was to support the effective integration of environmental concerns of poor and vulnerable groups into policy, planning and implementation processes for poverty reduction, pro-poor growth and achievement of the MDGs. Over the last two and half years of Phase I (2009 – 2012), the initiative has worked to include poverty-environment (PE) concerns into national and provincial development planning by supporting formulation of the appropriate tools and mechanisms such as technical guidelines, national and provincial investment strategies, to better manage private investments. The program has successfully raised awareness and enhanced the capacity of government to better manage the quality aspect of foreign direct investments by improving environmental sustainability and the economic benefits to communities.

## After setting a solid foundation for moving towards an inclusive and sustainable growth trajectory, the second phase of PEI (2012-2015) builds on Phase I to ensure widespread implementation of the tools, mechanisms and strategies developed. In order to fulfill the Phase II objective of: strengthening capacity of targeted central and provincial authorities to integrate poverty-environment concerns in development planning for sustainable and inclusive growth, Phase II will work towards a fully enforced investment management system for the promotion of quality investments. This will include the strengthening of screening and approvals, and investment monitoring and compliance, with environmental and social safeguards in place in the pilot provinces Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Savannakhet, Saravan, Vientiane and Houaphan provinces.

*Project Objectives*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Outputs | Main Goals | Main activities |
| 1 | Equitable, sustainable and climate-resilient development are included in the implementation and monitoring of the NSEDP | * Develop and implement guidelines and strengthen capacity for incorporating PE issues into provincial, district and sectorial annual work plans. * Develop capacity for the management and analysis of PE indicators in NSEDP monitoring and evaluation framework (M&E). * Integrate PE concerns into NSEDP projects. |
| 2 | National and provincial Investment strategies are implemented to strengthen investment management systems for quality and sustainable growth in Lao PDR | * Implement national and provincial investment strategies. * Investment promotion: produce promotion materials, develop tracking system for investment procedure and investment calling list. * Screening and appraisal: support the use of checklists for investment proposal screening, develop model contract template, contract negotiation skills, guidelines and assess the legal framework, etc. * Monitoring: improve monitoring evidence, investment database management, data analysis and follow up monitoring for compliance. The team will also carry out a sustainable financing assessment and support demand driven assessments of economic, social, environmental impacts, as well as climate resilience from investment projects. * Communication: develop and implement a PEI-wide communication strategy and relevant communication materials. |
| 3 | Improved effectiveness of ESIA system, particularly for the agriculture and forestry plantation sector, as a safeguard for sustainable and climate resilient development | * Support development of technical guidelines for reviewing and monitoring ESIAs and incorporate climate adaption into guidelines particularly in agriculture and forestry and infrastructure sectors. * Develop capacity and assess options for sustainable financing of ESIA monitoring. * Assess cumulative impacts from investments. * Build capacity of mass organizations and civil society groups for participation in ESIA public consultation process. |
| 4 | National Assembly decisions support quality and equitable growth that sustains the natural resource base | * Provide trainings for the NA working group. * Raise awareness of poverty-environment-equity-climate issues, with particular focus on the rights of ethnic groups and other vulnerable groups. * Provide technical support for developing land policy. * Provide technical resources to newly established NA Legislative Learning and Resource Center. |
| 5 | Investment decisions are better informed by targeted economic and environmental research and policy analyses | * Conduct strategic environmental economic research on agricultural contract farming models. * Enhance national capability in environmental economic valuation and related studies to make better informed decisions * Improve communication and dissemination of research to policy makers. |

**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 issues, evaluate progress towards the achievement of the project objective, identify and document lessons learned, 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. It will also include recommendations for ensuring sustainability of the outcomes beyond the project end-date. 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 and the project team. Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum:

1. UNDP staff who have project responsibilities
2. National Implementing Partner
3. The Chair of Project Board
4. The National Project Director (NPD) and Project Managers (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 – 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.

# SCOPE OF THE MTE

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

* 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 catalyse, 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.
  1. **Adaptive management**

Work Planning

1. Are works planning processes result-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results.
2. 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-UNEP requirements and evaluate the impact of the revised approach on project management.

Finance and co-finance:

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

Monitoring Systems

1. 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?
2. Ensure that the monitoring system, including performance indicators meet UNDPUNEP minimum requirements. Develop SMART indicators as necessary.
3. Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators as necessary.
4. 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?

Risk Management

1. 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.
2. Describe any additional risks identified and suggest risk ratings and possible risk management strategies to be adopted.

Reporting

1. Evaluate how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management, and shared with the Project Board.
2. Evaluate how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.
   1. **Management arrangements**
3. 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.
4. Evaluate the quality of execution of the project Implementing Partners and recommend areas for improvement.

Evaluate the quality of support provided by UNDP and recommend areas for improvement.

**4.4 Sustainability**

1. Evaluate clarity of project design sustainability expectations and project exit strategy development and determined effectiveness of these strategies.
2. Evaluate financial viability of mainstreaming measures that may support ongoing sustainability.
3. Outline policy development measures that may support sustainability.
4. Outline institutional capacity development measures that may support sustainability.
5. ***MID TERM EVALUATION DELIVERABLES***

Lao PDR PEI Project has been included in the Final Evaluation for the Global PEI Project and all Evaluation mechanisms such as preparation of Inception Report, In-country Mission, Presentation of Initial Findings to the Stakeholders would have already been concluded. This is detailed in the TOR’s for the Global Evaluation (Annex 8). The deliverables for this MTR will therefore include a Draft and a Final Report only, as specified below:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Deliverable** | **Content** | **Date** | **Responsibilities** | **Portion of Payment** |
| Draft Final Report | Full report (as template in Annex 5) with annexes | February 13, 2015 | Submit to UNDP CO, reviewed by UNDP CO, UNDP Regional Technical Advisor (RTA), and Implementing Partner (IP) | 0% |
| Final Report | Revised report | February 28 | Submit to UNDP CO | 100% on acceptance of report by UNDP CO |

1. ***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 consultant.

1. ***TIMEFRAME***
2. The total duration of the evaluation will be 8weeks, with 7 days Level of Effort. The contract period will be from January 01 to March 06, 2015.

**The overall responsibility for methodology, work plan and organization of the mission, and production of a high quality final report in English lies with the International Consultant. The qualification requirement for the international consultant are included:**

* Recent completion of PEI Scale-Up Phase Global Final Evaluation Recognized degree (at least MSc level) in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, Agro-biodiversity conservation policy, social sciences, agriculture and rural development, other biodiversity related sciences
* 10 years of relevant experience in development work, with a focus on socio-economic analysis, 10 years technical experience with agro-biodiversity policy development and analysis, the socio-economic impact assessment related to agro-biodiversity and rural development, and institutional development towards agro-biodiversity into the national strategy plans.
* The team should have prior experience in reviewing or evaluating similar projects.
* Recent experience with UNDP ‘s result-based management evaluation methodologies;
* Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
* Competence in mainstream policies in to the agro-biodiversity conservation and sustainable use projects
* Recognized expertise in the management and sustainable use of biodiversity
* Demonstrable analytical skills;
* 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).

1. **PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **%** | **Milestone** |
| 100 | Upon approval of final mid-term evaluation report |

Signature of Environment Unit Manager, UNDP Lao PDR

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chitlatda Keomuongchanh, OIC-ENV

Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Annex 1: Project log frame**

Separate document attached.

**Annex 2: List of Documents**

1. Project Document
2. Annual reports
3. Quarterly progress reports and work plans of the various implementation task teams
4. Monthly minute meeting
5. Spot check report
6. Audit reports

The following documents will also be available:

1. Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
2. UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks.

**Annex 3: Progress towards result - 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]](#footnote-1) | Name of Co-financer | Type of Co-financing[[2]](#footnote-2) | Actual Amount Materialized at Midterm (US$) | Actual Amount Materialized at Closing (US$) |
| PEF | PEF | Grant | 353,834.74 | 749,193 |
| SDC | SDC | Grant | 1,729,406.28 | 3,000,000 |
| TRAC | UNDP | Grant | 251,157.17 | 504,000 |
| Government | National and provincial government agencies in the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment; and National Assembly | In-kind | 529,190 | 708,519 |
|  |  | **TOTAL in-cash** | 2,334,398.19 | 4,253,193 |
|  |  | **TOTAL-in-kind** | 529,190 | 708,519 |

Explain “Other Sources of Co-financing”:

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **i.** | Opening page:   * Title of UNDP UNEP project * UNDP and UNEP 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 |
| **3.1** | Progress toward Results:   * Project Design * Progress |
| **3.2** | 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 met or interviewed * Summary of field visits * List of documents reviewed * Questionnaire used and summary of results * Co-financing table |

**Annex 6: Financial Proposal Template (International Consultant)**

International Consultant

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Cost Components** | **Unit Cost** | **Quantity** | **Total Rate for the Contract Duration**  **(USD)** |
| Professional Fees | $\_700\_\_\_/day | 7 days | $ 4,900 |
| **TOTAL** | **--** | **--** | **$ 4,900** |

**Annex 7: TOR’s PEI Global Final Evaluation**

Separate document attached.

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 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Type of Co-financing may include: Grant, Soft Loan, Hard Loan, Guarantee, In-Kind, Other [↑](#footnote-ref-2)